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Bauhaus Bodies, Modern Automatas and Other Performing Images

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Monica Toledo Silva

I. Introduction

The *Triadic Ballet* (Oskar Schlemmer, 1922) and its Bauhaus theatrical gestures, fine examples of the new modern society, is a starting point to think of body image presentations along time, in increasingly complex embodied affections. A very diverse feminine body also emerges in representations of other modern artists (as playing a character) and of oneself (as the creator), in more subjective forms of visual composition. Two approaches to body potential of imaging creation and gesture possibilities are presented in this chapter, as an extension of how embodied realities may reconfigure performed bodies along time.

Since the 19th century, our body is manipulated and recreated through various media languages, experiencing an existence influenced by society, science, technology and culture. A Schlemmer's contemporary German artist, surrealist sculptor and photographer Hans Bellmer (1902-1975) presents Olympia, from a body image related to other modern characters, embodied in a manipulated doll with a spherical body in photography series resembling dead bodies from World War or denouncing a scientific desire to control and recreate living bodies as pleased, since widely documented in medical protocols since the end of XIX century.

In a third example, I extend the somehow artificial body, no longer clear and colored as Schlemmer's, also further from the opposite aesthetic presented by Bellmer's doll, disarticulated and fragmented, as presented in the video performance *Monodrama* (Monica Toledo, 2012-19), when I raise embodied experiences in a singular form of simultaneous absence and presence while playing un/familiar memories.

The body plays its phantasmagory in anatomic presentations. Bellmer will desarticulate and renovate the surrealist reflexion from the 1930s in an object (a spherical doll) traceable in his "mysterious theatre." Also, and more important, both Schlemmer and Bellmer play with a concept of automata - automaton, an autonomous robot, term created by Czech Karel Capek in the begging of the 20th century to designate the machine with wo/man alike qualities, each of them extending it to a whole individual universe of possibilities: as the mutated doll Olympia, to be manipulated by an other; as a body with predicted gestures, assembling the industrial and perfect moves from factory workers translated to the stage, in *Triadic Ballet*.

The automata figure dances among aesthetic languages over time, presenting this diverse body which is at once itself and others, never completely autonomous. It represents a modern science and technological experience cheered with light and controlled moves, and darkened and manipulated body although able to provoke feelings; in both, a being apparently unable to feel by itself and move as it likes. A third automata will be disintegrated in embodied images.

Oscillating between objected and subjected forms of visibility of the self, a performance of body images, from others to our own visualities, permeates this essay. This is achieved by contrasting Schlemmer and Bellmer in their works in film (the ballet) and photography (the doll), with the contemporary video that investigates scenic and audiovisual languages of a living body through a singular process of image creation of its temporality and dramaturgy, as an evolution of the modern body aesthetics. But still, a body with no memories.

II. Dancing Machines as the Celebration of Form

Painter, sculptor and director of the famous theatre workshops at the Bauhaus School of Arts and Design (1919-1933), Oskar Schlemmer's dance piece *Triadic Ballet* gives life to a much-celebrated body, inspired by the industrial culture and diverse aesthetic practices current in Germany at the time, producing a multitude of mechanical gestures. Futuristic sceneries and the uses of plain colors in geometric and rigid costumes compose this unique post First World War art scene.

The Bauhaus was founded by Walter Gropius in Weimar as an attempt to express the technical spirit, uniform and controlled movement of the time. Its interdisciplinary approach to design and performance marked a new beginning of exploring the connection between different art forms, translating one art form to another. Despite the Bauhaus movement being known mostly for its innovative approach to design, an

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understanding of the scope of its influence of avant-garde performance practices is central.

Machine-like gestures, the triumph over the body, utopic and unreal; the robot, the automata, all kinds of body inventive existences in art and science come onto the scene. Bauhaus bodies are no ordinary subjects, nor subjected (such as the figure of the marionette), nor like real humans, but instead resembling enacted machine-like dreams of mankind. The evolution of body visualities will be as diverse as artists' discourses when related to performance art, in an ever-changing creative investigation. The subjected and objected body, an object of the self, subject to others, subjected by others, in modulations of sense and imagination.

