

My Seven Art Works

Pictures from the exhibition Candyshop.

A white box gallery where 6 different performances from the research, My fantasy body, were shown as an overview installation. From each performance I choose one object that in my opinion was the center piece for the performance. Along with each installation I proposed actions for the visitors to perform themselves. The performance Candyshop, where a I baked cake for the visitors, was premiered as the seventh performance in this research. The performance Candyshop was thought as a connection point to all the other performances and the installations as a playground for visitors where they could shop for candy.

Candyshop (exhibition).



Illustration 1



Illustration 2



Illustration 3



Illustration 4

Pictures from the overview exhibition in the Gallery space.

Frosting.



Illustration 5

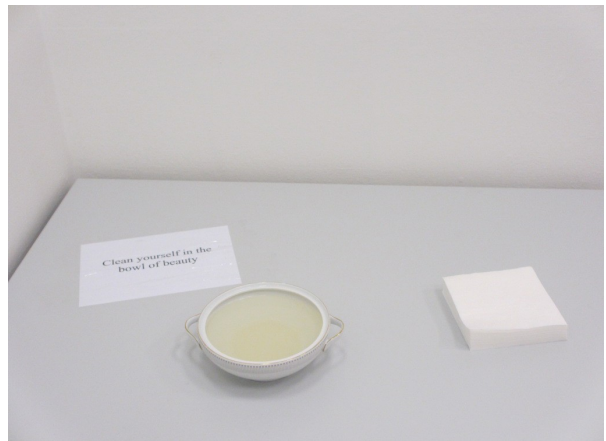


Illustration 6

Princess Diary.



Illustration 7



Illustration 8

White walkers.

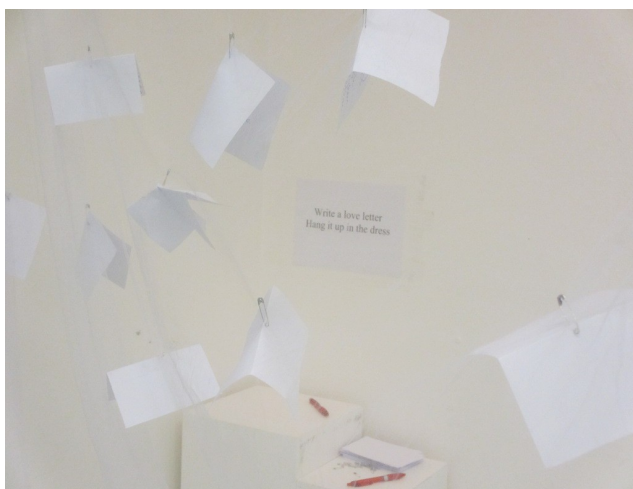


Illustration 9



Illustration 10

Candyshop (performance).



Illustration 11



Illustration 12

International Vagina.



Illustration 13



Illustration 14

Beautiful Beast.

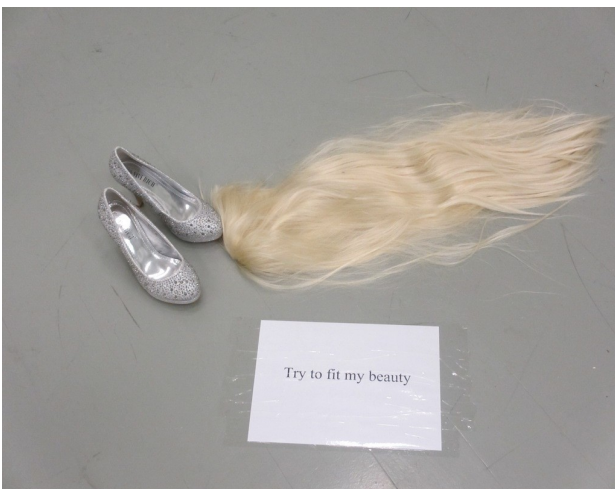


Illustration 15



Illustration 16

Glossy.



Illustration 17



Illustration 18

Candyshop (exhibition).



Illustration 19



Illustration 20

Pictures from the actual performances that I did through out my research.
They are not in real time chronological order but in the same order as the visitor sees the installations in the Gallery.

Frosting.



Illustration 21



Illustration 22



Illustration 23



Illustration 24



Illustration 25



Illustration 26

Princess diary.

Atkins.

Breakfast:



Illustration 27

Lunch:



Illustration 28

Dinner:

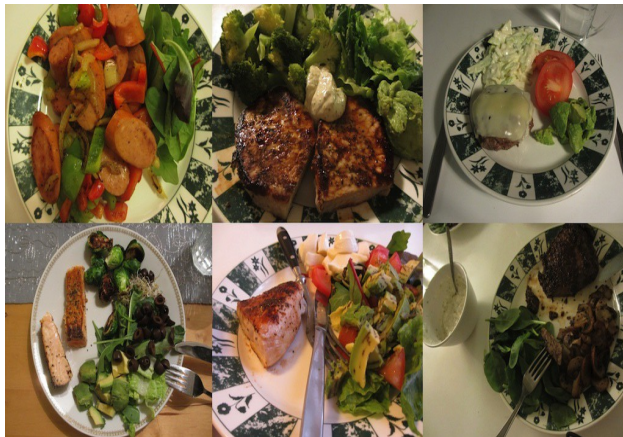


Illustration 29

Master cleanse.



Illustration 30

Fruitarian.

Breakfast:



Illustration 31

Lunch:



Illustration 32

Vegan.

Dinner:



Illustration 33

Eat yourself small.

Breakfast:



Illustration 34

Lunch:



Illustration 35

Dinner:



Illustration 36

Juice Fast.

Breakfast:



Illustration 37

Lunch:



Illustration 38

White Walker.



Illustration 39



Illustration 40



Illustration 41



Illustration 42



Illustration 43



Illustration 44

Candyshop (performance).



