

# PERFORMERS

## Portraits of Performance Artists by Johnny Amore

### Introduction

*Performers* is an archive collating portraits of performance artists active worldwide.

During the last three years I visited as many festivals and performance art venues as possible with the intention to depict the participants.

My aim is not the documentation of art actions but to capture the personalities that are behind.

Usually I take the photo right after a performance with the purpose of retaining the energy that a live presentation imbues in the artist.



Johnny Amore, *Performers*. Selection of 23 photos out of the 160 constituting the entire series, © Johnny Amore 2014

## **Performance and its historical heritage**

In the past years Live Art gained position in the contemporary art scene and more artists felt the need to experiment with this medium. I understand Performance Art is an expression of our eclectic historical moment, produced at the crossroads of many different disciplines (body, movement, installation, sound, ...), a language that allows interdisciplinary and interactivity to an extremely large extent.

A performance art piece only exists in the present and once presented it changes into another new form and stops being what it was. In the moment performance tries to take part in the circulation of the reproduction and documentation, it becomes unfaithful to itself and the promise of its own ontology. The nature of the performance is created, like the ontology of subjectivity, by its own disappearance.

The present, which leads the performance to its deeper question, is rarely valued in our culture. Performance is generated during a certain period of time that cannot be repeated. The repetition can be pursued, but this reproduction already marks something new. The document of a performance is only a recollective gesture, a stimulus of the memory to remember something transient.

However, art history and the cultural management politics demand documentation and strain the artists and institutions to list, conserve and archive the art works. That's why it is necessary to reflect on how these magic and unique moments can be frozen and preserved for the future.

## **My personal relation to photography and live performance**

My interest for performance art documentation did not originate in a methodological or academic scheme but from an artistic one.

I have been actively involved in the performance practice as an artist, curator and organizer; I realized several solo and group performances and organized performance festivals and gatherings. Those experiences, and collaborating with the research project ELAA (European Live Art Archive) in which we interviewed experienced Performer artists with the goal of archiving their memories, brought me to the idea to systematically photograph the performance artists I came across.

In the past years I had the opportunity to get to know many different performance artists with their different approaches to creativity, their particularities and individualities. And it is those differential factors that interest me and that I consider make this series interesting, colorful and strong.

From my years of photography study I kept an interest in portraiture, especially for the dynamic and complexity of the human being, and I have been developing this genre ever since. I used to photograph individuals to whom I feel an initial attraction and try to reflect this appealing force in images. A power that you cannot describe in words or concepts but that captures your attention and curiosity, a sort of addiction not only to body shapes, eyes, skin tonalities, but to what is behind: the thoughts and the mental state of these persons. And I feel a sort of instinct of possession, a desire to materialize the moment that this person is living.

The human presence, with its emotionality, is sometimes too strong; it is almost insulting, shouting to get all the attention: Like a red dot in the green, like a flash in the darkness. To balance that force I need the background, the space that as a negative form defines the contour of the figure. Through that supplementary space I create a whole story. The key of my research lies in the dialog between the person and their background; sometimes I think I am not portraying a person in a background, but the background with a person; sometimes it is the opposite. The background speaks about fear, happiness, peace, desperation; it speaks about the circumstances through an atmosphere.

## Publication

In October 2013 a catalogue was published containing a selection of 58 photos accompanied by some portrayed artists quotes, which unfold their thoughts on the specifics of performance and live art, in relation to documentation and photography.

The publication was being released in connection with the exhibition *Performers* at the Pori Art Museum in Finland and in collaboration with its curator Pia Hovi-Assad.

View catalogue directly here: <http://vimeo.com/78155428>



"PERFORMERS - the catalogue"

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**THE PERFORMERS ARE:**

**Collaborations:** The New Spastiks (Herma Auguste Wittstock & Dedan Rooney) [GER|IRL], VestAndPage-Verena Stenke & Andrea Pagnes (GER|ITA), Angela Schubot & Jared Gradinger [GER|USA], The Physical Poets [JPN|KOR]

**GER:** Boris Nieslony, Mike Hentz, Lilie Fischer, BBB Johannes Deimling, Jürgen Fritz, Holger Dreissig, Anja Ibsch, Florian Feigl, Heinrich Obst, Julischka Stengele, Marcel Sparmann, Kati Heck, Dirk Baumanns, Jörn Burmester, Tim Tiedemann, Christine Haase, Johnny Amore, Kurt Petz, Sindy Butz, Club Real, Frank Homeyer, Michael Steger, Hella Santarossa, Cornelia Schleime, Stefanie Trojan, Timm Ulrichs

**FIN:** MRCVE-Messianic Research Centre for Visual Ethics, Mimosa Pale, Peter Rosvik, Lauri Luhta, CW01, Kimmo Kanerva, Sari Kivinen, Leena Keela, Akashapushpa, Essi Kausalainen, Terho Sire, Eero Yil-Vakkuri, Aapo Kustaa Korkeaoja, Irma Optimist, Roi Vaara

