

“Frame Me”: Speaking Out of Turn and Lorraine O’Grady’s Alien Avant-Garde

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Eight years before the art world would become meaningfully integrated with the exhibits of David Hammons and Adrian Piper, and ten years before Coco Fusco and Gómez-Peña’s controversial performance *Two Undiscovered Amerindians*, American artist Lorraine O’Grady (born 1934 in Boston) staged a series of alien invasions on New York art spaces as the now notorious *Mlle Bourgeoise Noire* (Miss Black Middle-Class). The first time this persona appeared was at Just Above Midtown (JAM) during one of O’Grady’s first public performances in 1980. Dressed in an extravagant debutante-style gown made with one hundred and eighty pairs of white gloves, O’Grady shouted at her predominantly black audience as she ceremoniously whipped herself with a cat-o’-nine-tails spiked with white chrysanthemums:

THAT’S ENOUGH!
No more boot-licking...
No more ass-kissing...
No more buttering-up...
Of super-ass...imilates...
BLACK ART MUST TAKE MORE RISKS!!!¹

While the crashed gallery opening was for that of an exhibition called *Outlaw Aesthetics*, *Mlle Bourgeoise Noire*’s (MBN) invasion was unsolicited and her speech out of turn—a strategy scholar/artist Michele Wallace, argues is the only ‘tradition’ available to the black female critical voice.² Later, art critic and curator Lucy Lippard invokes the powerful stance of speaking out of turn in her essay about Wallace’s work.³ *Out of turn* for Lippard can be understood as, “outside the dizzying circle of white and male discourse.”⁴ I recuperate the historical phrase “speaking out of turn” for this essay on Lorraine O’Grady’s performance art in order to revitalize and develop a

vocabulary necessary for intervening in western-centric discourses of art history, the study of visual objects such as *MBN*, and for discussing the interventions these performative objects are making.

Speaking out of turn is predicated on a preexisting 'turn,' or order of speech. To speak out of turn means that you have spoken when it was not your turn to do so. More broadly defined, 'speaking out of turn' connotes 1) speaking at the wrong time or in an undesignated place, 2) saying something without authority, 3) making a remark/providing information that is tactless or indiscreet, or 4) speaking without permission.⁵ Speaking out of turn is a methodology developed out of the historical condition of being silenced and rendered invisible. Conditions, for example, established and maintained in order to manage the exclusive boundaries of the fine art world.

Historically, the relationship between communities of color and modern and contemporary art museums has been one of marginalization, exclusion, and invisibility.⁶ Within these museums, black and brown bodies, specifically those of artists, service workers and museum goers, become marked with a certain visibility, and yet their presence is simultaneously rendered strange in these sites, which are entrenched in a highly Eurocentric politics of aesthetics. Lorraine O'Grady's unruly performance as *MBN* highlights the duality of the non-white body—hyper visible and yet "alien"—within museums, galleries and the art world more generally.⁷

It is in these spaces and against the backdrop of the feminist artistic movements of the 1970s and 80s and the emergence of multicultural discourses and critiques of the 1990s and early 2000s, that O'Grady summons, like the courageous figures in Daphne Brooks' work, "multiple performance strategies, performative ideologies, and new popular cultural technologies to counter-intuitively articulate and deploy the discourse of socio-political alienation."⁸ O'Grady's undertheorized work should be counted among the cultural innovators who manage their alienation in a way that offers useful commentary on the ways their bodies, as those of women of color, are always already marked and categorized as foreign, especially when staged in Western art contexts. For example, as Uri McMillan notes, O'Grady exploited the immense possibility of her avatar in *Mlle. Bourgeoisie Noire* in order to transform her body into an art object. "Wielding her body as a tabula rasa, O'Grady's eccentric performance art hinted at the corporeal risks black artists could take: not the abandonment of representational art, but rather an amalgamation of self, a fashioning of oneself as both the



Fig. 1 Lorraine O'Grady, *Mlle Bourgeoisie Noire Goes to the New Museum*, 1981. Photo-installation. No. 3 of 14, "Mlle Bourgeoisie Noire asks, 'Won't you help me lighten my heavy bouquet?'" Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, NY.

subject and the object of art"⁹—a fusion of self/object/subject.

