Art Labor,

Sex Politics

Feminist Effects in 1970s British Art and Performance

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Prostitution and the Problem of Feminist Art

The Emergent Queer Aesthetic of COUM Transmissions

1976 was Britain’s year for art scandals and each one fed into the next. The first was provoked by the Tate Gallery’s purchase of Carl Andre’s minimalist sculpture Equivalent VIII (1966)—a rectilinear arrangement of unaltered house bricks. Later that year the media were again up in arms because of Mary Kelly’s installation Post-Partum Document at the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA). Her presentation of framed diaper liners with traces of her infant son’s feces was considered comically obscene, not just a hoax like “the bricks”; and the “dirty nappies” were in bathetic contrast to the artist’s extended intellectual exposition drawing on Marxist, feminist, and psychoanalytic theory (Figure 3.2). While Kelly was forced to go into hiding for a time to avoid the unwanted media attention, this was nothing compared with the experience of the performance artists of COUM Transmissions when, one month later, they presented another challenging installation about sexual difference at the same ICA venue. The all-too-familiar tabloid outcry against cultural decline was about to reach epic proportions with COUM’s provocatively titled installation Prostitution. While Kelly’s Post-Partum Document has long since transcended the sensational scandal that accompanied its entry into the public sphere, COUM’s installation has yet to do so. In fact, it is doubtful it ever will. This is not simply because the media scandal reached the scale of a moral panic but because of the complex performative way in which the media was staged by COUM as part of this exhibition. From the framed and signed pages from pornographic magazines featuring the nude modeling of COUM’s most prominent female member, Cosey Fanni Tutti, to the presentation of the group’s archive of press cuttings that continued to be added to...
during the course of the exhibition, the media was a central component of *Prostitution*.

Although Kelly’s *Post-Partum Document* is now widely accepted as the most significant work of feminist art produced in Britain in the 1970s, its relation to COUM’s *Prostitution* has barely been acknowledged. This is partly because *Prostitution* is not obviously a work of feminist art; nonetheless, feminism makes an appearance in the installation as part of a larger crisis in the cultural signification of femininity. It is only relatively recently that COUM’s complex, chaotic performance event has begun to be acknowledged in an art historical context in Britain. This is largely due to the inclusion of Tutti’s pornographic performance actions in both Helena Reckitt and Peggy Phelan’s 2001 book *Art and Feminism* and the major survey exhibition and publication *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* (2007). Both of these projects are North American, and Tutti’s use of her own eroticized body seems to fit easily into this company of artists. In Britain, however, COUM is typically seen as swimming against the tide of emerging feminist art. This is partly because their mode of artistic engagement draws on a historical legacy that is different from the one that has preoccupied us so far. *Prostitution* does not adopt a strategy of political critique, as is the case with Mary Kelly’s *Post-Partum Document*. Rather, COUM’s work emerges in critical relation to other political art of the period. That is, it was opposed to the very idea of political art. Nonetheless, in common with Kelly’s *Post-Partum Document*, *Prostitution* is fundamentally defined by an interrogation of the symbolic codes of sexual difference. If Kelly’s installation was framed as a critical interrogation of the heteronormative imperative, COUM embraces a queer aesthetic. This chapter is not an attempt to reclaim COUM for the curatorial category of feminist art, although both Tutti and P-Orridge acknowledge the significance of the cultural and social impact of feminism on their work. While *Prostitution* does indeed mobilize feminist codes, it does so to stage a queer aesthetic: not homosexuality as an identity or a generalized post-1960s idea of camp, but the mutual contamination of gender and genre. The queer aesthetic of *Prostitution*, in common with Kelly’s *Post-Partum Document*, articulates the relationship between the social instantiation of gender and the psychosexual notion of sexual difference, provoking a disruption in both.
Transmissions: COUM as Mediatized Formation

Prior to the ICA scandal, COUM had become a major presence in the British art press, so much so that they were able to amass a significant quantity of press clippings to constitute a wall display in Prostitution. As a measure of their burgeoning success, earlier in 1976 they were included in a survey exhibition of British art in Milan, Arte Inglese Oggi 1960–1976 [English Art Today], and their performance, Towards The Crystal Bowl, was the only work that received any critical analysis in Richard Cork’s review of the exhibition in the London Evening Standard. Earlier in 1976 P-Orridge had been subject to another censorship scandal, and prominent art world figures such as Sir Norman Reid, director of the Tate Gallery, and G. M. Forty, director of the Fine Arts Department of the Arts Council, took up his defense. P-Orridge was charged with obscenity because of his dissemination through the mail of pornographic collages featuring Tutti. Prior to the trial COUM issued wedding-style invitations inviting members of the art world to attend, and the proceedings were documented and subsequently published as an artist’s book. The treatment of the trial as a performance event sets a precedent for Prostitution in both the use of the media and the parodic attack on established norms of heterosexuality.

Today COUM is better known to fans of alternative (industrial) rock music and those art historians with an eye on the music scene. This is because the 1976 ICA exhibition was COUM’s swan song to the British art community; on the opening night of the exhibition, they shifted the orientation of their practice back to music under the name Throbbing Gristle. Like Andy Warhol’s presentation of the Velvet Underground in his Exploding Plastic Inevitable, the opening night of Prostitution was a multimedia performance event. It included the punk band Chelsea, Throbbing Gristle (COUM’s own band), and a hired female stripper, all performing in the exhibition space. Journalistic accounts of the opening reception were folded back into the exhibition as COUM updated the wall of media clippings. Later P-Orridge referred to Warhol’s assertion of fame as a new medium of art (alongside the other more traditional media such as painting, sculpture, and photography), and Warhol was an important figure for COUM’s evolving art practice. If Warhol provoked art historians to question the institutional function of the proper name

“Andy Warhol,” as it came to serve as a kind of brand, COUM took this in a slightly different direction. In Prostitution they incorporated their media presence into the very fabric of the installation itself. In doing so, COUM asserted that the broader discursive framework for understanding a work of art, its critical reception, and the notion of an artistic biography (including sensational and erroneous accounts) should also be considered part of the work. This situated the moment of the artist’s production decisively in the past and as just one part of a larger network of factors that shaped the work’s meaning.

Although vocal about the pornographic images by Tutti, the press maintained a stony silence about its own presence in Prostitution. Furthermore, as this element of the installation expanded, COUM’s staging of the media continued to be ignored. This was not the only part of Prostitution that was overlooked by the press. There was little discussion of P-Orridge’s Tampax Romana, a series of small mixed-media sculptures featuring Tutti’s used tampons in small wall-mounted vignettes, even more embarrassing, it seems, than Kelly’s diaper liners. Because of COUM’s staging of the media as part of the installation, together with the various occlusions that this produced, a clear picture of Prostitution has yet to emerge.

Originally, the media wall was conceived by COUM as a kind of epitaph for the art world. Prostitution marked the cessation of COUM Transmissions and Throbbing Gristle’s inception. This collaged obituary indicated the death of COUM, and, with the Throbbing Gristle set titled Music from the Death Factory, death is an important dimension of Prostitution as a whole. But the media wall served another important temporal function. As COUM continued to add the numerous articles written in response to Prostitution, this section of the exhibit functioned like a slowed-down feedback loop. This continually expanding wall of press cuttings propelled the ongoing sequential unfolding of Prostitution. While Kelly took her model from film, and Post-Partum Document can be understood as a visualization of linear narrative sequence, the temporality of Prostitution was unpredictable. Thus Prostitution should also be read as an extended improvisatory performance existing temporally as well as spatially that, following the group’s name, is structured by the logic of transmission.

The mediatized orientation suggested by the name COUM Transmissions
declares the group's engagement with one of the dominant themes in 1960s and 1970s art. The use of new video technology and experiments with television broadcast are the most obvious manifestation of the so-called mediatic turn in postwar art. More broadly conceived notions of information, communication, and feedback associated with conceptual art and mail art practices in particular demonstrate the widespread structural impact of ideas of media at this time. (The touchstone for many of these 1960s artists was undoubtedly Marshall McLuhan's enormously influential 1964 book, Understanding Media.) COUM's engagement with the distributive structure of mail art provoked a disciplinary shift around 1972 from the context of experimental theater and alternative music to the art world. Before further consideration of this first disciplinary shift—Prostitution inaugurated the second—we must go back to the beginning and address COUM's formation.

Genesis P-Orridge (né Neil Megson) founded COUM in 1969 in Hull, Yorkshire, in the context of experimental street theater and alternative music. The group's first Arts Council of England bursary was filed in 1969 under the category of experimental theater, and in 1972 the COUM artists were the first to win an award using the new category of performance art. COUM has all of the features of an early twentieth-century avant-garde group with its primitivist investment in new beginnings, the idea of remaking language, and the transgressive presentation of sexuality. But their invocation of spirituality and the mythic, together with a preoccupation with art and life, also suggests an affinity with the German artist Joseph Beuys. As the name Genesis might suggest, COUM was born (by its own account) as a result of a kind of mystical revelation, and as Simon Ford has described, P-Orridge's "missionary zeal" formed much of the group's energy in the early years. Soon after the founding of COUM in 1969, Cosey Fanni Tutti (née Christine Carol Newby, aka Cosmosis P-Orridge) joined P-Orridge; while COUM had numerous members during the eight years of its existence, P-Orridge and Tutti formed the backbone of the group as it shifted orientation around 1972 to an art world context. Inspired by the Dada movement, the name COUM, like the word Dada, has multiple nonsensical meanings and associations. The only actual known use of the word is in a botanical context: the cyclamen coum is a hardy cyclamen that originates near the Black Sea and in Southern Turkey. But, according to Ford, "COUM could refer to communication, commune, or, more obviously, to either come, cum or quim." The ideas suggested by these different associations evoke a trio of key countercultural themes: media transmission, social collectivity, and sexual freedom. Capitalizing the name also suggests that it is an acronym, and for a time P-Orridge claimed, "COUM stood for Cosmic Organicism of the Universal Molecular." P-Orridge consistently used his own idiosyncratic spelling for certain words: "E" instead of "I" and "thee" instead of "the," and the proliferation of puns on the name COUM was a constant feature of the group's mail art. This revealing an investment in the improper use of language that is frequently connected with the sexually obscene and the adulteration of the sacred by the profane, a combination of elements that was most powerfully developed by the early twentieth-century British poet and mystic Aleister Crowley (a figure whom P-Orridge took as a historical model). For example, in COUM's mail art project Thee Million and One Names of COUM, the group's name stands in for "God," and because of the sexual pun on cum/come, the title becomes a sexual obscenity. Even the names of the two principal members of COUM follow the contradictory logic of the sacred/profane and high/low art. The first book of the bible, Genesis, is coupled with porridge, the cheapest kind of nourishing food (something that P-Orridge survived on as an impoverished student), and it is also a colloquial term in British English for prison time. Likewise, read as a reference to high art—Mozart's opera Così Fan Tutte—the anglicized misspelling of the title as Cosey Fanni Tutti includes a sexual pun ("fanny" is British English slang for a woman's genitals). The opera is about sexual infidelity, and the loose translation of the title of Lorenzo da Ponte's libretto for the opera as "women are like that" is widely recognized as an everyday form of sexism that finds its contemporary low-art equivalent in Tutti's graffiti-style signature rendition of her first name. She puts a dot in the middle of the roundly drawn "C" and the "O," turning these letters into a graffiti-style image of women's breasts (Figure 3.3).

