



# The History Book

On Moderna Museet 1958–2008

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## Art on Stage Happenings and Moving Images at Moderna Museet

Moderna Museet's first manifestation in the refurbished premises on Skeppsholmen was a series of film screenings. Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* had, admittedly been shown there in 1956 and a first catalogue had been published, but the avant-garde film festival *Apropos Eggeling* was the first event, a few days after the inauguration. The museum published a small catalogue, with a lithograph by Pontus Hultén on the cover of the first edition.<sup>1</sup> The collection was shown in the galleries, but the ensuing exhibition on Le Corbusier already demonstrated an inclusive approach to what art is. The exhibitions were not confined to paintings, drawings, prints and sculptures. Prior to the inauguration, two programmes of film screenings had also been organised, with works by Luis Buñuel, Joris Ivens and Jean Vigo, among others, and the museum had its own film club. Film was a priority area for Moderna Museet from day one, but it did not immediately have the same status as other art. Film shows were also a means of attracting a broader public to the museum than the usual crowd that visited Nationalmuseum to look at paintings.<sup>2</sup> The museum premises were suitable for a variety of events, and the spaces were used for more than just exhibiting the collection. The ambition was that the museum should be a living forum for everyone interested in culture.

In this essay, we will look at Moderna Museet as a stage for time-based art, that is, art that, unlike paintings and sculpture, has not only a spatial but a temporal scope, such as plays, films or music. The emphasis will be specifically on film, since this medium was a central feature of activities from the start and is now a natural part of the collection. In consideration of the development of art, and especially the evolution and establishment of video art, it is justifiable to study how Moderna Museet, over the past decades, has related to the changes in the position of film in the art world. Performances, happenings, concerts, poetry readings, debate series, lectures, and so on, have been an addition to what is generally perceived as the core activity, i.e. exhibitions. Moreover, we will address the question of why film is such an important element in the museum's activities. With regard to the other events, the emphasis will be on the illustrious 1960s, which have been embellished in nostalgic memories.<sup>3</sup> The 1980s will serve as a reference point to provide contrast and add nuances to the picture.

The temporal distance to the 1960s is one of the essential reasons why some events have become so mythical. In addition to this, if we refer to the literature about this period, some critics have had the preferential right of interpretation

because they have first-hand experience that others lack. They have been in a position to highlight the aspects they considered important, while other things have been excluded. An objective historiography of Moderna Museet as a stage requires another kind of distance. This situation persisted over the ensuing decades, but they are too close in time to have attained the same status. New critics will focus on other events as being significant. Since only a small number of people, then and now, witnessed the events, they will in time grow just as legendary. What you cannot know about with certainty attains a special allure.

It should be pointed out from the start that vital differences exist between events, in how they are perceived by the audience. Whether they are organised in conjunction with an exhibition, as a programme of events or as separate features influences how they are received. It would be neither appropriate nor possible in this context to study all the events at Moderna Museet in depth. We will leave it to future research into time-based art to look more profoundly at how the museum has perceived its role in events in relation to the cultural field in Stockholm, Sweden, Europe and the world.

A scrutiny of the collection and the archive – Moderna Museet is a preserving institution with a mission to protect the cultural heritage – soon reveals clearly that the source material for events is entirely different from that relating to exhibitions. Events are, to put it briefly, transient, temporal, and do not exist as objects in the same way as paintings, films or sculptures. It will become apparent, as a result of this study, that Moderna Museet has striven from the start to appear less museum-like and more dynamic than its parent museum, Nationalmuseum. Or, to put it differently, rather than having a continuous programme of events, it has promoted artistic happenings.<sup>4</sup>

Regarding research on Moderna Museet's film-related activities, and the museum as a venue for events, the documentation relates mainly to specific occasions, and there is no general report. Famous and acclaimed events such as *Five New York Evenings* have been more extensively discussed than other events – and have impacted more strongly on the museum's image.<sup>5</sup> The selection of examples here takes this into consideration, avoiding the most well-known events of the 1960s and highlighting one typical performance from the 1980s. Leif Nylén and Bengt af Klintberg, both of whom have written about Moderna Museet without limiting themselves to dealing exclusively with the museum itself, have contributed valuable accounts of various types of events. In *Den öppna konsten* (1998), Nylén focuses on 1960s happenings, while af Klintberg highlights the Swedish fluxus movement in *Svensk fluxus* (2006). The seminal and initially intense collaboration between Moderna Museet and Fylkingen for music events in the 1960s is presented in *Fylkingen. Ny musik och intermedialkonst*, published by Teddy Hultberg in 1994. Film at Moderna Museet has been written about where Moderna

← Claes Oldenburg in *Massage*, 1966

Merce Cunningham, *Five New York Evenings*, 1964

Museet has participated as a joint organiser. *Konst som rörlig bild – från Diagonalsymfonin till Whiteout* (2006), edited by Astrid Söderbergh Widding, is an informative historic review of film-based art in Sweden, with Moderna Museet as one of the scenes.

### *Different Movements*

In the 1960s, the character and focus of the events are closely interwoven with the individual Pontus Hultén. His interest in books and film, and his artistic ambitions and network, were crucial to the museum's activities, in addition to favourable circumstances – Hultén was one of very few employees and rarely needed to consider other people's wishes or demands. Moderna Museet was exploring uncharted territory and had great liberty.

Together with the architect Hans Nordenström, Hultén had made the films *Det tryckta ordet 500 år* (1949) and *En dag i staden* (1955–56), in which Per Olof Ultvedt, Oscar Reutersvärd and Jean Tinguely participated. With the American experimental film-maker Robert Breer he made the film *Ett mirakel* (1954), and on his own Hultén created the animation *X* in 1957, that is, when he was already working at the museum.<sup>6</sup> Together with Billy Klüver and others, he was deeply involved in the Stockholm Students' Film Society (Student-filmstudion) and this involvement he transferred to Moderna Museet, prompting the film screenings there. Hultén linked the museum's activities firmly to his own experiments in the 1950s – including the student magazine *Blandaren*, Agnes Widlund's gallery Samlaren, and Denise René's gallery in Paris, as Leif Nylén and Hans Nordenström write.<sup>7</sup>

Naturally, Hultén was not the only one who was interested in film. The museum had a lively children's film studio, which was a club for members, indicating a lively and more general interest. Anna-Lena Wibom, later active in the Swedish Film Institute, and Louise O'Konor, who wrote a thesis on Viking Eggeling in 1971, were responsible for the programme during the first years.<sup>8</sup> In the years after the opening they screened films by Robert Breer, Charlie Chaplin, René Clair, James Finlayson, Robert Flaherty, Joop Gesink, Buster Keaton, Colin Low, Georges Méliès, Hans Nordenström and others. In addition, they showed countless documentaries and films with an emphasis on contents rather than on who made them (such as *Corral*, a Canadian film about a cowboy who captures a half-tame horse, shown in the autumn of 1960). The film screenings were on Saturdays and Sundays, consisting of two one-hour films for kids aged 6 and upwards. Members paid admission for each show. This gave enough money to cover the costs for the activity.<sup>9</sup> The film series were highly popular, and they were often attended by more than one hundred children.<sup>10</sup> In spring 1959, a typical programme may have been as follows: the film was introduced by Louise O'Konor, followed by the film show, where silent film was accompanied by a pianist – sometimes this would be Ulf Linde or Karl Axel Pehrson – and then Carlo Derkert would present a work in the collection.<sup>11</sup> Posters were printed with the programme for the season, and these were often artistically designed, with, for instance, motifs by Niki

de Saint Phalle.<sup>12</sup> Another sign of how highly-appreciated and influential the film club was is the early sponsorship programme involving a Swedish chocolate manufacturer.<sup>13</sup>

A crucial aspect, which helps to explain how Moderna Museet could attain such a central position as an alternative venue for Swedish art life in its first decade, is that there were no other art scenes available. Leif Nylén even writes: "In Moderna Museet the experimental 1960s culture gained its most poignant and typical venue."<sup>14</sup> When art began to look for new roads, there were not many venues for intermedia art. A few smaller scenes existed, such as Fylkingen and Pistolteatern, but Moderna Museet, as a public institution, could nevertheless acquire a strong position among these avant-garde settings. One explanation lies, perhaps, in the collaborations with the smaller venues and, thus, that the museum was not perceived as a competitor but as an alternative.

It is also vital to remember that art in the 1950s was progressing towards performance and transcending boundaries. In order to serve as a credible presenter of contemporary art, Moderna Museet was more or less obliged to host this kind of event, not just show paintings on walls. In consideration of this need to contrast against Nationalmuseum to demonstrate that a museum for contemporary art was necessary, it is hardly surprising that Moderna Museet chose a different path from merely offering the public traditional exhibitions of a familiar and well-tried recipe. Youthful energy and change were called for, and it was there in much of the art in question.

Seen from this angle, Hultén's exhibition *Movement in Art (Rörelse i konsten)*, 1961) appears like a programmatic manifesto. The exhibited works included not only Viking Eggeling's modernist film *Diagonalsymfonin* (1924), but also mobile works by Alexander Calder (*The Four Elements*, 1961, which is standing outside the museum to this day and is a veritable symbol of the new museum), Jean Tinguely and Per Olof Ultvedt, Robert Rauschenberg's changing work *Black Market* (1961), Allan Kaprow's site-specific installation *Spacial Construction*.<sup>15</sup> The exhibition itself could be likened to a moving stage where things happened; many of the interior shots, for instance, show children playing with Calder's sculptures. Here, contemporary movements in art were captured and turned into themes by Hultén in a way that points to the importance he gave to mobile art.<sup>16</sup> It represented not only a vital shift in art history, but also highlights the role of the museum in spreading knowledge about mobile art. Both as a venue and as a space but changeable and dynamic rather than static – which compares well to the demands on flexible architectonic design for modern museums. It is significant that Hultén ends his catalogue essay with the following lines on moving art: "It is a latent attack on the established order."<sup>17</sup> In other words, the new museum embodied a rebellion in a sector burdened with tradition.

A short summary of the development of art enables us to understand this shift more clearly, since the change had a decisive effect on the institutional framework and thus gives more depth and perspective to Moderna Museet's pioneering contribution to the Swedish and international art scene with regard to new art. The purpose is to underline the tendencies

that were perceived by the museum, revealing that Moderna Museet, in line with the art it was to exhibit, continued to monitor and highlight certain trends at the time, and that the break with Nationalmuseum was not merely for the sake of rebellion or for profiling itself. To put it more bluntly, their ways parted because art came to comprise so much more than just sculptures and oils on canvas.

In line with Rosalind Krauss' theories on the development of sculpture in connection with postmodernism – she refers to “sculptures in the expanded field” – we can identify a few turning points in twentieth-century art.<sup>18</sup> These relate, not least, to a new approach to the exhibition space and art in relation to reality. The collage technique initiated by Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso, which, in simplified terms, opened the surface of the work of art to new materials apart from oil paint, was one such pivotal change that had a strong impact on other movements, for instance dada. Kurt Schwitters' environmental constructions made of diverse waste material and Marcel Duchamp's readymades were essential to the extension of this tradition, not least in the way they impacted on American 1950s art. The neo-dada art of Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg developed and established a new profusion of materials in art.<sup>19</sup> The movement out into the space led to installations incorporating a rich array of materials, which in turn were used in happenings. For Allan Kaprow, it was a short step to happenings. He missed onlookers in his environments and wanted to engage them more actively. Visitors became part of the work of art, and towards the late 1950s, Kaprow began to direct these visitors to greater extent. He coined the term “happening” in 1959, in connection with the work *18 Happenings in 6 Parts*.<sup>20</sup> The extended field was manifested in installations that filled the whole space and demonstrated an altered attitude to place.<sup>21</sup>

In painting several vital conquests were made that also influenced the museum's self-perception. The movement in art, in mechanical artworks with moving elements, can also be said to reside in the very act that precedes and leads up to the artwork itself. Action painting was one exceedingly direct expression of this.<sup>22</sup> Jackson Pollock, Georges Mathieu and artists in the Japanese Gutai group were all experimenting at around the same time – the first half of the 1950s, with an energetic painting style that emanated, among other things, in abstract colour traces and physical alterations to the canvas itself. Hultén's early discovery of Sam Francis, who was shown at Moderna Museet in 1960, demonstrates the museum's openness to this new style of painting at an early stage.<sup>23</sup> The role of the audience changed gradually. In the same way that a visitor must move around an installation in order to perceive the work, s/he must visualise the artist's movements in the act of painting. The colour is the traces left by the action, which can be followed.<sup>24</sup> In some cases, the audience comes even closer to the action of painting, when invited to witness the actual conception, enacted as a performance. Yves Klein's anthropometries (the nude women who, smeared with International Klein Blue, leave trails on the canvas with their bodies) are one famous example; others are the Gutai group's performances, or Mathieu's painting/performance

*La Bataille de Bouvines* (1954).<sup>25</sup> Niki de Saint Phalle fired a shotgun at canvases prepared with paint filled plastic bags so they burst and coloured the surface, as in *Tir de Jasper Johns* (1961) which is in the Moderna Museet collection.