The dancing machines from Schlemmer's piece portrayed female figures influenced by the social and historical processes going on at the time, and in Germany in specific aesthetic ways. The Bauhaus movement maintains to this day its enigmatic qualities in different fields, such as architecture and design, and from the improved body in its mechanical anatomy, in much celebrated and explored aesthetic forms.

The Bauhaus' intriguing modern body images and gestures promote an exercise of rethinking a mechanical and sensitive body: a visuality at once artificial and natural inspires us to be an other while being the same. A different phenomenon occurs when a subjective body evolves from this scene. What we see is an increasingly diverse prospect, in which contemporary body image procedures are enlisted in the celebration of the multimedia body and its infinite imaging production and self-presentations.

At the same time of the Bauhaus' emergence, the reality of factories and newly overcrowded cities - such as Berlin - packed with new factory workers living in unhealthy conditions, play an other real subject of the modern movement in terms of its demands for a new urban and industrial society. Expressionist art, as well as Russian constructivism, are strong inspirations for the Bauhaus, even as a reference to what is to be avoided.

Body singularity by the end of the First World War reveals its emptiness and fragility. Simultaneous forces in a "historical moment of extremes delimit modernity, as a wide and complex theme." (MORAES, 2010:58). Aiming the rupture with different languages in the beginning of 20th century (although maintaining a close dialogue with surrealism), a fragmentation of consciousness corresponds to a fragmentation of the body – as presented, for instance, in works of Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dali, Renné Magritte and Giorgio de Chirico.

The practice advocated by Schlemmer's characters, gestures and sceneries - as of removing man from the center of the scene, a position in which he was placed since Renaissance, challenges the art historical pillars of realism and humanism. What emerges from this attitude is a variety of other and new visualities, as also demonstrated in Bellmer's body presentations and directing procedures. From Schlemmer's ballet dancers to Bellmer's dolls, a frontal camera registers both directors' characters, designed for an unquiet viewer. The dance piece is also performed for the camera, the bodies on stage and the screen playing for both dance and film spectators.





Figures 1 and 2: Triadic Ballet. Oskar Schlemmer, 1922

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I found myself in those images of the articulated doll in its changing positions from a "ball joint" spherical centre, while searching for new possibilities of physical balance and emotional steadiness. The *Monodrama* piece comes from that. Like in a dance mode our body oscillates between absent memories, disciplined gestures, unmapped desires and historical aesthetic influences. The automata theme enriches the embodied video practice, inspired by both divergent modern body presentations, in an individual experience with loss, performing images and gestures of realities I did not share. Dance language enables a video performing procedure which gives life to a singular form of emotion, which breaths while it keeps loosing itself. The visual process of reinforcing imagined memories presents a body solution at once an object and an image of the self.

In dance classes, in all its classic and contemporary variations, we soon learn to evolve any movement from our hip, the body's gravitational center. All moves might emerge from the center, allowing us to never lose balance of the whole body movement, stretching arms and legs, hands and feet in all directions, towards the floor and into the air. Further, the natural impulse steaming from the hip saves us from spending too much energy, and helps us maintain our breath to complete turns and jumps. It is interesting to see that a marionette also works in a pendulum-like manner. It moves freely and automatically, from its center, in a seemingly never-ending arc of movement. No wasted energy either.

The out-of-joint narratives performed by our dancing body are meant to act as stringed puppet dancing, or marionettes, articulated in signs. Articulation points generate provisory solutions in visible gestures as we move from our center; even when making "mistakes", we don't fall into pieces as automatas may do. Our natural commands work as exercises of enunciation, where the I is an infinite source for playing out narratives of the self. What emerges from this scope of movement possibilities are something like unfinished stories for pendulum-like bodies, able to sense and produce singular images along with an embodied gesture.

