Title

Preposterous Histories: maternal desire, loss and control in Carolee Schneemann's Interior Scroll (1975) and Tracey Emin's I've Got It All (2000)

Clare Johnson

Abstract

This article explores maternal desire, loss and control by reading Carolee Schneemann's performance Interior Scroll (1975) through Tracey Emin's photographic print I've Got It All (2000). More specifically, I consider Schneemann's work on the energy of female sexuality and maternal desire through Tracey Emin's recurrent visualizations of sexuality and maternal loss. The artists' refusal to disengage with the commodified (dis)pleasures of femininity leads me to consider the differently contextualized handling of these issues in each artwork. I explore the mediation of the body of each artist by positioning Emin's work as a 'source' for my reading of Schneemann's performance. Invoking the notion of "preposterous history" (Mieke Bal 1999), I argue that the concepts of the "live" and the "mediated" are differently intensified by operating outside of the constraints of chronology. Hence the inter-generational dialogue between these particular female artists, whose work has been produced at different historical moments, is itself generative of thoughts and ideas that are irreducible to the individual works.

Keywords

Carolee Schneemann; Tracey Emin; female sexuality; maternal loss; performativity; feminist art; generation

This article explores the practice of reading an historically precedent artwork, Carolee Schneemann's Interior Scroll, 1975 (Figure One) through the provocations of one produced twenty-five years later, Tracey Emin's I've Got It All, 2000 (Figure Two). The use to which female artists have put their own bodies, as both subjects and objects of desire, continues to be a source of contention within feminist art discourse (Amelia Jones 2006, p. 149), but Schneemann's identity as a feminist artist continues to be cited by looking back at the work she made during the 1970s.[1] The published images of Interior Scroll serve as pivotal touchstones of second-wave feminist body art and, in the process of image reproduction, contribute to a canon of works that can be securely identified as properly, if not unproblematically, 'feminist'.

[insert figure 1, size: half-page, caption below]
Carolee Schneemann
Interior Scroll (1975)
Performance photograph. (Photo --- Anthony McCall)

Here I explore Schneemann's work on the energy of female sexuality and maternal desire through Tracey Emin's recurrent visualizations of sexuality and maternal loss. I ask how Emin performs her position as a woman artist, not only in relation to contemporary culture, but also in terms of her performative relation to a history of feminist art practice. I invoke Judith Butler's genealogical notion of performance as the bringing into being of ideas, rather than the search for origins (Butler 1990). Read through Butler's challenge to identity as substance, the bodies of both artists can be understood as contingent and constituted in the temporality of "becoming" rather than "being". With this in mind I consider the production of

Schneemann's body through present day understandings of sexuality, femininity and feminism.

The desire of some women artists to represent active female sexuality continues to present a challenge to established understandings of the role of women in the artworld. In particular, Schneemann's dual identity as model and artist contests the idea of women as muse or model for male artists. This raises theoretical questions about what a specifically female form of sexuality might look or feel like (Luce Irigaray 1985a). Within this context it is striking that Emin's multiple evocations of maternal desire and loss are still met by some commentators with derision on the basis that her art is too personal, or consequently not even art at all (Melanie McGrath, online). The idea of maternal desire within the artworld remains as problematic now as it was when Schneemann performed Interior Scroll in 1975.

The artistic identities of some contemporary British artists such as Emin is shaped, as Rosemary Betterton argues, "in terms of a shared consumption of mass culture" (Betterton 2002, p. 24) and hence dismissed as unable to question the visual structures to which it refers, whereas Schneemann belongs in feminist art historical memory to an anti-capitalist critique of commodified pleasures. However, Schneemann's relation to this was always ambiguous, particularly in early works developed prior to, or in the nascent stages of, second-wave feminist art. Films such as Fuses (1967) and More Than Meat Joy (1964) were heavily criticized by women for whom Schneemann's active sexualized artistic identity was too close to the visualization of women as sexual commodities, which feminism targeted in its critique of representational codes. Laura Cottingham (2000, p. 128) has described the hostility with which these works were received, citing a screening of Schneemann's Meat Joy at a women's film festival in Chicago in the early 1970s as a prime

example. On this occasion the audience displayed outrage at what they read as a conventional porn film, which suggests that there was no context at this point for active female sexuality to be understood by an audience of fellow artists as in any way resistant to hegemonic femininity.

