



DISSENTING BODY AND ITS CREATIVE RECONTEXTUALISATION IN LITHUANIAN VISUAL ARTS

Basia NIKIFOROVA*, Kęstutis ŠAPOKA

*Lithuanian Culture Research Institute, Department of Contemporary Philosophy, Saltoniškių str. 58,
LT-08105 Vilnius, Lithuania*

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Abstract. The body is an important starting point concept throughout deconstruction, reconstruction and recontextualization of the body's concept. This change of focus in research that stems from the results to the process of contextualization means that the researcher should engage with texts or images, as they are reflected in the process of cultural development and exchange, through which decontextualization is exhibited. This article deals with the concept of new materialism and endeavors to explain, how discourses come to matter. It examines the issue of how new materialism tackles visual art in innovative ways – through the intersections of artistic practice, art-as-research, and philosophical analysis. Such definitions as Maurice Merleau-Ponty's "a bodily being", Julia Kristeva's "the abjection of the self", Arjun Appadurai's "the aesthetics of decontextualization" and "singularized object", Igor Kopytoff's "the cultural biography of things", and Nicholas Thomas' "entangled objects", constitute the methodological frameworks of our research. We will analyze such approaches as Hans Belting's concept of body as a "living medium", Giorgio Agamben's view on body as an object of commodification and Jacques Derrida's "trust in painting". An attempt to understand body reconceptualization and deconstruction through the categories of new materialism is the most important aim of this article. Karen Barad's concept of intra-action (that implies a clear-cut subject-object distinction) is crucial to our research, which underlines that bodies have no inherent boundaries and properties and that the analyzed representations are "material-discursive phenomena". The artworks under consideration will be confronted with a diagnosis that, according to Barad, all bodies come to matter thanks the intra-activity and its performativity. The case studies of Svajonė Stanikienė and Paulius Stanikas, Evaldas Jansas and Eglė Rakauskaitė works show how the image of the body is developed through the processes of their deconstruction and decontextualization.

Keywords: abjection, body reconceptualization, commodities, creativity, emotional terror, matter, new materialism, post-humanism, sexuality, violence.

Introduction

The meaning of the body is one of the most debatable matters in contemporary philosophy. In our view, the broader definition of the concept implies that the bodily/aesthetic basis is important to general philosophy and the deeper as well as more significant understanding of

*Corresponding author. E-mail: nikiforovaphilosophy@gmail.com

definition as such. In the book *The Meaning of the Body: Aesthetics of Human Understanding* Mark Johnson states:

“meaning is not just a matter of concepts and propositions, but also reaches down into the images, sensorimotor schemas, feelings, qualities, and emotions that constitute our meaningful encounter with our world. Any adequate account of meaning must be built around the aesthetic dimensions that give our experience its distinctive character and significance” (2007, pp. xi–xii).

To him, every kind of analysis of the “body” meaning should include the following five key dimensions: biological, ecological, phenomenological, social, and cultural (Johnson, 2007, pp. 275–278). We use the body artistic image, as an important starting point, which connects new materialist approach with processes of decontextualization and recontextualization. This change of focus in research that proceeds from the results to the process of contextualization means that the researcher should engage with texts or images, as they are reflected in the process of cultural development and exchange, through which decontextualization is exhibited.

As authors, we see decontextualization as the process of removing an artifact from previously existing context. We consider the works of artists regardless of the institutional and discursive contexts associated with these works. Our goal is not to review the existing discourse around these works, our goal is to identify in the works some conceptual strategies related to the rethinking of ideas, the image of the body and physicality. The goal of this method is to take up visual art through the intersections of artistic practice, art-as-research, and philosophical analysis.

Contemporary philosophy nowadays shows attention to such theory as “object-oriented ontology”, which challenged the centrality of subjectivity in the humanities, artistic practice, art critics and curators.

The magazine *October* in “A Questionnaire on Materialisms” asked different artists, historians, and philosophers to describe what kind of potential expectations and risks exist for cultural activity and mostly for visual arts. At the same time, it is a discussion about how today new materialisms can be fruitful and innovative for art. They find out the list of functions, what new materialism promises as philosophical approach to art and show some features that are typical for this phenomenon (Apter et al., 2016):

- it is not a monolithic phenomenon; it has own branches but common and central for them is the question of matter;
- the creation of out of the ordinary vocabulary for reflection on matter and its adequate use for the purpose of more clear formulation of everything that is shrouded in all kinds of veils and mystifications;
- the things of material culture and matters should be the subject of our attention and care.