A disruptive process of change takes place in the modern mind, willing to experience other possibilities of movement, giving way to individual body presentations. In an attempt to find a language to articulate one's experiences, artists continue to explore various media, resulting in the evolution of an image of the body as both object and subject. A "deep sense of struggle" is captured and performed - as through Bellmer's photographic lens, revealing "disturbances of bodily awareness." (TAYLOR, 2001:15). Since Jean-Martin Charcot's incongruent gestures captured during his studies as a neurologist at Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris during the late 19th century, exposing an obscure female body whose dramaturgy was much alike the automaton and surrealist bodies within their schizophrenic case studies, physical disorders are emancipated to regular people's ordinary life.

III. Bellmer: Dolls and Other Singularities

Since 2006, when I first read about Hans Bellmer, I have been enchanted by the way he (presents a body based on his very affections) - diverse from the unified, enlightened one as created by modern science; a disappearance of the disciplined, controlled, as imposed to society in the western world. Bellmer, evolving with Georges Bataille (1897-1962) from first surrealism as presented by André Breton (1896-1966) to a less romantic and more complex body, with simultaneous desires and durations of its own), and Antoin Artaud (1896-1948), among others, exposing a rather enriched reality, shared in our living body in its diversity and multitude.

A surrealistic body gives life to disturbing realities, as in Bellmer's interiors, where a doll portrays objected-subjected bodies as composed by the artist. "Modern art responds to chaos with fractured forms, ambiguous atmosphere and tragic irony, revealing a dark consciousness of a crisis." (MORAES, 2010:57). To fragment the body as its own sign: the modern spirit's collapse into disordered feelings and dynamic forms of uncertain characters.

Bellmer's marginal subject of his articulated dolls (Olympia is his second and last one) allowed him to manipulate the material body from a spherical belly, in endless compositions from with arms, legs and costumes, to present his "unconscious body": convulsed, wrapped, exposed: a dancing machine, moving sculpture, plays dark scenes in Bellmer's sceneries, photographed, as Schlemmer's dancers were filmed. Dance, film, sculpture and photography are employed as shifting representations of the body being both object and subject in a moving scene.

Sue Taylor (2001) adds that the "abject condition of the doll" is one of a "hapless female body", while both the author's subject and the artist's object – the doll – occupies a third place, a female other that makes itself visible in the field of body investigations (scientific, aesthetic, gendered, political, semiotic). This "female other" forces us to revise individualism itself. (Schechner, 1973, in FICHER-LICHTE: 2008, 52).

Bellmer's references include 16th century wooden dolls and spherical bellies, around which could be arranged several parts in various combinations. The fascination with automatas, their dubious animate-inanimate status is central to Bellmer's works, and is used as a vehicle for distorting a female body deprived of head and limbs. His life-sized female mannequin produces points of view with destabilizing effects. The

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distress caused by the First World War resulted in multiplied human and non-human figures, automaton and inanimate living forms alike, which will play a dark background scene.

In the dramaturgy of the senses of Bellmer's domestic sceneries, his doll (an automaton-like figure; Figures 3 and 4) is exposed to the camera, giving visibility to the artist's anxieties. A dramaturgy that serves as a frontier space of subjectivity and objectivity, in objectified configurations of a self, as one's own images. Ana Pais (2003:90) suggests an understanding of the aesthetic performative as an embodied art where what is visible exceeds meanings and preliminary significations; what is made visible "doesn't end up in itself". A phenomenological feminine body will transfigure, alter itself in its own multiple singularities. The body is presented in its own imaginary and material forms.

Artist and educator Helen Spackman argues that the exposure of the female body is traditionally an object of desire. The female body would be "always already" in representation, subject to cultural expectations and conditioning. Also, performance art general rejection of conjunctive, linear narratives in favor of fragmentary "open" texts can be linked to its contingent transition to the postmodern. Performing arts also enclose

> A deconstructive thrust of poststructuralist philosophy and its emphasis on the slippage between signifier and signified. The 1970's rise of poststructuralism has exposed the limitations of the use of the body as a subversive medium of expression, when based on the assumption that "the" body constitutes the authentic presence. (SPACKMAN, 2000:09).

