

GENDER



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A LIVE ART GAME FOR KIDS AND ADULTS
**PLAYING
UP**
A LIVE ART GAME FOR KIDS AND ADULTS



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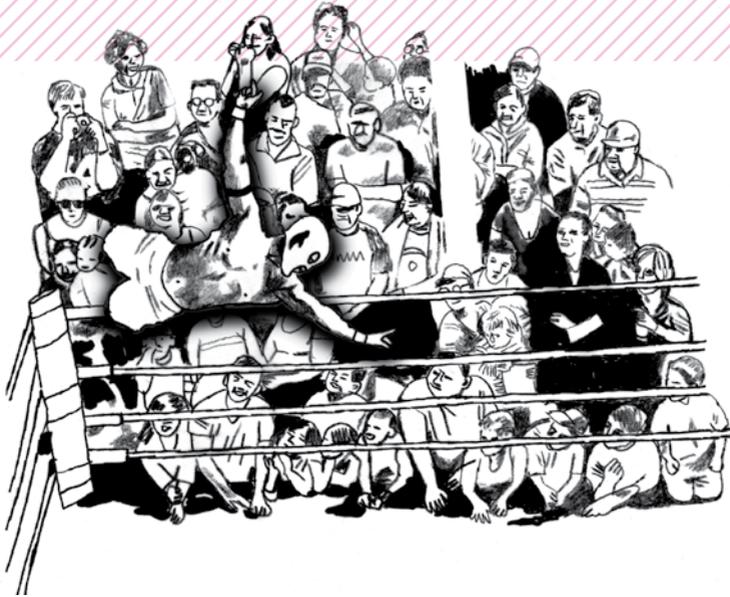
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SHAUN LEONARDO

EL CONQUISTADOR VS. THE INVISIBLE MAN (2006)



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The artist Shaun Leonardo grew up in New York City. His parents were immigrants from Latin America. He once said that he never saw a member of his family cry. He thought that immigrants, and especially people of colour, and especially boys, were supposed to be tough. Shaun became a football player. For 12 years he played in front of paying audiences who wanted him to be a fighting machine. After that he felt invisible somehow - that nobody had ever seen that he was a vulnerable human being. To change that, he turned from an athlete into an artist: In his first performances he wrestled with the Invisible Man, the invisible fighting machine he didn't want to be anymore. And this time the audience could see exactly how the punches of his opponent hurt him. Unlike in American football, in Live Art you don't have to be tough. It takes courage though to let the audience see that you are not a superman.

Note: In Mexico they call wrestling Lucha Libre. Lucha Libre is somewhere between sports and theatre. Some wrestlers fight in drag, which means they dress up as women who beat up the other men. In 1992 the gay wrestler Saúl Armendáriz won the World Championship of Lucha Libre while he was in drag.

Instruction: Fight against the *Invisible Man*. Do you want to wear a mask for this, like the Mexican wrestlers do? Define the space for the fight and step into the ring! The fight should take 3-5 minutes. Show as much struggle and pain to the audience as possible. Do you win or lose against the Invisible Man? With the audience cheering for you and some music in the background it will be easier to get into fighting mode. Could a whole family fight the Invisible Man together?

WURA-NATASHA OGUNJI SWEEP (2013)



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Cleaning doesn't sound like an exciting action to do, or does it? In Ghanaian artist Wura-Natasha Ogunji's piece *Sweep* women carry plastic bowls on their heads filled with dirt, mostly sand, and a small broom. They walk around, stand still, take the bowl down, scatter the dirt and spread it with their hands across the floor. Then they lay down in the dirt and make marks with their bodies, a bit like they were doing snow angels. Then they sweep the dirt back into the bowl with the broom and repeat the action. It looks like a ritual, a magic spell, even though the action of sweeping a floor is just everyday cleaning. For Wura-Natasha this piece is about being forced to leave her home and find another place to live. Forcing people from their homes and homelands can be called "a sweep", too.