My interest in the cross-generational production of feminisms contrasts with readings of Emin's practice as antithetical to the feminist politics associated with Schneemann (John Roberts 1996). This differentiation has been perpetuated by Emin herself, but in more recent works she has directly referenced feminist art history through her invocation of the work of Frida Kahlo, for example in Tracey x Tracey (2005), which calls to Kahlo's double self-portrait The Two Fridas (1939). Despite the different contexts of production, I've Got It All shares with Schneemann's work a refusal to disengage with commodified (dis)pleasures in what I will read respectively as Emin's ambiguous display of conspicuous consumption and Schneemann's mediation of the female body. The matrix of artist, desiring woman and maternal figure that Emin both constructs and calls into question in I've Got It All is generationally connected to Schneemann's Interior Scroll, but the historical linearity of this logic is here considered as a starting point for a temporally different model of analysis. My model resists what Michel Foucault has called "a history whose function is to compose the finally reduced diversity of time into a totality fully closed upon itself… a history whose perspective on all that precedes it implies the end of time, a completed development" (Foucault 2000, p. 379). Recognising the limits of matrilineage, in particular the perpetuation of a model that has historically obscured the interests of women artists, my approach is indebted to the arguments of Pollock (1996), de Zegher (1996) and Meskimmon (2007), which, while diverse in aims and scope, share an understanding of generations and geographies as freed from the

restrictions of linear chronology. Also of note is Lisa Tickner's (2006) use of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the rhizome, in which non-hierarchical alliance is presented as an alternative to an arboreal model premised on lines of descent (trees and roots).

The complexity of tenses that enables cross-generational dialogue between artists and artworks is, I argue, art historically productive. My mode of analysis moves away from a developmental trajectory, in which Schneeman can only be understood as 'feminist mother' and Emin as 'post-feminist daughter', and moves towards a situation in which the temporal complexion of the concepts of mother and daughter, as well as the limitations they impose such as the preclusion of positions other than those defined through a maternal relation, can be unfixed. What excites me about looking at Schneemann's performance through Emin's ink-jet print is precisely the possibility of producing ideas that derive in some sense from the inter-generational relationship between the two artworks, but cannot be reduced to either. It is in this spirit that I want to explore the possibilities that emerge through analysis of artworks that are each evocative of different understandings of both the maternal and the mediated in women's art practice. Consequently, new questions arise about what exactly this mode of analysis enables us to see. In what follows I explore how Schneemann's work is activated, or "re-born", through Emin's. What can this tell us about historically different, although not necessarily opposing, understandings of the relationship between feminist politics, visuality and our own mediated encounter with the body? This leads me to consider how the maternal can be understood, both within the visual and experiential fabric of each artwork, and within a broader discussion of genealogical approaches to art history. To read earlier works through contemporary ones is to bring an historically precedent artwork to life in a different context --- not

as a touchstone of accepted ideas to be looked back upon, but as the lifeblood of new configurations of mother-artist-desiring woman, to be produced in the present.

Maternal desire, loss and control

Discussions about Emin's work often revolve around her engagement with commodity culture. This is dismissed by some critics as signalling a depthlessness that is taken to be symptomatic of the broader young British artists scene (Julian Stallabrass 1999). However, I want to think about the details of this claim with specific reference to I've Got It All. Here I concur with Peter Osborne when he questions Stallabrass's argument that Emin's art is simply an intellectually desolate amalgamation of commodified cultural forms:

> Is Emin's art really no more than a symptom of a commodified fusion of cultural forms… Or does it address this condition within which it is located, artistically, and, in the process, tell us something about it, and with that, something about the conditions of contemporaneity in art? (Osborne 2002, p. 41)

Emin's piece addresses the tension between woman-as-commodity and woman as maternal figure in ways that warrant close attention to the details of the work. I've Got It All is a an ink-jet colour photographic print of Emin sitting on a red floor, legs apart, clasping bank notes at her crotch with one hand and holding the money over her stomach with the other, as if feeling the kick of a baby. Coins spill out over the floor emphasising the severity of the single point perspective that leads to Emin's crotch, which is positioned at the centre point of the print and is the object of

Emin's downcast look. The artist wears a top that is recognizable as a Vivienne Westwood garment. Her legs are bare and the image is cropped before the ankles so that Emin's feet are outside the parameters of the image. In the background we can identify a Ryman's carrier bag, which seems incongruous with the cultural capital of the signature Westwood bustier top. The image is contradictory inasmuch as the cultural kudos afforded by the Westwood garment and the signs of commercial success cannot be reconciled with the pose, which evokes a sexuality more akin to Emin's depiction of adolescent sexual encounters and abuse in her feature length film Top Spot (2004). In this film Emin cast six girls who narrate various facets of their teenage experience such as rape, promiscuity and the desire to escape. As Christine Fanthome explores in her reading of Top Spot the girls represent aspects of Emin's adolescent life, but also raise questions about the extent to which they own the confessions they make on screen (Christine Fanthome 2006). Indeed, when I've Got It All is viewed through this later work a clear dialogue emerges about sexuality, femininity and respectability. Top Spot appears, within my own viewing history, as a precedent for I've Got It All, which, in turn, cannot be encountered outside of the issues of sexual identity and vulnerability with which the film engages. Emin attends to herself as if left in a dark alley in the backstreets of Margate as I imagine it from other works such as Why I Never Became a Dancer (1995). Her body is divided at the waist between the boned control of Westwood's structured garment and the loss of control depicted in the overflowing excess of bank notes and coins. This composition is further marked by the line dividing the red floor from the white wall. The character of the image signals the precariousness of converting economic capital into cultural or symbolic capital (Pierre Bourdieu 1984) because her success as an artist does not guarantee the respect of cultural critics who continue to cast aspersions on Emin's

creative abilities. As if in response to the insecurity this kind of commentary can provoke Emin's conspicuous consumption appears out of control, spilling out of her body as if she is bleeding money.

