

Berlin, 7.6.2021

Part(l)y together

Dear shoes-wearer,

do you remember how often we used to cross paths at performances in Berlin before the Pandemic?

I just remembered those sneakers you were often wearing, that make a squeaky sound as you walked across the linoleum floor after the show.

What have they been rubbing and squeaking on while the theatres were closed? Or those thin flip-flops that you would slip in and out of when we were hanging out at the bar. Are you wearing them now to air your feet after this interminable winter?

It is funny that i remember your shoes so vividly now that we mostly see each other online. Maybe because my mind starts to wonder when the wholeness of your body is reduced to head and shoulders by the framing of the camera. But before i start to wander away, let me tell you the reason why i am writing to you.

I have to break the sad news to you that we will not be able to meet in person at SODA WORKS this July. My collaborators and i are preparing an experience for you, that you will be able to attend only partly.

It seems that our enjoyment of performing and attending live art together is still delegated to technical devices, and i invite you to join the live-streaming of our performative installation: "In someone else's shoes, metabolic encounters".

Wait, before you dismiss the idea of sitting in front of your screen on a hot summer evening, let me tell you how i plan to invite you.

First some background information: during our research we got fascinated by the concept of *interpassivity* and how we could play with it to bridge the distance between performers and attendants.

Interpassivity is the cultural behaviour of delegating the enjoyment of an experience to other people or other things. For example, "we can speak of *interpassivity* when people insist that others drink their beer for them, or when

they let recording devices watch TV programs in their place.”¹

As i was mentioning before, we got used to delegating cameras to be present instead of our bodies, while our screen becomes the interface to our enjoyment of remote events, places and relationships. But are there other forms of delegation beside the technology of communication platforms?

Could you feel as if you are participating in a performance, when something of yours is standing-in your absence?

Over the past month we started collecting our friends' footwear as their stand-ins, as proxies of their participation in our project.

We decided on footwear because we see it as the interface between our bodies and our direct surroundings. We wear it to protect our feet and follow our daily trails. As we walk, run, and dance it alters our balance, posture, and impact force to the ground. Shoes make our bodies as much as we make them. They carry the stories of the many actants in the complex system of modern capitalism as they are “offbeat proxy for globalization too”².

I would say they are a symbol of our quotidian relationship to our bodies and our environment.

So let me ask you, would you send a pair of your footgear as your representative to our performance?

Would you let your things enjoy the somatic experience while you attend on them via streaming?

I look forward to receiving a pair of your beloved shoes.

Yours sincerely,

michela

“In someone else's shoes, metabolic encounters”

Online streaming / 9 July 2021, 5-9 pm / HZT website

¹Robert Pfaller, “The Aesthetics of Delegated Enjoyment”, Edinburgh University Press 2017 (8)

²Caroline Knowles, “The Flip-Flop Trail and Fragile Globalisation”, Theory, Culture & Society 2015 (1–14)