Note: Everything can be art! This was the battle cry when Live Art first became a thing in the 1960s. In 1969 the artist Mierle Laderman Ukeles wrote the *Manifesto for Maintenance Art*, in which she claimed that this must be true for cleaning, too. In one of her performances she took a mop and a bucket of water, went outside and washed the grand staircase in front of the art gallery for several hours. Did you know that worldwide most cleaning is still done by women? And that at the same time it is one of the lowest paid jobs? Many women who migrated from Ghana and other poor countries do cleaning jobs and don't get much money for it.

Instruction: Take either a bowl with some sand in it and a broom or brush, or a mop and a bucket of water. Go outside and repeat the actions of Wura-Natasha Ogunji or Mierle Laderman Ukeles. Does this action look different when performed by adults, by kids, by people of different genders? What do you think about the action of cleaning now – still not exciting?

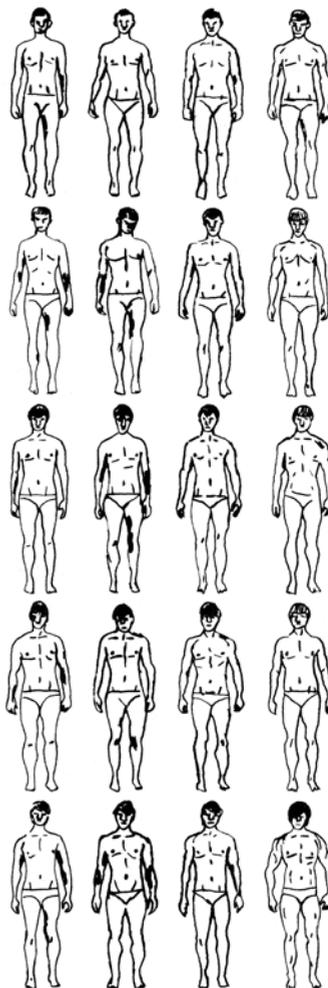
CASSILS CUTS (2011–2013)



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Sometimes we don't like how our bodies change throughout our lives. We have images in our heads of how the body of a boy, a girl, a man or a woman should look. But most of our bodies don't look like that. This can make us buy lots of stuff, creams or workouts. Which might just be the reason why the media continues to give us these images and this negative feeling about our bodies. For those of us who are trans, neither boys, nor girls, neither men nor women, this can be particularly hard. One of them is the US-based artist Cassils. In their piece *Cuts* they document how their body changed during 45 days of bodybuilding and eating special food to grow muscles. And yes, it looks kind of great. So, if we are able to change our bodies, why always try to go for the obvious? Why not go for something different? Some boys would like to have boobs, some girls would like to have a biceps as big as a watermelon, and some actually have them already.

Note: In Live Art many artists work with their bodies as material for their art and show how we are pressured to shape our bodies in particular ways. Cassils' piece *Cuts* refers back to the piece *Carving: A Traditional Sculpture* done by Eleanor Antin in 1972. In this work Antin documented how her body changed through going on a diet for 45 days.



Instruction: Luckily, you don't have to go on a diet or do bodybuilding for weeks to experiment with different body shapes. Instead, you can take a few cheap nylon tights and cut them into pieces. Now you can put those pieces around your arms, legs, upper or lower body and stuff them with fabrics or toilet paper. This way you can create muscles, boobs, big bellies, arses, or totally new forms of bodies. Maybe you can do a group portrait?

KRISHNA ISTHA

GENDER GALACTIC FASHION SHOW (2015)



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For many people, young and old, science fiction is a way to escape from the limitations of our lives on Earth now. We can imagine other planets with very different ways of life. For example: In many places on Earth only two genders seem to count – male and female. This is called a binary. The difference between adults and kids is also such a binary. Because of binaries like these many people are not able to imagine that things could be different. Science fiction can help to change that and to kickstart the imagination. For this reason Krishna Isha invited a bunch of artists to the *Gender Galactic Fashion Show* to perform gender in a way that doesn't fit the binary. This way to perform gender is called queer, as it crisscrosses the binary divide of male and female.

Note: In the 1980s Paris Dupree, Willi Ninja and other queer artists started a special kind of ball in New York City. In these lavish dance parties, queer people of colour met to compete with each other in a wide range of categories by showing off their looks, costumes and dance moves. This is called voguing and became very famous. Later, Madonna made a song about it that became number one around the world.