Performative language slides between spaces of representation; "the perceiving subject in betwixt and between, where subject and object can no longer be clearly defined." (FICHER- LICHTE: 2008:42;129). Between being a subject and object, or while playing both, the modern, sometimes futuristic, sometimes surreal, compose from its absence. Performed by others, as Bellmer's doll, or performing for others, like Schlemmer's characters, an inscribed body arises in aesthetic practices that allows other legible fields and "empiric processes of visibility" (COURTINE: 2013:79). In enunciation practices a performing body has its images disguised from the others, during its visibility procedures; visual images are the body's creative forms of presentation of the self.

To act our own body politics in aesthetic processes of embodied visuality, in a dramaturgy of embodied images practice of a multimedia body; if Schlemmer' has devoted his practice to the robot-like feminine characters – which despite being diverse builds a positive perception of the history of that time, celebrating order in straight visual compositions with much color and light – Bellmer has exasperated a fragmented body through his precious inanimate creature.





Figures 3 and 4: Hans Bellmer's *The Doll (Die Puppe*), 1934-8.

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The exposition of a body as an imaging creation would mean both withdrawal and an intimacy - the "withdrawal of the self" (NANCY, 2008:61). While taking the exposed object as an existence, as a subject of an exposition of itself, the body is the being-exposed of the being." Therefore, exposition takes place as a surface that exposes the singularity of the senses. A struggle of sense, a struggle with language, from which emerges a body "*excribed* outside sense." In other words our body, playing multiple signs, completes the philosopher, has no room for a formal discourse or single narrative.

An ambiguity takes place in our living environment: we are always experiencing a multiplied time, simultaneously bringing future and past to the upcoming gesture. An image of the body offers this strange coexistence while inviting us to experience this temporality, while performing an image. Nancy (2008: 81;115;121) adds to body image compositions that

> Politics begins and ends with bodies, being the body the end of the signifier; no longer a sign, no longer a self, but an anatomy of configurations of the plasticity of what we would call states of body, ways of being, bearing, staggering... a body converted in a pure sign of the self, the pure self of the sign. A body is an image offered to other bodies, a whole corpus of images stretched from body to body, colors and shadows, fragments, grains, tendons, ribs, bellies, tears, slits, veins, pains and joys.

Our bodies speak in silence. When the other is the self, narratives are embodied in time, space and place; one is no longer an automaton who has no memory but is an automaton in an endless speed of becoming apart, as Olympia activating her joints in disarticulated memories. As time amplifies space, so does our body, within its extended presence. The body as an environment with no beginning or end, no center, where no wound lasts longer than a memory, like scars on a metal or wooden surface. A dramaturgy of the body plays different and congruent selves: an always embodied performance, playing others as no one else.

The female image is figured in diverse ways in present and absent forms. An image of a modern woman in the 1920's will be spectral, anatomically deformed, in aesthetic modes of a changeable body. A combinatory game of articulations and enunciations in body image presentations is extended to various media languages - as dance, film, sculpture and video.

> Bodies as signifiers, contradictory signifying by nature, retreat to the depth of sense. The sense of rejection-of-sense: a schema without signification. It's a question of what, in language, no longer involves the message, just its inscription. Only sense escapes from the wound - the wound which presents the very body, as its own sign. (NANCY, 2008: 75;115;81).

These feminine figurations, the ballet dancers in Schlemmer, the spheric doll in Bellmer, are actual and virtual presentations of the time – a feminine body which is an automaton in different meanings (while being manipulated, directed, created by others, with no configurations of her own) amplifies this body to sometimes uncanny, and then exposed as an emptied state or condition. A diverse modern body evolves to a "vacuum" where *feminine* existence pulls out imagined memories from times not lived – as we see in *Monodrama* video experience.