Another pivotal point is the interdisciplinary happening that evolved from, and alongside, the collage tradition and the painterly movement. The manifestations of artist groups, such as the aforementioned dadaists and surrealists, and the futurists in Italy and Russia, were more than mere recitals of programmatic tracts. Cabaret Voltaire in Zürich, the Swedish and Russian Ballets in Paris, and the theatrical stages in Milan and Moscow were all arenas where the boundaries between the arts were transcended.<sup>26</sup> Encounters between different disciplines, between music, literature, drama, film and fine arts were central not only to moving art away from the traditional setting of orderly viewing in a gallery to a more temporary meetingplace outside the institutional framework, but also away from the passive audience towards a more active, participating audience. The development at the Bauhaus school in Germany, and the ideas on a fusion of arts may be relevant to an interpretation of what took place at Black Mountain College in North Carolina, USA, after the Second World War. One of the teachers there was Josef Albers, who came from Bauhaus; another of the pioneers was the composer John Cage, also known for crossing disciplinary boundaries in his work. The *Untitled Event*, initiated by John Cage, took place in 1952 at Black Mountain College and became famous throughout the art world as a new kind of event. This was a transcending performance set in the entire performance space, featuring the dancer and choreographer Merce Cunningham, Robert Rauschenberg and the poets Charles Olsen and Mary Richards.<sup>27</sup> A few years later, Cage, Rauschenberg and Cunningham were engaged by Moderna Museet and performed works in Stockholm – Cage appeared at the museum as early as in October 1960.<sup>28</sup> In Europe the Fluxus movement pioneered the introduction of happenings in art. Artists such as Joseph Beuys, Henning Christiansen, Nam June Paik, Emmett Williams and George Maciunas experimented with all the arts.<sup>29</sup> Interestingly, Bengt af Klintberg points out that the breakthrough of Fluxus was slower in Sweden than in other countries, and claims that this was because Moderna Museet promoted other trends that became popular instead. This would give some idea of Moderna Museet's impact at the time.<sup>30</sup>

Hultén's fascination with movement and happenings is probably associated largely with the artist Jean Tinguely. In his works, abstract painting – critically parodied in his painting machines – meets movement in the present that required an audience for his scrap iron objects. In the catalogue for *Movement in Art*, Hultén declared how important an artist he believed Tinguely to be, mentioning him in the same breath as John Cage, by virtue of the boundary-crossing quality of his work.<sup>31</sup> Of Tinguely's self-destructing *Hommage à New York* (1960), Hultén writes in a caption: “Rarely have so few seen a work of art that so many have talked about.”<sup>32</sup> Herein lies the key and the explanation to why some art has become legendary, so well-documented and stored in photographic

form – an issue we will return to further on.

This summary of how art moved out into the space infers a new relationship to the beholder. Michael Fried's admittedly negative approach to the theatrical side of minimalism emphasises this aspect of 1960s art.<sup>33</sup> The new role of the onlooker, requiring a performative position, formed the basis for the new self-perception of institutions. No longer did it suffice to display art in the form of paintings hung on walls; instead, the institutions were also forced to supply places for temporary events, such as performances presented in conjunction with the exhibitions. The audience also changed its attitude accordingly, learning that the museum was not simply a space for long-term exhibitions but also for short events that required them to keep up to date.

Development accelerated in the 1950s internationally, and Moderna Museet was open to this type of events from the start. Using a museum as an alternative venue for events was far from unusual at the time. On the contrary, it was in line with the general tendency as outlined above. Temporary projects also migrated from the galleries to the museums, often in the form of complementary events connected to an exhibition project. The Museum of Modern Art, for instance, opened its garden to jazz concerts and other events, such as Tinguely's construction of the aforementioned *Hommage à New York*.<sup>34</sup> At the end of the 1950s, the studios, galleries and universities were the dominant venues for the emerging art form, while the museums were increasingly drawn to this kind of activity in the 1960s.<sup>35</sup> Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam and Moderna Museet were among the earliest, which reflects their respective exhibition activities. Allan Kaprow's environment, for instance, featured in the exhibition *Movement in Art*, consisted partly of instructions for actions. The influence of the institutional framework can also be interpreted in another way. The art historian Oskar Bätschmann emphasises the evolution of the museum official from a background figure to a presenter of personal visions in competition with the artist. He mentions Harald Szeemann and Pontus Hultén as examples, and in view of Hultén's contribution, based so obviously on his own background, on the one hand, and on the exhibition itself as an event on the other, Bätschmann's account appears reasonable.<sup>36</sup>

The early film screenings revealed not only a personal involvement but also paved the way for the museum as a scene for other activities. Therefore, it was exceedingly fortuitous that Moderna Museet could gain a position at the very spearhead of developments internationally in its first decade of existence. Moderna Museet was an influential player from the very start and was able to provide artists with a venue that suited their purposes. Since there were few (if any) alternatives at the time, the museum soon became famous. As other arenas emerged, however, the situation changed. When new alternative venues were needed again in the 1970s, an institution no longer had the same allure as in the past. The openness was also lost, and things moved on. Moderna Museet continued to be an active place for events, but it became harder to discern a specific orientation, apart from a clear political stand, in what went on there. Nor was

it easy to claim a central position when there were so many alternatives. Moderna Museet was still a vital film venue and succeeded in creating an impressive collection, while happenings and performances took a back seat.<sup>37</sup> Politics were paramount, along with alternative music events, and this politicised state lasted into the 1980s. Compared to the dynamic development of the art scene in the 1950s and 1960s, the momentum had been somewhat lost, and thus the things that happened after 1970 appear less significant compared to the events of the 1960s that have been restyled into myth. This does not necessarily have any relation to Hultén's departure from the museum but may simply reflect the general historic trend in art. New approaches would be needed to maintain a position at the forefront.

#### *Happenings and Performances at Moderna Museet*

Two examples of happenings and performances in different decades can highlight the evolution of events at Moderna Museet and help to relativise and add nuance to the image of legendary occurrences in the 1960s.

In autumn 1966, Claes Oldenburg had a solo exhibition at Moderna Museet. He stayed in Sweden for long periods prior to the opening and started preparing for a happening. The first notes after his arrival give no clue to how the idea would eventually materialise.<sup>38</sup> The artist tried different approaches and perspectives, such as a boat trip and a film screening, and also associated around various words, such as tub ("tub = bed"), "polar bear" and "massage-massacre".<sup>39</sup> It is interesting how Oldenburg created an associative web of fairly precise instructions for the four evenings on which this happening would take place. Both prejudices and knowledge about Sweden and the USA were intertwined into a totality. *Massage* was also created in consultation with the people who would be acting within this totality, including Gabrielle Björnstrand, Olle Granath, Mette Prawitz, Claes and Pat Oldenburg.

Visitors reached the dark museum via the garden, where they could see three bears tearing up cardboard ("perhaps a soft picasso sculpture").<sup>40</sup> The audience were assisted in taking off their outdoor clothes by two "nurses" with masks. They were led into the large gallery where grey blankets were spread out on the floor. The bears had come indoors and were tearing paper bags apart. Organ music was played and the room resembled a church. A film was shown on the opposite wall above a woman dressed in brown pyjamas, who got into a bed of balloons under a coverlet that looked like a fried egg ("Pat sleeping in meat-and-potato hash"). A woman sat typing. A masseur kneaded an enormous tube so small textile sausages came out one end. The audience members were led out on to the floor to the blankets, which they wrapped themselves in and lay down. A man ran up and down the staircase to "Hyllan" (The Shelf, a part of the former museum building) – "Claes (as Nisse) – a busy man." The audience were given blindfolds and were told to go to sleep, hot dogs were distributed, Hawaiian music was played and then it was time to wake up and leave the museum.

Four evenings between 3 and 7 October 1966, were filled



with this happening, which lasted for some 35 minutes and admitted an audience of 60 on each occasion. Many participants means that several things can happen at the same time, and a description such as this can never do justice to the simultaneity. The happening was not filmed, but there are a large number of photographs by Hans Hammarskiöld. These give some idea of the various elements, the five acts, according to the reports, and the course of events.

Oldenburg's descriptions developed gradually, but even the later instructions, which are detailed and include notes on lighting, sound and the movements of the audience and the participants in the room, deviations occurred. This means that the notes are merely Oldenburg's sketches, rather than definite plans. Unforeseen events may, for instance, influenced the entire sequence and meant that no performance was exactly like the other.

Another source is the articles that were published about this happening. There were a few reviews in the daily press and a longer article by Olle Granath in *Konstrevy*.<sup>41</sup> Since Granath took part as a "masseur" he has first-hand experience and an insider perspective. Granath places Oldenburg in a historical context and discusses American pop art in the light of two opposites: Andy Warhol (cynicism) – Claes Oldenburg (love). This is an interpretative article that also gives some interesting details on what happened, for instance that Oldenburg altered the instructions according to the participants' wishes.<sup>42</sup> Although the article is worth reading, it does not give a clear picture of what it was like to be a masseur, of what the atmosphere was like at the nightly events, and how Granath experienced his relationship to the audience. In some ways, the article signed "Mrs Johansson" in *Dagens Nyheter* is more rewarding.<sup>43</sup> This was the first time she attended a happening, she writes, presenting herself as an innocuous person who arrives at the museum full of wonder. Naturally, "Mrs Johansson" does not have Granath's critical perspective, but delivers personal observations about the things that took place around her. This gives a fairly good idea of the atmosphere ("I began to feel a bit sleepy", "field hospital"), the audience ("I didn't really look the part. One should have been twenty and dressed in an orange-yellow Marimekko tunic, handcrafted silver bracelet and purple stockings."), the smell of hot dogs mixed with "perfume odour", the masseur ("kneaded a young heman [sic] in a vest on a huge inflatable mattress"). Göran Fant writes in *Svenska Dagbladet* about the same happening and, like "Mrs Johansson", he mentions Winnie the Pooh. The whole affair is described as "friendly, brief and harmless", and afterwards you feel more "relaxed", but that was all.<sup>44</sup> Other articles fill out the picture, but it remains hard to grasp everything that happened.<sup>45</sup> "Mrs Johansson's" naïve perspective captures other details than Olle Granath's trained art historian's eye, and both versions are biased and selective.

The artists Marina Abramović and Ulay performed their *Fragilissimo* in the cinema at Moderna Museet twice, on 9 and 10 November 1985.<sup>46</sup> In addition to Ulay and Abramović, two of their friends took part: Michael Laub who represented the theatre company Remote Control Productions, and

"Mr. Mondo" – Edmondo Za's stage name. The play in three parts was about "a woman seen by three men from different angles."<sup>47</sup> Abramović played the mother, sister, lover. Abramović and Ulay were otherwise accustomed to appearing only with each other, and this was their first performance with other participants. The press images show the woman particularly. She is seated on a stool, smoking, or standing on a pale, carpet-like surface, raising her arms upwards in two pictures; Ulay is in the background in one of the pictures. One photograph shows all four. The men are seated around a table and Abramović is standing at the back in a light dress which she holds out. The pictures convey nothing of the performance but appear distinctly still. They do not provide much information about the interaction between the four characters or how the different parts relate to one another. A stronger impression is made by the photographic documentation of parts of their performance. In one picture, Ulay and Abramović are sitting at a table, she on one side and he at the end to her left. Under the plain table, on which there is only a decanter of water, a glass and an ashtray for the smoking man, lies an enormous dog gnawing at a bone.