In the view of Alexander R. Galloway,

“tends to privilege deterritorialization over all else – territorialization having become a cardinal sin – the resulting precarity then recast in a positive light as contingency, flexibility, fluidity, or something else beneficial” (Apter et al., 2016, p. 46).

1. Body' phenomenological perception

Merleau-Ponty destroys the classical subject-object dichotomy and finds the space “between” subject and object. He rejects Cartesian dualistic view on the body, which puts it to the rank of the physical sciences' objects of investigation that in result connects another two categories: the subjectivity and human consciousness: “The union of soul and body is not an amalgamation between two mutually external terms, subject and object, brought about by arbitrary degree. It is enacted at every instant in the movement of existence” (Merleau-Ponty, 2005, p. 102).

For Merleau-Ponty the human body is itself a “subject”, and this human subject is necessarily embodied. Human being becomes to be seen as a phenomenon that includes such two different components as mind and matter, consciousness and body. The definition of *lived body* is closely connected with the meaning of our bodily existence. For him, the human body and humans in some sense are “bodies” but at the same time, the body which is analyzed, described and interpreted is not the objective body but the subjective, lived, changed body, in its permanent and unfinished relationship with the world.

Jennifer Bullington adds that the materiality of the body is obligatory from the reason that it builds limits and borders of our physical possibilities, which are established not only by our own physical forces: “Our concrete existence as beings who live in a meaningful world is never the product or result of physiological processes. We are also psychological, cultural beings” (2013, p. 28). Beginning from 1960s–1970s the artistic activity of the many visual arts artists, mostly in the area of performance, is characterized by the following features:

- social activism;
- the attempt to describe existential relations between personality and contemporary world;
- body and body language became a very important part of artistic ideas and practice;
- many female artists turned to performance practice, through which they try to demonstrate social and political frustration, own resentment and hope and the desire to fight for their rights;
- most of performance contained challenges and provocations;
- it demonstrates the border of the pain, torture and at the same time shows human tenacity and dignity.

In Eastern Europe during the 1980s–1990s, performance art expresses social dissent and struggle with the Soviet system. Let us take a more personal example.

We could consider a Lithuanian artist Jansas, who was especially active in the last decade of the 20th century, as an example of such a “phenomenological” strategy in the performance art practices. This artist called into question the main concept of the body and bodyness, body and/or consciousness as the leading ground of the problem of the (de)constructed self, in a creative and paradoxical way.

This paradoxical way is close to the Derrida's conclusion that “the taking away of the unclean has the virtue of laying bare and catharsis” (1998, p. 140). Derrida partly agrees that a creative artifact “takes place just once” and hence. Derrida in one of his interview told that “attention to history, context, and genre is necessitated, and not contradicted, by this singularity” providing we keep in mind “the date and the signature of the work [...] which

constitute or institute the very body of the work” (Attridge, 1992, pp. 67–68). He introduces the phrase “the culture of a museographic canonization” and thus recognizes the artifact soothing status for itself (Derrida, 1998, p. 56).

A number of performance artists have made endurance an important part of practice. They may involve themselves in rituals that border on torture or abuse, yet the purpose is less to test what the artist can survive than to explore such issues as human tenacity, determination, patience.

One could mention a couple of performances by Jansas, for instance, two different versions of the performance “In My Own Juice” (1998 and 2000). The artist obtained his own blood from the median vein of his forearm (using a syringe) and injected it into the muscle of his buttock muscle. During another performance, Jansas made an act of urination in a beer mug and drank it immediately.

In fact, the artist radicalized the concept of the body and bodyness, including phenomenological approach, by removing his own body juices (so, we could say – (a part of) his own body) and drastically returning it, injecting it into his own body again. However, the crucial point was that the act of returning, transformed his own juices into completely alien thing and/or subject, or we could say – into the Other. Therefore, metaphorically speaking, the artist’s body transforms and differentiates into the subject and object as a whole. So, the main question raised by these performances is – who or what is my body, what is my bodyness and who or what is my consciousness. Amelia Jones discusses the crisscross of live and archival performances of artists who work both through live performance and through the media, using and showing their own body via reality shows, the Web, video, social networks, films and archives. “The body itself is an archive. The archive can be reanimated in future artworks and performances” (Jones, Steinhäuser, & Macdonald, 2018, p. 11). The creativity as such is no discussable when we speak about body performance, which collects author, performer, curator in the same person.

