

well contain elements of that life. On the other hand, they have traditionally been expected to devote their entire life to art, to put their life on the line. Ideally, the artist should make no distinction between life and work, business and leisure, as reflected in artist legends from Vasari's *Lives* to a recent Turner film (*Mr. Turner*, Mike Leigh, 2014). In the film's mythical view, Turner sacrifices everything for his art (from his family to his health) while at the same time exploiting every life event for his work. Artists are experts in drawing on life for their own ends, making them role models for the new economy.

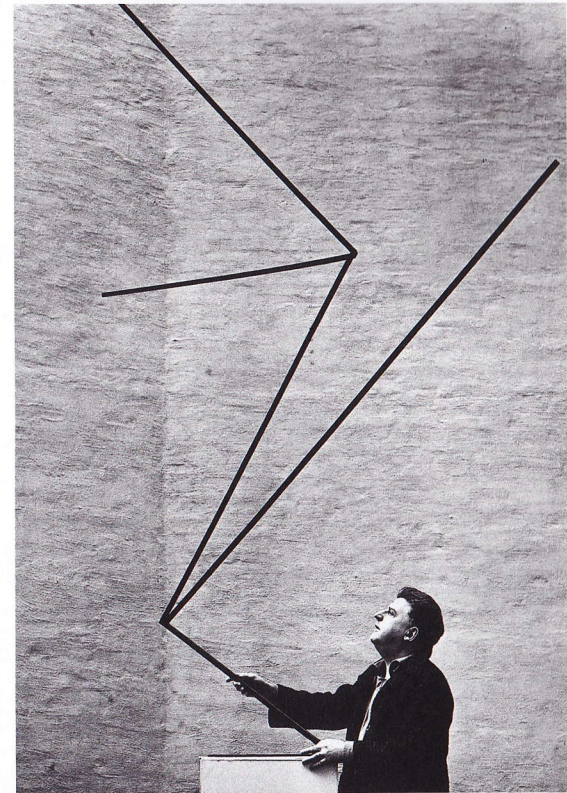
BODY POLITICS: JOHN COPLANS

If it is true that value creation now focuses increasingly on our physical and emotional lives, then the body becomes the centre of attention, especially as it forms the basis for all our activities. Compared with what Foucault called the "societies of discipline", however, bodies today are not so much condi-

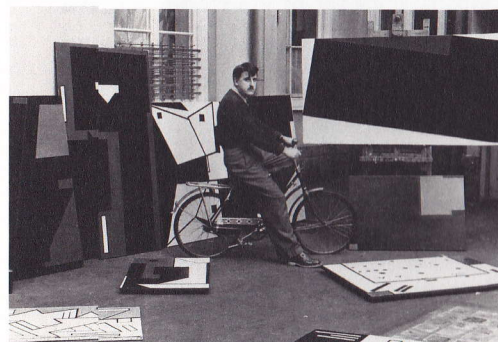
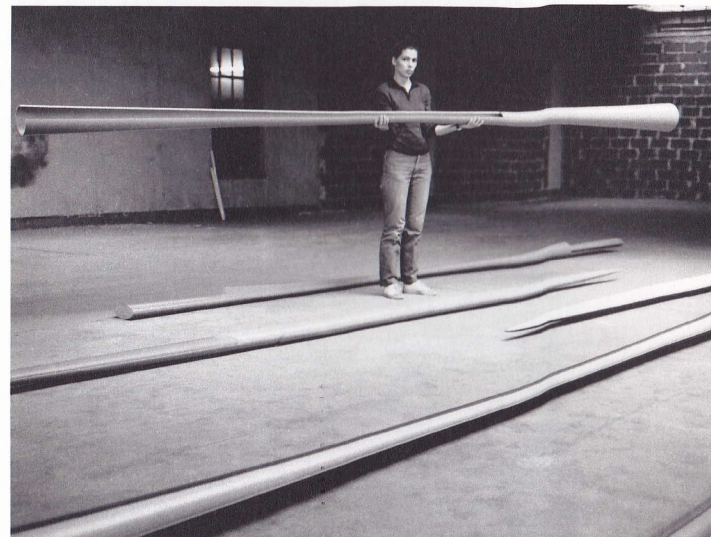
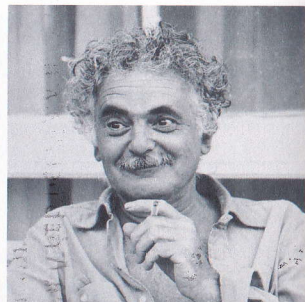
tioned or drilled as subjected to a biopolitical imperative to optimize themselves that is furthermore increasingly internalized by everybody. We cannot hope to free ourselves by working on our body, since this is precisely what the new technology of power which Foucault named "biopower" expects us to do. Therefore, unlike the 1960s and 1970s, when women artists in particular used their bodies as raw material in the sense of a drastic assertion of identity, artists today can no longer assume that it is possible to exert control over their "authentic" body. My body does not belong to me. Indeed, in a new economy, external constraints encroach on our body as we are constantly exhorted to keep it fit and healthy, an approach rendered all the more desirable by the potential pleasure derived from such care and pampering. At times it seems impossible to escape the ubiquitous dictates of yoga and fitness. Everyone seems to have their own particular kind of workout. Since the body has become the privileged terrain for generating value, artworks using the body can no longer claim to be emancipatory precisely. Whereas in the 1960s and 1970s, using

one's own body in art was considered to undermine art's commodification, the body has now long since become a commodity in its own right due to its role as a valuable resource in the new economy.