IV. *Monodrama*, an Experience of Emptiness and Affection

The automata characters explored from their combination of being able to feel but not to remember - an absence of memory - added to an exposed self to other's manipulation, as on marionettes from Henrich von Kleist and E.T.A. Hoffmann's characters Olympia, Coppelia and Antonia, with which I also engage, in other video performance pieces following their names in writings about these experiences with the camera and editing processes, constitute the basis of a whole nature of my work. Apart from exploring these three characters from Hoffman's universe back at the begging of the 19th century - indeed celebrating industrial, on one side, and body-mind scientific researches, also much fond for Bellmer's interests and the key of his artistic references.

Monodrama emerges as a dialogue between these audiovisual studies and essays and a struggle for my father's family's lack of memories. Therefore the automata inspiration comes first from an attempt to dance (Olympia), then from an *attempt* to show affection to someone else's memories (Coppelia), then been freed from others views as an objected body (Antonia) - a work in progress from the automata and marionette principles of being subjected by others as their object of desire, to finally come across and confront this nature of absence. There comes my manipulating the photographs performing an attempt of belonging to my life and private history of those unknown people's lives.

Image creation and presentation is an embodied process itself: disarticulated, to be joined; unmapped, to be traced. Its purpose is not to be visible but to make visible, to articulate a presence of our own, an intention caught before form. An image in its inner tension, a force mobilized to free itself from memory and reason, here sustaining itself in emptiness, there acting on a stage or screen. It is a dance move, filled with affections, unveiling subjects turned into objects. *Monodrama* illustrates the possibility of aesthetic and semiotic embodied practice in a video work, as presented.

For Fischer-Lichte (2008:24-28), the performative as self-referential generates a culturally marked body, as a performing embodiment itself. "The performative carries the double meaning of dramatic (as a process of generating identities) and non-referential".

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An exploitation of anatomy and the desire to destroy it results in a body of unstable dimensions and a fundamental crisis within its own objects, as subject of the self.

Modern body presentations, as in Bauhaus dance film and Bellmer's articulated and photographed sculpture, promote diverse aesthetic forms of visuality and different processes of visibility. As an object of the self, though, a body is at once made object and subject to self- presentations. These images and gestures, embodied events able to engage in a visual form, are seen in *Monodrama*, this performed video piece of embodied images, and we become a body image of our self.

In *Monodrama,* the visible experience of the body to the camera performs a dramaturgy of the self. The audiovisual experience of filming myself meets Schlemmer and Bellmer's attention to the camera, which constitutes a character by itself; as the dancers and the dolls do, I perform for the camera, while trying to put myself together in an empty space of memories, tracing unfamiliar photographs. As an automaton, objectified body, other times subjected to itself, feminine subjects constantly reviewed by artists and scientists take place over time, as the articulated senses and visual affections of mine.

Philosopher Gilles Deleuze (2009:122) reviews Bergson's studies on the moving image, while explaining the past as a coexistence of larger and narrower circles, each of them containing various temporalities. Having the present as the extreme limit, and the whole past as the smallest circle, between past in general and present are circles that constitute other several regions, each with its own characters, dominant aspects and specificities. Bergson's virtual images refer to a new present,

> A present that has not been: a virtual image would be a general past. Actual-virtual: an image both present and past, the smallest circle of the virtual image, which carries the whole. The indiscernible point is this narrowest circuit, at once actual and virtual, between real and imaginary. (DELEUZE, 2009:99).

In this video piece, I act as a character presenting my lack of memory, having my eyes shut while manipulating and trying to recognize people in photographs. This searching exercise is amplified by me operating the camera while acting, producing and directing myself, before editing all the work. The long editing duration, of seven years, may indicate that I am too attached to the images; the images become visual to others as an art piece, conveying the intimacy of (un)familiar prints, recording self-narratives in video, exposing a body who must remember and reinvent itself, tracing intensities that place us, performer and viewer, in different durations.