Let us take another reference to the text by Merleau-Ponty:

“I do not translate the “data of touch” into the language of seeing or vice versa – I do not bring together one by one parts of my body; this translation and this unification are performed once and for all within me: they are my body itself. [...] But, I am not in front of my body, I am in it, or rather I am it. [...] We do not merely behold as spectators the relations between the parts of our body: we are ourselves the unifier of these arms and legs, the person who both sees and touches them [...]. If we can still speak of interpellation in relation to the perception of one’s own body, we shall have say it interprets itself” (2005, p. 173).

According to Merleau-Ponty (as well as Jansas already mentioned before) the principle of an artwork function has to be taken as a basis of the concept of the body – as a basis of interaction between physical-material and perceptual-mental (performative) origins. What we understand as an artwork (principle) is not just the sum of different formal and material predispositions, but rather is considered as a specific unity of relations of those predispositions in a meaningful structure as a whole. Moreover, the artwork contains something more different and more conceptually profound, than it actually is. Therefore, the (artwork) body is “conceptual body”.

We could say that Jansas manipulates the concept of body by not only dividing body-ness into the notions of subject and object (abject), but also (metaphorically) creating deep contradiction of cultural norms, conventions and beliefs. By drastically exposing materiality of the body, the artist does rematerialize and then, reconceptualize (aesthetic) performativity as such. His creativity can be named as post-traumatic phenomenon.

On the one hand, materiality of the naked brutal body ultimately reverts to the implications of animality. On the other hand, the possibility of this implication could function in the only available way: as a cultural or quasi-aesthetic perceptive symbol and/or sign. Bullington, analyzing the concept of the (un)conscious bodyness of Merleau-Ponty also says:

“we inhabit the world with others and the ‘intercorporeality’ of the world is both my world and the world of the other [...] Just as the body and world meet in a chiasmic reversibility, so is the relationship between speech and perception. Language is not a mask over things, but the articulation of the thing, which is both perceptual (mute) and meaningful (structured)” (Bullington, 2013, pp. 55–56).

To summarize, one could notice that Jansas transforms his own body and/or the concept of bodyness into a kind of a text and/or performativity into sociocultural texture(s).

2. Body in “coming community”

In the 1960s–1970s, the image of the body starts to be a very important point of analyses and area, which focused on this problem in philosophical, cultural, ethnological studies. From the view of Mary Douglas, the body was a system of “natural symbols” (1970) but during the time, it metaphorically became a social category that was influential and challenging for an “image of society” (2003, p. 94). She underlined that the physical experience of the body is subject to a constant change and challenge due to the social categories that construct a particular society image.

From the view of Jones, the body is perhaps the primary metaphor for a society perception of itself. At the same time, she emphasizes that the individual and spoken language are what makes up the social body:

“I think the crux of the problem (if there is one) for feminist visual culture and analysis lies in how we approach identity and how we theorize and do interpretation. I would like to see feminist art historians, critics, and theorists become more sensitive to the philosophical difficulties of attempting to break down authoritative modes of analysis [...]” (Jones, 2003, p. 143).

In the article “Foucault, Femininity and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power” (1997) the feminist Sandra Lee Bartky writes about the socially accepted “norms” and habits for a woman, dimensions of her body and concludes that women are often judged for physical or biological body (size and shape) fully ignoring this fact that their bodies reflect their personality. She discusses popular idea that the “ideal body of femininity is constructed” and concludes that this perfect woman image connected mostly with cultural obsessions, hopes and pop-cultural standards of society.

Nevertheless, at the same time, we only partly agree with her view from the reason that celebrities and pop-culture exist beside with a parallel world, with other cultural

predispositions, which evaluate intellect, professionalism and social, cultural and feminist activity and activism.

Continuing the ideas of Douglas, Lee Bartky explains that the ideal body image changes through time and space. According to her, nowadays the ideal body image includes following characteristics (Lee Bartky, 2002, p. 17):

- taut;
- small-breasted;
- narrow-hipped;
- a slimness bordering on emaciation.