Neil Mulholland understands COUM's approach as evidence of the thematization of transgression as a form of avant-garde rupture; a strategy that, in another context, Griselda Pollock has dismissed as a superficial signifier of the avant-garde. I argue that a more profound exploration of the logic
of transgression inhabits COUM's work at the level of form. Lyotard has elaborated on this with regard to the aesthetic operation of the dream work, which he sees as a violent transformation or disfiguration at the level of form. He refers to the transgression of form as the working of the "figure" on the otherwise rational communicability of "discourse." In analyzing the performance practice of COUM Transmissions, I look beyond the immediate shock value of their violation of social norms in order to address transgression as a violation of the law. This is a form of contamination that leads to a disturbance in the ability to distinguish between subject and object, living and dead, male and female, here and there; a condition that Julia Kristeva refers to as abjection. As I will elaborate later in the chapter, the idea of abjection is connected in COUM's work to an antisocial mode of queer aesthetics. This analysis draws on the psychological idea of abjection as a way of understanding the effects of transgression, which, I suggest, is bound up with transgressions of gender and sexual identity more typically associated with queerness.

Furthermore, P-Orridge is now best known for her, or their (after transitioning) exploration of transgender identity—pandrogyne is the term she uses—as a performance artist and musician. Although this trajectory adds additional weight to my historical argument, it is not the decisive factor in my analysis of this 1970s work.

Like the twelve-year collaboration between the Yugoslavian performance artist Marina Abramovic and her German boyfriend Ulay (né Uwe Laysiepen) of 1976–88, the connection between Tutti and P-Orridge was founded on an erotic bond. Further, like Abramovic and Ulay, their heterosexual relationship became a means of exploring issues of sexual difference, sexuality, and power in a performance art context. But COUM diverges from these better-known European artists by the way in which the heterosexual couple was subsumed within the open-ended, loose collectivity of COUM Transmissions. While Tutti and P-Orridge were consistent participants, COUM had numerous different members, and its inclusive approach to collaborative identity allowed COUM to locate the artist(s) positionally as sexually differentiated while avoiding the idea that their practice was easily reducible to the particular biographies of this heterosexual couple.

The media wall in Prostitution told the story of COUM through press clippings. This contrasts with Kelly's carefully staged diary entries in Post-Partum Document because COUM's "obituary" was written by others and appeared in the form of a sensationalized media parody. Nonetheless, both Post-Partum Document and Prostitution self-consciously stage the broader discursive frameworks used for understanding works of art within the work itself. Moreover, both positioned the artist as sexually differentiated: Kelly is simultaneously both artist and mother, whereas COUM's staging of the sexually differentiated artist was achieved through the framework of a collective formation.

Unlike many contemporaries in the British art world of the early 1970s, COUM's turn to collaboration was not an expression of the political orientation of their practice (although the question of the political is nonetheless decisive). Following May '68 a politicized model of artistic collectivity was the dominant one in the United Kingdom. This had an important impact on artistic production, attitudes to spectatorial engagement, and very often the dominant themes addressed. Art & Language, the best-known conceptual art
collective in Britain at this time, acted like a Marxist-Leninist political cell with ideological purges and rigorous (intellectual) self-examination. Their intellectual application of analytic philosophy, dry humor, and a minimalist aesthetic became widely influential in Britain. Feminist collectives tended to follow the antihierarchical structure of the groups in the London Women's Liberation Workshop. The Berwick Street Film Collective, although a mixed-gender group, because of its grounding in post-'68 politics had a lot in common with such feminist approaches. The London Women's Film Group (see chapter 2) and the Hackney Flashers (see chapter 4) also adopted consensus-based models. What all of these artistic examples have in common is that their turn to collective practice was broadly understood in socialist terms. This was a political rejection of the idea of bourgeois individuality that had come to define the modern artist and an embrace of art practice as either modeled after activism or following the logic of unionized labor. COUM followed neither approach. First, because COUM was formed out of street theater and alternative music—where the idea of collective practice is constitutive—their model of collectivity was not grounded in a critique of individuality per se. In fact, P-Orridge in particular took—and still maintains—a 1960s countercultural celebration of the individual that verged on the cultish. Second, their approach to collaboration was much more open-ended than the other groups. As P-Orridge put it (using his own idiosyncratic spelling) in a mail art correspondence to Harley Landon,

COUM is not a group in the normal sense, it is simply a movement of like minded creative people. COUM is defined most accurately as being simply thee sum total of thee people in COUM at any given moment in time, or TIMEFIX. However, people can be, and are in COUM whom we have not seen in years. Because they still perceive thee world in a COUM way, and once touched by COUM, you are no longer not COUM. 24

Third, their work reveals an active hostility toward what they saw as the political instrumentalization of art practice after May '68. This was very much in keeping with the attitude of U.S. Fluxus artists. Indeed, it was their involvement with the Fluxus movement that brought about COUM's shift from the disciplinary context of street theater to the art world. Two of COUM's early mail art projects, L'école de l'art infantile (1972) and Ministry of Antisocial Insecurity (MAI) (1972), display an active resistance to post-'68 ideas about art's political purpose. Moreover, the primitivist embrace of the infantile in L'école de l'art infantile, with illustrations showing pacifiers and teddy bears, contrasts with the growing political and conceptual intellectualism of many artists during this period. At the same time, the use of the French language ironically invokes generalized (post-'68) franco-philic tendencies typical of the British cultural left. Although engaged with the issue of transmission, the members of COUM are not concerned with the dissemination of a political message. Rather, in keeping with McLuhan's argument in Understanding Media, their engagement is more with the structure or form of dissemination itself.

COUM's parodic invocation of the political turn in British art is further evidenced in Ministry of Antisocial Insecurity. The acronym (MAI) from its title is the French spelling for the month of uprisings in 1968, often referred to simply as "the events of May." This reference to the much-fetishized anarcho opposition to the state seen in May '68 is combined with the invocation of the British governmental bureaucracy dealing with unemployment (the Department of Social Security). MAI thus gives a condensation of contradictory signs that do not add up to a logical political message. At the same time, MAI resembles a work of conceptual art with its mock bureaucratic application that is made up of a series of questions to be filled out by the recipient and returned to COUM to be filed. But COUM's Ministry for Antisocial Insecurity promises no outcome, neither remuneration nor sanction; an applicant to this mock ministry is a willing participant in absurdist bureaucracy for its own sake. Thus COUM mobilizes an "aesthetics of administration" typical of conceptual art in order to undermine the idea of political rationality. 25 Likewise, in following a structure of transmission, the content of the form distributed for MAI belies the rationality typical of other politically invested groups. Bureaucracy is shown to be a form of irrationality. 26 As COUM's work developed within the field of art practice—performance art rather than street theater—it demonstrates a continued oppositional awareness of both the political currents in British art at this time and the rational model of practice that these approaches shared with conceptualism.
The logic of transmission seen in MAI is similar to the one developed in Prostitution. Both projects adopt the form of a temporally delayed feedback loop. In Prostitution the print news media is now the unwitting vehicle for COUM’s structure of transmission. In MAI COUM distributes forms through the mail with the expectation that they will be completed and returned for filing. While MAI continued to be disseminated in mail art form at least through 1974, in 1973 P-Orridge presented another version of the work as part of the Nottingham leg of the Fluxshoe exhibition. The formative relationship of MAI to Prostitution can be further drawn out by recourse to this version in which P-Orridge set up a table and chair in the street and solicited applications for the MAI file. In this format, the previously remote and dispersed audience for these mail art works became incorporated into a performance event.

Photography: Transgressing Transmission

Fluxshoe is also notable because COUM deployed photography for the first time as a significant visual component of their work. Photography is treated as a form of visual information that fits into the structural logic of transmission. COUM’s staging of photography transgresses the institutionalized function of photography as visual documentation for performance art, and is akin to conceptual art’s complex mode of dissemination. I am thinking of artists such as Douglas Huebler and Vito Acconci whose use of photography as part of performance art projects disrupts any clear understanding of before and after or event and record that came to shape early debates about performance. While it is not clear whether COUM would have known these conceptual performance artists’ work particularly well, photographic documentation of the work of Acconci, Abramovic/Ulay, Gina Pane, and Chris Burden was widely disseminated. By the early 1970s, the use of photography to document ephemeral time-based works had become an established practice in the art world. Such images were frequently reproduced in international art journals and followed a recognizable “artless” visual aesthetic. Unlike the glossy, professionally produced images of theatrical productions, the grainy, badly lit, and often ill-composed quality of performance art photography sets it apart as a particular subgenre within photography. COUM’s shift into an art world context around 1972 is marked by an engagement with this particular aspect of performance art. By 1976, with Prostitution, COUM’s boldest and final—at least in symbolic terms—engagement with the art world, the staging of photographic documentation is particularly significant. This can be seen in two distinct parts of the installation. The media wall was an ongoing record of the group’s public presence, made up of documentation by others that is incorporated into the installation itself. Also staged through the framework of media publications, Tutti’s pornographic images are reattributed in Prostitution as photographic records of magazine actions (Plate 2). Both these examples rely on institutionally established ideas about performance art documentation but only in order to interrupt its proper function.

In art historical and performance studies’ accounts of performance art, there has been a good deal of discussion of the use of photography. These images have been variously understood; for example, Susan Sontag, offering a negative analysis, has argued that photographic documentation inaugurates “a consumer’s relation to events.” Without obvious value coding, Mary Kelly has described such images as a kind of “ pictorial quotation,” and more recently Carrie Lambert argues that they shift the temporality of the work’s reception, since the photograph makes it “a matter of future mediation.” But Kathy O’Dell’s idea of photographs as both “relics and records of these live events” is, I find, the most compelling description of the contradictory function of photography by performance artists. As relics these images are understood as haptically invested substitutes for the body of the performer, a surviving trace of the event that is held as a remembrance, souvenir, or precious keepsake. The idea of the relic, with all its religious associations, is also a means of access to a body no longer present. Indeed it is the body itself that is the principal stake in performance art, and because of this O’Dell draws on Roland Barthes’s Christianized metaphors of light from Camera Lucida to firm up the particular play of absence and presence, loss and plenitude, that the photograph can suggest. The notion of these photographs as records—also suggested by Barthes—works at an entirely different register. In this understanding they are pseudolegalistic contracts that function as visual proof that a particular event took place. Photography’s metaphysical significance is
therefore offset by the term record: a visual contract attesting to the fact that the action has taken place.

Performance art emerged in the 1960s as part of a general opposition to the commodity status of the work of art, with a new emphasis placed on experience and participation. There is no fixed material object for an artist or dealer to sell. Paradoxically, photographs make present the otherwise absent commodity status of the art object; they are often the only remnants of the transient event, and as such they serve an ambivalent economic function. Artists, galleries, and the news media use these images as promotional materials. Thus photographs exist as part of the larger institutional framework of the work of art. As secular relics they link the publicity machine of the art world to the (no longer present) body of the performer and attest to the fact that the work of art existed and will, in photographic form, continue to exist historically.