O'Grady's invasion is multifaceted in its deployment of an "alien body" and alienation. *MBN*'s out of turn performance bears witness to the superficially foreign existence of the black middle class within both Western art's consciousness and the psych of black artists, most of whom circulate among middle to upper class social and political environs. In the 1980s, the white debutante gown and gloves would not have been lost on O'Grady's audiences. However, these *coverings* (the gown and gloves) and the artist's rebellious tone is as much a critique of the art world as it is of its central black participants—that is—while fine art museums and galleries begin token selection and exhibition of a few non-white artists, according to O'Grady, the art of black artists remains too safe and largely directed at white audiences. The artist recalls,

In 1980 when I first did MBN, the situation for black avant-garde art was unbelievably static. For more people, the concept of black avant-garde art was an oxymoron. Here was where you ran up against the baldest confusions and denials about black class—not just on the part of whites but of blacks too. Avant-garde art is made by and for a middle-class (and more occasionally, an upper class); it's a product of visual training and refined intellectualization. So how could blacks fit into the equation?¹⁰

For O'Grady, black art in this moment was not tapping into the impressive range of black expression born out of *diverse* histories of oppression and struggle—histories that include education, resources, access, and a black middle class experience. In the quote above, the artist describes a moment when identity categories and definitions were less fluid and where all blacks were presumed to be poor and undereducated. Seemingly, artists and cultural producers who did not adhere to these ascriptions were considered "inauthentic." Most troubling for O'Grady, "was how confused black artists themselves were," there was "this weird spectacle of middle-class adult artists trying to pass as street kids."¹¹ Thus, for both *MBN* and O'Grady, art needed to take more risks. More artists needed to disrupt the rubric for acceptable art produced by black and brown artists for white audiences (and for themselves)—a critique the Black Art Movement started in the early 1960s, and continued well into the 1970s when it was taken up and maintained by arts collectives such as AfriCOBRA, which still exists today.



Fig. 2 Lorraine O'Grady, *Mlle Bourgeoise Noire Goes to the New Museum*, 1981. Photo-installation. No. 11 of 14, "Crowd watches Mlle Bourgeoise Noire as she shouts her poem." Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, NY.

At the same time, artists like O’Grady and performances of this kind struggled against the pressure to be “relevant” to “the community.” She conjectures that black artists during this time existed between a wedge that produced cautiousness and fear as they wrestled with their desire “to be seen—recognized—to be let in,” and to make art that was “relevant.” So the trappings of the glove, gown, and whip in O’Grady’s mixed-method performance do the work of unsettling these expectations, and disturbing the facade of “black authenticity,” which was enacted by black art world participants, who perform what might be understood as palatable or *desired* blackness for both expectant white receiving audiences, as well as, presumed “black communities.”

What is unique about O’Grady’s performances and the objects she gathers around her, is that these seemingly innocent accessories, specifically the pristine white gloves and the stylized cat-o’-nine-tails in *MBN*, became the mechanisms through which her invasive presence and out of turn speech signified on the aesthetic stifling of black creative producers.¹² Aliens and out of order or disruptive bodies, as positioned by O’Grady in *MBN* and later in *Art Is...*, disrupt the material-semiotic coding of “human” and/or aesthetic “reality,” which is produced by historically specific objects, aesthetic tastes, conditions, and apparatuses of looking/viewing human subjects.