This view on woman fragility helps to create a female image as powerless and subservience to men: “The disciplinary project of femininity is a ‘setup’: it requires such radical and extensive measures of bodily transformation that virtually every woman who gives herself to it is destined in some degree to fail” (Lee Bartky, 2002, pp. 33–34). From the other side, this “disciplinary project of femininity” devoid of any creativity and fantasy reminds us of pre-established body treatment protocol that does not meet these temporary standards of beauty and perfection.

Autobiographical memory is one of the dominant leitmotifs of art works by Lithuanian artist couple Stanikienė and Stanikas. In addition, exploring themes of religion, sexuality and identity across a wide range of media, Stanikienė and Stanikas have created the specific iconography of the (female) body and sexuality. We could mention that the reappearance of the idea of autobiographical documentary in the works by the artist-duo highlighted two relevant directions or levels of transforming and/or deconstructing (female) body.

First, in the works of duo, female body is often portrayed as an object among other objects, or we could say more precisely as an object of trade among other objects of trade. Therefore, it is an expression of a commodified (mostly female) body concept. Secondly, processual autobiographical iconography (the duo has been collaborating for more than 30 years) allows us to follow the physiological and biological ageing processes, which confront the repressive ideological conventions of (ideal) beauty.

In the context of art works by Stanikienė and Stanikas a (female) body and sexuality is occupying by the logic of “mistake”, “failure” even quasi-demonic “sin”. However, we must remember that the concept of the “sin” has to be considered as one of “disciplinary practices” of ideological power and, there is no doubt, as a tool to justify stratification of marginals (e.g. women – we could remember so called witch-hunts). Moreover, according to Douglas, “biological-determinist theories of gender differences are also used to oppress” turning female body into a stance of a zombie (2003, p. 214).

So, we could indicate that Stanikienė and Stanikas explore the semantics of (exceeding) the limit, borderline of basic socio-cultural conventions and beliefs, transforming (female) body (in the eyes of the public) into the object controlled by the devil. Lee Bartky argues, that

“the imposition of normative femininity upon the female body requires training, that the modes of training are cultural phenomena properly described and that the discipline they represent is disempowering to the woman so disciplined” (2002, p. 17).

In this way, Stanikienė and Stanikas show how “sin” possesses (female) body and becomes the master of the (ageing) body. At the same time, this iconography of “possession”

and gradual “degradation” creates a kind of a “gap” in the whole concept of normative femininity. In addition, in the frames of the art works by Stanikienė and Stanikas this “gap” is self-manifested not as the lack of normative femininity, but rather as excessive femininity, and perverse, auto-destructive even over-commercialized beauty. However, that could be possibly one of the ways to avoid the logic of patriarchal capitalism and try to grasp the essence of female. Iris Marion Young designates it “not as mysterious quality” and describes it (as well as Stanikienė and Stanikas do it in their art works), rather, as “a set of structures and conditions that delimit the typical situation of being a woman in a particular society” (Young, 2005, pp. 30–31).

The special place in the process of body reconceptualization belongs to the historian of art Belting. His impact in the theory of anthropology was connected with such new definitions and meaning as a *living medium*, *mental images of the body*, *mental construct* and others. Belting offers to look on the image beyond the artifacts and shows the necessity to include such human experience as dreams, imaginations, personal perceptions and identification mechanisms. “When external pictures are re-embodied as our own images, we substitute for their fabricated medium our own body” (Belting, 2014, p. 16). He rejects from the division between *images in the world* and *images in our mind* and offers dialectical interplay between the physical and the mental worlds.

Belting analyzed the category of image and death, concluding that from the anthropological approach it is an attempt and intention of the human being memorization, desire to extend life creating his image through picture, monument or photography. He explains it through the philosophical definitions of time, space and transcendental existence: “The [...] embodiment in an image [...] testifies to an age-old urge to transcend, by means of the image, the boundaries of space and time that confine the human body” (Belting, 2014, p. 61). Tania Rossetto concentrates our attention on the definitions of “map”, “mapping”, “cartography” and concludes that

“cartography is very often neglected in image studies. One of the main contributions of visual studies, with respect to art history, has been to widen the horizon of the image and the canon of the media taken into consideration. This widening of the territory of images, together with the opening of the boundaries between different media, is one of the cornerstones of Belting’s book” (2015).