[insert figure 2, size: half-page, caption: below]
Tracey Emin
I've Got It All
2000
Ink-jet print framed
Print size: 48 x 36 in. (121.9 x 91.4 cm)
© the artist
Courtesy Jay Jopling/ White Cube (London)

I've Got It All captures Emin as if she is unprepared for the flash of the camera or caught in the glare of headlights. It alludes to paparazzi photos in which celebrities are caught unawares and in so doing reminds us of Emin's multiple performances as artist and celebrity. The lighting is focused sharply on Emin's lower abdomen and thighs, which has the effect of blurring the coins in the foreground and throwing the background into dim light, particularly the part of the room behind Emin in the top left-hand side of our view. While the poor light in this part of the scene virtually obscures it from vision, the bank notes at Emin's crotch are over-exposed and therefore appear not only as banknotes but as a mass of paper used as if to stop her bleeding. This connects I've Got It All to the recurrent themes of abortion and fertility explored in Emin's wider body of drawings, monoprints and video work. The argument I wish to propose about the materiality of the image is that the tension between the maternal and the commodified in this work cannot be thought outside of the photographic rhetoric of the piece. The lighting is aggressively and specifically connected to a particular kind of flash light photography in its use of under and over-

exposure. What I read as the coexistence of conspicuous consumption (both the financial means and objects of consumption) and maternal loss, understood as miscarriage as opposed to the choice not to have children (signified by the blood-red floor, which spills out around Emin), is produced in and through this form of mediation, rather than being described by it. The specific photographic vocabulary produces the effects of which it speaks (Foucault 1972). In this sense the maternal is an effect of photographic mediation, not a purely experiential phenomenon. It is formed in the flashlight directed at Emin's crotch, which draws our attention to the symbol of miscarriage that is further exacerbated by the blood-red floor. This resonates with historical precedents such as Kahlo's Henry Ford Hospital (1932), in which Kahlo paints herself lying on a hospital bed in the aftermath of a miscarriage. In I've Got It All Emin brings together the idea of her body as potentially reproductive, primarily through the spectre of failed procreativity, and the assertion of sexual availability that can be read through her open-legged pose.[2]

The concentration of light on Emin's flesh and, in particular, her crotch, is emblematic of the connection between light and patriarchy, which is crystallized in the objectifying photographic form. As a representation read through feminist responses to Lacanian psychoanalysis, Emin's role is to function as a mirror that secures male subjectivity. As "other of the same" (Hilary Robinson 2006, p. 66), she must affirm male coherence by virtue of her otherness and have no ontology of her own. This function is dependent upon the visibility of woman's "nothing to see" (Robinson 2006).

> If woman is 'seen' as 'castrated', as not having something… then her relation to origin and her representation of and to self will be seen as

> negative. How can she love the fact that she is like something that has nothing, that is nothing but the gap where something should be? (Robinson 2006, p. 58-59)

However, Emin fills this gap with the rewards of her success as an artist such that she cannot simply be regarded as not having something, or as deficient in the signifiers of material wealth. On the contrary, Emin does, as she herself exclaims in the title of the piece, "have it all". Read through the refusal to accept feminine lack, Emin's title, I've Got It All, is defiant rather than possessive. The material/financial and the maternal/sexual collide in her posture, which denies any sense of lack (even if it allows loss) and articulates her relation to the sexual division of labour within the activities of originating and generating --- as successful artist, if not as mother. Indeed Emin's history is one in which her creativity and procreativity have intersected. At stake is the recognition of Emin as an authorial subject in her own right rather than as "other of the same", which throws the construction of male subjectivity into turmoil.

Luce Irigaray has suggested that patriarchal understandings of light assume a flat mirror in which woman's reflection secures male subjectivity: "a faithful, polished mirror, empty of altering reflections" (Irigaray 1985a, p. 239). In place of the symmetry implied by the flat mirror, Irigaray posits the notion of concavity. Feminine desire curves the mirror so that the reflection functions differently and produces what Irigaray calls the "cultural reserve yet to come" (Irigaray 1985b, p. 138), the possibility of a space of representation for female sexuality. In I've Got It All the mirror is curved by the inconsistency between the expectation of Emin's multi-dimensional lack, as a half-Turkish Cypriot working class woman, and the authorial control with which she brings this lack into being as an image.