Illustration 45

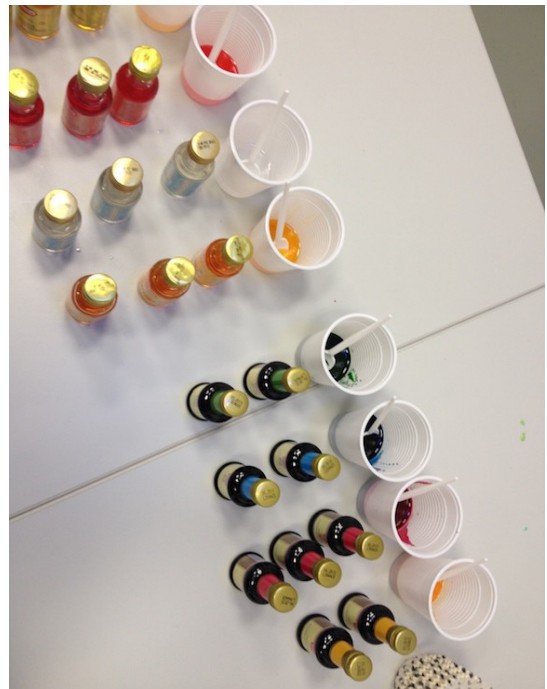


Illustration 46



Illustration 47



Illustration 48



Illustration 49

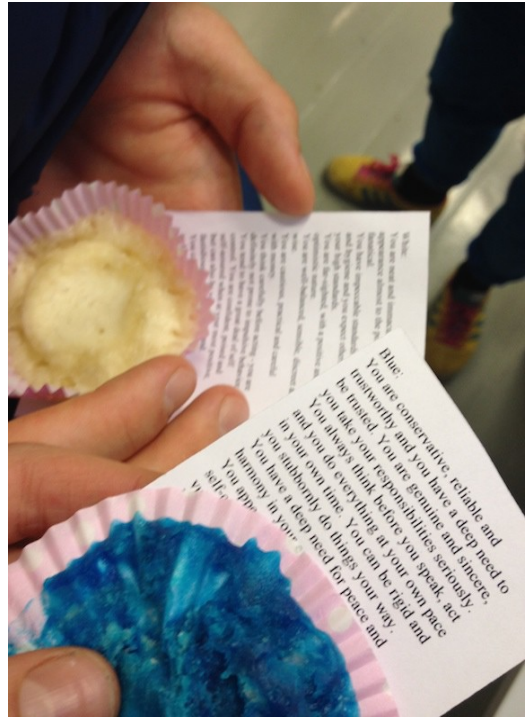


Illustration 50

International Vagina.



Illustration 51



Illustration 52



Illustration 53



Illustration 54



Illustration 55



Illustration 56



Illustration 57

Beautiful Beast.



Illustration 58



Illustration 60



Illustration 59



Illustration 61



Illustration 62



Illustration 63



Illustration 64



Illustration 65

Glossy.



Illustration 66



Illustration 67



Illustration 68



Illustration 69



Illustration 70



Illustration 71

Pictures from the Glossy dress.



Illustration 72



Illustration 73



Illustration 74



Illustration 75



Illustration 76

Here below is a description of the seven performances that are the essence of my research. An object from each performances was show in the exhibition Candyshop. You will get a idea of where the idea came from, how the preparation was and what inspired me.

These descriptions are not in chronological order. The texts are in the same order as the work in My Fantasy Body. This is considered additional information in order to understand the connection between my practical work and my written work better. The date and time, as well as location of each performance is listed for the reader to realize when and where the performance happened as I have used many different spaces to present in.

Frosting.

15th of March. 2013.

Theatre II. Academy for theatre and music. University of Gothenburg. Sweden.

20:00 – 22:00

An open presentation from Contemporary Performative Arts student. Frosting was one of 5 performances presented that evening.

The space was given to me since it was on a presentation evening of my research in a academical setting. That performance evening took place in a theatre space, a black box. I choose to use the space more like a gallery and thought of my performance more like an installation. I thought it would be more interesting to mix up art forms and present a work that normally would not be presented in a theater context. Also I like the mystery the black box can give and the opportunity to play with the audience in a way that the bright walls of a gallery space could never do.

I set up 4 different works, stations and filled the space up with smoke. The four stations where: 1) video work of shaking naked female body, 2) a soundscape and performance text a prerecorded¹, 3) table with a bowl full of frosting where guests where asked to clean themselves in the pool of beauty, 4) a white skirt hanging in the air and a real female body dressed in it.

In the end of the performance the body fell down from the skirt, but the skirt kept on hanging in the air, and crawled from under the skirt. Walked over to the table and cleaned herself in with the pool of beauty, the frosting bowl.

This was a remake of a performance made in Tokyo half a year earlier. At this point in the research I was lost in my project and wanted to find my feet again. The original performance Frosting was a

¹ See chapter 1. Frosting, in My fantasy body bls, 12-14.

great inspiration on me while I was forming the research project for this education. It is no wonder since I was working on that piece while applying for the entrance.

The original concept for the performance frosting was to search through fashion history for various techniques that have been used to change the female body, to make it desirable for each period. From using iron and steel to shape the bodies, till modern plastic surgeries and injections. The aim was to start with a perfect and beautiful body but by peeling of layers and layers, ending up with the real and the true body. The performance this time was still represented a search of a means to express that concept, only going one step closer with the second Frosting.

In my works I always look for a inspiration in Fairytales. Those stories offer the easiest stereotypical values a young girl can find in our society and through many of them princess-image is pushed up on young female bodies. While working on Frosting I was fascinated by the story of Cinderella and how universal that story is. There are different versions of that story from different part of the world and even hollywood films and romantic comedies such as Pretty woman, offer us a type of Cinderella stories.

When I was close to my teen years I felt the need to prove that I was a good woman and often showed my feminine side by baking. My favorite cakes were chocolate-cakes with lots of frosting and decoration. I even made them in different colors. The best part was to make the frosting, eat it and then cover the cake (that might have come out of the oven little bit ugly). That made the cake seem soft and smooth, even shiny. Frosting always made the cake look perfect when it was presented.