The body active-passive qualities and open structure often is associated with possibilities to act and be acted. Brian Massumi underlines that the body perennially had those double relations with the world. The body exists and manifests itself through the complex of active-passive potentials. This potential means that body open to the different acts: to the active struggle or to the passive waiting. Massumi affirms: “what is commonly called ‘the body’ is the bodying of the event” (2014, p. 29). This Massumi’s approach to the body as active-passive duality gives us as authors the possibility to look on the image of the body as something that can be felt and excite, produce and arouse feeling. It is an important point and approach for decontextualization of artistic activity. This is seen in the works such of artists as Stanikienė and Stanikas body images always demonstrate their active-passive potentials.

Elizabeth Grosz is one of the most famous researchers of the body found some specific body characteristics. From her point of view, the body is corporeality, meaning, and system.

This system has some unique features: this is open-ended system and it has the possibility to function with other large systems. At the same time, she approves that open-ended systems have own limit: it is no control under the large system and as a result “it cannot access and acquire its abilities and capacities” (Grosz, 2004, p. 3). Barad, continuing this idea emphasizes: “We’ are not outside observers of the world. Nor are we simply located at particular places in the world; rather, we are part of the world in its ongoing intra-activity” (2003, p. 828).

It could be useful to highlight two examples of performances by Lithuanian female artist Rakauskaitė. The artwork “In Honey” (1996) is a performance which possible was categorised as a video-performance. Later, this artwork has been transformed and presented as the video documentation of a performance. Also, the work “In Fat” (1997–1998) in which Rakauskaitė lies fully immersed in a glass tank filled with melted lard, breathing through a tube, until the fat starts to be solidified. One could understand these performances within the concepts of intra-activity or agential realism framework. Immersing her own body in honey or fat, Rakauskaitė erases the line between subject and object, body and environment. In other words, the artist embodies an act of (our) intra-participation in this event as part of the world becoming. Thus, not only the body becomes material phenomena that emerges through specific intra-actions but also the “mind”. We could say, that these two performances can be taken as manifestations of symbolical acts of dematerializing or even denouncing the repressive (language) regimes of representationalism and acts of returning to the phenomena – direct (female) realism, which underline the problem of accountability for what materializes. Barad emphasizes that

“matter is a dynamic expression/articulation of the world in its intra-active becoming. All bodies, including but not limited to human bodies, come to matter through the world’s iterative intra-activity its performativity... The very nature of materiality is an entanglement. Matter itself is always already open to, or rather entangled with, the “Other” (2007, pp. 392–393).

3. Jacques Derrida and many ways of deconstruction

The deconstruction as such offers and allows the world to change continuously and radically occurs in every culture “paradigm shift” that results in permanent and fundamental changes in the society consciousness.

In Ewa M. Thompson’s opinion, deconstruction as such is facing and challenging an unwillingness to understand deconstruction from the following reasons (Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 2014):

- the radicalism rejection with which it practices;
- the difficulties of the deconstruction language in the process of understanding such “non-concepts” meanings as difference, trace, supplement and other;
- the difficulties to assume an intellectual posture, which is not typical in our culture and society.

She adds, “To practice deconstruction means to achieve the ultimate degree of separation between the reading of texts and the experience of life (Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 2014).

Derrida in the *The Truth in Painting* (1987, p. 2) cited Paul Cézanne's words "I owe you the truth in painting and I will tell it to you" (Letter to Émile Bernard, October 23, 1905). He adds that from Cézanne's words he borrows "only some convenient approximations, which are really only the names of problems, without knowing if there really are any such things as pure "constatives" and "performatives" (Derrida, 1987, p. 8). For him, "with this verbal promise, this performative which does not describe anything, Cézanne does something, as much as and more than he says. But in doing so, he promises that he will say the truth in painting" (Derrida, 1987, p. 8). Derrida's words "around painting" (1987) mean the attempt to give answer on such philosophical question as what is tradition and non-tradition art, what is the art, beauty, representation, the origin of the art work at all.