I've Got It All pivots on an axis of accumulation and loss. Is she, as Osborne suggests, "symbolically filling the vagina with money, a blatantly profane, onanistic act of consummation" (Osborne 2002, p. 45) or trying unsuccessfully to stem the flow of an outpouring, hopelessly trying to keep something inside. The latter possibility resonates with Emin's decision to have two abortions, which has been well documented by the artist in other works such as Homage to Edvard Munch and All My Dead Children (1998). When contextualised within ongoing debates about the economic disadvantages of motherhood, I've Got It All functions as a visual reminder of the (im)possibility of inhabiting the dual identities of artist and mother. It asks whether financial gain is still at the expense of maternal loss. Furthermore, by combining the flashlight's propensity to reveal with the illumination of maternal loss the work articulates a tension between mother and sexual/desiring woman, which situates the work within a trajectory of feminist art practice. There is, I suggest, a cultural anxiety over both Schneemann and Emin occupying a maternal position as a result of their respective refusals to distance themselves from sexual and visual pleasures, as if they cannot be both sexually desiring and maternal. This friction is not resolved in Emin's piece, but it is positioned in relation to the contemporary artworld's interest in entrepreneurial success.

I read Emin's pose as an attempt to prevent loss. Her stance is intriguing because the notion of "outpouring" is highly gendered. It is formed in both art historical and corporeal terms. The connection between pain and creativity, characteristic of Romantic myths of the masculinized artist, is cleverly bifurcated by Emin, who comments in this image on both artistic creativity and maternal procreativity. In both works under discussion the gendering of "procreation", as opposed to "creation", is developed in relation to the initial contexts of the works'

consumption. Robinson has drawn on Irigaray's work to discuss the gendering of this distinction in which "creation" is proscribed as a male activity and defined in its difference from "procreation", which is the only type of creation that women can practice without threatening the social order (Robinson cited in Deepwell 1995, p. 162). In differing ways the procreative is fused with the creative in both artworks and hence there is a confusion of gendering at the level of the works' production. The gendered attachments of the terms "creation" and "procreation", as well as the implied hierarchy, is called into question. While Schneemann draws her words from her body as if giving birth to an artwork, Emin makes her art out of the fear of lost procreativity.

The issues of control (bodily/artistic) and loss come together in the very ambiguity cited by Osborne. The "materiality" of Emin's body, which supposedly obscures it from rational thought, is coexistent with the materiality of commodity culture that has infused the artworld. However, the irony is in the extent of Emin's artistic control over the depiction of her bodily lack of control. This is a dynamic that is carefully constructed by the artist herself. Chris Townsend has explored the construction of the ideas of immediacy, intimacy and spontaneous disclosure in Emin's work, noting, in particular, the use of monoprint to create the illusion of raw and unmediated outpourings (Townsend 2002). The process necessary for producing a monoprint involves coating a surface such as glass with ink, placing a sheet of paper on top of it and then 'drawing' on this paper before peeling it back to reveal the image. The resulting one-off 'print' (the image cannot be serialized) is, therefore, an inversion of the marks inscribed on the paper and at one remove from the perceived immediacy of drawing. Townsend explains this process in order to explore Emin's use of lettering in monoprints, in particular her deliberate construction of the notion

of literary 'failure' that we read through apparent mistakes such as inverted lettering. While this can be read as a hurried, emotionally charged outpouring, in which the care needed to correct mistakes is deemed unimportant, Townsend reminds us that lettering on monoprints is rare because it requires the artist to write backwards on the paper and to do so quickly, before the ink dries. His point is not to unmask Emin as fraudulent, but to argue that she uses a technique that removes the immediacy of drawing with clear purpose in order to create a feeling of raw, uncontrolled disclosure. The sense of loss that pervades much of Emin's work is carefully constructed. In controlling the appearance of loss of control, Emin's working practices are not only inconsistent with the identification of her artistic sensibility as out of control, but are also testament to her awareness of the cultural and historical feminization of this idea.

The title of I've Got It All is, at face value, an exclamation of possession derived from a sense of individualised self-entitlement. However, Emin's title also comments on these values (what does "it" consist of?) by relating the accumulation of financial wealth and commercial success to contradictory ideas about consumer culture, female sexuality and its relation to the maternal. Osborne observes the connection between the claim of the title, which refers both to consumer culture and female sexuality, and the visual rhetoric of the image, arguing that, "'I've Got It All' is thus simultaneously an economic and a sexual claim, an identification of economic and sexual freedoms" (Osborne 2002, p. 50). The nature of these freedoms, however, remains ambiguous given the tawdry depiction of the space, both literal and cultural, in which they occur.

When read through Betterton's argument about the feminist art historical context of Emin's work (2002, p. 23--39), in particular the critique of accounts that

assume Emin's alliance with apolitical libertarian agendas, the irony of the title becomes strikingly apposite. The personal pronoun can be read as a post-feminist statement of individualistic entitlement, but this is in tension with the complexities of the image and the discursive territories from which the possessive statement is made. Despite being dismissed for her lack of critical distance from commercial culture, including the accumulation of cultural as well as financial capital, Emin's work is permeated by a sense of loss which manifests itself in a number of ways. Monoprints such as Terrebly Wrong (1997) refer to maternal loss, Emin's film Why I Never Became a Dancer (1995) is initially about loss of respectable femininity, and her memento mori assemblage Uncle Colin (1963--93) refers to familial loss. I've Got It All does evoke a feeling of excessive consumption, but equally it articulates the vulnerability of gains that are easily lost. Emin is not throwing money around, but trying to hold it in. I've Got It All speaks of the impossibility of keeping hold of it all; not only the desire to be a mother while also remaining financially independent, but a cultural anxiety over the desire to be at once a sexual woman and a mother. The piece reflects on its own conditions of existence, both in terms of art history and sexual politics.