It is the mixed media “props” such as O’Grady’s white gloves (*Mille. Bourgeoisie Noire*) and gold frames (*Art Is...*) that become the mechanisms through which the artist both stages and subverts her own alienating presence as subject/object and artist/performer/art. She uses these objects in the early 1980s to make space and to stop time, which in turn produces a *turn* for her avant-garde mixed media enactments. She exists as both alien and avant-garde, paving the way for these two terms to be theorized in close proximity as a distinctive position from which to deploy strategic visibility and voice. Through these objects (whites gloves and gold frames), which each signify *covering*, and/or create *space* for the body of color to inhabit, O’Grady “makes strange” the processes of making and exhibiting contemporary art.

Mixed-Media Alienation Effect(s) and Invasion(s)

In *MBN* O’Grady’s uses the strategy of performative direct address intervention, drawing from the history and conditions within the contemporary art world of social, political, and cultural alienation to speak and exist out of turn, and to complicate and to challenge spectator



Fig. 3 Lorraine O’Grady, *Art Is...*, Afro-American Day Parade, Harlem, 1983. Photo-installation. No. 6 of 40, “*Art Is...* (Troupe Front).” Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, NY.

engagements with her art. Specifically, O'Grady's direct address deployments of *alien bodies* and *alienation* provide a generative platform from which to theorize out of turn enactments by women of color artists more broadly. Artists like O'Grady who channel their own approaches to alienation and multi-faceted identity politics into dynamic mixed media performance pieces. O'Grady, in *MBN* and later in *Art Is...* capitalizes on mixed media and performance art's capacity for unruly and out of turn enactments, which in turn articulate heterogeneous ideologies both silenced and rendered invisible within the art museum. However, these disruptive enactments have an intellectual history of their own.

Also known as the a-effect or distancing effect, the alienation effect is a central conception of the dramatic theory of Bertolt Brecht.¹³ Developed in 1936, the alienation effect is characterized by the use of theatre and performance techniques designed to disrupt and distance spectators from emotional involvement in the production through jolting or surprising reminders of its constructed nature. The impetus behind Brecht's techniques was the control over the spectator's identification with both performers and plot; thus, spectators could more clearly discern the "real" world and/or the political stakes inherent in each performance.

It is clear that Brecht was inspired by the philosophies of Karl Marx, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, and Viktor Shklosky, whose theory of *ostranenie*, or "making it strange," is reflected in the defamiliarization efforts found in the multiple strategies of the alienation effect.¹⁴ Like Brecht, by creating effects that are strange, out of place, or unusual, O'Grady's alien enactments consign spectators a participatory role in the production of her work. O'Grady's mixed media performance work compels spectators to question the constructed environment and performing bodies, and in doing so, allows viewers (according to Brecht) to distance themselves emotionally from social and political issues that necessitate academic discourse and intellectual solutions.

I cite what now may be common knowledge of Brecht in order to move towards feminist historians and theorists such as Daphne Brooks, who examines "alienation" as a loaded term in both theatre criticism and diaspora studies—that is—alienation as a *state of being* and a *creative process* containing multiple layers of meaning for the ways in which aesthetic production is written about and discussed, and how particular people experience mass dislocation and dispersal, and exist across the diaspora. I build on her analysis to consider the position of

the alien other and the process of alienation in the context of the contemporary art world, and how black women artists in particular navigate both the limiting discourses of both feminist art history and black art history.

Furthermore, both Brecht's and Brooks' work opens up numerous generative possibilities for understanding critical spectatorship, which includes the critical observations of the artists themselves.

O'Grady's brand of performative alienation is exemplary of how women of color artists might come into the field of vision and have voice through the artistic medium and direct address modality of mixed media performance—through invasion. Mixed media is a productive medium to consider alongside performance—usually recognized as two distinct practices—in order to highlight the multilayered complexity of O'Grady's work. Mixed media is the combination of multiple materials and/or mediums in a single work of art. This category is broad and nebulous; however, it gains traction when mixed media approaches are analyzed alongside definitions of direct address, and theories of alienation effect(s).¹⁵

Historically, mixed media art has refused aesthetic purity and medium specificity. Furthermore, just as the mismatched material signification of this practice subverts hard and fast adherence to medium delineated categories, artists of color have been taking up mixed media and mixed-methods for decades in order to undermine race, gender, and stagnant identity categorization. Many of such artworks also incorporate dance, theatrical performance, and other bodily enactments as a central form of the artistic expression.

