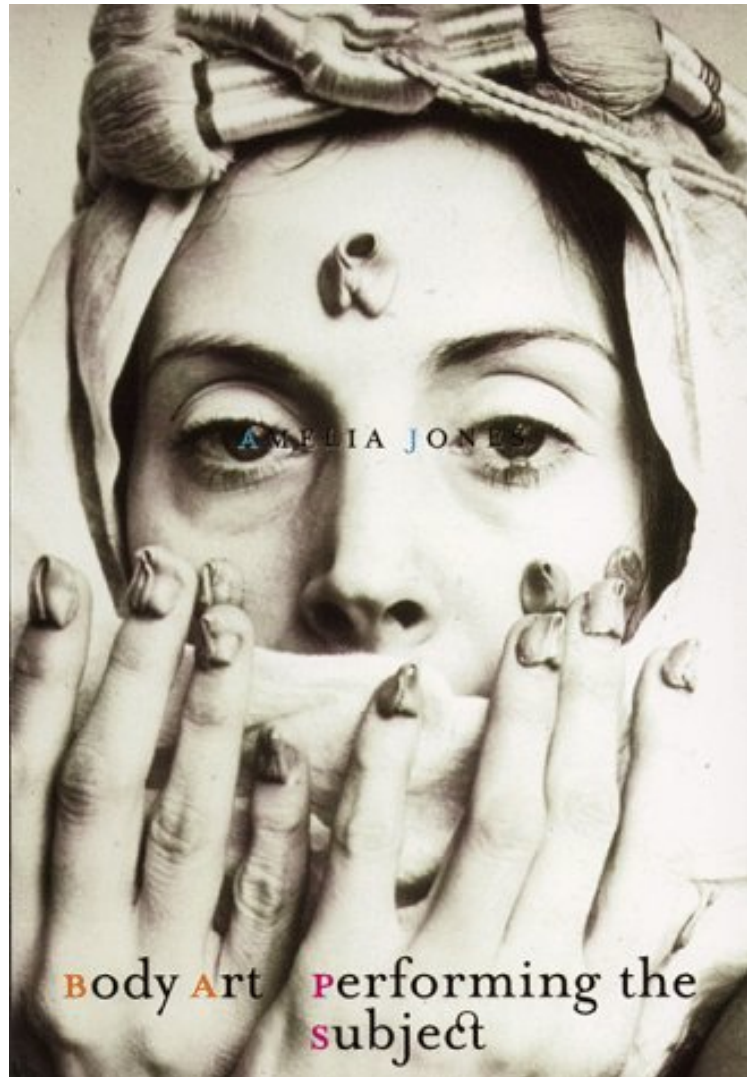


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## Body Art/Performing the Subject

*Amelia Jones*

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#356704 in Books imusti 1998-02-15Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 10.00 x 1.00 x 7.00l, 1.70 #File Name: 0816627738368 pagesUniversity of Minnesota Press | File size: 30.Mb

**Amelia Jones : Body Art/Performing the Subject** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Body Art/Performing the Subject:

2 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Ecstatic immanenceBy Luca Graziuso and Marina RossAn original, provocative, insightful exploration of "body Art". In "Body Art/Performing the Subject Amelia Jones ranges the bedding of postmodern art quick to excavate the surplus that lies buried when looked from the vantage of the common public. The critic is far too sensible and intuitive to ever come across as condescending, and her intellectual milieu, however teeming with extraordinary subtlety, never subverts the innocent eye which comes to these artistic endeavors. This is one of the best book in any area of the artistic domain: critical, performative, engaging, engendered.