Here the accumulation/loss dynamic is articulated within a reflexive relation to particular aspects of feminist art practice. Whereas Emin's piece is ambiguous in this regard (is she pushing the bank notes in or trying to prevent them from leaking out?), Schneemann's action in her Interior Scroll performance (1975) was clearly an extraction of a coiled piece of paper from her vagina. Emin's work is cognisant of the relationship between artistic/bodily control and creativity as a gendered concept, which was explored by Schneemann in Interior Scroll. Schneemann's performance includes a highly controlled unravelling as the artist uncoils a legitimated cultural

form as a kind of umbilical poem. In their different ways, both artists respond to the cultural anxiety over transgressed bodily boundaries using a high level of control, discipline and cultural competence, which is in sharp contrast to the notion of femininity as lack of control.

The description of Interior Scroll offered by Helena Reckitt and Peggy Phelan (2001) explains the sequence of events that took place. In the performance Schneemann appeared wearing a sheet and told the audience that she was going to read from her book, Cézanne, She Was a Great Painter. Unwrapping the sheet she then painted her body and face with mud to define its contours. Climbing on to a table she read while assuming a series of action poses familiar from life modelling. Having dropped the book Schneemann continued to read from a paper scroll that she gradually extracted from her vagina. Schneemann's controlled unravelling of the paper enacts movement from inside to outside, invisibility to visibility, as she performs the idea of women as makers of meaning, rather than bearers of meanings legitimated by men. Furthermore, the visibility of the poem is embodied. Knowledge is understood as an embodied phenomenon, both culturally and literally. What emerges from Schneemann's body is a poem about a structuralist film maker, which reads as a critique of disembodied forms of analysis.

Both Interior Scroll and I've Got It All explore an embodied relation to art practice, despite the different contexts within which this becomes meaningful. Schneemann's work can be contextualised within a feminist desire to use performance as a way of disrupting the aesthetic economy of the artworld (despite feminist criticisms of biological determinism) by making objectless art that cannot enter into a system of exchange. Interior Scroll positions Schneemann as both artist/poet and model/object, physically connecting these roles in the extraction of

critical thought from her body and refusing, in the process, the Cartesian mind/body split that has been used to secure women to the category of nature rather than culture. The natural (birth, menstruation) and the cultural (poetry and the authorial voice) are indistinguishable from one another within the experience of the performance.

Emin's piece reflects on its historical conditions of existence in different ways. The work comments on the commercialisation of the artworld, including what Roberts has called its "loss of guilt in front of popular culture" (Roberts 1996, p. 30), while simultaneously reflecting on the position of women who supposedly "have it all". Furthermore, the work questions the relationship between the maternal body, artistic identity and woman as commodity form, provoking questions about the 'value' of Emin's 'outpourings', understood as both emotional and physical. Her procreative value is represented as synonymous with her commercial value, described in the image using banknotes and coins. In this sense, Emin connects her own situation to feminist debates about the market economy in which both art and women are treated as commodities to be exchanged. Emin stages the aesthetic economy of the artworld (her body as a commodity and repository) and consequently retains a reflective relation to the circumstances of its production.

Contextual travels

In addition to arguing for the traces of feminist work in Emin's practice, which I think are palpable and important, the reality of my own experience of Interior Scroll is that, along with other feminist works of the 1970s, I read it through an entangled nexus of contemporary practice and discursive constructions of the 'feminist seventies'. Within the history of my own viewing, it is as if some aspects of contemporary women's art practice appear to be 'quoted' in the photographs of

Schneemann's performance. Clearly this kind of reverse quotation is factually impossible (how can Schneemann have been quoting Emin?), but it is not experientially impossible in terms of how I read and make sense of the artworks and their relevance to contemporary culture. This is more than simply seeing one image through another because it suggests a meeting point of discursive terrains. To deliberately embrace the lack of chronology this involves may be to enable a multi-directional dialogue that engages the earlier work in a dynamic that is only possible once the notions of cause and effect have been unseated. As Bal (1999) has argued in relation to contemporary artworks through which Caravaggio can be read, the quotation of past practices is not only important for a new artwork, but also for the work quoted from, because the new work itself becomes a source through which the chronologically precedent work can be read:

> This reversal, which puts what came chronologically first ('pre') as an aftereffect behind ('post') its later recycling, is what I would like to call a preposterous history. (Bal 1999, p. 7, original emphasis)

The "preposterous history" of reversing 'pre' and 'post' can lead to the dissolution of matrilineal logic. In common with Foucault's concept of genealogy, it challenges the tendency to smooth the edges of history in the service of a coherent continuum. For Foucault, genealogy involves the discovery that "truth or being lies not at the root of what we know and what we are but the exteriority of accidents" (Foucault 2000, p. 374). It has to do with the dissipation of events outside of any search for origins.