One book by Derrida gives us the possibility to deeper understand what to do when the artist mimes the history of painting and repeats the representations of famous and infamous women by repainting them again in another style and gives their images new meanings and characters. The case of painter Colette Deblé allows us to say that she paints through images and colors, same as Derrida speaks and writes with words. His "writing" is an attempt through radical different view to analyses traditional meanings or events and putting it new discourse to give them new sense. They both write, tell and paint about this fact that "women have no history" (Derrida, 2004, p. 10). Deblé uses such painting technique as Derrida when he speaks of the woman's body. It was named the aesthetic of "trembling" that sublimates the process of quotation. Deblé saved former contours of past author's women images, cleaning up original colours and painting the new supernatural body dimension as a reflection of her own historical journey through time. This idea and painting methods are visible in Lithuanian visual art (Stanikienė and Stanikas, Rakauskaitė, Violeta Bubelytė) and they go through Derredian repetition, deconstruction, and "an aesthetic of trembling".

Derrida often repeated that contemporary art criticism walks too far from contemporary art. It travels in the neighboring regions that in reality have nothing common with feelings and sense of art. Such matters as frame, title, museum, market, auction, archive, signature, reproduction are too far from a discourse, context or artist' emotions and mood.

4. New materialism approach as theory of body reconceptualization

Nowadays visual art is not concerned about the beauty of the body. The concept of new materialism examines the issue of how new materialism tackles visual art in innovative ways – through the intersections of artistic practice, art-as-research, and philosophical analysis.

Our attempt to understand body re-construction and reconceptualization through the categories of new materialism is an important aim of our research. The new approaches of understanding the body have arisen in the background of such trends as the increasing spread and growing influence of feminist and post-human theories, as well as mass consumer consciousness, when the body becomes a commodity. All these tendencies give birth to a new interpretation and of the body essence beginning to give birth to the new rethinking and interpretation of the body.

Inspirations and fascination with the body were provided by such diverse trends as psychoanalysis, feminist-oriented theories of the subject, oriented to the analysis of corporeality

or embodied in trend cognitive science. New approach to the body contains assumptions that can be found in Michel Foucault's approach. First, it is the anti-essentialism or the conviction that the subject (body, identity) is not a being with a predetermined nature. It is created according to the patterns of a specific culture, complex mechanisms that make up its socialization and the kind of relationship with the world. For Foucault, corporeality is a key and the starting point for constituting subjectivity. He examines sexuality as an experience, treating it as a relationship between knowledge, normativity and forms of subjectivity. At the same time, he looks on "the power, as a pure limit set on freedom is, at least in our society, the general form of its acceptability" (Foucault, 1978, p. 86).

Most of new materialism researchers describe it as the combination of different theories and approaches (feminist, scientific, philosophical, cultural, queer, environmental, biopolitical theory). The body is a visual element of each of these approaches and all of them emphasize the materiality and its differentiation from the body, create the intersections of environmental, material, social, human and non-human world. New materialism underlines that human identity is the result of different relationship between ecology, society, culture and genders.

Barad's intra-action concept is crucial because of the existing possibility to explain the statement that "bodies are not objects with inherent boundaries and properties" and the analyzed representations are "material-discursive phenomena" (2003, p. 823). For Rosi Braidotti, "neo-materialism" emerges as

"a method, a conceptual frame and a political stand, which refuses the linguistic paradigm, stressing instead the concrete yet complex materiality of bodies immersed in social relations of power [...] and later re-elaborations of the complex intersection between bodies and power" (2012, p. 21).

Employing Braidotti's term "affirmative", we pose a question whether it is possible to argue on the analyzed Lithuanian cases, since affirmative politics combines critique with creativity and "indicates the process of transmuting negative passions into productive and sustainable praxis [...] which does not deny horror and violence" (2016, p. 51). Now, artists, art critics and art philosophers experience "the need for a systematic meta-discursive approach", which would explain innovative art tendencies on the interdisciplinary level. Braidotti points out that "it stresses instead the need for an ethics based on the necessity of meeting the challenges of the contemporary transformations with creativity and courage" (2005, p. 178). "Post-human body" is an important concept, which serves as the key to explanation of the innovative visual art tendency. In the view of Judith Halberstam and Ira Livingston, "post-human bodies are the causes and effects of postmodern relations of power and pleasure, virtuality and reality, sex and its consequences" (1995, p. 3). They have found specific characteristics or meanings that help not only to understand this definition but also to apply it to our visual art cases.

