



Università
Ca' Foscari
Venezia

Master's Degree
In History of Arts and Conservation of Artistic
Heritage
Ordinamento D.M. 270/2004

Final Thesis

***A Manifesto for the XXI Century:
Julian Rosefeld's Reenactment
of a Modernist Genre***

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Academic Year

2020 / 2021

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Introduction

A sense of belatedness characterizes the aesthetic manifesto from its very beginning, where the authors reflect on the genre of the manifesto, implying that a genuine and original manifesto precedes the one authored and therefore is cited, repeated and perceived as part of the past where action could be enacted.

This is found in the characterization of the aesthetic manifesto, active in Marinetti's *'The Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism'* (1909). The futurist manifestoes aestheticized what was previously had been a tool for a political statement, creating an art form selected to erase the traditional understanding between creation and criticism, being set against the institutions and the past in itself. Therefore, anticipating the critical text that is found between theory and poetry, that occupies a space between the traditional modes and genres.¹ The self-reflective quality of the aesthetic manifesto emerges because it is an alteration or displacement of a genre that was previously a political speech act. As it will be discussed in chapter one, the manifesto was a printed declaration of the state that was used in both absolutist and democratic forms of government and became canonized as a genre of political agitation through Marx and Engels's *'Manifesto of the Communist Party'* (1848). The history of the manifesto genre is a history of rebellion that was in itself an appropriation of older uses of the manifesto genre. As the aesthetic manifesto assumed the characteristics and the rhetoric of the political manifesto, numerous manifestoes from Marx and Engels onwards relate to each other as a series of repetitions and displacements. Therefore, to write a manifesto means to reflect on the genre's structure and history which is characterized by self-awareness, critique and parody. Differences between the avant-garde and the neo-avant-garde manifestoes, between pre-WWII and post-WWII movements, are found in the different modes of displacement. As will be discussed in chapter two, to understand the manifesto genre one must take into account the operations of quotation, parody and distancing used by the movements in the last century in the manifesto genre. No original manifesto can be found but just different modes of expressing the belatedness inherited in the genre itself, from its very beginning in Marx and Engels's manifesto. Considering

¹ M. Perloff, *"Violence and Precision": The Manifesto as Art Form*, "Chicago Review", Vol. 34, No. 2, 1984, p. 66.

the classical form of the manifesto as part of the irreplaceable past, the act of rebellion and the pursuit of novelty in the manifesto form and in the act of founding movements is underlined by an awareness of being belated. As such, the historical avant-garde exhibits the adjective 'historical' because the past is considered as no longer continuous with the present moment of those who write a manifesto, and as such the manifesto assumes the characteristic of quoting past forms in a repetitive gesture throughout its history. This is found in both the avant-garde and the neo-avant-garde movements.

Just nine years after the publication of Marinetti's *The Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism* (1909), Tzara's self-reflective manifesto *'Dada Manifesto 1918'* (1918) confirms the critical awareness of the form of the manifesto. Tzara's manifesto looks back at the political manifesto whose conventions it aims to expose, demonstrating its retrospective nature. In order to create a zero-point in history, the manifesto instrumentalized language to pursue its efficacy, to create a revolutionary reverse in the present act and change the future in its present. A retrospective position that questions its subsequent performativity is found, functioning through the citational and reiterative practice. Manifestoes depend on the repetition of precious scripts to achieve their performativity and as such Tzara positions himself as being against the manifesto in principle and being against principles. Tzara's manifesto alternates between maintaining to be a manifesto and turning into a parody of one. As Puchner argues:

Far from being a classical, heroic, and historical manifesto, this manifesto presents itself as something grafted onto the manifesto form, which it obeys only for the purpose of subjecting it all the better to critical analysis and ridicule.²

Therefore, self-reflexivity and intermixture define the manifesto genre throughout history, as can be seen in the neo-avant-garde manifesto *'Fluxus Manifesto I'* (1963), which is not signed, not even by the presumed author Maciunas, but composed by the Fluxus movement anonymously. The manifesto does not correspond to the

² M. Puchner, *Manifesto = Theatre*, "Theatre Journal", Vol. 54, No. 3, 2002, p. 460.

standard features of the political manifesto genre as it is not signed by a coherent group but brings out another characteristic of the political speech act. The Fluxus members challenged the authority of Maciunas as a leader and the authoritative and controlling side of the manifesto genre comes forth, before becoming the chosen genre to act out a revolt, it was the instrument used by the heads of the state to make known their will to their subjects. Therefore, as the manifesto genre is utilized to break with the past in order to envision a new future acted out in the present moment, it still creates a new dogma to achieve its aims. This performativity is built on the efficacy of the speech act it utilizes, its rhetoric. The Fluxus members fought with the authoritative and dogmatic character of the manifesto genre, that as their name implies, could not be confined to a definable form. As such, this problem became part of their declarations and the '*Fluxus Manifesto I*' (1963) form consist, in half, of literally collaged definitions taken from a dictionary. The Fluxus movement followed the characterizing demands of the manifesto form (in a list or bullet form) but included them as definitions and quotations, keeping a distance from the original speech act. Between the three dictionary definitions, the movement inserted a list of commands that were handwritten, another characteristic of the manifesto genre. For Fluxus, they revolved around three commands: to purge, to promote, and to fuse and each command is related to the quoted definition that precedes it. The quoted definition and inserted commands are integrated with each other evoking the political speech act form. This interaction leads the quoted definitions to acquire more authority in respect to the commands, which seem more linked to quotations, questioning the authoritative practice of the manifestoes speech act and of the dictionary significance. As such, the '*Fluxus Manifesto I*' (1963) relies self-consciously on quotations and acquired authority, as does the aesthetic manifestoes since Marinetti.

The classical manifesto is then challenged with its intermixture quality, the theatre. The relation with theatre starts from its speech act that aims to turn words into action, as such Marx and Engels's '*Manifesto of the Communist Party*' (1848) has been read as a theatrical script because it is recognized as an example of dramatism. Marxism views history in dramatic terms and history progresses thanks to a crisis that is also a turning point that will lead to a resolution. Consequently, the manifesto is the tool

that induces change and is responsible for the final and dramatic revelation of the writer's truth. All manifestoes reflect on their own role before revealing and declaring their point of view. As such, the '*Fluxus Manifesto I*' (1963) was staged at an opening of the Festum Fluxorum Fluxus at the Dusseldorf Art Academy, where at the very beginning the curator of the show (Jean-Pierre Wilhelm) asked if a manifesto should be launched in the present day because the 'heroic' period of the manifesto has passed.³ From the beginning, the '*Fluxus Manifesto I*' (1963) presents itself as a belated manifesto, a manifesto that questions the genre itself through the manifesto form. As the manifesto is perceived as part of history it can no longer provoke change or rupture in the present moment and as such, its insecurity and self-reflexivity emerge even more distinctly.

Another form of displacement is seen in writing manifestoes retroactively and reversing their possible future by turning to the past. As for the collective of Danish filmmakers that launched the '*Dogme 95*' (1995) manifesto, written by von Trier and Vinterberg. The collective called for a return to the practices of the past, creating films without technology, displaying a sense of historical belatedness that recaptures the writers' self-awareness and critical output of the manifesto form. Thus, displaying distrust in the classical manifesto form and speech act. This produces a genre of reflection instead of action, grasping that the manifesto moment has come to an end. As the name of the collective states, a dogmatic form is needed to create a rupture in the present and change the future.

This sense of belatedness and self-reflexivity of the manifesto genre is explored by Julian Rosefeldt film installation *Manifesto* (2015). As the manifesto genre is inscribed in an exercise of a postmodern pastiche, the manifesto genre is investigated in its form and rhetorical speech act through the moving image. *Manifesto* is a manifesto of manifestoes that cites, transforms, deconstructs and recites almost sixty historical manifestoes divided into thirteen sequences that transfer this sense of belatedness in our present time. By collaging together the pre-WWII and post-WWII manifestoes the artist establishes their commonalities and their self-reflexive modality instead of constructing a rupture between manifesto-driven modernism and

³ *Fluxus Reader*, ed. K. Friedman, Chichester, Academy Editions, 1998, p. 3.

post-manifesto postmodernism since the practice of written manifestoes continues to this day. Rosefeldt decides to not emphasize the paradox of creating a rupture in the history of rupture that distinguishes the history of the manifesto genre but reflects through the manifestoes rhetoric, form and practice on the present time.

Transposing the historical manifestoes from their original context to that of a singular work of art, the speech act is freed from its original context and transferred into a new setting. In thirteen sequences original texts are collaged and transformed into poetic monologues presented and embodied by Cate Blanchett in twelve sequences. The work of art is a mixture of different interpretative gestures that revive the reference material in a textual and visual understanding. The practice of displacing and collaging the historical manifestoes text and composing them into a final piece perform a reversive arrangement. Thus, revealing the function of the words in the manifesto speech act: instrumentalizing words to ignite change, performing a call to action and a transformation of the possibility of action. As Rosefeldt simulates the rhetorical cadence of the historical manifestoes he uses irony, pastiche and irreverence to heighten «the dramatic spectacle of the manifestoes rhetorical power».⁴ The performative utterance of the monologue composed and collaged by Rosefeldt acknowledges the manifestoes essence of being a written artefact.

Repetition is invoked by the artist to assume the status of *Manifesto* as a manifesto, partaking and reiterating the rhetorical conventions of the manifesto form. As the performative utterance (the rhetoric) succeeds when identified as conforming with an ‘iterable model’, identified with and as a citation.⁵ Rosefeldt formalizes the historical manifestoes conventions and exposes the form’s aesthetic objectivity, but instead of aestheticizing a political speech act, it highlights the aesthetic into the political form. The effective ‘iterable model’ presumes a political context that implies its original model since the manifesto genre is a response to a politically and culturally urgent condition. Therefore, as the past ruptures are a product of the history of capitalism that has changed with the manifesto genre, Marxism contextualizes Rosefeldt’s view,

⁴ L. Lyon, *Transforming Manifestoes: A Second-Wave Problematic*, “The Yale Journal of Criticism”, New Haven, Vol. 5, Fasc. 1, 1991, p. 119.

⁵ J. Derrida, *Signature Event Context*, tr. eng. S. Weber and J. Mehlman, ed. by G. Graff, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1988, p. 18.

being considered the self-proliferating force between all historical manifestoes and the one most cited by the historical manifestoes themselves. As Rosefeldt states:

When the first Futurist manifesto was published on the front page of *Le Figaro* in 1909, it acted as a kind of an ignition, a spark, that infected a lot of artistic manifestos at the time. We are living in a moment that is, in a way, comparable to the tension felt between the wars. The world is upside down and people read in those manifestos a kind of call for action, or an anti-populist call.⁶

The artist decided to frame the historical movements manifestoes and sequences within the Marxist critique of capitalist society context. Therefore, viewers perceived *Manifesto* as dissenting from the capitalist and industrial values of production and progress, as a critique and personal view of the present day. Furthermore, repetition and the rhetorical historical manifestoes speech act is analyzed by Rosefeldt through a dissenting view of reality as an act of persuasion instead of the historical manifestoes frame of reference, the Marxist concept of revolution. To enable its interpretative approach in a postmodern understanding, Rosefeldt utilized dissent to change one's cultural sentiments with imagination, with an act that can raise consciousness instead of revolution which forces change with acts of coercion.

Manifesto attains a comparable immediacy in the repurposed environment depicted and Rosefeldt exposes the difference between novelty obtained by rupturing the past in the present moment and sustaining and submitting novelty. As *Manifesto* reflects on the various characteristics of the manifesto genre focusing on its rhetoric and form, Rosefeldt exposes the rhetorical conventions and practices reducing the form's historical urgency for change to a discourse of historical urgency in the present time. To understand Rosefeldt practice the first chapter reconstructs and defines the political speech act in its various characteristics from its origin to Marx and Engels and finally to the characterization of the genre to the aesthetic sphere, conveyed by Marinetti.

The second chapter explores the historical manifestoes traits and assumptions that Rosefeldt chose to reflect upon and its interpretation through the moving image,

⁶ L. Francis, *Julian Rosefeldt: An Artist's Manifesto*, "Port magazine", 15 November 2017.

context and characters in the thirteen sequences utilizing repetition and citation as a narrative to invoke the self-reflective nature of the manifesto genre. The present thesis explores a rendition of repetitions utilized by Rosefeldt by following Reyburn aesthetic theory, which he divides into mimetic theory, resentment and ritual.⁷ In *Manifesto*, Julian Rosefeldt not only examines the concerns and intentions that are so compelling and urgent they must be expressed in the form of a manifesto; he is also interested in the specific rhetoric of manifestos and how they create a ‘call to action’. Therefore, the artist decides to use repetition in its persuasive and interpretative form, indicating variations within its structural unity. Repetition as interpretation highlights that meaning can be reviewed and revisioned. Consequently, repetition is used as a rhetorical device as a confirmation and affirmation of what has already been communicated, signalling constants and consistencies rather than irregularities. Rosefeldt makes extensive use of the rhetorical method of repetition to focus on the aesthetic manifestoes obsession with innovation, its inherited dogmatic character, its performative power, its rejection of tradition and the past, its rebellious assumption and its doctrinaire and rigid arguments formed by the sacralized notion of art when speaking about it. As such, Rosefeldt invokes a critique of modernity and its belief in progress, confronting these notions with the world as the individual intends it, its reality. To do so, Rosefeldt has taken the concept of speech-act and decided to dramatize it. The artist does not seek to convince the viewer of anything in particular but would like to consider the formal language traits of the manifesto, its speech act. Therefore, the present thesis found different forms of repetitions in Rosefeldt’s practice and in the characterization and use of the script and the moving image. As such, the script is composed of existing material, and it is viewed as an original screenplay constructed from mostly quotations. Moreover, the image relies on homages to previous films (especially Michelangelo Antonioni and Stanley Kubrick), and works of art invoked by the moving images. Its originality resides in its interpretation of the movies cited and the film stills, where images are recycled and renewed. A third repetition can be found in the visual and dramatic rendition of Blanchett, as the primary presence and sole performer which plays twelve characters in the artwork.

⁷ D. Reyburn, *Repetitions repeatedly repeated: mimetic desire, resentment, and mimetic crisis in Julian Rosefeldt's Manifesto*, (2015). “Image and Text”, 33, 2019.

Rosefeldt focuses in particular on the action-oriented and authoritative gesture of the historical manifestoes in order to re-imagine and transfer the rhetoric to altered contexts. The discrepancy between image and text is illustrated by Rosefeldt in concentrating on the performative impression produced, losing the appellative context of the manifesto. A discrepancy illustrated in the inconsistency generated from the character's action and the contextual meaning of the texts is transferred into an interpretative gesture from the filmmaker. Through repetition, Rosefeldt adopts a rhetorical and interpretative look on the manifesto as a genre that is correlated to mimetic desire, a genre embedded in the rejection of mimesis represented in the manifestation of 'ressentiment'. Consequently, Rosefeldt reveals how the manifesto as a genre has become ritualized, and as repetition is related to 'ressentiment' in its assumption of an original hatred and envy that forms opposition against the other, a veiled characteristic that was repeated and ritualized by the historical aesthetic manifesto.

Rosefeldt uses parody, repetition, interpretation to speak about the contemporary while invoking the past as the aesthetic manifesto as an institutionalized text functions as mythology does, it does not explain or clarify the aims of the present moment but is driven by the desires that guide the artistic impulse, thus intentions are hidden, and meaning is concealed. The manifesto as a genre is found in what it opposes and rejects, usually without a reason or justification and not in its assertions. Therefore, novelty would not be asserted with the exclusion of the other, in order to assert the belief and authority of the manifesto writer. Modern art is built in accordance with the logic of contradiction, where the avant-garde artist requires mimesis, rivalry and 'ressentiment' to declare the 'new' and the 'now'. The manifesto as an artefact is one of the most perishable, launched to make a difference in transient circumstances. Art historians tend to regard everything created by the artist as sacred and must be treated with respect, the historical manifestoes writers hoped to become part of art history by making an impact in their present. Rosefeldt reminds us of the insecurity of such artists and how what is now sacred before was an attempt to survive and be recognized, challenging the viewer to consider the fundamental nature of the manifesto and their motivations in respect to the past and our present moment.

Therefore, the first chapter analyzes the manifesto genre in its definitions and characteristics to contextualize the historical manifestoes assumptions used and exposed by Rosefeldt in its manifesto composed of collaged historical manifestoes. As such, the first chapter utilized the notion of history, linguistic and speech act theory to characterize and define the manifesto genre in its political and esthetic configuration. The second chapter utilizes aesthetics and media theory to define Rosefeldt's *Manifesto* as a filmic re-enactment of the historical manifestoes, as a collaborative project that recontextualizes the existing material, echoing modernism as a contemporary urgency and persistence to pursue the historical manifestoes gestures. Gestures that are analyzed as repetitions in order to present the past in the present and question the rhetoric and assumption derived by the political speech act in understanding how the artist deviates or assumes these forms in the work of art. As such, Rosefeldt makes use of use of «scene, performance, staging, and spectacle, and draws our attention to nothing less than the fluidity and contingency»⁸ of the rhetorical concepts of the aesthetic manifesto to transfer his ideas of aestheticism, and what surfaces is a different attitude towards the use of the manifesto genre and the sense of belatedness embedded in the practice of composing a manifesto. *Manifesto* was made to compare and contrast the end product with the source material so that the vision of the artist could come forward. All the practices assumed by Rosefeldt, destabilize expectations in order to move beyond a typical practice by demolishing familiar structures and creating new ones. Rosefeldt work questions whether these manifestoes, composed by artists with certainty and delivered as statements, have survived the passage of time.

⁸ *Aesthetic Theory*, eds. by D. Mersch, S. Sasse and S. Zanetti, Zurich, Diaphanes, 2019, p. 183.

Chapter 1: The manifesto

1.1 Defining the genre

The manifesto is a legitimized genre that stands alone, thanks to many scholars who studied its history and its general features. Nevertheless, a certain confusion and difficulty transpire when one tries to define this genre. This is due to the fact, that the manifesto is a plural and open form that relates to various types of texts. It is considered the principal characteristic by Claude Abastado, identifying the manifesto as versatile, that comes in different shapes and forms.⁹ Through this characteristic, a relationship with various families of texts is implied: political writing, polemical discourse, or theoretical writing. Thus, the genre is identified by being associated with types of discourse and it is differentiated from other genres (pamphlet, preface, proclamation, poem, etc.).

Defining a genre implicates defining and organizing various types of texts that relate to social actions, which make these texts rhetorically possible. The manifesto has unstable formal elements, fluid in the making, which opens up the genre to various interpretations and uses. This instability contributed to the social image of the manifesto as being rebellious, unable to stay in place when compared to other texts which operate under constraints, usually controlled by institutions or governments. These fluid formal elements have been used to escape from the various types of constraints by adapting the genre to the conditions that the local's writer rhetoric demands. Thus, the genre becomes a function that is always subject to modification, rather than a stable form.¹⁰

The classification of a text as a manifesto depends upon the pragmatic results with a certain cultural field. The relation with the cultural field emphasizes the action implicit in the manifesto, it doesn't have to call for change explicitly, as long as the consequences after the release of the manifesto are evident in the effect it causes in the cultural field.

⁹ C. Abastado, *Introduction à l'analyse des manifestes*, "Littérature", vol. 39, No. 3–11, 1980, cit in: G. Yanoshevsky, *Three Decades of Writing on Manifesto: The Making of a Genre*, "Poetics Today", Vol. 30, No. 2, 2009, p. 261.

¹⁰ S. R. Amidon, *Manifestoes: A Study in Genre*, Doctoral dissertation, University of Rhode Island, 2003, p. 27.

The manifesto genre is well suited to revolutionary purposes, as such Winkiel associates manifestoes with activist texts that want to generate action¹¹ and Yanoshevsky sees the genre as related to the programmatic text that flourishes in times of crisis and change.¹²

Impatient, eager, and desperately portrayed towards action, the genre wants to move beyond language and towards change, revolution. Revealing its own self-critique, dissatisfaction with the world, it shouts stop talking and start acting. For this reason, it produces a language of its own, permeated with the attributes of action, distinguished in its conciseness. The polemical discourse accentuates its violent nature, in taking a stance and in producing an evident commanding relationship between the producer and the audience. It calls the reader into active participation, as required by the discourse in its incisiveness. In aspiring to change the world through words, the producer claims knowledge - rather than developing it - because it aims to use it as part of the revolution. Claiming knowledge as a discovery empowers its programmatic discourse.

The manifesto becomes the act itself, as a call to action, its textuality looks beyond the boundaries of the text, trying to reach the practice in itself and close the gap between writing and life. The genre, lies between theory and practice, and for this reason, it is difficult to define but it is able to adapt to various social and cultural domains. Its essence is illusory: «The manifesto does not exist as an absolute».¹³ This elusiveness does not mean that features and definitions cannot be found, but simply that one must take into account this intrinsic quality when talking about the manifesto. As such, one may consider the manifesto, in mode and form, as an incitement to a way of thought rather than a simplified definition. This entails an analysis that takes into consideration the grouping of the manifesto genre around various features, from similarities as subject matter, structural-based linguistic form, motivational-based intent of the speaker/writer, and the emergence and history of the genre. A more inclusive examination of the form starts with a comprehensive definition given by Amidon:

¹¹ L. Winkiel, *Modernism, race, and manifestos*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 12.

¹² G. Yanoshevsky, *Three Decades of Writing on Manifesto: The Making of a Genre*, "Poetics Today", Vol. 30, No. 2, 2009, p. 282.

¹³ L. Somigli, *Legitimizing the Artist: Manifesto Writing and European Modernism 1885-1915*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2003, p. 23.

by moving beyond the listing of family features into a simpler definition of *manifestoes as textual elaborations of political or aesthetic beliefs which challenge existing, and attempt to constitute new religious, political, or artistic institutions and movements* [author's cursive].¹⁴

1.1.1 The emergence and history of the genre

The first occurrence of the word 'manifesto' is traced to the Seventeenth century, designating a declaration of the will of a sovereign. Its purpose was to communicate to the people the intentions and laws authored by those in power. The dictionary defines the term as:

A public declaration by a sovereign prince or state, or by an individual or body of individuals whose proceedings are of public importance, making known past actions and explaining the motives for actions announced as forthcoming.¹⁵

Since the definition concerns the emergence of the genre, it does not take into consideration the modernist period and thus lacks to identify the variations brought forward by the period in question.

Instead, the OED etymology of 'manifesto' has more correlations with the modernist period. The word derives from 'manus' (hand) and 'festus' (cf. infestus, dangerous) and the primary meaning is hostile hand, this can be seen in relation to the feature associated with the writer's impatient desire to alter history with words. This evidential quality is correlated to its proclivity to use words as weapons. The writer, having confidence in its message, implicates the threat of violence by refusing to accommodate differences of opinion it acquires an aggressive militant stance. This uncovers the association between the manifesto genre and the activist text, both pursuing pressing, and prompt action. Moreover, 'manus' refers to a handcrafted marker for the important event it aspires to represent. The origin of the word 'manifesto' refers to the act of making visible, derived from the Latin verb 'manifestare'. This refers to the eye-visual rhetoric that makes evident to the eye

¹⁴ S. R. Amidon, *Manifestoes: A Study in Genre*, Doctoral dissertation, University of Rhode Island, 2003, p. 28.

¹⁵ *The Oxford universal dictionary on historical principles* (1937), eds. by W. Little, H. W. Fowler, J. Coulson, C. T. Onions and J. A. H. Murray, III ed, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1955, cit in: *Manifesto: a century of isms*, ed. by M. A. Caws, Lincoln and London, University of Nebraska Press, 2001, p. xix.

what was not yet brought forward, something that is manifest is easy to perceive and to recognize. As such, the manifesto is a statement in which someone makes their intentions or views easy to ascertain. Thus, the manifesto is a public and published enunciation wrapped in aggression and rage that sews together diverse discourses (religion, history, war) and persuasive rhetoric. As Lyon illustrates:

the term ‘manifesto’ itself signifies the form and the passional state (usually, frustration or disappointment or aggression) that precedes or engenders the manifesto text.¹⁶

Concerning the history’s use of the word ‘manifesto’, it begins with its participation in absolutist and democratic forms of government. Malleable by both, the manifesto emerges from statist institutions and their counterpart, the demos.¹⁷

Historically, the manifesto signifies different political speech acts: (1) emerging in the Sixteenth century as a form for disproving character assaults in the university community in Italy and for military purposes and religious proofs. (2) In the middle of the Seventeenth Century, it was used among anti-royal forces in England, its discourse was mainly martial, and the form was used for military ends. During the French revolution, it was used for asserting religious proof and for anti-statist dissent.¹⁸

The first use in the title of a document takes shape in the service of the state, in Milton's Manifesto of the Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, Ireland, and composed in Latin for Cromwell in 1655.¹⁹ This form of communication continues in the Twentieth century, where Emperor Franz Joseph declared World War I through a text called ‘To My Peoples’ that was referred to as ‘Manifest’.²⁰

¹⁶ L. Lyon, *Transforming Manifestoes: A Second-Wave Problematic*, “The Yale Journal of Criticism”, New Haven, Vol. 5, Fasc. 1, 1991, p. 103.

¹⁷ L. Winkiel, *Modernism, race, and manifestos*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 11.

¹⁸ Historical political speech acts retrieved from: L. Lyon, *Transforming Manifestoes: A Second-Wave Problematic*, “The Yale Journal of Criticism”, New Haven, Vol. 5, Fasc. 1, 1991, p. 103 and S. R. Amidon, *Manifestoes: A Study in Genre*, Doctoral dissertation, University of Rhode Island, 2003, p. 74.

¹⁹ *Ivi*.

²⁰ M. Puchner, *Poetry of the revolution: Marx manifestos, and the avant-gardes* (2005), Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2006, p. 12.

Everything starts with the political manifesto, it becomes part of the crucial elements of the public sphere, affirming identity. As the symbol of political conflict, it emerges at such points of linguistic and cultural discord challenging the authoritative narrative which prevents society from becoming its best self, according to the writer. The genre of the manifesto and its effects are permanently linked to the public sphere, incessantly recording the contradictions that arise within modern political life. As Lyon indicates:

To write a manifesto is to participate symbolically in a history of struggle against dominant forces; it is to link one's voice to the countless voices of previous revolutionary conflicts.²¹

As such, the primary dictionary definition of 'manifesto' implies a prominence of rational communication, but the root sense suggests otherwise: its denoting nature urges the unmediated here and now, with no interpretation needed.

Its time is now, creating the new by referencing itself. This entails that its pronouncements become self-generative by adopting a language that wants to elevate its statements out of the historical continuity and the constructs of tradition. It takes the present moment to be able to intrude in history. To do so, the manifesto places itself in the middle of what will happen and what has been done, between the occurred and the potential. It defines a moment of disruption as a radical division, marking the moment. In practice:

the manifesto generally proclaims what it wants to oppose, to leave, to defend, to change. Its oppositional tone is constructed of *againstness* [author's cursive] and generally in a spirit of a one time only moment.²²

The aim is to question the coherence of the metanarratives given out by the authority it opposes. Manifestoes give voice or in the least proclaim one's determination to

²¹ J. Lyon, *Manifestoes: Provocations of the Modern*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1999, p. 4, cit in: Yanoshevsky, *Three Decades of Writing on Manifesto: The Making of a Genre*, "Poetics Today", Vol. 30, No. 2, 2009, p. 268.

