"Performance Art"

A Mode of Communication

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Abstract

This paper is a phenomenological approach to the field of performance art. It is a qualitative study based on observations and interviews. The aim is to understand how and why do artists use performance art. The empirical result shows that artists use performance art to challenge what art is. The study explains how artists use performance art as a mode of communication, a communication based on using the voice in different modes. Through using an electronic filtered voice, the artists capture the audience's attention and at the same time they challenge their own narrative and presence. Performance art is seen as a mode of communication, which constitutes a social structure within communities. The study finds that the artists generate an existential and political awareness for their audience.

Keywords: Performance Art · Phenomenological Sociology · Verbal Art · Social Structure

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1. Introduction

This paper is about performance art. It is about an artistic form of communication that constitutes a social structure within communities. There seems to be few sociological studies about performance art, therefore, my aim is to move closer to an understanding of an art world that has challenged what art is all about. Through using Patrik Aspers's (2001) phenomenological approach, which is a systematic way to specify a research question between theory and empirical material, I developed four questions to make a better understanding of the art world: What is a performance artist; what is a performance audience; how do performance artists communicate with the audience; and why do artists communicate through performance art.

By communicating with performance artists and following their work, we can reach a closer understanding what may distinguish them from other artists in other art worlds. This also means that we have to ask the audience because their experiences become important in understanding the social interaction between artist and audience. The task ahead is to find out what a performance artist is and why he or she works with performance art, and how is the audience involved in the social interchange. Moreover, my aim is to make a contribution to sociology of art. In contrast to earlier sociological studies of art performed by Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) and Howard Becker, based on the production and consumption of the arts, the field of performance art is traditionally not about goods that can be bought or sold. It is about an artistic language that challenges our social world. Therefore, I argue that it is of great interest to study the field of performance art.

I find the field of performance art interesting due to its willingness to challenge boundaries, both cultural and political. It is an art form that illuminates issues of conflict, self-awareness and fellowship. There is a dialog between the artist and the audience that is powerful. It allows people to take part in the development of the social world. Ideas, which are the fundamental of performance art influence people, therefore, I argue the art world of performance is important in constructing a social world.

1.1 Outline of the text

First I will introduce the *history and development* of performance art. Second, I will bring in theories about *verbal art as a mode of communication*, developed by the anthropologist Richard Bauman (1975). Thereafter, I will present *phenomenological sociology* focusing on an empirical phenomenology, including presenting the methods. Moreover, I will answer my questions with the *empirical findings* and analyze them with theory. Finally, I will take the discussion further and suggest *new questions* to upcoming studies.

1.2 Limitations

Note that this is a broad assumption, but the study is narrowed down to four questions; what is a performance artist; what is a performance audience; how do performance artists communicate with their audiences and why do artists communicate through performance art. These questions will point in a direction and lay ground for my upcoming master thesis in sociology. I have reached closer to an understanding of the field of performance art through a phenomenological approach and there are many paths to choose, but these four questions I argue will be a start to take sociology of art further.

2. The Field of Performance Art

In this chapter I will present the history and development of performance art. It will be useful in understanding the art form and important in answering what a performance artist is. The literature survey is based on the works by Roselee Goldberg, Anthony Howell, A.A Bronson and Peggy Gale among others. Their writings on performance art will take us closer in understanding the art world. Furthermore, the current performance artist Marina Abramović, who performs at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, gives her view on the performance scene today.

2.1 The development of a new art world

Performance art is a term that was coined in the 1960s in the United States. It is referred to as a nontraditional art form usually having a political or topical theme that typically features a live presentation to an audience and draws on such arts as acting, poetry, music, dance, and painting (Goldberg 2001). It is usually an event rather than an artifact (Howell 1999). The 1960s offered Happenings[1], Body art[2], and Fluxus concerts[3] among other terms that were experimental in different art worlds (Bronson & Gale 1979). Performance art is closely identified with the progress of the avant-garde[4], beginning with Futurism[5]. The Futurists are famous for their attempt to revolutionize culture included performative evenings of poetry, music played on newly invented instruments, and a form of drastically distilled dramatic presentation (Goldberg 2001). The art of Futurist events were along the way refined by artists of the Dada[6] movement, who made great use of live art. Both Futurists and Dadaists worked to overcome the barrier between actor and performer, and both took advantage on the publicity value of shock and outrage (Schimmel 1998). An early theorist in avant-garde theatre was the German artist Oskar Schlemmer, who taught at

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[1] A happening is usually a situation considered as art and is often multidisciplinary. It is about improvisation (Goldberg 2001).
[2] Body art is part of performance art but focus mainly on the body. Artists use or abuse their own body to make their particular statements (Bronson & Gale 1979).
[3] Fluxus means to flow and is an international network of artists, composers and designers famous for blending different artistic media and disciplines in the 1960s (Howell 1999).
[4] Avant-garde is considered to be artists who led the field in breaking with each successive tradition. Goldberg says that performance artists could be called avant avant-garde artists (Goldberg 2001:7).
[5] *Futurism is known as* an artistic and social movement that was formed in Italy in the early twenty century. The Futurists has a broad practice in any kind of medium of art (Goldberg 2001).
[6] Dada laid out the ground for abstract art and sound poetry, which became a starting point for performance art and influenced pop art (Lowenthal 2007).

the Bauhaus[7] from 1920 to 1929 and is perhaps best known for *Das Triadische Ballet* that called for complex movements and elaborated costumes (Goldberg 2001).

Following, important developments in performance art occurred in the United States after World War II. In 1952, at Black Mountain College (1933–1957) in North Carolina, the experimental composer John Cage[8] (1912-1992) organized an event that included performances by the choreographer and dancer Merce Cunningham, the poet Charles Olson, and the artist Robert Rauschenberg, among others (Goldberg 2001, Howell 1999). They pushed traditional disciplinary boundaries and this influential event set a pattern for Happenings and Fluxus activities and provided a drive for much of the live art of the following decade. In the 1960s and 1970s, performance art was characterized by improvisation, spontaneity, audience interaction, and political protest. It also became a favorite strategy of many feminist artists, such as the gorilla-masked Guerilla Girls, whose mission was to expose sexism, racism, and corruption (Goldberg 2001).

2.2 New directions in the performance scene

Conceptual art in the seventies insisted on an art of ideas over product, and on an art that could not be bought and sold. Performance was often a demonstration, or an execution, of those ideas (Howell 1999). Goldberg describes that performance *"has been considered as a way of bringing to life the many formal and conceptual ideas on which the making of art is based"* (2001:7). Her description of performance art summons up some important features that the art form rests upon.

> Performance has been a way of appealing directly to a large public, as well as
> shocking audiences into reassessing their own notions of art and its relation to
> culture... Unlike theatre, the performer *is* the artist, seldom a character like an actor,
> and the content rarely follows a traditional plot or narrative. The performance might

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[7] Bauhaus that was founded in 1919, included a theatre workshop to explore dimensions of space, sound and light (Goldberg 2001).
[8] John Cage is famous for his composition 4'33" (1952), in which he stayed quiet for four minutes and thirty-three seconds. It became very controversial though the sound mostly consisted of the environment. He was ground breaking in introducing silence in a performance, which has inspired many artists (Kostelanetz 2003*). Cage describes his composition:*

"They missed the point. There's no such thing as silence. What they thought was silence, because they didn't know how to listen, was full of accidental sounds. You could hear the wind stirring outside during the first movement. During the second, raindrops began patterning the roof, and during the third the people themselves made all kinds of interesting sounds as they talked or walked out" *(Cage 1952 in* Kostelanetz 2003:70).

be a series of intimate gestures or large-scale visual theatre, lasting from a few minutes to many hours; it might be performed only once or repeated several times, with or without a prepared script, spontaneously improvised, or rehearsed over many months.