Monica Nieckels, who was a curator at the museum at the time, tells us about this performance, which she helped organise.<sup>48</sup> Everything was totally silent and all that could be heard was the dog's gnawing. It was dark, only the table was lighted. Nieckels describes Ulay and Abramović as sitting opposite each other, unlike the pictures from this scene.<sup>49</sup> This may seem like a small discrepancy, but it is not unimportant since it demonstrates how different sources approach the event in different ways and that time blurs the contours. Nieckels recalls the sound and the lighting as the essential elements. It is suggestive to imagine a couple sitting at a table and hearing a dog gnaw a bone. In the photographs the dog is barely visible, the bone is much more prominent. The brutality is emphasised, also in Nieckels' memory, which can be regarded as a condensed version. The photographs from this performance, as from others, appear to be arranged. They are not snapshots for posterity, but serve to convey a special impression and mood from the event. The picture is intended to match what the artists wanted to convey.<sup>50</sup>

Abramović and Ulay had embarked on their artistic collaboration in 1976, and had been engaged in performance art separately before then. By the time they parted in 1988 (they were also a couple in private), they had appeared in a large number of performances all over the world. They started in an exceedingly physical way in the 1970s – presenting themselves as an androgynous couple, but eventually went on to more "silent" work, to which *Fragilissimo* can be counted.<sup>51</sup> It is interesting, in the context and in view of the development of performance art, that they toured and showed the same performance in several places or presented others that changed and evolved from one occasion to the next. They adapted to the situation and absorbed impressions but also developed their own aesthetic that was not linked to one place but to their collaboration. A vital aspect was that they included the audience and related to the specific conditions surrounding each new occasion and also, as Chrissie Iles

writes, that they looked for the energy that was generated in these encounters.<sup>52</sup> Without having seen a performance of this kind, however, it is hard to convey an impression of the relationship between the artists and their audience. Remarkably, the documenting photographs usually only depict the artists and the stage, but not the reactions.<sup>53</sup> In the 1970s, performance grew into an established art form and it became possible for artists to tour between different institutions and events to present their works. Performance is no longer necessarily regarded as a small, marginal movement but has a given place in all institutions. Boundary-crossing is no longer an element of the art form as such, albeit possibly in the works themselves.

#### *Authorised Documents*

The background outlined above shows how happenings and performances were established at Moderna Museet, and how the museum grew into a significant venue. The evolution of the art form contributed to this development and to the position of the museum at the centre of events during its first decade. Naturally, these art forms have continued to develop over the years, and *Fragilissimo* is one example of a different route compared to Oldenburg's *Massage*. Ulay and Abramović created performances together that formed their joint oeuvre, which they also toured. The performances were not always engendered on site, at least not in the same way as Oldenburg's *Massage*. Since the 1960s, performance art has established itself and advanced into an even more independent genre. It can form part of an artist's repertoire, but it can also be the only form of art produced by an artist. As a rule, these activities take place in connection with an exhibition.<sup>54</sup>

Both happenings and performances at Moderna Museet involve a problem for the audience: there is no collected documentation.<sup>55</sup> Paintings, sculpture and even films and videos are collected and stored, but time- and site-specific art such as a happening cannot be collected. It takes place on a certain occasion and is only stored as a personal memory by the audience and participants. It can be documented, but there is no way of obtaining first-hand experience without personally attending the event. This applies to all art in this genre and forces museums to consider whether it should be documented and, if so, how. It is worth noting that the museum's database of works includes an art classification called "authorised document".<sup>56</sup> This is used for works that are associated with performances. Currently, only one object sorts under this classification – Elin Wikström's "activated situation", *Rebecka väntar på Anna, Anna väntar på Cecilia, Cecilia väntar på Marie...* from 1994. What Moderna Museet has is an instruction on CD for how the work should be performed. No physical work of art exists, but if the work is to be presented, a situation is to be enacted using several people. In other words, the museum's CD is a potential performance.

For art historians, this lack of documentation involves a special situation that requires another type of theory and method than for dealing with, say, an existing painting. Verbal sources are more crucial due to the information gap, but cannot be verified in the same way as a statement

about a material work of art. The audience's impressions fade with time, they can be confused with other impressions and new knowledge, and the experience cannot be verified afterwards. Moreover, second-hand sources become more profuse over the years. The fact that relatively few actually witnessed the happenings or performances means that the sources that do exist have more scope, while fewer can actually confirm or dispute their statements. Nor can those who witnessed the event return in time or check if their memory is correct. The situation is a perfect breeding ground for myth and legend.

In view of this trend in art and due to the nature of the source material, documentation came to take another form – primarily photography but eventually also more and more film. Moreover, video art has generated an entirely new trend in itself.<sup>57</sup> As the art historian Henry M. Sayre points out, the documentation problem also provides the museums with a new task to consider when it comes to preserving and showing this kind of document – art itself acknowledges its historicity.<sup>58</sup> There rarely exist any concrete remains from a happening that can be collected, although it does happen.<sup>59</sup> Nor do these remains provide any first-hand experience of the event, although they may convey more aspects than, say, photographs. Like the 1960s, the 1980s are now beginning to fade from the memory of those who attended the events. As before, it makes no difference how carefully an event is documented or that media are used to convey an impression, because it is nevertheless impossible to achieve a total picture. All the details that cannot be captured by various media will be lost. As shown, the documentation that does exist must also be scrutinised critically. Moreover, as the artist Laurie Anderson emphasises, many artists were opposed to documenting an event which related to memory and contemporaneity and where they actually wanted to avoid institutional, preserved art. However, Anderson stresses, when she realised that the audience's recall was far from perfect and that mythicising indeed increased, she changed her perspective and began to allow documentation.<sup>60</sup> Other artists work consciously on documenting and ensure that the picture they want to convey is the one that is spread. With this intent, they can contribute to the desired myths on their own and according to their instructions. Joseph Beuys' collaboration with the photographer Caroline Tisdall is one famous example of this, Chris Burden who intentionally published material about himself is another.<sup>61</sup> Their control does not necessarily have to adhere to the artists' explicit directives, but can also be a more or less coincidental effect. Going back to *Five New York Evenings*, the photograph by Stig T. Karlsson which is associated with the series of happenings is one of the more spectacular ones. It shows Robert Rauschenberg climbing into the barrel on a wagon that was pulled out of the room by a cow. This happening, merely one among all those performed, has perhaps become the main image for the five evenings. The picture has been spread and the effect went far

Marina Abramović in *Fragilissimo*, 1985; Bruno K. Öijer, 1979; King George, from *Red, White and Blues*, performing in 1971; Pat Oldenburg in *Massage*, 1966





beyond documenting an event – it became an icon in itself.<sup>62</sup>

As for the actual site, the place where the performance is set, there have been vital changes since the 1960s, influencing not only the audience's perception of the event, but also expressing the changes that have occurred in the art form, along with changes in the museum. If we study photographs from happenings in the 1960s, it is clear that they were integrated in a natural way with the exhibition spaces. The audience moves among the works of art and the mood usually seems relaxed.<sup>63</sup> The premises were not distinctly limited but were used if they suited the purpose. It appears, for instance, that the exhibition spaces were suitable for concerts.<sup>64</sup> In view of tightened security, the same liberty would not be possible today. And it is very unlikely that a cow will ever visit the museum again.<sup>65</sup> As the museum has been rebuilt, and especially after the new museum was built in 1998, the facilities have become more specialised for the activities. A cinema is used for film shows, an auditorium for major events.<sup>66</sup> The exhibition halls are still used for various events, however.

Another aspect of the space and the audience relationship to the event/art is the destabilisation of relationships that has grown increasingly prominent since the 1960s, that is, that the boundary is blurred. Claes Oldenburg is one of those who experimented with the perception of the space, and with the boundary between art and reality in works such as *The Store*. In his *Mouse Museum* (1972) he developed this in relationship to the museum as a space. The museum space was consequently a vital venue in the early days of performance art and happenings. The defined, institutionalised space served as an opponent that the artists could relate to and develop their art in relation to. This is one reason why the museum played a crucial part even though there were other available venues, at least internationally. As mentioned, art continued to relate directly or indirectly to the museums. Land art is perhaps the most distinct reaction against this, along with video art, which uses other spaces and follows the pattern marked out earlier by cross-disciplinary performance art.

As performance art and happenings were gradually integrated with established art, their alternative and provocative character began to fade. The challenge was no longer as clear when it became more difficult to provoke the audience. Moreover, the genre was no longer groundbreaking, and hosting a performance did not entail that the institution was daring or different. Thus, it was harder to achieve legendary status. This also impacted on the venues. There was more going on, with more kinds of events, and new venues appeared.

Moderna Museet has always featured events such as poetry readings, dance, happenings and discussions. A look at the chronology and a comparison between decades will also reveal that there are no obvious differences – the museum has been a permanent stage and has always been an important venue for performances of a less established nature. Happenings and performances are often staged in connection with an exhibition, and that was the case also in the 1960s. They are a complement to the art that is featured for a longer period.

### Film Series

At the beginning of this essay it was mentioned that Moderna Museet did not embark on its activities with a regular exhibition but with a manifestation – the avant-garde film festival *Apropos Eggeling* in May 1958. The festival was organised jointly with Académie du Cinéma, Paris, The Historic Film Collection in Stockholm and Det Danske Filmmuseum. For the four evenings between 13 and 21 May a programme was composed with screenings open only to the members of the Moderna Museet film club. The comprehensive programmes included films by Robert Breer, René Clair, Maya Deren, Marcel Duchamp, Viking Eggeling, Pontus Hultén and Hans Nordenström, Len Lye, Bruno Munari, Hans Richter and Robert Wiene. A catalogue was also published for the festival, with the subtitle “a collection of short essays on film published on the occasion of the avant-garde film series at Moderna Museet”. The authors include Hultén's network in the film sector, most notably Nils-Hugo Geber, Hans Nordenström and Robert Breer, but also Hans Richter, Eivor Burbeck and Peter Weiss. Several of the authors also participated as presenters at the events: Breer, Geber, Hultén, Nordenström and Gösta Werner. Hans Richter wrote not only about his friend Viking Eggeling, but also a section on “Film as an art form” in which he disparaged the feature film and highlighted visual experimentation and the exploration of the film medium as an end in itself, not as a means of telling a story.<sup>67</sup>

In his foreword to the catalogue, the editor Pontus Hultén writes: “It will become more common that artists stop painting in favour of film-making. Film is the most potent medium available in our age.”<sup>68</sup> Hultén made a bold effort to promote film as a visual art, and claimed to believe the concept of film would disappear when it obtained a natural place as one of many artistic media. He also underlined the importance of being able to exhibit this art form. On the strength of the catalogue, with its unequivocal stand, it is justifiable to interpret the choice of inaugurating Moderna Museet with a film festival as a signal that this genre was considered to be the most “modern”, and a genre that would gain even more significance in the future.<sup>69</sup>

The festival featured experimental film that is more closely related to visual arts than to conventional feature films. The museum's events included feature films, but this was initially just one activity among others. Moderna Museet served as a venue for this genre too, but Hultén and Derkert made no efforts to treat film as such as a visual art, differentiating clearly between feature films and experimental film. There was no ambition to collect with a view to copying and renting out films – perhaps this was not perceived as desirable. In this sense there was a clear foundation in a modernist art perspective.

