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THE VISUAL GRAMMAR OF SUFFERING

Pia Lindman and the Performance of Grief

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Pia Lindman is perhaps best known for her *Public Sauna* at P.S.1 in 2000, where she installed a working sauna in an artspace and invited the audience to join in the performance, defying the taboo of nudity in American culture and foregrounding the centrality of the human body in art. Like *Public Sauna*, her more recent work belongs in the tradition of minimalist and community-oriented art. Site-specific in nature, it concerns the relation of the body to public space in everyday life and the broader socio-political issues inscribed in those dynamics. Lindman provokes us to think about how everyday interactions with bodies, architecture, media, and public art affect our sense of self and our experience of social space. By drawing attention to how social interactions are themselves performative, her work also reveals the inherent performativity of making and experiencing art.

Her recent *New York Times* demonstrates the tensions between human gestures of private suffering and the political motivations for monumentalizing personal grief. Lindman has performed *New York Times* in Mexico City, Tokyo, Helsinki, Vienna, Berlin, and most recently at Battery Park, the Vera List Center, and the Luxe Gallery in New York. The actual performance is the last step in a long and complex process of tracing out the mechanics of making and publicizing gestures of grief. Lindman begins by videotaping herself re-enacting some of the 600 photographs of Afghan, American, Iraqi, Sudanese, Palestinian, Israeli, Balinese bodies in pain collected from *The New York Times* from September 2002 to September 2003. She then sketches out her re-enactments (with particular attention to facial expressions and hand gestures) and shares this set of drawings with the audience at the beginning of each public performance. The drawings outline the bodily gestures of grieving captured in the photographs, but are devoid of any feature that would indicate where the image comes from, or whom it depicts. By exhibiting her own sketches of her own re-enactments of the images of grief from *The New York Times* rather than those images themselves, Lindman demonstrates that gestures are not forms of pure expression but interpretations meant to frame information.

On one occasion, Lindman begins her *New York Times* performance dressed in gray and carrying a gray flag to lead a group of spectators through Battery Park, stopping first in front of the National Museum of the American Indian. At the foot of the

museum's marble steps, she pulls out the sketchbook and places them on a simple stand in front of her. Without speaking a word, she then selects one sketch and carefully reconstructs the gesture. First she poses her torso, her head, then her facial expression, and finally her hands, slowly freezing herself into a pose. She spends about ten minutes striking three poses in front of one of the four monumental sculptures that watch over the entrance to the museum. In her third pose she kneels before the statue to the Americas—a colossal feminized gray granite figure that sits with eyes closed and hands peacefully resting on its lap. This monumental woman dwarfs the three figures that crouch alongside it (a Cherokee, an Arawok, and an African-American slave). The juxtaposition of stone and metal sculptures, concrete pavement, and granite buildings to Lindman's gray attire suggests a visual metonymy, yet one that short circuits at the sight of flesh. Lindman bows her head, holding her heart with one hand and stretching her other hand up along the pedestal of the sculpture, as if trying to touch something entombed inside. Just as her hand touches the monument, security guards approach to remind her that this is a federal building and it cannot be touched. The audience reacts with a serious, moving silence, as if somehow they were directly witnessing someone else's pain. But it is the gesture of the National Guardsmen removing Lindman from the premises (or at least onto the sidewalk) that reminds us how public acts of grieving can still be seen as politically threatening, especially when a country is at war.

Lindman's gestures, however, are not simple statements about public grief and are not as emotive as the reactions they elicit. Because she takes a few minutes to embody a gesture and less than a minute to hold the pose, the gestures come off as oddly unnatural, though no less unnatural than the museum's own monuments. The immediacy of the gestures is not immediate: the performance requires an exchange of roles between performer and audience, between impression and reception. In order to be understood as a gesture of suffering, the performance must display what Jean-François Lyotard calls the "capacity to be affected by objects by means of sensibility,"¹ that is, it must demonstrate its own capacity for receiving interpretations. The juxtaposition of Lindman's carefully reconstructed gesture of grief to the gray granite sculptures above and the sepia-toned banner (a photographic image of the backs of six Native American men in ceremonial dress) hanging at the entrance of the museum exposes sensibility as an aesthetic feeling rather than an empirical phenomenon. This constitutes what Kant called the "transcendental illusion"—treating presentation as situation. The temporary but visibly orchestrated embodiment of grief draws attention to the emotional manipulation produced by the monumental gestures of suffering embedded in the museum itself. Lindman's performance shows how impressions of grief are ordered and objectified through aesthetic forms.

