PARSE

Carlos Martiel and the Transnational Politics of the Black Body

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Abstract
This essay explores the role of performance art in redefining blackness in the transnational sphere within the logic of "global apartheid" as defined by Manning Marable. It particularly addresses how imagined and lived blackness(es) continue to express life in proximity to death, yet persist in life, as conveyed in the performances of Afro-Cuban artist Carlos Martiel, who resides in the US. His work trespasses the national framework, either regarding Cuba or the United States, to engage in a cross-border solidarity that confronts the realities of black people and other subaltern groups within contemporary global neo-liberalism. Martiel's use of his body as *canvas* points towards the differentiated histories behind today's migratory movements that bear witness to the perpetuation of unequal guarantees of life, safety and hospitality for non-Western immigrants. I argue that the immediacy of the performance, instead of creating a community of strangers, reveals the fragility of guarantees for non-white bodies subjected to historical violence, and in so doing, his work circumvents the possibility of appropriation by Western audiences of any enduring suffering.

Black artists' presence within the accounts of performance art history, consciously or not, has been either erased or separated from the core, white examples generally referenced to talk about performance art in the 1960s and 1970s. Black performers of the time appear as liminal artists confined to liminal worlds.[1] An important exception to the obliteration of the Afro-American presence and significance is the exhibition *Radical Presence: Black Performance in Contemporary Art*, at NYU's Grey Art Gallery, and at The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, in 2013-2014, which later on moved to other venues in the US.[2] The catalogue affirms:

> *This groundbreaking exhibition is the first comprehensive survey of performance art by black artists working from the perspective of the visual arts from the 1960s to the present. While black performance has been largely contextualized as an extension of theater, visual artists have integrated performance into their work for more than five decades, generating an important history* that has gone largely unrecognized until now.[3]

I will not enter into a discussion about why black performance art has been "largely" approached within the confines of black theatre, and not put into perspective vis-à-vis others.[4] In fact, the most noted dissonance

registered by press reviews on *Radical Presence…* was a letter by artist Adrian Piper requesting the curator to remove her video *The Mythic Being* (1973), in which she walks around New York dressed as a black man. Piper asked to be included in a "multiethnic exhibition", a claim that "the notion of 'blackness,' the curatorial premise rests on, is not monolithic, nor does it feature work in the context of black art always desirable to artists."[5] The Piper anecdote brings to the fore the persistent "apartheid": not because there should not be an exhibition of black performance art on its own term, but because black performance artists are also part of the history of performance, in which they do not seem to appear in their own right. "Why not expand the limits and consider the impact of African American artists' practice in direct dialogue with their peers?", asked an art critic.[6] Equally relevant, Piper's claim to a "multiethnic exhibition" precisely puts forward a way of imagining blackness within a multicultural and multiethnic society, while making visible their contribution to the genre.

Afro-Cuban-American performance artist Carlos Martiel,[7] like Piper, also presents another way of imagining blackness in his works, considering that blackness is "perpetually redefined and transmutable no-place of rugged reinvention and hyper-sociality".[8] His performances call attention to what Manning Marable termed "global apartheid", which he identifies as "the problem of the twenty-first century",[9] deriving from W.E.B. Du Bois's notion of the colour line as the twentieth-century problem.[10] Marable defines this concept as

the racialized division and stratification of resources, wealth, and power that separates Europe, North America, and Japan from the billions of mostly black, brown, indigenous, undocumented immigrant and poor people across the planet.[11]

It is within this logic of "global apartheid", in which imagined and lived blackness(es) continue to express life in proximity to death, and yet persist in life, that Martiel's performances trespass the national framework, either regarding Cuba or the United States, to engage in a cross-border solidarity that confronts the realities of black people and other subaltern groups within contemporary global neo-liberalism.[12] His work points towards the differentiated histories behind today's migratory movements that bear witness to the perpetuation of unequal guarantees of life, safety and hospitality for non-Western immigrants, specifically those coming from the Caribbean, Latin America, North Africa and the Middle East.