In the feminist wave of the 70's, female artist started to use the kitchen as a source of material. Cooking, baking and food were now transferred as an artwork and represented the typical role of the female's in the society. One of these artists was New York based artist Alison Knowles². She made the performance "Identical lunch" in 1969, seemingly unconsciously at first, in which she always had the same lunch, a "tunafish sandwich on a whole wheat toast, with lettuce and butter no mayo and a cup of soup or glass of butter milk as it was the best thing this place offered. The coffee there was disgusting"³. Once when she and her friends where sitting at Riss for a lunch, like they did so often, one of her friend pointed out that she always had the same lunch, he said: "Alison you are having an identical lunch. At that point I realized that I was somehow involved in a performance," Alison claimed.⁴

2 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alison_Knowles

3 <http://vimeo.com/36770058>

4 <http://vimeo.com/36770058>

Martha Rosler made video-art piece named “Semiotics of the Kitchen”⁵ in 1975. In the video you see the woman (artist) standing in a kitchen and recites the kitchen alphabet. Starting with apron, bowl, cutter and ending with rolling pin, spoon, tenderizer then she uses her body with an kitchen object to form the letters: U V W X Y Z. With every object she takes it into her hands, names it and shows how it moves in a quite vulgar or unrealistic way.

The video art work and the text that it follows is to represent the deconstruction of the female body. That we see all the time in for example advertisements and other media that presents the female body as an object. I wanted to objectify my own body just like the female bodies that are presented to me every day of my life. I wanted to present the tabooed ares of the female body⁶ in it’s nature – naked and shaken.

For the video work I was inspired by the performance, “Selling Oneself on The Market”⁷ (1976-1977) by the French artist Orlan. She took picture of her body parts and printed them in real live size. Then she sold them on a street-market in Portugal like pieces of meat or fruits. For me this was a real deconstruction of the female body and was something that really inspired me, motivated me to do try out similar thing with my own body.

Princess diary.

Gothenburg 2012.

A durational performance: From 24th of September till 27th of November.

Set out with a program of 12 weeks, dieting 8 different diets.

Week 1-2: Atkins.

Week 3-4: Master cleanse.

Week 5: Hallelujah diet, Fruitarian.

Week 6: Blood type diet, Vegan.

Week 7-8: Eat yourself small.

Week: 9-10: Juice fast.

Week 11: Beverly hills diet.

Week 12: Grape fruit diet.

(I did not finish the last two diet as I only made it to week 10)

5 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vm5vZaE8Ysc>

6 <http://www.upworthy.com/being-a-sex-object-is-empowering-oh-wait-no-it-s-not-here-s-why-2>

7 <http://www.orlan.eu/works/performance-2/>

Things went up and down throughout the period but in week 10 I was already suffering from malnutrition and had to end the performance 2 weeks earlier than I had planned out. The recovery period is still going on (this is written in spring 2014) and I do not know when it will be finished. I may have made my digestive system dysfunctional, I just have to wait patiently to see what happens.

This was a durational live experience performance, a research where I used my body to try out experience through different diets that I know about and women around me had tried out.

I have always had that dream of having a tall and slender body, that was not only desirable but non optional to have other body type as I have a background in ballet. When I was around 12 years old adults around me started to point out that my body was not as it was supposed to look like but at that time I did not understand why it was not the right body or how my body should look. It did not take long until my ballet teacher whispered in my ear before a practice one day that I would need to go on a diet. I got angry since she was not only judging my body, she was judging me as a person and my live style. I did not choose to get a small and thick body.

Soon I started to cut out different food types. First it was candy and all food related to sugar that children at this age should love. Then when I grew older and my body was not changing at all I took out all meat in order to reduce the intake of food. I was lucky that my mom somehow knew what was going on and did everything she could to keep me eating. I was though clever then she and started to cut out different types of food for different periods.

During and especially after this performance I saw why diets are a huge issue for me and I finally opened my eyes to my anorexic thoughts in my young age. Though I had never done any specific diet programs I still have diet my own made up diets. At that time it was not so easy to access computers and the internet was not filled with quick solution diets and information on how to be anorexic. To gather information on each diet that I tried in this project and to find out the variety of diets, I browsed through the Internet. There was so much information about different quick solution for weight loss that it was overwhelming for me. I can not imagine and I won't imagine, what I could have done to myself if I could had just search for this information online. It's too easy access for vulnerable teen girls.

I am really happy about every decision that I made before, during and after the performance. I am so proud of me to finally do this kind of performance and really put my body and my artworks on the risk to get a wider perspective. Open up for new possibilities and see myself as an artist and my creations from a different angle.

In the end I could not have done it differently. Of course there are elements that I could have

done better but you can always be clever afterwards. I have good documentation, I have a great learning story share with other artist looking for another platform and other females still dealing with diets in their live. I will carry this experience through my whole live and I will never forget how ill I became during and after the performance, both physically and mentally. I will never forget how short it took my body to go into malnutrition. Some may argue that I should have had more consult with professionals, like doctors, digestive specialist, psychology and nutritionist. I will argue that this was an artistic research not a scientific one. There might be (and probably are) thousands of scientific research upon the concept of dieting but I am not a scientist so I cannot make my research a scientific research. I do artistic research where I look at social problems out of my own experience in that issue and try to open up that problem by pointing out something or let the society see that problem from another perspective. I want the people to take responsibility for their own actions and own behavior then hopefully they see what really is the problem with their perspective and teach the coming generation what they have found out.

