Aquabatics as new works of Live Art

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Abstract

This practice-based thesis (comprising of an exegesis, exhibition, performances and their documentation) traces a myriad of cognitive and sub cognitive processes that converge towards a complex practice referred to as ‘Aquabatics’. In broad terms, Aquabatics describes the research nexus of occupational diving and contemporary performance. The purpose of this body of research has been to explore underwater performance, behaviour and boarders, in order to both devise new works of live art and to develop new methodologies and approaches to art-making. Aquabatics, as a performance strategy, seeks to critique, contest and explore the liminal natures of human performance, and the role and context of live artists, in contemporary life.

This exegesis attempts to underscore the complex process of semiosis and the dissemination of experiential knowledge in, and through, human performance activities, behaviours and biotech fission engagements with, in, and related to, an underwater environment. Part One discusses the nature and condition of Aquabatics in terms of biological, ecological, technological, metaphysical, political and societal factors. Throughout, these natures are described as an active tool to suggest treatments for looking at, and understanding the acts/actions/activisms themselves and their possible functions to point towards liminality. The more complex issue of the inherent aqueous nature in/off/for performance is proposed as the vital link connecting Aquabatics to existing cultural texts and contexts. The multi-medial texts function to make sense of the aesthetic and utilitarian performance described by examining the intersections of performance praxis, theorem and the functional operations of occupational diving through a series of original live(d) engagements, hypothesis and proposals in Part Two.

In undertaking and discussing these works, I propose that I enter into a zone of irreducibility; a permanently spirally vortex of forms, dissolving and evolving into an absent-present state of existence as the performer/pilot of this research. By documenting and re-membering this process herein, the notion of ‘performance’ along with liberty, identity, culture, art and politics also regularly collapses in meaning, status, form and function. Finally, considering Aquabatics, pre and post performance, offers insight into the spatial and temporal factors, beliefs and actions leading to, and arising from, this research. It introduces a new episteme that transgresses traditional transgressions and proposes a liminal juncture of research, and performance behaviours that constitutes an awareness of where, at depth, underwater, the self collapses into its priori opposite.

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Submitted for the Award of Doctor of Philosophy Visual Art 2005 Conferred 2006
Awarded, Best PhD Abstract Art & Science - English LABS Leonardo, MIT 2007