For the exhibition *CUBA: Tatuare la storia* in Palermo, Italy (2016), Martiel had a pest exterminator fumigate his body with insecticide. The piece, an example of protest art, reflects "neo-Nazi and xenophobic practices which are increasing in European countries as a consequence of the economic crisis and racist policies generated by right-wing parties against immigrants and non-white minorities."[13] In Milan, at the Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea (PAC), Martiel appeared with a hunting arrow pierced through his skin (2016). The same year, at Fallsburg, New York, Martiel was subjected to the weight of a dried-out trunk of a pear tree, which compressed his legs for eight hours. And on 1 May 2017, as an homage to International Workers Day, he stood for two hours at the Y Gallery in New York, with "the collar of a blue shirt stitched to the skin around his neck".[14]

Fig. 1 Carlos Martiel, *Trophy*, 2016. For the exhibition CUBA. Tatuare la storia, at the Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea (PAC), Milan, Italy. Curated by Diego Sileo and Giacomo Zaza. Martiel lyes on the floor of the gallery —in a fetal position with a hunting arrow crossing his waist. Photo: Annamaria La Mastra, courtesy Rossmut Gallery.

In a recent issue of *Hyperallergic*, Chris Depuis includes Martiel's art in the tradition of self-harm in performance art in terms of his intention and methodology.[15] Other critics emphasise a ritualistic poetics that resembles religious sacrifices with the intention of denouncing violence against non-white populations.[16] I situate Martiel's pieces in the tradition of body art, particularly in relation to endurance and nudity, and pose that Martiel's presentations in the US and Europe claim the black nude body to make visible (and felt) those differentiated conditions in today's travelling across borders grounded in colonial pasts.

In a recent interview for this study, I asked Martiel how he conceptualises violence in these artistic interventions. He responded:

> *I work with violence more than anything as a form of denunciation, as issues in which I am involved or other people are involved, whether due to migration or social concerns, and what interests me more than anything is to reflect on that… or not so much to reflect, but to show the evil in which we are living, and that some bodies are limited for being of a different color, or coming from a different country…*[17]

Martiel's response deals with the conflation of subject positions that make certain people undesirable immigrants according to race, social class, ethnicity, religion, region/country of origin, and so on in different Western countries' discursive practices and other social spaces. Therefore, intersectional categories of identity emerge in tandem with an affective and ethical dimension in his pieces. To grapple with the transnational solidarities Martiel performs, I use Kimberle Crenshaw's conceptualisation of intersectional theory, which she defines as the simultaneous subject positions that oppress or sub-alternate groups or individuals in any society.[18] I put in dialogue Martiel's embodiment of subjectivity with affect theory deriving from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, who posit affects in the realm of intensities not delimited by the subject or any social forces.[19] As a result, intensities are situational experiences irreducible to grids of control and meaning. In bringing together affects theory and intersectionality, this essay looks at those moments in which Martiel's performances call attention to

the structural location of certain bodies in society as they become objects of laceration and death, and yet, the artistic event does not reduce them to victimisation, neither to apprehension by the other. The conflation of affects and intersectionality becomes a critical tool to underscore performance art as micro-politics without losing sight of macro-contexts.

Laceration in conjunction with material forces in the temporal dimension of the performance might generate a multiplicity of intensities among the audiences and the artist. However, by eluding the creation of a community of strangers in the privileged site of the gallery, the event hints at external sociohistorical realities. It is in the separation between the artist's body and those of the viewers that the attention drawn by the temporality of the performance to the "death worlds" suffered by today's migrants, refugees, and black people acquires an ethical stance. Western "sanitising" rationality that purges non-white bodies of its human condition appears connected to the very privileged realm of regular "cosmopolitan" audiences in the "cleansed" or "sanitised" space of the gallery or museum. In this spatial experiential dimension, Martiel's performances reveal the fragility of guarantees for non-white bodies subjected to historical violence, and in so doing, his work circumvents the possibility of appropriation by the audience of any enduring suffering.