When the idea was formed and I was ready to start the issue of how I could present my performance to an audience and how I could help people to participate in this experience. As this performance would mostly happen at my home or within my body I decided to use the internet to get comments and start a talk about the issue of dieting. This was the first time I had ever opened up my performance and the process in such a way. In the end I decided to make a blog, an internet diary of my experience and just that action of opening up my life, my thoughts to whom ever liked to read, I put myself and my identity on a verge of some limit. First I was afraid of what people would think of me but mostly I was afraid of how my family would react. I did not express myself truly and openly about what was happening but this was a big step for me towards such doing. During the period of the performance I got better in opening up to the internet, opening up to the issues I wanted to address. Soon I found the blog was not working as I hoped it would work, I was not in contact with my readers whatsoever I decided to open up a Facebook page to get closer to my audiences and to let them access my performance easier. I posted all the pictures of the food I ate on the Facebook page, just as I liked today's blog on the timeline but I started to post video blogs also, I had been recording video blogs from the very start. I got more reaction but still not as much as I was hoping for.

I am grateful for everyone that took part and read, watched my performance online but mostly I am grateful for myself and the courage it took for me to do this. I learned a lot both with the mediation that I chose but also how to make so long durational performance happen. I will always carry this experience and I hope I'll have more opportunities to make such a performance that can have live changing effects on me as an artist but also on the audiences.

The artist that influenced me for this performance, as her work are really live/body changing, was the French artist Orlan. Her performance “Surgeon, Remake me”⁸ (1986 – 1993) has inspired me to do lot of my artworks and this performance was the one of them. Though I knew that I would never dare do anything that permanent to my body as she did, I still wanted to be changed in my thinking and therefore I had to challenge my own body. In “Surgeon Remake me” Orlan went under the plastic surgical knife several times where she drastically changed her appearance. The performance was streamed straight from the surgical table to her audience. She was awake all during all the surgeries she went under and even explaining to the audience, to the camera, what was going on in the surgery.⁹

I am not only interested in how performances can leave changing influence on the artist body but also the strength and the power of the performance act itself can be, both for the performer him/herself but also for the audiences.

*“Once you enter into the performance state you can push your body
to do things you absolutely could never normally do.”*

Marina Abramović

The will of not eating or staying at the same position for a long period of time, fascinated me. The power that happens when you are performing, when you are surrounded by audiences that expects certain things from you. The hunger striker do not eat for weeks or even months as he/she is fighting for their cause. I did the same with this performance, but I ate for a cause. This reminds me of the performance “*In The House with the Ocean View* (2002), [where Marina] Abramović spent 12 days living on display at Sean Kelly Gallery in New York. She did not allow herself to speak or eat for these 12 days, though singing was “possible but unpredictable.” Her residence for this period consisted of three elevated platforms, one with a bathroom, one with a small table and chair, and the third with a small bed and chair. She drank mineral water, showered three times a day, and allowed herself no more than seven hours of sleep. The rungs of the ladders leading up to each platform were replaced with large steak knives, preventing descent. She drew her energy from her audience.”¹⁰

I kept out blog on the website: www.femalebody.wordpress.com

The Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/myfantasybody>

8 <http://www.orlan.eu/works/performance-2/>

9 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7qeW-ftFBGE>

10 <http://www.marinaabramovicinstitute.org/mai/mai/4>

White Walkers.

5th of May. 2013.

14:00 – 16:00. Piazza dei Signori. Santa Maria Antica. Verona, Italy

4 hours long performance at Verona Resuona, performance festival.

I stood as a fully dressed bride, with my skin painted white, outside the church Santa Maria Antica in Verona city and waited for love letters from my audiences.

When we (me and my class) were commissioned by the school to make performances for a festival in Verona, Verona Resuona, my mind went immediately to love and weddings. The whole performance around the wedding ceremonies, that princess-image of a girl falling in love with her prince and finally getting to be a princess for one day. Working on a recent performance Frosting with its Cinderella concept and going to present a work in the city of love, Verona, the scenario for the story of Romeo and Juliet the concept of love and weddings was the only thing on my mind.

I was inspired by love and how the female body should act in situations of love, in relation to fairytales and love stories like Romeo and Julia. The idea of a girl waiting for her prince to come along and rescue her from her castle and the ceremony of weddings where a white-dressed girl (representing the purity, virginity) walked down the aisle to the man of her dreams, where her father gives her away. I could not see the difference between the fictionalized image of the fairytale and the real wedding ceremony. Both the fairytale and the wedding ceremony hold on to outdated social rules that have been broken down by feminists in the past. I found it interesting that a society that is still so developed and informed holds on to such fictional ideas.

From this interest came two different performances,

- 1) a walk of white brides down the streets of the city as ghosts of the wedding day, the princess dream,
- 2) a performance where a female body dressed like a bride-to-be, waits for her love to show up.

In the beginning I was going forward with the first idea of the ghostly brides hunting the streets of unhappy prisoners in a marriage. I wanted the audiences to perform themselves by walking through Verona wearing a white veil and be led by clues in the city. Arriving in the city I knew this was not the venue for a participating work as almost everyone were tourists and if not tourists then a shopping public. No one was in the search for connection or to take a minute to engage in others' lives. After a long thought I decided to leave that idea, leave the rules I got from the school and go for the second idea I had. Hoping that I would get as much experience out of this idea in order to reflect upon it and work it further.

In the end I was really happy with my choice and the risk I took by going for something completely different in so short time. I tried to use all the things that I had brought to Verona, for the first idea to save time and energy on preparing yet another performance. The experience I got from standing outside a church in use for four hours in the burning sun on Piazza dei Signori in Verona is something I can for sure build on. I was so unfortunate, or should I say fortunate, that there was a double wedding ceremony happening in that same church as I stood in front of on my performance day. After only 2 hours standing in the sun, I got four angry Italian women standing over me, screaming at me, telling me to go away as I was overshadowing the brides to be with my presence. It was exactly what I was looking for, a clash between the fiction and the reality, the wedding ceremony and my performance. I had placed myself on a wrong spot at a wrong time for them and they did not know that they were included in my performance and were part of my experiment. I had touched up on something that I was not supposed to and I pushed the social boundaries of Verona, especially of these women.