(Goldberg 2001:8)

Performance can be understood as a *presence* for the artist in society, which can be expressed in obscure, shamanistic, instructive, provocative or entertaining forms (Goldberg 2001). It can be seen as an *"open-ended medium with endless variables, executed by artists impatient with the limitations of more established forms, and determined to take their art directly to the public. For this reason its base has always been anarchy"* (2001:9). It is unwise to find a *strict* definition because it would then negate the possibility of performance itself (2001). However, one thing that all performance artists have in common is the fact that the performance has to be live.

Gustav Tegby, a dramatist from Riksteatern in Stockholm argues that the term *performance art* is blurred and linguistically complex. In Swedish, it may be difficult to talk about performance art wherein the same term in English contains more descriptions and is looser. It does not close out other interpretations and does not stigmatize the term in a similar manner. Performance art has in some cases become a caricature of the art form. *"The difference from theater is that it has a higher degree of representation"* (Tegby 2010). There are various symbols of the two branches. Each branch has its own symbolic value but performance art's symbolism lies closer to everyday life. In many cases, performance art can be understood as a storytelling about the everyday life experiences as it promotes awareness, political and/or spiritual.

2.3 Performance goes mainstream

Marina Abramović is one of the leading performance artists that have been active from the very beginning of the art form's birth, still performing today. She has set up earlier performances, one of the more famous played out in Naples one evening in 1974. She had set up a table with 72 items (sugar, salt, a fork, a whip, a loaded gun, etc), which the audience was able to use on her during six hours. During the act, members of the audience took off her blouse and pointed the loaded gun to her head. Moreover, she and her former husband performed the act *The Lovers* (1976) in which they walked from opposite

directions of the Great Wall of China and met after three months in the middle and ended their relationship.

In her ongoing performance *The artist is present* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, she sets up an exercise in being present, an attempt to forget time. She says: *"Forget time with me, because the present is escaping us"* (Abramović 2010). Her work is unique because it challenges the art form that she was part of creating. Traditionally, performance art has been built on the fact that it is not supposed to be reconstructed or documented in such way that it is turned into a commercial market. In spite of this, Abramović in her new performance, enters the museum world with numerous of her old performance acts, which are re-performed by other artists, lasting over three moths at the Museum of Modern Art. Through increased distribution of the performance scene, she believes it is about giving performance art a longer life and the same rights as other art forms. There have been problems to referring to previous performance acts and acknowledge their creators. It is a way to modernize performance art. In its history, performance was not meant for reproduction and artists argued that there is no way one could re-perform an act because it would not be the same as the original version. Abramović argues that it is selfish, to bring a work into the grave (2010). She wants to make performance art mainstream and find ways to rebuild and preserve earlier performance work. She thinks it is her duty to teach and spread performance experience to younger generations. She wants to preserve the legacy of performance art (Abramović 2010).

3. Theory

As we have seen, the field of performance art is wide and it is complex to find a clear definition to the term *performance art*. However, it is important to understand that it is an art form that is performed *live* by *artists*. I will in this chapter lay out my four questions and connect them with theory. To start out I will describe theories about the artist and the audience based on the works by Vera L. Zolberg, Becker and Bourdieu. Thereafter, I will present Richard Bauman's theory about verbal art as performance, which is derived from work in folklore, sociolinguistics, literary stylistics and the ethnography of speaking. His theories will be useful in understanding how and why artists communicate through performance art.

3.1 Theories about the artist

Alienation, genius, neuroticism, otherness, and similar terms have become stereotypical characterizations for artists (Zolberg 1990:115). Different disciplines have different understandings of the artist, and therefore, an artist can be viewed in various ways. For aestheticians the artist is uniquely gifted and essentially alienated from routine life. *"Aestheticians believe that the great artist is exceptional and cannot be analyzed simply as if he were merely one of a type"* (1990:115). Unlike crafts workers[9], artisans, or commercial artists, the artist makes things that are not instrumentally useful; instead his or her work is related with spiritual realms and artistic greatness, sometimes referred to as mystic.

Other disciplines such as social psychology see the artist as a creative individual or intellectual of reasonably ability who engages in learning, problem-solving or problem-seeking projects. Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) tries to connect an artist's work to his psychic life, especially in childhood. Generally, whereas all human children are capable of

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[9] Howard S. Becker contribution to sociology of art is namely developed in his famous Art Worlds (1982). He has written among other things how crafts can become art, and vice verse.

"Art" and "craft" are two contrasting kinds of aesthetic, work organization, and work ideology, differing in their emphases on the standards of utility, virtuoso skill, and beauty. Activities organized as craft can become art when members of established art worlds take over their media, techniques, and organizations. Conversely, through increased academicism or subordination of traditional art concerns to exigencies that arise outside an art world, activities organized as art can become craft" (Becker 1978:862).

producing childish fantasies, most merely repress them; neurotics are unable to control them; but creative individuals are able to use them to achieve psychic balance by subjectively, or redirect them into creative channels (Freud 1932).

The sociology of art takes as its object the totality of relations *between the artist and the other artist, and* beyond them, the totality of actors engaged in the production of the *social value* of the work (critics, gallery directors, patrons, etc). Pierre Bourdieu and Howard S. Becker have performed major studies about art in society. They both argue that art is socially constructed. Becker's studies of art focus on the *process* whereby art happens or comes about. He shows convincingly that it is not, as in the romantic myth, the spontaneous action of a genius, but the collective action of a variety of social actors, many of who are not usually designated as artists (Becker 1982). Becker says that it is necessary to consider the artist as being involved in an artistic division of labor in which one may play social roles, not all of which are specifically artistic (1982). He sees art as a collective process that, without supporting personnel, may not lead to public expression.

> All artistic works, like all human activity, involves the joint activity of a number, often a large number, of people. Through their cooperation, the artwork we eventually see or hear comes to be and continues to be. The work always shows signs of that cooperation.
>
> (Becker 1982:1)

Bourdieu's study of cultural production built on his own terms *habitus, capital* and *field* generated a sociological understanding of the artist as a member of cultural production. He describes how the artist aims to be autonomous and concentrates on the artist's art production.

> The pure intention of the artist is that of a producer who aims to be autonomous, that is, entirely the master of his product, who tends to reject not only the 'programmers' imposed *a priori* by scholars and scribes, but also…the interpretations superimposed *a posteriori* on his work.
>
> (Bourdieu [1979] 1984:3)

The question of how someone becomes an artist is puzzling to scholars in different ways, according to their disciplinary orientation. Scholarships on patronage, politics, and cultural policy indicate that the ideology, cultural policy, and politics of different support structures

have varying affects, the kinds and styles of art created by artists, as well as on the artists themselves (Zolberg 1990). These processes clarify how and why people are drawn to become artists, by what means they are selected, though what agents or agencies, the nature and path of their career, what they create, and how they survive in the field (Crane 1978:57).