Similarly to the way Moderna Museet was used as a venue for happenings and performance, this film series was a temporary event, limited in time and space and only available to the visitors who were there for the occasion – and who were members of the film club. The membership requirement was due to copyright laws concerning public screenings of

rented films. The museum did not have its own collection of films and the club structure also provided a loophole with regard to censorship. This format for screenings was elaborated over the years, and several series of films were organised on themes ranging from countries to individual directors.

In connection with *4 Americans* (*4 amerikanare*, 1962) and *American Pop Art* (*Amerikansk pop-konst*, 1964) ambitious film programmes were organised under the title *The New American Cinema*.<sup>70</sup> The first programme focused on New York and included films by John Cassavetes, Shirley Clarke, Robert Frank, Alfred Leslie and Jonas Mekas. It filled a few days in March. The same year, in the autumn, the museum also put on a programme of Italian feature films by Michelangelo Antonioni, Ugo Gregoretti, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Francesco Rosi, Vittorio de Seta and Luchino Visconti. In spring 1964, the second series of American films was shown over two weeks. *The New American Cinema* included films by Kenneth Anger, Stan Brakhage, Ken Jacobs, George Landow, Gregory Markopoulos, Adolfas Mekas, Ron Rice, Jack Smith and Andy Warhol.

Although the screenings were for club members only, as a means of avoiding censorship, this was to no avail when the turn came to the screening of Jack Smith's film *Flaming Creatures* (1963). The film had been reviewed beforehand by *Stockholms-Tidningen*, and this had caused publicity for the event.<sup>71</sup> Moderna Museet was reported by a private individual prior to the screening, since the film had been described as offensive. The person who filed the complaint maintained that a public museum, funded with the taxpayers' money, should not be showing indecent films with pornographic content: "Nationalmuseum should clean up Moderna Museet so it does not insult people's intelligence. I have not had the opportunity to see [the film] myself, but I contacted the artist Knut Hallström, who has seen it, and was informed that it was atrocious."<sup>72</sup> After receiving a phone call from a criminal investigator, Hultén decided not to challenge the authorities and risk prosecution and cancelled the screening of Smith's film. The other films were shown, and Andy Warhol's eight-hour film *Sleep* replaced *Flaming Creatures*.<sup>73</sup> Although the censors could not legally have banned the film, the museum could have been prosecuted, something the directors wished to avoid. Jack Smith's film had also been banned by the censors in the USA, and this was a heated subject of debate on the art scene.<sup>74</sup>

In view of the many film programmes, screenings and other events relating to film that have taken place in the ensuing decades, it is justifiable to say that film takes a prominent position at Moderna Museet. Nevertheless, the collection had not increased. Film art was not purchased for the museum collection. It is remarkable that an avid promoter of the film medium like Hultén did not also emphasise the importance of collecting and acquiring film.

It was not until 1973, in connection with *The New York Collection for Stockholm* that a few video works were added to the collection. These included Walter de Maria's film *Hard Core* (1969), a 28-minute film in an edition of 100, curtly described by the artist in the catalogue as "a

Minimal-Land-Mystery-Historical-Western. God help us all."<sup>75</sup> The work *T.V. Chair* (1968) by Nam June Paik, consisting of a small TV screen under a chair with a glass seat, was also acquired, along with Robert Whitman's work *Dining Room Table* from 1963.

In this perspective, a film series such as *The Pleasure Dome. American experimental film 1939–1979* is invaluable to the museum's history.<sup>76</sup> More than 40 films were bought in connection with the series, with screenings between 16 February and 4 April 1980. The original idea was to buy all the films shown in the series, some 80 films in all, but there was not enough funding. Olle Granath tried to find sponsorship, but the only sponsor was AB Svensk Filmindustri, whose then director, Kenne Fant, supported the project. Claes Söderquist and Jonas Mekas prepared two possible budgets. If all the films were rented, the cost would be SEK 74,000 for the entire project, excluding the catalogue; if all the films were purchased instead, the total project cost would be SEK 145,000.<sup>77</sup>

*The Pleasure Dome* is, incidentally, a long film series at Moderna Museet but not in the form of an exhibition in one of the galleries that could be visited at any time. Unlike previous film series, however, the catalogue that was published was comparatively extensive and was also given a catalogue number in the Moderna Museet catalogue list. *The Pleasure Dome* can be regarded as a turning point, marking the acceptance of film as a collection area and an art form in its own right, rather than a complementary activity. The series approaches the exhibition format, and one of the purposes of the series was precisely to promote the collection to the museum, i.e., there is a long-term museum policy behind the series and this sets it apart from the previous, temporary film activities.

*The Pleasure Dome* was organised by Claes Söderquist, a film artist, together with Jonas Mekas.<sup>78</sup> Söderquist took the initiative and made the selection, together with Jonas Mekas at the Anthology Film Archives in New York. Mekas' prominent position in American experimental film – not only as a film-maker but also, and more importantly in this context, as a writer, founder of several organisations for showing and launching experimental film, and with a broad network of contacts – and his firm roots in American east-coast culture influenced the selection, which consists primarily of men from the east coast. The dynamic west-coast film scene was more or less ignored. The programme included films by Kenneth Anger, Stan Brakhage, Robert Breer, Marie Menken, Pat O'Neill, George Landow, Michael Snow, Yvonne Rainer and others and, of course, Mekas himself. The catalogue is comprehensive, and generously illustrated with black-and-white

Margaretha Åsberg, *Pyramiderna*, 1979; still from Jonas Mekas' *Reminiscences of a Journey to Lithuania*, 1971–72; Don Cherry in the exhibition *Utopias and Visions 1871–1981*, 1971; from *Five New York Evenings*, 1964; from the exhibition *After the Wall*, 1999; *Massage* 1966; two photographs from "Panik" in the cinema 1979; Maja Bajević 2005; opening of *Movement in Art*, 1961; concert in the garden, 1970; Marina Abramović and Ulay in *Fragilissimo*, 1985; Robert Whitman, *Fast Cloud* 1990; Göran Hägg 1985; public attending the Skeppsholmsfest, 1970; still from Yinka Shonibares *Un Ballo in Maschera*, 2004 →



[Images removed due to copyright restrictions]

[Images removed due to copyright restrictions]





stills from virtually all the films. A long essay by P. Adams Sitney introduces all the films and their originators.<sup>79</sup> In that respect, this is a film programme that presents a broad selection and provides a great deal of information – a laudable effort for this art form, taking up the baton from *Apropos Eggeling*. The catalogue and press releases juxtapose commercial film, with its focus on telling a story, with the greater artistic freedom of experimental film.

The fact that the films were shown in the cinema, and that the organisers had compiled a programme does not really differentiate this series from the previous ones. *The Pleasure Dome* may be a more ambitious and comprehensive presentation than *New American Cinema* in the 1960s, but it nevertheless follows in the wake of the previous film series. The collaboration with Mekas broadened the selection, which nevertheless adhered to the former programmes' focus on male film-makers from the east coast. Two women, Menken and Rainer, were included, however. Mekas is aware of this imbalance and writes to Söderquist:

*I should tell you right here that although my selection is very classical – the retrospective is made up of works recognized by most of the “avantgarde” film authorities as important works; however there is one very controversial aspect to it which I have no doubt will be noticed by someone and you may come under some attack: there are only THREE women in the whole retrospective (Levitt, Deren, Menken). There were simply no other important women film-makers I could include (Barbara Rubin's films being not available presently). The women have been very productive in the seventies here but no work of substance has come to my attention created by them. If anyone will attack you on this point – send them to me, I'll handle them.*<sup>80</sup>

It is interesting that Mekas alerts Söderquist to this fact, and that no one at Moderna Museet contradicts him. The quote makes it blatantly clear that Mekas, assisted by P. Adams Sitney, determined the selection from a New York-centric perspective.<sup>81</sup> In consequence, the series was merely a development of the preceding series – more extensive, but with a similar orientation. One instance of a more independent choice of films, far from Mekas' influence, nevertheless occurred already in the autumn of 1980 at Moderna Museet. The museum's programme featuring women film-makers exclusively can possibly be seen as a reaction against Mekas' male-dominated selection. On 14–19 October, Moderna Museet presented the series *We Film for Life* (Vi filmar för livet). Swedish and international works by women film-makers, including Gunvor Nelson, Mai Zetterling, Chantal Akerman, Ulrike Ottinger, Marguerite Duras and Frida Kahlo were compiled into a short programme.

The importance of *The Pleasure Dome* lies mainly in that film became fully accepted as a collection category. But the growth of the collection of moving images at Moderna

Museet is also connected with the rise of video art, and it is highly plausible that, even without the investment that *The Pleasure Dome* entailed, the museum would have followed the tendency and started collecting video art and other works in the field of moving images. Moderna Museet has continued to organise film series events over the years, for instance *Contemporary Film and Video* (*Samtida film och video*, 1998–99), and has compiled programmes in collaboration with others, in the same way as Söderquist and Mekas.<sup>82</sup>

At times, the selection criteria may appear strange. In 1993, for instance, Moderna Museet invited “a young Swedish gallery owner in New York”, Thomas Nordanstad, to choose and present film and video art to give a taste of what was going on in New York. Nordanstad chose three artists who in turn took part in selecting a total of 20 works by five artists.<sup>83</sup> All the films were bought by Moderna Museet – in other words, a specially-invited gallery owner placed his selection of films in the museum. This was a convenient way of obtaining and communicating an insight into the contemporary art scene in New York. Consulting a private gallery owner entails the risk that the selection will be criticised as being biased and based on financial interests. In this case, it was lucky, not to say crucial, that Nordanstad in turn consulted artists to broaden the selection. This venture, *Red Cut* (*Rött snitt*), was followed up in 1995 by *Blue Cut* (*Blått snitt*), but this time the selection, by Monica Nieckels, was Swedish.

Another vital project was *Blick. New Nordic Film & Video*, organised in 1999, 2001 and 2004. The common principle was that a jury selected works among submitted contributions and compiled a programme that was toured. In 2001, for instance, the jury chose works from approximately 600 submissions. Around 50 films by some 40 artists were combined into a two-day programme that was first shown in Helsinki, then at Moderna Museet in Stockholm, before going on an international circuit. The entire project was run jointly with the Nordic Institute for Contemporary Art (NIFCA) and the jury consisted of Rebecca Gordon Nesbitt from NIFCA, Maria Lind and Cecilia Widenheim – both from Moderna Museet. Films by artists such as Tobias Bernstrup, Johanna Billing, Saskia Holmkvist and Salla Tykkä were included.<sup>84</sup> A couple of themes were also identified in the material: “Narrative is still central in many works, occasionally with a purely documentary slant, sometimes in the spirit of the family video's private story-telling. Several film-makers comment on structure – urban models, social and political structures – focusing their explorative gaze on ‘the system’.”<sup>85</sup> They also emphasised that the concept was adapted to the exhibition format, and that they had striven to create a rhythm to facilitate screenings. This ambition underlines the fact that the series was adapted to a varied international audience, rather than being composed in conjunction with a thematic exhibition or for an audience that would return for several consecutive evenings.

Film programmes are often compiled as a complement to exhibitions, enhancing the impression of the exhibited art works in various ways. In connection with *Wounds* (1998), the audience was treated to an exceedingly ambitious

Still from Bill Viola's *Chott el Djerid – A Portrait in Light and Heat*, 1979  
Betacam SP, PAL, colour, stereo sound, 28:00 minutes  
Purchase 1983

programme. It was divided into categories, including video on monitors, video projections, film on video and film. The programme included not only works by visual artists such as Dara Birnbaum, Raymond Pettibon, Pipilotti Rist and Bill Viola, but also feature films – ranging from Ingmar Bergman, Jean-Luc Godard and Pier Paolo Pasolini, to Larry Clark, Rebecca Horn and Martin Scorsese. The exhibition strove to give a broader picture of the present day from a political perspective and a moral standpoint – “that beauty has a moral dimension,” as David Elliott puts it.<sup>86</sup> Interestingly, the selection of films mixed “high and low”, from Hollywood blockbusters to narrow cult movies. The museum was promoting itself as a broad cultural scene, commenting on the times in various media and avoiding the pitfall of “only” conveying impressions of art on an aesthetic plane. The ambition was to make visitors aware of how all cultural expressions are linked and how culture and society are closely entwined and shed light on one another mutually. More recent examples of such projects include *Africa Remix* (2006) and *Time and Place: Rio de Janeiro 1956–1964 (Tid och plats, 2008)*. Feature films from the African continent and Brazil were shown to give new insight into the cultures and to add nuance to the picture. Often these film programmes have been put together in collaboration with other organisations, for instance CinemaAfrica and the French Embassy.<sup>87</sup>

Film programmes are an actively used element and a complement to the museum’s exhibitions activities. They fill a vital purpose per se but do not work on their own or outside the context provided by the museum. They are not to be regarded as exhibitions and they are not tied to the galleries. Still, a film series can serve as an introduction and a starting-point, a knowledge source, for making further acquisitions for the collection. Moreover, they can form a backdrop for a whole exhibition, as in the case with *The Pleasure Dome*.