The location, the square and the church (Piazza dei Signori, Santa Maria Antica) was chosen after I made the performance changes but we were commissioned to be in a public outdoor space in the city of Verona. There was no other option in my mind but to place myself outside of a church as I was waiting for my love and to finally get married. I was just thinking of the visual aspect and what fitted best for my concept, my vision. I did not plan to raise up anger or confusion in the society but I still managed to do so. I just followed my instincts and did what I thought would be best fitted for the scenario and the rhythm in the city. I am not sure what would have happened in Iceland or Sweden, if I had face similar situations. I am though interested if I would have got the same reaction about my placement and my clothing.

After a long discussion with these women, I decided to leave the square while the ceremony was going on. I am not sure if that was the right thing to do at this point but as I had already refused 2 times to leave I felt I had pushed them to their social limits. In the end I did not want to ruin the Cinderella day for these brides to be, though I was commenting on that ceremony. Nothing is more absurd than two brides, or a bride without a wedding. Perhaps marriage as a social institution is too easily mocked? At least the idea of an artist in the vicinity of the church making a silent performance using wedding dresses was too much of a disturbance.

“In 1988, Ulay and Abramovic decided to end their relationship and to mark that end of a period with a performance, which became the legendary endpoint of their collaboration. After years of negotiations with the Chinese authorities, the artists couple got the permission to carry out the performance ‘The Lovers: The Great Wall Walk’, in which they started to walk from different ends

of the Chinese Wall in order to meet in the middle and say good-bye to each other.”¹¹

“After they both continuously walked for 90 days, they met at Er Lang Shan, in Shen Mu, Shaanxi province. Here, they embraced each other to go on with their life and work separately from then on.”¹²

I was so inspired by their dedication and their love for each other that I wanted to make something as powerful like they did but on my terms. I experienced Ulay’s and Abramovic walk just as ritualistic and the walk of the bride down the aisle. I also connected their dedication to each other and the performance, like the long wait princesses have to endure in their phallic towers of love. I wanted to have this ritual experience in my body and so I decided to wait, without the male appearance, of course. The White Walker performance is now developing into a walk, similar as Ulay and Abramovic did, though with different focus. The old bride is looking to recapture her wedding day by taking all the love she can find on the streets of the city she is in. She walks endlessly around dressed up in her old, stored dress that have not been in use since the big day. What she is really looking for no one knows but when she finds it, it will not be a pretty side.

I am so glad that I had the courage to stand up for my artistic choices and changed my mind having this risk of failing in my head. I take a lot of experience both as an artist but also working with a certain culture, city and a festival that is not willing to put their resources into my work. That risk I lead to something that I can build up on and use as a material in my future performances.

This piece is just on the beginning stage. This was was a pilot of what is to come. I have already two performances that I have worked on and developed from these first ideas. Now I just need a place and venue where I can really try them out with public, participates and audiences. I am looking forward to what the future gives this performances.

Candyshop.

7th and 8th of February. 2014.

Gallery Rotor, Academy Valand. Gothenburg, Sweden.

A durational performance along with an exhibition in the same gallery.

The performer baked microwaved cooked cakes for the audiences. They could choose which flavor they liked the cake to taste and what color it should have. By their choices the audiences got psychoanalyzed by the artist and got a note about their personalities with their cake.

11 <http://www.li-ma.nl/site/catalogue/art/abramovic-ulya/the-lovers-the-great-wall-walk-short-version/7588#>

12 <http://www.li-ma.nl/site/catalogue/art/abramovic-ulya/the-lovers-the-great-wall-walk-short-version/7588#>

Almost my whole life my parents have been owners of a candy shop or “sjoppa”, which just plainly means a shop (Icelanders generally refer to candyshops using that term, due to how common they are around Reykjavík). The shop just like any kiosk contained products like sandwiches, hot dogs, sodas, ice cream and all kinds of different candy and chocolate. Early age I started to help out in the candy shop, filling up the candy and putting more soda in the fridge. When I got old enough I worked there more and more, ending in working every evening in later years to pay my rent as an artist.

Looking back to these times I remember different moments that I experienced. As a cashier you are never only supplying costumers their needs in food or drinks, you are also fulfilling their social needs. You could easily think of any shopkeeper as a social worker as well but I had to deal with lot of different social issues that came up. From assisting old people fill up their cars with gasoline, to helping immigrants children out with their homework since their parents did not speak Icelandic. Assisting a pregnant woman that was abused to seek help and being sexually abused myself by my own costumers. To the regular based costumers I became really close and there was a seldom that unknown face dropped in.

I wanted to combine my two carrier expertise, artist and a shop lady. I wanted to get to know my audiences just as I got to know my costumers at the candy shop. I wanted to create the same atmosphere inside a artistically venue as happened in the candy shop.

The performance took place inside a gallery space and I was serving my research material, my artworks and myself as a sale product for the Candyshop. To lure people in, to make them feel conferrable and talkative, I made cup-cakes for the audiences, the flavor and color chosen by themselves. To twist up the real life and make that action of choosing ones candy as a work of art I made my visitors psychoanalyzed themselves with their choses. The cup-cakes where the only thing not for sale in the Gallery.

The chose to put myself, my own body on sale was connected to my work in the shop in Iceland. In that situation I often got a joke, mainly form mail-costumers, that if they could choose one think in this shop it would be me. First it was fine and I just laughed with them, thought I did not found it funny at all. When this sexual harassment's jokes started to be a everyday joke it went deep under my skin and hurt. I could not show it to them but I stopped laughing and showed no sign of amusement.

Because of my circumstances in living situations and project wise, the idea of having my practical work in that gallery came from outside. I immediately said yes as it has been a long dream of mine to present my works in a visual art context. It was also my aim with this masters study to move

away from the theatre more into visual arts venues and public spaces. It was the perfect venue and a perfect ending of my research in the academy. I was not going to let that opportunity slip out of my hands. Thought it was a short open exhibition I now have the experience and the reflection of my works in relation to gallery space.