Real and virtual images fuse in reveries of memory, perception and imagination, dissolving the body in processual visual presentations, at once being object and subject, evolving to a practice of the self. A singular body, now expanded to empty spaces of a self, with a white wall replacing the Bauhaus colors in an ascending process of singularity. Body presentation and the practice of creating a dramaturgy in moving images bring with it untraceable actions, sustained by a discontinuous movement – revealing the impossibility of completeness of the living body since modern discourses.

Our body, a multitude affected by its own temporalities and spatialities, each articulating itself in visual solutions, acts as embodied objects and subjects of its own nature, as we create images that reinvent our selves. Moving images are generated by a moving self - we make ourselves visible to others, sharing living experiences.

When staging the self, presenting body states and imaginary memories, our embodied gestures generate images as provisory solutions, instantaneous affections, acting as all of them at once, as a character of the self. *Monodrama* also plays my own images with others – constituting the pictures of the "unknown familiar faces" from my lost relatives. The self comes to be a fictionalized character of the presented images in time and space.

A visible presence, as an attempt of language, moves about in front of an empty white wall. After dancing dolls, machine-like existences, automatas directed by an other, subjective body, a living being dances its own death. An absence of self – because we are many, we are a multimedia body playing new configurations, trying different memories in a constantly changeable live experience. A missing memory inspires movement to be reconfigured in inventive solutions, making room for the new. Comparable to a programmed machine of Bauhaus, such as a movable sculpture from Bellmer, our body is at once manipulated by others' images and reinvented by itself in a multiplied search for a single self.

For Nancy (2008:33) a departure, in the sense of leaving behind one's own space, would

> intimately be the extremity of its separation (which makes it distinguished, subjective): the body is itself in departure, insofar as it parts - displaces itself right here from the here. The by-itself of the subject exists only as the swerve of this a-part-self, which is the moment proper of its presence, its sense. The a-part-self, as departure, is what's exposed. A departive body carries its spacing away, is carried away as spacing, and somehow it sets itself aside, withdraws into itself - while leaving its very spacing "behind" in its place, with this place remaining its own, at once absolutely intact and absolutely abandoned.

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Emptiness acts as an other nature of singularity, through gestures affected by memories of all kinds, as if imagination and self-presentation were able to move from their states to other forms of being. Gesture is at first choreographed and directed (by Schlemmer), manipulated and photographed (by Bellmer), and then enacted, made visual in a video of an emptied body (by myself). A living body does not need a past to remember; it creates body images from its own states of presence, perception and affection. The various media of dance, film, photography, sculpture, performance and video are enabled to turn a body into a living entity.

In an empty state of presence, within one's own living memories, a living body proceeds to other forms of displacement. When freed from specificities, we turn to ourselves in modes of absence and formlessness. *Monodrama* is a video performance with images composed from a box of photographs of relatives I never got to know. The work reflects on my father's beloved memories, untraceable to me, and on the (un)familiar stories and whereabouts of some relatives - as my Grandparents, who I never came to know. Filled with my own emotions and imaginations, I allow myself in the video performance to be continuously displaced and emptied, performing memories through time.

Through this process, it became apparent to me that one must make room for images to surface and to pass while moving through embodied subjects. Producing body images in dance, film, video and sculpture also brings back the body to its materiality. A singular expression provides the body possibilities of visual enunciation. A subjective being m oves about its objects to compose gestures and many memories, renewed affections, provisory solutions.

Schlemmer's dancers, Bellmer's doll and I all act for the camera via body performances for a moving image. These modes encompass three diverse approaches to presentation that use film and video as body events. In *Monodrama* the camera acts more independently, determining, even from a fixed spot and without mobility, what will be made visible and what will be cut. My body performs for the lens and there is no one else operating the camera, so that any scene out of frame, all images cut by the frame, will be empty too. In other words, the camera that with Schlemmer and Bellmer registered a "complete scene" now shifts to becoming a "directing object", determining the nature and the results on the captured scenes.