#### *From Performances to Exhibitions*

Parallel to the film programmes in the cinema, film and video have been an integral part of happenings, performance art and exhibitions in other parts of the museum. In short, moving images have been incorporated in the collection after occurring mainly as film series events in the first decades. Today, film and video is presented in exhibitions and in the permanent collection in much the same way as painting and sculpture.

Several of the artists who were central to Moderna Museet’s original profile – for instance, Robert Rauschenberg and Öyvind Fahlström – worked in a cross-disciplinary way with painting, sculpture, dance, sound and moving images. *Five New York Evenings* is typical in this respect. To quote Fahlström: “In my performances, I elaborated on the sound and music rather than on the visual elements; worked more on illusion (projection, textual references, gestures) than on materiality; with a complex large format and kaleidoscopic variation of subject matter.”<sup>88</sup> Another example is Pistol-teatern’s happenings in the autumn of 1967, incorporating projections. Leif Nylén reports: “Staffan Olzon was assisted by the National Forensic Laboratory to make a high-speed

film of a hand stroking a female breast, screened at normal speed the film lasted 20 minutes. It was projected on a convex film screen that Staffan Olzon climbed, spraying paint, while Sören Brunes slashed a film screen from behind on which the same female breast was projected.”<sup>89</sup> Considering that the first portable video camera, the Portapak launched by Sony in 1965, was also used to document the performance and other things, it is only natural that the boundary-crossing includes moving images.<sup>90</sup> The next step is that artists work directly with performance art for the camera in the studio. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that the incorporation of film in multimedia installations was a result of the development of installation art, not an extension of experimental film of the kind that was presented in a cinema instead of as spatial installations.

Film was also included directly in exhibitions. *Movement in Art* has been discussed previously and is a perfect example of an exhibition where experimental film was incorporated naturally – and also figured distinctly in the catalogue. In *Andy Warhol* (1968) the intention was that film should be a prominent part of the exhibition, being shown alongside other works and not secluded in a darkened room.<sup>91</sup> The ambition was to show loops from extremely long films like *Sleep, Eat* and *Empire*. Shot in one uninterrupted take with a static camera, these films approach paintings’ aesthetics. Due to copyright issues, Olle Granath explains, none of the films could be sent to Stockholm. The programme was altered, and instead of showing films in the exhibition space *Chelsea Girls* was shown in the cinema.<sup>92</sup> A striking example in Moderna Museet’s history is *She – A Cathedral (Hon – en katedral, 1966)* by Niki de Saint Phalle, Jean Tinguely and Per Olof Ultvedt. In addition to a café, the combined work of art and venue contained a small cinema; i.e. film shows were integral to the exhibition, and the cinema was a vital meeting place rather than a mere work of art.

In later exhibitions with Swedish artists, including Olle Bonniér and Åke Karlung, film and projections were used in a cross-disciplinary way, revealing the link between installation, film and exhibition. For the exhibition *Minos’ Palace. Communications – Simultaneously Insulated in Man and Open Towards Cosmos (Minos palats. Kommuniceranden – samtidigt slutna inom människan och öppnade mot kosmos, 1967)*, Bonniér designed a “theatrical” room which included a film screen with film projections, in addition to sound and light effects in the otherwise dark chamber.<sup>93</sup> The work was originally created for the opening of the European space research centre ESRO in Kiruna in 1966, before going on tour.<sup>94</sup> The purpose, according to Beate Sydhoff, was to create “a new kind of art work, a theatre of the senses, where the spectator, with the guidance of a theme, is the recipient of (and physically surrounded by) a system of independent images (light) and sound.”<sup>95</sup> The interesting aspect here is the ambition to create a total experience, and the inclusion of film in Bonniér’s work. A few years later, in the autumn of 1972, the museum showed Åke Karlung’s filmic work *Aliena Kadabra – a porno-puritanical failure (Alienakadabra – fragment av ett PornoPuritanskt Misslyckande)*. This was an “exhibition

of ideas” in the black-curtained cinema – “like a film reel”.<sup>96</sup> The spatial experience was also created by “rotating lights” that adhered to a “pseudo-Hellenic hexameter”.<sup>97</sup> A film was also shown, but the artist states in a letter to the museum that the film is not viable on its own but must be seen as parts of a space and in a greater context.<sup>98</sup> The film snippets should be regarded as separate scenes, Karlung continues.

These traditions lived on, and Moderna Museet was a venue for various forms of film shows throughout the 1970s. Film gained a status in its own right, and in connection with the previously mentioned *Pleasure Dome* project, the collection was substantially enlarged. This trend went hand in hand with the emergence and improved status of video art.<sup>99</sup>

In 1985, the museum showed Bill Viola’s *Room for St John of the Cross* (1983). This was one of the first video installations to be presented at Moderna Museet. It was shown in the film gallery, and the brief programme produced for the event describes the installation: “The size of the cube in this video/audio installation is the same as the cell in which the Spanish mystic St John of the Cross (1549–91) was incarcerated for nine months in 1577.”<sup>100</sup> Videos from 1977 to 1983 were also shown in the cinema. These were introduced briefly in the programme by Bill Viola himself. Two of the videos, *Anthem* (1983) and *Chott el-Djerid (A Portrait in Light and Heat)* (1979), were bought and added to the Moderna Museet collection.

A few years on, in 1993, Bill Viola returned to Moderna Museet for a more comprehensive exhibition: *Bill Viola – Unseen Images*, produced jointly with Kunsthalle Düsseldorf and a couple of other European art museums.<sup>101</sup> In the foreword to the catalogue, the then director of Moderna Museet, Björn Springfeldt, writes about the medium and emphasises that one of Bill Viola’s strengths is that he has succeeded in transcending its limitations. He writes:

*No medium has so changed our understanding of our own situation and of the world at large as the electronic image. [...] Thus it is both a surprise and an inspiration to be confronted with the work of an artist who has so skilfully succeeded in transcending the limits which, one was convinced, governed the medium.*<sup>102</sup>

Bill Viola’s video art exhibition in 1985 was an even greater step than *The Pleasure Dome* in Moderna Museet’s history with regard to the moving image as a feature of the museum’s activities. Video was manifested spatially and plenty of room was freed up for an international artist – rather than merely including his work in a series with several others.<sup>103</sup> Hand in hand with the progress of video art, new works were shown at the museum, but combining moving images with installation, a format that became more pronounced and developed in Bill Viola’s art over the years, required a different form of viewing than the museum cinema could provide. Moreover, the fact that installation was related to sculpture made it easier to assert the status of video installation as art.<sup>104</sup> Considering that Bill Viola had his first major exhibition in Europe in 1983 and did not become known to a wider public until 1979

with his work *Chott el-Djerid*, Moderna Museet was one of the earliest museums to feature this pioneer of video art.<sup>105</sup>

Another seminal exhibition after the various exhibitions of Bill Viola’s work was *Tall Ships* (1995) by Gary Hill, co-produced with Riksställningar – Swedish Travelling Exhibitions.<sup>106</sup> After being shown at Moderna Museet, a smaller version of the exhibition, consisting of the work *Tall Ships*, but excluding the other works shown in Stockholm, went on tour.<sup>107</sup> The centrepiece of the exhibition was the title work *Tall Ships* (1992), an interactive video installation incorporating advanced technology. The work is built like a corridor, with a floor, walls and a ceiling. Sensors under the carpet register where the visitor is standing and start the projections on the walls.<sup>108</sup> The exhibition also prompted the museum to purchase ten early single-channel video works from the 1970s and 1980s for the collection.<sup>109</sup>

At the opening of the exhibition, Gary Hill said in a conversation with the curator Tom Sandqvist that “video was accepted as art five years ago.”<sup>110</sup> According to Gary Hill and many others, the entrance of video and film art into the gallery is intimately associated with the potential of the video projector, which made it easier to show videos in a gallery setting. Prior to the video projector, videos could only be viewed on monitors in exhibition spaces while film could be shown in cinema-like spaces. Monitors were hard to integrate in a satisfactory way in the exhibition context, being far too similar to a domestic TV set. This, in turn, inspired many artists, including Warhol and Paik, to focus on TV and work actively with TV as an artistic medium and material. Like Viola, Hill says that the space surrounding the monitor is crucial to video art. Movement through the exhibition space influences how the work is experienced. If Viola and other artists paved the way for video art, Hill followed up their intentions and contributed to establishing video art in a museum context.

In her now classic essay “Video: Shedding the Utopian Moment”, Martha Rosler identifies similar aspects, and the development outlined above is in no way unique for Moderna Museet.<sup>111</sup> The advent of the video projector in the exhibition space has been critical in transforming video from an underground art form in ideologically radical rebellion against the art market and the existing art system, to a genre that is presented in much the same way as painting. The new distribution channel was also crucial, since it made the works more exclusive on the art market and more desirable as collectibles, and thus moved the new medium even closer to painting. The presentation methods also impact on, and interact with, the spectator in different ways. In a video installation where the spectator is surrounded by large screens, as in Pipilotti Rist’s seductive installations, it is harder to remain critically detached from the work. The spectator is veritably immersed in an ocean of images and sounds. Watching a single-channel video on a monitor, the spectator has few opportunities to interact, unlike being faced with several projections, where the spectator can edit his or her experience by focusing on different projections and perhaps even casting a shadow on them.

A further aspect of Moderna Museet’s history vis-à-vis



the moving image is that the museum has also produced of many film and video works over the years. An early example is *Nothing* (1971) by Suzanne Nessim and Teresa Wennberg.<sup>112</sup> More recently, Moderna Museet Project has been responsible for several productions and has enabled Maria Lindberg (1998), Philippe Parreno (2001), Simon Starling (1998) and others to produce new works for the museum.<sup>113</sup> Other examples include Yinka Shonibare's *Costume Ball (Un Ballo in Maschera)* and Hussein Chalayan's *Anaesthetics* for the exhibition *Fashionation* (2004).<sup>114</sup> Moderna Museet's commissioning of works by artists in the form of moving images is no different from commissioning, say, a sculpture. This, of course, depends on which artist the museum commissions, and the techniques s/he habitually uses. The museum provides the space required to the extent that this is possible. The commissions should, in other words, be interpreted as a relationship to the development of art.

### *The Collection*

The first films to be registered as part of the Moderna Museet collection were, in addition to the works by Viking Eggeling, *Entr'acte* by René Clair, *L'age d'or* and *Un chien andalou* by Buñuel and Dalí, *The Man with the Film Camera* by Dziga Vertov and *Dreams that Money can Buy* by Hans Richter. They were added to the collection already in 1958, but it is not known how they were acquired, or from where the films came.<sup>115</sup> A few experimental films were subsequently acquired, the most comprehensive purchases being those made in connection with the previously described film series *The Pleasure Dome* in 1980 in accordance with Jonas Mekas' proposed selection. Apart from that major one-off investment, the number of film and video acquisitions has grown steadily, despite the relatively steep increase in price since the commercial galleries started selling limited editions of film and video art. The distribution channels have changed, as has the character of the works of art, and this has meant that collecting of film and video works has increased in volume and significance. It has also become a way for artists to finance and facilitate their work.

