

Petrolio2

In an empty room, there is a plywood replica of a swimming-pool. Inside the empty, shiny white scenes from the film *Saló – or the 120 Days of Sodom* by Pier Paolo Pasolini are reenacted. Writer Johan Jönson recites text he has written in relation to Pasolini's writing. The rest of the performers constitute a gender-undefined listening crowd, often morphing into multiple organisms (*creatoids*) crawling along the pool's walls. Farther away, four screens are running: one shows the *Saló* film (muted), one plays a You-tube clip of Glenn Gould playing (and humming) Bach's Goldberg variations BWV 988, and two are rendering the event as it occurs inside the pool.

Audiences sit on the gallery and observe the event as rendered on the screens with binoculars (for those sitting in the gallery, the inside of the pool remains inaccessible to direct sight), or else stand by the edge of the pool and see the event at close sight from above. Once the poet has completed his recitation, he leaves the pool and some *creatoids* crawl up onto the front edge of the pool (tongue) where they perform a live-edited collective recitation of text-fragments from Marquis de Sade and Pier Paolo Pasolini - texts that speak of body, sex, sadism, homosexual pleasure and politics.

Petrolio2 is a re-volting version of its original. The empty pool and its glossy white, cold, bare fencing walls replace the original billowing white, softly swathing furry room. The trans-morph *creatoids* replace the original gender divide. Instead of pre-recorded, the text is now recited live. Instead of listening to citations from Pasolini, text is now performed by the performers. Pasolini's novel, *Petrolio* no longer runs the narrative, rather opens language to the wordings of de Sade, the poet and the *creatoids*. More so. In the original, sight designated perception, now it is listening that triggers the sensible. Still, sight is impeded, and yet specified. Listening is enhanced and breached. Instead of enfolding language, the room now differentiates the body. In the submerged enclosure language breaks apart, and all bodies. By a rigorously structured performative choreography, where politics and poetics occur in one and the same gesture. *Petrolio2* revolts itself inside out. In and through a poetic submergence that affirms its politics. Through and between bodies no longer human, in and between words no longer text. The violence of poetry once again hard to handle. But possible to speak-out/do.

cc, November 2014

Choreography Cristina Caprioli, performers Ulrika Berg, Philip Berlin, Pavle Heidler, Emelie Johansson, Sebastian Lingserius, Louise Perming, Pontus Petterson and guest Johan Jönson. Text Johan Jönson, Marquis de Sade, Pier Paolo Pasolini, film (YouTube) Pier Paolo Pasolini *Saló – or the 120 Days of Sodom* (1974), music Bach Goldberg variations BWV 988 played by Glenn Gould, space Cristina Caprioli, construction Johannes Fäst.

When not dwelling *Petrolio2*, the pool turns into the installation POOLLOOP.

Petrolio2 – foreground

Pier Paolo Pasolini was murdered November 1975. Fall 1992, almost twenty years after his tragic death, his last, incomplete novel *Petrolio* was published. November 1994, I presented *Petrolio – accumulation av materia*, a choreography that was dealing with Pier Paolo Pasolini politics of poetics – a work that forced me to reevaluate my understanding of choreography and paved the path I still walk. November 2014, after twenty years of working continuum, I retrace my path to Pasolini – once again to question how and why choreography.

To work with material from so way back is scary, but productive. The vertigo of time becomes fully tangible. That nothing has changed is clearly exposed. I smile with anxiety at my former brave efforts, and question today's drive, probably equally naive, although equally well meant. I ponder over the former unreserved tone, over the courage, so violently confident, even if unconscious. Realize that it takes a beginner's energetic ignorance to dare the kind of run-up that with contagious enthusiasm claims that which one neither understands nor knows how. I by no means sigh for the past. Still, the challenge jostles from within. Why return? Because continue. If not as enthusiastically, still with the same entranced confidence.

And everywhere; Pier Paolo Pasolini. Still today a role model, a hinge onto the strived. Language, poetics, rigor, violence, the intellectual effort, the visual wallow, power politics, the barricade. Most importantly the female figure. All of which still occupies my time and meager strength. Pasolini outlined my tentative tracing steps. It is a privilege to return to what has been – my current now. my still going disoriented steps, now in company with new collaborators, in a different circumstance.