Affects and Intersectionality: A Political Move

The work of affects enables different sensations in the audience, as the artist's body enters in contact with an array of non-human bodies that affect each other. In the performance *Simiente* (*Seed*) at Chicago's Defibrillator Gallery, in 2014, Martiel was covered with blood donated by immigrants from different parts of the world. The public in the gallery mostly white and young quietly observed the performance; some were standing taking photographs while others were sitting on the floor. The viscosity of the blood produced a tactile sight, a sight that "discovers in itself a specific function of touch that is uniquely its own, distinct from its optical function."[20] In effect, the audience's gaze, projected less than a metre away from the blood line, looked as if mired in the thick surface of the dark red fluid. The blood separates artist from observers, and yet attracts them. Like the blow flies "an insect that feeds itself exclusively on decaying meat" used by Martiel in a recent presentation in Europe, the audience's gaze appeared to leave its "impression" on the decaying blood, the "flesh" of the "other".

In *Simiente*, life and death are mutually connoted through the fetal position of the body and its encounter with blood. In the notion of birth, blood appears as giver of life. Yet, blood escaping from the body might be a reminder of death, maybe a creepy shill, a faint in the audience. Martiel's strategy of covering himself with immigrants' blood hints at different yet intersectional subject positions. In this case, pointing to ethnicity, citizenship status, regional origin, and skin colour in the context of transnational human mobility. It portends oppression to which his performance is a political reaction. The presentation of migrants as sources of life indicated in the very title of the performance, *Simiente*, but subjected to death draws attention to the machinery that exploits certain bodies, confining them to "death worlds": indentured servitude, deplorable living conditions, and human trafficking.

Martiel's 2016 presentations in Italy played with the imbrication of migration and black/foreign racialised bodies as statistical outliers. In *Mar sin orillas* (*Sea Without Shores*), the artist introduced himself in a glass box filled with blow flies. Such vision came to the artist in allusion to "the more than 4,700 people coming from Africa and the Middle East who, during 2016 alone, drowned in the Mediterranean Sea trying to reach Europe."[21] Once again, Martiel points to the "feel" (the sensed) of undesirable migrant in European societies as matter, "decaying meat", disposed of its human condition in a contemporary world indifferent to the human tragedy of millions. Such transnational racialisation of certain immigrants visualises how today's globalised world, where flows of all kind

multiply, continues replicating control and thingification of immigrants from the Global South; globalisation does not cease to "tweak and modulate bodies as matter".[22] At the same time, Martiel's attention to intersectionality makes visible a fierce ongoing globalisation, the structures of domination that cast light on the violent internal "logic" of modernity and its post era. In Martiel's words:

I think that racial discourse must be transcended in art; this would indicate that society is evolving towards a greater understanding and less differentiation between humans. Because the critical position of intellectuals who approach the issue is the rebellion against the policies that have justified, spread and perpetuated racism. You cannot turn your back on things that happen; you cannot transcend what is still latent and affects certain human groups. It is important to visualize certain issues of art to create a consciousness of collective change.[23]

On the other hand, Martiel's black body, bathed in blood, signals the many assassinations of black males in the streets of the United States as a result of police repression. I link this reading of *Simiente* to Christina Sharpe's concept of "the wake", a call for both activism and scholarly work as much as a metaphor for black people's history and present. The wake revives the questions of "unlivable" lives in tandem with "ungrievable deaths".[24] Sharpe casts the wake from her personal experience to the collective, highlighting a black history of "deathly repetition".[25] The wake, then, is defined as a conceptual framework "of and for living blackness in the diaspora in the still unfolding aftermaths of Atlantic chattel slavery",[26] in other words "Black people living in, and produced by, the contemporary conditions of Black life as it is lived near death, as deathliness, in the wake of slavery."[27] However, at stake in this conceptual framework and metaphor for ongoing death, mourning, and survival, is inhabiting "a blackened consciousness that would rupture the structural silences produced and facilitated by, and that produce and facilitate, Black social and physical death."[28] In what follows, I continue to expand upon this reflection about the clamour of the wake under the experience of life as proximate to death in "the face of physical, social, and figurative death" without desisting "Black life insisted from death".[29]

Fig. 2 *Simiente,* 2014, Rapid Pulse International Performance Art Festival, Defibrillator Gallery, Chicago, USA. Curated by Joseph Ravens. Martiel's body in a fetal posture, is covered of human blood, donated by immigrants from Mexico, Estonia, Italy, Venezuela, England, South Korea, as well as the United States. Photo: Nabeela Vega.