There was some confusion in the initial phase concerning the rights adhering to an acquisition or donation. There were no formal procedures and the market was still a vague and untested playing field. It was not until the mid-1990s that an inventory was made of the collection of video tapes in various formats, and at the same time the legal rights were clarified where uncertain.<sup>116</sup> Other film and video material, including documentation of performances and happenings at the museum, interviews with artists, recorded TV programmes and news reports about the museum from specific exhibitions, were also continuously registered and filed.<sup>117</sup>

One could understandably see Moderna Museet's approach to collecting video art up to the early 1990s as rather unstructured, but this was far from unusual for museums at the time. It reflects the position of video art in the art world, not to mention the rather tepid interest from the market, up to the turning point in the 1990s. It was, above all, when film and video works began to be sold in limited editions that

collecting and collections started to be taken more seriously and regarded in the same light as painting and sculpture. Distributors such as Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI) in the USA have been highly influential in this process. The EAI sells unlimited editions of video works, but the legal rights are nevertheless restricted. Naturally, the prices are considerably lower than for works published in a small, limited edition. Incidentally, Moderna Museet has been involved since 2005 in a research project run by the EAI with the purpose of formulating guidelines for collecting and preserving film and video art.

It is remarkable that the museum did not follow in the footsteps of the otherwise so seminal pioneering institution – the Museum of Modern Art in New York. In 1935, MoMA had already started a film library and now has a collection of more than 22,000 films of varying age and style. This proves that it was possible for a museum institution, if there was a will, to collect film. It also demonstrates that although Moderna Museet had a definite interest in film, and later on in moving images as art, there were no facilities for the museum to collect film. Nor was there any ambition to collect anything other than art film. This is a consequence of Moderna Museet's public assignment as an art museum, to the exclusion of collecting design or other objects bordering on art but not included in the definition of art. When the definition of art was extended and became more inclusive, the museum's exhibitions and collections changed accordingly.

In connection with the return in 2004 to the museum buildings on Skeppsholmen after the temporary exile at Klarabergsviadukten, the Moderna Museet collection was presented in a new way. The presentation is chronological, although reversed, considering that most visitors start by going to the galleries nearest to the entrance. In this presentation, film and video were integrated in a way that is entirely new to the museum. From having figured primarily as part of temporary exhibitions or in the cinema, film and video works were now presented in the same halls as paintings and sculptures, even though the lighting conditions often meant that the exhibition architecture had to be modified or that entire rooms in the permanent collection presentation were used exclusively for film and video works. It should be remembered that these media require different lighting, technology and space compared to paintings and sculptures, often involving more extensive alterations to the space and thereby influencing the conditions for exhibiting other art in the same space. For the same reasons, and with the same ambitions, photographs and prints are also presented as part of the collection – to give an idea of how these different media co-exist and are explored, often by the same artists. Although these media have separate histories, the specific characteristics of the genres are not emphasised by showing them separately. The boundaries between media are not considered in the same way as before, and this is a continuation of the



development that was started by the intermedia happenings, performances and installations of the 1950s and 1960s.

A special room was built for the newly acquired film installation *Out of Blue* (2002) by Zarina Bhimji. The rooms showing early modernist art also featured integrated moving images, such as Viking Eggeling's *Diagonalsymfonin* in an inserted room with an opening facing works by Malevich and other early modernists, but with seating and walls against the strong light that illuminates the rest of the hall.

The movement towards dedicated spaces continued when the museum redesigned one of the halls for the collection in 2006 to create a permanent place for presenting film and video art from the breakthrough of video in art up to today. Although this is a purpose-built area, just as the cinema was used previously to show films, there is a substantial difference in that it is a permanent place where video works are shown continuously in loops and are consequently just as accessible as other works in the collection. The programme changes, but visitors do not have to come at specific times.

Another new feature which was launched in connection with the return to Skeppsholmen was the Studio, a place for individual study of the museum's collection of films and videos. The Studio replaced the former video library that was part of the Photography Library. The Studio also presented temporary exhibitions in the series *The 1st at Moderna* (*Den första på Moderna*), including Carsten Nicolai, Xu Bing and Claude Closky's interactive exhibition featuring works on the boundary between design/typography and art. The artist duo *Heavy Industries*, with the internet as their primary exhibition forum, also used the computer screens in the Studio as a complement to projections for their exhibition in this series.

Movement in art has been a key concept for Moderna Museet from the very start, and it will remain so in the years to come. As we have attempted to demonstrate in this essay, Moderna Museet has striven to achieve great flexibility in its activities, with the ambition to cater for the changing demands of art. Temporal art, from film, via video, to performance art and happenings, has been a living feature parallel with the major exhibitions. The myths engendered by these events have given them a place in the memory of our visitors. Over the years, the museum has developed towards not only showing but also collecting works in new artistic media in a way that corresponds to new demands from artists and the public. Temporal art now has a firm place in the museum.



- 1 *Apropå Eggeling. En samling korta uppsatser om film utgiven med anledning av avantgardefilmserien i Moderna Museet maj 1958* (exh. cat.), ed. Pontus Hultén, Moderna Museet, Stockholm 1958. Regarding the catalogue, see Lutz Jahre, *Das gedruckte Museum von Pontus Hultén. Kunstausstellungen und ihre Bücher*, Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn 1996, p. 82.
- 2 Pontus Hultén, "Fem fragment ur Moderna Museets historia", *Moderna Museet* 1958–1983, eds. Olle Granath and Monica Niekels, Stockholm 1983, p. 33f.
- 3 An event, in this text, signifies an individual occasion, at a particular time and place, when something is performed and presented. Event is used here to describe anything from a lecture, a film screening, a poetry recital, a concert, a happening, to a performance or dance. Event, in other words, comprises anything that is not regarded as an exhibition at the museum.
- 4 When it comes to describing the museum as a venue, the focus will be on action-based art rather than on scheduled events, debates, etcetera. In this essay the emphasis will be on events involving artists. The museum's lack of a standardised series of publications of the kind published by, say, Nationalmuseum, is part of this policy. It should be stressed, however, that the Friends of Moderna Museet and their so-called Tuesday Club have organised a continuous programme of events.
- 5 For more on *Five New York Evenings*, see, for instance Leif Nylén, *Den öppna konsten. Happenings, instrumental teater, konkret poesi och andra gränsöverskridningar i det svenska 60-talet*, Stockholm 1998, p. 80ff. Öyvind Fahlström, "Efter happenings", *Öyvind Fahlström* (exh. cat.), ed. Björn Springfeldt, Moderna Museet, Stockholm 1979, pp. 36–39. In this article from 1965, Fahlström also relates how he was influenced by New York. See also Annika Öhrner, "Recalling *Pelican*: On P.O. Ultvedt, Robert Rauschenberg and Two 'Ballets'", *Konsthistorisk tidskrift/Journal of Art History*, vol. 76, no. 1–2, 2007, pp. 27–39.
- 6 See Lars Gustaf Andersson, John Sundholm and Astrid Söderbergh Widding, "I skuggan av spelfilmen: svensk experimentell film", *Konst som rörlig bild – från Diagonalsymfonin till Whiteout*, ed. Astrid Söderbergh Widding, Stockholm 2006, p. 33ff, p. 201 and p. 205 for biographies on Hultén and Nordenström, and p. 219 for a short summary of the film which is available in a DVD compilation. See also Hans Nordenström, "Preludier på 50-talet", *Moderna Museet* 1958–1983 1983, p. 22.
- 7 Nylén 1998, p. 45ff, and Nordenström, *Moderna Museet* 1958–1983 1983, pp. 22–28.
- 8 Louise O'Konor, *Viking Eggeling 1880–1925. Artist and Film-maker. Life and Work* (diss.), Stockholm 1971.
- 9 The signature Mareng, "Rusning till Moderna museet varslar om ny våg för barnfilm", *Dagens Nyheter* 13 Oct. 1963. In the article, Mareng writes: "No, not a penny has the activity received in funding. It started from zero and is still entirely self-sufficient; three kronor membership fee for a series and one krona for a ticket. The films are rented from regular film-rental companies."
- 10 "Rusning till Moderna museet varslar om ny våg för barnfilm", *Dagens Nyheter* 13 Oct. 1963. The article starts with the question: "Were you among the parents who waited in vain in the telephone queue to try to get your children a ticket for the Moderna Museet children's film studio, which opened yesterday for the autumn?" It goes on to point out that it has prompted the same mad rush every year. The archives also reveal that a large number of children turned up for each performance. The Children's Film Studio 1959–1971, F2:4, Moderna Museets myndighetsarkiv (MMA).
- 11 See the programme for spring 1959. F2:4, MMA.
- 12 The poster for spring 1969 is adorned with a motif by Niki de Saint Phalle, but other years also boast graphically advanced posters. F2:4, MMA.
- 13 Hilding Palme, head of advertising at Marabou, writes in a letter to Carlo Derkert: "Further to our previous conversation, we would like to inform you that we will be sending a couple of boxes of chocolate, which we hope you will be willing to accept as a gift to the children's shows in spring 1961." Letter from Hilding Palme to Derkert, 12 April 1961. F2:4, MMA.
- 14 Nylén 1998, p. 73. Bengt af Klintberg calls Moderna Museet, along with Pistolteatern, the most important fringe stage in the 1960s Bengt af Klintberg, *Svensk fluxus*, Stockholm 2006, p. 27.
- 15 See Anna Tellgren, "Robert Rauschenberg's Swedish Combines", *Konsthistorisk tidskrift/Journal of Art History*, vol. 76, no. 1–2, 2007, pp. 72–77.
- 16 Patrik Andersson rather emphasises this "open art" in his doctorate thesis *Euro-Pop: The Mechanical Bride Stripped Bare in Stockholm, Even*, Vancouver 2001. The term does not refer to Umberto Eco's theories on the open work of art; instead, Andersson is referring to art that changes, which is a broader field than mobile art. He interprets Ultvedt, Tinguely and Saint Phalle as central to development in Stockholm and argues that Moderna Museet played a key role in the early 1960s in establishing pop art.
- 17 Pontus Hultén, "Kort framställning av rörelsekonstens historia under 1900-talet", *Rörelse i konsten* (exh. cat.), ed. Pontus Hultén, Moderna Museet, Stockholm 1961, unpaginated.
- 18 Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field", *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, Cambridge/London 1986, pp. 276–290. The fact that Krauss describes modernist sculpture as "nomadic" and stresses the new approach to the plinth and the movement into the surrounding environment can probably help to explain the development of moving sculpture.
- 19 Cf. Monika Wagner, *Das Material der Kunst. Eine andere Geschichte der Moderne*, Munich 2001, especially chapter 2, pp. 57–81. See also Cecilia Widenheim's article "A Goat's-Eye View – Monogram at the Moderna Museet", *Konsthistorisk tidskrift/Journal of Art History*, vol. 76, no. 1–2, 2007, pp. 40–47, which explicitly puts Rauschenberg's combines in relation to his interest in collective and interdisciplinary projects, see p. 41.
- 20 See Michael Kirby, "Happenings: An Introduction", *Happenings and Other Acts*, ed. Mariellen R. Sandford, London 1995, pp. 1–28.
- 21 The increased importance of the place found a temporal equivalent in land art and site-specific art, genres that emerged in the 1960s and 70s. Performance in relation to place and documentation is discussed by Nick Kaye in *Site-Specific Art. Performance, Place and Documentation*, London 2000, see p. 105ff on Allan Kaprow and his exploration of the space in the footsteps of John Cage and Jackson Pollock.
- 22 Cf. Paul Schimmel, "Leap into the Void: Performance and the Object", *Out of Actions. Between Performance and the Object, 1949–1979* (exh. cat.), ed. Paul Schimmel, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles 1998, pp. 17–119. Schimmel provides a detailed introduction to how happenings developed out of action painting and refers, among other things, to Kaprow's interpretation of Pollock, see p. 19f.
- 23 In view of the friendship between Hultén and Francis and the latter's close links with Japan, it is somewhat surprising that Hultén does not comment on this art-historic tendency.
- 24 In the case of Pollock, for instance, the critics were instrumental in emphasising the act of painting. In contemporary American criticism, including Harold Rosenberg and Clement Greenberg's publications, Pollock is portrayed as something new, typically American, to also highlight the American art scene as opposed to the Paris scene from which they wanted to liberate themselves. See, for example, Harold Rosenberg, "The American Action-Painters", "The Fall of Paris"; Clement Greenberg, "The Decline of Cubism", *Art in Theory 1900–1990. An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, eds. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, Oxford 1992, pp. 581–584, 541–545 and 569–572. Greenberg's article, which is actually about French cubism, mentions Pollock as "full of energy". See also Serge Guilbaut's basic discussion in *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art*, Chicago 1983.
- 25 See Schimmel, *Out of Actions* 1998, p. 29ff.
- 26 There is extensive literature on this, for instance RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance: Live Art 1909 to the Present*, London 1979. Incidentally, Goldberg's short introduction is noteworthy, since she writes from a performance perspective. RoseLee Goldberg, "Performance: A Hidden History or, The Avant Avant Garde", *Performance by Artists*, ed. A.A. Bronson and Peggy Gale, Toronto 1979, pp. 170–175.
- 27 See *Out of Actions* 1998, p. 21f; Michael Kirby och Richard Schechner, "An Interview with John Cage", *Happenings and Other Acts* 1995, pp. 51–71, see pp. 52ff; and Jorge Glusberg, *The Art of Performance*, New York, undated, p. 16.
- 28 John Cage appeared with David Tudor on 10 October, 1960, at Moderna Museet. They performed *Solo for Piano with Fontana Mix* and *Cartridge Music* (first performance). The concert was organised by Fylkingen. Cage had visited Stockholm before under the auspices of Fylkingen on 29 September 1958. See *Fylkingen. Ny musik och intermedialkonst*, ed. Teddy Hultberg, Stockholm 1994, p. 167f. Fylkingen's importance as a link to the latest trends in the USA cannot be overestimated.
- 29 See *Happenings. Fluxus, Pop Art, Nouveau Réalisme. Eine Dokumentation*, eds. Jürgen Becker and Wolf Vostell, Hamburg 1965. Bengt af Klintberg gives an idea of the Swedish movement against a European backdrop. Öyvind Fahlström is one of the most famous artists, along with Carl Fredrik Reuterswärd and Åke Hodel – all have connections with Moderna Museet. See also Schimmel, *Out of Actions* 1998, p. 71ff. Hubert Klocker, in the article "Gesture and the Object. Liberation as Aktion: A European Component of Performative Art", *Out of Actions* 1998, pp. 159–195, also highlights the Vienna Actionists, a vital movement where the body was