²² *Manifesto: a century of isms*, ed. by M. A. Caws, Lincoln and London, University of Nebraska Press, 2001, p. xxiii.

speak from a point of view that feels marginalized, in disagreement with an experience that is not accommodated in society.

The genre gives the opportunity to affirm one's presence, to reach out and carve out a space for the group it seeks to establish.

1.1.2 Rhetorical analysis

The history of the genre's use in the struggle for cultural authority is crucial for a rhetorical analysis that aims to define and group features on the manifesto. To start an assessment of the rhetorical form it must be indicated that it is delimited by a formalist analysis. A formalist practice:

undertakes to and to evaluate speaking-positions in rhetorical practices—where 'speaking-positions' are not (transcendentally) inherent to particular forms but are rather constituted through discursive political struggles among disparately constructed claimants to cultural authority.²³

The manifesto is not considered as an independent, inclusive, and pre-existent form since its conventions have resisted discursive and narrative transformations. This stand occurred to facilitate the consolidation of the public, instead of mediating with it. Taking into consideration the history of the circumstances of the use of the manifesto and the conventions that structure its making, an understanding of its meaning can come forward. As Lyon proposes, the manifesto must be understood considering its historical use in the public sphere as a form of political militancy.²⁴ The manifesto is characterized by the need to position itself in opposition to the authority it despises and to reflect its manifest quality of being comprehended by the dominant culture. This characterizes its relationship with sovereignty, and it can only be achieved through rhetorical strategies, specific to the genre.

It must be stated that many of the strategies used depend upon the context in which the manifesto is employed. The genre by its very nature <<is changeable, flexible, and

²³ L. Lyon, *Transforming Manifestoes: A Second-Wave Problematic*, "The Yale Journal of Criticism", New Haven, Vol. 5, Fasc. 1, 1991, p. 101.

²⁴ L. Lyon, *Transforming Manifestoes: A Second-Wave Problematic*, "The Yale Journal of Criticism", New Haven, Vol. 5, Fasc. 1, 1991, p. 101.

plastic»²⁵ making it possible for the writer to manipulate the manifesto for rhetorical purposes. As a cultural means of communication that occurs across time and space it enters reality through the event it aspires to produce in its cultural domain. Thus, the manifesto encompasses a dialectical tension between unifying forces of convention and diverging pursues for difference.²⁶

The rhetorical strategies function on three types of discourse, that depend upon authority: history, logic, and prophecy. The manifesto interchanges them to justify the revised historical perspectives, new ranks of power, and the use of metaphors that narrativize the ideology proposed.

To elaborate a structural description, the elements of the rhetoric can be isolated and described as discursive strategies that serve the polemical and antagonistic function of the genre. These elements embody the pragmatic function as an essential characteristic, but must not limit the understanding of the genre.

The linguistic metaphor ‘to make a statement, defines in the essence the act of writing a manifesto. To maintain a definition of the genre open and not bound to a formalist practice, it must be considered keeping in mind the relationship it establishes with its audience. What is revealed to the eye must be concerned with its readers since the manifesto is established and functions through the rhetorical triangle: text, reader, and writer.

The manifesto’s language is exceedingly rhetorical and can be viewed as manipulative, for this reason, it is associated with programmatic discourse. It is considered as a variant of polemical discourse because: (1) it asserts and defends a thesis, (2) as required by the discourse type it is concise in its form, (3) it calls the reader into active participation: taking a stance, accepting a thesis, or voicing one’s agreement, (4) it aims to validate a speaker on behalf of a group or movement.²⁷

As such, the manifesto is a text that produces a violent position and produces a glaring dominant relationship between writer and audience. Intending to discipline rage as it creates its audience, the formal layer holds an unexpected pair: straightforward rage and utopian social intentions.

²⁵ S. R. Amidon, *Manifestoes: A Study in Genre*, Doctoral dissertation, University of Rhode Island, 2003, p. 11.

²⁶ *Ivi.*

²⁷ Yanoshevsky, *Three Decades of Writing on Manifesto: The Making of a Genre*, “Poetics Today”, Vol. 30, No. 2, 2009, pp. 264, 275.

These rhetorical tensions make the manifesto function and are recognized by the public as unquestionable in their discursive blatantness, «manifestoes are taken to mean what they say».²⁸

Because of the importance of such features, Winkiel emphasizes that:

These taxonomic categories, however, are merely heuristic devices. The formal features of manifestos change: historical conditions shift and produce new generic configurations.²⁹

In the rhetorical domain, a formal feature is composed of micro and macro elements. The microelements belong to the model of *elecutio* or style. Macro elements are understood as motifs or *topoi* and are situated to the model of *inventio* or *dispositio*.³⁰

Generically, the manifesto contains the following defining features³¹:

1. use of the present tense. Suited to the manifesto's rhetorical strategy when speaking of the present and future.
2. use of pronominal configurations as 'we'. By speaking directly to its reader it aspires to organize an oppositional collective.
3. striving to break with the past it details a concentrated, rational, and demanding chronicle history of the hardship that led to the moment of rupture, attempting to raise consciousness in the reader.
4. it tends to historicize a specific moment of crisis, drawing attention to its present moment to generate a different future. It outlines a program of action that emphasizes the symptoms of a system that is viewed as unstable or in a crisis.
5. the program is enumerated (for clarity and brevity) with elements in a list or bullet form. Those elements can be an enumeration of demands, grievances, or proposals that politicizes the oppression it feels from the authority it opposes.

²⁸ L. Lyon, *Transforming Manifestoes: A Second-Wave Problematic*, "The Yale Journal of Criticism", New Haven, Vol. 5, Fasc. 1, 1991, p. 101.

²⁹ L. Winkiel, *Modernism, race, and manifestos*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 12.

³⁰ Formal feature definition retrieved from: S. R. Amidon, *Manifestoes: A Study in Genre*, Doctoral dissertation, University of Rhode Island, 2003, p. 52.

³¹ Defining features retrieved from: *Manifesto: a century of isms*, ed. by M. A. Caws, Lincoln and London, University of Nebraska Press, 2001, p. xxvi; L. Lyon, *Transforming Manifestoes: A Second-Wave Problematic*, "The Yale Journal of Criticism", New Haven, Vol. 5, Fasc. 1, 1991, p. 102; Yanoshevsky, *Three Decades of Writing on Manifesto: The Making of a Genre*, "Poetics Today", Vol. 30, No. 2, 2009, p. 275 and L. Winkiel, *Modernism, race, and manifestos*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 12.

6. The content and the form strive to break with the literary conventions by adopting a concise, declarative style and revolutionary tone that challenges the authority.

Manifestos intertwine social theory, political acts, and poetic expression taking on many styles that reflect the personality of the author or group. As a self-reflective and intermixture genre throughout history, manipulating the public view defines the text as a document of an ideology, prepared to convince and convert. The stance may be institutional or individual and independent.

The general rhetorical features can be analyzed further for a better understanding of the manifesto genre.

'We': the pronoun of manipulation

As a discourse strategy, the writer uses the first-person plural 'we' to address the reader.³² It mainly poses a 'we', explicitly or implicitly, in opposition to a 'they'. These terms are built intentionally separate, inviting the reader to the side of the righteous. The tone is set towards a future made of 'we'. Thus, instructing the reader how to respond to its surroundings, building the manifesto's state for reception. To some extent, it claims its audience by creating a model one. The function of the distinctive pronoun is to perform as insertion of the audience it requires, acquiring its hold on the audience by constructing a descriptive remark that implies a linguistic contract.

The descriptive remark is a statement that positions the reader as the knower of the topic, as such the reader can agree or disapprove with the writer. With disagreement, the reader becomes the disputed 'you' which the discourse is directed. Instead, those who agree, embrace the 'we' as part of their acceptance. The manifesto bestows a space in ideology by authorizing these speaking and subject positions.

Furthermore, plural pronouns are evasive frameworks, perfect for manipulating the reader. Through interpellation, 'we' takes over the position of the speaker it manufactures, suggesting an agreement in the group.

³² Discourse strategy 'we' retrieved from: L. Somigli, *Legitimizing the Artist: Manifesto Writing and European Modernism 1885-1915*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2003, p. 21.; *Manifesto: a century of isms*, ed. by M. A. Caws, Lincoln and London, University of Nebraska Press, 2001, pp. xx-xxiii.; and L. Lyon, *Transforming Manifestoes: A Second-Wave Problematic*, "The Yale Journal of Criticism", New Haven, Vol. 5, Fasc. 1, 1991, pp. 104-05.

This discursive strategy is used not simply to influence the reader, but is also used for other beneficial factors. Firstly, the multiplicity of the 'we' establishes the writer as a self-created fiction, set against or over the story told in the subject of the text. As such, the pronoun is given power by this indeterminacy. Secondly, as undetermined it proposes and provides participation, towards its appealed subjects in a temporary group, relating with the provocative power of being part of the overall thought that distinguishes the masses. Even though the larger part of the group is uncountable and unaccountable. Finally, the manifesto uses a public sphere discourse to employ power for the writer that speaks for the masses and a reader that becomes an audience because of the public sphere's activity of deliberation and debate. The reader decides for him/herself to be part of the story the manifesto proposes, but he/she is not aware of the rhetoric use the manifesto proposes to make him/her become part of the audience. The discourse of universality which characterizes political rhetoric brings to light the complexity of the theoretical issues hoisted by the mutability of the genre. The manifesto reminds us of the exclusions and delays experienced by marginalized groups and makes space for these voices to be heard.

Redeeming the past through action

Two of the manifesto's general rhetorical features are: being always opposed to something, particular or general, and striving to form a community of like-minded individuals. The subject in the opposition has no historical trend, but commonalities can be found (for example the subject of aesthetics as a debate at the beginning of the Twentieth century). As to whom it is opposed, being an act based on 'demesure', it aims to go beyond what is conceived as proper and sane. As such it has to embody an excessive self-assurance to advance its requests. The institutional function of the manifesto is distinguished through the imposition and opposition stance taken in the manifesto. Imposing one's view represents groups in power and opposing against authority in power represents groups that feel marginalized in the public sphere. As such, a relation with the institution is certain because:

It is a question of striking a blow, of fulfilling/invalidating an explicit or implicit contract with the partner/adversary, of strengthening/displacing the law, eventually to control/displace the site of the word of the other.³³

The opposition of the manifesto points out its defining function of being an indication of an institutional crisis. It suggests the presence in society of more discourses that compete for cultural dominance. Furthermore, the text is classified as a manifesto when it denotes a rupture extended to a certain cultural field, whether foregrounded or not. Creating and assessing a break with history outlines and implements change. Thus, it must be acknowledged that manifestos are not merely symptoms and indicators of social formations - superstructures - but that they are also moments of actual or attempts of intervention.

Manifestoes articulate a political unconscious that the writer aims to bring out and reveal to the reader. This inclination for openness defines its creative practice that articulates what was not yet brought to light. This manifest quality comes about because language finds itself divided from the world, making reality not immediately accessible, due to «a system built on differences and deferrals rather than on identities».³⁴

In Winkiel's perspective,³⁵ the genre achieves such a creative practice by remodeling the power relations, communities, and history through a sense of vision in its 'structure of feeling'. This feeling alludes to how people at different key moments are called to decide whether to repeat the past or change it. The practice indicates a visible and material force of writing that articulates and offers a cultural ideology, depending on the creativity of the enunciation of the emotional lived experience of the group.

As a rebellious genre, set against the controlling authority, the action implied guides the manifesto to an interest in the efficacy of its speech acts. Leaning towards the accomplishment of the goal it intends to achieve through action, creates a zero point

³³ J. Demers, and L. McMurray, *L'enjeu du manifeste/Le manifeste en jeu*, Québec, Préambule, 1986, p. 53 cit in: L. Somigli, *Legitimizing the Artist: Manifesto Writing and European Modernism 1885-1915*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2003, p. 28.

³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 7.

³⁵ L. Winkiel, *Modernism, race, and manifestos*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 42.

in history, revoking past revolutions. What was before becomes the preparation towards this point that is filled with what will come. The rebellious act in the present is the begging of a new outcome. The point of departure becomes its rupture with history. Based on the efficacy of speech acts, it creates a new credo while seeking to break with the status quo. Thus, the manifesto becomes the act in itself. A textual practice of attacking and opposing the authority, raising consciousness in the reader that the revolution was supposed to be fought against ‘them’. The manifesto becomes a call to action, the tool to achieve the writer’s ideological goals.

As a consequence, the writer’s battle with a particular temporality of modernity, made of rupture and emergence that is always entangled with the past, never being able to abandon it for good. Using earlier texts as inspiration or models for their writing of manifestoes, writers diverge from them because of the «rhetorical dynamics of their own local writing conditions».³⁶ The genre, calls on the history of other manifestoes, the act itself is a declaration of the writer’s participation in a history of conflict against the authority. The steadiness of the signifying form is determined by the form and the rhetoric used, which was established long before its popular use in revolutions and the public sphere. Thus, the use of citation increased in the manifesto, due to the consciousness of temporality that the act of writing a manifesto imposes on the writer.

The historical conditions of the text and its recognition from the public imply a shift in markers. This is the reason why many manifestoes are called as such retroactively. Blurry boundaries among a variety of types of texts and the establishment of the genre made retroactivity possible.

Marking grievances to overturn the past and remake history

Rhetorical strategies function by positioning the manifesto against the dominant culture. Depending on the three types of discourses: history, logic, and prophecy, the genre alternates them to legitimize its altered historical point of view. These revised cultural positions submit a history that consolidates the group’s grievances and struggles. This history functions as a myth by creating a duplicate of rupture in the dominant view of history. The manifesto revokes time and reconstructs history.

³⁶ S. R. Amidon, *Manifestoes: A Study in Genre*, Doctoral dissertation, University of Rhode Island, 2003, p. 27.

The elaboration of grievances that the writers identify with the authority in power is a formal feature and a rhetorical necessity of the message conveyed by the form. These elaborations come from, what Laclau calls, dislocation.³⁷ A dislocation is located within the discourse and arises when the subject is troubled by a conflicting inconsistency in ideology. The subject is established out of a structural displacement that creates the trauma. The more this dislocation occurs, the more the response becomes exemplified, creating a formative repetition.

Similarly, the content and form strive to break with literary conventions. Since they both contribute to the rhetoric field they are not treated as in opposition. The form of the manifesto creates its meaning and depending on the time period the writer can focus on one or the other while contributing to both.

1.2 A broken narrative: Modernism as rupture

One of the more extensive claims is that:

the manifesto form has much to teach us about the problems of modernity³⁸

The manifesto announces modernity and for Somigli³⁹ it encompasses a form of dialogue and legitimization of the writer's role at a moment in time of great social and cultural mutation: European modernism (1885–1915). The manifesto, with its various attestors and collective demands, can be indicated as the realization of modernism since it claims to have severed its relation to the past. «[M]odernism's self-authorizing and self-canonizing ambitions»⁴⁰ declare its break with the Victorian past and with its conventions, opening upon the space to the modern. To be modern becomes a new dimension that carries out two ambiguous determined

³⁷ E. Laclau, *Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*, London, Verso, 1990, cit in: *Ibid*, p. 19.

³⁸ J. Lyon, *Manifestoes: Provocations of the Modern*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1999, p. 2, cit in: Yanoshevsky, *Three Decades of Writing on Manifesto: The Making of a Genre*, "Poetics Today", Vol. 30, No. 2, 2009, p. 260.

³⁹ L. Somigli, *Legitimizing the Artist: Manifesto Writing and European Modernism 1885-1915*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2003, p. 3.

⁴⁰ M. Puchner, *Poetry of the revolution: Marx manifestos, and the avant-gardes* (2005), Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2006, p. 5.

notions: it has to be accepted in all its aspects without questioning it, and simultaneously, is a predetermined state in which the human being is placed.

Being modern is from the start a state pushed forward towards a utopian future envisioned by the ideologies of modernity. Stabilized by a sense of nostalgia, it perceives what has been destroyed and crushed by 'progress' as taken away, leaving no place for it in the narrative of modernity. What has been contained not only past approaches of existence, but also past needs and desires, and they must be abandoned for good. A feeling of longing and retrospection towards a moment they missed is established in the modernist manifesto, the present can be changed for a different future, but what has been is lost forever. The potential for revolution is given by the violence incorporated in the rhetoric of the manifesto, energizing the writer for the future. Instead, the present is outlined by a culture of rupture and alienation that consolidates the social and cultural experiences restrained and concealed by the emergence of modernity's narratives.

Thus, the manifesto questions the present moment to reevaluate the past and proposes new assumptions of the future. It does not simply reflect on the past and the future, but it dictates urgent action to transform its surroundings in line with this temporal reassessment.

[T]he manifesto gives expression to a particular experience of modernity at a certain moment and location that includes the demand to realize a novel future through action in the present.⁴¹

Making evident the strain to assert and define the modern, the manifesto reveals the marginalized groups and ideologies in its occluded history, shaping the very notion of modernism. This understanding came forward in conjunction with imperialism. Its perception in the metropolitan domain came about from the cities that the writers experienced. The city presented itself as a concentration of wealth and power and it allowed opportunities to interact with a broader variety of cultures. This unlikely combination generated a sense of peculiarity and distance, detachment and

⁴¹ L. Winkiel, *Modernism, race, and manifestos*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 25.

dissimilarity. Hence, the formal examination of modernism came forward, one that defines and views its community through its medium and practices.

The city may have created unease, but it also allowed finding like-minded individuals in small-scale groups in a new and complex society.

Manifestoes indicate a crisis in modernity's narrative of progress and the temporal dimensions that this narrative shapes. Interrupting the linear development of history, they present a suitable structure to reimagine modernism. Taking into consideration the formation of its community and the historical organization in its present moment. The formation of the modernist community is defined in contrast or inclusion of varied groups. In both cases, the formation occurs in response to an international crisis of imperialism in which boundaries become unstable and unpredictable. The competing of community formations is made relevant by the manifestoes practice to change history and revise national myths.

The revised temporality that the narrative shapes, produced a discontinuity in how history was perceived, offering a methodological inclination to establish that the manifesto as a modernist text: (1) establishes the present as the moment that rethinks history and historical activity, (2) presents marginalized groups through the structure of feeling outlined in belonging to a specific group, (3) different positions within modernity are expressed giving possibilities and other alternatives of modernism. Thus, the manifesto reveals the irregular development of modernity worldwide, moving across societies and ideas.

The history of manifestoes interventions, a historical narrative soaked in marginalization and oppression, provides another way of approaching modernity's narrative of progress, that assures liberty and equality for those who want it.

The time is now

As the manifesto kept on being utilized and needed, the very notion of modernization should be reconsidered. Modernization is not a single development or period that gave rise to a historically bounded form of modernism. Rather, it should be thought of as differentiated, englobing different waves of modernization, each bringing its own set of tools and ideas.

Considered as features of modernism, the manifesto's rupture is understood through a Eurocentric notion of history, and the advancement of history is geared forward, increasingly improving. Manifestoes writers attempt to go beyond history. The progressive notion of history is revised by the modernist themselves, attempting to go against the conception of history as a continuous unfolding of a coherent structure of world history. To do so, writers establish themselves against the past and refuse any form of historical understanding. Thus, employing Foucault's description of discontinuous history⁴², the manifesto takes the form of an event that adjusts the structure through which history is depicted. By interrupting the constant increase of knowledge it aims to disrupt its gradual growth and forces it to move into a new time, diving history from its pragmatic origin and motivation.

In interrupting historical narratives, modernists sought to reconceptualize modernity and its relation to the past.⁴³

An understanding of the mechanism structuring the retrieval of alternative modernism is given by the modernist cultural critic and philosopher W. Benjamin⁴⁴, that critiques history from within a European framework. Benjamin's historical materialism was developed to critique the uniform and insubstantial time of rationalized societies and their perception of history as progress. 'Historicism', as determined by the author, takes away the attention from the historical present because it diminishes history to a useful current that effortlessly develops from the primitive to the modern, from barbarism to civilization. As it flows effortlessly forward, this narrative imitates the past and enables the propagation of prevailing power structures and beliefs. As such, the historian's duty is to understand the mutual temporal calamity of past and present that marks modernity's crisis. Therefore, modernity is understood by Benjamin as a whole of the present moment, an outcome of the past that is being used as a tool by those in authority. The account of the present disposition is established by the victors of the past, composing history for

⁴² M. Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, tr. eng. by A. M. Sheridan Smith, New York, Pantheon Books, 1972, p. 4.

⁴³ L. Winkiel, *Modernism, race, and manifestos*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 8.

⁴⁴ "Theses on the philosophy of history" in W. Benjamin, *Illuminations* (1955), ed. by H. Arendt, tr. eng. by H. Zohn, New York, Schocken Books, 1968, pp. 253-264.

their benefit. Historical materialism may create an equal society by revolutionizing the present eternal existence, understood by the author as «*nunc stans*»⁴⁵, as Benjamin argues:

History is the subject of a structure whose site is not homogeneous, empty time, but time filled by, the presence of the now [Jetztzeit]. ... it is a tiger's leap into the past. This jump, however, takes place in an arena where the ruling class gives the commands. The same leap in the open air of history is the dialectical one, which is how Marx understood the revolution.⁴⁶

Thus, historical materialism reveals the numerous temporal stances that span out from the modern to the primitive within modernity, granting different and varied groups of people to provoke alternative modernism and to rethink modernity itself. Constructing alternative modernisms takes place when the past emerges in pieces, in the time of the present crisis, giving the opportunity of possibility for the future.

The manifesto by breaking with the past declares a particular event of discord that asserts newness and the unexpected of what it wants to express. As such, they are identified as documents of rupture, that intend to alter the course of history. Representing modernity's rupture, they 'manifest' a double function: bringing to light the obvious truth and breaking with the past, carrying together the inconsistencies of modernity. Modernity is revealed as between history and myth, absoluteness and distinctiveness. Their goals are sought to be realized by depending upon myth to build a community that has the same goals, to break with the past to realize their novel future. Thus, the manifesto depends on identifying the community which shares the same destiny.

As promised by the writers of the manifesto, the possibility for freedom and independence can only occur during and after the revolution, it is not a precondition. The revolution's goal is to articulate a different modernity, and as a delayed completion of modernity, it boosts society forward, advancing towards its utopian objective, creating a liberal approach of society to adapt and use. The new movement or group of writers must, therefore, present themselves as the solution to the present

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 261.

⁴⁶ *Ivi*.

crisis, constructed as critical and hostile to society to establish the community. Revealing a crisis of modernity, this crisis is articulated through the interruptive temporality of manifestoes.

As manifestoes stage community formations and embody an integral feature of modernity, they are considered as documents of the archive. Foucault's attention on the archive's break in historical continuity⁴⁷ is the notion that permits an understanding of the manifesto vicinity to boundary-crossing revolutionary change. The archive is intended, by the author, as a discursive approach that adjusts the enunciative opportunities, forms, manifestations of certain assertions and methods. Manifestoes are articulated amongst other archival material in a manner that interrupts the temporal and spatial parameters that motivated the narrative of modernism.

The study of the archive interrupts linear histories, producing the circumstances of what can be said:

it deprives us of our continuities; it dissipates that temporal identity in which we are pleased to look at ourselves when we wish to exercise the discontinuities of history; it breaks the thread of transcendental teleologies; and where anthropological thought once questioned man's being or subjectivity, it now bursts open the other, and the outside.⁴⁸

Moving across boundaries

The manifesto is understood as an articulation of modernity, of a local occurrence of an international trend that is similar and different to other locations. As an articulation, it connects and gives expression to the ideas of the writers. This connection involves relations arranged in order of rank and lateral ones and not merely a comparison of independent entities. As such, modernity is:

⁴⁷ "The Historical *a priori* and the Archive" in M. Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, tr. eng. by A. M. Sheridan Smith, New York, Pantheon Books, 1972, p. 126-131.

⁴⁸ L. Winkiel, *Modernism, race, and manifestos*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 25.

structured through relations of dominance and subordination; it does not spread uniformly or progressively throughout the world.⁴⁹

This notion of articulation entails a practice of joining or connecting through gaps that are shaped by two kinds of production (capitalist and formalist). As such, comparisons can be traced across several modernities in societies that are constructed in power and control. The manifesto brings with its history transformed experiences and causes of modernity, displaying the importance of devising alternative modernisms.

Then, modernity is considered as a form of uneven development, experienced through delays and separations at the center of power as well as in the peripheries. Manifestoes become global forms that reflect this uneven development of modernity across oceans and nations through translation implementing change and transgression in different modern societies. Modernism occurs at different times in various places, varying on the prevailing economic method of production.

Manifestoes produced in industrial semi-periphery countries and cities reinforce the notion that radical forms of modernism arose in places where a confrontation between the forces of modernization and older forms of production and social organization occurred. This deterministic model proposes that modernism is indicated as a response to the crisis developed from rapid modernization.

This limitation works for European industrialized societies but not for different points of view regarding industrialization and modernization in general. Thus, modernization is not thought of as a separate development or period that produced a single historically bound form of militant modernism. This is confirmed by the repeated use of the manifesto genre indicating different currents of modernization, each bringing its own perspective.

Another limitation of the uneven development theory is that it attributes to the manifesto a reactive and signaling function, rather than a formative one. A formative role can contain the effects produced outside the realm of the manifesto's production, enabling reactions and responses in centers of modernization and in less modernized nations. As such, the history of the manifesto accomplishments and failures can be

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 25.

seen in a different perspective: as different formulations and occurrences of a world system that is comprehended as simultaneous, moving across boundaries.

The theory of uneven development thus explains well the first emergence of radical [...] modernism, but not the often unpredictable impact and reactions this modernism provoked once it was transported beyond its origin through translations, travels, and adaptations.⁵⁰

The emergence of the first modernism can be explained as an occurrence from partial and disputed industrialization. This model does not take into account the evolving, altering, and variations of modernism beyond the emergence of the first modernism. Failing to explain different articulations that do not take into account origin and language and/or favor cultural frames and prospering on the unbalanced and transitory features, even as it may be haunted by a sense of nostalgia and longing.⁵¹

A more comprehensive understanding can come forward by adding to the theory of uneven development the modernism dynamic that takes into consideration the traveling and distributing account of manifestoes. Reaching a broad variety of locations while demeaning predominant means of production, creating feedback between different geographical areas. The manifesto is a genre that embodies modernism and that is accountable for the distribution of modernism worldwide.

1.2.1 From the formation of the genre to its characterization

The manifesto generates cultural and political disputes that extend across boundaries, placed between theory and practice it transmits an experience of crisis and philosophical break with the past. Acquiring an imperative tone to put forward ongoing deliberations and methods to new domains of possibilities, takes over the present moment in order to interfere in history.

When breaking down the manifesto genre to fully comprehend its structure, subsets of manifestoes are found: (1) forthright political manifestoes; (2) avant-garde manifestoes that imitate and exaggerate formal features of political manifestoes; (3)

⁵⁰ M. Puchner, *Poetry of the revolution: Marx manifestos, and the avant-gardes* (2005), Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2006, p. 5.

⁵¹ The description of this different articulations of modernism references the avant-garde at large.

combined texts which contain manifestoes conventions, registering and supplementing on the manifesto's function as an activist text.

In these subsets, the '*Manifesto of the Communist Party*' by Marx and Engels is considered as the formal political manifesto, the original model that influenced later proclamations and was canonized in the Nineteenth century. Subsequently, the Futurist manifestoes by Marinetti typified the genre and established the aesthetic manifesto as a new literary genre with distinct composition and style. These manifestoes will be discussed further in their particularities (1.3.1 '*Manifesto of the Communist Party*' by Marx and Engels and 1.3.2 Futurism), and in the meantime should be kept in mind as frames of reference while discussing the contamination of the political and the aesthetic domain with each other, understanding why and how this occurred.