Defining post-human bodies as the causes, effects and results of the postmodern relations, we emphasize the following features:

- "constructionist body" which is impossible to see as something merely replacing the "humanist body";
- post-human bodies manifest themselves at critical points where discourses of bodies intersect to any easy distinction (metaphorically as between actor and stage or between sender/receiver);

- today human body itself does not belong to a part of “the family of man”. Mostly it appears close to the zoo where all living beings stay;
- we search for post-human bodies it is possible to find them not in the culture but in “subcultures without culture”; the culture as such manifests itself only through sub-cultures, due to which it becomes visible;
- the searching for the post-human origins is difficult because we are the origins. It is only available when we analyze virtual or gothic reality.

“The post-human becoming-subject vibrates across and among an assemblage of semi-autonomous collectivities it knows it can never either be coextensive with nor altogether separate from” (Halberstam & Livingston, 1995, p. 14).

5. “Entangled art’s” autonomy and the commodification of the human body

Art as a commodity means transmutation or transformation artworks in merchandise or trade product, which has to own price. In this process of transmutation artwork marketable product participates many agencies, concepts and entertainment (catalogues, mass media, and art magazines). Art as a commodity embodies different concepts by transforming them into material goods, capable of being marketable and collected. By interacting with the global economy, art subjects overcome distance, cultures and frontiers. “As a concept, then ‘art’ is not an economy free zone. Consequently, the notion of art and economy as a pair of polar opposites is untenable” (Graw, 2009, p. 66). Artistic autonomy is linked with market in a very specific way:

- the context of art as a commodity must first be understood within its own developing cultural environment;
- the art as a commodity has own specific and unique niche, which has specific rules, sellers, intermediaries and buyers;
- the art market includes commodities embodied by culturally different values, many of them resist being measurable and not amenable to comparison;
- it is not to be completely separated from the world economy and use the same economic meanings, terminology (production, marketing and promotion);
- the financial crisis demonstrated how much the art world is tied to financial markets but at the same time investment in the art is a more stable commodity in the periods of recession;
- in the condition of the world market, due by art criticism and promotion has converted many of the questionable artworks into valuable assets. This process turns symbolic capital into financial.

Appadurai, Thomas, Kopytoff and other cultural anthropologists have begun to take into account the way objects flow between these spheres of exchange. They refocused their attention on “the social life of things”. They concentrated their attention on the strategies by which an artwork’ object could be unique, beautiful and special, and quickly selling on the market.

As Kopytoff argued, “the production of commodities from a cultural standpoint must be created materially as things, but also culturally marked as being a certain kind of thing” (1986, p. 64). Thomas considers the same cultures and analyzes artworks as the “entangled objects” that have double value and meaning as both gifts and commodities (1991). Appadurai

suggests, “commodities, like persons, have social lives” (1986, p. 3). For him, adequate value of a commodity demands investigates “things-in-motion” or the entire lifecycle of an object that includes commodity trajectory (history). For Appadurai, a commodity is not simply a thing or matter, but rather an episode or period in the full life of a thing. Using his words possible to say that the artworks as a commodity are often connected with “competitively inspired diversions” (Appadurai, 1986, p. 17).

In the book *The Coming Community* (1993) Agamben emphasizes the problem of human body’s commodification which is subjected to the laws of commercialization, consuming and exchange value. He uses such meanings as biological destiny and individual biography, by rejecting of the tragic body image. Agamben optimistically offers for body the possibility to be beauty, illuminated and communicable. He wrote:

“The epochal process of the emancipation of the human body from its theological foundations was thus accomplished in the dances of the ‘girls’, in the advertising images, and in the gait of fashion models. This process had already been imposed at an industrial level when [...] the invention of lithography and photography encouraged the inexpensive distribution of pornographic images. Neither generic nor individual, neither an image of the divinity nor an animal form, the body now became something truly whatever” (Agamben, 1993, pp. 47–48).

We live in the age of commodity domination under all other aspects of our social and cultural life. The female body starts to be the object of manipulation from different sides: fashion, pharmaceutic, food industry and other. The process of technologization gives minimalistic impact in the female body health but opens much kind of “woman” industries that practically have no point of contact with ecology of female being. In reality, what has been technologized “is not the body, but its image”.