3.2 Theories about the audience

The audiences as we have seen are vital for the performance artist; therefore, we need to understand who they are. No matter how much artists claim to be unconcerned about audience, they are obliged to gain their favor (Zolberg 1990). First, cultural support, creation, distribution, and reception are not simply processes of economic exchange, but symbolic ones as well. Second, neither actor on the either side of the relationship is simply a passive receiver, but interacts with other in the process of negotiation, selection, and conflict. Third, just as artists themselves gain or lose standing depending upon the prestige of the support structure, the quality of the audience and the value placed on the art form, audiences, too, have much at stake as a result of their artistic choices (Howell 1999). The drive of the audience is built on expectations of what they may acquire from contact with the artist. Their expectations may include intellectual challenge, aesthetic stimulation, moral instruction, emotional experiences, or entertainment (Zolberg 1990).

Dora Garcia, a Spanish performance artist that recently performed in Stockholm has an interesting perspective in which she sometimes uses actors; to read her texts meanwhile she herself is a member of the audience. She means that she has greater control of her work in this way (Garcia 2010). To escape from the ego, self-consciousness on the scene, she makes use of actors performing her work. Garcia also suggests that the idea that art is for everyone is not without complexity. If the audience gets too big, more people will misunderstand what you want to say (2010). However, she points out that without audience, there would be no performance art. They are essential to the artist. The audience plays a role as a CO-creator of the act and is just as important as the performer in the act. I will now extend my first question *what is an audience* and point specifically to a performance audience. The new extended question is; what is an audience and how do they experience performance art. In short, what is a performance audience. This question will be answered with my empirical findings in chapter five.

3.3 Theories about verbal art

Further I will theorize the questions; how do performance artists communicate with their audiences and why do performance artists communicate through performance art. There will be no direct answer in this chapter to these questions, but it will make us understand how performance artists modes of communication may affect communities and constitute social structures. However, I will answer these questions more specifically in the next chapter when applying my empirical findings.

Bauman (1975) discusses the pattering of performance in acts, roles, genres and events. His work aims to understand quality of performance, how it can be manifested in text, events and even in social structure. Noteworthy, a conception of verbal art as performance is based *"upon an understanding of performance as a mode of speaking"* (Bauman & Sherzer 1974:290).

> The term performance...conveyed a dual sense of artistic action–the doing of folklore–and artistic event–the performance situation, involving performer, art form, audience, and setting–both of which are central to the developing performance approach to folklore… Performance...is a unifying thread tying together the marked, segregated esthetic genres and other spheres of verbal behavior into a general unified conception of verbal art as a way of speaking.
>
> (Bauman 1975:290-291)

Some linguists argue that verbal art *"in some way deviates from norms which we, as members of society, have learnt to expect in the medium used"* (Leech 1969:56; cf. Stankiewicz 1960:12), while others of their colleagues make a point of the *"multiplicity of additional formal laws restricting the poet's free choice of expressions"* (Fónagy 1965:72). Their approach is text centered. This may not be the product of performance.

> By identifying the nature of performance and distinguishing it from other ways of speaking, we will have, among other things, a measure of the authenticity of collected oral literary texts. A performance-centered conception of verbal art calls for an approach through performance itself. In such an approach, the formal manipulation of linguistic features is secondary to the nature of performance, per se, conceived of and defined as a mode of communication.

Artistic performance is based on the idea that there is something going on in the communicative interchange, which means that you do not have to understand every word that is spoken to follow the context (Bauman 1975:292). In this sense, performance represents an interpretative frame within which the messages being communicated are to be understood, and that this frame contrasts with at least one other frame, the literal (1975:292).

> Fundamentally, performance as a mode of spoken verbal communication consists in the assumption of responsibility to an audience for a display of communicative competence. This competence rests on the knowledge and ability to speak in socially appropriate ways.
>
> (Bauman 1975:293)

Framing performance is accomplished through the employment of culturally conventionalized metacommunication[10]. *"In empirical terms, this means that each speech community will make use of a structured set of distinctive communicative means among its resources in culturally conventionalized and culture-specific ways to key the performance frame, such that all communication that takes place within that frame is to be understood as performance within that community"* (Bauman 1975:295). These frames may consist of special prosodic patterns of *tempo*, *stress*, *pitch*, etc (special paralinguistic patterns of voice quality and vocalization) (1975:295).

Bauman points out that art *"is commonly conceived as an all-or-nothing phenomenon–something either is or is not art–but conceived as performance, in terms of an interpretive frame, verbal art may be culturally defined as varying in intensity as well as range"* (1975:297). There is no point in speaking about good or bad performance, but instead; *"the degree of intensity with which the performance frame operates in a particular range of culturally defined ways of speaking"* (1975:297).

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[10] According to Bateson's term metacommunication "any message which either explicitly or implicitly defines a frame, ipso facto gives the receiver instructions or aids in his attempt to understand the messages included within the frame" (Bateson 1972:188).

3.4 Verbal art as social structure

Bauman is also taking on a more sociological approach besides text and event structure. He uncovers a third kind of structure emergent in performance, namely, *social structure*. *"There is an important line of inquiry in contemporary sociology which concerns itself with the creation of social structures in the course of and through all social interaction"* (1975:304). He is referring to Raymond Firth's (1901-2002) articulation of the distinction between social structure and *social organization*. Social structure is an *"abstract conception of ideal patterns of group relations, of conventional expectations and arrangements"* (Bauman 1975:304). Social organization on the other hand in Firth's term;

> ...is the domain of variation from what has happened in apparently similar circumstances in the past...Structural forms set a precedent and provide a limitation to the range of alternatives possible...but it is the possibility of alternatives that makes for variability. A person chooses, consciously or unconsciously, which course he will follow.
>
> (Firth 1961:40)

However, in Firth's formulation *"the centrality of situated social interaction as the context in which social organization, as an emergent, takes form"* is missing according to Bauman (1975:304). He is then turning to the work of Harold Garfinkel, Aaron Cicourel, and Harvey Sacks (1935-1975), who argue that the field of sociological analysis is *"anywhere the sociologist can obtain access and can examine the way the 'social structure' is a meaningful ongoing accomplishment of members"* (Phillipson 1972:162). They find the recognition that language is a basic means through which social realities are intersubjectively constituted and communicated (1972:140). In this perspective, *"performance is conceived as communicative interaction, the social structure of the interaction developing from the interaction itself"* (Bauman 1975:304).

> It is part of the essence of performance that it offers to the participants a special enhancement of experience, bringing with it a heightened intensity of communicative interaction which binds the audience to the performer in a way that is specific to performance as a mode of communication.
>
> (Bauman 1975:305)

4. Phenomenological Sociology As Method

In this chapter I will discuss how I collected my empirical material. I have used a phenomenological[11] approach, which is a qualitative method. In short, it is based on interviews and observations. It offers a close understanding of the phenomenon and gives the subject a high degree of participation in the study. Phenomenological sociology aims to understand and analytically describe acts of individuals' intentional consciousness. The object to be study is the meaningful lived world of everyday life, also called *Life-World*. It is important to address that this approach is built on subjectivism[12], which stands in contrast to objectivism[13]. It was Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) that introduced the term and it can be described as an epistemological springboard for phenomenological analysis. The lifeworld is the fundamental for all epistemological enquiries in Husserl's meaning and in *Crisis of European Science* (1954) he presents the idea of the lifeworld.