Theoretically Amelia Jones argues in keeping with a dialectic of intersubjective claims informed by a witnessing rather than the Hegelian moment of recognition; Consequently the author steadily demonstrates how art is an event, a moment of suspension and reevaluation, that invites an insurrectionary violence toward the preconceived and assimilated notions of a rational web we lie dormant within. Psychoanalytic rhetoric is intermittently strewn about the essays (a minimum of Lacan is required here), but only when pertinent to exposing the internal dynamics of an artist's work. The vigor of the essays is enthusiastic, full of joy, teeming with emotional investment. This is a careful perceptive critique that stands free of the inevitable political underpinnings contemporary art deploys, yet it never embraces the overt liberal, if anarchic tendencies of the work she discusses. Speaking of Performance Art can be a terrifying experience, for we have a fading record and still shots of a narrative experience that is frozen in its vanishing: It is much like taking a snapshot of a dream, or an acid trip, describing what took place and the life it gave birth to through its fading. Amelia Jones is outstanding in her capacity to do so. There is hardly a better exploration in art criticism today on Jackson Pollack, Ashton Harris, Laura Aguilar, Hannah Wilke and Vito Acconci. Anyone fascinated by the abject nature of such artistic endeavors will find in these essays, especially those on Vito Acconci and Hannah Wilke, a compelling, forward, well-written, easily understood and intellectually astute critic that ushers and guides to an enlightening understanding. This is the best art critic writing to day since Rosalind Krauss, Lucy Lippard, Donald Kuspit and TJ Clark, Arthur Danto and Barbara Stafford. Not to be missed given its intelligence, eloquence, clarity and an invigorating aesthetic ductility rarely encountered today. 17 of 20 people found the following review helpful. A tough slog. By A Customer I really wanted to love this book, because I like a lot of the art she writes about. But the prose is awful!! And it's actually not that Jones is "too" theoretical -- if anything, she might not be "theoretical" enough. Instead, she constantly uses current crit theory buzzwords -- "performative," "embodied," "subject" etc -- without ever really defining or locating them. And the readings of individual art works get buried under her heavy-handed "thesis." This is one of those academic texts that feels like it started with an "idea," and found work to fit it. Not that her engagements with Hannah Wilke, Bob Flanagan, et al, aren't sincere, because they are. But they still seem without real awareness, and some of the author's "personal" observations are just dopey. Somehow she seems new to the territory and weirdly conventional. 18 of 22 people found the following review helpful. Thinking bodies. By M. Cheng BODY ART/PERFORMING THE SUBJECT offers an excellent critique of a fascinating phenomenon in contemporary art: the artist's voluntary use of her/his body in art. In this superb and much-needed book, Amelia Jones defines body art "as a set of performative practices that, through such intersubjective engagement, instantiate the dislocation or decentering of the Cartesian subject of modernism." Anti-formalist intersubjectivity and poststructuralist criticism against the Cartesian mind/body split are the two theoretical angles from which Jones examines body art pieces from the 1960s to the 1990s. She argues that body art performances, enacted against the grain of normative subject, exposes the logic of exclusion assumed by the modernist art history and criticism. With this rigorous, incisive, and politically informed thesis, Jones develops a stunning series of analytical re-readings: from the action painting of Jackson Pollock--filmed by Hans Namuth; the erotic/violent/contemplative body sculpture of Vito Acconci; the feminist performances of Hannah Wilke, who marks sexuality, vitality, and mortality with equal measure of intelligence, humor, and courage; to the intersection of body and technology as exemplified by the works of Gary Hill, James Luna, Orlan, Bob Flanagan/Sheree Rose, Maureen Connor, Laurie Anderson, Lyle Ashton Harris, and Laura Aguilar. Other artists covered extensively in Body Art include Chris Burden, Yves Klein, Carolee Schneemann, Yayoi Kusama, Lynda Benglis, Marina Abramovic and Ulay, Adrian Piper, and Niki de Saint Phalle. The depth and breadth of Jones's theoretical references that particularize her portraits of these artists makes for the reading of this book a difficult but stimulating pleasure. Provocatively argued and elegantly expressed, Body Art/Performing the Subject is a must-read for those interested in the debates over embodiment, subjectivity, performance, feminism, and theories of identity. The intensity of Jones's writing is the heat--and the cool--of a philosophical motion.

An examination of the social and cultural significance of body art by a major new voice. The past few years have seen an explosion of interest in body art, in which the artist's body is integral to the work of art. With the revoking of NEA funding for such artists as Karen Finley, Tim Miller, and others, public awareness and media coverage of body-oriented performances have increased. Yet the roots of body art extend to the 1960s and before. In this definitive book, Amelia Jones explores body art projects from the 1960s and 1970s and relates their impact to the work of body artists active today, providing a new conceptual framework for defining postmodernism in the visual arts. Jones begins with a discussion of the shifting intellectual terrain of the 1950s and 1960s, focusing on the work of Ana Mendieta. Moving to an examination of the reception of Jackson Pollock's "performative" acts of painting, she argues that Pollock is a pivotal figure between modernism and postmodernism. The book continues with explorations of Vito Acconci and Hannah Wilke, whose practices exemplify a new kind of performance that arose in the late 1960s, one that represents a dramatic shift in the conception of the artistic subject. Jones then surveys the work of a younger generation of artists -- including Laurie Anderson, Orlan, Maureen Connor, Lyle Ashton Harris, Laura Aguilar, and Bob Flanagan -- whose recent work integrates technology and issues of identity to continue to expand the critique begun in earlier body art projects. Embracing an exhilarating mix of methodologies and perspectives (including feminism, queer theory,

philosophy, psychoanalysis, and literary theory), this rigorous and elegant examination of body art provides rich historical insight and essential context that rethinks the parameters of postmodern culture.