Soon as the gallery was decided the idea started to come together. My works are often connected to side specific terms as when I know the space the idea starts to formulate or the concept changes with the space it is in. This time I had had rather many different ideas, in different spaces and on different scales. In the end most of them were not doable as I did not have much finance behind this work. With the gallery space came a totally different idea and I think the best one. Instead of making completely new work I could connect all my former research performances together still present a concept I had not touched upon, to sell your body. The exhibition contained center keys, objects, from six different performances that all had their own concept. All the objects had some kind of action with them so the exhibition visitors where now the one performing. To connect them all together I made all the object for sale and connected them to the performance, Candyshop.

For the performance, I got inspired by the performance Meat Joy by the American artist Carolee Schneemann. I had known her works for many years but when she came to the Gothenburg Art biennial last autumn (2013) I revisited her work through her presences and what she offered the at the biennial. I see my work as a development of what Schneemann did in the 1964 in the performance, Meat Joy. Then bodies rolled around in meat but now we roll around in a sugar coded world and stuff our body with sweetness. The sugar has taken over the meat, the fantasy as taken over the reality and we even sugarcoat our reality. Just as we, humans, are now consuming much more sugar then in the 60's and less good, quality, natural meat.

“Meat Joy has the character of an erotic rite: excessive, indulgent, a celebration of flesh as material: raw fish, chickens, sausages, wet paint, transparent plastic, rope brushes, paper scrap. It's propulsion is toward the ecstatic-- shifting and turning between tenderness, wilderness, precision, abandon: qualities which could at any moment be sensual, comic, joyous, repellent.”¹³

What started out as a overview exhibition ended to be a contextualization and decomposing my whole research. I realized how much my artistic choses has developed through out these two years and I saw that I really did make a huge research about My fantasy body. I chose to do it through my own body and through performances as the focus was on me as an artist and me changing my position in the artistic field. I saw a full and whole circle by placing my works side by side in a

13 <http://www.caroleeschneemann.com/meatjoy.html>

gallery. Each work, each performance, was addressing a under topic of the main research and was now developing into another art form. I see potential in every work I did in my research to continue to develop after my graduation. An artwork is never perfect it is always changing just like our view change.

In my time as a student I hoped that I could get to know other art forms that I had not worked with before. My aim was to change my performances from being read as a dance performances to a visual arts, installations performance. These 7 performances I touched up on different art forms but in the end each work ended up taking a role in side different forms. What started out as a performance, changed into a installation in a exhibition and in the end is presented as a written work in the work My fantasy body. I did not only touch up on different art forms, I finally succeed to make one artwork be presented in various artistic form. I have reach my goal and gone even further then I expected during these 2 years in the academy.

International Vagina.

Rue du Vieux Marché Aux Grains 1, Brussels, Belgium. My home.

28th of January. 2014.

Performance made in my apartment were I printed my vagina on black and white in different shapes. No one witnessed the performance, no one knew about it. It was private, it was mythical.

I have a friend that is studying masters in Fine arts. She made a artwork, a print that I thought all looked the same, in order to finance her study. I got a bit jealous as I am a performance artist can not produce this kind easy sell artwork but thought this idea of her quite clever. This idea did not leave my thoughts and my frustration of not having the capability inside my field to do such work increased. When I really thought of it I did not see why I was letting some definition of art forms stop me. The outcome was 8 printed vagina picture and a video work from the performance.

My background is not with in the visual arts though my interest and my works are more related to visual art and fine art performance field rather then dance or theatre. I do not like to put my art in some category. I use what ever needs to be used to tell what I am trying to mediate. If it is a dance piece than I make a dance piece, if I feel the idea needs to be expressed through other media then that is what needs to happen. Now a days I am more interested in the field I have no skills in and especially the field I really struggle with, making or understanding. I understand these fields on my terms, not on scholar terms, like art should be understood. That is why I decided that I had all the rights to make my own prints to sell.

I have never understand the concept of producing art as I feel that art is something that someone shares with someone else. In this work I went against all my visions and made something that I usually do not understand why is made. I made a mass production print but I did it on my own terms and printed my vagina in black and white. This was my way to understand this form of printing and make a work that I could mass produce.

I have been reading many articles about plastic surgeries that women undergo on their vaginas. They want their vaginas to fit their live, so they can move, sit and walk better, the plastic surgeons says. I have not yet heard about a woman that went under the surgical knife to widen up her vagina as most all of them want them smaller and tighter. All I can see that these poor women want their vaginas to fit into social standards by either narrowing the vagina it self or reduce to big labia. My point of view is that the vagina cannot be subjected to random and unreal standards of beauty without jeopardizing women's health, causing sexual problems and possible endangering the safety of mother and children in childbirth. The vagina has a beautiful form, it is interesting, and because we so rarely look down there, it seems abstract. That's why I wanted to mass produce my vagina and show it can have various forms and shapes.

I chose the venue, my apartment, because I wanted to make it non reachable for audience for various reasons. First of all in our society we are not supposed to speak of our private parts nor show them in public. Then all these painters are always painting in their studios and their art dose not interfere with others until the opening night of the exhibition (or that's how it's from my point of view). Last all the mass production products are made by someone we never see and never contact.

The vagina is so private that even woman themselves do not know much about that organ. It is a pleasure spot but that has been made a tabooed through out history and though today we see half naked female bodies everywhere the vagina is still secret, the pandora box. I wanted this performance to be a secret and in the end it would be so mystical that it would become a myth, a great story of something that maybe never happened.