> The 'lifeworld' is a grand theatre of objects variously arranged in space and time relative to perceiving subjects, is already-always there, and is the "ground" for all shared human experience.
>
> (Husserl [1954] 1970:142)

His theory of the lifeworld became a start for the phenomenological sociology of Alfred Schütz (1899-1959). Schütz tried to build a bridge between Husserl's phenomenology of consciousness, his view of *meaning* and the *lifeworld* with Max Weber's[14] (1864-1920)

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[11] I will point out that in this paper I have chosen to study phenomenology sociology of Husserl and Schütz. However, Patrik Aspers suggests that there is a second road to phenomenology sociology where the German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) in contrast to Husserl "argues that our lifeworld is the starting point of any knowledge, and this means that man is essentially constituted as being together with other men"...In short Husserl "brackets the lifeworld in order to get to true knowledge" (Aspers 2010:214).

[12] The premise of subjectivism is the understanding and explanation of social phenomena in terms of psychological dispositions of individuals. Many sociologists claim that subjectivism is reductionism, which is a term that describes "forms of explanation which are inappropriate to the things they attempt to explain. For example, explaining institutions as individual rather than social creations" (Layder [1994] 2006:308-9).

[13] The essence in objectivism referring to theories of action is that there is little or non "connection to the level of meaning of the actors about whom the theories have been developed; little connects the ends, means, beliefs, and intentions of the actors to the theoretical constructs of the researcher" (Aspers 2001:162).

[14] In sociology one commonly refer to the three classics namely, Karl Marx (1818-1883), Émile Durkheim (1858-1917) and Max Weber. Their theories laid the foundation of sociology. Max Weber, known for his theory about social action is an important reference in understanding theories of action. He says that:

sociology and its focus on *subjectively meaningful action*. This bridge became a starting point for contemporary phenomenological sociology.

Schütz in contrast to Husserl takes intersubjectivity[15] for granted, like many other sociologists, and is therefore not concerned with its complexity (Aspers 2001:174). Schütz says that one should start out from the premise of the *"intentional conscious experience directed towards the other self"* (Schütz [1932] 1976:144). In short, the empirical material that is collected by the researcher "is the mental content of peoples' natural attitude" (Aspers 2001:174). Aspers argues that the empirical material of the social scientists is what people in the everyday life take for granted (2001:174). This becomes important because we can start to question things we usually would take for granted. In understanding the performance artist, I argue that this is one of the most crucial points of departure, because their message is about the conflict in the everyday life, challenging what is taken for granted and through their art illuminate new questions about the social world.

Schütz sets up two distinctive futures of the problem of the phenomenological sociology: How should one collect empirical material based upon the actor's perspective; and second how to produce valid scientific knowledge based upon the actor's perspective (Schütz 1962:3-5; Aspers 2001:175). He sets up four postulates to solve these problems.

"[Sociology is]...the science whose object is to interpret the meaning of social action and thereby give a causal explanation of the way in which the action proceeds and the effects which it produces. By 'action' in this definition is meant the human behaviour when and to the extent that the agent or agents see it as subjectively meaningful...the meaning to which we refer may be either (a) the meaning actually intended either by an individual agent on a particular historical occasion or by a number of agents on an approximate average in a given set of cases, or (b) the meaning attributed to the agent or agents, as types, in a pure type constructed in the abstract. In neither case is the 'meaning' to be thought of as somehow objectively 'correct' or 'true' by some metaphysical criterion. This is the difference between the empirical sciences of action, such as sociology and history, and any kind of priori discipline, such as jurisprudence, logic, ethics, or aesthetics whose aim is to extract from their subject-matter 'correct' or 'valid' meaning" (Weber [1922] 1991:7).

[15] In philosophy and psychology intersubjectivity describes a condition between subjectivity and objectivity. In phenomenology, intersubjectivity consists of many functions. One perspective is empathy that means experiencing another person as a subject instead of an object, among other objects. This means that one experiences oneself as seen by the other, and understands the world as a shared world instead of one only available to oneself.

"[In the] consciousness of each individuals, and in the overarching community consciousness which has grown up through [social] contact, one and the same world achieves and continuously maintains constant validity as the world which is in part already experience and in part the open horizon of possible experience for all; it is the world as the universal horizon, common to all men, of actually existing things. Each individual, as a subject of possible experiences, has his experience, his aspect, his perceptual interconnections, his alteration of validity, his corrections, etc.; and each particular social group has its communal aspects etc" (Husserl [1954] 1970:163-164, second brackets included in original).

1. *The Postulate of Relevance* – This is in short the determination of the research question. The researcher sets up a scheme of references, built on which theories are adducted (Schütz 1964:18).

2. *The Postulate of Subjective Interpretation* – To explain a social phenomenon, the researcher must describe the mind of an actor, the subjective meaning of the actor (Schütz 1964: 84-85).

3. *The Postulate of Adequacy* – *"It may be formulated as followed: each term used in a scientific system referring to human action must be so constructed that a human act performed within the life-world by an individual actor in the way indicated by the typical construction would be reasonable and understandable for the actor himself as well as for his fellow-man"* (Schütz 1964:19).

4. *The Postulate of Logical Consistency* – *"The system of ideal types must remain in full compatibility with the principles of formal logic"* (Schütz 1964:19*)."By constructing scientific thought objects, such as a model, and by adhering to the principles of formal logic, the social scientist produces knowledge that is objectively valid. This is made possible by stressing clarity and distinctiveness"* (Aspers 2001:176; Schütz 1962:43,64, 1964:19).

> These postulates give the necessary guarantees that social sciences do in fact deal with the real social world, the one and unitary life-world of us all, and not with a strange fancy-world independent of and without connection to this everyday life-world. To go into the details of the typifying method seems to me one of the most important tasks of a theory of action.
>
> (Schütz 1964:19)

4.1 Conducting empirical phenomenology

It is time to present a solution on how to conduct an empirical phenomenology. Following Schütz four postulates Patrik Aspers has tried to solve the problem with empirical phenomenology because neither Husserl nor Schütz developed an empirical solution. Aspers developed this empirical work when he preformed a study of markets in fashion in Sweden (2001). First he explains that *the postulate of relevance* is about deciding what problem is to be studied. In order not too decide to early which theory to use, Aspers provides a prestudy within the field of study. Thereafter, it is possible to choose a

preferable theory and give focus to the study. Then, *the postulate of subjective interpretation* becomes relevant in understanding the actor's first-order constructs. This means that the *"researcher must explicate the actor's meaning structure and the ideal types they themselves use within their natural attitude"* (2001:183). Moreover, the researcher conducts a second-order constructs, which is problematic in the sense that they *"must be understandable to the actors within the field"* and *"they must be connected with existing scientific theory"* (2001:183). This is understood from *the postulate of adequacy*. Finally, *the postulate of logical consistency* lays out when you have decided to stick to a scheme of reference and then is able to stress clarity and distinctiveness to your phenomenon. In short, you as a researcher can connect the lifeworld with the world of theories. Ideal types [16] become important for the researcher in constructing an understanding of the subject. Hence, that the subject perspective in social science is about reaching the understanding and the meaning, which are decided by the actor, not the researcher. To stress this further, Schütz means that a social phenomenon is to be understood from the motives[17] of the actors (1964:12). The researcher starts off to understand the actors' motives to create ideal types. However, the level of meaning can vary because it is a complex situation to reach a *clear* understanding of actors meaning.