The sense of pain produced in this performance is only an effect of juxtaposition. There are both similarity and contrast among the sculpture, the images on the banner, and Lindman's re-enacted gesture. On one hand, her pose mirrors the figures of the Native American and the two slaves that lean on the shoulder and huddle at the feet of this seemingly indifferent feminine figuration of the Americas. On the other hand,

it does not participate in the monumentalization and celebration of the Americas, but rather emblemizes the cruelty of colonization: forced labor, slavery, and the extermination of the native peoples. Like the Native Americans represented on the banner, Lindman's back is turned toward the audience, making both her and the Native Americans appear distant, unaware of being watched, and vulnerable. While her gesture makes suffering present, the sepia-toned banner displaces the suffering of the Native Americans into the aesthetics of the historical past, making reference to "authentic" photographs of the "Old West." What is preserved is not just what is captured in the image, but also the sense of loss marked by the photograph—the loss of the very Native Americans it represents. Lindman's pose, instead, makes loss present by performing an explicitly temporary gesture of grief in front of the image that claims its own historical permanence. By demonstrating how gestures, images and monuments are depicted, selected, framed, and situated within urban environments, she reveals how both the sculpture and the banner manufacture the sense of permanence of the past they represent.

Focusing more on the processing of images of grief than on the gestures, her performance incorporates drawings, painstaking rehearsal, and posing. Lindman's gestures become gray signifiers, simultaneously pointing to and problematizing the visual association of suffering with the exposed body. While her gray attire blends with the granite figures, the flesh of her exposed arm and hand calls attention to the fact that the symbolic figure of the Americas is robed with immobile but seemingly flowing garments. In contrast, the suffering peoples who huddle beside her are gray but scantily clad. The proximity of these gestures brings to life a sense of vulnerability embodied in these exposed figures. While they provide a sense of chromatic continuity (gray on gray), the juxtaposition of the performance to the gesture of suffering, as well as to the buildings and the monuments mark the different material relations of power between the global capitalism of neighboring Wall Street, the beige and black uniforms of the museum guards, and the sculptures that use female figures to emblemize continents (but not the peoples) of the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Europe.

Lindman's work involves multiple border crossings by bringing to each performance site gestures of suffering from Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and the Americas. The effect of such decontextualized gestures is different with every performance as each site is differently enframed by architecture, urban planning, and the power relations ingrained in the social behavior of those who live in these spaces. Her work responds to what Edward Said called the feminization of the other in the practice of Orientalism. But rather than repeating Said's critique of connecting the "Oriental" to the feminine (as a sexualized body), she circumvents the differentiation of gestures of suffering in terms of race, gender and class. Lindman does not deny that Western discourses feminize third world subjects, but challenges notions of identity (whether imperialist or multiculturalist) rooted in difference. As Gilles Deleuze points out, difference does not exist in and of itself but must be related to a preconceived concept of ground.² By demonstrating how similar gestures of grief are used to differentiate



Pia Lindman performs *New York Times* in the streets of Vienna.
Photo: Courtesy the artist.

victims from victimizers, us from them, or men from women, she shows how such gestures do not mark actual difference but only ground and legitimize pre-existing relations of power by repeating them.

Rather than declare there is no feminism or post-colonialism free of asymmetrical power relations, Lindman makes this asymmetry a central concern of her work.³ Her embodiments are not offered as political statements, but as questions about how media, architecture, and public art address us, installing us in ideological, imperial, and patriarchal structures in ways that we cannot avert or avoid. She does not address particular site-specific issues, such as genocide or mass rape in Sudan, terrorism, human rights abuses of prisoners in Iraq, etc. Instead she draws on images of people who have suffered abuse or the violent death of loved ones to explore how the representation of vulnerability calls on us to react. I read her work as paralleling the discourse of Judith Butler and Adriana Cavarero who have turned away from arguments based on the notion of feminine experience to explore how any “structure of address” introduces its own “moral authority.”⁴ Given the international visibility of *The New York Times*—a newspaper that often blurs American national interests with geopolitics—Lindman’s *New York Times* performance constitutes a poignant and timely critique of the political use of human gestures by the media.⁵

