

Performance Art, Audiences and Ethics

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This jointly authored paper will explore the discomfort created by performance practice in terms of an ethical sacrifice; in sacrifice something is given up for a greater gain. The paper will discuss if comfort is sacrificed for the greater gain of the sensuous knowledge offered by performance works that may make the audience feel uncomfortable. In *Life in Fragments: Essays in Postmodern Morality*, Zygmunt Bauman described humans as fundamentally moral beings, which he distances from the notion of goodness. Rather than being connected to the debate about the essential goodness of humans he suggests that to be moral is to exercise one's freedom of authorship and/or actorship as a choice between good and evil.

Discomfort can be brought into the reception of performance practice that makes bodily fluids visual and tangible. Art practice that includes the release and transfer of bodily fluids produces anxieties, and raises questions of health and welfare, safety and conduct. This sees the individual experiences what Bataille called impotent horror as they negotiate the implied danger of the experience. This paper will make specific reference to Bartram's performance work and its relationship to the audience, which uses saliva and the impact of its displacement at its core.