

2008-2009 - Dutch Art Institute

The Office of Lost Gestures

Course tutors: Sarah Pierce and Stefanie Seibold

Coordination: Flora Lysen; coordination during the Dublin trip: Joris Lindhout

Guest tutors: Frederique Bergholtz, Francesco Bernardelli, Rick Dolphijn, Annie Fletcher, Wendelien van Oldenborgh, Dieter Roelstraete, Iris van der Tuin, and Marta Zarzycka.

Students: Buba Cvoric, Teresa Maria Diaz Nerio, Tvika Gutter, Rana Hamadeh, Seda Manavoglu, Barbara Philipp, Eva Schippers, James Skunca, Marina Tomic, Veridiana Zurita, and Yen Yitzu.

Short description

The Office of Lost Gestures was a seven-month programme in which artists, theorists and curators met, worked and thought together on the topic of 'gesture' and 'masquerade'. Departing from Giorgio Agamben's essay 'On Gesture', the students looked at 'gesture' as an alternative way of understanding the way we produce, present and act in this world. According to Agamben, by the end of the nineteenth century the Western bourgeoisie had lost its gestures and today we have therefore become obsessed by them. Exploring this obsession together, the Office of Lost Gestures examined concepts such as the archive, autobiography, camp, conversation, dancing and the styling of the self. Departing from gesture – and not from image, or representation – there was a special interest in thinking about art and exhibitions as open-ended and in perpetual progress, not as fixed ends, but as moments of temporary arrest.

In collaboration with the students of the MA Visual Arts in Dublin, the project culminated in a ten-day performative art exhibition in the LAB, a contemporary art space in Dublin, which ran parallel to If I Can't Dance's presentation of Episode 3 of Masquerade in Project Art Centre, Dublin.

The course included:

- Monthly meetings at the Dutch Art Institute in Enschede;
- Visit to M HKA Antwerp: exhibition 'The Order of Things' and audiovisual lecture/performance by Terre Thaemlitz (20-11-2008); visit Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven to the exhibition 'Heartland' and meeting with Sarah Pierce (28 or 29-11-08); visit to If I Can't Dance Tonight with Sarah Pierce at Frascati, Amsterdam (30-11-08);
- 10-day performative art exhibition in the LAB, a contemporary art space in Dublin (June 2009);
- Participation in Sarah Pierce's work 'An Artwork in the Third Person';
- Artist contributions to the If I Can't Dance '(Mis)reading Masquerades' Reader (co-produced by If I Can't Dance, the Dutch Art Institute and the Piet Zwart Institute, published by Revolver in 2010).

Syllabus

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Documentation

- 1) See [Google Drive folder](#) for some pictures of the Sarah Pierce video installation

Student materials

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Links to other sites

- [Course description on the DAI website](#)
- [Month by month descriptions as part of the DAI bulletin 2008-2009](#)
- [About Sarah Pierce's work 'An Artwork in the Third Person', on her website The Metropolitan Complex](#)