> The actors meaning is to some extent lost in the scientific process, even if one uses the phenomenological approach. That is because the researcher can never be like the actors, and the actors in the field are never identical. The process of creating second-order constructs involves some loss of meaning, but still there is a tremendous difference between the phenomenological researcher and the objectivist one when it comes to scientific approach. Most of the difference can be seen in light of what constitutes an explanation according to the different perspectives.
>
> (Aspers 2001:180)

The process moves from the subjective level of the actor's first-order constructs to the objective level of the second-order constructs (Aspers 2001:185). This process may generate new theories. Acts normally have both intended and unintended consequences and the researcher may be able to present a *new* picture of the actor's lifeworld (2001:187). Findings of unintended effects become interesting to the actors as a result of the research,

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[16] Max Weber developed the ideal type, which is the construction of hypothetical concepts in the abstract. It means that ideal type is a subjective element in social theory and research.
[17] "A motive is a complex of subjective meaning which seems to the actor himself or to the observer an adequate ground for the conduct in question" (Weber [1921-22] 1978:11).

and what; *"actors see as uninteresting may be very interesting to the researcher, because they have different horizons of interest"* (2001:186). Finally, one must understand that *phenomenology* does not offer a clear empirical method. Therefore, I will further discuss my empirical process and present which methodological tools I have used to conduct an *empirical* phenomenology.

4.2 Entering the field of performance

I will shortly describe how I conducted a phenomenological approach inspired by Aspers's (2001) study of markets in fashion. At first I wanted to write about the music scene because I myself am a songwriter and perform live. However, I felt that I was too close to the field of study so I decided to turn to performance art, which in many cases are closely related to music scene. So I began to talk with friends who were part of the performance scene and through them and performance acts I visited, I developed a closer understanding of the art form. I conducted a prestudy, which generated many different directions that I found interesting, but the one I found most exciting was the artists' modes of communication, how they used the voice as a powerful instrument. I then found theories about verbal art from the anthropologist Richard Bauman (1975) who studied verbal art as performance in different communities. Then I focused on two performance acts, one in Umeå and the other one in Uppsala. I interviewed artists and members of the audience and bracket the theories. The second-order constructs I reached by sharing my writing with the artists I had interviewed to see if they recognized their lifeworld, which I have tried to describe. This is crucial for a phenomenological approach. The actors are supposed to recognize themselves, thereby understand the discussion by the researcher. Afterward I checked for unintended effects and applied the empirical evidence with the theories that are presented in the analysis in the next chapter.

4.3 Observation

I have been participating in five performances during my study (including prestudy). I have visited three cities in Sweden, Umeå, Uppsala, and Stockholm. An interesting point is that before I turned to the field of performance art I imagined a higher degree of participation. Much of the shows I had read about referred to a high degree of participation from the audience: By participation I mean that you physically would be interacting in the

performances and steer the act in some direction. The performances I participated in had a low degree of participation on the stage, but a strong psychological connection between the artist and the audience (including myself). So in a way, I would call it a participant observation[18]. I also argue in studying performance art from a qualitative perspective, participant observation is necessary, due to its tradition that performance can only be understood live. You have to be present, unless you only have a strict theoretical approach.

When conducting a participant observation it often includes interviews to move closer to the actors' meaning. However, when using observations and interviews there is always a risk of loosing contact and misinterpret the actors. To understand another individual is always problematic for social scientists, due to the actor versus the scientist. Anthony Giddens, a leading contemporary sociologist, addresses one essential problem in social science, *double hermeneutic*. Giddens says:

> The sociologist has a field of study phenomena which are already constituted as meaningful. The condition of 'entry' to this field is getting to know what actors already know, and have to know, to 'go on' in the daily activities of social life. The concepts that sociological observers invent are 'second-order' concepts in so far as they presume certain conceptual capabilities on the part of the actors to whose conduct they refer. But it is in the nature of social science that these can become 'first-order' concepts by being appropriated within social life itself.

(Giddens 1984:284)

I argue that Aspers's empirical phenomenological approach solves this problem when dealing with *the postulate of adequacy*. The lifeworld of the actor and the scientist's schemes of references are understood both-ways. This I mean is ideal in social science. Thus, it can be criticized for missing the big picture, and only understand a micro-perspective, and not participating in a generalizing social science. Following I will present my interviews and how I have analyzed them.

4.4 Interview

I have interviewed five active performance artists, three individuals working or having worked within theatre and seven members of the audience. The table below shows the

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[18] For anthropologists and social scientists, participant observation is a method in which a researcher takes part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routines and their culture (DeWalt, M. & DeWalt, R. 2002).

informants in number. I chose to interview individuals from the theatre because it is a close relationship between the two art worlds. I find it interesting how members from the theatre scene understand performance art in contrast to their own art world.

Table 1

Artists	Theatre	Audience
V	III	VII

Note: The table shows how many from each category that has been interviewed, including my prestudy.[19]

After each performance I picked up vibes from members of the audience and took notes. Then, I followed up more intensive interviews both with the artists and members of the audience. I also sent out an email to collect thoughts from the audience after the performances, a follow-up. In most cases I taped and transcribed (including translated some interviews from Swedish to English) the whole interview. Some of the interviews were carried out more rapidly in which I used my notebook. I have also used interviews of Laurie Anderson and Marina Abramović from magazines and TV-shows, which I found on the Internet. This material will lay ground for my analysis in the next chapter.

I had planed to film some performances but due to the rights it was problematic. It had of course given me better understanding of the performances afterwards but due to performance art's complex nature maybe it would have taken me in a wrong direction. I mean, that it is understood by what is happening at the moment, the tension and the happening in the very present of the environment. Performance artists usually argue that documentation in form of video recording, does neglect the definition of performance art (Goldberg 2001, Abramović 2010). However, I have been able to see short clips of Laurie Anderson's performance *Delusion* on YouTube, which afterward have been fruitful to gain a better understanding of the performance act.

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[19] I will clarify how I chose to analyze these categories. As I discussed in chapter three the artist and the audience has been analyzed from different perspectives. However, one could take the discussion further and exploring other dimensions of being an artist or an audience. These may be fruitful questions in upcoming studies.

5. Empirical Findings

I will now analyze my empirical material with the theories from chapter three. In doing so, I will try to answer my questions, but first I will short present the two performance acts by Imri Sandström and Laurie Anderson. The other three performances I participated in was part of my prestudy, which guided me to study the mode of communication in performance art. My questions rose from the result of my observations and interviews, which I then used as a frame, observing Sandström and Anderson's performances.

I saw Imri Sandström's [20] performance *Me and my mother. A conversation between Imri Sandström, Anita Sandström and texts by Sara Lidman,* at BildMuseet[21] in Umeå, Sweden. The performance is a celebration of the Swedish author Sara Lidman. Combining recorded voice with live voice, singing, music and pictures Sandström created an interesting conversation between herself and her mother (a phone-call that was recorded) about the spread of HIV and AIDS and the apartheid in Johannesburg, South Africa.