In Prostitution the media wall marries the idea of transmission with the logic of photographic documentation. COUM explicitly incorporates the broader discursive framework of art criticism and media promotion into the material form of the installation itself. In doing so the artists transgress the proper temporal logic of the photographic document. The media wall adopts a structure that is more like a distorted, specular mise en abyme. Moreover, in this context the relic’s function as an emblem of the dead finds its proper place in COUM’s performance art obituary. This is reinforced by the idea that journalism as such can be understood as a form of death writing.

The “improper” use of photographic documentation is a continuous theme in COUM’s oeuvre. From Fluxtime onward, photography proliferates. On first look this archive of images of COUM’s performances appears to be consistent with the photographic documentation of works by performance artists such as Abramovic/Ulay and Burden. But this is misleading. Unlike these artists, COUM put photography into a more dynamic and integrated relationship with the live event. In at least two major performances, COUM explicitly incorporated the documenting process into the live action. In Studio of Lust (Southampton, 1975) the three performers, P-Orridge, Tutti, and Peter “Sleazy” Christopherson, held—as if in freeze-frame—a series of typical pornographic poses that were then photographed using a camera rigged up in the performance space (Figure 3.4).

Similarly, in Towards the Crystal Bowl (Milan, 1976) P-Orridge, having ascended to the top of the scaffolding tower used during the performance, took a series of photographs of Tutti as she moved through a pool of styrofoam beads on the ground below. Again, the photographic process was performed as part of the live event. In these two instances the staging of photography suggests that it is understood as more than just a secondary documenting device as it was for most U.S. Fluxus artists and for many other performance artists of the time. Instead, the audience in both Studio of Lust and Towards the Crystal Bowl were made aware that the live experience was incomplete without a series of photographs, and these images would effectively replace the original live work. While photographic documentation is typically reserved for publicity about the work of art—to be used in grant applications, magazine articles, and other publications—here it is incorporated into the performance itself. Rather than privileging the live experience as more authentic, COUM worked to disrupt the stability of both categories.

While the COUM artists drew attention to the broader discursive formation of performance art through their use of photography, at the same time they transgressed the established institutional function of photographs as documents. The photographic documentation from Studio of Lust is particularly misleading since these images—made as part of the performance itself—have also come to function as straightforward records of the performance. Indeed the iconic quality of the images is due to the fact that the poses were devised as pornographic quotations, but because of their very iconicity, these photographs now appear as if they are records of live-action pornography. Furthermore, during the course of the same performance, Christopherson laboriously applied wound makeup to himself and Tutti, using techniques he learned from movie special effects. But in the later photographic records, the fact that these lesions were explicitly staged within the performance is also lost. Performance artists like Marina Abramovic, Chris Burden, and Gina Pane had become notorious for their “masochistic” performances, and as Mary Kelly has argued with reference to the writing of Lea Vergine, their pain became a means of reinforcing the authenticity of the artist’s bodily presence. In Studio of Lust, however, these images are neither haptic relics nor accurate records of the performance that they purport to document. And because of the institutional expectations that apply to performance art documentation, their status as representations within representations is no longer visually transparent. Indeed, Roselee Goldberg’s brief reference to COUM in her history of performance art, where she understands Tutti as straightforwardly adopting a stereotypically masochistic position, suggests such a misreading.

In Prostitution Tutti’s art actions are offered as documents of a prior performance. The pages from pornographic magazines featuring Tutti are entered into COUM’s exhibition as contractual documents; they are signed by Tutti as both artist and model. Here the evidential logic of photographic documentation of a live action—the contractual status of the photographic image—coincides with the Duchampian logic of the ready-made. As seen with Studio of Lust, the live performance event includes photography as a constitutive element. But in Prostitution we are asked to see the pornographic images as “documents” of a preexisting performance by Tutti that the art audience can only encounter remotely through the photographic image. This is achieved by the signature of the artist in tandem with the institutionally validated idea of photography as performance art document. The pornographic images of Tutti are now by Tutti, and as Carrie Lambert-Beatty has suggested in another context, this turns the immediacy of the live into “a matter of future mediation.” Lambert-Beatty’s central concern is with the issue of art historical interpretation, whereas Tutti circumvents the live altogether, making these interpretative issues constitutive of the work itself.

Copyright Breaches/Breaches: Transgressing Gender/Genre
The first significant attempt to insert Prostitution into a comprehensive history of feminist art was an American undertaking. Tutti’s pornographic pages—excised from the other elements of Prostitution—were included in the major survey exhibition WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution. In the United States, unlike the United Kingdom, there are many examples of feminist-identified women artists who have presented their own nude (often eroticized) bodies in their work. With important examples by artists such as Yoko Ono, Carolee Schneemann, Eleanor Antin, Adrian Piper, Martha Rosler, and Hannah Wilke, it could even be described as one of the dominant instantiations of feminism in post-1960s American art. But in three recent exhibitions featuring Tutti’s work in the United Kingdom, at the Barbican Centre and Tate Britain, there has been a general avoidance of the work’s relation to other feminist trends of the period, despite the fact that feminist critics, most notably Margaret Harrison, Lisa Tickner, and Roszika Parker, seriously debated Prostitution at the time.

The closest comparable work to Tutti’s appeared two years prior to Prostitution and is an American example. In 1974 Lynda Benglis presented a similar use of the formal conventions of pornographic display within an art world context in a renowned advertisement in Artforum (Plate 3). The photograph of Benglis showing her oiled, slender, nude body wielding a double-headed dildo was used to announce her latest exhibition at the Paula Cooper gallery in New York. The scandal that ensued is well-known; the Artforum editors published a letter of protest in the next month’s issue, and two of them, Rosalind Krauss and Annette Michelson, soon after resigned.
The same year as the Benglis scandal, Tutti began posing for small underground pornographic publications. This was initially a way of making money, but COUM immediately began to archive these magazines in preparation for use as part of a future work. That Tutti's engagement with the sex industry began as a matter of employment is not immaterial, since this aspect persists as an important dimension of the work's subsequent appearance in the ICA in 1976. Moreover, Tutti's identification with the classed position of the sex worker is decisive to the work. While Benglis's advertisement satirically adopted the visual conventions of pornography for the purposes of avant-garde interruption, *Prostitution* displayed Tutti's own labor in the sex industry (Figure 3.5).

There is a significant body of scholarship on the close relationship between modernism and prostitution/pornography, and COUM even invoked Manet's *Olympia* (1863)—one of the “high holy prostitutes of modernism,” as Rebecca Schneider puts it—in the poster for the ICA show (Figure 3.3). The nineteenth-century poet and art critic Charles Baudelaire is frequently cited for equating the modern artist with the prostitute, a sentiment that COUM saw itself echoing. But as Rebecca Schneider has pointed out, Baudelaire's suggestion remains metaphorical, whereas “it is quite another thing when an actual prostitute attempts to claim the place of the artist in the museum.” While Tutti is not, strictly speaking, a prostitute, the literalism of her work as a pornographic model is nonetheless pertinent to Schneider's point. Furthermore, despite Baudelaire's assertion and its critical elaboration by the much-lauded theorist of modernity Walter Benjamin, many modernist art historians seem to have a particular difficulty with artists that come too close to sex work. Jennifer Doyle has explored this very problematic in the art historical writing on Warhol. What she calls the “rhetoric of prostitution,” the suggestive, often moralizing, invocation of prostitution in relation to Warhol's work, ends up occluding the critical examination of the relationship between sex, sexuality, and capital in his complex oeuvre. When it comes to women artists such as Benglis and Tutti, the operation of critical occlusion is even further marked.

These general issues aside, the important difference between Benglis and Tutti's project—over the question of female-specific labor—brings us back to the political concerns of other British artists of the period, and this was noted in critical accounts at the time. With *Prostitution*, however, Tutti enacts a Duchampian transformation of her erotic labor through a gesture of contractual retribution. The pages of the magazines featuring her image were signed by Tutti in order to reattribute the authorship of the works from the (anonymous) photographer to the (no longer anonymous) model. Each double-page spread was framed to declare the work's new status as a magazine action. Thus the question of gendered authorship is also brought to bear as a central issue.
I will not analyze the pornographic content of these images, since it is their unexceptional conformity to the genre—lazy-eyed sensuality, lacy lingerie pulled back to openly reveal the genitals—that enables them to function as ready-mades. It is the transgressive display of pornography in the art gallery and the equally transgressive—in the context of the feminist movement—idea of the woman artist’s complicity with, as Margaret Harrison put it, an “activity which degrades women as sexual objects” that is significant. Setting aside the sexual content of the images, I will examine the nature of the transformation enacted by means of the artist’s signature, that is, the particular gendered relationship between the categories of artist and sex worker. This is about the form that the work takes, its transgression of genre from pornography to art, and how this is also a transgression of gendered authorship. Indeed, as Schneider points out, with reference to Lynn Hunt’s book on the emergence of the modern idea of pornography in the nineteenth century, “The demarcation between art and porn has not been concerned with the explicit sexual body itself, but rather with its agency, which is to say with who gets to make what explicit where and for whom.”

The relationship between the proper name, the signature, the contract, and the Duchampian idea of the work of art as a performative text is first elaborated in COUM’s 1973 photolithographic artist’s book Copyright Breeches (Figure 3.6 and Plate 5). It is worth exploring this formative work in some depth since it is also COUM’s first elaborated engagement with photography as a kind of performance art document. In this work the question of the sexually differentiated performing body emerges as one of the central issues.

The title, Copyright Breeches, is a visual pun that refers to a pair of enormously flared pants printed with copyright symbols that were first worn by P-Orridge in a performance of the same title and are shown in the opening sequence of images in the book (Figure 3.7). This use of costume is perhaps the last remnant of COUM’s involvement with experimental theater, since the ill-fitting sculptural quality of P-Orridge’s copyright breeches coupled with the long hair and unruly beard has a whimsical absurdity that, when compared with Prostitution, looks like it belongs to COUM’s nonage. With the subtitle “An Interim Report,” in common with COUM’s mail art works from this period, Copyright Breeches evokes conceptual art’s aesthetics of

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administration. Furthermore, at the end of the book is a list of captions for each image stating that the named individual “performed” at the named date and place. This further reinforces the idea of the photograph as proof that a particular event took place. The notion of the image as a form of visual proof is further reinforced because the issue of copyright invokes a legalistic discourse that connects to broader institutional questions of ownership, authority, and authorship.

Avant-garde precedent for such concerns can be found in Marcel Duchamp’s early twentieth-century ready-mades, and so it is unsurprising that COUM connects the copyrighting gesture directly to the work of Duchamp. But in the context of the recent art world deification of Duchamp, and after a flurry of new monographic publications, there seems to be a significant diminishing of Duchamp in this rather modest, small-scale publication. The front cover of Copyright Breeches announces this with a hand-drawn rendition of one of Duchamp’s earliest ready-mades, The Bicycle Wheel (1913) (Plate 4). Turning to the title page establishes an immediate visual connection between the Duchamp sculpture and COUM’s typographic design for the copyright symbol—the circular shape of the bicycle wheel echoes that of the copyright symbol (Figure 3.6). Seven years after Duchamp’s first major British retrospective exhibition at the Tate Gallery in 1966, bringing the ready-mades (remade for the Philadelphia Museum in 1953) to a British art audience for the first time, COUM illicitly produced twelve copies of the Bicycle Wheel. A photograph of one of these, labeled “super copyright breech of Marcel Duchamp’s Ready-Made Bicycle Wheel,” is the final image in the book (Figure 3.8). These twelve replicas were made in preparation for a 1974 performance titled Marcel Duchamp’s Next Work. In this multimedia work of experimental music performed at the Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels, Belgium, the twelve Duchamp sculptures, referred to as “Duchamp’s harps,” were played to a score by P-Orridge and Paul Woodrow. This marks a further mistreatment of Duchamp, with the Bicycle Wheel illicitly reproduced once again as a repurposed functional object.