Black Nudity

The nude body has been represented in multifarious ways, responding to different ideologies and histories as well as aesthetic perspectives. In performance art, the naked body has appeared since the 1960s in relation to different aesthetical and socio-political statements in the work of, for instance, Marina Abramović, Chris Burden, Joan Jonas, and others who have performed acts of violence towards their own bodies to stage human vulnerability under diverse forms of oppression and violence (within and outside art). However,

> *the black body, whether on the auction block, the American plantation, hanged from a light pole or tree as part of a lynching ritual, attacked by police dogs within the Civil Rights era, or staged as a "criminal body" by contemporary law enforcement and judicial systems, is a body that has been forced into the public spotlight and given a compulsory visibility*.[30]

I approach Martiel's nudity from that "compulsory visibility" connected to historical violence, repetition and endurance. Though performance art may be understood or felt in the limits of body endurance, the black body's resistance might signal more than human fragility in proximity to death or a test to the boundaries of the body: "not only a sign of the persistent threat of death: Black people are threatened with corporeal death on a regular basis."[31] Martiel's work presents a vulnerability in black masculinity, "a paradox" as he himself posited it in an interview for this study. Sharpe's metaphor of the "wake" in light of colonialism and its aftermath, might illuminate this paradox entangled in the history of black people: "understanding how slavery's violence emerges within the contemporary conditions of spatial, legal, psychic, material, and other dimensions of Black non/being as well as in Black modes of resistance".[32]

As an embodied time-based practice, performance art is relevant for the "bodily entanglements" in its own production and the '"sensate lures' in its reception".[33] Looking at performance art we might "explore impulses and responses that social conventions shape but do not circumscribe".[34] In other words, there is always a virtual potential in performance art to trigger impulses that cannot be subsumed by the regulatory sphere of the social. Because of the compelling material production of the event that prompts the audience to get involved/participate, it is impossible to elude the display of nudity and the closeness of that "other" body. Martiel's work, rooted in the tradition of using the body as tool, canvas, medium, offers a glimpse to the unresolved history of black people's dehumanisation by Western societies. and modes of resistance to it, by exploring that anxiety produced by the "nude" closeness to the "stranger" to paraphrase Sarah Ahmed[35] with respect to traditional white audiences in the US and Europe.

The Black Body Against Transience and Disappearance

I had the opportunity to attend one of Martiel's performances in Miami during Art Basel 2016. The event was scheduled as part of CIFO's gallery exhibition *Toda percepción es una interpretación*: *You Are Part of It*, that presented pieces belonging to Ella Fontanals-Cisneros's private collection. Martiel's performance at CIFO was scheduled for 1 December at 11 am on a handful of online sites. It was advertised as "a participatory performance by Cuban-born artist where his body replaces the fourth leg of a table. A meal, prepared by an undocumented Haitian chef will be placed on the table for spectators to consume."[36]

At the entrance of the gallery of Martiel's performance, a big screen continually reproduced images of an immigrant's hands preparing the dishes, while a voiceover (the cook's) commented on personal experiences as a Haitian immigrant in the United States. The voice emanating from the screen was loud enough to be heard; it had an insistent tone, like a ghostly presence whose phrases were repeated over and over, trying to be noticed. The

voice of the Haitian immigrant ghost, the living dead of Miami society, the ones who construct, build, and cook, is consumed like the dishes on a white table by a non-black audience. I looked around for people's responses, reactions, to Martiel's performance: everyone was either chatting, eating, or moving around. What follows is a brief reflection on the reaction that *Basamento* provoked in one of the audience members:

> *I started watching a video, on a screen by the door. A middle-aged black woman is speaking that's the voice I hear.*
>
> *She speaks of her heritage. Why and when she came to America.*
>
> *She speaks of the white folks. Not with hate, not with anger. Just speaks. Natural.*
>
> *She worked hard and opened her own business.*
>
> *She, a middle-aged black woman, came to America and succeeded.*
>
> *Meanwhile, people still eat around the table.*
>
> *People watch.*
>
> *The table is set as an offering…*
>
> *There's tension in the air. The people eat around the table, while the naked black man still holds the table. Sometimes he moves, slightly, a leg, the other leg. He changes the shoulder that holds the corner of the table.*
>
> *Will the man ever free himself?*
>
> *Expectations*.[37]

"The naked black man", says the observer/journalist, already assigned political meaning to the black naked male body, without signaling the possibility of Martiel's performance as a contestation of an assumed fixed political signification. In the observer's words, gender and skin colour make an explosive mix: "there's tension in the air." At any moment, the black man will rebel against the indulgence of the white audience that eats and converses while he supports the table offering.