There are elements of I've Got It All, such as the conflict between the seductive visual pleasures of the surface (the smoothness of the ink jet print) and the

ambiguous, even potentially disturbing, nature of the scene, or the tension between the implication of tawdry sexual encounters and the evidence of financial and artistic success, that raise questions of Interior Scroll that are predominantly of the present. How has Schneemann's work interacted with the economy of repetition and her accumulation of cultural capital? How has this impacted upon her politics of representation? How adept is Schneemann at simultaneously inhabiting a range of environments that span what might once have been considered incompatible spaces in terms of the political consciousness of her work, for example her web presence alongside her presence in memory, or in art anthologies? Emin's occupation of multiple identities (for example, woman artist, fashion icon and celebrity) also provokes a debate about Schneemann's dual identity as both radical artist and established figure within feminist art. Perhaps most provocatively, what would it mean to read Schneemann's display of overt female sexuality through current understandings of post-feminism with which Emin has, I suggest problematically, been identified?

This multi-directional production of meaning is more than a quotation of motifs and closer to what Bal terms "interdiscursive": "the precise quotation of utterances [turns] into the borrowing of discursive habits" (Bal 1999, p. 10). This mode of analysis highlights the way in which Schneemann's work appears to find its natural context in times other than those in which it was produced. No doubt this feeling of temporal mis-match contributed to the experience of Interior Scroll as a transgressive work in the mid-1970s, but the depiction of active feminine (and sometimes maternal) desire in work that is as widely disseminated and discussed as Emin's, offers a more sympathetic context for Schneemann's ideas despite Emin's reluctance to acknowledge her relationship to feminist predecessors. The notion of

"preposterous history" highlights not only the empathetic intricacies of Emin's relationship with her feminist predecessors (including her way of doing feminism differently), but the temporal fluidity of Schneemann's work, which, as Barry Schwabsky puts it, "reaches backward and forward through time" (Schwabsky 1997, p. 80). Schwabsky notes the geographical as well as temporal dislocation of Schneemann's work, arguing that her "sensibility seems much closer to that of the West Coast scene of the fifties and sixties… than to hard-nosed, formally terse New York-style empiricism" adding that her work is "somehow out of place as well as time" (Schwabsky 1997, p. 81). "Preposterous history" travels through and in between re-materializations such as films and photographs, not in chronological order, but in the less structured experience of memories.

Clearly Emin's I've Got It All is not intended as a revisiting of Schneemann's Interior Scroll, but it does engage with the political and artistic terrain in which Schneemann's piece was performed. Emin may not identify as a 'feminist artist', but she nevertheless uses a language made available to her by the work of feminist artists, theorists and activists to explore sexuality and the female body in a way that can be read as an inter-discursive conversation, even if each discursive terrain remains elusive to the other and can never be grasped with any certainty. As such, I suggest that I've Got It All stands in a performative relation to both the historically precedent work and its traces, in the sense that the conversation between the two works is productive of new possibilities. As a text it also becomes a historical other to the earlier work, which has the analytical advantage of disallowing the present to become taken for granted as the natural outcome of previous historical moments. The present moment is understood as historical in itself and the act of interpretation self-reflexive.

The materialization of performance

In the last section I want to explore how the dynamic between femininity and feminism in Interior Scroll can be produced through Emin's contextually different encounter with the themes of mother-artist-desiring woman as mediatized entities.[3] What is the relation of the performance to the performative in Schneemann's work, when read through Emin's highly specific appropriation of the medium of photography? What can a "preposterous history" of these two artworks offer?

If the detail of Schneemann's performance of Interior Scroll is emphasized, rather than only the fact of its original existence as a performance, the artist's adoption of life model poses warrants careful consideration. Schneemann combined the mediated with the live scenario. She was explicitly engaged with woman-as-image and the effects of the screen as a mediating device. Schneemann's fascination with the sensate experience of an embodied subject is well documented (Robert Enright 1998), but with the exception of Jones' (2006) reading of Schneemann's films Plumb Line (1968-71) and Fuses (1967) less emphasis has been placed on her competence in critically mimicking femininity-as-image. This is likely a result of her own appearance, which was too close to white normative femininity to be comfortable for a feminist reading, hence other aspects of her work emerged as meaningful within a feminist context. What has disappeared from view in the photographs of Interior Scroll is the fading in and out of movement or what I imagine to be the poignancy with which Schneemann's performance of mediation (life model poses) must have melted into live action. The tension that Interior Scroll sets up between the mediated and the live is labyrinthine. These elements are not simply combined, but start to question each other. The penetrating camera is positioned by Schneemann's anticipation of it, even if its 'real' purpose is to document a

performance that takes this penetration as its object of critique. It is almost as if Schneemann poses for two different types of camera, one complicit with the visual apparatuses she was challenging, the other recording the live act of her artistic agency in doing so. There is nothing in the descriptions or reproductions of Schneemann's performance of Interior Scroll to suggest that live acts are independent of mediated images.