COUM’s invocation of Duchamp in Copyright Breeches is not, therefore, a straightforward homage. With Bicycle Wheel Duchamp puts the signature of the artist to work in order to obey the law of copyright, but COUM’s Copyright
Breaches repeatedly transgresses this law. In enacting the copyrighting gesture again and again—in a range of different European cities, both indoors and out—COUM invokes the law of copyright only in order to break it. After all, these photographs are copyright breaches. Indeed, Copyright Breaches is marked from the outset by COUM’s breach of language. The book is the literalization of a pun. The breach of copyright is an item of clothing: a pair of breaches covered in the copyright symbol. Thus every assertion of copyright is at the same time a breach of copyright, and the first breach takes the form of a rebus: a clownish pair of breaches.

Jacques Derrida has described this same peculiar contradiction in his essay “The Law of Genre.” Initially posed in the form of a question, he asks: “What if there were, lodged within the heart of the law itself, a law of impurity or a principle of contamination? And suppose the condition of the possibility of the law were a priori of a counter-law, an axiom of impossibility that would confound its sense, order, and reason?” This is precisely the contradiction that Copyright Breaches performs. Enforcing the law of copyright, Derrida suggests, is always already a transgression of this very law. In Copyright Breaches the slip of the pen from “breaches” to “breeces” follows numerous other linguistic slips scattered throughout COUM’s work—the to “thee,” “I” to “F,” and “cum” to “COUM”—and the appearance of P-Orridge’s trousers, the copyright breeches, is but the first mark of the text’s ongoing series of breaches.

“The Law of Genre” is also useful for understanding Prostitution, and here the gender stakes of Tutti’s art actions become immediately visible. The French word for literary (or artistic) genre is the same as the word for gender. Thus the law of genre referred to in the essay’s title should also be read as the law of gender. As Derrida puts it,

The question of the literary genre is not a formal one: it covers the motif of the law in general, of generation in the natural and symbolic senses, of the generation difference, sexual difference between the feminine and masculine genre/gender, of the hymen between the two, of a relationless relation between the two, of an identity and difference between the feminine and the masculine. (74)
If the foundation of this law, as Derrida argues, is a prohibition on the mixing of genres/genders, then Tutti's pornographic images enact both kinds of transgression. The transgression of genre is immediately apparent: by putting the works signed by the artist in the art gallery, "low" pornography becomes "high" art. But this is not some kind of alchemical transformation; both parts of the opposition, pornography and art, are simultaneously kept in play, which is one of the causes of the controversy. In her feminist analysis of the exhibition, Margaret Harrison points out, "By bringing these photographs into the art world, they exposed the double standards existing in the media and society in general."56 Because of the use of the artist's signature, further contractual shifts occur: the commercial employee becomes the non-commercial artist and the pornographic model the performance artist. Thus, following speech-act theory and related philosophical debates, the artist's signature functions performatively. Through signing the pornographic images, Tutti brings them into being as works of art, and she, at the very same time, is brought into being as the artist.57 Thus Tutti's reference to "Magazine Actions" goes further than the genre of performance art. The signature renders these images the textual equivalent of speech-acts. These works of art are performative texts. As such they follow the peculiar contradictory logic of other much more august performative texts such as the U.S. Declaration of Independence. As Derrida describes in "Declarations of Independence," this performative political text is signed in the name of the American people who could not exist as a political entity until the document had in fact been signed.

Similarly, in Prostitution, through the act of signing the magazine pages, the pornographic model becomes the artist; she moves from inside to also being outside the picture frame. This in turn brings us to the law of gender. Tutti's transgression of gender does not just rest on the idea of sexual display. Is this not a typical instantiation of sexual difference? Rather it is because she couples this with an assertion of female authorial control. With reference to U.S. artists such as Benglis and Carolee Schneemann, Schneider diagnoses the issue thus: "Nudity was not the problem. Sexual display was not the problem. The agency of the body displayed, the author-ity of the agent—that was the problem with women's work."58 In Prostitution, Tutti makes this contradiction transparent. Not only does she usurp authorship from the (unnamed) male photographer, but also this genre of imagery, hard-core pornography, is typically produced both by and for men. (This is not, after all, alternative woman-centered pornography.) Therefore in transgressing the law of genre, Tutti also transgresses the law of gender. She takes up authorship within a genre that is typically reserved for the male gender. In Prostitution both gender and genre are subject to contamination.

In Copyright Breaches, however, the relationship between signature, image, and gender is somewhat different, and this clarifies the significance of Prostitution. The equation between the individual artist (the proper name) and performing body (the work of art) is from the outset transgressed by COUM since Copyright Breaches is not the work of an individual artist but an amorphous collectivity. All participants are named (some consciously misnamed) in the list of illustrations, and the final page of the book extends the collectivity to include the reader with the following message: "Copyright Breaches is a continuous project by COUM to which all readers of this book are invited to contribute ideas, examples, photos." Having said this, the two principal participants in COUM, P-Orridge and Tutti, are the only individuals who appear more than once, and the depiction of the two principal "authors" is quite different from the other participants. Furthermore, there are notable differences between the images of Tutti and those of P-Orridge. In differentiation from the other male and female participants pictured in Copyright Breaches, both Tutti and P-Orridge occupy explicitly gendered positions. Moreover, the masculine and feminine positions taken up in the work directly relate to COUM's staging of authorship as sexually differentiated.

All depictions of P-Orridge in Copyright Breaches are outside in different urban environments in British, French, Belgian, and Swedish cities. Many, including the opening sequence, show P-Orridge wearing the copyright breeches and are labeled in the index as "situations." These images are not fragments of a live event or an interactive performance like Fluxshoe; instead, they are performed simply in order to be photographically documented. P-Orridge addresses the camera directly and frequently adopts a pose so that the images appear to be directed by P-Orridge, that is, authored by him as well as featuring him. He becomes an active figure both within the frame and behind the camera (Plate 5). As such he is understood to be the active masculine subject:
author, creator, and performer. The public location of P-Orridge's performance situations contrasts with the images of Tutti, all of which are restricted to interior, "private" spaces, and three of the four images are explicitly sexualized. The first image featuring Tutti looks like a snapshot taken in a casually bohemian social situation (Figure 3.3). One other person is in the frame, and Tutti is positioned between a large, hand-painted copyright symbol next to the date 1973 and her signature. Tutti's gaze is averted away from the camera lens—apparently listening to a male speaker—and she does not adopt a self-conscious pose. The effect is quite unlike the active depictions of P-Orridge as both author and performer. In this photograph of Tutti authorship seems to reside with the photographer rather than the performer. Adopting a typically feminine position, she is the passive object of the photographer's look, as opposed to the active (masculine) subject who authors the work. Although her name has been painted on the wall to the right of her head as if she were the copyright holder, when compared to the images of P-Orridge, Tutti's authorial presence is much less certain, or rather the idea of authorial identity is sexually differentiated and identified with the active masculine position.

This is more clearly demonstrated in the other three images of Tutti, which are close-up shots of her nude body. These images are more immediately assumed to have been taken by a male artist. Although these images are clearly also staged for the camera—like those of P-Orridge—an ambiguity about her authority as the author persists. In contrast with the male figure that performs within an environment, the female body here is the environment. In all three of these images, the female body completely fills the frame and any detail of context is absent. Copyright Breeches stages a typically gendered understanding of space wherein the female figure is associated with the interior (and inactivity) and the male with the exterior (and activity). On one page spread (shown in Plate 6), labeled in the index as "copyright breech, Cosey Fanni Tutti's Tutti Frutti," two full-frontal images of Tutti's torso are shown side by side. In the left-hand image the copyright symbol is placed over the labia at the vaginal opening; for its partner image Tutti holds her labia open, and the copyright symbol is positioned at the clitoris. In order to further emphasize her sexuality, the image is cropped at the neck and thighs—she is a body without a head—which contrasts with P-Orridge's intense gaze. This


image featuring Tutti conforms to a masculine avant-garde staging of female sexuality, which overwrites Tutti’s authorial presence. David Summers has described how this gendered opposition has been understood within philosophy from Aristotle onward and continues to shape current thinking: the “perfect potentiality” of feminine matter is set in opposition to the “perfect activity” of masculine form.

In Copyright Breaches the collective formation typical of the experimental theater troupe or rock band intersects with the deeply gendered notions of individual authorship found in the art world. Within this collective formation the two principal “authors” remain sexually differentiated with Tutti positioned as feminine and P-Orridge as masculine. Because of this, P-Orridge’s masculine authorial individuality is produced at the expense of the images of Tutti that conform to established gendered notions of her as model and muse. Copyright Breaches reveals a typical problem faced by women artists when they occupy a feminine position within the work: authorial identity is gendered as masculine. Within the framework of COUM’s collaborative structure, collectivity as egalitarianism seems to be riven by femininity as difference.

Writing to Harley Lond, an American writer and magazine publisher who later founded the Throbbing Gristle fan club, P-Orridge expresses what might be described as a feminist sentiment regarding COUM’s origin and mode of collective organization. He writes, using his own idiosyncratic linguistic disruptions: “She [Tutti] is also equal co-director of COUM. This is important because E built COUM with her so that neither is indispensable. And also to prove that women are strong and essential as men. That sounds corny but anyway it seemed for many reasons vital to any group to be honest and balanced” (letter to Harley Lond, September 21, 1974). P-Orridge’s assertion of Tutti’s role as his full collaborator and the cofounder of COUM suggests that he (and perhaps also Tutti) was well aware of the implication of gender-differentiated authorship in Copyright Breaches. Especially so given that P-Orridge also included in the same mail art correspondence the four images from Copyright Breaches that are analyzed above: two of himself wearing the copyright breeches and the two full frontal images of Tutti with the copyright symbol over her labia and clitoris. This suggests that he did
not want Londo to misunderstand the implications of these images, which, along with P-Orridge being the signatory of the mail art correspondence, might otherwise imply that he was the sole author. P-Orridge then goes on to describe an unofficial "intervention" performance with Tutti that took place in a shopping mall in Birmingham, England. In contrast with Copyright Breeches, this work stages the breaking of gender archetypes through the idea of transvestite performance. The work enacts the contamination of femininity by masculinity and vice versa. In the same letter to Londo, P-Orridge describes the performance, titled Orange and Blue:

It starts with Cosey in blue evening wear and me in orange labourers wear. The table is half orange and blue to match. Split down the middle. By various movements and actions we swap clothes and roles to end up in reverse. Me as woman her as man. Our gestures change accordingly. But at first glance this is not usually noticed. It is a piece about the area of ambiguity between male and female, and the way our visual responses are keyed to symbolic images.