Instruction: What would be fashionable on a planet where everybody is queer, where male and female are mixed up entirely? Imagine you are invited to a ball on the queer planet. Find a suitable outfit and styling and invent a name for your queer Sci-Fi persona. Now put some Sci-Fi-music on and let the fashion show begin. Vogue!

NEGAR FOROUGHANFAR

SCHMERZPERFORMANCE/PAIN-PERFORMANCE

(2018)



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The artist Negar Foroughanfar was born in Iran. There, women don't have equal rights. They can't move around freely on their own, they have to wear certain clothes, and at home they have to obey their fathers, brothers or husbands. After coming to Europe Negar found that people didn't seem very interested to support women in Iran. This didn't give her the same pain as not having equal rights, but it still stung. In Negar's first Live Art piece *Pain-Performance* the audience faces a long table with small objects from the household: wire brushes, clothes pegs, tweezers, tape and so on. Negar takes one object at a time and uses it to hurt members of the audience. Not much, just a tiny little bit. She tears out a single hair here, and she pinches an earlobe there. It takes quite a while until all objects on the table are used. Meanwhile the audience members look at each others' reactions. Often they start to giggle, while the artist stays really serious.

Note: In the history of Live Art female artists have often done the opposite of what Negar Foroughanfar does and have invited audiences to do things to them. In 1964 Yoko Ono let the audience cut her clothes with scissors in *Cut Piece*, and in 1974 in *Rhythm 0* Marina Abramović invited the audience to do with her whatever they wanted, using one of 72 objects laid out on a table next to her. Some participants were nasty to her, others really gentle. What would you do if you had the power?

Instruction: It can be frustrating to be a kid, especially if you are supposed to act like a girl or a boy but don't feel like it. This is your chance to let the audience feel your pain – just a little. Maybe you don't like to have your hair brushed out? Then use the wire brush on your audience. But take your time and be gentle, no anger attacks, nor rush. It is art, not fighting! 60 seconds is enough time to do this right. Sorry adults, you are the audience for this one. That's a rule. An audience of more than one adult makes the performance more interesting.

DICKIE BEAU BLACKOUTS (2012)



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Do you know what drag queens and drag kings are? These artists dress and perform as another gender. One of them is the UK-based artist Dickie Beau, except he calls himself a “drag fabulist”. In his performances he hardly ever speaks. Instead, the audience hears other people’s voices from interviews and speeches, movies and songs, while Dickie Beau makes it appear as if he is the one who is speaking or singing. He lip-syncs, while he wears makeup that makes him look like a mix of a clown and a female movie star. In his show *Blackouts* he chooses recordings of famous actresses from the past, like Judy Garland and Marilyn Monroe, and impersonates them on stage in their saddest moments.

Note: Lip-syncing was invented in 1893 by Georges Wague. He called it “cantomime”: a mime performed on stage as if he was singing, while the actual singer was standing hidden behind the curtain. Live Art existed long before someone called it Live Art, you know. Of course, lip-syncing became much more popular when radio was invented, especially among gay boys, who liked to impersonate female singers. Today, lip-syncing is one of the main artforms used in drag.



Instruction: Do you sing along when your favourite song is playing on the radio? Do you know parts of your favourite audiobook by heart? Then you can probably lip-sync them! Try it out and give a lip-sync show for your audience. Do you want to dress up for that? Does it make a difference if the voice you are impersonating is of a different gender and age to you? Take turns or do a lip-sync together.

ROSANA CADE

WALKING:HOLDING (2011)



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How old are you? At some point most of us start wondering about holding hands. Should we still hold hands with our parents, or not? Could I hold hands with my friends? UK-based artist Rosana Cade's *Walking: Holding* is a performance about just that: As a participant you do a walk through the city holding hands with the performers, first with a young woman, then with a man dressed like a woman, then with an older man, and so on. Meanwhile passers-by in the street look at you, and it seems their whole idea of who you might be is changing according to who you are holding hands with. That's why gay and lesbian people keep wondering about holding hands throughout their lives. In some places it can get you into trouble to hold hands with someone from the same gender because of homophobia, which means that some people are so afraid of a person loving another person of the same gender that they get angry and mean. In the Arabic world on the other hand, adult men often hold hands with their male friends and call it brotherhood.