Modernity no longer describes only to the contemporary, as its origin in the Latin adverb 'modo' (recently) entails. Modernity has become a historicized category against which can be identified and correlated different notions, this establishes a system of associations of adjacency and opposition: modernism, avant-garde, and post-modernism. The Nineteenth-century signaled the peak of modernity and witnessed the rise of cultural encounters such as modernism and the avant-garde. Represented as a point in time characterized by challenging and turbulent transitions and dislocations that challenged and altered the social institutions, the economic structures, and the collective ideologies. This mutated social and cultural horizon was established and consolidated in the European cultural and political life until the French Revolution.

In the modernism era, a contamination of the political with the aesthetic and vice versa is a phenomenon that derives from a similar antiestablishment debate (antibourgeois) that assumes different configurations. This intersection is not merely an «aestheticization of politics» or as its opposed discourse, «a politization of art», as in Benjamin's formulation.⁵² Rather, the manifesto encloses the two domains, in which:

⁵² W. Benjamin, *Illuminations* (1955), ed. by H. Arendt, tr. eng. by H. Zohn, New York, Schocken Books, 1968, pp. 241-42.

certain forms of artistic and political discourse construct themselves by means of the same rhetorical and tropological strategies.⁵³

A communality is found in the utopian element that characterizes the manifesto, these two domains argue that they can offer a better approach and incorporation between the individual and the social. As such, the Nineteenth century is the heir of Enlightenment with its positivist modernity. Marxism is guided by a utopian inclination when identifying rupture as the generator of history, rather than proposing a linear progress of the conception of the past and future.

An anti-bourgeois propelling force is an aspect of the second 'critical' modernity, established as different articulations of replies to a modernity that is conceived as forced. Modernity is felt as a condition that society must reside in, a destiny imposed whether or not they share modernity's principles and ideologies.

The second modernity is what later will be devised as 'modernism': the endeavor to cease the experienced modern present, pursuing a social and different way of life. As a culture of rupture and alienation, it sets forward as a reassurance of the social and cultural experiences that may be expressed or fragmented by the development of modernity's narratives.

The anti-institutional drive of the aesthetic and political programs, makes them confront each other on the topic of legitimation. To legitimize a new kind of authority in the eye of the people requires an understanding of the importance of narrative strategies. As the French philosopher Lyotard articulates⁵⁴, the compresence between the positivism legitimization narrative and democracy is consolidated by the reappearance of the 'narrative knowledge' to solve such problems:

the name of the hero is the people, the sign of legitimacy is the people's consensus, and their mode of creating norms is deliberation. The notion of progress is a necessary outgrowth of this.⁵⁵

⁵³ L. Somigli, *Legitimizing the Artist: Manifesto Writing and European Modernism 1885-1915*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2003, p. 18.

⁵⁴ J. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979), tr. eng. G. Bennington and B. Massumi, Oxford, Manchester University Press, 1984, p. 30.

⁵⁵ *Ivi.*

The fracture between modernity and post-modernity understood within a legitimating function, that the philosopher calls 'metadiscourse', defines modernity through its fall back on grand narratives. Rather than being determined by a positive or negative point of view towards the contemporary environment, Modernity's recourse - in its favorable or critical occurrences - on metanarratives provides coherence and a functionalist path to the epilogue. This ending is identified with the social and ideological discourse that represents modernity.

Although, as the manifesto writers and thinkers of modernism have explicated thoroughly, the discourse of modernity is from the very beginning divided.

Two conceptions of modernity encompass this time and Marxism is the core example: a definitive positivist trust in progress, and at the same time the refusal of the cultural and social ideals of bourgeois modernity, particularly the instrumental and pragmatic logic. Modernist politics step in by trying to replace a progressive narrative with a new one. The attempts go from replacing the 'hero' from society with the producer or by identifying the same 'hero' with a captivating individual, replacing the debate with the direct dialogue between the leader of the group and society. This procedure assumes aesthetic strategies that support the legitimating narratives in their audience. The political manifesto borrows from aesthetic thought and so does the aesthetic manifesto, which appropriates directly from the political manifesto.

As such, manifestoes are positioned where political changes and events are assimilated and determined. Politics becomes an essential part of the aesthetic manifesto since manifestoes communicate with the cultural and the authoritative field. With the aesthetic manifesto, the manifesto is part of the course of action where literature becomes an independent area in society, defending with words the cultural independence that art seeks. What had traditionally been a political statement becomes aestheticized by Marinetti. From that time forward, all avant-garde groups between 1910 and 1930 use manifestoes as political declarations where the aesthetic domain is followed through. This establishes the genre as a hybrid, an elusive form that combines artistic and political inclinations. As Perloff suggests:

The term's vagueness extends even to the group of texts explicitly bearing the title 'manifesto,' which by itself does not distinguish among uses of the form that are utopian, political, or artistic.⁵⁶

The manifesto is recognized in the polemical genre by its kinship to the historical avant-garde, which legitimized its role in the cultural domain by realizing its authorship by publishing the texts that had the title or functioned as manifestoes at the end of the nineteenth century. The manifesto lends itself as a genre that has a complex network of resemblances that intersect and overlap. Moving from a persuasive (political) to a literary (aesthetic) discourse and culminating in a referential discourse (after the establishment of the genre as literary). Resisting a straightforward classification, the manifesto is a «a genre that refuses to stay in its place».⁵⁷

As a textual space balanced between the political and the aesthetic, propaganda and the work of art, and ultimately between practice and theory, the manifesto is versatile. Although offering distinctive characteristics for the two domains, scholars disagree on the elements to take into consideration for their examination of confrontation.

According to Meyer⁵⁸, the political manifesto is set towards action and is time-restricted because of the deadlines correlated to the political action it demands. In contrast, the aesthetic manifesto surpasses time and upholds value over action. For Lyon,⁵⁹ the political manifesto is practical and linked to social and cultural circumstances. In opposition, the aesthetic manifesto conveys and asserts a narrow number of beliefs and principles. Caws⁶⁰ hesitates to set the two domains apart, and wavers by viewing them as belonging to a single model with a common origin or as two distinct types of discourse. Nevertheless, she views the aesthetic manifesto as

⁵⁶ M. Perloff, "Violence and Precision": *The Manifesto as Art Form*, "Chicago Review", Vol. 34, No. 2, 1984, p. 66.

⁵⁷ S. R. Amidon, *Manifestoes: A Study in Genre*, Doctoral dissertation, University of Rhode Island, 2003, p. 24.

⁵⁸ A. Meyer, 'Le manifeste politique: Modèle pur ou pratique impure?' "Littérature", Vol. 39, 1980, pp.29–38 reference in: G. Yanoshevsky, *Three Decades of Writing on Manifesto: The Making of a Genre*, "Poetics Today", Vol. 30, No. 2, 2009, p. 268.

⁵⁹ L. Lyon, *Transforming Manifestoes: A Second-Wave Problematic*, "The Yale Journal of Criticism", New Haven, Vol. 5, Fasc. 1, 1991, p. 123.

⁶⁰ *Manifesto: a century of isms*, ed. by M. A. Caws, Lincoln and London, University of Nebraska Press, 2001, p. xix.

based on a specific circumstance that depends on its ingenuity and the capability of the writer/leader of the group. Instead, the political manifesto efficiency is contingent on its force of declamation and persuasion. Lastly, according to Burger,⁶¹ the main difference resides in their intentionality: avant-garde manifestoes operate with ‘subversiveness’ while the political manifesto signifies a part of the existing public sphere that it supports, therefore it is related to citizenship.

Differences and commonalities can be found, but what is obvious of the manifesto genre is that it encompasses them all, in the cultural domains where it is more needed. The manifesto’s characteristics depend on the historical and geographical circumstances, all features can be found but none can be pinned down, even if specific to a cultural domain or type of discourse. This is why the manifesto keeps on being utilized and can communicate with all.

1.2.2 Performativity and theatricality

The analysis of the manifesto merges a political theory of speech acts with procedures informed by the avant-garde and the terminological pair of performativity and theatricality is essential to an understanding of how the manifesto comes to be.

The manifesto as a political genre has been set towards a revolution, a break with the historical process, changing the course of history, therefore the temporality of the manifesto forms a history of rupture. The aesthetic manifesto assumes the urge for a revolutionary change, an event, and introduces it into the art world. Each break with the past is the beginning of a new future. As such, the name chosen by Marinetti for his movement was ‘Futurism’, a name to identify the rupture between past and future, that every manifesto seeks to produce. This involved the manifesto as a tool through which every avant-garde movement presented itself and competed for dominance in the art world. In this history of rupture, one finds the performativity of the manifesto in producing its break with the past that structures history through its own intervention. It does not simply describe a history of rupture.

The manifesto challenges the authority in question through a revolutionary speech and wants to turn this speech into an instrument of change. Combining speech and

⁶¹ M. Burger, *Les manifestes: Paroles de combat; De Marx à Breton*, Lonay, Delachaux and Niestlé, 2002, pp. 202-03, reference in: G. Yanoshevsky, *Three Decades of Writing on Manifesto: The Making of a Genre*, “Poetics Today”, Vol. 30, No. 2, 2009, p. 269.

action is addressed by Austin⁶², which provided a paradigm explaining that in specific situations uttering certain words brings change and performs an action. As such, the urge to take action leads to a concern about the efficiency of its speech act, the manifesto is overinvested in the impact it creates on the world.

For the speech act to have an effect that produces change, the conditions are: it must be said in the right context and by the right person, a person with the authority to produce a transformation using only words. This is why to legitimize the movement or group of the revolutionary modern manifesto, one must gain this kind of authority that it does not yet possess. The manifesto creates the setting that guarantees that the speech act would be authorized by the context. To do so, the speech act is set forward in the foreseeable future, stating that the authority will be supplied by the change they will bring. This perfect construction is a hope, a desire that often comes to nothing. The interest in efficiency and efficacy comes from the desire to be successful in the revolt, to create a point zero in history. All history before this moment is preparation towards a different future and the act, the revolution, signifies the beginning of the future and its performativity.

All this future success is based on the manifesto to perform such a speech act and to do so it has to battle theatricality. A manifesto is theatrical when the speech act that occurs is in an unauthoritative context and has no relevant authority in society. Manifestoes seek to turn the theater into a source of authority, trying to get rid of this theatricality by borrowing future authority.

Indeed, one may say that theatricality is what enabled the manifesto to speak in the first place, in the absence of proper authority.⁶³

Speaking from a position of disadvantage, the manifesto hopes that the assumptions of future authoritative will have an impact and consequences. Theatricality depicts a space between having no power and the assured position of authority, a logic that the manifesto uses to his advantage without knowing if the project will go its way if he

⁶² J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1962, p. 14.

⁶³ M. Puchner, *Poetry of the revolution: Marx manifestos, and the avant-gardes* (2005), Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2006, p. 25.

will ever gain power and control. Without theatricality, there would be no presumption, no future assessment, no manifesto needed.

As in the preamble of most manifestoes, the writers do not immediately assess declarative notions and revelations. Rather, they consider their position and their purpose between and against their opponents, indicating a moment of hesitation. Theatricality enforces performativity allowing a moment to surrender its adherence to efficiency and action. This relation with performativity exposes the opposition and convinces the reader to be part of the task that the manifesto seeks to accomplish, successfully executing its speech act.

Theatricality threatens that the speech act might turn into false promises. According to Austin,⁶⁴ the theater is where speech acts lose their prescriptive force, not including the theater as a space where normal speech acts function because they do not provoke real change on stage. Nevertheless, in the case of the manifesto, a rigorous division is required, defining the struggle between the two forms to provide a full understanding of the manifesto genre. The struggle between the two implies that there is a tendency of the manifesto's performativity to obscure theatricality, confirming their relation to one another.

For manifestoes to accomplish the effects they prescribe, they must depend on the repetition of previous texts (political speech acts), functioning through the citational practice of performativity, thus fulfilling their attribute of activist text. These effects are contingent on the historical location from which the writers speak and the impact of their statements on their readers. Pronounced attention on performativity disrupts the historical narrative, fragmenting it and multiplying the entrances from which history can be transformed. Differently from the «historicism's continuist flow of history»⁶⁵ that facilitates the recreation of power structures and sovereignty representations.

Drawing attention to the present moment, the experiencing of time becomes central but also provokes irregularities and separation. Performativity expresses a conditional quality that depending on how the manifesto replicates preceding texts, can be: normative (reproduces the previous order of things) or resistant (reproduces a repetition with variations).

⁶⁴ J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1962, p. 148.

⁶⁵ L. Winkiel, *Modernism, race, and manifestos*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 13.

The performativity of language, at its most resistant quality, becomes the avant-garde event. In interrupting received meanings it seeks to disrupt the standard boundaries of representation as to the understanding of time that develops always and everywhere in the same matter, going towards the unrepresentable. The event nature of avant-garde art forms represents experience and the historical effect in the present moment as indefinite, extreme in correspondence to its depiction. In undoing the representation, the avant-garde event aims to invalidate modernity's pragmatic rationality, breaking with the historical narrative.

Avant-garde manifestos, I propose, more so than the work of art to follow, seek to bridge the gap between art and life, theory and action, politics and aesthetics through the event-nature of their utterance.⁶⁶

Going beyond the restrictions of representational thinking, the manifesto as an event signals how modernist texts are revolutionary because they view the present moment as a possibility that should not be constrained in time, opening up other points of view and accounts of modernity. The present moment is a prospect that reconfigures time, the modern moment resides in the historical action of the now.

Displacement

The history of the manifesto is a mutation or displacement of a genre that was originally a political speech act. From the '*Manifesto of the Communist Party*', the canonized manifesto of political agitation, the history of rebellion of the genre was in itself an adoption of the older use of the manifesto, as an authoritative declaration of the state. The different manifestoes interact with each other because they are a series of repetitions and displacements that began with Marx and Engels through the avant-garde, reaching the 21st century.

Manifestoes are involved with establishing a foundation, declaring a zero point in history, and in taking a central position from which to make their declarations. From the Marx and Engels '*Manifesto of the Communist Party*' the geographic circumstances of the majority of the manifestoes was one of displacement. A

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, p. 14.

displacement that encompasses the exile of the writers, theories of translation such as world literature to the creation of moving avant-garde journals. Even if aware of their displacement, writers adopted their geography from the older manifestoes, a type of manifesto that was certain of its position and place.

As Puchner argued,⁶⁷ the manifesto writers tried to turn the experience of being without a country into a new form of internationalism. Using the form of being displaced for a diverse geographic practice as a point of departure, they tried to turn displacement into replacement, devising and establishing a new approach.

Replacement is to the manifesto's geography what repetition is to its history: not a return to a given center or point of origin but an active fabrication and creation of an alternative standpoint.⁶⁸

Repetition and replacement occur from a combination between the two entangled traditions of the manifesto: the political and the aesthetic manifesto. This communication implies an intersection between their dominant traits: performativity and theatricality. The political manifesto is motivated by the objective of transforming the world and making performative speech acts and interventions instead, the aesthetic manifesto prefers to disclose in the speech act its theatrical nature. This distinction is more concise when thought in terms of 'means to an end', the political manifesto leans towards being a tool for change, a means to an end, and the aesthetic manifesto places itself as an end in itself, especially the avant-garde.⁶⁹ These dominant forms are present in both types of manifestoes through their histories, in one degree or another. The political manifesto encloses theatricality and the aesthetic manifesto accomplished speech acts and actualized change despite its theatricality.

Political manifestoes are texts urging to evoke change through words, the ultimate examples of a performative speech. Avant-garde groups are more propelled towards

⁶⁷ M. Puchner, *Poetry of the revolution: Marx manifestos, and the avant-gardes* (2005), Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2006, pp. 260-61.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p. 261.

⁶⁹ *Ivi*.

the theater, with their sharp pronouncements and provoking statements. Despite their differences, to some extent, performative intervention and theatrical posing are part of all manifestoes. Political manifestoes use theatrics to exaggerate, overcompensating for their lack of power in their speaking positions, also their confidence is assumed rather than being based on obtained authority. Moreover, the avant-garde achieved performative effects, influencing history, through their assessed theatricality.

Theatricality and performativity thus describe two conflicting tendencies that informed all manifestos, the two ingredients that, according to their respective degree of influence, produced the various types of manifestos⁷⁰.

Their effects depend on this varied mixture of their dominant forms. Therefore, the manifesto comes up with new and original combinations of performativity and theatricality to establish and implement change. Manifestoes are a means to an end and an end in itself, dangling between past and future and bound to repetition and replacement to define the new and the present moment.

1.3 The founding manifestoes

1.3.1 ‘*Manifesto of the Communist Party*’ by Marx and Engels

The manifesto developed stable characteristics as a genre from the emergence of the ‘*Manifesto of the Communist Party*’ by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (1848), influencing and developing historical importance for subsequent manifestoes for both aesthetic proclamations and political statements. This influence marked the elevation of the social and cultural consciousness to a different stage of inclusiveness, becoming part of modern history as an «unsurpassed dramatic representation, diagnosis, and prophetic array of visionary judgment on the modern world».⁷¹

The new form of the manifesto genre developed by Marx and Engels, succeeded the understanding of revolutionary modernity, making and manifesting this section of

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p. 5.

⁷¹ S. Marcus, Marx's Masterpiece at 150, “New York Times Book Review”, April 26, 1998, p. 39 cit in: *Manifesto: a century of isms*, ed. by M. A. Caws, Lincoln and London, University of Nebraska Press, 2001, p. xix.

modernity. Due to its fervent action writing the '*Manifesto of the Communist Party*' directly affected the course of history in its immediacy, defining and inspiring, for example, the Paris Commune and the Russian Revolution, just to name a few. The manifesto acquired such importance and became a model for many because of its content and form. The history of revolutions advocates for the perpetual driving force of this text, but the real triumph lies in the composition of the text, one which created a new genre that incorporates in a unique manner philosophy and politics, research and action, historiography, and mediation.

The new genre emerged by altering its original significance with something necessary at the time, a tool for change. The word 'manifesto' as a title was in its origin a communication authored by those in command, but with Marx and Engels it became a collective, revolutionary and rebellious voice that demands power and authority. The revolutionary manifesto disputes the assumption that lies on the belief that what is said in the manifesto comes from sovereignty, turning what is declared instantly into action, as a law. The new manifesto genre fractures the concurrence between authority, speech, and action on which the previous manifestoes were set on. It does so by appropriating the authority and control it does not yet possess, becoming more aggressive to turn words into action and requests into reality. A political articulation that comes about by resisting to its actual circumstances and striving to use history as a supporter in its future project. Even if it does not yet possess authority it is able to generate a history.

History of revolution

The urgency to write a manifesto came out from the forced exile that Marx had to endure from Paris to Belgium in 1846, due to the political activism of the Parisian working class. As the workingman's society grew from Belgium to London, in 1847 the London 'Communist League' asked Marx and Engels to write a declaration of beliefs of the group. Engels prepared a statement of Socialist principles and Marx revised and expanded on Engel's draft, publishing the '*Manifesto of the Communist Party*' in February 1848. The manifesto was used as a tool by German workers for an uprising in March of the same year, shortly after the German revolution failed, and

Marx was banished from Germany in May 1849 moving from Paris to London, where he remained even after the Communist League was dissolved.⁷²

The text's history materializes the categories that make the manifesto: authority and authorship, theatricality, and performativity, which resurface in different forms. As the '*Manifesto of the Communist Party*' speaks from the point of view of the proletariat, the first edition was published as an anonymous pamphlet and as an anonymous text, it was written by a collective party, in this case, the International Communist League. By excluding the names of the authors it presented the unity of the proletariat in a collective spirit and the «Manifesto appeared to be a text arising from the revolution even as it sought to trigger the revolution».⁷³ The fiction disappeared as soon as the revolution failed. Authorship without a deputy and performativity without theater did not work and from that point on, all the editions of the *Manifesto* detailed Marx and Engels as the authors. This commenced a history of repetition and revision that answered to the text's necessity to envision a future with an alternative nature, thus commencing the necessity to expel its own theatricality. Consequently, the manifesto assesses and develops its particular point of articulation, its own unfolding, and distribution. When revising the new editions of the manifesto, history is thought of by Engels in terms of a dialectical process, reporting the history of Communism and industrialization. Industrialization was the motor that made communism possible, according to the authors.

Where there is industrialization there will be a proletariat, where there is a proletariat there will be communism, and where there is communism there will be the *Manifesto* [author's cursive].⁷⁴

The '*Manifesto of the Communist Party*' flourishes in waves that align with the periods of revolutionary activity, becoming an example of world literature because is one of the most printed, translated, and issued texts in history. Diverging from its counterpart, the utopian manifesto, which prospers in periods defined by response

⁷² S. R. Amidon, *Manifestoes: A Study in Genre*, Doctoral dissertation, University of Rhode Island, 2003, p. 75.

⁷³ M. Puchner, *Poetry of the revolution: Marx manifestos, and the avant-gardes* (2005), Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2006, p. 33.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, p. 36.

and the existing current condition. Utopian manifestoes envision a distant future that seems inaccessible in the present, permitting the revolutionary force to assume political power and organization. Radical change is what the two manifestoes have in common but the acknowledgment of how to get to the future they envision is taken up by the revolutionary manifestoes instead, utopian manifestoes prefer to appear vague and lack political reassurance. How to get to the future by acting in the present moment is what the manifesto wants to enforce in its reader, and utopian manifestoes seem to not answer adequately. As the '*Manifesto of the Communist Party*' became a beacon for the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth century, gaining the status of the foundational text of Marxism, the manifesto as a genre that could not be used without a good reason or implemented lightly. As such, the title 'manifesto' began to be used for founding or constituting various movements or different Internationals.

The form that produces content

Initially, the '*Manifesto of the Communist Party*' was conceptualized as a 'credo', an assortment of treaties of faith in the form of a dialectic. The International Communist League was formed in 1847 and decided how to present itself to the world. The 'credo' form turned out to be insufficient for Marx and Engels's aspirations because it did not work for the narrative style they had in mind. The 'credo' form is well suited to assert a number of principles but not to establish a history-based storyline. They kept in mind that the title supported the notion of the open declaration and Engels proposed to use the term 'Manifesto'. As such, the title chosen did not want to mimic previous manifestoes but served to include in the presentation an awareness of the historical process, a name that included the historical and narrative conditions.

The power of its title lies in a reversal of the conventional rhetorical usage of the allusion: instead of looking backwards it provides an anchor to which all future movements of working class peoples can allude. All manifestoes after the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* are implicitly connected to the perpetual struggle of the masses against the powerful elites [author's cursive]⁷⁵

⁷⁵ S. R. Amidon, *Manifestoes: A Study in Genre*, Doctoral dissertation, University of Rhode Island, 2003, pp. 74-5.

The form of the historiographic text becomes the power to which future groups and movements would aspire. The manifesto distinguished itself from its predecessors and competitors by advocating a history of socialism and, more importantly, history as such. History becomes the subject in the manifesto, and it encompasses this in the first two sentences:

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large or in the common ruin of the contending classes.⁷⁶

The language changes from 'struggle' to 'revolution' because each struggle leads to a modification of society. The first section of the *Manifesto* presents the history of preceding revolutions and the subject of history as the revolution, guided by succeeding revolutionary disturbances that lead to the final and sweeping one. The new form of the manifesto presents an understanding of history as a revolutionary development culminating in the present moment. The manifesto genre is treated as a tool that assembles the past and shapes those events towards the foreseeable future and the revolution is described as imminent. For Marx and Engels the manifesto is not a declaration of distinct principles or a calamitous announcement because it participates in its own history and wants to forge and record it. All this concludes in the final revolution that is made possible by the manifesto. A prophecy of the future that in the meanwhile summarizes humanity's history of demands for a profound transformation. The writers place themselves in the service of society in light of the imminent revolution. Consequently proclaiming the age of manifestoes, defined as:

⁷⁶ Manifesto of the Communist Party in K. Marx and F. Engels, *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works in two volumes*, Vol. I, Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955, p. 34.

the texts that have accompanied and sought to provide a discursive ground for these traumatic transformations.⁷⁷

To intervene and generate history, shaping and describing history is not enough, the writers had to embrace a different voice than that of the historiographer: a political one. This formal feature depicts a revealing gesture and mindset directing the manifesto towards the circumstances it aims to destroy and shape. This outlines its form by being concise and direct in its speech, coupled with a critical and violent appeal, the ultimate goal is to declare an impatient and extreme demand, excess is the only way to be heard.

The history of the manifesto genre always includes the impatient attribute because it characterizes the struggle to disrupt the correlation between speech and action, words and revolution. It is the acknowledgment that it can only be a call or a demand, no matter the efficiency of its speech act, no matter how effective it can be, the manifesto may not create the change it desperately seeks. The political voice holds together and makes the reader understand «historiography and the philosophy of history, speech, and writing».⁷⁸

The manifestos impatience with its existence emerges distinctly at the end, placing itself between text and action. The voice of appeal culminates in the slogan that marks the end of the call to action. In fact, most manifestoes end by calling into existence their audience, a conventional feature that defines the performative nature of the conclusion. The performative nature invokes a self-evident concurrence, predicting the unified proletariat it appeals to and produces a malleable written and supplementary identity for readers through militant manipulation. In other words, it suggests a former audience by producing a false identity to connect with the prospect of a revolutionary change. As a call to action, the manifesto challenges the universal issue of the public sphere, borrowing its rhetoric from the slogan: short and memorable. The call to action avoids the moderate language of debate and reform that belong to the bourgeois public sphere and instead uses a repetitive structure with

⁷⁷ S. R. Amidon, *Manifestoes: A Study in Genre*, Doctoral dissertation, University of Rhode Island, 2003, p. 22.

⁷⁸ M. Puchner, *Poetry of the revolution: Marx manifestos, and the avant-gardes* (2005), Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2006, p. 22.

the implementation of chiasmus and as many rhetorical forms for emphasis as litotes purposeful understatements.⁷⁹

The manifesto takes the slogan from the battlefield⁸⁰ to politics, as seen in the topological '*Manifesto of the Communist Party*' by Marx and Engels which states in its conclusion:

The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Workingmen of all countries, unite!⁸¹

As the logic entails, the shorter the manifesto the more captivating it becomes but unexpectedly the brevity cannot be taken to its extreme it must be calibrated with a postponement: the exclamation mark, This regulates the demand to take action in the present moment, postponing the moment where the manifesto will end, and the reader must evaluate whether to take action or standstill. Accentuating the necessity of the act while giving the time to think, is the exclamation mark's role. A mediation between the manifesto and the revolution, a gesture that imitates the act in itself, trying to make its own language part of the change it requires and demands a different future, keen to stop discussing and begin doing.

In this way, the manifesto is a genre that imagines itself to be on the verge of action, anticipating, preparing, organizing this action, and perhaps participating in it already, if only in a preliminary manner. The manifesto simply cannot wait for its own end so that real action, the only thing it cares about, can begin.⁸²

The '*Manifesto of the Communist Party*' desires to speak from the point of view of the proletariat and knowing what the realization of the proletariat should be like, it

⁷⁹ S. R. Amidon, *Manifestoes: A Study in Genre*, Doctoral dissertation, University of Rhode Island, 2003, p. 79.

⁸⁰ The slogan originates in the Eighteenth century with the Scottish war, according to: *The Oxford universal dictionary on historical principles* (1937), eds. by W. Little, H. W. Fowler, J. Coulson, C. T. Onions and J. A. H. Murray, III ed, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1955, retrieved from: *Ivi*.