I was inspired by Valeri Export and her performance "Genital Panic" 1969. "The action that gave rise to the photograph Action Pants: Genital Panic has become the subject of apocryphal art historical legend. EXPORT performed Genital Panic in Munich in an art cinema where experimental film-makers were showing their work. Wearing trousers from which a triangle had been removed at the crotch, the artist walked between the rows of seated viewers, her exposed genitalia at face-level."¹⁴

14 <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/export-action-pants-genital-panic-p79233/text-summary>

I wanted to expose the organ vagina in the purpose of awaken the society of its beauty and differences but with my fairytale interest I wanted the piece to not be as obvious, in your face, like she made it. Let the visitors watch the painting, the prints, and really rack their brains out what that form was. Then when they see that the prints is of a vagina and there is clearly some pubic hair stuck in the paint, it will make them question the vagina as an organ and as a social object. I want them to question why the vagina should be hidden and such a mystical organ. These biblical idea are coming from an unconscious need to hide and suppress women.

Beautiful Beast.

Starbucks. Central Station. Brussels. Belgium.

14:00 – 14:30. 15th of January 2014.

I walked into the Central Station in Brussels, Belgium, my new home town and bought an internet account. Then I went over to Starbucks coffee where I bought a small americano and sat down with my computer on one of the few seats inside the coffee house. I waited a half an hour for the time to be 14:00, but then the performance was supposed to start.

I had some internet problem, trouble with the live stream but after 15 minutes delay everything went smoothly. I sat there drank my coffee and cut of my 50cm long white hair with shiny grey scissors. No one interrupted me. People where looking, whispering and pointing but no one stopped me, no one interfered.

It was in February 2009 when I first colored my hair blond for a performance. I wanted my friends, family and my audience not to recognize me straight ahead standing on the stage. I wanted to change my identity, to change peoples view upon me. That time around my hair did only turn orange and I quickly colored it back brown as my natural color is. A year later in 2010 I finally went for it again. Now I had experience and new that this transition would take some time so I started one month before the performance premier was. It was a successes and I really did change peoples view upon me and I have been blond since then.

The last half a year (from summer 2013), my hair has been becoming worse and worse, dryer and drier, with every bleaching, with every month. My hair has been dry ever since I started to bleach it but during that period I was combing it off my skull. It became thinner and thinner and I was afraid to lose it all. The thought of taking it all off and change into my natural color gain started to appear in my thought. It was difficult to think off but necessary as my hair could not take it any

longer. I could not picture me without that beautiful, long, white hair that I had been working so hard on last years. First I started to plan out a cutting performance in April as I was afraid of this action, but as weeks went by I understood that now was the time and if I was going to do some performance out of it, my hair could not wait any longer.

Soon as I decided to cut my hair off as soon as possible, I tried to find the best performance situation to do so. My mind went immediately to Britney Spears and her infamous farewell performance. In 2007 she was sitting at a salon waiting for a dresser to fix her hair up, when she took up a razor and shaved it all off¹⁵. Many thought she was on drugs or that she went crazy, but I felt sorry for her since the pressure up on her and her body, as a famous icon, was tremendous. Soon I decided that I would make my performance in honor of her and her performance in 2007. My choice to use a scissors where because I did not want to imitate her but I wanted to make same affects on the society. I wanted to do the same action.

The venue was decided as often sit at public coffee houses in relation to my work probably Britney relate to salons on a similar work level, I assumed. So I chose Starbucks as it is an American coffee house chain and Britney is from America, it brought me little bit closer to her. The idea of live streaming the performance came after, when I had decided that I would be sitting with my computer using the commuter camera to film the performance. My vision of the live stream was a nice extension of the venue and the performance to people I know in other countries. Involve a global audience like Britney did.

Over all the performance execution went really well. I just sat there cutting my hair off without any disturbances or interfering. The results of the performance really surprised me. People totally ignored me, whether it was the customers or the staff. They neither talked to me, nor reacted with disdain, anger or shock. I felt completely unnoticed in the chaotic environment of a train station, big city, international coffeehouse. It became a private and a messy performance solely for the digital audience that watched me like curious porn-voyeurs. Much like we live Britney's and other celebrities lives through some stream, some other medium and never by actually witnessing her life. (Unless you think of her concerts based on pre-recorded soundscapes, but those are only a very small and perhaps negligible part of Britney's work).

I was inspired by the performance "Art must be beautiful; Artist must be beautiful"¹⁶ by Marina Abramovic. That artist can not perform or are interesting enough to watch if they are not inside some beauty standards. It is necessary to be on a high level of beauty and sexuality in the pop music field, Britney Spears performs in, but this standards counts for every performative field of art. Even

15 <http://www.justjared.com/2007/02/19/britney-spears-shaved-head/>

16 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1smoNE6Stc>

in contemporary performance art, the pressure of the social standards of beauty becomes the standard of how good performer you are. This is exactly what Abramovic was commenting on with her performance “Art must be beautiful; Artist must be beautiful” in 1975.

I wanted to take this issue out of the art context and bring it into the context of normal woman in a normal situation. The holy hair that is the symbol of your sexuality is not as important or holy as some wants to assert. Afterwards I can not say that these words are true though I would like them to be. After my hair is off I feel less sexy and less of a woman with that short brown hair of mine. Now I feel more closer to my personality, to my identity and I know that at some point during these four years I was playing the role of the blond girl and that frightens me. There comes days when I wished I still had my long, beautiful, white hair and the charm that came with it, but what amazes me is that I get no less attention from the male gaze with out it. It is mostly the female gaze that deems shorter and darker hair somehow less sexually active or interesting, much like a wine connoisseur that only judges wines by their color in the bottle without a taste.

Glossy.

Bar 10. Konstepidemin. Gothenburg, Sweden.

19th of November. 2013.

Glossy was part of a performance night at this artist bar in Gothenburg.

A 15 minutes long performance where 3 different currently popular pop songs where played. Each song text was in some way distorting our view on the female body. With the first song was “Do what U want” with Lady GaGa. The action with that song was I walked into the space just wearing black high heels. I walked from one end to the other and then back again, like I was a model on the catwalk. When the second started, “Blurred lines” with Robin Thicke, I walked to the one end of the room where a dress made out of glossy magazine pictures of a young girls, age between 3-13 years, hung up. I took the dress of the hanger and dressed my old body into these youth dress. Then I turned slowly the same path as before, like a ballerina trapped in a jewelry box. The third song was “Work bitch” with Britney Spears and for that song I had learned her movements from the original music video. In the dress I imitated Britney’s video performance but because of the dress these sexual, seductive movements did not quite show.