In this performance COUM stages a transvestite process of gender interchangeability using the social codes of costume and gesture combined with the symbolic codes of complementary colors. It is particularly interesting to note that COUM aligns masculinity with labor. This invocation of masculine labor, a central trope for many politically engaged artists at this time, is further evidence of COUM's continued awareness of the political preoccupations of the period. As outlined in chapter 2, feminist artists were struggling to reconceive the opposition between sexual difference and the political. But when sexual politics is addressed in egalitarian terms (most commonly through the model set out by class), women become honorary brothers, their difference elided by sameness. Instead of femininity being subsumed by masculinity, in Orange and Blue each is subject to mutual gender contamination. COUM's performance thus shifts the terms of this feminist debate by invoking a queer sensibility. As Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has put it, queerness "can refer to: the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning which the constituent elements of anyone's gender, of anyone's sexuality aren't made or can't be made to signify monolithically." Gendered heterosexuality is enacted in Orange and Blue only in order to be destabilized, disrupted, and dissolved. This queering of gender is taken even further in Prostitution.

Looking at all of the elements of the 1976 ICA installation—Tutti's pornographic magazine actions, the disruptive presence of the punk performers and fans, Throbbing Gristle's performance, P-Orridge's used-tampon sculptures, and the media wall—reveals a complex queer scenario. Queer theory, as Biddy Martin puts it, "seeks to complicate hegemonic assumptions about continuities between anatomical sex, social gender, gender identity, sexual identity, sexual object choice and sexual practice." Prostitution, I contend, enacts the very same kind of destabilizing tendencies that Martin describes in the entropic feedback loop of the exhibition's temporal structure.

Queer Aesthetics and the Death Factory

There are well-established avant-garde precedents for the male artist adopting codes of femininity, from Duchamp's Rose Selavy to the portraits of Warhol made up in drag, but for a woman artist to occupy both feminine and masculine positions, a more radical gesture is needed. Tutti's transgression of gender/genre in Prostitution enacts this shift. In transgressing genre from "low" pornography to "high" art, Tutti occupies both feminine and masculine positions simultaneously, and her authorship is secured by the performative assertion of the artist's signature. Tutti's is a queering of gender/genre; in terms of authorship, this work attacks the stability of the binary opposition, demonstrating that masculinity and femininity are mutually permeable. This is gender understood as a social instantiation, regulated through institutions and social practices. Although this understanding of gender is not restricted to sexed bodies (male and female), the social and institutional practices of gender normalization produce the effect of naturalizing these social and cultural norms. Certainly Prostitution enacted a violent disruption of the social instantiation of gender norms, but COUM's queer aesthetic also operates at the symbolic as well as the social level (I mean symbolic in the psychoanalytic sense, related to the production and psychological regulation of sexually differentiated subjectivity). Although COUM was certainly not associated with the emerging intellectual and aesthetic interrogation of Freudian-Lacanian
psychoanalysis in British feminism, as Mary Kelly was, *Prostitution* nonetheless speaks to some of these shared concerns. The idea of queer aesthetics articulates the relationship between the social and the psychical domains, provoking a disruption in both.65

The punk fans at *Prostitution* caused an immediately apparent disruption of gender in social terms. In inviting the band Chelsea to perform, COUM knew that they would bring an entourage that would provide a visual spectacle of vanguard street style, drawing on the mixing of codes of gender and sexual identity. Because Chelsea's guitarist William Broad (soon to be Billy Idol) was part of the so-called Bromley Contingent—the inner circle that formed the entourage of the Sex Pistols—COUM was certain to attract representatives of cutting-edge punk style.66 In October 1976, it should be noted, punk was still very much an underground subculture that would not attain national recognition until two months later with the scandalous TV appearance of the Sex Pistols and some of their entourage. Earlier in 1976, COUM's Christopherx was commissioned by Sex Pistols' manager Malcolm McLaren to photograph the band. Perhaps in order to make explicit the original U.S. vernacular meaning for "punk"—slang for someone who receives anal sex in prison—he staged the Pistols as if they were rent boys.67

The punk fans also provided irreverent (predictably unpredictable) behavior. This was a transgression of genre—an alternative music audience in an art gallery—that was matched by the exhibiting artists also taking on the role of musicians.68 *Prostitution* was thought of as the symbolic termination of COUM Transmissions the performance art collective and the beginning of Throbbing Gristle the rock band. While it was not unusual to have music performed at an art opening, and the music space in the ICA had become a venue for punk bands, it was unusual for the artists themselves to take up instruments and perform as a corollary to the visual art on display. While little was said about the musical component in the mainstream press, a lot was made of the incongruity of the punk fans and their outlandish appearance. In at least one example, the theme of queerness is made colorfully explicit. Helen Minsky wrote in the *London Evening News*: "As I walked in a drunken young woman was being carried out. She had green hair. At the bar, a girl in trousers and bright orange hair was embracing a blond in a gold lamé dress.

Next to them was a 6 foot 5 inch tall West Indian transvestite in a red off the shoulder gown."69

This brief descriptive passage offers a metonymic chain of interconnected codes that evokes a scenario of queerness. From the unruly drunken woman with green hair to the girl with "bright orange hair," whose innocuous "trousers" become a signifier of her butch lesbianism when put together with her female partner, the "blond in a gold lamé dress," and their neighbor, the "West Indian transvestite." In this brief passage gender and sexuality are disrupted principally by female figures. This aspect of punk's queering of gender is typically overlooked in many critical accounts in favor of male figures. As Simon Frith and Howard Horne have argued in one of the few early discussions of female punk style:

From the start [punk] raised questions about sexual codes. It is often argued that punk opened a space which allowed women in—with its debunking of "male" technique and expertise, its critique of rock naturalism, its anti-glory. But the spaces were there because of women's involvement in the first place. Punk *bricolage*, for example, was most effective in the work of Vivienne Westwood and Poly Styrene, in the play of the female art student musicians on images of femininity. Iconography which is consistent in patriarchal ideology—women as innocent/slut/mother/oral—was rendered ridiculous by all being worn at once.70

Indeed, before COUM titled their installation *Prostitution*, in 1974 Vivienne Westwood was decorating her punk boutique Sex with graffiti slogans from Valerie Solanas's 1967 *SCUM Manifesto*. A photograph taken outside the ICA of Siouxsie Sioux—soon to be lead singer of Siouxsie and the Banshees and a member of the Bromley Contingent—wearing one of Westwood's topless blouses appeared in the *Daily Mail* newspaper (Figure 3.9). The blouse is designed so that the fabric covering the breasts is removed in a kind of reversal of a bikini. Thus for the press who were not able to reproduce images of Tuttis's magazine actions, these punk fans served as a visual stand-in, and all of this was incorporated into the feedback loop of *Prostitution*'s media wall.

The band name Throbbing Gristle, Northern English slang for an erect penis, is, of course, the normative heterosexual masculine response to Tuttis's

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66. COUM's Christopherx was commissioned by Sex Pistols' manager Malcolm McLaren to photograph the band.
68. COUM Transmissions the performance art collective and the beginning of Throbbing Gristle the rock band.
70. "Bricolage" is the term used to describe punk's playful appropriation of materials and ideas.
73. Throbbing Gristle, Northern English slang for an erect penis.
magazine actions. Because Tutti played the lead guitar topless during this opening-night set—seated, rather than adopting the typical thrusting male guitarist's pose—further reinforces the linkage with pornographic images. Furthermore, the theme of illicit or deviant sexuality was a dominant motif in punk bands of the period, and in name at least Throbbing Gristle sounds quintessentially punk. A brief list of other band names from the period illustrates this point: Sex Pistols, Slits, Foreskins, Discharge, Nipple Erectors, Penetration, Pork Dukes, Homosexuals, Vice Squad, Members, Masters of the Backside, Buzzcocks, Sham 69, and UK Subs. But Throbbing Gristle evoked punk in name alone since the band's music was far from the primitivist, speeded-up, three-chord rock that was typical of the early punk sound. Thus while male sexuality is suggested in the band's name, Throbbing Gristle's sound would have stood in stark contrast to the virile masculinity of a band like Chelsea. Throbbing Gristle is now usually defined as a post-punk band—a stylistically rather than strictly temporal category—and the *Prostitution performance* was typical of its dark industrial soundscapes. The slow rhythmic drone of Tutti's guitar overlaid with heterogeneous recorded samples and the synthesized sound of Christopherson and Carter provided a textured backdrop for P-Orridge's dark vocal narratives of sexual violence and postapocalyptic urban degradation. As a further transgression of genre, COUM invoked punk but only in order to frustrate the audience's musical expectations. (On the recording, you can clearly hear the punk fans loudly talking as a theatrical display of their disinterest in Throbbing Gristle's music.) Contrasting the Throbbing Gristle sound to the Stooges and the Sex Pistols, Drew Daniel evocatively writes, "The clammy, weedy, thin, unpleasant sounds of Throbbing Gristle's needling high-end and dull ache inspired by their relentless low-end thrub weren't the sounds of petty gripes about 'no fun,' they literally were no fun."  

Likewise, the title of the set for the evening, *Music from the Death Factory*, was in equal parts homage to Warhol's Factory and another punk reference. This invocation of Nazism, common to the early punk scene, was not a mark of right-wing political affiliation but rather another means of shocking the Second World War generation with a feigned association with the nation's former enemy. As a general punk condemnation of the society made by the so-called victors, COUM takes it one step further with the suggestion of an ongoing "death factory." The Death Factory became the name for their recording studio, and Throbbing Gristle derived the band's insignia from a picture taken at Auschwitz I. In 1978, after the source of the insignia had been
publicly revealed, P-Orridge explained the thinking behind this reference in an interview in the music magazine *NME*:

Humanity as a whole is stupid to allow anything like that to begin to occur. There's no one person that's guilty... we didn't even know it at the time, but the local people in Poland used to call Auschwitz the factory of death. We called our album 'Music from the Death Factory' as a metaphor for society and the way life is... What we're saying is: be careful, because it's not far from one to the other.27

Daniel offers the following anticapitalist interpretation of the logo: "The concentration camp was not a historical memorial to a forty-year-old war but the secret truth of everyday life: the camps had shown that the factory model can be applied to anything, including life and death."24 From the death writings of COUM's obituary wall, *Prostitution* inaugurates the (second) musical phase of their practice under the sign of the Holocaust, the factories of death.