- focused in an often gory way. The persistent interest in actions is also apparent in the fascination for that part of Beuys' oeuvre when he exhibited at Moderna Museet in 1971: *Joseph Beuys. Aktionen/Aktionen* (exh. cat.), ed. Karin Bergqvist Lindegren, Moderna Museet, Stockholm 1971. The catalogue contains reproductions of photographs from well-known happenings objects and drawings.
- 30 Klintberg 2006, p. 94. He stresses Öyvind Fahlström as the most important introducer of the new ideas.
- 31 Hultén, "Kort framställning av rörelsekonstens historia under 1900-talet", *Rörelse i konsten* 1961, unpaginated. Hultén's extensive book, *Jean Tinguely. Méta*, Stockholm 1972, reveals his steady interest in and commitment to this artist, culminating in his appointment as director of Museum Tinguely in Basel, Switzerland in 1995.
- 32 Hultén, *Rörelse i konsten* 1961, unpaginated. This statement is probably true, considering that it is referred to by a plethora of writers, including Rosalind Krauss, Henry M. Sayre, Oskar Bätschmann and Leif Nylén.
- 33 Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood", *Minimal Art. A Critical Anthology*, ed. Gregory Battcock, Berkeley 1995, pp. 116–147.
- 34 A series of jazz concerts was held in 1960, for instance. *Art in Our Time. A Chronicle of the Museum of Modern Art*, eds. Harriet S. Bee and Michelle Elligott, New York 2004, p. 121 and 122.
- 35 See the detailed chronology compiled by Kim Cooper, *Out of Actions* 1998, p. 330ff. See also Becker/Vostell 1965, "Zeittafel", p. 34ff.
- 36 Oskar Bätschmann, *Ausstellungskünstler. Kult und Karriere im modernen Kunstsystem*, Cologne 1997, p. 223.
- 37 Several important dance performances were held at Moderna Museet, however. It is certainly possible that the interdisciplinary element in Margaretha Åsberg's choreographies, including *Life Boat* (8–13 June, 1976) and *Pyramiderna* (7–23 September, 1979), to music by Steve Reich and others and sets by artists such as Bård Breivik, Jan Håfström and Håkan Rehnberg, will generate future legends.
- 38 The notes have been published: Claes Oldenburg, *Raw Notes. Documents and Scripts of the Performances: Stars, Moveyhouse, Massage, The Type-writer, with Annotations by the Author*, Halifax 1973, pp. 89–153.
- 39 *Ibid.*, p. 95, 97.
- 40 The quotes in the following paragraph are all from the same longer account of what will happen in Oldenburg's *Raw Notes* 1973, pp. 119–130. On p. 123 it is definitely a cardboard of Picasso's sculpture *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* that is standing in the garden.
- 41 Olle Granath, "Hur jag lärde mig älska tuben: Reflexioner kring ett stockholmsbesök", *Konstrevy*, no. 5–6, 1966, pp. 221–224.
- 42 Granath writes: "It was a remarkable experience when Oldenburg, during preparations, encountered resistance from any of the participants and softly countered it by changing the angle and adjusting the script. It was like seeing one's own self being plastically expressed." *Ibid.*, p. 223. In a conversation with Granath, he describes Oldenburg as highly "sensitive to his surroundings", and added that there was give and take in the creation of his happenings, which also required that he was acquainted with the people. Interview with Olle Granath, 18 Dec. 2007.
- 43 The signature Fru Johansson, "Fru Johansson: Stillsam happening", *Dagens Nyheter* 4 Oct. 1966.
- 44 Göran Fant, "Ett kärnfullt ingenting", *Svenska Dagbladet* 5 Oct. 1966.
- 45 An unsigned article, "Här ligger vi tillsammans i en hög och har det mysigt", in the magazine *Vi*, no. 42, October 1966, describes how, when the music finally started playing, "Carlo Derkert grabbed a broad and slid out onto the dancefloor. He danced as if on clouds. It was very beautiful."
- 46 This performance was only enacted on one other occasion, at Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam in 1986.
- 47 The printed programme reveals this, and the subtitle for *Fragilissimo* reads: "A dramaturgical realisation; a woman seen by three men from different angles". Programme in MMA.
- 48 Interview with Monica Nieckels, 15 Jan. 2008.
- 49 Ulay and Abramović sit opposite one another at a table in the extensive performance *Nightsea Crossing*, 1981–87. They did not speak, but sat perfectly still. *Ulay/Abramović. Performances 1976–1988* (exh. cat.), ed. Jaap Guldmond, Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven 1997, p. 81ff.
- 50 It is significant that the book Marina Abramović. *Artist Body. Performances 1969–1998*, ed. Emanuela Belloni, Milano 1998, does not include any photographs from *Fragilissimo*, see p. 250f. On p. 250 it says: "For this performance there is no visual record." This is actually not true, since there are photographs in the Moderna Museet archives, but the statement can add to the mythology. The text mentions that a total of 405 people saw the performance in Stockholm and Amsterdam.
- 51 Abramović says this in a conversation with Paul Kokke, "An Interview with Ulay and Marina Abramović", *Ulay/Abramović* 1997, p. 117. See also Chris- sie Iles, "The Shadow and the Reflection: The Relation Works of Marina Abramović and Ulay", *Ulay/Abramović* 1997, p. 10.
- 52 Iles, *Ulay/Abramović* 1997, p. 12.
- 53 With Ulay and Abramović the case is slightly different in their performance *Imponderabilia* (1977 in Bologna). Here visitors had to squeeze through a passage where they were standing naked on either side. The photographs document how different visitors negotiate this, but that is an exception. See also Nylén 1998, p. 77f, who writes briefly about the audience in the 1960s.
- 54 Examples from more recent years are Vanessa Beecroft (*Wounds*, 1998) and Azat Sargsyan (*After the Wall*, 1999).
- 55 The problem has been acknowledged in research on performances and happenings and there is ample literature on the subject. Good introductions are found in Amelia Jones, "'Presence' in absentia. Experiencing Performance as Documentation", *Art Journal*, Winter 1997–98, pp. 11–18, and Rebecca Schneider, "Archives. Performance Remains", *Performance Research*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2001, pp. 100–108. Jones especially mentions that it is like writing about a performance one has never seen in reality, and Schneider thematises the relationship between the role of the archive and the vanishing performance.
- 56 The purpose is to differentiate between documentation that is approved by the artist and other documentation that may have been added by the media or audience. Other photos and video films in the collection could also be classified as authorised documents. The authorised documents also include the right to recreate performances and instructions for doing this.
- 57 Compare with RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance. Live Art since the 60s*, London 2004, p. 179ff. In this chapter she highlights the impact of video on artists such as Vito Acconci, Bruce Nauman and Nam June Paik.
- 58 Henry M. Sayre, *The Object of Performance. The American Avant-Garde since 1970*, Chicago 1989, p. 3f. Sayre localises the awareness of the photograph's documentary significance in connection with happenings in Tinguely's *Homage to New York*.
- 59 The Moderna Museet collection includes, for instance, Kjartan Slettemark's poodle costume *Pudel* from 1975. He used it the first time in a performance in 1975 at Malmö konsthall.
- 60 Laurie Anderson, "This is the Time and this is the Record of the Time", foreword to Goldberg 2004, p. 6f. Anderson also writes: "Once performed, it tends to become myth and a few photos and tapes."
- 61 Tracey Warr, "Image as Icon: Recognising the Enigma", *Art, Lies and Videotape: Exposing Performance* (exh. cat.), ed. Adrian George, Tate Gallery, London 2003, pp. 30–37, see p. 36.
- 62 It is telling that this photograph, which has been wrongly attributed to Hans Malmberg, is used to illustrate a review of the exhibition *Evidence of Movement* at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles in summer 2007. Shana Nys Dambrot, "Evidence of Movement", *Art Review*, October 2007, p. 163.
- 63 Previews, another kind of event, also give an indication of how the times have changed. In a TV report on the *New York Collection*, broadcast on Swedish Television on 2 April 1974, visitors and artists mix around the works, smoking, drinking whisky and eating carelessly. Today, this is no longer possible. Drinks are served but have to be consumed outside the actual exhibition, and hosts and guards keep an eye on the visitors.
- 64 Folke Hähnel, for instance, writes: "The experiment of using Moderna Museet as a concert hall was successful." See Hähnel, "Fylkingen (1933–1966)", *Fylkingen* 1994, p. 17.
- 65 The fact that the cow had a strong impact on Moderna Museet's image even then is demonstrated in an article about Oldenburg's controversial happening *Massage*, which starts with the words: "There were no cows at Moderna Museet yesterday." Unsigned article, "Säng-konst!", *Expressen* 4 Oct. 1966. Cows are not entirely excluded from the museum context. In connection with Jonathan Meese's exhibition *Mama Johnny* in 2006 at Deichtorhallen, Hamburg, there was a performance, "Fräulein Overkill's Tanzboden, rattenscharf, klarmachen (das hermetische Duell des Nugget-Jim de Gong und Dr. Billy the Kidaddy am Eagle-Tail von Sherif 'Marshall-Dirn' (nah' dem Spinnenteaforest 'Mammutus 1912))", in which a live cow was led around the exhibition space.
- 66 For instance, the cinema was used for a series of film nights in conjunction with Gunvor Nelson's exhibition in October–November 2007. Another example is Fia-Stina Sandlund's performance *Om du är rebell, så är jag reko* (If You're a Rebel, I'm Decent), which took place in the Auditorium on 8 October, 2006.
- 67 Hans Richter, "Filmen som konstform", *Apropå Eggeling* 1958, pp. 8–14.
- 68 Pontus Hultén, "Inledning", *Apropå Eggeling* 1958, p. 7.
- 69 "Hultén's cinematic involvement also meant that Moderna Museet's prehistory and early years of activity gave more scope to film than to any