As evidenced in *MBN* and *Art Is...*, O'Grady's mixed media performance practices stage enormous creative labor and expertise, which is necessarily mobilized across a wide range of expressive techniques in order to, as I argue, speak and exist *out of turn*. Peggy Phelan's conception of performance as "the exchange of gaze" across diverse representational mediums is instructive here,¹⁶ and invigorates a conversation that includes both an invasive/unsolicited routine from *MBN*, and a street parade float. Both performances mobilize alien subjectivity to produce avant-garde events. This alien avant-garde in similar ways to our own popular understanding of extraterrestrials—would be nothing without the slime, green skin, bulging eyes, flying objects, and the fierce technological unknown¹⁷—much of O'Grady's and other feminist artists' spectacular existence is predicated on the uncanny utilization of

objects, spaces, artistic medium, and unacceptable bodies.

Moreover, O'Grady wields her own alien body through dynamic and complex personas, or as McMillan terms them, *avatars*. These personas and avatars open up immense possibilities for coming into the field of vision and having voice—for performing objecthood.¹⁸ The centrality of the artist body (which is predominantly white and male) is often emphasized in performance art, and most certainly in the surrounding discourse facilitated by curators, historians, critics, and other scholars.¹⁹ Women of color bodies, on the other hand, have largely been alienated from the space and history of contemporary art museums; however, not from Western museum and exhibition display entirely. In fact, non-western bodies figure deep into the foundations of Western modernity as curiosity and spectacle to be *seen* (but not heard). Well-known bodies on display such as *The Hottentot Venus* (Saartje Benjamin, 1810-1815), General Rivera's stolen *Uruguayan Charrúas* (1834), and *Ota Benga*, the first "pygmy" to visit America after the slave trade in 1906 are clear examples. The pointed naming of O'Grady's hybrid practice (mixed media performance) also posits an alien existence between the mediums and genres these hodge-podge modalities originate from, as well as the immense potential they represent for theorizing audience reception and spectator engagement. What is the impact of an encounter with an art object that speaks (or exists) out of turn?

In the case of *MBN*, O'Grady had the performance meticulously documented so a reading of its potential impact is not entirely lost to time or distance from the event. From the moment *MBN* stepped out of the black hired car, her processional in and through the white-walled gallery reception, and finally, her infamous speech and subsequent exit—a professional photographer captured the rogue debutante. The black and white still images throw into sharp contrast both the artist's toffee colored skin and white dress, but also the costume, her audience members, and the space. The performance itself had several iterations in its sojourn from gallery space to gallery space; however, what seems to have remained fixed is how both the media and later exhibitions of *MBN* represented the performance. That is, the singular image of *MBN* standing center-stage, neck strained, eyes bulging, and mouth agape in what appears to be a passionate wail. Other venues often include one or two images of the artist in the process of whipping herself with the chrysanthemum studded cat-o'-nine-tails. However,

the performances archive contains hundreds of images captured by the hired photographer. In fact, an overwhelming majority of these images depict both O'Grady and her audience members smiling and amused. O'Grady scans the room and like a pageant queen, waves to her admiring audience. An audience, as evidenced in the documentary images, that often smiles back.

It is necessary to consider this captured amusement alongside possible alienation effects, but also as a representation in a long history of avant-garde institutional critique that may actually delight, rather than insight the institutions (and individuals) targeted or in question. Through its re-presentation as only ever aggressive and offensive, O'Grady's performance itself becomes alienated from other possible experiences of it. Experiences, I argue, that may interpellate other more diverse political subjects, and represent more complex implications for such events and disturbances. For example, the subsequent delight (and possible anxiety) of the black middle-class subject, to which her speech is actually targeted in her frightening iteration of the debutante ball participant.