In the tradition of minimalist performance art, her work resists commodification while exhibiting a nuanced critique of current political issues such as the global effects of the war on terror. Her performance cannot be reduced to a single message, like “the media manipulates the way we perceive grief” or “the media instructs us on how to express grief.” Nor do these gestures of suffering reproduce simple dichotomies between the feminization of grief as opposed to the masculinization of power, or between an ephemeral feminine “performative” art and a masculinized object-oriented art. I agree with Peggy Phelan and Amelia Jones that the art world is dominated by male artists and their privileged objects, but find equally problematic the connection of performance art to an essential feminine experience, and the reading of all performance as an attempt to make visible the radical ontology of presence, that is in turn feminized.⁶ But if we agree that gender is a performance, then it can only be defined as an act of repetition (as Butler argues) rather than an act of erasure disappearing as soon as it appears, as Phelan instead proposes when she says in “The Ontology of Performance” that: “Performance’s only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance.”⁷

While concurring with Phelan that performance consists in its commentary on its own medium and that it calls attention to the interaction between itself and its spectators, I do not see how her definition of performance art makes it essentially feminine or transgressive. Her definition of performance art is tautological, replacing art with life and femininity with disappearance or non-subjectivity.⁸ Lindman’s work engages feminist arguments like Phelan’s and Jones’s that performance art does not allow for the formation of any stable subject position, but does not do so on

account of the uniqueness of the performance itself. Because her embodiments are simultaneously performative and documentary, they challenge theories of gender differences that end up essentializing gender. She purposefully puts sexual identity in a gray zone, questioning arguments that attribute feminine experience to radical ontological presence and spectatorship to an oppressive (if not formative) male gaze that objectifies it so as to fix bodies into a space governed by male hegemony.

The process of objectification—of a woman into an image through the male gaze, or of someone who suffers into a victim—is, as Samuel Weber argues, tantamount to an attempt of the subject “to set or bring things before itself to fix them in place and then to declare the truth of objectivity is thereby determined as its capacity to fix and secure the subject.”⁹ By stripping gestures of trauma and grief from their contexts, Lindman demonstrates how the repeated embodiment of affective gestures does not reaffirm stable subject positions. Dislodging gestures from contexts, she upsets the translation of emotions into identifiable gestures; into a telos designed to fix and secure subjects. No stable identities form in her performances to establish relations between victims and victimizers, between events and their geopolitical consequences.

Lindman does not see performance art as a self-conscious phenomenological experience (of being a woman), but as a coding of experience as affect. Her embodiments examine the various political investments inscribed in visualizing and publicizing emotional expression. Instead of disclosing how we perform gender, she reveals how we perform our grief. She outlines the processes by which gestures are generated: from the media’s representation of bodies in pain to the selection and framing of pain “that’s fit to print.” She also asks us to think about how media aesthetics affects the way people learn how to perform their grief (as Marcel Mauss did concerning bodily gestures). Hers are not performances of an authentic immediate experience (using the body as evidence of some truth), but a process that is methodical, thoughtful, and reflective about the artificiality of what is conventionally presented as immediate.

Lindman’s embodiments express multiple possible relations between time and space: the time of a site-specific performance, the moment caught in the photograph, its displacement onto the front page of the newspaper, the framing of the image, the staging of the image next to monuments and memorials, the time and space of suffering, remembering and grieving. Such repetitions and juxtapositions of gestures connect the uniqueness and vulnerability of sentient bodies to their abstractions, what Butler calls the dehumanized image of suffering, and what Cavarero calls the generalization of ideology that divorces politics from reality.¹⁰ Rather than treat the body as discursive (that is, as performing social critique), Lindman’s work instantiates the public dimensions of the body, its materiality, vulnerability and relations to other bodies. The vulnerability of the body to violence, abstraction, aestheticization, and enframing puts the notion of the bounded individual into crisis. Butler says that the exposure of such vulnerability places us outside of ourselves or beside ourselves with grief or rage. Lindman exposes this space and time between violence and vulnerability.