Lee Edelman's *No Future*, a queer theory polemic against what he calls "reproductive futurism," offers compelling points of intersection with COUM's politics of death. Written in reaction to the gay community's embrace of normative heterosexual institutions such as marriage and queer theory's turn to utopian thinking, Edelman argues that this politics of futurity conforms to a logic of heterosexual procreation. Against this, he contends that "queerness names the side of those not 'fighting for the children,'" and he embraces an "antisocial" queer politics wherein the queer comes to figure the bar to every realization of futurity, the resistance internal to the social, to every social structure or form."25 Despite the reference to the Sex Pistol's lyric from their most famous song "God Save the Queen" in the title of his book, *No Future*, Edelman’s argument is not concerned with punk. Elsewhere he has dismissed the negatory politics of punk as "little more than oedipal kitsch."26 This latter comment discloses the rather aristocratic tone of Edelman's work that contrasts markedly with the class formation of a subcultural movement that emerged during an economically fraught era. As Tricia Henry comments, "For the large number of people on welfare—or 'the dole,' as it is known in Great Britain—especially young people... the irony, pessimism, and amateur style of the music took on overt social and political implications, and British punk became as self-consciously proletarian as it was aesthetic."27

Queer theory scholars have debated the limitations of Edelman's position, but the value of his approach is clear since the most thoughtful responses (and there have been many) offer important supplements to the underlying premise of his argument. Tavia Nyong'o, writing about the punk reference in Edelman's title, convincingly argues, "Punk performers were highly cognizant of precisely the challenge of abiding neotraditionalism that Edelman raises."28 Despite his titular reference to punk, *No Future's* central metaphor in fact brings us to a key feminist theme, abortion. Edelman seeks to negate reproductive femininity—the maternal—and instead to occupy the place of the aborted fetus. But, as Jennifer Doyle has pointed out, he fails to engage in any significant way with the complex feminist literature on the question of abortion—more than thirty years of scholarship that critiques feminism's heteronormative emphasis on reproductiveity.29 In doing so, Edelson's identification with the image of the aborted fetus is in danger of blindly repeating a masculinist tendency that feminism has roundly critiqued. As Carole Stabile has put it, fetal imaging "depend[s] on the erasure of female bodies and the reduction of women to passive, reproductive machines."30 In other words, for the fetus to emerge as subject, the mother's subjectivity must be erased.

Like Nyong'o and Doyle, I am mobilizing Edelman's argument in order to supplement it. As Daniel vividly puts it, "TG [Throbbing Gristle] wasn't music that let you feel any comfort in the idea of belonging; it was a scraping sound that rubbed raw your paranoid suspicion that the need to belong to anything, including a music scene, was a sign of subjection, just one more form of alienated pleasure."31 Indeed, the figure of heterosexuality that marked this nonbelonging in P-Orridge's lyrics for Music from the Death Factory was the infamous 1960s child murderers, Ian Brady and Myra Hindley. As a monstrously chilling echo of COUM's deviant staging of heterosexual coupledom, this reference to the so-called Moors murderers is an abject literalization of Edelman's queer negation of the child.

The final link in the exhibition's scattered signifying chain that coalesces around the crisis of genre and gender is P-Orridge's series of sculptures titled
**Tampax Romana** (Figure 3.10 and Plate 7). As figures of reproductivity without reproduction, these works evoke certain feminist themes that intersect with Edelman's argument. If mentioned at all in the press, these sculptures are simply read as transgressive. Along with the punk audience in their queer attire, **Tampax Romana** was not understood qua sculpture but only as another example of the obscene. References to menstruation, however, and used tampons in particular—the modern instantiation of the taboo of female reproduction—had become something of an emblematic figure within feminist art. In one sense therefore we can understand **Tampax Romana** as an engagement with a particular form of cultural feminism, but it is not a typical one. This is a feminism that Julia Kristeva has associated with “monumental time.” An aspect of the second-wave feminist movement is related to a post-'68 suspicion of linear history that identifies universal aspects of femininity with a particular focus on female corporeal experience. These are the dimensions of femininity that have been occluded from culture, such as menstruation, pregnancy, birth, and lactation. Typically this form of woman-centered feminism tends to produce a separatist politics. Thus P-Orridge’s invocation of this kind of feminism in his used-tampon sculptures can also be understood as a form of gender transgression. Indeed, through a practice of omission, art history has proved this point. While Tuttì’s pornographic imagery was included in the recent survey exhibition of feminist art *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution*, P-Orridge’s sculptures **Tampax Romana** were not. The very fact that the most comprehensive survey of feminist art in recent years only included work by women artists attests to the fact that even as “feminist art” becomes a curatorial category, “feminism” and “woman” remain continuous.

The best-known feminist works featuring used tampons are by Judy Chicago, a quintessentially woman-centered artist. Chicago co-taught (with Miriam Schapiro) the first women-only studio art program in the United States and then went on to cofound the Women’s Building in Los Angeles. In the art world, Chicago remains the exemplar of 1970s feminist separatism. Although *Menstruation Bathroom* (1970) is her best-known work referencing used tampons, her lesser-known photolithographic print *Red Flag* (1971) establishes the political stakes in her feminist use of this motif (Plate 8). *Red Flag* shows a close-up crotch-level view of a woman in the process of remov-
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is rooted in female bodily experience, which she celebrates and transforms by aesthetic means. In contrast, the used tampons in P-Orridge’s *Tampax Roma* remain abject things, not aestheticized like Chicago’s *Red Flag*, and they have been disconnected from their proximate relationship to the vital female body.

*Red Flag* can be understood as an affirmative reworking of Chicago’s earlier installation *Menstruation Bathroom* (1970). This latter work is more immediately comparable with *Tampax Roma* since here the tampon is staged in a more abject state. Chicago’s pristine white bathroom with shelves stacked with brand-new feminine hygiene products serves as a theatrical stage set for an overflowing trashcan of what appear to be soilied tampons and sanitary products. In fact Chicago did not use actual menstrual blood; these sanitary items had not been anywhere near a woman’s vaginal canal. The theatrical approach applied to this installation was reinforced by Chicago’s use of red paint in place of actual menstrual blood. Despite their abundance in the installation, the fact that these were constructed props—something that must have been apparent at least to all female visitors because of the vivid red color—diminishes the revulsion produced by their obscene display.*

P-Orridge, by contrast, presented actual soilied tampons used by Tutti, his lover, and these metonymic tokens of female sexuality—even more repulsive over thirty years later—serve as a “feminist” counterpart to Tutti’s pornographic display. Tutti’s complicity with the making of pornography—an activity by men and for men—has made it difficult for this work to signify in feminist terms. By the same token, P-Orridge’s explicit feminist theme has also been occluded from consideration as feminist art precisely because of his gender. In relation to the art historical investment in authorship, both P-Orridge and Tutti transgress gender.

P-Orridge’s transgression of gender is matched by a transgression of genre. In one example the used tampons hang from small statuettes of classical female torsos. Like Tutti’s magazine actions, *Venus Mound* (from *Tampax Roma*) combines “high” and “low,” “art” and “non-art.” One part is a reference to the apotheosis of idealized mimesis (classical art)—an iconic representation of the highest order—and the other part is an indexical trace of a bodily process, barely readable as art. The classical reference in the title *Tampax Roma*—

*a pun on Pax Romana, a Latin term used to describe the golden era of the Roman Empire—reinforces this opposition. Like the iconic image of classical feminine beauty *Venus de Milo*, P-Orridge’s *Venus Mound* is damaged and partial. But there the similarity ends. In P-Orridge’s sculpture, the figure’s arms are degraded stumps, and her face and breasts seem to have been roughly scraped away and defaced. *Venus Mound* has been disfigured, damaged, and degraded almost as if to match the indexical equivalents. The used tampons hang from wires attached at the shoulders, and this spindly framework looks like an elongated substitute for the figure’s lost limbs. As prostheses the wires also enact a shift at the level of representation: between the iconic depiction of the female body (the statue) to the indexical tokens of female sexuality (the tampons). Moreover, the cast of the female torso has been cut off at the midriff and mounted onto a disk-shaped plinth. This creates a division in the iconic representation of the body with only the upper torso and head shown. The breasts, face, and belly are scarred and crumbling as if the sculpture is in the process of becoming a piece of rubble. The intimacy of scale (the vitrine is approximately 12 inches square) along with the combination of elements makes *Venus Mound* suggestive of a sacred object that is intended to mobilize feminine powers. Its combination of female corporeal experience and the sacred archetype—as if it were a modern instantiation of a female cult—further reinforces the sculpture’s connection to the type of feminism that Kristeva identifies with monumental time.

While these obscene feminine objects retain an indexical relation to the (absent) female body because they have been removed from the body of the woman (artist), they are now abject. Kristeva’s theorization of abjection in her book *Powers of Horror* has many points of overlap with Edelman’s treatise on queer theory and the death drive. Abjection is an affective psychological state that, according to Kristeva “does not have, properly speaking, a definable object.” Thus abjection is not directed toward or inherent in the object itself, but it is related to a psychological response that can be provoked by objects. In the 1990s the art world became preoccupied with abjection as a kind of curatorial theme. I want to be clear that this is not my approach. While certain things can incite abjection—the skin on milk, a corpse, bodily waste, or an infected wound—Kristeva clarifies that this is the opposite impulse to
desire. This is an important distinction. Desire is object-oriented; it is aimed at the discovery of meaning. Abjection, however, is produced by the confusion between subject and object—life and death, inside and outside, male and female, between different genres—that Kristeva claims "draws me to the place where meaning collapses." Abjection, like Edelman's queer, which he aligns with "the signifier's collapse into the letter's cadaverous materiality," is about the death drive. In this regard Prostitution as an installation provokes an experience of the abject. In contrast, the used tampon in Red Flag transcends abjection through aestheticization. Chicago's carefully composed photographic image has been subjected to further artistic processes by the ink and texture of the lithographic print. Likewise we view Menstruation Bathroom as if it were a stage set; as onlookers we remain protected by a white gauze curtain. Chicago's work is not about abjection as the collapse of meaning; instead, she is concerned with representation—visualizing what has previously been hidden—and remaking meaning via aesthetic means.

Unlike other notable feminist examples that reference this feminine/feminist motif, such as Shigeo Kubota's Fluxus performance Vagina Painting (1965), the used tampons in the Tampax Romana series have been disassociated from the body of the woman artist. Because Tampax Romana is by P-Orridge, a male artist in COUM, femininity is separated from the sexual female body. For Vagina Painting Kubota squatted over a canvas laid out on the floor painting abstract marks in red paint with a paintbrush attached to her underwear (but appearing as if it were held in her vagina). This performance is widely understood as both a response to Nam June Paik's Zen for Head (1962) and as a feminine interpretation of Jackson Pollock's drip painting. Kubota displaces Paik's Cartesian focus on the head as the vehicle of performance with her reference to the vagina. She debases Pollock's balletic dance with her primitive squatting pose and literalizes the metaphor of the paintbrush as a phallus. The work turns on a contradiction. Placing herself visibly within the scene—as the object of the look—Kubota adopts a traditional feminine position that is typically associated with the artist's model. This is exemplified by Yves Klein's performance θ (1960) where nude female models are instructed by the artist to use each other's bodies as live paint brushes with Klein hovering on the sidelines acting as conductor of the scene. In Vagina Painting the prone canvas becomes a figure for the female body in relation to which she adopts a masculine position because of her use of the paintbrush as phallic extension. Thus the reproductive reference suggested by the red paint and the paintbrush as used tampon is transformed by a phallic logic. The elementary Freudian lesson asserts that to be an artist, the woman must claim the phallus. Likewise, Chicago's Red Flag can also be understood in phallic terms, and the notion of abjection is overwritten by the opposite, the phallus. As the privileged stand-in for the lost object, the phallus is the representation of desire. The tampon is again transformed into an object, the object of desire.