There was more to add to Martiel's sacrifice: the video, a performance within a performance, and the audience, to increase the intensity of the scene. Gazes, curiosity at the free "exotic" meal, mouths tasting and talking, stomach noises, devouring the "offering", Martiel's sweat, cameras flashing, images from the video, a casual encounter with the Haitian woman/cook who smiles timidly, while discreetly joining the audience the only Haitian immigrant in the room.

The relation between Martiel's body and the video-performance brings to the fore not only an aesthetic of repetition so as to make the performance endure in the audience's experience. The video went over and over the motion of the Haitian immigrant's hands and phrases. It almost sounded like a recitation in the midst of a

ritual. At the same time as the recorded presence reminds us of the transience of live performances, it also casts light on the ritual nature of our daily actions. Repetition is part of our social existence, always keeping a trace of the past. Moreover, repetition produces a sensation of tiredness stemming from the reproduction of the immigrant's image/voice. It was as if we could feel the exhaustion, a fatigue almost ancient. In generating that sensation, the video-performance offers a glimpse into the non-escape from colonialism's aftermath: migration, discrimination, and marginalisation in the host societies, nothing less than the everyday reality of concealed violence that escapes attention because, ironically, of its repetitive nature, or because of the indifference towards it. Haitian immigrants, such as those who live in Little Haiti in Miami, are the undesired, racialised community. In contrast, the "other" immigrants in a city, comprised mainly of white Cuban immigrants, were welcomed to stay in the United States without a visa until January 2017, when President Barack Obama cancelled the "Wet Foot, Dry Foot" policy.[38] Yet, the exhaustion of the immigrant voice through repetition also puts endurance at the centre of Haitians' life in Miami (or host society): the repetitive phrase rings in our ears like the woman's mantra, a ritual phrase to transcend the odds. Martiel's posture under the table, supporting it stoically, enters in tandem with the video sound and image: endurance through repetition.

Fig. 3 *Basamento*, 2016, for the exhibit Toda percepción es una interpretación: You are part of it, at CIFO Art Space, Miami, USA. Curated by Eugenio Valdés Figueroa and Katrin Steffen.

On its knees, Martiel replaces the fourth leg of a table, on top of which there is typical Haitian food cooked by an undocumented Haitian immigrant who lives in the United States since 2000. Photo: Walter Wlodarczyk.

The Haitian woman in the video speaks of an absence/presence, the trace, the immigrant ghost that interrogates the present turned into past again as it foreshadows its own futurity. In fact, the performance reaches rupture through rebellion and, hence, change: Martiel rises abruptly from the floor of the gallery and, in so doing, spills the food, which becomes unfit for eating, useless to the indulgent but speechless audience. As Martina Cardoni comments: "Martiel's work does not make us turn our heads, so that we do not pretend that nothing is going on, and reminds us of what's happening in the world once more: an uncomfortable truth that destabilises our daily unconsciousness."[39]

For *Basamento*, the Fontanals-Cisneros collection included *Condecoración Martiel*, a video that registered every detail of the surgical removal of a piece of the artist's skin. The removed skin was then introduced in a

golden medal, honouring the title of the video-performance. I averted my gaze from the screen when the scalpel started peeling, while sensing a sort of ripping. The video-performance made me feel bodily discomfort. After watching it, any person unfamiliar with Martiel's work would wonder about the extremes of *Basamento*, the scheduled event for that day. Despite the very unpredictable nature of performance art, an art based on the contingency of the moment by interrupting our daily lives, breaking precisely with expectations, the video foreshadowed our next experience. The inclusion of photographs of a 2015 version of *Basamento* in different announcements of CIFO's event, also contributed to such a foreshadowing. Consequently, documentation also generates bodily affects and predisposes the viewer before the event.