New York Times engages with media criticism, photography's relationship to the aesthetics of reality, the use of photographs as documents, and also theories about the theatricality of human gestures. Lindman's performances reveal (through staging) the processes that turn expression into meaning. The performance is clearly repetitive: over and over she selects an image of suffering, rehearses it, and strikes a pose. These reiterations of gestures emphasize the media's constant use of images of suffering to illustrate events, focusing particularly on their political and emotional coding. Gestures of kneeling in prayer, clutching one's heart, covering one's eyes, saluting dead fathers, brothers and sisters, holding pictures, flags, guns, and dead loved ones are all placed next to each other. Lindman's repeated embodiment of disparate gestures of grieving calls attention to how the media's recycling of images of suffering seems to suggest that one gesture can be exchanged with another, and that any gesture can be taken from one context and placed into another. While the repetition of gestures likens one to the other, the juxtaposition of one unrelated gesture after another produces an effect of difference, a difference between the gesture of suffering and the environment in which it is situated.

In one such embodiment she pulls out a gray stick out of her bag of props, handles it carefully, and brandishes it as a militant would a machine gun that is not meant for use, but only for show. The stick, as the gun once was, is held at waist level pointing toward the ground. In each of the three occasions I have seen her perform this particular gesture, her stance is almost identical: the stick is held over her right hip, which is rotated a bit forward, her legs are parted, her body erect, and her head is slightly tilted back in anguish. But even if the stance is identical, the effect is not. When performed next to the lady liberty impersonators that stand on wooden platforms in Battery Park so tourists can take their picture next to them this gesture evokes a completely different response than when performed next to *The Immigrants* sculpture in Battery Park, or between the two panels of José Clemente Orozco's mural at the New School—the *Struggle in the Orient* and *Gandhi and Imperialism*. Lindman's gestures, then, are both symmetrical and asymmetrical to each other.

She reveals two distinct but simultaneous types of repetition. When performed next to *The Immigrants* in Battery Park, the gesture of holding the gun disrupts both the gesture of suffering and the gesture embodied in the sculpture. The aggressive gesture of militancy and grieving seem to guard and mourn the multi-cultural group of immigrants celebrated in the sculpture. But it is not clear whether this is a gesture to protect or quarantine immigrants as Others. For instance, when performed next to the Statue of Liberty impersonators, this same gesture comments on American intervention throughout the globe—to “make it safe for democracy”—and on the reaction to such intervention by foreign militant groups; this gesture also comments on gender roles. Lindman dressed in gray unisex clothes brandishing a stick (as she would a gun), appears as a militant woman or a woman dressed as a militant man. But when placed next to the three green-faced Lady Liberties (performed by men in drag), this gesture of militancy becomes a parody of stereotypical gender roles. Parody, however, does not stop at simple role reversals since it becomes less



Top left: Lindman performing in front of the Korean War Memorial at Battery Park; Bottom right: Lindman in front of the East Coast Memorial for Coast Guard casualties in WWII at Battery Park. Photos: Daniel Marzona. Courtesy the artist.



Top: Lindman performing *New York Times* for the Vera List Center in the Orozco Room at the New School; Bottom: Lindman in front of “The Immigrants” at Battery Park. Photos: Amanda Matles. Courtesy the artist.



clear why militancy should be inherently masculine, or why democracy should be emblemized by a female figure.

While the repetition of gestures produces a disjuncture between their instantiation and the conceptual framework from which they emerged, they also produce something in excess of the ideas they were meant to express. What emerges is both a critical reflection on subjectivity and identity politics, and the repeated displacement of images into ideologically charged narratives. Such repetitions undermine the construction of stable subject positions, re-envisioning what we take for truth as a special effect or pure affect. The repetition of such diverse gestures in one specific place (in front of monuments, murals, or in a gallery) calls into question their authenticity as embodiments of suffering. This does not mean that Lindman treats the image of someone's grief with irreverence. She is remarkably faithful to the gesture she embodies, taking a long time to study it and to strike its pose, but she also demonstrates how the gesture itself is recyclable, exchangeable, and consumable—that it has political use-value. She makes “public” images of trauma and suffering. By embodying them next to monuments, murals, and memorials, Lindman recalls the suffering of both those who are memorialized by the image, the mural or monument itself, and those who grieve their absence. Yet this juxtaposition of image to monument, memorial, mural, and gallery suggests that the image and the gesture are also monuments, memorials, and commodities.