- other art form,” according to Lars Gustaf Andersson, John Sundholm and Astrid Söderbergh Widding in “I skuggan av spelfilmen: svensk experimentell film”, *Konst som rörlig bild* 2006, p. 52.
- 70 Regarding the influence of American experimental film on Swedish art film, and the media attention given to the screenings at Moderna Museet, see also Andersson, Sundholm and Söderbergh Widding, *Konst som rörlig bild* 2006, p. 66ff.
- 71 Sten Berglind, “Sexfilm stoppades!”, *Expressen* 25 March 1964. Berglind accounts for the events prior to the screening. A footnote gives the following information: “Moderna Museet has experience of [showing] daring films. In autumn 1956, the censorship board prohibited the museum from showing Franju’s ‘Blood of Beasts’.”
- 72 Unsigned article, “Är filmklubben en sluten grupp? Museiman ingrep mot visning”, *Svenska Dagbladet* 26 March 1964.
- 73 Erik Skoglund, director of the censorship board, was in the audience, but *Expressen*’s film critic Lasse Bergström noted that he left the screening fairly soon: “Among the film studio members this evening was the director of censorship himself, Mr Erik Skoglund, always ready to assist the decline of culture. He left the showing of ‘Sleep’ after some 15 minutes, probably with peace of mind.” Lasse Bergström, “Makterna växer i vårt sedliga land”, *Expressen* 25 March 1964.
- 74 John G. Hanhardt, “The American Independent Cinema 1958–1964”, *Blam! The Explosion of Pop, Minimalism, and Performance* 1958–1964 (exh. cat.), ed. Barbara Haskell, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York 1984, pp. 130–132. A further comment on Swedish censorship was written by Lasse Bergström in *Expressen* 25 March 1964. He points out that it is hard to get to see films in Sweden and that it is indefensible that a show can be stopped by a person who has not even seen the film. He ends his article by stating that “Night is falling”.
- 75 Walter de Maria, *New York Collection for Stockholm* (exh. cat.), ed. Björn Springfeldt, Moderna Museet, Stockholm 1973, unpaginated.
- 76 Andersson, Sundholm and Söderbergh Widding also mention *The Pleasure Dome* as being significant, as “one of the largest shows of American experimental film in Europe”, in *Konst som rörlig bild* 2006, p. 84.
- 77 Preliminary budget for the Film Series. 7 Nov. 1979. F3:9, MMA.
- 78 Regarding Jonas Mekas, see Magnus af Petersens, “Medan livet passerar genom kameran”, *Jonas Mekas. Dagboksfilmen* (exh. cat.), eds. Magnus af Petersens et al., Moderna Museet, Stockholm 2005, pp. 5–10.
- 79 P. Adams Sitney, “Den amerikanska avant-garde-filmens insatser 1960–1970”, *The Pleasure Dome. Amerikansk experimentell film 1939–1979* (exh. cat.), ed. Claes Söderquist, Moderna Museet, Stockholm 1980, pp. 5–18.
- 80 Levitt was never shown, only Menken and Rainer. Jonas Mekas in a letter to Claes Söderquist, 12 Oct. 1979. F3:10, MMA.
- 81 Jonas Mekas writes that he and P. Adams Sitney put great effort into the composition of the programmes. Letter to Claes Söderquist, 1 Nov. 1979. F3:10, MMA.
- 82 The series of “mini retrospectives” was initiated by the then curator Maria Lind, who also presented the artists featured once every month. The artists included Eija-Liisa Ahtila, Ann-Sofi Siden, Pippilotti Rist and Douglas Gordon.
- 83 Between 27 November and 5 December, 1993, films by Roddy Bogawa, Cheryl Donegan, Greta Snider, Sadie Benning and Tom Kalin were shown under the heading *Rött snitt* (*Red Cut*). The events were three hours long with an intermission and began at 1 pm.
- 84 Two of the works shown, several more had been proposed by Maria Lind and Cecilia Widenheim, were purchased for the collection: Saskia Holmkvist’s *System* and Katarina Löfström’s *Hang Ten Sunset*.
- 85 Rebecca Gordon Nesbitt, Maria Lind and Cecilia Widenheim, “Inledning”, *Blick: New Nordic Film & Video* 2001 (exh. cat.), Helsinki 2001, p. 1.
- 86 David Elliott, “Lön för plågan (No Pain No Gain)”, *Wounds. Between Democracy and Redemption in Contemporary Art* (exh. cat.), eds. David Elliott and Pier Luigi Tazzi, Moderna Museet, Stockholm 1998, p. 12.
- 87 In connection with *Africa Remix*, for instance, the museum organised four Sunday matinées with feature films and documentaries by African film directors.
- 88 Öyvind Fahlström, “Efter happenings”, *Öyvind Fahlström* (exh. cat.), ed. Björn Springfeldt, Moderna Museet, Stockholm 1979, p. 36.
- 89 Nylén 1998, p. 137. Pi Lind, Staffan Olzon and Sören Brune’s (*Pistolteatern*) also performed at Moderna Museet and are renowned for their performances that transcended the boundary between art and technology. In May 1967, they performed *Levande porträtt* (Living Portraits, by Pi Lind) and the audiovisual composition *Ingång – Utgång* (Entrance – Exit, by Sören Brunes), and in the autumn the same year they performed a series of happenings that incorporated moving images. See Nylén 1998, p. 106, 135ff.
- 90 Michael Rush writes: “And soon, yet more portable, and eventually more affordable, the Sony Portapak video camera became available and a new chapter in media art began.” Rush, *New Media in Late 20th-Century Art*, London 1999, p. 33. Rush mentions Nam June Paik as one of the pioneers in New York in using the new film medium, see p. 81.
- 91 Olle Granath, “Med Andy Warhol 1968”, *Andy Warhol. Other Voices, Other Rooms* (exh. cat.), ed. Eva Meyer-Hermann, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam and Moderna Museet, Stockholm 2008, p. 11.
- 92 Ibid., p. 12f.
- 93 Ulf Linde has reviewed the exhibition and writes of the “heterogeneous materials” that nevertheless resemble his paintings. Linde, “Från Minos palats”, *Dagens Nyheter* 13 May 1967.
- 94 The work included the ten-minute film *Teseus* and the whole work was commissioned by the physicist and space researcher Hannes Alfvén. See *Konst som rörlig bild* 2006, p. 220.
- 95 Beate Sydhoff, “Myter, bilder, ljus och ljud”, *Svenska Dagbladet* 5 July 1967. She also writes that the work of art represented one more step towards a “more total experience of a work of art”.
- 96 Press release. F1A:66, MMA.
- 97 Ibid.
- 98 Letter from Åke Karlung. F1A:66, MMA.
- 99 This is obviously a broad field of research. For introductions and further reading, see, for instance, Michael Rush 1999; *Beyond Cinema: The Art of Projection. Films, Videos and Installations from 1963 to 2005* (exh. cat.), eds. Joachim Jäger, Gabriele Knapstein and Anette Hüsch, Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, Ostfildern-Ruit 2007; *Projections. A Major Survey of Projection-Based Works in Canada. 1964–2007* (exh. cat.), red. Barbara Fischer, University of Toronto Art Centre, Toronto 2007.
- 100 Programme. F1A:125, MMA. See also Bill Viola, *Reasons for Knocking at an Empty House. Writings* 1973–1994, London 1995, pp. 116–117.
- 101 The exhibition tour started in Düsseldorf and opened in April 1993 at Moderna Museet. It went on to Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts Lausanne Saint-Gervais, Geneva, and ended at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London.
- 102 Björn Springfeldt, “Preface”, *Bill Viola. Unseen Images* (exh. cat.), ed. Marie Luise Syring, Kunsthalle, Düsseldorf 1992, p. 7.
- 103 Monica Niekels also emphasises the importance of the space to Viola, and writes: “The walls of the room have been moved; a new space has been created.” Niekels, “Preface”, *Bill Viola* 1992, p. 7.
- 104 Compare Rush 1999, p. 116.
- 105 Niekels relates that Viola’s tour was sponsored by Polaroid and that this made it possible for the museum to show his work. She also recalls that “Viola arrived with a bag containing tapes, which he left behind.” She had visited him in a shack in Los Angeles before his major breakthrough. Interview with Monica Niekels, 15 Jan. 2008.
- 106 See Gary Hill. *Tall Ships. Clover... och tio videoband* (exh. cat.), eds. Ulla Arnell and Tom Sandqvist, Riksställningar, Stockholm 1995. Moderna Museet had shown video films by Gary Hill from 1973–89 already in November–December 1990.
- 107 The exhibition was also shown at Museet for samtidskunst, Oslo, Helsinki Konsthall, Helsinki, Bildmuseet, Umeå, Jönköpings läns museum, Jönköping, and Göteborg konstmuseum, Gothenburg.
- 108 See Gary Hill 1995, p. 29 (plan) and p. 48, for a detailed description of the Riksställningar tour version.
- 109 Ten works were acquired by Moderna Museet: *URA ARU (The Blackside Exists)* (1985–86), *Processual Video* (1980), *Around & About* (1980), *Soundings* (1979), *Bathing* (1977), *Sums and Differences* (1978), *Mouth Piece* (1978), *Why Do Things Get In a Muddle? (Come on Petunia)* (1984), *Primarily Speaking* (1981–83) and *Incidence of Catastrophe* (1987–88). A total of 26 works by Gary Hill are now in the Moderna Museet collection, but neither *Tall Ships* (1992) nor *Clover* (1994) is included.
- 110 Magnus af Petersens was present as a listener to the conversation between Gary Hill and Tom Sandqvist.
- 111 Martha Rosler, “Video: Shedding the Utopian Moment” (1985), *Illuminating Video. An Essential Guide to Video Art*, eds. Doug Hall and Sally Jo Fifer, New York 1990, pp. 31–51.
- 112 See Teresa Wennberg’s biography in *Konst som rörlig bild* 2006, p. 209.
- 113 Lindberg documented his car journey from Gothenburg to Moderna Museet in the work *Fredag den trettonde* (Friday the Thirteenth), the day the new museum was inaugurated, and the video was shown from 14 February 1998, at the museum. Starling had a small model airplane made, which he then used to film the woodland cemetery Skogskyrkogården from the air. A film resulted from this workshop-like project. Parreno, on his part, gave

the museum his “imaginary commercial, *A Thing’s Dream*”. The film was shown for two months in regular Swedish cinemas, among the commercials. Maria Lind emphasises in her introduction that the film was “made specially for the Moderna Museet Project and its specific context – cinema commercials”. Maria Lind, “Introduktion”, *Philippe Parreno. Moderna Museet Projekt* (exh. cat.), ed. Maria Lind, Moderna Museet, Stockholm 2002, p. 4.

- 114 Chalayan’s work is in the Moderna Museet collection in the form of a DVD.
- 115 These films have all been registered with MoMFi (Moderna Museet Film) numbers. The first two works registered with numbers are recorded as having been added to the collection the year after, in 1959. These are Edwin S. Porter’s *The Great Train Robbery* (1903), and *The Eagle’s Nest* (1907) by Henry B. Walthall. This shows that there is some discrepancy in the early days of collecting, probably related to the status of film in the art context at the time.
- 116 The project was initiated by the curator Monica Niekels and was assisted by trainees and temporary staff who contacted originators and galleries.
- 117 It is typical that the handwritten list that was made by the AV technician in charge was known for many years as “Kjelle’s list” – after the technician, Kjell Thunborg.



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