Philip Auslander has argued that performance studies persists in distinguishing the live/real from the recorded/artificial despite the increasing cultural appetite for events that combine the two, for example the use of video footage at rock concerts or screened imagery at large sporting events (Auslander 1999). The transgressive potential of feminist performance art has been characterized by Catherine Elwes as the unmediated encounter with the 'real-life' presence of the woman-artist (Elwes 2000, p. 71). The implication of Elwes' position is that as a cultural form performance contains within its very experience an immediate loss. This argument contends that the merit of feminist performance art lies primarily within the moment of its enunciation, a temporary encounter that cannot be traded upon, owned, accumulated or exchanged. Similarly, Peggy Phelan has argued that "performance's only life is in the present" (Phelan 1993, p. 146). Phelan is concerned with resistance to commodity culture through the notion of the immateriality of performance art, an understanding of performance "as that which disappears" (Phelan 2003, p. 293).

Powerful though this argument is, it has the effect of encasing performance in a kind of temporal purity of the present. It renders the cultural form of performance art temporally autonomous, despite its simultaneous call to contingency and reciprocity, because these factors are privileged in the here and now of the event. The desire to privilege the origin, the specificity of the initial event, can even begin to

counteract feminist critiques by resonating with the search for beginnings in mainstream art history. In this understanding the 'live-ness' of performance art, which, given its feminist use as a critique of modernism is somewhat ironically treated almost as a formal property of the work, is prioritised over what I read as the temporally dispersed reciprocity of the gaze, a dialogic encounter that takes place between and across generations and geographies.

Here the notion of a direct and intimate form of address is understood as contingent upon historically specific cultural and technological possibilities, rather than something that can be attributed to a particular media form. In fact, when Schneemann re-created a performance of Meat Joy in London, as part of the Whitechapel gallery's series of events in 2002 entitled A Short History of Performance, Anna Dezeuze wrote a review for Art Monthly in which she related the experience of watching the performance in 2002 to her knowledge of the photographs and film footage that exist as a record of the 1964 version. While these traces had clearly enhanced her desire to see the 'real thing', it is with a sense of disappointment that Dezeuze laments the loss of the intimate effect of the close-up photographs taken in 1964, which were shot from a position above the reclining performers (Dezeuze 2002). Intimacy is enacted here as an effect of photographic practice.

Performance art does not have the monopoly on intimacy and there is no guarantee that intimacy depends upon physical proximity to a performance in real time. Schneemann performed Interior Scroll standing on a table, a form of pedestal, which itself creates a distance despite the live nature of the event. Her maternal desire was constituted within the visual structures of painting (life model poses) and the structural conventions of the gallery. Possibly the most significant aspect that is irretrievably lost through reproduction is less an idea of proximity to the artist and

more the power of Schneemann's authorial voice. Few have written about this, with the exception of Peggy Phelan who argues that "the photograph cannot amplify the dramatic sound of Schneemann reading: instead, it renders the scroll as a kind of mirror" (Phelan in Reckitt & Phelan 2001). The relative lack of attention to the aural, rather than visual, detail of the performance seems strange given that reading, in public, from the text is such a key component of the work and its political import. This absence of debate is a measure of the extent to which the vocal dimension of the performance has turned into a purely visual artefact, which leaves me wondering how loud Schneemann spoke, how fast, and which parts of the text she lingered on.

Rather than positing an understanding of live-ness in terms of its intrinsic difference from the recorded or reproduced image, Auslander understands live-ness as both historical and contingent. This contingency is refracted through Bal's notion of "preposterous history" because the source of our present day understanding of Interior Scroll as a 'live' event consists of a filigree of image fragments, partial memories and knowledge of both feminist and non-feminist discourses on female sexuality and the body. Auslander's debate with what he reads as the persistent methodological assumptions of performance studies opens up our understanding of what constitutes the 'live'. As a concept this becomes less an ontological fact or form of cultural practice, defined within the temporal singularity of the inaugural moment of consumption/collaboration, and more a relation to changing conditions of existence, which suggests a mutability that cannot be fixed either temporally or politically in any straightforward way. What is at stake is the difference between 'performance', as a cultural form that suggests a particular temporality of the present, and the notion of the 'performative' (Butler 1990), as a relation to an event that invokes a different kind of temporality involving repetition, duration and travel

through different contexts of consumption. Butler's notion of the performative is not a search for precedence and, with this in mind, I have no interest in explaining Emin's work in terms of Schneemann's, as if the former is subservient to the latter. Instead, performativity opens up a space in which both artworks are instantiated anew in what Butler describes as "a dramatic and contingent construction of meaning" (Butler 1990, p. 139). Exploring mediation and the photographic production of the maternal in Emin's I've Got It All opens up a space in which Schneeman can be read as an artist adept at combining the live and the mediated, via the intimacy of a screen-based visual repertoire.