Contrary to Bill Viola's *Passions* (a recent series of video installations that link the expression of suffering to iconic Medieval and Renaissance paintings to intensify the affect of emotion), Lindman does not represent human suffering as much as she calls attention to the gestures of grief, loss, and trauma that have themselves become iconic. Rather than trying to capture some ephemeral moment outside of time, she demonstrates how such gestures are timely and point to the external manifestation of trauma or grief rather than to an internal expression. The images in *The New York Times* constitute an instruction book on the aesthetics and visual grammar of gestures of grieving, but Lindman's work questions the translation of personal suffering into a universal image of suffering. As she puts it: “the universality of the expressions of grief we observe in the public media does not derive from the direct human response to individual internal processes via culture, but from a response to the *mise en scène* created by the presence of the camera—the mobile media machinery units on the sites of disasters.”¹¹ This “opportunity”—being at the right place at the right time—may look like a random event, but comes equipped with its own structure of address, its own aesthetics of capturing the moment. It is the aesthetic of suffering that poses an ethical problem concerning how or whether photographs of trauma and grief should be used to illustrate events. “Media ethics” seamlessly slips into violence when the specificity of events are misread as generalized political positions that embrace “any means necessary” to achieve pre-established ends. It is the imposition of exclusionary ethics that renders judgments indifferent to those individuals who are most vulnerable. Lindman's processing of images into generalized gestures (but ones that are once again embodied within a unique situation)

calls attention to how gestures themselves translate a unique sentient experience into a generalized form.

Ironically, it is the generalized and sentimental form of suffering on the front page of the newspaper that, Susan Sontag maintains, will produce “a grammar and ethics of seeing.”¹² But in her more recent *Regarding the Pain of Others*, she argues that: “certain emblems of suffering can be used like memento mori, as objects of contemplation to deepen one’s sense of reality; as secular icons.”¹³ These icons are not simply an “invitation to reflect and learn,” but an obligation to act. Sontag’s call for an ethical response to the image of the Other’s suffering seems to draw on Emmanuel Levinas’s argument that all suffering is useless, and that we have an ethical obligation to the suffering of the Other.¹⁴ But instead of exposing political and ideological biases and forcing us to think about what is ideologically and politically at stake, the media asks us to respond emotionally. This results in a hyper-valuation of private suffering, to the point that private psychological trauma replaces political consciousness. Politics is no longer conceived as the field where human freedom is unfurled (as it was for Hannah Arendt), but is reduced to the field of secular icons of suffering bodies.

In *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes observes that the subject (whether the nation, the individual self, or the Other) is “doomed by (well meaning) photography always to have an expression; the body never finds its zero degree”¹⁵ There is always already a gesture that makes the body readable not in particular, but in general terms—namely, aesthetics, and their historical, moral, and political associations. Making images readable involves the disjuncture between description and prescription. The photograph is “invaded by language at the very moment that it is looked at: in memory, in association, snatches of words and images continually intermingle and exchange for the other.”¹⁶ This invasion marks the transformation of the figure (without words, history or narrative meaning) into a sign (something with meaning) that then becomes an icon for an event. But here we cannot forget the role of the medium, the newspaper whose contents are forms of exchange predicated on consumption value (infotainment) and on censure that prohibits information that would damage its interests.

In this sense, Lindman’s *New York Times* can be seen as a challenge to the media’s spectacularizing of September 11th in stark contrast to the lived experience of many New Yorkers. Her response to “the usurpation of the representations of public mourning via the media for the purposes of justification of war” was one of indignation, questioning “who has the right to define how Americans, Palestinians, Israelis, or any other individuals affected by terrorism should grieve and who has the right to make those gestures of grievance public and official.”¹⁷ The journalistic photograph lies precariously between empirical evidence (the witnessing of the Other’s pain) and outright propaganda (the manipulating the way we see). The image also cultivates a public awareness of the plight of the Other. It constitutes public taste and the aesthetics of Otherness. In the process, it tells us not only who the Other is, but how

to read the Other. Through an intricate process of identification, “we” are addressed as a virtual subject and then are asked to witness “events,” experience these “events” by proxy, and ultimately react to such “events” by giving consensus.