The second performance act took place at the performance art festival in Uppsala, Sweden, called TUPP 2010[22]. They managed to capture many interesting artists, not least, Laurie Anderson[23] who is a well-known multi-artist. Along with Marina Abramović and other artists, she helped form and develop the performance scene in the late sixties. Her performance *Delusion* takes you on a journey, led by her own violin, *The talking stick*[24], which has become one of her hallmarks. She uses a poetic language meanwhile she walks or sits, surrounded by projections that magnify her and turn her into a small silhouette of a forest of grass. Sometimes her voice distorted to her male alter ego, the socially critical historian Fenway Bergamot as its dystopian comments gives ironic distance to grief. Her longing for a mother's love she never knew and that she now projected at a dog that symbolically is born from her own body. Autumn leaves singles while Anderson throws

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[20] Note that Imri and I are not related. (Sandström 2010) are Imri's words.
[21] This performance was part of the Sara Lidman Day. Sara Lidman (1923-2004) is a well-known author and has become a symbol of Västerbotten a region of northern Sweden.
[22] This is the second time TUPP is produced in Uppsala. Their aim is to challenge and develop the Swedish art scene in offering the audience a wide range of interesting artists, mainly performance artists.
23 Laura Phillips "Laurie" Anderson (1947) is an American performance artist and musician. Trained in traditionally sculpturing, she performed hers first performance act in the late 1960s following up major performance acts during throughout 1970s (May 2002).
[24] The talking stick is a wireless instrument that can access and replicate any sound. It works on the principle of granular synthesis. This is the technique of breaking sound into tiny segments, called grains, and then playing them back in different ways.

herself between memories, dreams and reflections on one's own identity has to be reconciled with the idea that your ancestors were not at all sophisticated, but fairy believer, alone, Nordic souls. Moreover, she speaks about how people claim the moon for their own purposes[25] – as colonizers of America. She puts a wedge of humor and politics in the personal, but the basic chord melancholy turns around the question: How to continue, what drives us to continue despite our mortality?

The results of these performances built on interviews from the artists and the audience shall now be presented. I will answer my four questions; what is a performance artist; what is an audience and how do they experience performance art; how do performance artists communicate with their audience; and why do artists communicate through performance art. I have reached this result by coding my empirical material, transcribed from taped interviews, notes and emails. Note that most of the interviews were in Swedish, which I afterward have been directly translated to U.S. English. The interviews from Anderson (2007; 2008; 2010) and Abramović (2010) have been conducted by others which I have taken part of. After answering these questions I will summarize them at the end of each question.

5.1 What is a performance artist

The performance artist can best be described as an individual who is engaged in a learning, problem-solving or problem-seeking project. It is about *challenge*; challenge the *self* and the environment. The term *challenge* has been the most common use for the artists I have interviewed. However, it is not necessarily about challenging traditional political conflicts, but challenging oneself and the audience to be *more* aware of its surroundings, both political and existential. In contrast to other artists one big different is about challenge. Certainly there exist many artists, which challenge themselves in similar ways but do not call themselves performance artists. As some of the informants argue unlike the actor in theatre, the performer is the *artist* (Tegby 2010; Stenberg 2010, Sandström 2010). Though, understanding the performance artist is about understanding the importance of challenging something, the subject or the object in different types of lifeworlds.

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[25] "I mean, there's so much silliness surrounding moon real-estate between the Americans and the Russians, and others—yes, the Italians included—but there is an actual lawsuit, just as I tell it in the show. It's fascinating and just so bizarre. I picked this up after my time at NASA [as the space agency's first and so far only artist-in-residence, between 2004 and 2005], but I was kind of more tuned in to what was going on after working there, and I was certainly interested in following this particular thing up" (Anderson 2010).

> - Performance allows you to perform crazy acts and challenge your own being. It raises questions about what you can do, what ideas are allowed to be realized.
>
> (Stenberg 2010)

However, the term performance art contains conflict. Therefore, Sandström uses the term carefully. Instead of using the term *performance artist* or as Laurie Anderson *multimedia artist*, she says: *"I'd rather use the term interdisciplinary artist or simply artist"* (Sandström 2010). It is difficult with terms she means, but she is determined that performance art is all about a live situation that challenges something.

> - Something that has to do with time. It's there and then it's not there/.../I think that it does not even need a performer for a performance is to take place/.../it can still be a performance.
>
> (Sandström 2010)

Sandström explains that she, as an artist, does not identify herself with the feminist movement, which traditionally some women performance artists expressed in their acts. She believes that it can be awkward to use the concept of performance art because it is associated with the seventies art scene. In this sense, she sometimes calls her performance for *exhibition*. She is cautious about using the term performance art because it can be linked to the earlier scene, which focused on provocative expressions and political extremes. However, you can use the term she says, depending on the performance.

> - I think what is important is that *nothing* is forbidden. If I'll be honest, I think very little of what is acceptable in artistic terms...I can use the term to point in a certain direction/.../It's like comparing with the broad concept of pop music. It's a good term, but very wide.
>
> (Sandström 2010)

Now maybe there has emerged a new generation of performance artists who do not necessarily follow the same struggles as the active artists in the sixties and seventies. She

does not see her exhibition as a theater, although there is a narrative. Yet she follows a script but sees no problem in making a rehearsed performance. [26]

> - There is no theater, no concert, more of a show. As I said, it is a fluid concept/.../Arts with a script, scene, it can open up for an artist to think from another angle, I think.

> (Sandström 2010)

Moving on to Anderson's performance *Delusion* and some thoughts from the audience. Tegby[27] describes how Laurie Anderson in *Delusion* presents herself on stage. Contrary to the theatre scene, she is not playing a role but instead perform as herself with some bumps (2010). He describes that there is a technical construction that lies between the epics of the show, constructed on a clear depiction of her voice (2010). Compared to the theater, Tegby argues that there is no clear theme in *Delusion*. There is no dramatic whole. He sees Anderson as the *theme*; she is like a biography or narrator (2010). Sandström, who also saw Anderson's performance *Delusion,* means that:

> - She is a storyteller/.../The whole situation becomes a performance. It is here we are now, politically, I mean. The idea of oneself in front of their personality, their identity, their language – that our acts (performances) construct us. It becomes more evident when a person is a performer, then *Is* is a performer. Which she is, she is so incredibly aware of her voice, her language, moods, rhythms, etc.

> (Sandström 2010)

According to Becker (1982) an artist is not, as in the romantic myth, the spontaneous action of a genius, but the collective action of a variety of social actors, many of who are not usually designated as artists. This is what Sandström and Anderson in their acts in someway identify. That art is about a collective awareness, to share ideas and think outside the *given* social world, always stretching it. Anderson (2008) describes herself; as an anthropologist, as a spy who is enthusiastic to understand the *other*.

[*A performance artist challenges him or herself and the environment. In contrast to the actor, who represents someone else, the performance artist is the artist*]

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[26] She had before performing the act in Umeå, performed the act for a small audience. Also, she sees no problem in performing the act on other occasions (Sandström 2010).
[27] Note that Tegby also saw Delusion in Uppsala. The performance was playing 20.00-21.30 from Wednesday to Saturday, 7-10 April 2010.

5.2 What is a performance audience

Members of an audience interact with others in process of negotiation, selection, and conflict. The drive of the audiences is built on expectations of what they may acquire from contact with the artist. Their expectations may include intellectual challenge, aesthetic stimulation, moral instruction, emotional experiences, or entertainment (Zolberg 1990). In this sense, performance art can offer a totality of expressions. The general expression of the two audiences is positive. The different forms of expression, used by the artists, captivated the audience.