⁸¹ Manifesto of the Communist Party in K. Marx and F. Engels, *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works in two volumes*, Vol. I, Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955, p.65.

⁸² M. Puchner, *Poetry of the revolution: Marx manifestos, and the avant-gardes* (2005), Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2006, p. 43.

takes preventively its position, predicting and enacting theatrically the proletariat. In the theory of speech acts, the *Manifesto* exposes three modes: takes the position of the proletariat, performatively creates its audience, and enacts the future theatrically. It does not simply struggle between theatricality and performativity because it speaks from the same point of view of its reader. Thus, creating a place where unlicensed theatricality and performativity shift and project the manifesto towards its accomplishments, anticipating the results. A political speech act portrayed onwards, a form of 'futurity' without authority that is therefore political and futurist in its performativity. As such, the single command is not enough, the manipulation is incorporated in the demand to convince the reader.

The theatricality of the manifesto is correlated to the futurist performativity to accomplish its speech act. Exposing the truth and compelling its reader to join the cause is the manifesto's task.

A relationship between theatre and the manifesto depicts all, even a classical and political manifesto as the '*Manifesto of the Communist Party*'. The form of the *Manifesto* is correlated to that of a theatrical script because Marxism views history in dramatic terms, as tragedy and charade. History is made only when a crisis comes crashing, and as such progress can commence, the crisis is also a juncture that will lead in time to a rectification. Drama is impregnated in the manifesto in the conflict between the yearning for a revolutionary action that transforms the future and the assertion that the world is determined by tangible conditions. This theatrical self-authorization is due to the reluctant collaboration between theatricality and performativity: urging to change, to acquire political strength in just a written text, to bestow power in action while not knowing if the context, the reader will allow such acts, stealing the authority it needs to be taken seriously.

Formal elements

The structure of the manifesto invokes the theatrics and requisites that Marx and Engels used to accomplish their speech act.

The preamble is one of the most theatrical parts of the manifesto, describing the exigency for the text using the metaphor to underline the nature of the situation they

witness in society. The first paragraph depicts the ‘specter’ as being chased by the opposing forces of Europe and the second paragraph assures the manifestation of Communism. Marx explains that he wants to replace the opposing forces with Communism, with Communism beginning to establish itself and declaring its intentions it will be able to enter into European politics in its true form. The revelation and its claim to its rightful place are given by the publishing of the ‘*Manifesto of the Communist Party*’.

The manifesto is the instrument, the genre, that replaces specters with the real thing, and it is the genre that is responsible for the final, dramatic revelation of Communism on the scene of world politics.⁸³

The last paragraph of the introduction begins with a single grievance: the wrongful depiction of the history of Communism, the tale perpetuated by the opponents of the revolution. Marx promises a climax, a confrontation between the two main characters from the previous two paragraphs. A moment of reflection and hesitation defines the introduction, set against its theatrical and haunting opposition. The metaphor is immersed in a reflection on the role of the party and the function of the manifesto in the rivalry, it does not immediately invoke a declarative stance and revelation to the reader.

The grievance is numbered, as in many manifestoes, but instead of a list of grievances, the writers decide to structure four histories that reconstruct the historiography of the manifesto genre.

Chapter one details the birth of the ‘modern bourgeois society’ from a lost feudal society. The process cracked society, sprouting from the medieval past two classes: the bourgeois and the proletariat.

Chapter two describes the historical development of Communism thought. The theory is originated not from abstract principles, but it is a consequence of inductive logic, retrieved from the material observation of the historical process of class struggle and the conception of history. This will become the fundament for Marx’s ‘historical materialism’.

⁸³ M. Puchner, *Manifesto = Theatre*, “Theatre Journal”, Vol. 54, No. 3, 2002, p. 462.

In the middle of the *Manifesto*, a dramatic dialogue engages other intellectuals in a direct speech form, illustrating their arguments. Then the point of view turns back to the one of the writers, answering to the theoretical objections made. The drama of history and the dialogue structure are mirrored, as to return to the origin of philosophy, the dramatic dialogues of Plato.⁸⁴ The technique is utilized to destabilize the opponent but structurally it interrupts the discourse of the writers, disrupting an engaged tone towards the reader to give voice to the Communist rivals. The dramatic form of the passage halts temporarily the driving force of the manifesto, inserting a different point of view into the dominant one.

Near the last part of this chapter, the list of demands appears, a numbered list of ten political actions that will be enacted to alter society into a Communist one. This feature is unique in the *Manifesto* because it is history itself that makes the demand. The historical narrative is present, but the argument is not framed by history.

Chapter three analyzes other socialist movements in Europe and illustrates their historical reactionary relevancy.

Chapter four is short and simple, it describes the affiliation between the International Communist Party and other left allies.

A different practice to understand modernity

The manifesto according to Marx and Engels is understood from the point of view that a philosopher should not merely explicate the world but also transform it. To produce a modern revolution, the writers engage with the act of creating and founding their own present, split between rejecting the past and envisioning the future.

The manifesto presents itself as ‘a mean to an end’, requesting to be seen through its capacity to revolutionize the present and not by its rhetorical or literary constructions. The ‘*Manifesto of the Communist Party*’ reveals that the form and not the content better illustrates and conveys the final goals, desires, and strategies of modernity. The form of modernity embodies the creation of a point zero in history, where society can’t look back because it is building a different conception of history and changing the future.

⁸⁴ *Ivi.*

The established temporal connotations related to terms as ‘modernism’ and ‘modernity’ offer the contexts in which manifestoes take place.

Marshall Berman’s traditional reading of Marx and Engels’s *Manifesto* defines it as «the archetype of a century of modernist manifestos and movements to come».⁸⁵ For the writer, the *Manifesto* transmits the expression of the experience of modernity, in all its configurations. Modernity is defined by the writer as a historical experience of the social and economic change that occurs as a capitalist expansion. As such, modernization merges society and the circumstances through the same system of capitalism but, this union is always evolving. To experience modernity is to be part of what Marx and Engels state:

All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.⁸⁶

Modernism becomes strength, the historical process gives to the world people and societies with ideas as different as they may be, that want to give power to the individual, to be the object of modernization. Berman emphasizes that what is changing society gives the individual the power to change it and shape it to their will. Change and power belong to those who decide to participate in their time, in modernism, to be part of the revolution.

In the first chapter, Marx and Engels describe this dynamic process and the prose expresses the possibilities and the sacrifice, the strain of modernity. Individuals are part of an enhanced time that offers perpetual innovation, and the capitalist revolution separates the present from the past, prompting and promising that Communism will overcome the problems of modernism.

Winkel criticizes Berman’s view⁸⁷, objecting that he does not take into consideration: (1) modernity’s time is not uniform, participation in the revolution was available to

⁸⁵ M. Berman, *All That’s Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*, New York, Penguin, 1988, p. 89, cit in: L. Winkel, *Modernism, race, and manifestos*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 14.

⁸⁶ ‘Manifesto of the Communist Party’ in K. Marx and F. Engels, *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works in two volumes*, Vol. I, Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955, p. 37.

those who were located in a historically privileged position; (2) History and modernism are not linear, they do not advance in a continuous and uninterrupted flow of time.

As it may be, the fact remains: Marx and Engels *Manifesto* viewed and encompassed modernism and history in the manifesto genre. With their *Manifesto*, the writers promote a break into modernity's conceptually linear account by acting into the present moment through discourse and speech acts. Interrupting the flow of history shapes different points of view and possibilities. Rupture as unpredictable it may be, implements a dislocation between past and present, keeping the future open for new possibilities.

Marx arrived at his practice of the manifesto through a critique of philosophy. While before Marx, the manifesto was a genre presented by an authority, the modern manifesto is created by challenging such authority through revolutionary change and speech act theory. For Marx, the features of speech and action, theatricality, and performativity resided in a question of specialties and methods of writing.

Philosophy is viewed as having no history of its own but just ideologies. Thus, Marx goes against philosophy in general. This thought describes many modernists after Marx as Friedrich Nietzsche, which shares the belief that philosophy must come to a standstill, opening the path for the philosopher to write the final philosophy and its eulogy. As such, Marx created a new form of theoretical writing, just as Nietzsche produced an original blend of prophecy, polemic, and fiction.

What drove modernist philosophers to write a new and last philosophy varies.

Marx questioned how language could be used for political objectives, driven by the notion that philosophers had to try to change the world. Instead, Nietzsche created a new philosophy mainly because of an epistemological crisis of language. For Marx, political action became its directive, diverging from philosophy and changing its practice by turning the argument into an aphorism. He achieved a fragmented, condensed formulation, that was not sufficient for its directive. Consequently, the manifesto genre fits the task at hand in its form and aim. The manifesto was the tool

⁸⁷ M. Berman, *All That's Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*, New York, Penguin, 1988, p. 89, cit in: L. Winkiel, *Modernism, race, and manifestos*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008, pp. 16-17.

for a new practice of the philosophy that pursues action over theory and could actualize change.

Berman argues that Marx's philosophy is essential to economics and politics but disregarded for art and culture. This occurred because modernity is divided: 'modernization' for economics and politics and 'modernism' for art and culture.

Marx's modernist approach is noticeable by its resemblance with other modernist writers such as Nietzsche. The narrative taken by Marx and Engels in the *Manifesto* is for Berman a «paradoxical counternarrative in the melting vision».⁸⁸ Focusing on the first chapter, the memorable narrative on the bourgeoisie is described historically in a double sense: abuse and admiration. The crimes of the bourgeoisie that lead to the formation of the revolutionary proletariat are seen as an inevitable counterculture and as a possibility, the creation of capitalism liquefied all attachments to the aristocratic feudalism, that for the time being remained. Berman notices paradox and irony in the diverged rhetorical figures. This conflict and irony came from the dialectical materialism of Marx's methodology, he did not want to leave the reader in the modern condition, without reassurance. Marx's methodology required an analysis of the theses, antithesis, and ultimately the synthesis. In the '*Manifesto of the Communist Party*' the synthesis is the communist future, where the past is long gone, and bourgeois capitalism is forgotten and destroyed thanks to the revolution. The revolution is the only hope for a new order and a brighter future. The writers ask the reader to view the paradox as a solution to the modernism conflict and not an indication of the death of what was before.

1.3.2 The avant-garde: Futurism

The aesthetic manifesto

The collection of Caws, *Manifesto: A Century of Isms*, labels the period of 1909-1919 as 'the Manifesto Moment', which begins with the Italian movement Futurism.⁸⁹ During this period of time, the political scene witnessed dislocations as

⁸⁸ M. Berman, *All That's Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*, New York, Penguin, 1988, p. 99, retrieved from: S. R. Amidon, *Manifestoes: A Study in Genre*, Doctoral dissertation, University of Rhode Island, 2003, p.80.

⁸⁹ *Manifesto: a century of isms*, ed. by M. A. Caws, Lincoln and London, University of Nebraska Press, 2001, p. xxii.

the first World War or the Bolshevik Revolution. Aestheticism witnessed the emergence of modernism as the predominant cultural movement that captivated writers to use the manifesto, especially the avant-garde movements. These manifestoes make excess their art form, challenging society in what it views as proper. Manifestoes are performative in achieving with great confidence a form that conveys the message, rather than a vessel for any conventional meaning. The ‘Manifesto moment’ extends to the 1940’s moment of Spatialism but after the first World War, the manifesto form is still in existence but is written with a different spirit and in less abundance. Yanoshevsky⁹⁰ has tempted a division of the manifestoes timeline, that leaves many circumstances out but gives an idea of the different currents and movements it holds: (1) ‘classical’ prewar avant-garde manifestos (Futurism, Dadaism, Surrealism); (2) postwar manifestos until the 1940’s; (3) 1960’s counterculture manifestos and (4) manifestos published on the Web from 1990 to our present day.

All this came about thanks to the vision of Tommaso Marinetti and his Italian movement of Futurism, which started the manifesto craze.

To understand how and why Marinetti chose the manifesto as his vehicle to form a new literary genre, we must first talk about modernism, the predominant cultural movement at the time.

Turning back time, Charles Baudelaire’s⁹¹ poems and prose writings articulate a reflection on the subject of modernity. Modernity is a term introduced by the author in the aesthetic discourse legitimizing it. As noted by Walter Benjamin⁹², Baudelaire in contemplating society and modernity reveals the artist’s alienation and solitude because of the momentous transitions that start to reveal themselves: the capitalist system of production. Exposing the crisis of art in modernity in ‘Lost of Halo’

⁹⁰ G. Yanoshevsky, *Three Decades of Writing on Manifesto: The Making of a Genre*, “Poetics Today”, Vol. 30, No. 2, 2009, p. 258.

⁹¹C. Baudelaire, ‘The Painter of Modern Life’ in *Baudelaire: Selected Writings on Art and Literature* (1972), tr. eng. by P. E. Charvet. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981, p. 403.

⁹² W. Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*, tr. eng. by H. Zohn, London, NLB, 1973.

(1865)⁹³, a composition that describes the contradictions fostering in modernity, which the artists from that moment on will try to provide a solution to this condition. The loss of the halo is the symbol of the artist's social status and function. The artist finds himself at the margins of the capitalist economy, losing its function gives him freedom but also a sense of uselessness, being not part of the bourgeoisie order no more. This demised condition in modernity is articulated by Baudelaire as «What is art? Prostitution»⁹⁴ because the artist becomes a producer who sells the product made in the marketplace, a process that commodifies everything, including spiritual products such as the work of art. Once the artist realizes the situation, the truth about the ideological foundations of the bourgeois society can be revealed to others. The artist can thus retrieve a new and revolutionary function. When the role of the artist in society is unveiled, to regain one's usefulness the artist must revolutionize and act in accordance.

The dynamic of the loss of the halo goes one step further, and Marx and Engels in the '*Manifesto of the Communist Party*' reveal its nature:

The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honoured and looked to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage-labourers⁹⁵

The halo is shown as a transient characteristic of the artist that the bourgeoisie took away. Thus, the halo is a construction, structured as a myth from an idealist tradition that disguises the relationship between the artist and the other producers that perform the same practice. The halo becomes a product of capitalism that conceals the relations with the dominant class, perpetuating the notion that art is timeless and indestructible. The artist, as an individual develops an understanding of the uniqueness of its activity, this constitutes the halo and positions the artist as a 'prophet/poet'.

⁹³ C. Baudelaire, *The Parisian Prowler: Le spleen de Paris, petits poèmes en prose*, tr. eng. by E. K. Kaplan, Athens, University of Georgia Press, 1989, p. 113.

⁹⁴ C. Baudelaire, *Intimate Journals*, tr. eng. by C. Isherwood, London, Black Spring Press, 1989, p. 3 cit in: L. Somigli, *Legitimizing the Artist: Manifesto Writing and European Modernism 1885-1915*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2003, p. 9.

⁹⁵ Manifesto of the Communist Party in K. Marx and F. Engels, *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works in two volumes*, Vol. I, Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955, p. 36.

The halo [...] it is now recognized for what it is, an artificial glow that can be removed just as easily as it was bestowed. In plain terms, its ideological function becomes evident. For this reason, even after recovering the halo the poet is obsessed by the thought of its loss: he now knows that it can be lost, and that once this happens he will have to work through that loss either to find a new badge of office or to understand how to operate within a crowd that no longer recognizes his difference.⁹⁶

The author, as Michel Foucault argued,⁹⁷ is a ‘function of discourse’ and not merely a biographical figure. A definition of the author is found in a historical parameter because the structure and operation within discourse differ depending on the historical moment. The conception of the author originates in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth-century and persists in our time. The artist must validate to himself, to its competitors, and to its audience, the presence of the halo and the manifesto becomes a vehicle to do so.

The avant-garde in Modernity

Charles Baudelaire⁹⁸ gives us insight into the problems concerning modernism which developed before the turn of the century: (1) freedom of thought and expression was dissipated by political commitment, regulating the artist’s values; (2) after the acknowledgment of the loss of the halo the artist renegotiates its social role in bourgeois society. The notion of avant-garde entails a division inside the cultural production, the artist who belongs in the social structures of the dominant economic arena and those who belong in other subalternate positions, with greater freedom of expression.

The term ‘avant-garde’ was originally a military word used to elect the advance force of an army, it was assumed in the Nineteenth Century by the ‘utopian socialists’

⁹⁶ L. Somigli, *Legitimizing the Artist: Manifesto Writing and European Modernism 1885-1915*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2003, p. 12.

⁹⁷ M. Foucault, ‘What Is an Author?’ in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, tr. eng. by D.F. Bouchard and S. Simon, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1977, pp. 113–38.

⁹⁸ C. Baudelaire, *Intimate Journals*, tr. eng. by C. Isherwood, London, Black Spring Press, 1989.

nominating a small group of individuals who elected themselves as ‘advanced’ in relation to their contemporaries, thanks to their advancement they deemed themselves as closer to a utopian future that was already in the making. This is the alignment that the manifesto will adopt, an alignment of progress in which history is unified and humanity moves in it, with some individuals ahead and some behind. From politics to art, the cultural movements began to present themselves as advanced groups, bringing the value of the new into the art world. Fame resided in being ahead of others and not anymore in intrinsic qualities. The avant-garde brings with it more than a progressive advancement, it implies a collective enterprise established with brute force that brings with it the privilege of becoming a member of a movement or group that arrived before everyone else.

The exposed position of the avant-garde requires not only individual daring and recklessness but also some form of military discipline.⁹⁹

The manifesto became the perfect tool for creating and proclaiming a collective identity and discipline of the avant-garde movements. The term entered the art world before the manifesto, but our understanding of the avant-garde come forth when the two were unified, and Futurism made this enduring move. When the avant-garde has at its disposal this legitimizing vehicle it could formulate its advancement, its break with the past and kinship to the future, formulating a concise, aggressive single collective voice. The manifesto ensured the creation of the avant-garde, and the avant-garde prepared for the arrival of the manifesto.

Within modernity aesthetics developed as an autonomous sphere of experience, splitting art and life. From Terry Eagleton’s¹⁰⁰ explanation, with modernity the spheres of experience (cognitive, ethico-political, and libidinal-aesthetic) became autonomous of each other, developing their own set of rules to legitimization, rules so different from each other that could not find a point of junction. Thus, aesthetics arose at the moment when art was not a political force because it was integrated into

⁹⁹ M. Puchner, *Poetry of the revolution: Marx manifestos, and the avant-gardes* (2005), Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2006, p. 77.

¹⁰⁰ T. Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1990, p. 366.

the capitalist mode of production. Aesthetics assured a space of experience where capitalism would be repressed, at least for the moment.

The responses to this situation are varied and catalogized under 'modernism'. The reality of the artist that seems to be integrated or marginalized in the capitalist system of commodity exchange speaks volumes on the social and cultural models that in the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth century were established in bourgeoisie society. The enduring or surfacing of different social structures of the social organization raised tensions because of: (1) the existence of the aristocratic class, (2) the development of technologies from the second industrial revolution, and (3) the imminent revolution from the setting in of socialism and of organized global parties. These three factors motivate and arouse different articulations of modernism. To begin with, Futurism responded with the celebration of technology, questioning how and if it should incorporate the larger audience with the artist.

What connects the various tendencies of modernism is their dismissal of the values of the bourgeoisie. The manifesto in the hands of the avant-garde announces different articulated breaks from traditional aestheticism, cultural and political forms, proclaiming themselves the leaders of the new and of the present moment, an archetypical gesture of modernity. The manifesto as a modernist genre is composed as between theory and action, politics and aesthetics, and the old and the new, integrating art and life to shape the future. Thus, the praxis of modernism depends on the manifesto, employing it in different manners. These varied and competing aesthetic programs of modernism are contingent upon the genre to outline what, where, and to what aim modernism is.

Moreover, the different manners in which the avant-garde present themselves are due to the loss of the halo. The halo becomes lost to contemporary life, swallowed by the modern city leaving the artist to work out a different configuration in its relationship with the environment and society. Consequently, the recovery of the halo means restoring its relationship with the public. But the avant-garde decides to reject the halo because it becomes the symbol of the institution, a sequence of rules and guidelines enforced by the bourgeoisie public on the artist. The avant-garde discards the halo in different forms and manners, such as Futurism who initially used

desacralized art, and the artist wanting to become one with the public and modern life.

Opposition as fuel

The manifesto becomes a debating ground to expose the movement's theories and practices on the role of the artist and art, confronting the public with the problem of the loss of the halo and trying to formulate new ways to legitimize their activity. Being written by those who practice what they formulate, the point of view is internal, stating and demanding what it believes and as such the different avant-garde movements «meet, converge, and converse»¹⁰¹ in the manifesto.

Distancing oneself from other movements came forth because of the anxiety related to influence. The manifesto becomes the best tool and weapon to differentiate one movement from another in the struggle of such anxiety. Like the '*Manifesto of the Communist Party*' by Marx and Engels, who distanced themselves from the 'utopian socialism', the text form requires a meditation on history described in cycles and evolutions. The avant-garde manifesto does the same by condemning their predecessors and opponents, seeking to write from their point of view the history of art, to declare a new departure. The realization of the project was not the primary interest, the focus was on:

setting one ism against the next, and of laying claim to the future at the expense of the past. What succeeded, in other words, was the revolutionary historiography dictated by the form of the manifesto.¹⁰²

This specific effect comes from the manifesto genre, shaping the theories of the avant-garde because of its historiography. The constructed history of ruptures, began an infinite loop of successions and breaks from the past to prepare for a different future:

¹⁰¹ *Manifesto: a century of isms*, ed. by M. A. Caws, Lincoln and London, University of Nebraska Press, 2001, p. xxv.

¹⁰² M. Puchner, *Poetry of the revolution: Marx manifestos, and the avant-gardes* (2005), Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2006, pp. 70-1.

Futurism breaks with Symbolism; Vorticism breaks with Futurism; Dadaism breaks with everything that came before; Surrealism breaks with Dadaism; Situationism breaks with Surrealism; Fluxus breaks with Dada; Conceptual Art breaks with Fluxus.¹⁰³

The avant-garde deprives itself of a political objective to pursue an aesthetic objective and the manifesto becomes the weapon to establish the movement in an expanded global competition. Antagonism regulates society because social encounters become economic relations. Shifting from a feudal society to a bourgeois one hinged on the individual subject, whose relationship with society was determined by its individual accomplishments calibrated in economic terms, viewed as such in proper society. The drive for development and self-success became part of the narrative of capitalism. Aestheticism becomes the general guideline to all social relations assuring to reunite the individual self-interest and the collective, stopping the consequences developed from capitalism.

The epistemic rupture¹⁰⁴ marked by the unfolding of bourgeois capitalism as the dominant mode of production arose modernity. The term modernism becomes a synonym for the formal experimentation, that according to Marx and Engels¹⁰⁵ creates and destroys. The modernist text becomes a rhetorical apparatus developed by the writer for the individual, rather than for the public, causing the disablement of the homogeneous public and the emergence of separate public spheres, independent and specialized. This connects Marx with Marinetti in their use of the manifesto, moving from unification to a decentralization:

¹⁰³ M. Puchner, *Manifesto = Theatre*, "Theatre Journal", Vol. 54, No. 3, 2002, p. 451.

¹⁰⁴ M. Foucault notion of epistemic rupture: overcoming the obstacles to thought posed by knowledge itself thus changing the condition of what is and can be known by adding and reorganizing knowledge.

¹⁰⁵ S. R. Amidon, *Manifestoes: A Study in Genre*, Doctoral dissertation, University of Rhode Island, 2003, p. 95.

Modernity is entrenched as a central organizing principle only when it has apparently decentered any such central principle and disseminated power to the various autonomous discourses.¹⁰⁶

In Marx and Engels pre-modern manifesto occurred an epistemic alteration that transferred the use of the manifesto genre as a 'call to arms' to the avant-garde. The political manifesto influenced aesthetic manifestoes in their political coordinates. Even if detached from political history, the aesthetic manifesto remains correlated to the history of revolutionary writing. To write a manifesto means to be connected to the socialist history of the '*Manifesto of the Communist Party*' by Marx and Engels. The avant-garde chose to absorb and accept this lineage and to use it to their advantage. The aesthetic manifesto remains aligned with socialism, but they do not have to be identified with the cause of socialism to use this genre. As Marinetti chose to redirect and deflect the revolutionary politics of the genre because Futurism manifestoes necessity was modernity itself.

A new literary genre

The end of a century society perceived the historical condition as stopping in itself, the future project is taken away and development disrupted. This standstill is understood by Futurism and inaugurates the new century by developing the new cultural perimeter by removing the past and its Nineteenth-century post-Romantic culture. But the past cannot be removed completely since it is its departure and as such, it resurfaces in the language and the figures used in the manifestoes of the movement. The attack against the past is not merely just to affirm the ingenuity of Futurism because it would reaffirm its presence within the tradition and become its continuation. On the contrary, it rejects history as such, repressing and suppressing the past to embrace action.

Modernity is conceived as a new technological and industrialized society in the early Twentieth century and it is exemplified by Milan, which Marinetti turns into a symbol of its time. Moreover, modernity is understood as a form of inclination that erases what came before to finally reach a true present, eradicated from the past.

¹⁰⁶ A. Hewitt, *Fascist Modernism: Aesthetics, Politics, and the Avant-Garde*, Stanford, Stanford UP, 1993, p. 43 cit in: *Ibid*, p. 96.

[A] point of origin that marks a new departure. This combined interplay of deliberate forgetting with an action that is also a new origin reaches the full power of the idea of modernity.¹⁰⁷

Futurism assembles its doctrine as a point of origin, a new beginning that is set in place of the literary and artistic production that preceded it, thematizing the very condition of possibility. From that point on, the movements of the Twentieth century would re-evaluate and assess the legitimacy and functions of the models of literary communication that came from tradition. Consequently, the production of manifestoes is intended as a textual site where the process of renegotiation with society is employed, formulating new ways to legitimize the relationship between the artist and its audience.

The foundation of Futurism and the publication of the first manifesto is emblematic of the shift from an aesthetic poetic to an aesthetic of modernity, adopting new thematics to disclose a new form of literary communication. As such, Futurism reversed the logic underlining aesthetics until then, defining the work of art in modernity as fleeting and impermanent, coming to life in the moment of reception. The practice of writing became the solution to the reversed logic of aestheticism, foregrounding «the function of the audience in the production of signification».¹⁰⁸

The articulation of distinct narratives ushered to a comprehensive regeneration of the development of literary communication which gave birth to a new literary genre: the manifesto. As an established literary genre, the manifesto is no longer questioned in its existence. Marinetti with the form of the manifesto transforms what was a political genre into a literary one, because of:

¹⁰⁷ F. Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, tr. eng by R.J. Hollingdale, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983, p. 148 cit in: L. Somigli, *Legitimizing the Artist: Manifesto Writing and European Modernism 1885-1915*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2003, p. 118.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, p. 220.

Marinetti's virtuoso handling of oratorical devices, striking poetic images, narrative segments full of adventure and suspense, and his overall tone of bravado.¹⁰⁹

Reaching word-wide and continental resonance, the manifesto genre used by Marinetti contributed to the European culture, transmitting an aesthetic of rupture thanks to the publication of the first manifesto: *'The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism'* (1909).