From the Gallery to the Streets

In an event deemed as an immediate success by the artist, Lorraine O'Grady's *Art Is...* (1983) was a mixed media, mixed modality, multi-participant performance piece, that made its debut as part of the 1983 *African American Day Parade* in Harlem, New York.²⁰ The performance event was a continuation of O'Grady's probing critique of the boundaries of the avant-garde from her inaugural performances as *Mille Bourgeoise Noire (MBN)*²¹. It was out of this moment, directly following *MBN*, that O'Grady developed the public performance *Art Is...* in order to address an acquaintance's assertion that "avant-garde doesn't have anything to do with black people."²² O'Grady's dynamic response positioned avant-garde artistic sensibilities at the center of blackness in New York—a parade celebrating black people with over a million people in attendance—and arguably, in the nation's artistic core. The artist described the performance as risky and "the Harlem marching-band parade [as] alien territory" for evidencing such an argument.²³ Thus, *Art Is...* became a performance piece about art itself and questions surrounding what qualifies as art, rather than about confronting the art world (as in her previous work).



Fig. 4 Lorraine O'Grady, *Art Is...*, Afro-American Day Parade, Harlem, 1983. Photo-installation. No. 16 of 40, "Art Is... (Man with Baby)." Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, NY.

Through *Art Is...* the act of speaking out of turn is subverted in O'Grady's move away from the strategy of invasive performance and speech acts towards the unexpected but heartedly embraced parade-crashing visual art that was *Art Is...* In this environment the artist's body itself is not what is alien, rather, it is the concept of "high art." It is the radical relocation of this formal designation—of the gilded frames—from the fine art gallery to the streets of Harlem that disrupts the logics of fine art galleries in search of avant-garde expression. The disruption of these logics through the performative gesture generated in O'Grady's out of turn art produced a *turn* (a space) for the artist herself to exist creatively in the field of vision, as well as a space for the foreign bodies of her collaborators within the now exploded rubrics of avant-garde expression.

As was the state of many artists of color having found only sporadic opportunity to exhibit their work within the architectural confines of traditional art museums, O'Grady embraced the unique format of the African American Day Parade's use of public outdoor space. This outdoor environment, en route through a predominantly black community represented the political and communal arenas in which to recoup a collective history of elision and to imagine its revision. Within this public space, the lines between the hired performers and the spectators were blurred, "making the performances—like Suzanne Lacy's *Whisper, the Waves, the Wind*—more congruent with modern-day notions of "ritual,"²⁴ focusing on efficacy over entertainment" as well as audience participation as *art*. O'Grady's float obscured the lines between art and life (black life in particular), integrating performers, artist, and spectators, and achieving what performance art historian Lucy Lippard calls a 'fundamental notion of feminist art'—exchange"²⁵

Reminiscent of radical street theatre of the late 1960s and 1970s, *Art Is...* in many ways, functions as a democratization of art, a move that eschews the alienation of the performers and O'Grady herself from the parade spectators and participants. A division well-managed by the art world at large through the division of class and labor, which results in an "art world," or "art industry," through which art and artists' bodily performances become a commodity for sale to an exclusive (and frequently anonymous) audience.²⁶ Often, communities of color are excluded from these transactions, and their labor (specifically, labor within these institutions) is extracted—removed from the context of *producing* and



Fig. 5 Lorraine O'Grady, *Art Is...*, Afro-American Day Parade, Harlem, 1983. Photo-installation. No. 39 of 40, "*Art Is...* (Nubians)." Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, NY.

managing the very spaces from which they are alienated.²⁷

Art Is..., along with its performers and participants, stages a counter narrative to the art world's narrowly conceived, strictly policed designation of the avant-garde as always already outside of or antithesis to its radical existence and creative sensibilities. *Art Is...* highlights this *outside* by placing black and brown bodies *inside* the frame—intentionally, frames wrought in gold—the accouterments of art's historical legitimacy. An observation made by one of the parade's participants—"That's right, that's what art is. We're the art!"—becomes a pointed designation as co-produced black existence within the frame becomes the material evidence of genius. These alien geniuses, like pre-established avant-garde creative producers, are said to exist on the fringes, tapping into a range of under-explored possibilities for radical substance, textuality and existence (read survival).