As mentioned above, the selection from the Jarla Partilager Collection on display here includes many works by artists who make extensive use of their bodies in manifold ways. They seem to have been chosen with a keen eye for the body's current condition and possibilities. One could claim that it is its changed status as a battlefield in the new economy that is at stake in this exhibition. Think only of John Coplans, whose photographs draw on his naked (male) body - indeed, they consist of it. By using his body as his material in the 1980s and 1990s, Coplans could be said to have paid homage to the approach taken by feminist artists like Valie Export or Carolee Schneemann who used their bodies in the 1970s, as mentioned already, as a way of asserting their identity. The fact that this approach involuntarily allowed for the traditional reduction of women to their bodies was, in a sense, the price that had to be paid



OLLE BAERTLING, LJLJEVALCHS KONSTHALL, STOCKHOLM, 1961.
COURTESY OF HARRY DITTMER.



ABOVE LEFT: BERND, HILLA & MAX BECHER, KALKÖFEN IN MEPPEL, NL 1968.
 ABOVE RIGHT: JOHN COPLANS, 1975.
 BELOW: STILL FROM FRANZ WEST, *PAR BLEU*, MAK, VIENNA, 2001. COURTESY OF PETER NOEVER.

ABOVE: ISA GENZKEN IN HER STUDIO, DÜSSELDORF, 1982. COURTESY OF GALERIE BUCHHOLZ, BERLIN/COLOGNE.
 BELOW LEFT: OLLE BAERTLING, 1961.
 BELOW RIGHT: THE UNILEVER SERIES, MIROSLAW BAŁKA IN FRONT OF *HOW IT IS*, TATE MODERN, 2009.



for this powerful gesture. In the case of Coplans, however, the absence of his head, which always remains invisible, already provides a distancing element: while his body is revealed to the viewer as "bare life" (Agamben), his personal identity is not exposed and carefully withheld. He delivers his flesh while retaining his personality - which remains protected. But there can be no doubt about this body's ascent to the status of a product. Although broken down into fragments, the various segments fit together into a picture object whose unity is maintained while being fragmented. In fact, Coplans seems to perform on his own body the kind of symbolic fragmenting and dismembering that has traditionally been applied to the female body, as in pictures by surrealist artists like Hans Bellmer or René Magritte. This might be read as an implicit expression of solidarity with the female muses of art - except that, firstly, it is Coplans himself who decided to fragment his own body and, secondly, he ultimately ensures that this body will actually be perceived as intact after all.

On closer inspection, these pictures seem to have escaped the grasp of the new economy with its attempts to shape and optimize bodies in accordance with its normative standards of health and beauty. Coplans exposes his hairy body that boldly defies today's duty to wax. His un-muscular stomach and his un-manicured nails, some of which appear to be dirty and cracked, also point to his indifference towards current norms of grooming and fitness. In some pictures, as if signalling his resistance to any attempt to reduce him to his body or to influence that body directly in any way, he turns his body away - as if not wishing to expose himself to the camera entirely, thus slipping through the fingers of discipline and optimization. One could say that in his works, Coplans affirms the possibility of an "authentic artist's body" against all odds, although what we perceive to be his body is of course highly mediated and staged. The depiction of his seemingly authentic body also benefits from a tradition that makes it much easier for the male body not to be coerced by normative ideals of beauty. The (heterosexual) man of his

generation is still allowed to have a flabby gut, and to show that gut, especially in the art world. As much as the fiction of an "authentic body" gets activated in Coplans' work we are constantly reminded of its highly mediated and staged character due to its fragmentation and due to its visual aesthetics. In the light of a new economy that wants all of us - body and soul - Coplans seems to deliver his body only seemingly or to a certain extent, withholding it simultaneously quite carefully.

LATENT AND EXPLICIT REFERENCES TO THE BODY: ISA GENZKEN, FRANZ WEST

Isa Genzken's *Violett-graues zweiteiliges Ellipsoid* (1978) refers to the body in a much more implicit way. This streamlined painted object is made on a scale far larger than the human body, while taking it as a point of orientation for its size nonetheless. It derives its scale from the human body but claims to go far beyond it at the same time. While it seems to loosely refer to body activities if only due to its canoe-shape, it