Much has happened since. Choreography dares much more now than we were able to then. Audiences participate, are critically acquiescent. At least some. Pasolini's dread for consumerism dystopia has become our common ground. Still, here we stand and claim a gesture. Once again with naïve optimism. *Petrolio2* is a here and a now, a place that 'revolts' inwards as it unfolds outwards. A run-up that reaffirms the run-up. Into and between bodies, words and all that remains usefully inexplicable. What it will become, I once again do not know.

cc, May 2014

Petrolio2 - background

Petrolio – accumulation av materia (1994) was a performance that addressed the work of Italian poet, cinematographer, and social critic Pier Paolo Pasolini. Specifically, his posthumously published novel *Petrolio*, which constituted the script (and soundtrack) of the piece. The performance took place in two separate spaces, each targeting a specific theme/issue. One, the bio-politics of poetics, staged in the small stage of the theater, and two, the everyday social choreography, performed in a nearby underground garage.

At arrival, audiences were brought to the garage where four male dancers played a (choreographed) soccer game amongst parked cars, priest garments, bags of flour, tubs filled with water and swimming eels, and a video screening Pasolini's last interview, which provided the soundtrack of the event. The choreography was performative and installation-like, for audiences to behold whilst walking along and inside it. Although unconsciously, this set-up anticipated my current understanding of choreography as a regulated 'game' what outcome cannot be predicted. Since its outcome is depending on the interaction between players and spectators, who neither behold nor perceive themselves nor each other but the game itself, that is, the collective choreography they themselves produce (1). This first event addressed Pasolini's life-long care for youth, not least the soccer youth culture, in Italy run

by the Catholic Church. Here, the soccer game (and the young male dancers) stood as metaphor for Pasolini's unlimited faith in and love for lower class (male) youth, and for his life-long conflict between his catholic faith, radical activism and homosexuality.

After this introductory event, audiences walked back to the theater and to the small stage, which was entirely dressed in white fur. The fur covered the floor, the back wall and all seats. The space folded itself upon itself, sight was brought out of focus, the sound was muffled, and the atmosphere became intimately tactile. The space stood as metaphor for the flat and smooth unwritten page's white surface, upon which scripture ('white writing' (2)) can and at the same time is hindered to inscribes its meaning. Here depicted neither as flat nor smooth, but rather as a (living) fuzzy surface what motion blurs and distorts both writing and language. In this fuzzy-white room, four female dancers, dressed in tight grey skirts and cardigans (bourgeoisie code) performed a dynamic yet highly restrained abstract/non-figurative 'white' choreography that depicted a number of female figures from Pasolini's films, what gestures were engrafted upon the furry background (fuzzy page). Once in a while, selected excerpts from Pasolini's text were projected upon the furry background, where they were set in motion not only by the fur, which uneven surface blurred the sharp contours of the scripture, but also by a series of distortions (at the time programmed analogue) such as dispersion, accumulation, swaying twists and mirroring revolutions of graphs and patterns that made the text 'dance', and by that also its meaning. Other times (sparsely) a recorded reading of the text could be heard, spoken by a TV news anchor, whose unaffected reading handed hermeneutic interpretation over to the spectator. Other noises traveled (sparsely) the room; light steps walking about, climbing up and down a stair, loud voices from a bar, a passing train, dripping rain. These sounds came from 18 speakers, strategically distributed in the room, allowing audiences to experience sound as choreography moving in space.

Finally, the performance ended to the tones of Bach's Goldberg variation BWV 988 nr 1 played (and hummed) by Glenn Gould (Pasolini considered Bach's music, and Gould's interpretation of Bach, as the ultimate example of a coalescence of stringency and poetics). This second (female) choreography addressed Pasolini's life-long care for the female figure, and his concern with questions of language, specifically his interest in how semiotics operates within writing, cinema and politics. Which are the concerns that still as of today dominate my work. It is therefore relevant for me to return to Petrolio – accumulation av material, and therein recognize that which was and still is crucial. And I the spirit of Pasolini, with restraint sustain unrestrained faith in language, and the politics of poetics.

(1) This concept of the 'game' is widely informed by the writings of Hans Georg Gadamer and Jacques Rancière.

(2) 'White writing' is a concept introduced by Roland Barthes to depict a writing potentially unimpeded by circumstance conditions.