Conclusions

Reconceptualization of body from the philosophical point of view undergoes such postmodern definitions as the “thinking body” or the “virtual body” or “body without organs. The concept of “deterritorialization” includes a political reframing of the body. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari described it as “a not closed entity, but as an open and dynamic system of exchange, constantly producing modes of subjection and resistance and becomings” (Lepecki, 2006, p. 5). Art and art philosophy critics experience “the need for a systematic meta-discursive approach” which would explain innovative art tendencies on the interdisciplinary level. New materialists explain how matter (body in our case) comes to matter and how (public) discourses come to matter (body). New materialist scholars use matter (body in our case) as their focal point. Zooming in on the matter of art, they move away from a framework of representation and start to be in fact part of the phenomena that they study.

Reconceptualization of body includes such notions as abjection (see Kristeva, 1982), anti-consumerism, commodities, existential border situation, post-humanism, rejection of sexually attractive corporality, convulsive beauty and perverse strangeness, body’s transgression, deromanticizing, demetaphorization, and desocialization of body. Creative and artistic researchers that have a will and wish of thinking radically, “outside the box”, have mostly adapted all of these concepts.

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PRIEŠTARINGAS KŪNAS IR JO KŪRYBINIS REKONTEKSTUALIZAVIMAS LIETUVOS VIZUALIUOSIUOSE MENUOSE

Basia NIKIFOROVA, Kęstutis ŠAPOKA

Santrauka

Kūnas, kūniškumo koncepcija dažnai yra atskaitos taškas naujojo materializmo filosofinėms kryptims, ieškančioms naujų kūno ir kūniškumo apibrėžčių, taip pat pasitelkiančioms ir naujas kūrybiškumo koncepcijas. Tai reiškia, kad tyrėjas turi naujai pažvelgti ne tik į pačią kūno sampratą, tačiau ir permąstyti kūniškumą apibrėžiančius tekstus bei vaizdus (taip pat vaizdinius, įvaizdžius) neperžengiant kultūrinės interakcijos ribų. Perkurti kūniškumą kartu reiškia perkurti kultūrinius tekstus ir tekstūras apskritai.

Straipsnyje daugiausia remiamasi naujojo materializmo koncepcijomis, kurių visu-
ma formuoja kūniškumo sampratą. Tekste susitelkiama į tas naujojo materializmo
koncepcijas, kuriomis bandoma naujai pažvelgti į vizualiuosius menus, pasitelkiant
ir derinant įvairias jų praktikas, meninius tyrimus, taip pat filosofinę analizę.

Straipsnio metodologines gaires galima apibrėžti Maurice'o Merleau-Ponty „kū-
niškos būties“, Julios Kristevos „svetimumo savastyje“ arba „savasties atmetimo“,
Arjuno Appadurai „dekontekstualizavimo estetikos“ ir „unikalaus objekto“, Igorio
Kopytoffo „daiktų kultūrinės biografijos“, Nicholaso Thomaso „susaistančių objek-
tų“ daikto, kūno ir kūniškumo koncepcijomis. Straipsnyje iš dalies aptariamos ir
Hanso Beltingo kūno kaip „gyvos medijos“, Giorgio Agambeno kūno kaip objekto
idėjos, taip pat glaustai aptariama Jacques'o Derrida „tiesos tapyboje“ koncepcija.

Galiausiai naujai kūniškumo sampratai svarbi ir Karen Barad suformuluota in-
tra-akcijos (ne tiek objektų, kūnų, kiek bendros energijos sąveikos) samprata, kurią
filosofė pasiūlė vietoj interakcijos sąvokos. Pasak filosofės, kūnai nėra statiški, už-
baigti objektai su savo ribomis. Kūnas aktualizuojasi per pasaulio kartotines in-
tra-akcijas – dėl savojo performatyvumo.

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Rakauskaitės kūrybos pavyzdžiais, bandoma parodyti, kaip kuriamos naujos kūniš-
kumo apibrėžtys, įvaizdžiai, įvairiais būdais išardant ir perkuriant kūno sampratą.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: atmetimas, kūno perkūrimas, prekės, kūrybiškumas, emocinis
teroras, materija, naujasis materializmas, posthumanizmas, seksualumas, smurtas.