In a note about the sufficiency of the body, Amelia Jones affirms that, through "its very performativity and unveiling of the body of the artist, surfaces the insufficiency and incoherence of the body-as-subject and its inability to deliver itself fully (whether to the subject-in-performance her/himself or to the one who engages with this body)."[40] She concludes that live performances do not guarantee total access to any truth more than its own documentation. There is always a lack, she affirms, a "projected desire" onto what we see in the live act or in its reproduction. Presence does not guarantee anything.

Mathew Reason reminds us of Peggy Phelan's articulation of ephemerality in terms of disappearance, as ephemerality "describes how performance ceases to be at the same moment as it becomes", whereas documentation reinforces such a concept.[41] Documentation sheds light on the ephemerality, in its very goal to preserve an event, yet it posits further queries and analysis. Up to what point might we consider documentation a repetition of the performance, as it is through documented images that past events are continually watched, known, evaluated, and having an impact on people?[42] Feminist performance art, for example, has left "resonances, traces and fragmentations".[43] I recall now Cuban-American artist Ana Mendieta's performances from the 1970s and 1980s, in which not only photographs/videos but the very traces of her body on certain presentations remain as part of museum collections, like her drawings *Untitled (Body Tracks)*, 1974, at the Hayward Gallery, London.[44] Traces and fragments, as reproductions, shed some light on the original act, but are not "absolute representations of the thing itself", affirms Reason.[45]

Paul Auslander further complicates the discussion on ontological ephemerality and documentation when arguing that "the crucial relationship is not the one between the document and the performance" but "the one between the document and its audience."[46] According to him, authenticity should be determined not by the criteria of ontology, but from a phenomenological point of view, that is "the relationship to its beholder rather than to an ostensibly originary event."[47] Consequently, he proposes a more radical posture:

> *they may not even depend on whether the event actually happened. It may well be that our sense of the presence, power, and authenticity of these pieces derives not from treating the document as an indexical access point to a past event but from perceiving the document itself as a performance that directly reflects an artist's aesthetic project or sensibility and for which we are the present audience.*[48]

In Auslander's point of view, "the act of documenting an event as a performance is what constitutes it as such."[49] In effect, Martiel's performances travel beyond the possibilities of the artist's body, creating "new recreations of the artist's work", as it travels, participating in the rumour about the artist and their work, enabling and spreading further encounters. Nevertheless, Auslander's emphasis on documentation as to neglecting the *in situ* political potential sounds like a generalisation because "there is no stable thing, an 'emotion' (or a 'feeling' or an 'affect') that exists transhistorically, transculturally, or, indeed, outside of or prior to its cultural expressions."[50] In other

words, affects are situated experiences of the body, in the space of encounters; the underestimation of the life event undermines its very performativity precisely in its energy-charged nature, in producing clusters of sensations/thoughts, and creating its own lines of flight with regard to power structures, systems of control, albeit or precisely because of the fleeting nature of performance art. In effect, Auslander recognizes the impossibility of photography, for example, to grasp the energy of the audience.

I propose that Martiel's nude performances involving documentation in some sense counteract that denial of presence conveyed by Jones (and suggested by Auslander). The very attempt against the body underscores its materiality as a situated experience of the flesh. Such anxiety over presence, while simultaneously casting light on the ephemerality of live performance, emphasises the body at the core of social relations, leaving in it a multiplicity of signals. It is precisely the living through the body that Martiel capitalises on, to expose it as "victim and actor at the same time".[51] Martiel's body has become a body of traces itself, in its struggle to resist the fleeting materiality of performance, at the same time affirming it as a trace or as a "presence in absentia", as Jones would put it.