**USA:** Ben Patterson, Ray Langenbach, Horsecow, Travis McCoy Fuller, Erik Hokanson, Jill McDermid, Amy Klement, Ninnie Nuevo, Crystal Tits (Anna Natt & Jaime Schwartz), Bernard Roddy, Jessica Hirst, Marilyn Arsem

**ESP:** Esther Ferrer, Bartolomé Ferrando, Joan Casellas, Nieves Correo, Lucia Peiró, Isabel León, Irene Pascual, Paco Nogales, Andrés Galeano, Ana Matey, Daniel Hinojo

**CH:** Marion Ritzmann, Ozgül & Mouschi, Barbara Sturm, Saskia Edens

**F:** Arianne Foks

**IRL:** Kira O'Reilly

**GBR:** Mark A. Ward

**UK:** Ann Noël, Sophie Soni, Brian Catling

**BEL:** Dialogist-Kantor, Eric Andersen

**NL:** Ieke Trinks, Renee van Trier, Willem Wilhelmus

**SWE:** Maline Casta

**ISL:** Magnus Logi Kristinsson

**JPN:** Oikado Ichiro, Fujieda Mushimaru, Takisa Risa, Miyako-Chocho Takatani

**KR:** Baek-Ki Kim, Yong-Gu Shin, Sooim Kwon

**TAW:** Lan Hung, Watan Wuma, Tzu-Chi Yeh  
**EST:** Sandra Jogeva, Epp Kubu, Mai Sööt, Non Grata, Tiina Sööt, Anonymous Boh, Sybille Neeve, Ville Karel, Kaarel Kuetas  
**ISR:** Dovrat Meron  
**AUT:** Marc Aschenbrenner, Knopp Ferro  
**POL:** Anton Karwowski, Arti Grabowski, Jaroslaw Kozlowski, Suka Off, Zbigniew Warpechowski  
**POR:** Marcio Carvalho  
**NOR:** Kurt Johannessen, Ida Grimsgaard, Ane Lan  
**MEX:** Lala Normada  
**CAN:** Sarah Goody, John Boehme, Rodolphe-Yves Lapointe, Karine Turcot, Yannick Ross  
**IND:** Perfo Fartistsuva, Nikhil Chopra  
**CMR:** Serge Olivier Fokoua, Hervé Yamguen  
**Congo DR:** Julie Djikey Kim  
**RUS:** Dmitry Paranyushkin  
**CHN:** He Chengyao, Yingmei Duan  
**CZE:** Tomas Ruller, Jiri Suruvka  
**SLO:** József Juhász  
**BRA:** Larissa Ferreira  
**SCO:** Alastair McLennan  
**TUR:** Nezaket Ekici, Dolanbay  
**CHL:** Tito Garcia Jorquera  
**BUL:** Yovo Panchev, Lora Dimova, Ivan Yamaliev  
**DK:** Philip Luddite  
**ITA:** Fausto Grossi  
**PHL:** Vim Nadera  
**MMR:** Moe Satt

## EXHIBITIONS

2014 RAVY Performance festival in the Goethe Institute, Yaoundé/ Cameroon  
2013 Pori Art Museum [FIN]  
museum FLUXUS+, Potsdam  
Ballarat International Foto Biennale, Victoria/ Australia  
Exist-ence 5, Symposium-Performance, the Body and Time in the 21st Century, Brisbane/ Australia  
Kunst braucht Fläche, in the public space in Oranienstr. 40, Berlin/Kreuzberg  
2012 Mozg Festival, Bydgoszcz [POL]  
Second performance festival, Berlin

## PUBLICATIONS

*Performers*, Pori Art Museum Publications

10 years of T.E.H.D.A.S. (book incl 12 Portraits), Pori Art Museum Publications

## PRESS

2013 Le Journal de la Photography

The British Journal for Photography

Getaddictedto magazin

2014 Kultur.err.ee

**Johnny Amore** (Germany) is based in Berlin but works in an international context. He has held several solo and group exhibitions in Germany, UK, Spain, the Netherlands, Estonia, Switzerland, Poland, Finland, Australia, Cameroon and Taiwan.

In his performances he works often in collaboration with the Finnish performance group MRCVE (Messianic Research Centre for Visual Ethics) and with the Spanish artist Irene Pascual.

He received grants by the EU Commission, Kulturreferat München, Goethe Institutes Amman, Sofia and Yaoundé, and participated in artist in residence programs in Jordan, Finland, The Netherlands and Taiwan.

You can follow Johnny Amore's activity on his colourful blog ([www.johnamore.blogspot.com](http://www.johnamore.blogspot.com)), in which he is not only showing finished art works but also impressions and processes of his daily routine.