Using rhetorical and formal tactics to achieve a radical break with the culture of the past, the question of origin and originality came forth from Marinetti's historical narrative of futurism. What Marinetti intends with an utter begging, is exemplified by Benjamin:

The term origin is not intended to describe the process by which the existent comes into being, but rather to describe that which emerges from the process of becoming and disappearance.¹¹⁰

Altering the notion of beginning, the emergence of Futurism is due to a dialectic process where Marinetti had to evaluate and dispose of different alternatives in light of the position that the artist and the intellectual had in modernity, forging a way out and proposing a new project to escape the norms and models that came from past tradition. As such, the first manifesto exemplifies this by proposing the new while being haunted by the past, leaving traces of tradition in the language used in the manifestos. Marinetti wants to launch the Twentieth century while proving closure for the Nineteenth and in this flux lies Futurism originality. Furthermore, the originality quality lies in the use of the manifesto to unleash its program, previously used for political purposes and not aesthetic ones. The manifesto genre was used for art and as art, marketing it as an artistic product. Marinetti did not create and adapt a

¹⁰⁹ *Russian Futurism through Its Manifestoes 1912-1928*, ed. by A. Lawton, trs. eng by A. Lawton and H. Eagle, Ithaca, Cornell UP, 1988, p. 4 cit in: S. R. Amidon, *Manifestoes: A Study in Genre*, Doctoral dissertation, University of Rhode Island, 2003, p. 23.

¹¹⁰ W. Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, tr. eng. by J. Osborne, London, NLB, 1977, p. 45 cit in: L. Somigli, *Legitimizing the Artist: Manifesto Writing and European Modernism 1885-1915*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2003, p. 95.

literary genre to his necessities but treated the manifesto genre as a political and aesthetic object, as products of capitalism. Thus, attacking the notion that art is separate from everyday life. This act acknowledges the discourse of the sacralization of art and wants to «pry an object from its shell, to destroy its aura».¹¹¹

Futurism manifestoes constructed a new kind of manifesto by functioning as a political document with an artistic purpose. Marinetti decided to break with the communist reference of Marx and Engels *Manifesto* and emancipated the literary manifesto from the revolutionary one. Futurism brought together the poetics of symbolism and the manipulative clear-cut manifesto rhetoric, creating a poetics that pursued the condition of the manifesto genre. Transferring the «[d]irect naming, the striking noun, the perfect label»¹¹² to poetry. The manifesto of the Futurism movement created a poetry of aggression, forcefulness, and conviction. Increasing the characteristic of the expression of the genre, Marinetti extracts the main action of the revolutionary manifesto: the rupture with the past to summon a different future and the future is Futurism. Rejecting the past as such and invoking the future as the movement in itself, Futurism makes the very content of the movement the manifesto form. As Winkiel suggests:

The manifesto, [...] plunges to the heart of the present moment in order to rethink the relations between the past and novel expectations of the future. More than a literary reflection on the past and future, the manifesto demands urgent action in order to remake the world in accordance with this temporal realignment.¹¹³

A conflict between the political and aesthetic manifesto was still in order. Even if Futurism acquired social and political features of the revolutionary manifesto the two remained separated in two spheres. A fusion between the two did not occur between the two domains but in its place the manifesto found itself in politics and aesthetics,

¹¹¹ W. Benjamin, *Illuminations* (1955), ed. by H. Arendt, tr. eng. by H. Zohn, New York, Schocken Books, 1968, p. 223.

¹¹² M. Puchner, *Poetry of the revolution: Marx manifestos, and the avant-gardes* (2005), Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2006, p. 74.

¹¹³ L. Winkiel, *Modernism, race, and manifestos*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 24.

communicating with each other even if separate. As such, the Futurist manifesto became a form of originality of modernist literature because it utilizes «a politics of the manifest».¹¹⁴ Moreover, the Futurism movement was the first that organized itself as a modern party, with a propaganda strategy and an administration that organized the movement's activities.

Marx and Engels's influence comes forth as Marinetti referred to the movement as composed by the proletariat and directed the manifesto to a proletarian public made of intellectuals. The goal of the Futurism manifestoes was to unify art with action which is akin to Marx's idea of revolution. Despite the differences in style and content of the two manifestos, the first Futurist manifesto was in debt of Marx and Engels *Manifesto* in its configuration. Furthermore, the emergence of the Futurism movement was composed of the working class, set against classicism and traditional Italian art. The movement functioned in a diverse political and aesthetic transformation that was occurring throughout Europe.

As Marjorie Perloff states, Marinetti conceived:

what was essentially a new genre, a genre that might meet the needs of a mass audience even as, paradoxically, it insisted on the avant-garde, the esoteric, the anti-bourgeoisie.¹¹⁵

The launch of Futurism

The first Futurism manifesto, '*The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism*', had international recognition when it was published in February 1909 on the front page of 'Le Figaro' the Parisian journal. It was published with the solemn headline of 'Le Futurism' and was headed by an editorial note that doubted its disruptive ability. In fact, Futurism was neither the first literary movement to present itself in European culture, to put pen to paper an aesthetic program. Even the program in itself was not exemplary of originality because its philosophical thought came from Nietzsche's anti-foundationalism with Marinetti's contribution of an idealized romanticism for

¹¹⁴ A. Hewitt, *Fascist Modernism: Aesthetics, Politics, and the Avant-Garde*, Stanford, Stanford UP, 1993, p. 16 cit in: S. R. Amidon, *Manifestoes: A Study in Genre*, Doctoral dissertation, University of Rhode Island, 2003, p. 23.

¹¹⁵ M. Perloff, "*Violence and Precision*": *The Manifesto as Art Form*, "Chicago Review", Vol. 34, No. 2, 1984, p. 66.

war and modern technology.¹¹⁶ What characterized Futurism was its artistic and extra-artistic ideology summed with its use of the manifesto genre.

To launch Futurism Marinetti made three decisive decisions: the language was French, the place was Paris and to publish the manifesto in 'Le Figaro', the ideal journal for artistic declarations during the Belle Epoque. Paris was the ideal place because it had the infrastructure to unveil new programs and movements as magazines and newspapers that put on the front page the artistic declarations.

To include the term manifesto in the title happened retrospectively, with successive publications Marinetti acknowledged the strength that came with calling such texts 'manifesto' and decided to use the term at his disposal. He became the first person to use the term methodically and to produce a great number of self-declared manifestoes. Using the term 'manifesto' conferred authority to the movement and its author or at the very least it was the best way to claim authority in the artistic field. Marinetti reached a self-consciousness in hindsight even if the example of Marx and Engels *Manifesto* and its successors was visible as a successful act of foundation. This occurred because establishing a movement entails:

a mediation between past and future; naming something means ensuring that others will respect and follow an act of baptizing once it has occurred.¹¹⁷

Once the launch was a success, many more Futurism manifestos sprung out and reached all of the European continents and further, announcing a new genre. Futurism taught how the manifesto should be handled and successive movements, especially from the avant-garde, would employ this strategy.

The fact that it was Futurism who exposed the norms and functions of the manifesto and not Symbolism (also named the first aesthetic declaration as 'manifesto' retroactively) is because of its aesthetic doctrine, utterly in conflict with the manifestoes language and form. Symbolism was set against the form of direct

¹¹⁶ S. R. Amidon, *Manifestoes: A Study in Genre*, Doctoral dissertation, University of Rhode Island, 2003, p. 100.

¹¹⁷ M. Puchner, *Poetry of the revolution: Marx manifestos, and the avant-gardes* (2005), Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2006, p. 73.

naming and even if rivalry and influence were comprehended, the decisive language of the manifesto was never met with the archetypal and complex style of Symbolism.

Futurism speech act

Marinetti took from the revolutionary manifesto its theorizing tradition and transformed it into an antitheoretical text of action speech. Action speech is part of Marx and Engels *Manifesto*, but it was drafted with the addition of a historical narrative and a scientific, logical, and theoretical discourse. The war-driven Futurism manifestoes instead are permeated with the attributes of battle: «aggression, agitation, rupture, violence».¹¹⁸ Marinetti removed the historical and theoretical discourse of Marx and Engels *Manifesto* and diminished it to the most impatient and explosive speech acts.

Dismissing theory and reflection for the spoken speech was another procedure to turn language into action, embracing a theory of the performed declamation. Enforcing the doctrine of spoken speech by reciting the manifestos on stage. Many manifestoes were firstly performed and then printed, the layout of such manifestos indicate the declarative and spoken word on stage. As part of the theater performance, manifestoes endured a declamation based on the depersonalization and dehumanized theater of Futurism.

Marinetti's conception of a specifically futurist declamation gives us further hints about the poetics of his manifestos. Opposing stasis, the manifesto uses dynamism; rather than studious elaborations, we have a short, "synoptic" concentration of words; and instead of continual discourse, Marinetti privileges the wild gesturing of arms and legs.¹¹⁹

Words were used for the tone of the manifesto and the futurist performance is where the confrontational attitude towards the reader came forth, quantifiable in the atmosphere of the futurist theater events. The textual practice rejects linearity and conformity, opening up the interpretive possibilities. As such, the moment of reception encapsulates the moment when meaning is produced, the creation of

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 86.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 87.

meaning is transferred to the reader and/or viewer. Meaning becomes momentary and fleeting, lasting until the communication is in order and then replaced with a new communication. Consequently, the theater is where the experimentation occurs and the text is swapped with performance, «a communicative action open to infinite variations».¹²⁰

For Futurism the theater was lived and thought of as a condition that could be applied to all forms of art, incorporating the theatricality feature to alter, distort and demolish art. Conquering the distance between author and spectator for its collaborative practice, the theater is used as a parody that destroys the aura of the work of art. This entails an original view of the loss of the halo, by incorporating the circumstance completely. The artist becomes the producer that acts and writes for the present moment, to involve his contemporaries and his audience. This notion was set against the modernist consideration that viewed the theatrical circumstance as a hazard to art and wanted to remove theatricality to maintain their perception of a genuine and authentic art form. Futurism aimed to change the notion of art and art itself beyond recognition.

Futurism handled theatricality in a different manner than the revolutionary manifesto, declaring the supremacy of theatrics over speech acts. Revolutionary manifestoes intended to claim the authority they did not yet possess, and the avant-garde manifesto blatantly admits it, taking theatricality to its extreme.

¹²⁰ L. Somigli, *Legitimizing the Artist: Manifesto Writing and European Modernism 1885-1915*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2003, p. 144.

Chapter 2: History has only recently passed: a comparison between the historical manifestoes and Rosefeldt's *Manifesto* monologue.

2.1 Life has to be produced to become conscious.

Berlin-based artist Julian Rosefeldt (b. 1965) is internationally renowned for his visually lavish and scrupulously devised film installations. The artist creates complex and compelling multi-screen installations that carry the viewers into a surreal and theatrical realm. Within the episodic arrangements, Rosefeldt uses familiar cinematic images and devices to explore themes of dislocation, alienation, social and psychological disruption as myth and identity. Inspired by art, film and architecture alike his narratives are often ambiguous and elliptical, employing humour and irony to approach the viewer. Rosefeldt has a Master of Arts in Architecture (1994), which shaped his interest in engaging audiences with his visually rich and immersive large scale installations. As the artist states: «I was interested in the audiences becoming part of the work, and really embracing them the way architecture does.»¹²¹ Furthermore, architecture is utilized in his general approach to his work by utilizing different scales, and in his working strategy when directing a team as a filmmaker. During his studies in Munich and Barcelona, he had different jobs as constructing and designing stage sets and as a photographer. This developed his interest in constructing realities and deconstructing the cinematic illusion, as such, construction and deconstruction play an important role in his film installations. As Gregori reveals:

Even as early as his thesis project, a film arose in collaboration with Piero Steinle; Rosefeldt has stayed behind the camera even after a range of diverse installations with his former classmate.¹²²

A complex visual quality is significant in his work, where the viewer is immersed in copious stage sets that are projected in a cinematographic style onto multiscreens.

¹²¹ I. Soetomo, *Architecture, Film and The Poetry of Art Manifestos with Julian Rosefeldt*, "Whiteboard Journal", 4 March 2020.

¹²² D. Gregori, *Film Artist Julian Rosefeldt: "Manifesto" and "Masquerade"*, "The Theatre Times", 13 June 2017.

Rosefeldt's style is calm and simple, and the film sequences are long with unobtrusive editing that allows the actor's performance to breathe, making them exist in the space. The artist cinematic accuracy is correlated to the brightness and intensity of the images, given by the 16mm film which the artist has been using since 2001. Affiliated to the vocabulary of cinema and production processes, the artist belongs to the generation of artists whose work draws from cinematic conventions. The artist sees a clear distinction between artist's film and video art, as he has stated «filmmaking allows one to construct an image layer by layer, by forcing you to work more carefully on light, color, texture, hues, etc.»¹²³

As contemporary media artists are freed in digital editing technology, artists as Rosefeldt create a viewing experience that can be described as cinematic or immersive. From the early stage of performance-based video art, contemporary artists have evolved in an idea-driven process that possesses a performative component but is more abstract and poetic than before. The cinematic component is linked to the traditional cinema characteristics as «lush images, inventive camerawork and lighting (cinematography), large-scale projection, and passive viewing in a darkened theater.»¹²⁴ Video art is claiming the moving image domain and as expanded cinema, installation is the new cinematic relationship based on spectator and image.

In the lapse of a few years, the relationship between the installation and the spectator has shifted. In 2004 an interactive relationship is seen between the viewer and the images in the multiscreen installation where, as Joselit establishes, «video is transformed from an apparatus within a space to a new electronic skin that engulfs architectural elements.»¹²⁵ This has been transformed today, where viewers navigate in the imagery projected, which requires movement and a multi-layered mental engagement with the image, sound, language, scale, and architectural placement of

¹²³ Julian Rosefeldt: *Film Works*, eds. by S. Berg, A. Franke, K. Gregos, D. Thorp, Ostfildern, Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2008, p. 46.

¹²⁴ *Resolutions 3: Global Networks of Video*, eds. by M. S. Ma and E. Suderburg, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2012, p. 112.

Furthermore Rush observed that: The use of the term *cinematic* in this context is perhaps unfair given the voluminous controversies over medium specificity in media criticism. All of this could get unnecessarily convoluted if we were to parse the word media itself, which in this context refers to electronic media, as opposed to the fundamental components of all artworks—that is, *media* as the plural of *medium*.

¹²⁵ D. Joselit, *Inside the Light Cube*, “Artforum”, v. 42, n. 7, 2004.

surfaces.¹²⁶ As such, Rosefeldt utilizes an «interactivity in an expanded understanding of ‘actor’ as one who must physically manage the installation to ‘see’ it.»¹²⁷ A cinematic practice becomes indistinguishable from a filming and editing procedure of traditional cinema where the viewing experience of the large-scale multichannel works implies an enhanced experience of the moving image.

The artist filmworks thus operate within a cinematic framework that has had a considerable influence on art production over the last decade. Consequently, the production of the artist film installation is collaborative and labour-intensive, constructing elaborated sets and engaging a traditional cinematic crew. The artist mainly works with the cinematic episode and explores the painterly possibilities of film, formulating elliptical narrative with a style described by Weibel as the «triumph of the eye which places itself at the service of the storyteller.»¹²⁸

Rosefeldt oeuvre examines various aspects of the human condition and is concerned with displacement, estrangement, and social and psychological detachment. With a meticulously choreographed sense of space that utilizes a decelerated rhythm, his cinematic quality is achieved through atmospheric lighting and aestheticized staging. The spectacular nature of his images is due to his virtue as a filmmaker, being:

capable of creating images of remarkable beauty and iconic resonance, while at the same time keeping the viewer intellectually inquisitive and on his or her toes.¹²⁹

Rosefeldt prefers to not assume an ideological position in his film installation, thus desisting to manipulate the viewer in his understanding, conclusions are drawn in the mind of the spectator, leaving the narration open to interpretation. Furthermore, in his pictorial language, he tends to exaggerate the artificiality of the image, investigating reality to cause the «profound truths lying behind the spectacle to

¹²⁶ *Resolutions 3: Global Networks of Video*, eds. by M. S. Ma and E. Suderburg, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2012, p. 114.

¹²⁷ *Ivi*.

¹²⁸ *Fast Forward: Sammlung Goetz*, exh. cat. ZKM Center for Art and Media, eds. by I. Goetz and S. Urbaschek, München, Karlsruhe Ingvild Goetz, 2003, p. 434.

¹²⁹ *Julian Rosefeldt: Film Works*, eds. by S. Berg, A. Franke, K. Gregos, D. Thorp, Ostfildern, Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2008, p. 45

emerge all the more clearly».¹³⁰ The abandonment of a distinct point of view that informs the viewer guarantees an impact of his work enhanced by the play with the vocabularies of exaggeration, irony and parody. This is correlated to a balance between a richly displayed and detailed realism and a destabilization of familiar contemporary reality, without giving a satisfactory outcome to the reality displayed in his studies of the contemporary society, inciting meaning through allegory.

The film installation *Manifesto*, as Ljungbäck states, can be situated in the context of experimental film, following its traditional techniques, strategies and thought, as «appropriated language, voice-over narration, non-narrative structure, directly addressing the spectator, performativity, self-reflexivity, and duration.»¹³¹ The film installation is also situated within the tradition of video art, subverting the traditions of Hollywood films and the industrial cinema, adapting the conventions of commercial film and disrupting them. As such, Rosefeldt utilizes constructed film sets on sound stages and collaborates with a production crew. *Manifesto* was shot in HD before converting it to video for the exhibition. Moreover, the work of art keeps in mind scale in featuring long-shots, vast landscapes and architectural structures. Rosefeldt's image and narrative are determined by an obsessive need to fill every frame and scene, 'a material overload' that makes the underlying emptiness more acute in his endless and impassively scans of a slow-motion camera and pendulum movement in the picture frame, emphasizing the ritualistic and senseless characteristic of the task being executed.¹³² As Rosefeldt states: «The image is intended to hypnotize the viewer. A pseudo-scientific experiment is built into it as you keep watching you become part of it.»¹³³

The immersive film installation

¹³⁰ M. Engler, *Made in Germany: Young Contemporary Art from Germany*, Exh. cat. (Kestneregesellschaft, Kunstverein Hannover, Hannover, Germany, and Sprengel Museum Hannover, Hannover, Germany, May 25-Aug. 26, 2007), Ostfildern/ New York, Hatje Cantz and D.A.P., 2007, p. 226.

¹³¹ H. Ljungbäck, From Art Gallery to Movie Theatre, *AM Journal*, No. 15, 2018, p. 136.

¹³² *Julian Rosefeldt: Film Works*, eds. by S. Berg, A. Franke, K. Gregos, D. Thorp, Ostfildern, Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2008, p. 10.

¹³³ L. Dezfouli, *Julian Rosefeldt: Manifesto*, "Beat".

The artist monumental work can be placed in an immersive cinema rooted in digital technology, that while exhibited creates an overwhelming effect due to the large multi-channel screens (16:9 video screens). Digital video has become a tool for hybrid artists as Rosefeldt to use technology in engaging the cinematic image. With video equipment being easily accessible, the challenge for video artists has become to differentiate themselves from amateurs and the practitioners of narrative and commercial cinema. Therefore, artists tend to associate themselves with cinema or movies characteristics and production.

In contemporary art the traditional cinematic moving image and video art practices have remained separate, this is due to the fact that artists were first engaged with traditional practices of art and have been absorbed by galleries and museums and not by cinema houses. As Rush emphasizes:

Artists, to be viable, and not considered precious by seeking the relative protection of the art world, must make a good case for why their work should be seen in the context of the visual arts and not subjected to the harsh realities of the film world, even the ‘art film’ world.¹³⁴

As such, artists decide to utilize multi-screen channels and a ‘short film’ format, which lasts four or five minutes ascribing themselves to the context of the visual arts system. Rosefeldt for *Manifesto* decided to make his sequences last ten minutes and thirty seconds, hybridizing the form from video art to a cinematic correlative.

Placed in a gallery, multi-channel installations support a type of interaction from the viewer, that encounters the work of art for a contained period of time and then move on to the next work of art, this succinct time frame defined the video art component and its success in the gallery space. Furthermore, affordable projectors made the installation expression the preferred form of showing videos, as for a single-channel and multi-screen format. Therefore, multi-channel works of art become commonplace in video art and in the hybridization of the form, making the audiovisual structure entirely and instantly available, giving freedom to the viewer to decide in which order to view the multi-screen installation.

¹³⁴ M. Rush, *Video Art* (2003), London, Thames & Hudson, 2007, p. 214.

As *Manifesto* is a film installation that is meant to be projected in a single place where thirteen screens are installed, the viewer can move freely from screen to screen. Moreover, the depicted situations are inspired by the manifesto genre and more specifically the aesthetic manifesto rhetoric, as such, they are not depicting a single narrative that develops over time but distinct narratives that are correlated in their approach to the manifesto genre.

Rosefeldt theatricality is situated in the performance of a single actress, Cate Blanchett, throughout twelve of the thirteen screens. Theatrical works are textual structures defined by scripts and expressed through the performance piece, involving a deliberate creative activity that can be evaluated from an aesthetic point of view. This evaluation is made accessible from the screening of such performance, which makes the structure accessible without the performance taking place at the moment. Therefore, it is based on the aesthetic evaluation of a mechanical act that is taking place, through the medium of film. Consequently, the theatricality of the video installation is based on the medium's specificity.

Correlated to the theatre, installation is characterized by space, time and fiction. The space and temporality of the moving images imply movement comparable to the movements of the stage performed by the actors. Fiction produces an immersive effect, and the spectators find themselves inside the narration of the videos and the architectural space of the installation. Thus, as Roman states «the theatricalization of art is embodied in an artistic form that is directly linked to cinema: video.»¹³⁵

Installation is devised as a work that appropriates the space in which it is exhibited, perpetuating a total aesthetic experience and by extension, a video installation combines video with an architectural and sculptural proposition. As such, it creates an environment in which the image is integrated from the apparatus that exhibits the moving images be it a monitor, screen or projector. A close connection between theatre and video is found in their treatment of space and time of representation, as video affirms its presence in space and time and its illusion is enabled from the screen and the environment in which it is displayed. The theatrical dimension of the film installation is an affirmation of the specificity of a visual language and does not lead to a total work of art in the gallery or museum space. The spatiality of the

¹³⁵ M. Roman, *On Stage The Theatrical Dimension of Video Imaged*, Bristol, Intellect Books Limited, 2016, p. 9.

moving image is constructed by artists through means of multiple supports and constructions of different types of montages in which the images are set against in space, engaging the viewer in its relationship with the moving image.

The immersive process utilized by Rosefeldt in his film installations entails that the spectator is aware of his surroundings and his reception, shifting its relation to the moving image. The film installation transforms the spectator into an actor which by moving between the multi-channel work of art experiences a reception that becomes performative in its nature, being in control of its reception. While entering the space of projection the viewer is immersed in the imaginary of the moving image, that while it is constructed in and by the image it also involves the spectators choice to position himself in regard to the work of art in the space. The structure of the film installation combines the moving images with the spatialization of sound and its architectural structure, offering a space that engages the spectator with the representation of the work of art. Going beyond the framework of the moving image through the exhibition space, Rosefeldt offers an immersive experience that calls attention to the relation between the spectator's body and gaze. This is sustained by activating an understanding in the spectator about «a way of thinking about perception and a questioning of the relations to the world that subtend it.»¹³⁶

The exhibition spaces showed *Manifesto* in a closed and isolated space immersed in darkness, a 'black box' that imitates cinema to help the spectator concentrate on the moving image and its relationship with the blackened space and sound. As such, the immersive experience is heightened by taking into account most of the organs of sensations as sight and hearing. Furthermore, this perception of the film installation takes into account the spectators sensation of presence in the space and sense of awareness of what is around them, creating a destabilizing effect that introduces another relationship with the space and the work of art exhibited. Calling into question the spectator's traditional reference points in relation to the work of art, darkness enables the viewer to move forward into the space and use the multi-screens as reference points to move. The body, sight and hearing are modified thus entering into a performative experience that requires mental and physical commitment, pivoted in a state of indeterminacy. Rosefeldt utilizes the immersive experience to

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 12.

question the spectacular registers that are employed to provoke a response in the spectator, as the film installation employs the viewer's body and emotions to compel and dismiss them in the contextualizing manipulation of the moving image.

One must keep into account how the spectator engages with the film installation, Rosefeldt decided to leave *Manifesto* open to interpretation, but does give some guidance to the viewer. A theatrical program was given at the gallery spaces of the film installation that suggested a path that the viewer could follow from one screen to another. Furthermore, the viewer's engagement was encouraged by allowing to take photographs with no flash and posting them on Twitter and Instagram with the hashtag of the gallery where it was exhibited. The viewer's participation could continue outside of the installation spaces where they could engage with the texts cited and collaged together in the *Manifesto*'s script in the libraries of the exhibition spaces.¹³⁷ This was conceived to help the wide range of spectators to understand that the monologue was collaged from different historical manifestoes of the twenty and twenty-first century. As the work of art implies a well-read individual to fully appreciate the content and interpretative gestures utilized by Rosefeldt, the guidance given to the spectators enabled the artist, as Francis states, to «pull off the impressive feat of making these scholarly manifestos digestible, comprehensible and almost conversational.»¹³⁸

2.1.1. Editing: transforming a film installation into a feature film

To place Rosefeldt's work of art in the experimental and cinematic style the film technique was composed in light of his understanding of editing. In *Manifesto* the literal and connotative meanings were brought forwards through the personas, spaces and objects all captured through the moving image. When shooting the work of art, Rosefeldt utilized a handheld camera, long takes with a fixed camera and also a slow-motion shooting. Thus, the artist aimed to create a narration pattern by building the film sequence on it. As cinema is a language that narrates both the real and the imaginary and the truth behind what is displayed, it aims to reflect on its language through symbols exposed in a literal sense. Hence, to comprehend what is happening

¹³⁷ Information retrieved from D. Venning, *Manifestos for Theatre and Nation*, "Performing Arts Journal", Vol. 42, Issue 2 (125), 2020, p. 95.

¹³⁸ L. Francis, *Julian Rosefeldt: An Artist's Manifesto*, "Port magazine", 15 November 2017.

in a film sequence one must take into account the technical codes employed that signify a basic meaning. Therefore, when considering the slow-moving images and the other filmic techniques that are utilized in all the thirteen sequences of *Manifesto*, one recognizes that there is not a lot of editing. As Rosefeldt has stated:

My work is an answer to the modern frequency of editing, there's so much action in contemporary films. If you compare films from 50 years ago to modern day films, there were 1/10 of the cuts.¹³⁹

The sequences are composed utilizing film techniques that portray the first half of the sequences with a calm array of images and the other half to show action. As a representation of ego and alter-ego, Rosefeldt represent two characters inherited in the viewer, one is destructive and one is constructive which intersect into the action that the protagonist, Blanchett, performs. As for the first half of the sequences, the slow-moving images seem condensed in time, and this is devised as an endless loop of the present allowing a linear progression to reset. This specific filmic experience used for the opening scenes portrays a feeling of being in that specific moment and that the protagonist is trapped in one specific experience that the loop enhances through its repetitions. Furthermore, as Gregos has stipulated:

This sense of specific time is also akin to Andrei Tarkovsky's idea of 'sculpting in time,' an idea which sees cinema as the representation of distinctive currents or waves of time, conveyed in the filmic shot by its 'internal rhythm'.¹⁴⁰

As Tarkovsky was opposed to the traditional idea of montage, he believed in an 'internal rhythm' that would be determined by the stress of time that runs through the moving images. A cinematic rhythm is enclosed in the movement within the frame and not in the sequence of shots in time. Akin to this vision, Rosefeldt keeps his editing to a bare minimum and prefers to not split up perception and to not manipulate the viewer in his understanding by utilizing the single frame to give

¹³⁹ L. Dezfouli, *Julian Rosefeldt: Manifesto*, "Beat".