Conclusion: Productivity in Alien Effects and Otherness?

It is clear that O'Grady's performances are based on critical observations of the functions of the avant-garde and the fine art museum, including her own excluded place within both—a radical practice that could be included in bell hooks's foundational conception of *oppositional gazing*—which is predicated on the black female spectator.²⁸ hooks illuminates the power in observation—in looking—particularly through a black female perspective, and argues that black female film spectatorship is a site of agency through oppositional and confrontational gazing practices. Just as hooks links the development of independent black cinema to the creative responses of oppositional black gazing, I suggest O'Grady's alien avant-garde practice is a direct result of her oppositional gazing and participation in and against the grain of an art world that oftentimes still denies her existence. Specifically, both *MBN* and *Art Is...* are reliant on the very problem of violent silence, erasure, and even historical death, which motivates and informs the physical enactments as well as the "how" and "why" they take place. This, of course, is all part of the labor women identified artists (in particular) perform in the process of becoming art.

Inspired by historical enactments of liberation and self-determination, I suggest that conceptual art performances of radical (out of turn) presence, such as O'Grady's, achieves a different kind of political currency for women of

color speaking out of turn in and against the contemporary art museum by utilizing alien bodies, effects, and mixed media acts. Rather than an inherently negative occupational hazard, alien existence and alienation instead should be considered as generative sites for creative existence and survival. A site from which oppositional imaginings take shape and flourish. In fact, projection into objecthood through the process of becoming art is a vital strategy—as McMillan puts it, “indeed alienation has its uses.” Uses O’Grady exploits in her subversive decolonization of both notions of the avant-garde and American performance genealogies.

O’Grady’s practice in particular challenges the marginalization of women identified artists of color and their artistic interventions. Through her performances, O’Grady ‘applies pressure’ on our assumptions about performance art as a genre. What makes it performance art? And what (or who) counts?²⁹ *MBN* and *Art Is...* also challenge and recalibrate art world understandings of feminist art, and the disavowal of non-white artists as participating in (and frankly, initiating) the history and production of the avant-garde. Performance art and the art of performance, thus, must continually be rewritten prior to its art world historiography of a limited white and male dominated cannon—it must come to terms with its alien avant-garde.

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1. Performance transcript. Data collected from the Lorraine O'Grady Papers house at Wellesley College, Massachusetts. Summer 2015.
2. Michele Wallace. "Variations on Negation and the Heresy of Black Feminist Creativity," in *Invisibility Blues: from Pop to Theory*. Verso: New York, 2009.
3. Lucy R. Lippard "Out of Turn," in *Transition: Under Review*, No. 52 (1991): pp. 144-150.
4. Ibid.
5. Idioms: The Free Dictionary. Online Access. May 9, 2015.
6. Bridget Cooks takes up this historical legacy within her book, *Exhibiting Blackness: African Americans and the American Art Museum*, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2011.
7. Howard Becker's foundational text, *Art Worlds* (1982), sociologically examines art as collective action. Becker explores and analyzes the cooperative networks of art world participants, performers, dealers, critics, consumers, and artists that constitute a work of art. I closely reconsider Becker's text as a way of understanding the collective actions within art networks that strategically exclude and/or purport black bodies to the convenient margins of trendy diversity rhetoric and politics.
8. Daphne Brooks, *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom, 1850-1910*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2012.
9. Uri McMillan, *Embodied Avatars: Genealogies of Black Feminist Art and Performance*. New York: NYU Press, 2015.
10. Courtney Baker (1998) E-mail Q & A with the artist. Retrieved from the Lorraine O'Grady Papers house at Wellesley College, Massachusetts. Summer 2015.
11. Ibid.
12. The pristine white gloves signify on this stifling through the submission of creative producers to institutions such as modern and contemporary art museums, but also as artists are written into and/or excluded from special and permanent collections. The chrysanthemum whip recalls the historical suppression of black creativity—the enduring practice of mass enslavement and violent labor exploitation. An argument I borrow from Uri McMillan's *Embodied Avatars: Genealogies of Black Feminist Art and Performance*, 2015.
13. Brecht conceived the alienation effect not simply as an aesthetic program, but also as a social theory and political mission. Hundreds of scholars since have taken up his challenge and have expanded his work to include theories and strategies for engaging specifically raced and gendered performances as well. The work of scholars such as Elin Diamond, Daphne Brooks, Dorinne Kondo, and Amelia Jones in particular, has been profoundly influential in the development of this essay as well as the larger project from which it emerges.