The two earlier directors project their creatures in ballet gestures and artificial poses. In *Monodrama,* a living self is directed by itself in a dance created and performed by the artist. Enunciation turns out then to be a key issue in modern and contemporary examples. It comprises an expression that speaks through the body, with no choreography or any sort of previously mapped gestures. Improvisation is primary to this practice of enunciation, in modes of presence, absence and complex relations.

Embodied practices such as mine articulate aesthetic languages that allow us to experience a form of corporeality through an active absence, as presented by the death of the subject and the death of language. Such practices strive to make sense in a body turned into image.





Figures 5 and 6: *Monodrama* frames (Monica Toledo, 2020).

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We make ourselves visible through a circuit of actions and intentions. Living things are for Bergson "undetermined, from which emerge micro spaces, as deviant centers, deepened all around through cuts, disjunctions, creating instead of a perception mode (of affection or action) a new sphere of signs." (DELEUZE, 2009:99) The suspension of meanings from this virtual image can correspond to an actual one, as perceived and felt. An image of what is no longer there; an articulated point of the body, as an emptied joint.

Visibility practice as a living drama is never presented in a given form; it is performed by a body, by memories as signs. A "monodrama" is a recurrent drama about a loving loss; automaton characters will be body solutions for unexpected gestures, pretending to signify something to some others' eyes. Where shall we place a political and actual body after modernisms, historical and scientific evolutions? An aesthetic language of an absent body is played by a phenomenological body.

Performative language enables reality to be mapped in processes of visibility in-between spaces (JEHA, 2007). Performance art crosses diverse art languages, embodies subjects of objected selves and present states of ours. Randy Martin (2004:59) claims that "difference and transgression are the conditions of identity", while Maurice Blanchot adds that "presence and language are in inescapable conflict." (in MARTIN, 2004:142).

Presence has unpredictable configurations in art languages, and without any opposition. Absence makes its room, creates its space and articulates body subjects in visible gestures. Intimacy plays in imaginary spaces of affection, as beloved relatives play unfamiliar relations. "Absence acts." (MARTIN, 2004:174). How may visibility act in a language of the absence, in an ever embodied environment of our own, after being reinvented by human machine aspirations during last century? We move back to ourselves in an ever new configuration of self-images.

An objected body may be an image of the self to perform narratives in strains of conscience. A body as an image of the self, an imagined body, the living, the mechanical, the spherical. The emptied, which embodies its images while creating a self-dramaturgy, brings together performed memories and modern presentations in an always dialectic image, neither subjected nor objected body, but in a presentation of itself.

It all works as an expanded dance: my performing to the camera, playing Hoffman's automatas, directly connected to German romanticism), Bellmer's Olympia, a namely doll inspired by the former, my memory of being a ballet dancer still with the classic gesture's codes in my body although unable to perform them, and Bauhaus inspiring robot-like dance scenes directly and contraposing shadowily and darken previously commented - and contemporary - modern characters. An expanded dance from a body that lives all at once, experiencing being subjected, objected, with memories it cannot control (the ballet in my mind which is not made visible in its language codes) and memories I wish I had.

Monodrama ends this embodied path playing a transit through incorporated living experiences, imagined and performed. What makes it all real and possible is precisely for being played by a living body - and not a robot, automata or marionette. Because it is experienced and practiced in a living body (the one of my self). Bauhaus bodies work as a confrontation of life and death, evokes autonomous entities who despite that play the gestures of machinery programmed bodies - it celebrates and denounces a growing industrial worker who acts both feeding a progressive economic system and ultimately a growing lack of consciousness and individual affected experiences.

An embodied performance of a self continuously fulfills this diverse nature of body presentations in art in search of a body which is ever undone. It is precisely the condition of emptiness and a dramaturgy of absence, as also inherent of gesture and emotion, that suppress any automata status and enable us to experience an expanded living body. We will find fragments of a unity in visual narratives of an unfinished body, which is whole in its ever impossible predictions, live in its simultaneous intensities.

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Figuras 7 and 8: *Monodrama* frames (Monica Toledo, 2020).

The body is this departure of self to self. Jean-Luc Nancy.

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