Early in 2013 I was traveling around Europe and made a stop in Belgium as I have a friend and a colleague based in Ghent. One day when we where in the supermarket shopping I went to the

magazine stand to have a glance at the front pages to get some gossip in my vain's, but what I found something better, more interested. There was a magazine with a young girl, just about 7 years old, posing like an adult model on the front page. I usually do not pick up these glossy, gossip magazines as I despise them but this one I just needed to read.

I took it up and opened it. In the magazine were only pictures of young children but mostly girls, though there were some boys but in only 10% of the pictures. They were all dressed up and posing like they were a normal grown up model, in a fancy fashion magazine like Vogue or something. Everything about this magazine triggered me in different ways, I was amazed by it but I felt disgusted by it. Then my friend came to me and explained what kind magazine it was as I could not read Flemish. He said it was a Christian magazine and these children were recently confirmed, as they were age 3, 7 and 13. Their parents fight for their spot in this magazine but not everyone are accepted to be one of the kids modeling.

After knowing the bases of this magazine and know why these children are in those pictures behaving in this way, I had to buy it. I was just reaching my own limits of understanding as I could not see why grown ups want their kids to be in such a circumstances. I knew this magazine would be a source of inspiration one day.

The magazine was on my shelf for almost a year and other stuff had piled upon it. When I got the opportunity to be part of one of Bar's 10 evenings at Konstepidemin this magazine came again into my mind. I felt this was the place and time to make something out of it. At first I had it on my table going through it once and a while trying to get some image of what to do with this frustration. At the same time I opened my Spotify account again and started to listen to the top lists songs, the most popular ones. It was the first time in years that I was listening to pop songs but at some time in my live I just could not listen to that genre anymore. I was back again listen to songs that were all talking down to me as a woman, all talking down to my body. The same anger started to grow in my body as I felt when I found the magazine in Ghent.

“You can't have my heart
And you won't use my mind but
Do what you want with my body
You can't stop my voice cause
You don't own my life but
Do what you want (with my body)” Lady GaGa.

“OK now he was close, tried to domesticate you
But you're an animal, baby, it's in your nature
Just let me liberate you. Hey, hey, hey
You don't need no papers. Hey, hey, hey
That man is not your maker” Robin Thicke.

“You wanna hot body, You wanna Bugatti, You wanna Maserati, You better work bitch.
You wanna Lamborghini, Sip Martinis, Look hot in a bikini, You better work bitch.
You wanna live fancy, Live in a big mansion, Party in France.
You better work bitch.” Britney Spears.

Listen to this over and over again like I did when I was a young teen, I felt more connected to these girls in those pictures. I felt how I got more connected to me at that age and I felt disgusted by the society and what it had to present to young girls. Somewhere in that chaos, listen to songs discriminating the female body and looking at these pictures of innocent girls the idea of the performance started to form. To use my older, imperfect body as a reality image, then make a dress out of these picture to present my fictional body with their youth but playing pop songs on top. I wanted to screen the lyrics but at Bar 10 that was not possible. In the end I think it was a good hindrance as the performance would not be better for that screening.

For this performance I was inspired by Marta Minujín's work. She is born in Buenos Aires the 30th of January, 1943. She moved to New York and became part of the feministic art wave that was going on in the 60's / 70's. I saw her in a documentary biography made about Charolee Shneemann and shown at the Gothenburg Biannual autumn 2013. I looked Marta up as I thought she stood out of the film with her spacial looks and behavior. She had a one sentence where she said about Charolee (they were standing side by side): “I know that I am a genius but she is too modest to say that she is the master genius”. I thought that sentence was a bit arrogant but really sincere at the same time and I wanted to see what she had done as I had never heard of her before.

What fascinated me with her work was her simple but rich performance titles like “The cock”, “Plastic events”, “Sweet obelisk” and “Reading the news”. In the performance “Reading the news” she lay on a floor in a gallery and wrapped her body in news paper. I could relate to that performance as I had done something similar recently on a show and tell evening of the Gothenburg biennial. For that happening original idea was to rap my body in plaster but I did not have any funding behind me so I went for a cheaper version and used paper mache. The paper I used to rap my body in was new paper and I did that with out knowing about Marta's performance.

When I saw the title of “Plastic events” and what Martha did in the performance “Reading the news” my mind drifted of to this glossy magazine that I bought in Ghent. If people read so strongly out of the action of woman putting a news paper on her body (when I did that I was oblivious to what I could be saying with that action but I got some interesting feed back from my audience), what would happen if It was a magazine made by the church and contained pictures of newly confirmed children, young girls. The idea of making a dress came after I had to put the performance together. It was the only thing that made sense to the progression from being naked until using the music video movements. I started tape the pictures together with white paint tape, in that way I could easily take that tape off with out ruin the pictures and take the dress apart when ever I like.

The performance was made out of my frustration towards the social standards held to the female body. As a woman you are not beautiful unless you are young with stiff and smooth skin. All attempts of trying to look like I am 10 years old are without success since my body is not a child’s body anymore, short as I am. What happen if I put images of these beauty on my body mix it with the pop songs that are telling me how my body should look and behave? Will others, the audiences, consider me, my body, beautiful? Can I somehow turn the cultural pedophilia to my advantage? I wanted to use my own nakedness, my own imperfect body, imperfect skin as the real body then put on the fiction, the dress where the young body is embraced.

Here you can find inks to the original performances on my video page (vimeo), pictures that were taken from the performances and my final exhibition (flick) and my official artistic website were you can find further information about me and my artistic works.

All the videos of the performances you can find on my [Vimeo page](#): (except White Walkers):



All the picture of the performances you can find on my [Flick page](#):



On my [artistic website](#) you can find information about the performances and my future works:



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