This phallic logic is not deployed in COUM's installation. Instead, Tampax Romana is doggedly turned toward abjection. P-Orridge has consistently claimed that his interest in this motif is an acknowledgment of feminine power. But what kind of feminine power is this? Earlier I referred to this as reproducibility without reproduction. Edelman, however, might challenge this distinction in the following terms:

The biological fact of heterosexual procreation bestows the imprimatur of meaning-production on heteronormative relations... The child, whose mere possibility is enough to spirit away the naked truth of heterosexual sex—impregnating heterosexuality, as it were, with the future of signification by conferring upon it the cultural burden of signifying futurity... This, I argue, is a futurity that COUM's installation reverses and turns back toward the uncanny. Abjection, Kristeva argues, is a version of the uncanny; it is a reaction to, or psychological protection against, the memory of the mother's body. In his identification with the aborted fetus separated from the mother's body, Edelman, Doyle argues, "comes awfully close to speaking from exactly the reproductive position he so forcefully challenges—speaking as Child cut from the body of mother (which I take here to be not only the maternal body that disappears into the background of the anti-abortion poster, but the 'past' feminist theory No Future ignores). Furthermore, in reading Kristeva's Powers of Horror alongside Edelman's No Future, it seems
remarkable the extent to which the uncanny figure of the mother is replaced by the death-identified gay man. This unremarked-on displacement of sexual difference in Edelman's work reinforces Doyle's insights about the dangers in his occlusion of feminist politics.

The uncanny is the familiar, longed-for home that has become terrifyingly unfamiliar. P-Orridge's wizened objects are dried out to the point of blackened desiccation; they hang limply from their wires, absent of any sense of vitality that they may once have had. Having come from the interior of the woman's body, they are now deathlike emblems of "an opaque and forgotten life." Both in their invocation of the past and of death—another life no longer lived—the psychical aspect of these abject things links to the death writing of the media wall and Throbbing Gristle's Music from the Death Factory.

Prostitution, I contend, has more in common with Kelly's Post-Partum Document than the accident of their historical conjunction. Both installations are concerned with the symbolic codes of sexual difference, but the difference in their modes of address has veiled the many points of connection. As I discussed in chapter 2, Kelly was part of a feminist study group, which included Juliet Mitchell, Laura Mulvey, and Jacqueline Rose, dedicated to the feminist analysis of Lacanian theory. While psychoanalysis is writ large in Kelly's installation, COUM does not lay claim to such theoretical motivations. Because of this, Kelly's and COUM's addresses to the symbolic codes of sexual difference—the tone, if you like—are significantly different. If Kelly's installation is a demonstration of the proper realization of the law, according to Lacanian psychoanalysis, COUM's queer aesthetics is an attempt to transgress this law, to interrupt it. Post-Partum Document tracks the male child's entry into the symbolic order—his acquisition of language—and how this is also a process of heteronormative gendering. Prostitution, however, is an exploration of the perverse. Through a queer aesthetic, COUM disrupts the apparently fixed symbolic codes charted by Kelly. While Post-Partum Document is more obviously "self analytical" in its attempt to "explore the constitution and functioning of this [symbolic]
essay by using a range of varied anecdotal evidence from a series of actual female spectators differentiated by both class and race who respond to the racial coding of feminine beauty in mainstream cinema. Although the two writers are in fact describing very different kinds of spectators, hooks (empirical) and Mulvey (psychically imagined), the critique of Mulvey’s inability to see the “whiteness” of classical Hollywood cinema’s presentation of femininity is important and necessary. In the example of Antepartum, the racial identity of the woman is not decisively presented, and even though it is generally taken to be a white woman’s body, motherhood is not identified with whiteness here to the extent that femininity was in Mulvey’s text. See hooks, “The Oppositional Gaze.”
85. For a discussion of the significance of indexicality in relation to Kelly’s work, see Iversen, “Readymade, Found Object, Photograph.”
86. S. Wilson, “From Women’s Work to the Umbilical Lens.”

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1. For a further discussion of these two art scandals, see Mulholland, The Cultural Decollation, 5–30; and Walker, Left Shift, 157–81.
2. From a telephone interview with Mary Kelly, October 11, 2004.
3. The decade of the 1970s was marked by a more general sexualization of British popular culture that can, in part, be seen as a reaction to feminism. For a good cultural studies account of this, see Hunt, British Low Culture.
4. Reckitt, Art and Feminism, 103; and Mark, WACK!
5. The catalogue entry for Tutti’s art action, when they were included in the 2006 Tate Triennial, states the following: “Her approach positioned her in direct opposition to the didactic exploration of gender politics favored by her contemporary female artists, and what she saw as the restrictive dictates of feminism” (Ruf and Verwoert, Tate Triennial 2006, 42). Needless to say, I do not endorse this parsing of 1970s feminist engaged art even if Tutti herself has come to see it in such terms. It is, nonetheless, a typical postfeminist simplification of the second-wave women’s movement as limiting, judgmental, and implicitly dull.
6. The sense of Prostitution as implicitly engaged with feminism is clear from statements made by Tutti and P-Orridge. Here is Tutti from a 1982 lecture at the University of Leeds: “[Working in the porno industry] enabled me to work as an artist (unknown to my associates) and as a woman within a man’s fantasy world and also to see women through the eyes of men” (see the liner notes for the CD Time to Tell with a transcript of the lecture). Also see P-Orridge, “The First Throbbing Gristle Annual Report,” 24.
7. Cork, “Now What Are Those English Up To?”

8. Ford, Wreckers of Civilization, 6.12. Ford’s is the best account so far of COUM Transmissions, and my chapter is indebted to his excellent scholarship on the performance work as well as the band, Throbbing Gristle.
9. P-Orridge, GPO versus GPO.
10. Throbbing Gristle included Genesis P-Orridge, Cosey Fanni Tutti, Chris Carter, and Peter Christopherson. Only Carter was not part of COUM. Although the Prostitution exhibition is the symbolic beginning of Throbbing Gristle, the actual debut performance was in the summer of 1976 in the AIR gallery in London. There was one other performance that summer at the Hat Fair music festival in Winchester before the opening night of Prostitution. Ford, Wreckers of Civilization, 6.16–19.
11. P-Orridge and Naylor, “Counting Along.” 23. There are other examples of artists’ involvement with celebrity culture, both contemporary and historical. Significant precedents for Warhol, on different points of the spectrum, might be Salvador Dali and Jackson Pollock.
12. The best essay to date that explores these issues in relation to performance art in particular, although it does not mention Prostitution, is Kelly, “Re-viewing Modernist Criticism.”
13. Examples of Tutti’s pornographic art actions were included in the 2006 Tate Triennial. The 2007 Barbican Centre Gallery exhibition Panic Attack: Art in the Punk Years (June 5, 2007 to September 9, 2007) is the fullest attempt yet to reassemble Prostitution. The curators presented facsimiles of the media wall as it would have appeared in the original ICA show, together with examples of some of the other visual elements of the exhibition. In 2011 Tate Britain presented the exhibition COUM Transmissions in Context: 1969–1977 with a series of original newspaper clippings presented in vitrines along with the used-tampon sculptures and examples of Tutti’s art actions. See Ruf and Verwoert, Tate Triennial 2006; and Sladen and Yedgar, Panic Attack!
14. COUM did not document the media wall photographically, and I have been unable to track down any newspaper images of it. The organizing rationale for the group’s use of media cuttings and their decision not to record this material was that it represented the record of their work by others. (This information was given by P-Orridge in an e-mail communication, June 22, 2013.)
15. See Joselit, American Art since 1945 and Feedback.
16. The two best English-language books on Beuys are Ray and Beckmann, Joseph Beuys; and Mesch and Michely, Joseph Beuys. A full flowering of the subcultural spiritual aspect of P-Orridge in particular emerged in the 1980s in relation to the band Psychic TV. P-Orridge enacted a cultish transformation of the social
formation of the fan structure in an obscure counterinstitution known as the Temple of Psychick Youth (TOPY). The writings related to TOPY, by P-Orridge and others, are collected in P-Orridge, THEE PSYCHICK BIBLE.

18. Ibid., 116.
21. See Lyotard, “The Dream-Work Does Not Think,” 21. For a full elaboration of this distinction, see Lyotard, Discourse, Figure.
22. See P-Orridge, Painful but Fabulous and Thirty Years of Being Cut Up; P-Schapiro, “Interview: Genesis P-Orridge”; P-Orridge, “Three Splinter Test” and THEE PSYCHICK BIBLE.
23. See C. Harrison and Orton, A Provisional History of Art & Language; and C. Harrison, Essays on Art & Language and Conceptual Art and Painting, Andrew Herringway, who knew P-Orridge briefly in the late 1960s when they were each living in Hull, told me that Art & Language's Howard Hurrell was also teaching in the art school there. While I do not know if P-Orridge and Tutti came into contact with Hurrell, they would certainly have been aware of Art & Language by the 1970s. The group's particular brand of analytical conceptual art was ascendant in the art world at this time. Furthermore, together with Colin Naylor, P-Orridge was compiling an encyclopedia-style book on contemporary art in Britain. See Naylor and P-Orridge, Contemporary Artists.
25. This is in direct contrast with the approach taken by Art & Language whose work in the late 1960s and early 1970s draws on the logical investigations of analytic philosophy. The classic text on conceptual art as an “aesthetics of administration” is Buchloh, “Conceptual Art 1962–1969: From the Aesthetics of Administration to the Critique of Institutions.”
26. On the idea of conceptual art and the irrational, see Krauss, “The Lewitt Matrix.”
27. On Huebler, Acconci, and other conceptual approaches to photography and performance, see Costello and Iversen, Photography after Conceptual Art.
28. Kathy O'Dell's study is groundbreaking in its account of photographic documentation and the analysis of the dispersed conceptual art use of photography. She analyzes the location of these images in journals and other publications. See O'Dell, Contract with the Skin.
29. COUM Transmissions continued to participate in the art world idiosyncratically throughout the late 1970s. Most notably, in 1977 they did a U.S. performance tour titled Cease to Exist. On this, and COUM Transmissions' final performance work, see Ford, Wreckers of Civilization, 6.30–6.33, 8.5–8.7.
30. Tutti uses the term “Magazine Action” to describe the medium of the work in order to differentiate it from straightforward performance art and from photographic documentation of performance.
32. Kelly, “Re-viewing Modernist Criticism,” 2; Lambert-Beatty, Being Watched, 73.
33. O’Dell, Contract with the Skin, 13.
34. On this aspect of performance and installation art, see Frielings, The Art of Participation; and Bishop, Participation. For a critical engagement with the contemporary art discourse of participation as democratic, see Bishop, Artificial Hells.
35. For an excellent elaboration of the complex relationship between performance and photography in the 1960s and 1970s, see the exhibition and publication by Maude-Roxby, Live Art on Camera.
36. For an extended account of this performance, see P-Orridge and Naylor, “Coming Along,” 24–25. P-Orridge told me in an interview that they were particularly interested in capturing the audience reaction (October 8, 2012).
37. Cork, “Now What Are Those English Up To?”
38. For a discussion of this issue in relation to Fluxus, see Kotz, Words to Be Looked at, 173–212. For a comparable argument on the incorporation of photography into the performance scenario itself with regard to the work of Gina Pane, see O'Dell, Contract with the Skin, 31–43.
39. Kelly, “Re-viewing Modernist Criticism,” 33–57. Also see Vergine, Body Art and Performance. The key term here is presence. For a powerful and complex critical defense of presence as a founding paradox in live work, see Phelan, Unmarked, 146–52. For a reiteration of these ideas in relation to the art museum's recent embrace of performance art, see A. Jones, “The Artist Is Present.” Kelly’s essay is the first critical engagement with this idea. She connects Vergine’s argument about the presence of the performing body to the high modernist investment in this idea because of the centrality of the autographic mark (the original, signatory gesture of each painter) in critical writing on abstract expressionist painting. Setting aside the polemical aspects of Kelly’s apparently hostile approach to the body itself—which have been addressed in an equally polemical vein by Amelia Jones (see A. Jones, Body Art / Performing the Subject, 22–29)—Kelly’s essay has far-reaching implications for our approach to post-1960s art. She argues for an analysis of the artwork that addresses its systemic imbrication in the institutional frameworks of the museum and publishing industry (art magazines, exhibition catalogues, etc.) that she connects to
the particular gendered investment that these institutions have in the proper name of the artist. For a recent critical elaboration of this issue in relation to the Museum of Modern Art in particular, see Pollock, “The Missing Future.”