¹⁴⁰ *Julian Rosefeldt: Film Works*, eds. by S. Berg, A. Franke, K. Gregos, D. Thorp, Ostfildern, Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2008, p. 40.

rhythm. This is developed through the use of long takes with a fixed camera and slow-motion shooting. Furthermore, the slow-motion or slow-moving images are enhanced in the ritualistic actions performed as suspended in time. Consequently, the second half of the sequences portrays the time of action that becomes charged and significant.

Manifesto (2015), has been exhibited both as a video installation in art galleries and as a feature film in movie theatres (2017), where Rosefeldt collapsed the barriers between these exhibition spaces. Transforming a film installation into a feature-length film was a process that took almost a year due to editing.

Working with Bobby Good, the editor, Rosefeldt had to create a structure that stitched thirteen scenes together. The aim was not to reproduce the film installation as a sequence of scenes one after the other and as Rosefeldt has stated:

So we understood that we have to replace the nonexisting story or narration with visual narration. Like a visual trip. And that's the art of editing.¹⁴¹

The feature film was produced because the movie industry financed the film installation and asked in exchange for a narrative or single-screen film that could justify the support received for the film installation. Julian Rosefeldt's *Manifesto* has been co-commissioned by the Australian Centre for the Moving Image, the Art Gallery of New South Wales Sydney, and the National Gallery of Hannover. Additionally, the work of art was co-produced by the Burger Collection Hong Kong and the Ruhrtriennale. Furthermore, it was realized with the support of Medienboard or media panel Berlin-Brandenburg and in cooperation with Bayerischer Rundfunk or Bavarian broadcasters.¹⁴²

The result of this finance is an hour-and-a-half-long feature film in an anthology-like format, in which Blanchett portrays twelve characters in thirteen episodes, drawing on the manifestoes that shaped the identity of artistic movements of the last two

¹⁴¹ I. Soetomo, *Architecture, Film and The Poetry of Art Manifestos with Julian Rosefeldt*, "Whiteboard Journal", 4 March 2020.

¹⁴² Information retrieved from *German-Australian Encounters and Cultural Transfers. Global Dynamics in Transnational Lands*, eds. By B. Nickl, E. M. Goździak, I. Herrschner, Singapore, Springer Singapore, 2018, p. 13.

centuries. The film questions what it means to translate the artistic manifesto on screen, and how this may affect the contemporary viewers' relationship with these texts.

Transcending two venues with opposing histories, the film installation concept had to be reconstructed and forgotten, starting the composing of the feature film from scratch. It must be noted that the feature film does not function as an anthology where the single episode could function as a distinct chapter in which causal or narrative relationships are unmotivated. Instead, Rosefeldt was inspired by this mode of composition by imposing a narrative to the collective episodes and correlating them thematically, metaphorically and visually since the film installation was already correlated in the examination of the manifesto genre in its form and secondarily in its content. As such, the feature film transitions from one character to another flawlessly, employing music that was specially composed for the feature film. Furthermore, each scene has a different length and does not lend to chronological order. Ultimately, Rosefeldt and the editor worked on the credit design and the title sequence. The title sequence alternates the names of the historical manifestoes writers with Blanchett's close-up face. As Rosefeldt has stated on the opening credits:

So we thought it was much more interesting to have this accumulation of ideas at the very beginning in this energetic sequence of short edits, two per second, to have them like an intro.¹⁴³

Much as the program made available at the galleries spaces, the sequence tells the spectator which manifestoes will be featured and what characters will appear in the feature film. The title sequence is complete with the production credits that encourage the viewer to perceive the movie as any other theatrical release. *Manifesto* was transformed into a new experience by forming casual relationships and shaping the development of a narrative that takes the form of a feature film, comprehensive of credit sequences and musical cues.

¹⁴³ S. Rezayazdi, *Turning 13 Installation Screens of Cate Blanchett Into One Single-Screen Feature: Julian Rosefeldt on Manifesto*, "Filmmaker Magazine", 9 May 2017.

It is interesting to note that a comparative analysis of *Manifesto* as film installation and as a feature film outlines different behaviours from the spectator. The feature film does not attempt to replicate the installation experience, nor does it bring a version of the installation to the movie theatre. As such, the active participation advised in the installation venue is not replicated or encouraged in the feature film, assuring that the spectators of the movie could inhabit the scenes constructed by the artist.

Different behaviours from the spectator are outlined because of the two sites that entail differing histories and types of reception. Therefore, in the film installation venues, the spectator is given time to think about the statements and their meanings given from the collaged historical manifestoes in relation to the moving image. Instead, in the feature film, the spectator must adjust to the next setting, character and statements. Furthermore, in the movie, the choice of duration and length have been set by Rosefeldt and his editor. Instead, in the gallery space, the spectator can choose his time frame and attention span. Consequently, duration stands at opposite ends in the movie theatre and in the gallery.

As such, feature films tend to have a higher frequency of edits with faster cuts and shorter shots while the film installation images can dwell on contemplative shots as seen in Rosefeldt's film technique. As traditional cinema employs fast editing to develop the narrative, the artist film installation images linger highlighting the spatial and temporal experience over its information and content. Thus, the spectator and its participation are viewed as an essential component to the completion of the work of art in its installation form.

Subsequently, the two venues place different demands on the spectator. In the movie theatre, the experience is primarily temporal. Instead, in the installation venue, the physical spectator's element is required to move through the space to experience the totality of the work of art, making their own choices and shaping their own experience. This is similar to the movie theatre where the spectator can choose where to sit in correspondence to the screen, but the experience will be from one point of view in its duration. Accordingly, in the movie theatre, the spectator is passive thus displaying involuntary attention towards the moving image, as opposed to the installation venue where the spectator is active and the attention given is voluntary in

choosing how to view the moving image. As Rosefeldt has stated, «*Manifesto* is a manifesto in and of itself» and as such reception plays an important role in reaching different types of audiences through different mediums.¹⁴⁴ As the manifesto genre entails through its speech act and form, the manifesto is made to implement change and manipulate the reader or in this case, the viewer, to revolutionize the present moment to achieve a different future. Therefore, the larger the audience, the more chance for efficacy there is for the manifesto to be heard and cause a disruption in the mind of the viewer or reader in his relation to society and the present order.

2.2 Rosefeldt's *Manifesto*: the moving image that focuses on text

Julian Rosefeldt's work of art *Manifesto* first emerged as a film installation in 2015 (Fig. 1) and then was adapted into a 90-minute feature film in 2017, premiering at the Sundance Film Festival. For the purpose of my thesis I will focus on the film installation and not the feature film in exploring the practice utilized by Rosefeldt in exploring and depicting the manifesto genre.

Manifesto presents art movements of the twenty and twenty-first century and their accompanying manifestoes, with the exemption of a fragment quoted from Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels's '*Manifesto of the Communist Party*' of 1848, «All that is solid melts into air», the selection begins at the start of the twentieth century with the '*The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism*' of 1909 by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti and ends shortly after the turn of the century.¹⁴⁵

Manifesto is divided into thirteen different categories conveyed to the audience through thirteen sequences «where film, text and words shock the spectator out of their complacency».¹⁴⁶ Shifting our perception of the prevalent system through visual and audio discord, *Manifesto* explores the present critical discourse of performance art and multi-media presentations in our current time.

¹⁴⁴ S. Rezayazdi, *Turning 13 Installation Screens of Cate Blanchett Into One Single-Screen Feature: Julian Rosefeldt on Manifesto*, "Filmmaker Magazine", 9 May 2017.

¹⁴⁵ 'Manifesto of the Communist Party' in K. Marx and F. Engels, *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works in two volumes*, Vol. I, Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955, p. 37 and F. T. Marinetti, 'The Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism' in A. Danchev, *100 Artists' Manifestos: From the Futurists to the Stuckists*, London, Penguin Books, 2011, pp. 1-8.

¹⁴⁶ D. Price, *German Expressionism: Der Blaue Reiter and Its Legacies*, Manchester, University Press, 2020, p. 28.

The title *Manifesto* is related to Rosefeldt's focus on the text and poetry of the historical manifestoes in his work of art. *Manifesto* is the first film installation where text is part of the artist practice. A characteristic of Rosefeldt's previous work was his renouncement from using language, a script was always prepared to hold the film installations together, but it did not contain words. Using a strategy of allusion permitted Rosefeldt to refrain from a verbal narrative or a cinematic 'plot', that as Peter Weibel points out, permitted the artist

to regulate the degree of narration and anti-narration, of figuration and abstraction. [...] The allusive technique of narration in the visual media signifies a further development of the literary plot and almost a break with it, with the literary structure of a narrative¹⁴⁷

Rosefeldt focuses on allusion and gesture, working beyond verbal communication on a pre-linguistic level allowing the artist to create a story about his contemporary understanding of our present. With no specific narration, each projection conjures different associations and possible fictional narratives.

In *Manifesto* the text is transported from the past to the present for its poetic value and rhetoric quality, meaning becomes secondary. The work of art questions the configuration of storytelling, a rebellion in a narrative dominated terrain. As Rosefeldt himself has stated:

I work a lot on the deconstruction of myth-making in cinema and reality-building on screen. I see this film as a deconstructor or a questioner of the narrative movie world.¹⁴⁸

Manifesto rearranges with the technique of collage and pastiche almost sixty historical artists' manifestoes from their original context to that of a singular work of

¹⁴⁷ P. Weibel 'The Allusive Eye: Illusion, Anti-Illusion, Allusion', in *Fast Forward: Media Art Sammlung Goetz*, eds. I. Goetz and S. Urbaschek, exh. cat ZMK Center for Art and Media, München, Kunstverlag Ingild Goetz, 2003, p. 434 cit in: *Julian Rosefeldt: Film Works*, eds. by S. Berg, A. Franke, K. Gregos, D. Thorp, Ostfildern, Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2008, pp. 37-40.

¹⁴⁸ S. Rezayazdi, *Turning 13 Installation Screens of Cate Blanchett Into One Single-Screen Feature: Julian Rosefeldt on Manifesto*, "Filmmaker Magazine", 9 May 2017.

art. Thirteen poetic monologues arise through the artist practice of «abbreviation and collation of the texts.»¹⁴⁹ As the script entails,¹⁵⁰ the result is a mixture of various gestures of interpretation of the historical texts, as «accentuation, recitation, indication, perversion, deconstruction, and parody»¹⁵¹ which brings life to the reference material by turning them into a monologue uttered, performed and embodied by Australian actress Cate Blanchett. Rosefeldt understands the value of mixture and gives way too many forms associated with pastiche, he did not merely edit and reassembled the historical texts into thirteen collages but combined these gestures creating a work of art that as a «whole is greater than its parts»¹⁵².

This mixture contains collage as an end product and pastiche and adaptation as gestures of interpretation. The gesture of adaptation is pertinent in its modification of the source material, by adding or subtracting words in the phrases chosen by Rosefeldt in his text collage, transporting the manifesto rhetoric to a script. Pastiche also applies in the additions and subtraction of words because an act of imitation of style took place. In addition, as Hoesterey has noted:

Postmodern pastiche is about cultural memory [that which cannot be learned] and the merging of horizons past and present. One of the markers that set aesthetic postmodernism apart from modernism is that its artistic practices borrow ostentatiously from the archive of Western culture that modernism, in its search for the ‘unperform’d’ dismissed. Artists have been re-examining traditions that modernism eclipsed in its pursuit of the "Shock of the New" (Robert Hughes)¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ D. Gregori, *Film Artist Julian Rosefeldt: "Manifesto" and "Masquerade"*, "The Theatre Times", 13 June 2017.

¹⁵⁰ *Julian Rosefeldt: Manifesto.*, Exh. cat. (Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne; Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Sprengel Museum), eds. by A. Gebbers, U. Kittelmann, B. Dogramaci, R. Spieler, S. Tutton, J. Paton, London, Koenig Books Ltd, 2015, pp. 5-54.

¹⁵¹ M. Elo, 'Ineffable Dispositions', in *Transpositions: Aesthetico-Epistemic Operators in Artistic Research*, ed. by Michael Schwab, Leuven, Leuven University Press, 2018, p. 292.

It must be noted that I left parody because it is utilized by Rosefeldt in the construction of the image, not in the historical texts collage.

¹⁵² B. Swinson, *Text as pure thought and pure poetry: Julian Rosefeldt on Manifesto*, "Creative Screenwriting", 25 May 2017.

¹⁵³ I. Hoesterey, *Pastiche: cultural memory in art, film, literature*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2001, p. xi.

Rosefeldt pays homage to the manifesto genre poetic beauty and tradition and rediscovered and reinvented the manifesto as an art form by delivering them as something new and noteworthy. The manifesto produced by Rosefeldt as an end product is composed through the practice of collage. This is evident in the script, which maintains a certain degree of distinctiveness of its former parts and the process of assembling is still evident and accounted for. Invoking Tristan Tzara method of constructing a poem, 'décollage', and similar approaches as the 'cut-up technique (Burroughs and Gysin) or 'mash-up'. All these practices destabilize expectations in order to move beyond a typical practice by demolishing familiar structures and creating new ones. Rosefeldt work questions whether these manifestoes, composed by artists with certainty and delivered as statements, have survived the passage of time.

The practice of collage can be associated with the figure of the tweaker¹⁵⁴, both are characterized by the personal inclination and necessity to alter the source material to align it with the artist desire. A tweaker remakes and adapts the source material of previous forms. Concerning Rosefeldt practice of transporting the historical manifestoes into the medium of film, the gesture of tweaking across media and disciplines validates the political efficacy of mixing, mash-up and montage. As Burrill states:

Authenticity hasn't lost its cultural capital; it's just that it can be a roadblock to the articulation of choice. Since the popular embrace (and technological availability and complexity) of digital technology across various media forms, a slow but steady ideation of the possibilities of digital copying, and sharing has been replaced with tweaking¹⁵⁵

More commonalities come forward when comparing the figure of the tweaker with Rosefeldt practice of collage. For the tweaker, the genre must be maintained, and the

¹⁵⁴ A tweaker is a term used by D. A. Burrill in 'Everything is Possible, but Nothing is Real' in *Resolutions 3: Global Networks of Video*, eds. by M. S. Ma and E. Suderburg, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2012, pp. 286-96. A tweaker is identified in the practice of altering the source code of computer games to render them aligned with the user's desire.

¹⁵⁵ D. A. Burrill, 'Everything is Possible, but Nothing is Real' in *Resolutions 3: Global Networks of Video*, eds. by M. S. Ma and E. Suderburg, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2012, p. 287.

design is imitated to preserve a degree of familiarity, as in the case of *Manifesto*, the rhetoric of the historical manifestoes is adapted, and both must have the original source to be able to modify it. Finally, the gratification in tweaking resides in the comparison with the source material. *Manifesto* was made to compare and contrast the end product with the source material so that the vision of the artist could come forward. As John McKenzie wrote:

the model of creativity [...] is not that of originality or uniqueness but recombination and multiplicity¹⁵⁶

As such, tweaking and collage are here correlated and establish an unofficial commemoration of authority that is conscious of its impermanence where words are stolen and shared but still worth writing.¹⁵⁷

Manifesto addresses various movements in art, architecture and performance from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Each scenario of the work of art contains a selection of the manifestoes chosen to represent a specific category, many of which are combined. These historical manifestoes are presented in current social contexts, each different and represented by a single person, Cate Blanchett (except for the prologue which represents a burning fuse). Words and content become topical and significant into the transference of thought and ideas of the artist and his view of the manifesto as a genre, embodied by the different currents that converge and meet into his translation of word and image, words are supported by spaces and spatial objects. Rosefeldt sets each section of artwork in a distinct fictional world and Blanchett's monologue is delivered in different theatrical registers and accents according to the section and character she is embodying. These concrete situations are exemplified by characters of everyday life and are represented through a homeless person, a choreographer, a curator, a worker in a waste processing plant, a conservative Southern American housewife and her family, a puppeteer, a stockbroker, a physicist, an elementary school teacher, a punk singer, a news announcer, and a

¹⁵⁶ John McKenzie, 'Response by John McKenzie' in *First Person: New Media as Story, Performance and Game*, eds. N. Wardrip-Fruin and P. Harrigan, Cambridge, MIT Press, 2004 p. 118 cit in *Ibid*, p. 288.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 295.

funeral speaker. Rosefeldt has produced, directed and written *Manifesto*, shooting it largely in and around Berlin depicting multiple Cates and manifestoes collages in ten a half minutes of duration for each sequence presented.

A collaborative project

Manifesto started taking form when Julian Rosefeldt met Cate Blanchett in 2010 at the opening of Rosefeldt's exhibition '*Living in Oblivion*' at the Berlinische Galerie in Berlin. They were introduced by their mutual friends, the theatre directors Thomas Ostermeier and Tobias Veit.¹⁵⁸ They expressed the desire to work together and in 2013, while Rosefeldt was working on his film installation *Deep Gold* he came in contact with historical manifestoes, at this stage, the artist only knew that he wanted Blanchett to play multiple characters in one single project.¹⁵⁹ Rosefeldt stated that Blanchett was the perfect actress for this work of art since her chameleon transformations are masterful, an art form in itself in the ability to embrace a character.¹⁶⁰

While researching for its film installation *Deep Gold*, a homage to the Surrealist masterpiece *The Golden Age* (1930) of Luis Buñuel, he came across two manifestoes from the French futurist Valentine de Saint-Point and started researching feminist manifestoes and gender theory. Sparking his interest, the artist began reading and researching other artist declarations especially through the book by Danchev, *100 Artists' Manifestos*.¹⁶¹ As Rosefeldt has stated:

¹⁵⁸ R. Pogrebin, *Cate Blanchett Morphs a Dozen Times in 'Manifesto'*, "The New York Times", 25 October 2016.

¹⁵⁹ *Deep Gold* is part of a film anthology, *The Scorpion's Sting* (2013/2014), which was initiated by the artist duo M+M. Six artists were invited to work on Buñuel's film. Based on the original episodes, Tobias Zielony, Chicks On Speed, M+M, Keren Cytter, Julian Rosefeldt and John Bock each reinterpreted one of the six filmic sequences. Rosefeldt's part was the black-and-white film *Deep Gold* and was reinterpreted as an early and provocative feminist manifesto. The artist version shows a world full of lust and desire, in which a weak male protagonist becomes overwhelmed by the omnipresent female sexuality. Information retrieved from: Barbara Gross Galerie, *Julian Rosefeldt Portfolio*.

¹⁶⁰ L. Dezfouli, *Julian Rosefeldt: Manifesto*, "Beat"

¹⁶¹ A. Danchev, *100 Artists' Manifestos: From the Futurists to the Stuckists*, London, Penguin Books, 2011.

when I read all those beautiful and poetic texts, presumptuous and yet prophetic, I imagined her [Blanchett] incorporating all these ideas.¹⁶²

A year later Rosefeldt approached Blanchett to start working together on a collaborative project, *Manifesto*. They met in New York to develop the material and decide the characters and possible sequences.¹⁶³ Rosefeldt began to outline different scenes in which Blanchett delivers a monologue, the drafted scenes were being performed in the present time and the situations were held together by different educational levels and professional environments. From sixty short scenes, Rosefeldt edited them down to twelve scenes corresponding to twelve text collages, with Blanchett performing them. The thirteenth collage was used for the prologue (Fig. 2), showing a burning fuse burning in slow motion. Rosefeldt stated on the monologue that: «[the] words that remained were simply the most beautiful, speakable and performable ones.»¹⁶⁴ The artist aimed to engage with the historical manifestoes as expressions of a young generation, as a living material and less as art history, not as ‘monuments’ as regarded by art historians. As Rosefeldt has stated:

The manifestos are not only expressing the will to change, not just of changing their own art world, but of the artists’ own will to change themselves. ... As an outcry, a manifesto is very loud; a loud gesture, an expression of the fiery part of an artist. ... The manifestos read like completely different texts.¹⁶⁵

The manifestoes were read first as an expression of rebellious youth, then as literature and poetry. The artist saw the historical manifestoes as revolutionary statements and testimonials about the search for one’s identity, with the level of insecurity inherited in the rhetorical aspect. Rosefeldt fell in love with the rhetoric and poetry of such statements, artists who formulated thoughts and visions whose

¹⁶² R. Pogrebin, *Cate Blanchett Morphs a Dozen Times in ‘Manifesto’*, “The New York Times”, 25 October 2016.

¹⁶³ D. Vankin, *A chameleonic Cate Blanchett materializes in Julian Rosefeldt’s ‘Manifesto’ at Hauser & Wirth gallery*, “Los Angeles Times”, 31 October 2018.

¹⁶⁴ *Julian Rosefeldt: Manifesto.*, Exh. cat. (Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne; Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Sprengel Museum), eds. by A. Gebbers, U. Kittelmann, B. Dogramaci, R. Spieler, S. Tutton, J. Paton, London, Koenig Books Ltd, 2015, p. 96.

¹⁶⁵ L. Dezfouli, *Julian Rosefeldt: Manifesto*, “Beat”.

reliability had yet to be proven. This was put forward by recognizing the performative aspect of such manifestoes, meant to be uttered, spoken, shouted and related to theatre. Rosefeldt freed such manifestoes from the weight of art history research and gave them a new life by relocating them in the present time.

The process of scripting *Manifesto* started by rearranging the texts and then editing them, creating a monologue that could be spoken and performed by Blanchett. Rosefeldt would take a sentence by one artist and interrupt it with words of another one, making his own connections and taking significant license (unafraid to add and subtract words). To resemble a discussion between the various isms, the aim was to make the monologue vibrant and speakable by maintaining the idea of a collection of ideas and words, a conversation where ideas could contrast and merge. A discussion where artists do not necessarily agree on everything but share a certain type of spirit and beliefs on art. As Rosefeldt has stated:

Within these circles there is as much contradiction as agreement. But in art, as in history and fashion, everything repeats itself. Ideas come up, disappear for a while, and then forty years later have their rebirth.¹⁶⁶

This practice takes into consideration the collective nature of the historical manifestoes, as Anderson points out, from Karl Marx to the avant-garde and onward the standard manifesto was often written collaboratively and on behalf of a group.¹⁶⁷ As the texts had to be speakable, they had to be understandable too, as such, Rosefeldt eliminated the more difficult to interpret and complex historical manifestoes. Although, Rosefeldt maintained a few sentences of those who appealed to the artist the most, he decided to not interpret them through the moving image. Rosefeldt individual interpretation was ensured by not including the visual works of art of the isms he selected, trying to ignore the name and the fame of the artist too. This practice came about to maintain the identity of the historical texts artist. Since the inspiration for the text collage come from the beauty of the written words, their rhetoric and poetry, Rosefeldt would keep the «fragility and freshness and naive

¹⁶⁶ L. Francis, *Julian Rosefeldt: An Artist's Manifesto*, "Port magazine", 15 November 2017.

¹⁶⁷ P. Anderson, *The Origins of Postmodernity*, London, Verso, 1998, 93 cit in M. Puchner, *Manifesto = Theatre*, "Theatre Journal", Vol. 54, No. 3, 2002, p. 455.

approach to life»¹⁶⁸ of those who wrote them. To include the visual works of art of the artists meant to give another layer of significance to the ideas that originated from written texts, Rosefeldt instead allowed himself to have just a layer of interpretation to frame *Manifesto* as a whole. The visual work of art of such artists may have influenced the text poetic characteristic that Rosefeldt wanted to focus on. By including such visual elements, the spectator would have been influenced by the fame and recognition the artist achieved in the art world today, manipulating their perception of the texts selected and collaged. References to the artists and collectives are available in the catalogue and pamphlets distributed at the installation venues, but in Rosefeldt's work of art what counts are the text's rhetoric and poetry components. The historical voices were rearranged into monologues, manifestoes being incredibly rhythmic resemble theatre monologues and with Rosefeldt, Blanchett contributed to choosing the more dynamic manifestoes to be uttered.

In the monologues, the different artists talk to one another and at the same time, they are addressing the audience with one voice. Confirming that «the manifestoes aren't meant to stand alone; they are meant to be in dialogue.»¹⁶⁹ The borderline between texts fragments can no longer be identified, constructing a series of sequences that could be seen separately but also in their entirety, together as a whole of different voices. On a textual level, it is significant to point out the heterogeneity aspect of the different historical manifestoes from diverse historical periods made homogeneous to be performed.

The connection with theatre is embedded in the artistic manifesto, especially in correlation with the avant-garde, where public recitation was a vital aspect. The relationship between performativity and theatrical performance surfaces in various displacements of the historical manifestoes.¹⁷⁰ Manifestoes were frequently performed especially by the Futurist and the Dadaist, establishing a form that took place in traditional theatres (Futurist theatre tours) and nontraditional performances (as Dada Cabaret Voltaire or the streets). Many Futurist manifestoes were firstly

¹⁶⁸ I. Soetomo, *Architecture, Film and The Poetry of Art Manifestos with Julian Rosefeldt*, "Whiteboard Journal", 4 March 2020.

¹⁶⁹ R. Pogrebin, *Cate Blanchett Morphs a Dozen Times in 'Manifesto'*, "The New York Times", 25 October 2016.

¹⁷⁰ Displacements varied from pre-WWII and post-WWII as the use of quotation, parody, distancing...etc.

performed on stage and then printed, and even when they appeared only in print their layout suggested the spoken word. Pure speech was then applied to the manifesto by turning the genre into a spoken and declaimed event. As such this characterization continued and Dada manifestoes were born from the spirit of theatre becoming a performance genre where «provocation and entertainment, attack and moderation»¹⁷¹ was uttered in the form of the manifesto. Tristan Tzara read the ‘*Dada Manifesto 1918*’ aloud at a gathering in Zurich’s ‘Salle Meise’ months earlier the publishing of the manifesto in question in ‘Dada 3’.¹⁷² The avant-garde thought of the theatre as a condition that could be applied to all arts, theatricalizing art in order to change, deform and destroy it by changing art beyond recognition. The manifesto rarely remains confined to language, provoking change even in the moment of conception. As the Latin word ‘manifesto’ suggests (manus + festus) a literary punch is evoked, and other applications of the word ‘manifesto’ suggest physical phenomena, as in various Romance languages manifestare/manifester/manifestar means to communicate and demonstrate. As Merjian points out:

Nonverbal phenomena—such as individual works of architecture or music or painting—are themselves often deemed manifestos of a particular style: a case of practice entailing its own theory, or an exception that aims to become the rule, an aesthetics by (unspoken) fiat.¹⁷³

The manifesto genre in itself is a form of speech, an incitement to revolution issued forth from a speaking position that presumes to have the answers to the problem at hand, that is a social, political or an aesthetic problem. This feature can be seen throughout the history of the manifesto interpreted in different ways. As in the performances of Dada and Fluxus artists, the distancing effect between the context and the text and its enactment reflects the basic structure of the performance of such manifestoes. As these artists are concerned with introducing «discontinuities,

¹⁷¹ M. Puchner, *Poetry of the revolution: Marx manifestos, and the avant-gardes* (2005), Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2006, p. 151.

¹⁷² T. Tzara, *Seven Dada Manifestos and Lampisteries*, tr. eng by B. Wright, Surrey, Alma Books, 2018, p. 115.

¹⁷³ A. H. Merjian, *Manifestos!*, “Art in America”, June-July 2017, p. 28.

dissonances and irritations into their presentation»¹⁷⁴ rather than attaining a correlation between word and action. Consequently, the aesthetic manifesto reveals its true self when spoken and performed.