Read through Auslander's move away from privileging the 'live' event over and above the reproductions that ensue, the enduring significance of Interior Scroll can be preposterously reconfigured. While such performances are clearly not now experienced as live in an ontological sense, they remain live in an ideological or political sense, but only through the very reproductions that their existence has been interpreted in opposition to. Rather than positioning photographic documentation as the antithesis to the feminist critique of both patriarchy and capitalism, photographic traces of performance events are not only testament to that which has disappeared, but are themselves differently live, reactivated by their performative relation to contemporary works. Emin's I've Got It All is consciously formed within a photographic imaginary (the photographic as a cultural context rather than only a medium) whilst simultaneously retaining something of the agitation and urgency of being present in a specific moment, which is more commonly attached to the immediacy of performance art. Auslander is right to identify that the notion of disappearance (Phelan 1993) is not particular to live performance. More specifically, I would cite the immediate past-ness of the photograph, its "having-been-there"

(Barthes 1977) as grounds for this observation. Emin's I've Got It All simultaneously provokes strong emotions around the failure to be there in the moment that matters. Why is she alone and not being helped? Could the loss have been prevented? Could I have done anything to help?

Bal's notion also illuminates the contingent character of live-ness in the work of both artists; a sense of the live, intimate and embodied relation to woman as both artist and maternal figure that is re-imagined through cultural consumption in the present. However, what I read as the live-ness of Emin's address in I've Got It All is an effect of mediatization. The desire to experience the live event (or the wish that you had) in both its temporal immediacy and geographical singularity, even to understand the live as a differentiated concept, is a product of mediatization. In this sense the experiential is not opposed to the material. Making sense of Emin's I've Got It All enables me to see the materiality of Schneemann's performance in Interior Scroll, including the extent to which she "performs the inscription of mediatization within the immediate" (Auslander 1999, p. 54, original emphasis). This form of "preposterous history" enables a different reading of Schneemann, as an artist adept at exploring the mediation of the body, rather than only its 'live-ness' as a direct encounter. Schneemann becomes, for me, differently live. Interior Scroll is mediatized in a way that preposterously echoes Emin's I've Got It All in its consciousness of the life model pose and the idea of a repertoire of poses from which it is acceptable to choose. It is in relation to the conventionality of this repertoire, its cultural sedimentation of the woman as image, that Schneemann's 'live' act of pulling a scroll from her body becomes transgressive. In effect, the live-ness of this is only meaningful in the context of the historically changing mediation of the female body, its continual production through representation. Emin's inability to keep hold

of it all becomes source material for my reading of Schneemann as an artist highly adept at questioning the gendered relationship between the live/real and the recorded/reproduced. Both works are involved in a dialogue between the material and the experiential, in particular the materiality (and material consequences) of that which is considered non-material and sometimes immaterial – not only the 'lost' performance, but the lost experience of maternal desire.

What is produced through the genealogical implication of "preposterous history" is a series of different intensities, which are not possible to reach unless the relation between maternal desire, sexualised femininity and woman-as-artist is understood as a historically specific effect of the continual reorganisation of discourse, power and the body. And what of the artistic agency of Emin and Schneemann within this framework of contingency and inter-generational dialogue? Where Butler argues that "there need not be a 'doer behind the deed', but that the 'doer' is variably constructed in and through the deed" (Butler 1990, p. 142), this does not amount to the exclusion of agency so much as a re-conceptualization of what it means. Artistic agency may give way to a dispersed series of connections, continually in formation and irreducible to authorial intent, but the artist is, nevertheless, still there in her propensity to elicit new forms of kinship.

Notes

1. Carolee Schneemann's Interior Scroll has been frequently cited in anthologies of feminist and body art, including Norma Broude and Mary Garrard's The Power

of Feminist Art (1994) and, more recently, Helena Rekitt and Peggy Phelan's Art and Feminism (2001).

2. These are ideas which, as Rosemary Betterton has argued in relation to early twentieth century works by Paula Modersohn-Becker and Käthe Kollwitz, have traditionally been kept apart (Betterton,1996, p. 20).

3. There is a distinction to be made between media forms and what Auslander terms mediatization, used in Frederic Jameson's sense of a 'mediatic system' (Jameson 1991). Emin's I've Got It All suitably demonstrates Jameson's definition of "the process whereby the traditional fine arts… come to consciousness of themselves as various media within a mediatic system" (Jameson 1991, p. 162).

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Biographical note

Clare Johnson is a Senior Lecturer in Visual Culture in the Faculty of Creative Arts, University of the West of England. Her primary research interests include femininity, feminist art practice and embodiment. Email clare.johnson@uwe.ac.uk.