Lindman’s work reveals both the politics and the theatricality of photojournalism. Her repetitive gestures question how photojournalism simultaneously gives a “human face” to events while decontextualizing actual bodies, a decontextualization that freezes them in space and time. Photojournalism turns images of people into a virtual body (a pre-determined one) that can be installed in an unlimited number of politically and morally charged discourses. But Lindman shows that because these images arrest a moment, separate it from the here and now, and then reproduce it within multiple contexts, they cannot be stilled (made to represent one unique expression or experience). She marks the ambivalent site between violent acts and their separation from the here and now in the form of an image, which is already a form of interpretation. This “human face” is reduced to a “reality effect” for the purpose of augmenting the ideologically charged interpretation of events.

There is nothing unique to the media’s monumentalization of bodies in pain. Memorials and museums do the same. Lindman’s performances, in fact, uncover the political consciousness embedded in the spaces we inhabit, and how these spaces reflect their own violent framing of human bodies. For example, when she stops in front of the iron eagle perched atop a dark gray granite block memorializing Coast Guard casualties in WWII, her gestures of suffering call into question both the gesture of the sculpture and the environment in which it is situated. In the last pose she strikes in front of the iron eagle her body seems to abandon itself to suffering: arms are flung open slightly behind the shoulder line, and the head is tossed back. Yet the juxtaposition of this particular embodiment with the eagle makes the American icon appear as a bird of prey swooping down from the monuments of industrial capital (the buildings of Wall Street that loom in the background), and closing in on the gesture of suffering performed by Lindman. Her gesture imitates the form of both the bird and the buildings: her arms are open like the wings of the bird, stretched out between the two Wall Street buildings. But Lindman’s gesture of arms flung wide in distress calls attention to the disjuncture between the pained gestures she embodies, the gestures to industrial capital inscribed in the architecture of Wall Street, and the gesture of American nationalism embodied in the eagle.

It is not just photojournalistic images and human gestures, but urban environments that call on us to react. Lindman’s performance too interpolates us, but not like a photograph in *The New York Times*. It does not oblige us to respond to the Other’s suffering. What is ironic about her gestures is that they are more than familiar, and yet not easily placeable. We cannot tell where they come from or whom they designate. Even when we attempt to project our own sentimental interpretation onto them, this sentiment has no subject, object, or Other, nor any ethical or political teleology to follow.



Lindman performing *New York Times* in front of the Memorial for the Merchant Marines at Battery Park. Photo: Daniel Marzona. Courtesy the artist.

Responses to Lindman's embodiments reveal how perception slips into interpretation. Photojournalism, as Don Slater puts it, "marks very clearly the constant pressure to move from a sense of vision as the route to knowledge, to experience as [a form of] cultural appropriation."¹⁸ Her embodiments of grieving explore how gestures of suffering (found in photographs), of heroic sacrifice (embodied in monuments), and of urbanization (embodied in buildings) are only readable in their immediate context. Her gestures at the Korean War Monument, for example, visualize the conspicuous presence and absence of bodies. The penumbra of the missing soldier is marked by a metal outline into a granite obelisk, while the presence of Lindman's body is momentarily frozen into a gesture of grief. The effect is one of interruption, both of the monument's heroic gesture and of any singular emotional reading of Lindman's performance. Both appear to be displaced gestures: one of enduring heroics and sacrifice embedded in the monument: and the other of fleeting yet multiple gestures of suffering.

But these gestures cannot stand apart from the frames of reference in which they have emerged. Each gesture defers to something else to give it meaning. The gesture of loss defers to and is given meaning by suffering, while sacrifice is given meaning through the triumphal monuments built by an industrial, military, and financial power. At the same time they mark radical differences: the ephemeral presence of suffering in the media, the repetitiveness of suffering, the aesthetics of suffering, the aesthetics of monuments, the repetitiveness of monuments, and the monumental presence of absence which defers its sense of loss to a triumphant ideal. By juxtaposing embodied gestures to monuments, buildings and urban landscapes, her performance interrupts any one possible reading of the relationship of gestures of pain to memorials and the power they represent.