Moreover, Martiel's performances affirm the black nude body as trace of history, black life in proximity to death, to disappearance, and yet, it is a performance of survival and affirmation of presence, despite history, despite (in)visibility. The body, therefore, becomes the ultimate recipient of such a violent history, the visible scar: a presence. In so doing, performances and its documentation defy the erasure of blackness in both the realms of life and art, while contesting any fixed meaning and potential of blackness in a transnational spatiality. Engaged in an affective connectivity with multiple elements (artificial matter, objects, and so forth) that inflicts a violence upon the body. According to Cardoni, his works convey a form of "not to live in one's body, but in that of others, in an endless empathic circle. Living in your body."[52] This extract from an Italian art blog is intended to highlight a cosmopolitan ethical stance, yet it enters in conflict with Martiel's positioning of his work. His pieces do not create "a community of strangers", but rather hint at the impossibility to embody and apprehend the lived experience of the other.

Footnotes

1. Ironically, given the rich history of performance and its prevalence in black artistic practices since the 1960s, this tradition has largely gone unexamined save for a handful of publications, including the exhibition catalogue *Art as a Verb* (1988) by Leslie King Hammond and Lowery Stokes Sims.
2. Exhibition dates were Sept 10-Dec 7, 2013, and Nov 14, 2013-Mar 9, 2014, respectively.
3. Catalogue *Radical Presence: Black Performance in Contemporary Art*. Available online at https://walkerart.org/calendar/2014/radical-presence (Accessed 2019-05-15.)
4. It has been argued how "black cultural nationalism reaffirmed the ties of the black artist to the black collective and structured the relation between that artistic practice and the black community." See Cook, Bridget R. "The TDR black theatre Issue. Refiguring the Avant-Garde". *Not the Other Avant-Garde: The Transnational Foundations of Avant-Garde*. Edited by James M. Harding, andJohn Rouse. University of Michigan Press. 2006. p. 11. Yet, this does not cancel out other historiographical possibilities of reassessing performance art history and the legacy of black performance artists.
5. Pollack, Maika. "'Radical Presence: Black Performance in Contemporary Art' at the Grey Art Gallery and

the Studio Museum in Harlem." *Observer*, 26 November 2013. Available online at https://observer.com/2013/11/radical-presence-black-performance-in-contemporary-art-at-the-grey-art-gallery-and-the-studio-museum-in-harlem/ (Accessed 2019-05-15.)

6. Tavecchia, Elena. ''Radical Presence: Black Performance in Contemporary Art' at The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York". *Mousse Magazine*. 2014. http://moussemagazine.it/radical-presence-museumstudioharlem-newyork/ (Accessed 2015-10-12.)
7. Martiel started his performing career in Cuba with Tania Bruguera, who since 2010 has led two projects marrying art and activism in Latino communities in the United States. Prior to coming to the United States, she founded the *Cátedra Arte de Conducta* (Behavioral Art School), in Havana (2002), where Martiel became one of the "students". The name of this project, considered by Bruguera a long term artistic endeavour, speaks of a conceptualisation of art connected to the transformation of individual attitudes towards and in relation to structures of power in daily life. *Arte de Conducta* re-formulated the place of performance art, inscribing it as "social gestures in the public sphere"), and placing it in the tradition of Latin America and Cuba. See Bruguera, Tania. "Cátedra Arte de Conducta." Artist's website, available at http://www.taniabruguera.com/cms/492-0-Ctedra+Arte+de+Conducta+Behavior+Art+School.htm (Accessed 2017-05-21); and Manzor, Lillian. "Performance Art in Greater Cuba". In *Cuba: People, Culture, History,* edited by Alan West-Durán. New York, NY: Charles Scribners Sons. 2011. pp. 732-35. Available online at http://scalar.usc.edu/hc/lillian-manzor/tania-bruguera?path=the-1990s (Accessed 2017-05-14.)
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10. Du Bois, W.E.B. "The Color Line Belts the World". *Collier's Magazine*. No. 20. October 1906. p. 20. For a condensed history of the concept see Irwin, Ryan. *Mapping Race: Historicizing the History of the Color-Line*. History Faculty Scholarship. No/ 22. Available online athttp://scholarsarchive.library.albany.edu/history_fac_scholar/22 (Accessed 2019-12-12.)
11. Marable, "Blackness beyond Boundaries", p. 4.
12. [12] *Ibid.*
13. See http://www.carlosmartiel.net/plague/ (Accessed 2019-12-12.)
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