42. Another notable example of a woman performance artist in Britain at this time known for presenting the eroticized nude female body is Rose English. See MacDonald, “Live and Kicking.” For a longer history, see Buszek, *Pin-up Girls*.
44. For an excellent analysis of Benglis’s advertisement in *Artforum*, see A. Jones, *Body Art / Performing the Subject*, 1–14. Also see Chave, “Minimalism and Biography”; and S. Wilson, “Reading Freire in London.”
47. See Doyle, *Sex Objects*, 45–70; and Bryan-Wilson, “Dirty Commerce.”
48. Conrad Atkinson put it thus: “Cosey introduced to the ICA a space which was reserved for the showing of ‘art,’ the reality of her hard won struggle for economic survival, her own sexuality as object, her necessity to pose for pornographic pictures. Half a mile from the ICA such scenes can be seen in any strip club, and in most newsgagents similar photographs are openly displayed for sale” (“Art for Whom: Notes,” 38).
49. M. Harrison, “Notes on Feminist Art in Britain, 1970–1977,” 218. Soon after the exhibition, P-Orridge indicates that the idea of the relation to feminism is implicit in the work itself. In an interview in the music magazine *Sash!*, he elaborates: “The Cosey part was so funny... ‘This is Tessa from Sunderland, she’s an air hostess,’ and then the next one was ‘This is Barbara from Hawaii.’ We didn’t have to say anything, we didn’t have to say it was feminist or anything, it ridiculed the whole thing in its own way” (P-Orridge, “The First Throbbing Gristle Annual Report,” 23).
51. The title was first used for a performance at the University of Kent, Canterbury, in 1972, but I have not found any visual record of this. *Copyright Breaches* the book—hereafter simply referred to as *Copyright Breaches*—is made up of a series of photographic images.
52. This idea is carried through to Throbbing Gristle’s discography; their first album is titled *The Second Annual Report* (1977), which is followed by *D.o.A.: The Third and Final Report of Throbbing Gristle* (1978).
53. The idea of an implicit contract between the performance artist and the audi-
66. For the opening night COUM billed the band (without their consent) under the name LSD. This was chosen as the most antipunk name they could come up with; see Ford, Wreckers of Civilization, 6.19. Chelsea soon changed its name to Generation X. According to Peter Hitchcock in a personal conversation, the members of the Bromley Contingent did not embrace this reference to Bromley, a middle-class south London borough, since it undermined their claims to working-class street credibility.

67. While the band was willingly complicit with Christopherhoop’s queer photo shoot, McLaren, the band’s manager, was not so happy; see Ford, Wreckers of Civilization, 4.10, 5.13. These images of the Sex Pistols appeared in Prostitution and have been published in Savage, England’s Dreaming. For an excellent discussion of this photo shoot in light of queer theory, see Nyong’o, “Do You Want Queer Theory?” 109. For a more general discussion of the racial complexities that arise at the intersection of the popular culture understanding of “punk” and “queer,” see Nyong’o, “Punk’d Theory.”

68. On the relationship between art and music at this time, see Frith and Horne, Art into Pop, Cagles, Reconstructing Pop/Subculture, and Molon, Sympathy for the Devil.

69. Minsky, “Mall Porn Exhibition.”

70. Frith and Horne, Art into Pop, 155. For examples of work on the enduring relationship between feminism, queers, and punk, see Halberstam, In a Queer Time and Place; Kearny, “The Missing Links”; and Fuch, “If I Had a Dick.” For an excellent discussion of the intersections of queer masculinity and punk, see Nyong’o, “Do You Want Queer Theory?” As Frith and Horne point out, these women were not from the start, but bands like the Slits and Poly Styrene took much longer to secure recording deals in an industry still rife with sexism. Caroline Coon’s fanzine-style illustrated book on the early punk and no wave scene is unique in the attention it gives to women; see Coon, 1988: The New Wave Punk Rock Explosion.

71. The ICA recording has been released as part of the box set TG24—24 Hours of Throbbing Gristle on the Mute label, 2003.

72. Daniel, Throbbing Gristle’s Twenty Jazz Funk Greats, 12. “No Fun” is the title of a track by the Stooges that the Sex Pistols famously covered.

73. Quoted in Ford, Wreckers of Civilization, 7.19. In 1979, in an editorial introduction to a reprinted interview between P-Orridge and Colin Naylor, the Marxist art critic John Roberts indicates a growing discomfort with such dark sentiments in his warning that “Hacker’s is not Dacau. The morality becomes inverted; a cruel milieu is taken up as the image of a fashionable ennui. These are creeping signs of decadence. They have to be watched.” See P-Orridge and Naylor, Cutting Along, 22.

74. Daniel, Throbbing Gristle’s Twenty Jazz Funk Greats, 16. An anonymous re-viewer from 1980 echoes this latter-day account in the following way: “It is the modern chain gang blues; the voices of concentration camp workers. The infinite echoing of the voices creates the sense of mass production slavery” (“Modern Music of the Chain Gang,” 234). The literature on the significance of the Holocaust to subsequent cultural production is of course vast; the classic philosophical text is Horkheimer and Adorno, Dialectic of Enlightenment. For an interesting recent political elaboration of this issue in a cultural context, see the Introduction in Pollock, Concentrationary Cinema, 1–54.

75. Edelman, No Future, 3. 4. The key text on the question of “antisocial” queer theory is Hochguenghem, Homosexual Desire. Also see Bersani, Homo. For a further discussion of Edelman’s relation to the “antisocial” strain in queer theory, see Case- rino et al., “The Antisocial Thesis in Queer History,” 819–21; and Nyong’o, “Do You Want Queer Theory?” 104. For an elaborated counterposition, see Halberstam, The Queer Art of Failure.


77. Quoted in Young, Break All Rules!, 8. The seminal political analysis of punk is Heggide, Subculture, the Meaning of Style. Also see O’Hara, The Philosophy of Punk.


79. As Doyle points out, the only feminist text cited by Edelman is Johnson, “Apocalypse, Animation, and Abortion.” Also see Poovey, “The Abortion Question”, and Stabile, “Shooting the Mother.” An extensive bibliography on this issue in feminist thinking can be found in Doyle, “Blindsots and Failed Performance.”


81. Daniel, Throbbing Gristle’s Twenty Jazz Funk Greats, 14.


84. For an excellent analysis of Chicago’s installation and the presumption of its literalism on the part of male viewers (as evidenced by viewer interviews in Johanna Demetrakas’s film, Womanhouse, 1974), see Blocker, What the Body Cost, 107–8.


86. Ibid., 2. The idea of abjection as a significant theme in contemporary art is exemplified by two exhibitions; see Houser et al., Abject Art; and S. Morgan, Rites of Passage. For a critical polemic against the use of abjection as a curatorial theme that also includes a critique of Kristeva’s (but seems to be more of a response to the curatorial application of Kristeva’s work), see Bois and Krauss, Formless. Also see Foster, “Obscene, Abject, Traumatic.”

88. For an excellent feminist analysis of this piece by Kubota (along with other New York–based women artists who used their own bodies, such as Carolee Schneemann and Yoko Ono) in comparison with Yves Klein, see Schneider, The Explicit Body in Performance, 38–40. For a general overview of Kubota’s work, see Yoshimoto, Into Performance, 169–94. Also see Schor, “Representations of the Penis.”
92. For a recent close reading of Post-Partum Document, fresh in its treatment of the density of Kelly’s theoretical reference, see Meltzer, “After Words.”

4. Revolting Photographs
1. Wall, “‘Marks of Indifference,’” 250.
2. For an excellent overview of these issues in relation to developments in photographic theory, see Batchen, “Palinode.”
3. Spence, Putting Myself in the Picture, 118. The series also went by an alternate title, The History Lesson.
5. Spence began working with her principal collaborator, Dennett, in 1973 through the children’s rights movement giving photographic workshops to inner city kids. Spence’s engagement with children’s rights was rooted in her own traumatic experience of being evacuated from her parental home in London to the countryside during the Second World War because of the Blitz bombings. For an account of this, see Jo Spence, The Oral History of British Photography, audio recordings held in the British Library Sound Collections; and Dennett, “The Wounded Photographer,” 26.
7. When Burgin was hired to teach in the highly regarded degree program in photography and film at the Polytechnic of Central London in 1973, it was housed in the School of Communication not the School of Fine Art. For a discussion of this prehistory, see Roberts, “Interview with Victor Burgin.”
9. Burgin, Between, 84.
10. Kotz, Words to Be Looked At, 194.
12. For a critique of Wall’s position, see Costello and Iversen, Photography after Conceptual Art; and Stallabrass, “Museum Photography and Museum Prose.”
15. While Roberts makes a general connection between conceptual photography and workerism, I do not mean to say that he is guilty of sentimentality. Moreover, he has written widely on Spence’s work and has paid close attention to figures of working-class disruption in other work. See Roberts, Postmodernism, Politics, and Art and The Art of Interruption.
17. Spence’s radical politics and growing theoretical engagement led to irreconcilable tensions, and in 1977 the collaboration dissolved when Spence was fired. For a full account of this, see Evans, The Camerawork Essays.
19. Burgin also had a working-class background, but he was able to transcend its social limitations through higher education and his intellectual status as a university professor and theoretically engaged artist. See Roberts, “Interview with Victor Burgin.”
20. Other members of the collective at some point during its period of operation were Ruth Barrenbaum, An Dekker, Helen Grace, Sally Greenhill, Liz Heron, Gerda Jager, Maggie Millman, Michael Ann Mullen, Maggie Murray, Jini Rawlings, Christine Roche, Nanette Solomon, Arlene Strasberg, Sue Twereek, and Julia Yellacott. They also produced an educational pack of slides called Domestic Labour and Visual Representations and presented their work in numerous discursive contexts. For a general account of the project, see Heron, “The Hackney Flashers.”
21. Other projects that began under the aegis of Photography Workshop and then developed independently were the Camberwell Beauties, a group of black women who used photography as part of a literacy program; the Working-Class Women’s Post-Education Group, which included Valerie Walkerdine; and Faces, a group that included Elizabeth Wilson and was addressed to personal appearance and identity. More Photography Workshop groups started in Brazil and India. Information on these international groups was given to me by Terry Dennett in an interview in London on December 12, 2004. Also see Dennett, “The Wounded Photographer.”
23. In the course of the project, the artists took documentary photographs within the factory space that showed women and men at workstations, but none of these appeared in the final project. Examples of these images have been included in the 1997 catalogue that was published when the exhibition was restaged by the curator Judith Mastai for the Charles H. Scott Gallery in Vancouver, Canada. In this publication