Elin Diamond, "Brechtian Theory/Feminist Theory: Towards a Gestic Feminist Criticism," in *TDR*. Vol. 32, No. 1 (Spring, 1988): pp. 82-94.

Elin Diamond, *Unmaking Mimesis: Essays on Feminism and Theatre*. London: Routledge, 1997.

Daphne Books, *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom (1850-1910)*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2012.

Dorinne Kondo. "(Re)Visions of Race: Contemporary Race Theory and the Cultural Politics of Racial Crossover in Documentary Theatre," in *Theatre Journal* 52, No.1 (2000): p. 100.

Amelia Jones eds. *Performing the Body/Performing the Text*. London: Routledge, 1999.

Amelia Jones. *Seeing Differently: A History and Theory of Identification and the Visual Arts*. London: Routledge. 2012.
14. Viktor Shklovosky, *Art as Technique*, (1917)
15. As mentioned above, it is productive to return to Brecht's theory of the alienation effect, but I do so in order to move into future

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- iterations by Daphne Brooks and several women identified artists and theorists of color.
16. Peggy Phelan. *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*. London: Routledge, 1993.
 17. This language and line of thinking was borrowed from the Introduction of Sara Ahmed's book *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality*. New York: Routledge, 2000.
 18. The central contention in Uri McMillan's recent book is that "objecthood provides a means for black subjects to become art objects" (McMillan, 7). A process of becoming that McMillan terms *performing objecthood*.
 19. Amelia Jones, who has written some of the principle works on performance and subjectivity, has been invaluable for shaping my understanding of these theories and histories in this regard. Specifically, *Body Art/performing the Subject*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998. And *Self/Image: Technology, Representation, and the Contemporary Subject*, London: Routledge, 2006.
 20. www.lorraineogrady.com (web.archive)
 21. Translated as "Miss Black Middle Class".
 22. www.lorraineogrady.com (web.archive)
 23. www.lorraineogrady.com (web.archive)
 24. Judith Sebesta, "Audience at Risk: Space and Spectators at Feminist Performance," in Kattwinkel, S. (ed.) *Audience Participation*, London: Praeger, p. 151.
 25. Lucy Lippard, "Lacy: Some of Her Own Medicine," *TDR*, No. 32.1 (1988): p. 73.
Judith Sebesta "Audience at Risk: Space and Spectators at Feminist Performance," in Susan Kattwinkel (ed.), *Audience Participation*, London: Praeger, p. 151.
 26. Henry Lesnick (ed.), *Guerilla Street Theatre*. New York: Avon, 1973, pp. 12-13.
 27. Stephanie Sparling, *White Walls, Black Service Bodies* (unpublished essay).
 28. bell hooks "The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators," in *Black Looks: Race and Representation*. Boston: South End Press, 1992, pp. 115-131.
 29. These questions, while directly posed in the 1980s by O'Grady through her creative enactments, get reinvigorated in Uri McMillan's recent work (2015). Inspired, this essay also seeks to apply pressure on these nebulous categories and exclusive histories.