Note: A performance in which one performer meets only one audience member is called a one-to-one performance. One of the most influential artists who did those was the UK-based Adrian Howells. He invented a persona for himself called Adrienne. As Adrienne he, for example, helped audience members to buy a new outfit in *Adrienne's Personal Shopping Experience*, 2005. Holding hands, buying clothes – as you can see, really every activity can be a piece of Live Art.

Instruction: Walk down a busy street holding hands with someone you would not usually hold hands with. Do people look at you differently than usual? If you don't want to hold hands with anybody except your parents, form a bigger group of people holding hands while walking.

THEATRE OF RESEARCH

HAARSALON / HAIR SALON (2014)



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Would you like to change your hair? In the project *Haarsalon* a whole theatre turned into a hairdresser's salon. Here, kids and adults tried out different kinds of styles, even those they would not usually go for: They dyed their hair green for the day, tried on wigs, and so on. At the same time experts talked about how different cultures are connected to different hairstyles. Though the *Haarsalon* was supposed to be about hair, it quickly also became about gender. Apparently, hair has a lot to do with that: In some cultures women hide their hair, in other cultures men are not supposed to wear long hair or braids, and so on. In the *Haarsalon* everybody was invited to try anyway: Boys were introduced to binding and wearing beautiful scarves or using hair clips, girls went for a new, really short cut, and so on.



Note: One of the first pieces of Live Art about gender was *Mythic Being* by the African American artist Adrian Piper in 1973, and it also had to do with hair. At the time, Adrian was a young woman with long dark hair. For *Mythic Being* she put on an Afro wig, a moustache and sun glasses. After this transformation she selected a sentence from her diary and started to say it again and again. Weirdly, the sentence also seemed to transform and mean something slightly different than before. Ever since, the culture and politics of hair have been important in Live Art and theatre - check out Inua Ellams' *Barber Shop Chronicles*, for example.

Instruction: Change your hair dramatically. You don't have to cut it. You can use clips or scarves, pearls or headbands, you can do small braids or ponytails, even with short hair. If you want, you can buy hair gel or washable hair colour at the pharmacy. Are there also hairstyles that are usually only worn by kids? Have your parents try those for once! When you all have your new hairdos, talk about them: Why not look like this more often?

EISA JOCSON MACHO DANCER (2013)



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Do you know pole dancing? Eisa Jocson lives in the Philippines and won several pole dancing competitions as a girl. Growing up, she wondered why pole dancing is mainly done in bars for adults, where female pole dancers try to look sexy, while men stare at their bodies. To change that, she did her first Live Art piece about pole dancing. For her second piece she learned another way of dancing that is done in adult bars. Only this one is performed by men. It is called the Macho Dance and is mainly known in the Philippines. In *Macho Dancer* Eisa moves like a cowboy from an old movie but in slow motion, while cheesy ballades are playing in the background. She shows her muscles and how strong she is, while staying really cool. She rides imaginary horses and forms her hands into pistols to “shoot” the audience. Basically, she dances like a macho, just slower and better.

Note: There are kinds of macho dances in European history, too. For example, Irish folk dances, in which people stamp their feet a lot. They are traditionally only performed by men. Except for Kitty Doner, a girl who danced with her whole family in shows called vaudeville about one hundred years ago. In these shows, her mother performed as a man and her father danced Irish folk dances. From an early age Kitty learned to combine the two and became really famous as the drag king who “danced like a feller” (like a boy).

Instruction: Would you like to be macho for once? Do the Macho Dance! What are macho moves for you? Put on some slow music and try those moves in slow motion. Stand with your legs apart to begin with. If you want to put on a whole family dance show like the Doners did, the adults could try the pole dance! No worries, there are lots of poles available in public spaces or playgrounds for your practice.

ADDIE WAGENKNECHT

I QUIT (2014)



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Austria-based artist Addie Wagenknecht's performance is about "showing the finger". That's forbidden? Right – because it is rude. Just not when it happens in Live Art. Also, she is not showing the finger to other people, only to things. On Valentine's Day 2014 she had enough of the role women are supposed to play, especially on this day. She went to the shops and "showed the finger" to all the products she didn't want to buy anymore: to make-up products and Barbie dolls and even roses. She took pictures of her finger in front of the products and called the picture series "I quit".