As Rosefeldt explored in the choreographer sequence (Fig. 8), where Blanchett with a Russian accent, wearing a draped turban and dark plum lipstick, is demanding excellence from a troupe of dancers. As the artist declaration is directed to a public audience or at least it addresses one and therefore it is meant to be read and heard due to its conative and appellative function. Furthermore, the aesthetic manifesto has a socially formative or transformative effect that goes beyond the sphere of art, into a cultural one. The public presentation of the artist manifesto «takes place as part of a live event or action with a set spatial and temporal framework.»¹⁷⁵ The choreographer sequences (Fig. 8) focuses on performance and happenings, collaging the texts of the Fluxus movement manifesto (1963-1978) and Maciunas's '*Fluxus Manifesto*' (1963), Rainer's '*No Manifesto*' (1965), Ukeles's '*Maintenance Art Manifesto*' (1969) and Schwitters's '*The Merz Stage*' (1919). These artists illustrate a connection between written text, spoken word and action. A blurring of text and performative action is seen in the manifestoes and happenings of the Fluxus artists. Examples are given by Dogramaci in Fluxus lecture-performances:

At a Fluxus concert in Wuppertal on 9 June 1962, Arthus C. Caspari read a manifesto by George Maciunas, while two transparencies were projected onto a wall. A few months earlier, in February 1962, Maciunas himself had thrown offset-printed copies of a manifesto into the crowd at the *Festum Fluxorum* in Düsseldorf.¹⁷⁶ [author's cursive]

According to the Fluxus movement, art could only be revolutionary when it was destructive, reproving the sacred position given to the artist and the hierarchy in the culture of art. This is illustrated by Rosefeldt through the character of the

¹⁷⁴ *Julian Rosefeldt: Manifesto.*, Exh. cat. (Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne; Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Sprengel Museum), eds. by A. Gebbers, U. Kittelmann, B. Dogramaci, R. Spieler, S. Tutton, J. Paton, London, Koenig Books Ltd, 2015, p. 94.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p. 93.

¹⁷⁶ *Ivi.*

choreographer where Blanchett challenges the dancers to the limit to bring out their instincts when performing. The sequence starts with Rainer's *'No Manifesto'* (1965), but what is depicted in the scene is the creation of what the artist opposed. Rosefeldt questions the performative power of the manifesto genre. The artist in *Manifesto* released the historical manifestoes from the written form of the book in which they have been stored and restored their original power and structure.

Rosefeldt treated the manifesto as a 'unifying theme that allows Blanchett's performance to soar.'¹⁷⁷ As such, Blanchett was the main element that allowed the historical manifestoes to be embodied, and not simply illustrated. Being the pern to the project Rosefeldt had only eleven days to shoot with her, producing an average of twelve minutes a day, a cheap Tv soap opera time frame.¹⁷⁸ With such a tight schedule Rosefeldt relied on its production team to conclude the entire project in twelve days of shooting (eleven days with Blanchett and one without), having to move quickly from one location to another, most of the time they shot only one take and Blanchett had very little time for rehearsals. Retrospectively, Rosefeldt was satisfied with the chaotic pace of filmmaking because it gave a certain freshness to the text.¹⁷⁹ Blanchett memorized and recorded the texts every evening after shooting, for the next day's sequence, and the next morning would listen to the registration and adjust her accent and physical gestures while being transformed by the makeup artist for an hour-long process.¹⁸⁰

The end result is *Manifesto*, a filmic re-enactment of the historical manifestoes which remains separate from the original authors. A collaborative project that recontextualizes the existing material, echoing modernism as contemporary urgency and persistence, as Rosefeldt calls the project a «manifesto of manifestos.»¹⁸¹

2.2.1 A rhetorical and interpretative approach

¹⁷⁷ R. Astle, *Four Lessons for Filmmakers from Julian Rosefeldt's Manifesto*, "Filmmaker Magazine", 12 January 2017.

¹⁷⁸ Film Rise, *Manifesto*, 2017.

¹⁷⁹ D. Vankin, *A chameleonic Cate Blanchett materializes in Julian Rosefeldt's 'Manifesto' at Hauser & Wirth gallery*, "Los Angeles Times", 31 October 2018.

¹⁸⁰ *Ivi*. Credit: Makeup artist: M. Ross, Hair artist: M. Gattabrusi and Costume designer: B. Daigeler.

¹⁸¹ J. Rasula, *Acrobatic Modernism from the Avant-Garde to Prehistory*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2020, p. 398.

Thirteen manifesto collages emerged through cuts and the combination of the texts from numerous historical manifestos. The rhetoric across almost every text is similar and each writer or collective asserts its practice as the best way to revolutionize the present and the subsequent future. Rosefeldt decided to reengage the spectator with these ideas that navigate in differences of opinion from «stylistic preferences, political leanings, decades and generations»¹⁸² to see them for their form and not their content. Different reactions come forward when considering the historical manifestoes context as their utopian ideals. What is put forward are words, poetry, the cadence and form of the manifesto genre - uttered by mostly female characters - that become part of the aesthetic of the film installation. All the manifestoes chosen by Rosefeldt make a bold claim of the importance of art regardless of form, bringing differences in the creation of *Manifesto*. What is striking is that from the avant-garde forwards, form has been always more important than the content because the final pursuit was to be recognized in the art world as a power to be reckoned with, secondarily what was said had meaning and importance. It must not be forgotten the political roots of the manifesto, primarily that one must be heard.

In *Manifesto*, Julian Rosefeldt not only examines the concerns and intentions that are so compelling and urgent they must be expressed in the form of a manifesto; he is also interested in the specific rhetoric of manifestos and how they create a 'call to action'.¹⁸³

As manifestoes are intended to shape reality, to speak and to act is related to speech-act theory and content. As Austin demonstrates, constative expressions have a performative dimension, by issuing an utterance they are performing an illocutionary act.¹⁸⁴ Therefore, speaking is action and linguistic action performs a wide range of acts. Rosefeldt explores this by putting in dialogue the filmed image and the text collage turned into a monologue. To do so, Rosefeldt has taken the concept of

¹⁸² G. Bola, *A moving medley of manifestos*, "Apollo. The international art magazine", 13 November 2017.

¹⁸³ *Julian Rosefeldt: Manifesto.*, Exh. cat. (Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne; Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Sprengel Museum), eds. by A. Gebbers, U. Kittelmann, B. Dogramaci, R. Spieler, S. Tutton, J. Paton, London, Koenig Books Ltd, 2015, p. 83.

¹⁸⁴ J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1962.

speech-act and decided to dramatize it. The artist does not seek to convince the viewer of anything in particular but would like to consider the formal language traits of the manifesto, its speech act. In fact, many of the historical manifestoes used by the artist contradict each other in content and sound least convincing if read out of the context of *Manifesto* as a complete work of art. Having each sequence presented and embodied by Blanchett controls the evaluation of its efficacy, and this is why the actress performs every role since the ideas and concepts are not on display but just their rhetoric. Mostly every section of the film installation combines three distinct historical manifestoes into one singular performance.¹⁸⁵ Blanchett plays twelve characters in a non-naturalistic manner, allowing the creation of the cinematic context. Rosefeldt shows that all cinematic communications consist of a set of performative speech acts, demonstrated through the speech act of the manifesto. This is achieved through the arrangement of the texts into a thematic category and the characters that enable the presentation of the texts collage.

The characters come from different sociopolitical spectrums because any speech act, as the manifesto genre, to be heard has to establish who is the speaker, where he comes from and its social power in correspondence to the audience and its final goal. The writer of the manifesto is conscious of the fact that in order to create change, the right moment must be chosen, and the right interlocutor has to be listened to and have a certain amount of charisma to express the ideas in place in order to have an effect, create and gather a community with the same ideals. Rosefeldt explores this notion in establishing its characters in different sociopolitical fields.

As in the sequence where Blanchett portrays a laborer in a garbage processing plant (Fig. 10), texts are taken from postmodern architects such as Bruno Taut (1880–1938), Antonio Sant’Elia (1888–1916), Robert Venturi (1925-2018) and the architectural studio Coop Himmelb(l)au which was founded in 1968. After the opening sequence, we see Blanchett situated in a garbage incineration plant, «characterized by a lack of prospects, hopelessness and sadness».¹⁸⁶ The character is

¹⁸⁵ See the distinct thirteen sequences and their groupings of *Manifesto* on the Website of Julian Rosefeldt;

https://www.julianrosefeldt.com/film-and-video-works/manifesto-_2014-2015/installation_views/
[last access 01/02/2022]

¹⁸⁶ *Julian Rosefeldt: Manifesto.*, Exh. cat. (Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne; Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney;

unhealthy, both physically and spiritually and her surroundings are filled with refuse and meaninglessness is evoked by the mountain of waste, resources squandered. Through the words collaged by Rosefeldt, it is clear that the character is not able to articulate a solution to the present crisis. The historical manifestoes propose a departure from the dominant spatial order but nothing is consistent in their ideas and confusion is deliberately used by the artist to imply that:

Blanchett's laborer cannot gain enough purchase to see a way out of her circumstances. But more importantly, if she did, who would be there to listen?¹⁸⁷

Comparing this scene to the one of the CEO at a private party (Fig.6) where the manifesto collage is made of manifestoes from the Blaue Reiter, Vorticist and Abstract Expressionist, we see a businesswoman entertaining a party in her mansion. This character entails economic power over the laborer in a garbage processing plant that is an average everyday person. In this sequence, Blanchett adopted patrician gestures and emanates confidence in the words she speaks during her speech. She portrays a wealthy madam as a caricature of privilege and wealth. Incoherence is underlined by the words of the historical manifestoes that speak of sublimity and collectivity ideals. Rosefeldt assumes that certain members of the professional and/or creative groups, do not know how to transmit ideas, at least among themselves. Furthermore, the choreographer (Fig. 8) and the elementary school teacher (Fig. 14) do not have the same degree of economic power as the stockbroker (Fig. 4) or the CEO (Fig. 6), but their pupils look up to them for guidance because they do have some cultural capital.

These examples are correlated to what White established as ‘constitutive rhetoric’, explaining how speech acts create communities while also producing effects.¹⁸⁸ Therefore, speech acts create a collective identity for a previously marginalized group, inciting a sense of belonging and aiming towards collective action. The

Sprengel Museum), eds. by A. Gebbers, U. Kittelmann, B. Dogramaci, R. Spieler, S. Tutton, J. Paton, London, Koenig Books Ltd, 2015, p. 89.

¹⁸⁷ M. Sicinski, *Manifesto by Julian Rosefeldt*, “Cinéaste”, Vol. 42, No. 4, 2017, p. 49.

¹⁸⁸ J. B. White, *Law as Rhetoric, Rhetoric as Law: The Arts of Cultural and Communal Life*, “The University of Chicago Law Review”, vol. 52, No. 3, 1985.

manifesto genre is a subgroup of the ‘constitutive rhetoric’, no matter the result they rhetorically construct a movement or group to revolutionize and take action by means of collectivity. *Manifesto* seeks to question this type of rhetoric in history through the characters interpreted by Blanchett, showing the discrepancy of social and economic positions. Rosefeldt would like us to question our present-day through the words of the past.

A repetitive gesture

The artist makes use of use of «scene, performance, staging, and spectacle, and draws our attention to nothing less than the fluidity and contingency»¹⁸⁹ of the rhetorical concepts of the aesthetic manifesto to transfer his ideas of aestheticism, what surfaces is a different attitude towards the use of the manifesto. Therefore it is useful to acknowledge these rhetorical gestures in the historical manifestoes text to better understand how the artist deviates or assumes these forms in the work of art. The aesthetic manifesto rhetoric is characterized by a concise nature that is developed by directly addressing the audience with an appellative, demonstrative and action-oriented confrontation. Their perspective has a socially revolutionary and often bellicose character provoking an affirmative nature in their use of language. To serve an appellative function and create an emotional impact on the reader they ensure an indisputable imperative style, a declamatory tone and use hyperbole and superlatives. The producer of such manifestoes positions himself strongly in art history and society, introducing a rupture in the present moment. They embody the disruption in the past and future while discarding the past as a whole, presenting themselves as being able to practice a ‘new and now’ action unburdened by the past. Thus, they formulate a historical position and a proposition for the future, drawing out a consequence that is imperative from the position presented. Pragmaticism and action are seen in the disruption they present: the historical manifestoes call for an end of the past while proclaiming a future tailored towards their principles and ideals.

¹⁸⁹ *Aesthetic Theory*, eds. by D. Mersch, S. Sasse and S. Zanetti, Zurich, Diaphanes, 2019, p. 183.

Keeping in mind these characteristics that were further explained in Chapter one, Rosefeldt examines one key feature of the avant-garde manifestoes: repetition. As stated by the artist:

It was exciting to discover that the same ideas appear again and again. And these common ideas all came along with so much energy and utopian enthusiasm.¹⁹⁰

As Hal Foster has argued in his book, *The Return of the Real*, speaking from a temporal conception of subjectivity argued by Freud, art history is a historical process that calls for repetition and re-evaluation:

One event is only registered through another that recodes it; we come to be who we are only in deferred action (*Nachträglichkeit*). It is this analogy that I want to enlist for modernist studies at the end of the century: *historical and neo-avant-gardes are constituted in a similar way, as a continual process of protension and retension, a complex relay of anticipated futures and reconstructed pasts-in short, in a deferred action that throws over any simple scheme of before and after, cause and effect, origin and repetition.*¹⁹¹ [author's cursive]

Repetition is used as a rhetorical device as a confirmation and affirmation of what has already been communicated, signalling constants and consistencies rather than irregularities. Rosefeldt makes extensive use of the rhetorical method of repetition to focus on the avant-garde obsession with innovation, unexpectedly repetition does not resist novelty and thus Rosefeldt focuses on the artistic avant-garde innovations proposed in the rhetorical gestures of the manifesto genre. The artist decides to use repetition in its persuasive and interpretative form, indicating variations within its structural unity. Repetition as interpretation highlights that meaning can be reviewed and revisioned. Therefore, repetition of the same completes novelty, being its source

¹⁹⁰ Film Rise, *Manifesto*, 2017.

¹⁹¹ H. Foster, *The Return of the Real. The avant-garde at the end of the century*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1996, p. 29.

and context. Pursuing the new is underlined by the negation of the new, as such, all theories of the new and the unfamiliar are connected to the presence and revision of the familiar.¹⁹² The notion of novelty comes forth in rearranging what is already known and not in the absence of the same. Rosefeldt utilizes repetition to contextualize its film installation in two main repetitions: the script and the image. As already stated, the script is composed of existing material, and it is viewed as an original screenplay constructed from mostly quotations. Furthermore, the image relies on homages to previous films (especially Michelangelo Antonioni and Stanley Kubrick), its originality resides in its interpretation of the movies cited and the film stills, where images are recycled and renewed. A third repetition can be found in the visual and dramatic rendition of Blanchett, as the primary presence and sole performer plays different characters in the artwork, performing as a double in the puppeteer (Fig. 9) and the newsreader (Fig. 13) sequences.

The following rendition of the repetitions utilized by Rosefeldt follows Reyburn aesthetic theory, which he divides into mimetic theory, resentment and ritual.¹⁹³

Repetition in mimetic theory

In Rosefeldt's *Manifesto* emphasis remains on the manifestoes rhetoric rather than on its variation, the form precedes over the content. As for the avant-garde manifestoes, the artist mirrors the historical manifestoes quoted and adds its variations and themes, its own view on the rhetorical gestures. In the prologue (Fig. 2) the artist analyzes the modernist pursuit of the dialectical oppositions to make something new. Avant-garde thought that repetition undermined novelty and Rosefeldt undercuts this conception. The film *Manifesto* starts with a dictionary definition of the word manifesto which is stated as «a public declaration of policy and aims by a party, group or individual».¹⁹⁴ This is followed by a blurred shot in slow motion of a burning fuse of a firework, where Blanchett's voice-over declares a fragment of the famous line from Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels's '*Manifesto of the Communist*

¹⁹² D. Reyburn, *Repetitions repeatedly repeated: mimetic desire, resentment, and mimetic crisis in Julian Rosefeldt's Manifesto*, (2015). "Image and Text", 33, 2019, p. 2.

¹⁹³ Ivi.

¹⁹⁴ *Manifesto*, Directed by J. Rosefeldt, performances by Cate Blanchett, Wonder Pictures, 2018.

Party' of 1848, «All that is solid melts into air».¹⁹⁵ This fragment confirms the persuasive and interpretative repetition utilized by Rosefeldt. The duplication resides in quoting the '*Manifesto of the Communist Party*' and a duplication of the historical manifesto that follows, Tristan Tzara's '*Dada Manifesto*' (1918), in which Tzara repeats the same words of Marx and Engels, in itself a repetition. Three quotations and repetitions appear: the original source is quoted from Tzara and Rosefeldt, and the artist decided to start with the original manifesto from where the quotation comes from. The repetitions are not identical or univocal, because the amplification is ensured through minor contextual alterations in the differences of the repetitions. Ephemerality is captured by Soupault's, and Tzara's manifestoes, and as entailed by Reyburn a Nietzschean idea comes forward, that of «positing being over and against the scenography of entropic becoming»¹⁹⁶ Philippe Soupault in his manifesto '*Literature and the Rest*' (1920), reflects on what it means to write a manifesto and acknowledges in a playful and destabilizing way that: «I am writing a manifesto because I have nothing to say.»¹⁹⁷ Soupault notices an irony of the manifesto form that its self-assertion foresees and reinforces on its own obliteration. This irony is also invoked by Tzara in Rosefeldt's collage:

To put out a manifesto you must want: ABC to fulminate against 1, 2, 3; to fly into a rage and sharpen your wings to conquer and disseminate little abcs and big abcs; to sign, shout, swear; to prove your non plus ultra; to organize prose into a form of absolute and irrefutable evidence.¹⁹⁸

Tzara implies that even to have an 'ABC' is to assume a model and to do so is against the Dadaist assumptions. To form a new norm, one that will be repeated, is to

¹⁹⁵ 'Manifesto of the Communist Party' in K. Marx and F. Engels, *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works in two volumes*, Vol. I, Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955, p. 37.

¹⁹⁶ R. Bittner, 'Introduction' in *Nietzsche: Writings from the late notebooks*, Cambridge, Cambridge University, 2003, pp. ix-xxxiv in D. Reyburn, *Repetitions repeatedly repeated: mimetic desire, resentment, and mimetic crisis in Julian Rosefeldt's Manifesto*, (2015). "Image and Text", 33, 2019, p. 5.

¹⁹⁷ T. Tzara and others, 'Twenty-Three Manifestos of the Dada Movement' in A. Danchev, *100 Artists' Manifestos: From the Futurists to the Stuckists*, London, Penguin Books, 2011, pp. 166-88.

¹⁹⁸ *Julian Rosefeldt: Manifesto.*, Exh. cat. (Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne; Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Sprengel Museum), eds. by A. Gebbers, U. Kittelmann, B. Dogramaci, R. Spieler, S. Tutton, J. Paton, London, Koenig Books Ltd, 2015, p. 5.

set up the very circumstances corresponding to which the model will be challenged. Therefore, Tzara himself declares resistance to repetition and underlines the ambivalent stance that is essential in artistic creation. Like many avant-garde artists, Tzara emphasizes the autonomy of artwork and artists, the only guideline that Dada follows is its ‘distrust for unity’, establishing a universal refusal for the possibility of universality, of any kind (a contradiction in itself). Rosefeldt instead proposes that universality can’t be denied so easily because it is grounded in our yearning and dependence on repetition. Furthermore, another repetition arises in the image of the burning fuse, which is repeated at the begging of the next sequence, the homeless man (Fig. 3), the scene continues with the firework being lit and released by three old women. This repetition of form connects the two sequences in thematic and implies that repetition can be a tool to «overcome the sheer transience of art, and also the brevity [of] life itself.»¹⁹⁹

If the focus of Rosefeldt resided in the content of the historical manifestoes one could argue that he tried to capture the pluralism of the avant-garde. The juxtaposition of such different manifestoes would have acted as an archetype of the modernist frame. This is not the case, the form of the manifesto is what counts in the artist view and so one could argue that it is a reflection of the ‘logic of contradiction’ in the modern arena. As observed with Tzara, self-contradiction is necessary to unfold the practice of destructing the past and the present to create a point-zero where the avant-garde practice can emerge. As Groys has argued:

It is a field [of modern art] where every thesis is supposed to be confronted with its antithesis. In the ideal case the representation of thesis and antithesis should be perfectly balanced so that they sum to zero.²⁰⁰

The avant-garde paradigm refuses mediation, and the thesis is cloaked and not clarified by its negation. This premise by Groys is challenged by the *Manifesto*’s repetitions, as such Rosefeldt invokes that antithesis is ultimately the predominant rule and the avant-garde tends towards self-mediation, giving rise to contradiction. In

¹⁹⁹ D. Reyburn, *Repetitions repeatedly repeated: mimetic desire, resentment, and mimetic crisis in Julian Rosefeldt's Manifesto*, (2015). “Image and Text”, 33, 2019, p. 5.

²⁰⁰ B. Groys, *Art Power*, Cambridge, The MIT Press, 2008, p. 2.

other words, the thesis emerges as a reaction to the antithesis, recognizing the rule when it has been contradicted, so the thesis comes from antithesis and to create a point-zero the antithesis is resolved through mediation. Therefore, antithesis is the rule. Repetition indicates that the antithesis is inherited with a constant alternation between opposites. Furthermore, what drives repetition is instituted in novelty, a sense of authenticity and autonomy is obtained by the assimilation, the repetition, of what others constitute as authentic. Consequently, repetition is guided by mimetic desire, the what is repeated via otherness. What fascinated Rosefeldt was the common base that the historical manifestoes shared, their rebellious attitude to establish oneself in the world, which is obtained by repetition.

Many of them were written when the writers were very young. I see them as the voice of a certain moment in life, when you are shaping your identity and are actually quite insecure. [...] I can identify with them as a moment in life when you are trying to find out where you belong and what you're going to do.²⁰¹

As Girard argues, mimetic desire is what is repeated in others, it is not inherited in a closed and autonomous individual, but it emerges in the communication between individuals.²⁰² As such desire is copied and repeated and in the avant-garde and Rosefeldt recognizes this desire in the negation to any reference to commonality. Futurism is the best example since it is the founding aesthetic manifesto that would set the model for subsequent manifestoes to decide whether to repeat and contradict these movement ideals. It is perceived that after Futurism spread into the world and Europe most of all, most avant-garde movements to establish themselves had to set themselves against Marinetti. In the stockbroker's sequence (Fig. 4), Marinetti's '*The Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism*' (1909) and other Futurism manifestoes are referenced and collaged together. In Marinetti's manifesto, there is a hostile attitude towards the older artistic order. Condemning the past serves to create a point-zero in history and this very rejection is dependent upon tradition. As argued in chapter one,

²⁰¹ S. Rezayazdi, *Turning 13 Installation Screens of Cate Blanchett Into One Single-Screen Feature: Julian Rosefeldt on Manifesto*, "Filmmaker Magazine", 9 May 2017.

²⁰² R. Girard, *A theatre of envy: William Shakespeare*, South Bend, Angelico, 1991.

tradition cannot be escaped, and it is invoked in the very practice of dating Futurism manifestoes. As Apollinaire argues in his manifesto *'The Futurist Antitradition'* (1913), cited in Rosefeldt's collage, repetition is insisted upon when declaring that Futurism should not be copied, and that art should be built upon rivalry with the past, revealing the paradox of novelty. Futurism was indeed repeated by those who came after, and subsequent art was built against them. As exemplified in *'The Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism'* (1909) a reliance on tradition is both affirmed and renounced, appearing as a desire that contradicts the original desire, instead of affirming it. The desire for originality is in opposition with the desire for the traditional, Marinetti seems to reject its initial desire by not wanting to be imitated by others, being in contrast with Girard's notion of mimetic desire. Rosefeldt unravels this contradiction in his visual repetitions used in the stockbroker's sequence (Fig. 4). Blanchett character has straight hair and wears a blazer depicting a stockbroker, the artist presents this character as one among many workers whose job is to buy and sell stock. The sequence starts with a bird's eye view of a «dehumanizing and seemingly endless office space» while Blanchett's voice-over speaks the words of Marinetti's *'The Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism'* (1909).²⁰³ Rosefeldt juxtaposed the artistic with the economic to announce the 'tradition of the new', the Futurist belief that nothing should be repeated here is destabilized through repetition itself. This is done by the artist by quoting the Futurism manifesto in itself, repeating their ideas and going against the movement's wishes. Repetition is inherited in the sound, heard through the repeated clicks that come from using technology (the computer keyboard and mouse) and the updating of the market boards. Constant change becomes insignificant in the world represented by Rosefeldt, one in which impersonality is rendered through repetition. The artist confirms Girard's notion of mimetic desire by choosing to represent Futurism in the stock market, where people buy and sell stocks in accordance with trends, thus keeping up with the collective mimetic desires of others. Therefore, Futurism desire to break with tradition and the past is in itself a mimetic desire because it takes into account the desire of others. The stock market represents the shared desire to make money and conform to the economic order.

²⁰³ D. Venning, *Manifestos for Theatre and Nation*, "Performing Arts Journal", Vol. 42, Issue 2 (125), 2020, p. 90.

Rosefeldt represents the endless attitude of the art world to commercialize art and the mimetic desire rooted in the practice of art.

The shared desire, beneath all apparent trends and conflicts, is still to make art; to fit into the given complex artistic order.²⁰⁴

The mimetic desire to make art is associated with the desire to break with the past, Futurism rejects traditionalism but not art in itself.

In Rosefeldt film installation the word 'art' is repeated throughout all the historical manifestoes collage, indicating mimeticism. Contradiction co-exists because of Groys's conception of modern art which is envisioned as a conflict that has no unification.²⁰⁵ The persuasiveness of rhetoric and the claim of novelty masks the mimetic desire to be the sole guardian of the true envisioned 'art', even if temporarily. Therefore, tradition is rejected because it did not manifest the art envisioned by the artists, becoming part of the past and not the present.

I would like to open up a digression in the rhetorical view of the manifesto of Rosefeldt's work of art to focus on the commodification of art expressed by the artist in the stockbroker's sequence (Fig. 4). Associating the sequence with the notion of 'commodity'. This section speaks about the commercialization of art and the commodification of the artist's practice, originally attuned towards rupture and the refusal of such institutions. As *Manifesto* was initially presented as a film installation, it toured around the world and was installed in mainstream galleries. Inherent in its diffusion was the risk to become commodified and consumed in terms of its ideal prerogative to express the radical spirit of the original authors of the manifesto genre. The gallery space, as Grehan proposes, has transformed into a space of consumption rather than a site of rupture, where operations of the capitalist machine overwhelm the artists' intentions.²⁰⁶ Rosefeldt's work of art could be ill interpreted as a performance detached and derivative of the original texts, thus devaluing the historical manifestoes because of its circulation and reinterpretation of

²⁰⁴ D. Reyburn, *Repetitions repeatedly repeated: mimetic desire, resentment, and mimetic crisis in Julian Rosefeld's Manifesto*, (2015). "Image and Text", 33, 2019, p. 9.

²⁰⁵ B. Groys, *Art Power*, Cambridge, The MIT Press, 2008, p. 2.