Lindman's performances offer us a way of rethinking how we ground discourses about Others on notions of difference. By focusing on repetition rather than difference, Lindman's performances do not allow any subject position to form. She shows that gestures or emotional expression cannot be immediate. Involving interpretation and perception, they cannot be construed as authentic. Without stable ground to determine identity, the difference between actors and situations dissolve. What is left is the theatricality of political gestures that seek to conceal themselves in the image of someone else's pain. By exposing the process of making bodies readable Lindman reveals that affects (emotional gestures) and perceptions (the reading of those gestures) are only perceivable through gesture (affect). She lays bare the processes involved in turning lived experiences, events and sensations into forms of representation. More than simply reminding us about the manipulation of images and gestures into representations, her work makes us think about the way we consume images, make gestures, interpret events, and even how we can make political and feminist art.

NOTES

1. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, translated by Georges Van Den Abbeele. Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1988, 61.

2. Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, translated by Paul Patton. New York: Colombia University Press, 1994, 66.

3. See Indrepaal Grewal and Caren Kaplin, "Warrior Marks: Global Womanism's Neo-Colonial Discourse in a Multicultural Context." *Camera Obscura* 39 (1996): 5–33.

4. Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. New York: Verso, 2004, 130.

5. The credibility of the *Times* has been in question in the wake of the editors' public apology for their sensationalized reporting on weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and its controversial treatment of Judith Miller's involvement in the Valerie Plame Wilson case.

6. Amelia Jones claims: "The artist must be embodied as male in order to be considered an artist—placed with a (patri)lineage as originary and divinely inspired—but his embodiment (his particularity as a gendered and otherwise vulnerable, immanent subject) must be hidden to ensure his transcendence as disembodied and divinely inspired." See Amelia Jones, *Body Art: Performing the Subject*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998, and Peggy Phelan, "The Ontology of Performance," in *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*. New York: Routledge, 1993.

7. Phelan, 148.

8. See Philip Auslander, *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1999. Auslander explores how the concept of "liveness" has been confounded with "realness," and questions Phelan's claim that performance art is a unique ontological experience. Instead he claims that early television exhibits similar qualities. See also Bert O. States, "Performance as Metaphor." *Theatre Journal* 48,1 (1996): 1–26. He argues that: "Phelan's notion of performance seems to come down to a thematic matter, rather than to an ontological one . . ." (12).

9. Samuel Weber, *Mass Mediauras: From Technics to Media*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996, 48–49.

10. See Judith Butler's *Giving Account of Oneself*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2005, and Adriana Cavarero's *Scene di un Massacro* (forthcoming Einaudi), 71 of the manuscript. Cavarero argues that the "I" is not a unitary subject closed upon itself, but a set of relations. She suggests that we disband with the term "We" that includes the gesture of speaking in the name of others (an abstraction of immediate relations), in favor of focusing only the I/you relation.

11. Pia Lindman, "The New York Times, Art and Affect: Re-enactments in grey-scale." In *Art in the Age of Terrorism*, edited by Graham Coulter-Smith and Maurice Owen. New York: Paul Holberton, 2006, 87.

12. Susan Sontag, *On Photography*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1973, 3. She distinguishes between two types of knowledge: one analytical, ethical, and political, and the other a cynical form of sentimentalism. Here she argues that the photograph is cynical and sentimental. Although she later notes that "photographs cannot create a moral position, but they can reinforce one," she claims that "exceptional" photographs like those of the Nazi camps have "gained the status of ethical reference points," that maintain their emotional charge (17–21).

13. Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2003, 119. In this book Sontag shifts from an earlier analytical approach to photography as an act of non-intervention, to a later one of bearing witness and serving as a medium for a more ethical type of watching, which involves “coming close to the intimate pain of others,” and “letting the atrocious images haunt us” (115).

14. See Emmanuel Levinas, “Useless Suffering.” In *Entre nous*, translated by Michael B. Smith and Barbara Harshav. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998. He argues that the suffering body is the ultimate source of moral value, the response to bodily suffering, the ultimate test of moral responsibility.

15. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, translated by Richard Howard. New York: Noonday, 1980, 12.

16. Victor Burgin, “Seeing Sense.” *Artforum* XVIII (February 1980): 62–65.

17. Lindman, 84.

18. Don Slater, “Photography and Modern Vision.” In *Visual Culture*, edited by Chris Jenks. New York: Routledge, 1995, 232.

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