> - The call, song, lyrics, music and pictures were woven together and gave thoughts and feelings of time and space/.../to travel/.../Imri's face in the centre, quiet and clean, and intermediary reflective story that had many different voices: man, woman, song, Sara's lyrics – a man's voice reading 'Me and my son.'
>
> (Member of Sandström's Audience)

> - I enjoyed that the show alternated between three voices, two of which were recorded. It made it easier to maintain interest over the longer pieces/.../and the song was a wonderful feature. I think I snatched the first time Imri burst into song, it was so surprising.
>
> (Member of Sandström's Audience)

> - Anderson practiced a kind of quiet anarchy that strikes the viewer's need for control of the fingers. Just when you think you extracted a handy and hands-on existential messages are broken suggestion of a joke, or something flat and artless–noting that the U.S. is governed by psychopaths. We are forced to constantly rethink and think again.
>
> (Member of Anderson's Audience)

The audience is grasped of the way the artists use the voice as a dimension of timelessness, recorded and filtered, and live voice in song and speech. By using different forms of expressions, they describe how the acts become living, interesting and point out a realization of how complex the world is. Members from the two audiences experienced a political awareness, the political situation in Johannesburg in Sandström's performance, and the discussion of ownership in Anderson's.

- Facts about the situation in Africa today, feelings worn by music, voices that crossed in the past and present got me carried away, I just enjoyed and took in what Imri did. My total impression was a realization of how much that is not done for the African people and it is shameful how much time has elapsed without taking action. I also think that Imri's way of dealing with words and tone is very sensitive and lyrical.

(Member of Sandström's Audience)

- The texts from Sarah's book about South Africa "I and my son," the experience of apartheid/.../and about Imri's mom is now in Johannesburg and fighting against the spread of HIV and AIDS. The conversation between mother and daughter of South Africa and today's poverty and class divisions. They talked with each other on the phone, but I still wonder, is Imri's mother really in Johannesburg.

(Member of Sandström's Audience)

- Anderson takes with her authority the large auditorium into possession. Sometimes she distorts her voice electronically, but regardless of which recorded each syllable equally attentive to the focused audience. It depends more on her monumental and a bit eerie presence, than with the substance of what she says. She owns a perfect pitch for linguistic phrasing and melody and I think she could talk about anything – the audience had yet been bewitched.

(Member of Anderson's Audience)

- Technology also played a big role in creating such a powerful persona: the digital manipulation of her voice was virtually instantaneous, which only heightened the contrast between what I was seeing and what I was hearing. Bergamot was the social commentator who couldn't resist making sharp pointed comments about politics and the big stories of the day.

(Member of Anderson's Audience)

They raise questions, which prove that the artists have reached their audiences and affected them in some way. This is the fundamental task for a performance artist, I argue. To evoke ideas and raise questions about the world. I argue that performance art is part of developing and moving beyond socially constructed borders. Abramović (2010), Anderson (2007, 2008, 2010), Goldberg (2001) and others argue that performance art makes sense if it is

live, not as documentation. The audience has to be where it happens and maybe the real documentation is the memory[28] of the audiences and their experiences passed on to their fellow human beings (Abramović 2010).

Another interesting aspect is to perceive the audience as homogeneous. It may be about a class issue, who has the time and money to see a performance in its traditional sense, which often lasted over many hours. Bourdieu's studies of taste, based on interviews, ethnographic studies, and survey data, reveal what others have noted, that upper, middle and working-class people have different preferences in art, as well as in style more generally. In *Distinction* (1979) he analyzes the ways of having aesthetic taste and the qualitative meaning of interpreting art (Bourdieu [1979] 1984:506). In the history of performance art there are numbers of acts that have in a sense being forced on a public. You as a spectator have not always the choice to *not* be part of a performance, in this sense, it can be understood as very provocative. Moreover, it can challenge the idea what an audience is, depending on the act, can the audience consist of any kind of individual. I would dare to say yes because performance art does not need to be understood, only performed.

[*An audience is a gathering of people who in some way interact with an artistic expression in any form. Whether they seek conflict, entertainment or challenge etc, they are dependent of the artist. A member of a performance audience I argue can be anyone. There is no specific audience because you can anytime in the public be part of a performance whether you like it or not. I do not mean that you have to interact directly, but as part of the environment you are in some way part of the performance. In my findings the audience (which chose to be present) has a positive attitude to performance art and has been touched and maybe more aware of the political conflicts that has been presented in the performances, as well as other conflicts*]

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[28] Anderson tells a story in Delusion of how memory came to exist. Before Earth had a ground, there were only birds, birds circling around in the sky. One day a bird died and there was no place or ground to bury the bird, so the other birds buried that bird in their minds. This is how memory came about (Anderson 2010).

5.3 How do performance artists communicate with their audience

The empirical and literary findings show that there are no boundaries and rules of how to communicate with the audience. There are many artists who even crossed serious criminal boundaries and challenge the law.[29] Goldberg describes how a fixed definition of the art form would negate performance art's existence:

> By its very nature, performance defies precise or easy definition beyond the simple declaration that it is live art by artists. Any strict definition would immediately negate the possibility of performance itself.
>
> (Goldberg 2001:9)

Through the boundless expression forms performance artists mixture any kind of artistic attribute. In the performance acts that I have presented in this paper, the artists have used combinations of sound, picture, dance, video, etc, with a focus on the *voice* in different modes. The digital manipulation of the voice is in both performances central. In using the voice as electronically filtered, they can freely use language in different ways. There is a power in the pitched voice, a power that challenges the audience to understand the spoken words in a different mode. Anderson says:

> - If you talk in a different voice you realize that you have different things to say about the world. Different ways of phrasing things. It is different from the voice you use normally, but how do you ask yourself which voice you choose to use, and when? Which one do you talk to your self-with/.../At heart, I'm an anthropologist. I try to jump out of my skin. I normally see the world as an artist first, second as a New Yorker and third as a woman. That's a perspective that I sometimes would like to escape. It's why in my performances I use audio filters to change my voice. That's a way to escape as well.
>
> (Anderson 2007, 2008)

Sandström and Anderson stress what Bauman lists in the use of the language: Patterns of tempo, stress and pitch; which are special paralinguistic patterns of voice quality and

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[29] An example of this is the exhibition called Fuck Off, launched alongside the opening of the 3rd Shanghai Biennale in China 2000. Some off the acts challenged cannibalism and both FBI and Scotland Yard were provoked and performed an investigation of the acts (Berghuis 2006:151-153).

vocalization (1975:295). The patterns of a conversation are an important feature for both Sandström and Anderson.

> - The movement is exciting, speed and movement drives time. The conversation form has a thrilling tempo/.../This can appear in different ways, cut up by creating frames and edges.
>
> (Sandström 2010)

Both Sandström and Anderson are interested in time and change. It is important to focus on the voice, the message and listening, both to oneself and the audience. They both used the filtered voice, which they know is powerful in reaching and evoke awareness. The narrator in *Me and My Mother* (a recorded voice) is Sandström's but it is pitched so it sounds like a man, like a 30-year-old man from Stockholm, she describes (2010). It's funny she says, that her voice in that mode sounds like a person with a dialect from Stockholm, meanwhile her voice in normal mode still rings in the dialect from the north of Sweden. The pitched voice is the ultimate voice. It has power and generates new positions (Sandström 2010). Moreover, Anderson describes her voice in *Delusion* that is called Fenway Bergamot:

> - It is an "audio-drag" filter that I've used since 1978, when I first had to be a master of ceremonies at a [William S.] Burroughs event/.../It was Lou [Reed] who decided to call this character Fenway Bergamot, and as soon as that filter had a name it was almost like I could do something different emotionally with that filter/.../I used to call it "the voice of authority" but now it doesn't have much authority left. It frees me to use language in a more cut-up way.
>
> (Anderson 2010)

The voice appears as the most important medium for these performances, but it is interesting how it is mixed with other expressions. In this way, I argue that they reach the audience in a powerful way. When the voice changes, people become more curious, and then you as a performer can steer the audience focus, attract their attention. This quality, I would say is powerful. When the voice becomes too static, you as a performer can start to sing, dance, play an instrument or express yourself in some other way, and then, bring back the audience's attention. Performance makes the interaction move. Constantly move in new directions.