Note: Addie Wagenknecht's picture series reminds us of a poster designed by the feminist artist Barbara Kruger in 1987. It shows a hand that holds a sign saying "I shop, therefore I am". This is a version of a sentence by the philosopher René Descartes, who wrote "I think, therefore I am" hundreds of years ago. Today, who we are has less to do with what we think and more with what we buy, Barbara Kruger seems to say. We try to make ourselves into certain people, into "better girls" or "better men", for example, by buying certain stuff. Do you think that's true?

Instruction: Do you also have enough of certain things and never want to buy them again, because of the way they make you appear to be a certain kind of person? Then quit! Show them the finger and take pictures. You can go to the shops for that, like Addie Wagenknecht did. But you can also do it at home and throw the whole stuff out afterwards. I quit, therefore I am! Would you like to share your picture series with your friends?

HENRIKE IGLESIAS

FRESSEN / GOBBLING

(2019)



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Do you like eating? Do you think you should be thinner? Do you think your life would be better if you were thinner? Do your parents worry sometimes that you eat too much, or too little? Do you pull your belly in in front of the mirror? Are you afraid that someone might call you fat? Women, girls and many other people feel like that a lot. One of the artists of the German group Henrike Iglesias said that she has been pulling her belly in most of the time since she was ten. The group was wondering why there are so many pictures of women cooking and hardly ever a picture of women just simply eating. So, they made a show in which they eat all the time. And during it they say what really makes them angry when it comes to eating. For example that people shame each other for how their bodies look like or how they change.

Note: If you love to eat, Live Art could be just perfect for you, as eating and food in general has long been a favourite practice and topic of Live Art. Since the 1970s female artists have raised questions about gender inequality around eating, like the fact that it is mostly women who are supposed to prepare the food for the family while they themselves are pressured to diet, or that mainly girls get a disease called anorexia, which makes them starve themselves. Parents might want to have a look at *Losing: A Conversation with the Parents* by Martha Rosler 1977.

Instruction: Let's play Truth or Truth, like the group Henrike Iglesias does in their performance *Fressen / Gobbling*. For that, all of you have to have chips, crisps or popcorn in front of you. Then you ask each other questions about food. If your answer to a question is yes, you are allowed to eat some of the popcorn. If your answer is no, you have to pause eating. Are you ready? Then you can start by reading the questions on top of this card again. And afterwards you might come up with a few questions of your own?

TRAVIS ALABANZA BURGERZ (2018)



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Travis Alabanza is a young, UK-based artist who identifies as trans feminine. Like many other people Travis decided that they don't want to be referred to as "he" or "she", but as "they". Imagine how difficult it is to explain to people all the time that you are neither a boy, nor a girl, neither a woman, nor a man! A few years ago Travis was walking down the street when a man called him "Tranny", an offensive term for a transgender person, and threw a burger in their face. Many people saw the incident, but nobody stepped in or said anything. That's when Travis decided that things couldn't go on as they were. They made a performance called *Burgerz*, in which they told the audience how it feels to be exposed to this kind of discrimination. They made burgers on stage, which they offered to the audience. Travis toured with their performance and invited transgender people along the way to eat burgers together and share their experiences. Travis also included burgers into their costume and wore them as part of a specially designed hat.

Note: To take what is thrown at you and make it your own can be a strong move against discrimination. You find this strategy in Live Art as well as in activism. Take, for example, the name of the artist group *Kanak Attack* from Germany. It was founded in the 1990s, when racist Germans called people from southern Europe "Kanakanen". Also the term "queer" has been reclaimed in this way – it used to be an insult and is now used by people who don't fit into the male/female binary.

Instruction: Make burgers! At the end of a game of PLAYING UP you will surely be hungry. This is why you should play this card last. Note that for making burgers you don't necessarily need meat. While you prepare them, share your experiences: How was PLAYING UP gender for you? Have you ever been called names like Travis was? When the burgers are ready, take the first bite together and commit to never looking away when people like Travis are attacked.