- When someone tells you a story, whether it's Obama or your brother, you're going to read the thing really differently. This is a whole series of interlocked stories and delusions. There are many, many different ways to tell them, and in many different types of voices. It's not so much deconstructing the story as changing the voice in which they're told. I've realized that the same exact words could be on a page and they could be in a live situation, or in a conversation, they could be the saddest thing you've ever heard, or really callous, or carefree. You can attach a whole lot of things to that.

(Anderson 2010)

Through combinations of artistic forms and styles Sandström and Anderson generate a mode of communication directed to their audiences. As the empirical findings tell us, this mode of communication is indeed a powerful one. They create awareness within their audiences. New meanings and values, new practices, new significances and experiences are continually being created and the performance scene is part in doing so, I argue.

The emergent quality of performance resides in the interplay between communicative resources, individual competence, and the goals of the participants, within the context of particular situations. We consider as resources all those aspects of the communication system available to the members of a community for the conduct of performance.

(Bauman 1975:302)

[*In my empirical findings the voice has been the most visible instrument of discussion. Through using filtered voices, the artists have been able to capture the audiences' attention and at the same time challenge their own narratives and presences*]

5.4 Why do artists communicate through performance art

Artists use performance art because of its loose and abstract definition. It allows them to explore and challenge boundaries between the audience and community, as well as their own identity. Bauman describes that:

Through performance, artists are able to take control of the situation, creating a social structure with themselves at the center. The consideration of the power

inherent in performance to transform social structures opens the way to a range of additional considerations concerning the role of the performer in society.

<div align="right">(Bauman 1975:305)</div>

Through performance art I would argue that artists are able to create social structures, through their modes of communication they generate patterns of group relations. Bauman argues that; *"performance is conceived as communicative interaction, the social structure of the interaction developing from the interaction itself"* (1975:304). Moreover, Kenneth Burke (1897-1993) an American literary theorist and philosopher addresses how through performance, the artist through attention and energy of his or her audience, will allow himself or herself to be caught up in it. The artist gains a measure of *prestige* and *control* over the audience – prestige because of the demonstrated competence they have displayed – control because the determination of the flow of the interaction is in the artist hands. *"When the performer gains control in this way, the potential for transformation of the social structure may become available to them as well"* (Burke [1950] 1969:58-59). Anderson describes that she does not have a clear message and is more interested in evoking a reaction more than a clear solution:

> - If I had a message, I would write it down and e-mail it to everybody. I would save a lot of paint that way. My work is more about trying to create images through words and pictures. I want to evoke a reaction more than explain anything clearly. I don't like things to be confused, but I like them to be multifaceted.

<div align="right">(Anderson 2008)</div>

Sandström clearly points out; that through performance art you are able to challenge yourself and the environment. She says that she does not try to provoke the audience. Although, she describes that there has to be something at stake.

> - I want to challenge something/.../myself or something else.

<div align="right">(Sandström 2010)</div>

Moreover, people from the theatre describe how through performance art one can use the audience in different ways. The theatre is cowardly in using the audience, Tegby says:

> - Performance art/.../challenges what is entertainment.

<div align="right">(Tegby 2010)</div>

Both Imri Sandström and Laurie Anderson create *power* and *positions* in using their voice in different modes. Bourdieu argues that in making one's name in the artistic field, you are able to create new positions.

> To 'make one's name' (faire date) means making one's mark, achieving recognition (in both senses) of one's difference from other producers, especially the most consecrated of them; at the same time, it means creating a new position beyond the positions presently occupied, ahead of them, in the avant-garde. To introduce difference is to produce time.
>
> (Bourdieu 1980:289)

In creating new positions, power becomes visible. I mean that you as an artist can put conflict in your work in using different modes of the voice. To use language and master it is one of the most powerful features for a human being. As Bourdieu says: To introduce difference is to produce time (1980:289). To introduce different voices and different modes of communication is to produce time as well I argue. Members of the audience addressed this and described how they experienced timelessness in the performances. Sandström and Anderson bring up conflicts (political or cultural) and create awareness and questions about time for their audience.

[*I argue that artists use performance art because of its wide range of communicative expressions. There seems to be no boundaries within the art form and that allows artists to challenge what ideas that can be performed*]

6. Conclusions

Further down the road I hope that more researchers will conduct phenomenological sociology because in my opinion it is a fruitful way to reach a closer understanding of social phenomenon. It will also be interesting to study more of Heidegger's theories, which opens a second road to phenomenological sociology (Aspers 2010). Once more I will address the importance of the distinction between the subjectivity and the objectivity. What distinguishes an objectivistic perspective from the subjectivistic in action theories is that the objectivist scientist defines the social world of the actors; on the other hand, the subjectivist scientist defines the motive of the actor and interprets the meaning. Phenomenology is criticized of dealing with microanalysis, therefore, missing out power and put more interest of meaning over praxis (Wolff 1978:530). However, I argue in conducting an empirical phenomenological sociology one can reach closer to an understanding of the actors' motives and their lifeworlds, because the researcher maintains a dialogue between the actors. This is what Schütz's call *the postulate of adequacy* and Giddens further suggests *double hermeneutic*. There is always a risk of loosing touch with the scientific ground, and that, may be the greatest challenge for the subjectivistic scientist.

Due to performance art's wide spectra, there are many paths to choose and I hope that more people will come across the experimental world performance artists' offers. To study performance art compared with earlier sociological studies of art, which often focused on the production and consumption of art, the field of performance art is traditionally not about goods that can be bought and sold. There is no clear documentation that can be seen an artwork. The artwork is *live*, and you as a spectator must experience it *live*. Performance art is about experience and challenges what you as an artist can do. Where are the boundaries drawn. What happen if you push them further. These are questions that surround performance art. Most likely, it will as it has done many times before, provoke people and be rejected, but still, the artists' performances can lead to unintended effects, which are important in driving communities forward. Moreover, Bauman (1975:293) says that performance as verbal art is spoken in socially appropriate ways. This may be true for many types of performances; however, performance *art* challenges what is socially appropriate. It is one of the cornerstones in the existents of the art world of performance. One could call Sandström and Anderson storytellers, but what distinguishes them from an

ordinary storyteller, I argue, is through the usages of technology of their appearance and voice, they do something more, they *challenge* stories.

Finally, after reaching a closer understanding of the field of performance art, I suggest it will be interesting what it means in contrast to other sociological studies of art: What distinguishes the performance art world from other art worlds; and what can performance art contribute to sociology of art. Another fruitful way to continue a sociological approach to the field of performance art could rest on Becker's approach that focuses on the *process* whereby art happens or comes about. It would be interesting to follow the process how one becomes a performance artist, and what may distinguish him or her from other artistic processes.

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