²⁰⁶ P. Eckersall and H. Grehan, *The Routledge Companion to Theatre and Politics*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2019, p. 338.

the manifestoes as filmic texts set in the present day. It must be underlined that Rosefeldt's work cuts - the consumption of and participation in - the present state of affairs in order to manifest alternative ways of interpretation and imagination. As such, Manifesto is viewed as a

reimagining of the originals in a way that creates moments of micro-rupture both to the fabric of the originals, and to the often 'covered over' (or rendered invisible) operations of late capitalist society, more broadly.²⁰⁷

Repetition in resentment

The contrasting desires in novelty expressed by the avant-garde in preserving the impression of an autonomous break with the past are expressed in mimeticism. Such opposite desires are best understood in a Nietzschean frame of reference as repetition is understood by 'resentment'.²⁰⁸ An emotional moralism emerges from the historical manifestoes in the act of writing, novelty is understood as a moral category and the past is framed as immoral. 'Resentment' has been categorized as a mimetic phenomenon defined as a 'reversal of the evaluating gaze' towards an incapacity or failure to accomplish the ideals of an original standard structure.²⁰⁹ What was formerly considered as exemplary, worth of imitation and envy, is re-ordered as worthless. Action or the artists practices developed the antithesis to affirm themselves and to be able to act, 'resentment' needs an opposing world to enter in conflict with. In doing so, this approach reduces the individual as submissive, responsive to the mimetic desire of others. Therefore, action is assembled of reaction and passivity, and this explains why contrasting desires can coexist.

The avant-garde rejects tradition while asserting the predominance of 'art'. The emotional frame is reassessed and as Groys remarks when talking about the 'new' conception in art, a 'revaluation of values' occurs, depending on the point of reference of the original values.²¹⁰ As 'resentment' is embedded in mimetic desire and appears as an action that opposes the original it is an acquired desire from others.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid*, p. 339.

²⁰⁸ F. Nietzsche, *On the genealogy of morals. A polemic*, tr. eng by D. Smith, Oxford, Oxford University, 1996, p. 22.

²⁰⁹ *Ivi*.

²¹⁰ B. Groys, *On the new*, London, Verso, 2016, pp. 18-9.

Therefore, following mimetic desire theory, Marinetti like other avant-gardists, are set against tradition because they cannot reach the norm set by those older institutions, hence they decide to set up new standards in order to achieve them. Rejecting tradition enables the avant-garde to achieve what it denounces. Ultimately, hatred determines the moral status, replacing what was originally envied and therefore regarded as immoral.

Rosefeldt exemplifies this notion in his sequence of the CEO at a private dinner party (Fig. 6) focusing on an illusory repetition. Cate Blanchett character is immaculately dressed and holding a flute glass of champagne while she presents a new concept for the company while hosting a private board meeting in a modern glass-fronted villa. The camera moves from a wide-angle scenery to people having a conversation on the terrace of the villa, to the interior of the villa and then to Blanchett having a conversation with people. She calls for the attention of her guests and delivers a speech that clearly does not entertain and seems to even bore herself while assuming a cold and detached temperament. The speech uttered by Blanchett is made up entirely of Lewis's '*Manifesto*' (1914) published in the journal BLAST.²¹¹ It is interesting to note that Lewis was set against Marinetti's conception of war as a cleanser and violence as a hope of renewal. As Puchner states:

Lewis is trying to distance himself from Marinetti's war rhetoric, even though Lewis's own "blasts" borrow from warlike violence as well.²¹²

This thematic is guided by Blanchett's façade, assumed with a forced smile and a dismissive commentary on the lives of others, rendered in the words uttered before the speech:

The 'Poor' are detestable animals! They are only picturesque and amusing for the sentimentalist or the romantic! And the 'Rich' are bores without a single exception, *en tant que riches!*²¹³ [author's cursive]

²¹¹ The journal BLAST was published in 1914 and contains '*Manifesto I*' and '*Manifesto II*' written by W. Lewis. The journal lasted from 1914 to 1915 and was edited by W. Lewis and E. Pound.

²¹² M. Puchner, *Poetry of the revolution: Marx manifestos, and the avant-gardes* (2005), Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2006, p. 90.

Rosefeldt indicates a disconnection with the presentation she is putting on and how she acts, she seems polite but does not want to be. Everything is done because it is supposed to be done in such a manner, everything seems fake. In a brief moment, she reveals her true self by looking at someone whose back is turned to the camera and decides to ignore that person and talk to someone else. The illusion of etiquette is broken in its repetition. A contrast emerges between the primitive and the apparently cultured, between word and image. As Rosefeldt script entails by using Lewis's words during the speech:

We want to leave Nature and Men alone. We need the unconsciousness of humanity – their stupidity, animalism and dreams. The art-instinct is permanently primitive. We only want the world to live, and to feel its crude energy flowing through us.²¹⁴

Rosefeldt underlines the contrast in desires in many manifesto writers, to desire novelty while maintaining the illusion of an autonomous break with the past.

In 'ressentiment' the subordinate rages against the elite and the powerless rage against the apparently powerful, the 'original regime' are regarded as an opponent. As Tzara realized and exemplified in his manifesto '*Dada Manifesto*' (1918), the fundamental structure of the manifesto involves going against the 'other', and the goals and ideals come secondarily. The consequence of such realization of 'ressentiment' is the condemnation of the opposed, inverting the mimetic structure. Therefore, morality has little to do with the manifesto genre because morality and immorality is an excuse to not recognize the feeling of powerlessness felt in the historical manifestoes writers. The writers understand that they are being oppressed by a dominant power and decide to convert this into moral superiority. Repetition in the insistence of the historical manifestoes protest towards the institutions is articulated in incessant terms and highlighted in Rosefeldt's work of art through the

²¹³ *Julian Rosefeldt: Manifesto.*, Exh. cat. (Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne; Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Sprengel Museum), eds. by A. Gebbers, U. Kittelmann, B. Dogramaci, R. Spieler, S. Tutton, J. Paton, London, Koenig Books Ltd, 2015, p. 20

²¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 21.

filmic repetitions correlated to the desires and ‘ressentiment’ connotations it manifests. This underlines the inherited affirmation of the avant-garde artists as fragile, unable to meet or exceed tradition and therefore denounce it. As Reyburn states:

If tradition can be utterly derided and dismissed, it will no longer seem to be competition. The artist will then be able to assert not only his or her illusory autonomy, but also dominance over what constitutes 'art'.²¹⁵

As Girard recognizes, when desire that is acquired through others is overstated, tradition becomes an obstacle to be destroyed and argument is not an option.²¹⁶ In *Manifesto* Rosefeldt refrains from the discourse against tradition, but it is implied by confirming tradition’s role and rejection. The affirmation cannot be denied in the work of art since it is the basis for repetition, conflict establishes itself in the affirmation of the desire of the other.

It is significant that the CEO at a private dinner party sequence (Fig. 6) has been related to the notion of the sublime, particularly in the dialogue between text and the image. As Rosefeldt’s medium is film, the moving image, for the opening sequences of the sequences the camera angle, framing and perspective are complemented to the setting of the scene. The artist slows down almost to a complete stop the movement of the camera achieving a solidified image, almost static. At the beginning of the sequence, the camera remains on a tree frame landscape of a lake (Fig. 15) that resembles a Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840) painting. Rosefeldt draws on the paradox of a living image in which nothing moves, even if it could, closely articulated towards the genre of the *tableau vivant*, of the medium of painting. The pictorial image is constituted by the meticulously set and the planning of the images layer by layer. The still image is a filmic equivalent of the sublime beauty and mystery remarked in Romanticism painting, as Berg underlines:

²¹⁵ D. Reyburn, *Repetitions repeatedly repeated: mimetic desire, resentment, and mimetic crisis in Julian Rosefeldt's Manifesto*, “Image and Text”, 33, 2019, p. 13.

²¹⁶ R. Girard, *Things hidden since the foundation of the world*, tr. eng by S. Bann and M. Metteer. London, Bloomsbury, 2016, p. 255.

The work is as poetic as it is beautiful, and as unsettling as it is sublime, since, in fact, the beauty serves to cloak the unsettling associations that lie beneath.²¹⁷

Repetition is found in the static image itself, a repetition of the same that never will change even if it could. As recognized by Gregos, the cinematic quality is evocative of filmmakers such as Theodore Angelopoulos (1935-2012), who works with slow, long takes characterized by silence, encouraging the ‘deceleration of perception’.²¹⁸ Rosefeldt utilizes David Caspar Friedrich imagery through the practice of parody to discuss the historical manifestoes theatricality. The film still (Fig. 15) portrays a canonically sublime subject matter which Romantic painters depicted to evoke a precise response. Such subject matter may not provoke the originally intended response of astonishment and wonder and at the same time feeling demeaned and elevated in the presence of a natural landscape depiction. This occurs because, how Crowther has stated: «[t]he infinite vistas and terrifying events [have] become mere signifiers of an outmoded theatricality.»²¹⁹ Rosefeldt treats this vista in relation to the practice of parody, where thoughts of ‘finitude and infinity’ in the presence of the vast lake are replaced in a conversation to past the time (as shown by Rosefeldt in the scene).²²⁰ Parody is used to imitate an existent piece that is well-known to viewers with critical or polemical intention, features that characterized the work are retained but are imitated with contrastive intention.²²¹

After the long take on the landscape, the camera shows with the use of a long tracking shot across the terrace people that are mingling while sipping champagne and talking on the phone. The people seem to be distracted by the vista, and it becomes part of their conversation, two people walk right in front of the landscape but are consumed by their phones. Only two people are talking profusely indicating the view. A romantic perception and conception of the sublime has not occurred, what is depicted is a response to the general aesthetic properties such as beauty and

²¹⁷ Julian Rosefeldt: *Film Works*, eds. by S. Berg, A. Franke, K. Gregos, D. Thorp, Ostfildern, Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2008, p. 12.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 44-5.

²¹⁹ P. Crowther, *The Kantian Sublime: From Morality to Art*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1989, p. 155.

²²⁰ J. Levinson, *Suffering Art Gladly: The Paradox of Negative Emotion in Art*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p. 96.

²²¹ I. Hoesterey, *Pastiche: cultural memory in art, film, literature*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2001, pp. 13-4.

grace, no one is overwhelmed imaginatively or emotionally. The sublime is invoked for what Crowther distinguishes as a universality characterization which is understood

through the imaginatively overwhelming character of some general truth embodied in a work, making vivid the scope of artistic expression.²²²

Since the scenery is part of the discussion or it is distracting the people talking with each other, the landscape absorbs the viewers by emphasizing or building personal associations, especially depicted in the two people talking about the landscape throughout this section of the sequence. Truth becomes universal because it occurs again and again in different cultures and ages and can be called sublime due to the fact that it «makes the scope of human expression vivid to the senses.»²²³ The overwhelming feature of this universality still does not transpire and as such is just becomes part of a conversation or a distraction in one's experience.

Rosefeldt aims to provoke in the viewer another universality characterization, a sense of the «overwhelming perpetual scale of a work making vivid the scope of human artifice»²²⁴ by containing nature in a frame. As the Romantic painters did, the artist wanted to evoke a sense of nature's majesty and meditation on humanity's place within nature. We must keep in mind that the thirteen sequences of *Manifesto* were installed on 16:9 video screens in the installation venues and as such provoked a similar reaction because of its immersive experience. And yet, Rosefeldt shows us in the sequence the reaction assumed by the contemporary audience: discussion, distraction and indifference. This interpretation is correlated with the historical manifestoes cited in the script: Kandinsky and Marc 'Preface to the *Blue Rider Almanac*' (1912) and Newman's, 'The Sublime is Now' (1948). The script starts with the manifesto of Kandinsky and Marc, which depicts the notion of the predominant system through the visual and acoustic dissonance in Kandinsky's concept of a

²²² *Ibid*, p. 161.

²²³ J. Levinson, *Suffering Art Gladly: The Paradox of Negative Emotion in Art*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p. 100.

²²⁴ P. Crowther, *The Kantian Sublime: From Morality to Art*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1989, p. 161. This is the first sublime response to art theorized by the author.

Gesamtkunstwerk, made up of conflicting forces. The spectator is central in this notion where:

Kandinsky looked to multiple contrasting stimuli [...] to communicate the chaos and disharmony of his time. If he could prove that confusion led eventually to knowledge, he could deal with the problematics of communicating to the spectator. Accordingly, he used numerous means – writing manifestos, organizing exhibitions, [...] to both promote and to explain the significance of their approach to a frequently uncomprehending public.²²⁵

Rosefeldt explored how and why ‘Der Blaue Reiter’ addressed spectatorship to activate the viewer and lift them out of their passivity, a central preoccupation in the twenty-first-century multi-media presentation. In fact, Rosefeldt chose the passage from the historical manifesto that speaks of ‘awakening’ and ‘spirituality’, revealing a dissonance with what is viewed in the filmed image.

Viewers need an explanation to relate to the work of art, and in this case to relate to the sublime Romantic feeling. This is exemplified in the next segment of the script composed by Rosefeldt that uses Newman’s, ‘*The Sublime is Now*’ (1948), where the historical manifesto insists on favoring new content and an effect for painting, raising concerns on how to create sublime art in correlation to the viewer. The passage selected from Rosefeldt is the answer to this question, indicating that to create the sublime one must get rid of the past and focus on the individual feeling. Newman is considered one of the artists that revived the artistic sublime but was ill-defined and poorly executed in expressing this feeling to viewers. His painting ‘*Vir heroicus sublimis*’ (Man, heroic and sublime, 1951) was meant to give an immediate self-evident feeling of revelation by the presence of the gigantic nearly monochromatic red canvas, interrupted by several ‘zips’ of contrasting colour. As indicated by Newman, viewers just had to stand up close to the canvas to have it provoke a feeling of communion in its presence.²²⁶ No such thing happened, and viewers did not

²²⁵ D. Price, *German Expressionism: Der Blaue Reiter and Its Legacies*, Manchester, University Press, 2020, p. 20.

²²⁶ J. Levinson, *Suffering Art Gladly: The Paradox of Negative Emotion in Art*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, pp. 101-02.

respond how expected by the artist because they needed the intellectual aspect in order to consider sublimity as intended by the artist. As such, Rosefeldt decided to use parody in order to pursue the age-old concept of sublime and spectatorship, wondering whether it has contemporary relevance or if the past keeps on repeating itself. The Romantic era notion of the sublime fails to provoke the intended response, but this is correlated to the dismissal of tradition that implicitly confirms it, and therefore even rejection requires affirmation. This is explained by Pifer:

art produced for consumption supports the existing institutions, affirming it and validating those values these institutions promote. [...] Such art is informed by conformity not resistance and change and certainly it doesn't rupture through the established reality principle to promote questions and radical inquiry.²²⁷

Therefore a connection between the historical manifestoes is found, different views on how to make art and become the patrons of novelty is issued, while unconsciously affirming the institutions, while rejecting them.

The 'new' is announced in all three manifestoes cited by Rosefeldt, but how can one break with the past to reset the present and have a brighter future if the future is decided not by the collectivity but by a few wealthy individuals. To quote Rosefeldt's beginning of the sequence of Kandinsky and Marc 'Preface to the *Blue Rider Almanac*' (1912):

A great era has begun: the spiritual 'awakening', the increasing tendency to regain lost 'balance', the inevitable necessity of spiritual plantings, the unfolding of the first blossom. We are standing at the threshold of one of the greatest epochs that mankind has ever experienced: the epoch of great spirituality. Art, literature, even 'exact' science are in various stages of change in this 'new' era; they will all be overcome by it.

After Newman's, 'The Sublime is Now' (1948), Rosefeldt quoted Lewis's manifesto that appealed to the individual and believed in 'high art'. Collectivity is a mirage and

²²⁷ M. T. Pifer, *Dissent and the Dynamics of Cultural Change. Lessons from the Underground Presses of the Late Sixties*, New York City, Taylor & Francis, 2019, p. 136.

even if 'BLAST' has failed in history as a magazine, the institutionalization of art remained. Through repetition, Rosefeldt adopts a rhetorical and interpretative look on the manifesto as a genre that is correlated to mimetic desire, a genre embedded in the rejection of mimesis represented in the manifestation of 'ressentiment'. Rosefeldt uses parody, repetition, interpretation to speak about the contemporary while invoking the past.

Repetition in ritual

In the conflict with the 'new' and the past tradition, another form of repetition comes forth, ritual. Rosefeldt reveals how the manifesto as a genre has become ritualized. As Reyburn notes: «Even the variations in content confirm the ritualistic nature of the form.»²²⁸ Ritual is a relic on which culture was formed, obscuring the original violence inherited in the ritual ceremony. Repetition is related to 'ressentiment' in its assumption of an original hatred and envy that forms opposition against the other, a veiled characteristic that was repeated and ritualized by the historical aesthetic manifesto.

Two sequences pivot on this concept: the funeral speaker (Fig.7) and the conservative mother with family (Fig. 12). In both the sequences, the repetition of words defies time and deconstruction becoming a transcendent experience and the connection between words and their meaning fall apart, dissolving. Rosefeldt uses this to his advantage connecting meaning and ritual in the repetition of words through the practice of the anaphora (used by the historical manifestoes writers).

Concerning the funeral speaker (Fig.7) ritual upholds tradition through the acknowledgement that tradition has died. The script is composed of diverse Dada manifestoes and Blanchett character is at a traditional outdoor funeral in the countryside. The scene was filmed in the dying light of a winter afternoon, and it starts by showing two children playing in the forest from a bird's-eye view establishing a connection between life and death as the children join the funeral and Blanchett's voice-over starts. In the Dadaist view, society has become indifferent to

²²⁸ D. Reyburn, *Repetitions repeatedly repeated: mimetic desire, resentment, and mimetic crisis in Julian Rosefeldt's Manifesto*, "Image and Text", 33, 2019, p. 16.

morality and logic because the justice system has become so.²²⁹ In the next part of the sequence, the voice-over begins with the depiction of the beginning of the ceremony, the camera portrays a group of people walking together outside the church to reach the gravesite, Blanchett then commences her eulogy in front of the other guests on a platform. A disjunction between the text collage and the image is articulated by Rosefeldt by juxtaposing words, images and spatial configuration. Creating varied significations, the «segments underscore Blanchett's theatrical virtuosity while establishing resonances between the film scenarios and the manifestos.»²³⁰ The contrast starts with choosing the gravesite as the site for Blanchett's eulogy delivered shouting Dadaist collaged words. The aggressive eulogy aims to bury tradition, a double repetition that denies and affirms tradition. This is depicted in the words slightly altered of Picabia's '*Dada Cannibalistic Manifesto*' (1920):

You are all complete idiots, made with the alcohol of purified sleep. You are like your hopes: nothing. Like your paradise: nothing. Like your idols: nothing. Like your political men: nothing. Like your heroes: nothing. Like your artists: nothing. Like your religions: nothing.²³¹

These words are then completed with the rhetoric of repetition using an anaphora, utilized by Aragon in '*Dada Manifesto*' (1920):

No more painters, no more writers, no more musicians, no more sculptors, no more religions, no more republicans, no more royalists, no more imperialists, no more anarchists, no more socialists, no more Bolsheviks, no more politicians, no more proletarians, no more democrats, no more bourgeois, no more aristocrats, no more armies, no more police, no more fatherlands, enough

²²⁹ M. Buldaç, G. H. Eren and S. Canoğlu, *Semiotic Analysis of Julian Rosefeldt's Manifesto*, "Quarterly review of film and video", Vol.37 (4), 2020, p. 337.

²³⁰ G. D' Cruz, *Teaching Postdramatic Theatre. Anxieties, Aporias and Disclosures*, New York City, Springer International Publishing, 2018, p. 144.

²³¹ *Julian Rosefeldt: Manifesto.*, Exh. cat. (Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne; Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Sprengel Museum), eds. by A. Gebbers, U. Kittelmann, B. Dogramaci, R. Spieler, S. Tutton, J. Paton, London, Koenig Books Ltd, 2015, p. 33.

of all these imbecilities, no more anything, no more anything, nothing, NOTHING, NOTHING, NOTHING.²³²

Dada's meaningless is juxtaposed to the seriousness of the context and establishes that meaning is on display in this sequence. A powerful contrast comes out of the intonation of Blanchett's voice when eulogizing with extreme sincerity Dada's outlandish poetry confronted with the context. Rosefeldt chose a situation in which each divergence from a standard behaviour would be associated with a breach of taboo, charged with great seriousness. The graveyard represents what the Dadaist movement was conveying to the public after WWI, when they were trying to assert «absurdity, the absence of all logic and consistency in world affairs»²³³ Therefore, the arrangement of text and image does not always correspond to what was initially related with the historical manifestoes texts.

As for the conservative mother with family (Fig. 12) sequence, Blanchett's character is accompanied by her husband and three children (played by Blanchett's actual family) while eating lunch. This is the only sequence that presents a single historical manifesto, Oldenburg's *'I am for an Art...'* (1961) which is presented in the type of environment that the Pop movement attacked, «a claustrophobic, petit bourgeois family household in the USA»²³⁴ and Blanchett's character embodies the conservative values the artist opposed.

The mother's face with its out-of-fashion glasses serves to express piety and a strong demand for self-control and obedience to tradition.²³⁵

Rosefeldt exposes tradition set against the 'new' where the historical manifesto of Oldenburg is recited as an extensive grace before eating lunch, there is no use of voice-over, and the manifesto is uttered only by the actress when saying grace. A prayer is an ancient form of human utterance, an affirmation of human dependence

²³² *Ivi.*

²³³ *Ibid*, p. 90.

²³⁴ *Julian Rosefeldt: Manifesto.*, Exh. cat. (Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne; Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Sprengel Museum), eds. by A. Gebbers, U. Kittelmann, B. Dogramaci, R. Spieler, S. Tutton, J. Paton, London, Koenig Books Ltd, 2015, p. 90.

²³⁵ *Aesthetic Theory*, eds. by D. Mersch, S. Sasse and S. Zanetti, Zurich, Diaphanes, 2019, p. 192.

and need, a desire for divine blessing.²³⁶ Rosefeldt use of the historical manifesto as a prayer which can only make sense when giving grace to connect this form to a rhetorical gesture that deallocates from the original form and content, linked to religion and devotion in its utterance. The artist suggests that when rejecting tradition one must replace it with something else, and tradition would be what legitimizes what has been replaced. Therefore, emphasis is given to the repetitiveness of ritual, by using Oldenburg's reliance on anaphora in the form of a phrase 'I am for art ...' followed by what constitutes art in the artist view. What comes out of Oldenburg's view does not make much sense because art is whatever is necessary, even violence. As Reyburn states:

In grappling with Oldenburg's words, one finds, indeed, that the 'art' that he is 'for' is not defined at all. It reflects a desire for everything that amounts to a desire for nothing in particular.²³⁷

The historical manifesto itself ironically condemns tradition, it remains rooted in the discussions concerning the definition of art and art's religious stance. Rosefeldt tries to destabilize the dogmatic opposition of the historical manifesto's formulations. Illusion is given by the very beginning and art is defined by this illusion, revealing its dogmatic constrain, its correlation to tradition:

I am for an art that is political-erotic-mystical, that does something other than sit on its ass in a museum.

I am for an art that grows up not knowing it is art at all.

I am for an art that embroils itself with the everyday crap & still comes out on top.²³⁸

²³⁶ D. Reyburn, *Repetitions repeatedly repeated: mimetic desire, resentment, and mimetic crisis in Julian Rosefeldt's Manifesto*, "Image and Text", 33, 2019, p. 15.

²³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 16.

²³⁸ *Julian Rosefeldt: Manifesto.*, Exh. cat. (Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne; Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Sprengel Museum), eds. by A. Gebbers, U. Kittelmann, B. Dogramaci, R. Spieler, S. Tutton, J. Paton, London, Koenig Books Ltd, 2015, p. 40.

The content of the ‘prayer’ and the offensive language used in it constitute a violation of the norms of the prayer and the moral conduct of the family. Rosefeldt ironizes the attitude of the manifesto genre, bringing to light the seriousness, doctrinaire and rigid arguments when speaking about art. In fact, even if Oldenburg uses the anaphoric speech to break conventions and distance himself from the institution, his acquisitive mimetic desire takes him back to a certain type of model. The family is entrenched in tradition and in contrast the historical manifesto enjoys being provocative, as the artist presents himself as a radical innovator and despises the traditional bourgeois notion of art that for a sculptor is associated with precious material and institutionalized spaces as museums and galleries. Oldenburg aims for the diverse and everyday objects, displacing the notion of art and non-art. In fact in the sequence, the turkey prepared as dinner for the family is a visual allusion to the sculptures of the artist based on comfort food, an item set ironically by Rosefeldt to make it seem like part of the Pop art movement ideals. Then at the end of the scene (Fig. 16), there is a room filled with stuffed animals, which can be seen in other places inside the house. This references the use of animals and animal bones to create a work of art, as every object can be considered as an artistic element. Another symbol is evoked by Rosefeldt in utilizing taxidermy: ‘life emerges with and out of death and as such culture emerges out of violence’.²³⁹

The aesthetic manifesto as an institutionalized text is found to function as mythology does, it does not explain or clarify the aims of the present moment but is driven by the desires that guide the artistic impulse, thus intentions are hidden, and meaning is concealed. The manifesto as a genre is found in what it opposes and rejects, usually without a reason or justification and not in its assertions. Therefore, novelty would not be asserted with the exclusion of the other, in order to assert the belief and authority of the manifesto writer. Consequently, modern art is built in accordance with the logic of contradiction, where the avant-garde artist requires mimesis, rivalry and ‘ressentiment’ to declare the ‘new’ and the ‘now’. This dedication to novelty is searched to bring down your opponent and less to desire a different future for art. The artist conceals this gesture not revealing that his weakness has been constructed on his strength. Therefore, the artists are aware that when writing a manifesto they

²³⁹ D. Reyburn, *Repetitions repeatedly repeated: mimetic desire, resentment, and mimetic crisis in Julian Rosefeldt's Manifesto*, “Image and Text”, 33, 2019, p. 18.

are committing to the immanent, with a limited position on the past and future, because the sole consequence of rivalry is insignificance and demise. As Marinetti has stated:

The oldest among us are thirty: so we have at least ten years in which to complete our task. When we reach forty, other, younger and more courageous men will very likely toss us into the trash can, like useless manuscripts.²⁴⁰

The manifesto as an artefact is one of the most perishable, launched to make a difference in transient circumstances. Art historians tend to regard everything created by the artist as sacred and as such must be treated with respect. In this regard, the historical manifestoes writers hoped to become part of art history by making an impact in their present. Rosefeldt reminds us of the insecurity of such artists and how what is now sacred before was an attempt to survive and be recognized, challenging the viewer to consider the fundamental nature of the manifesto and their motivations in respect to the past and our present moment.

2.3 A dissenting view of reality

Julian Rosefeldt's idea for *Manifesto* avoids any direct relation with the historical figures of the manifesto writers and their social, political or historical contexts. The artist has defined a classification of nameless and universally understandable everyday figures of our present time to transport the manifestoes in the present day. By doing so the inherent social criticism of the historical manifestoes comes to light and can be interpreted in different ways by the artist. The manifesto genre is inquired in its many aspects as a literary document that can be poetic, political and performative. Their socially formative and transformative effect goes beyond the sphere of art, invoking the declamatory form to speak urgently to the present of the present. As such: «modern, postmodern and contemporary manifestos are demonstrative articulations that assert themselves as a pars pro toto.»²⁴¹ Rosefeldt

²⁴⁰ F. T. Marinetti, 'The foundation manifesto of Futurism' cit in A. Danchev, *100 Artists' Manifestos: From the Futurists to the Stuckists*, London, Penguin Books, 2011, p. 7.

²⁴¹ *Julian Rosefeldt: Manifesto.*, Exh. cat. (Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne; Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney;

explores the correlation between the everyday experience and the aesthetic practice, where aesthetic manifestoes who pursued greatness «in a headlong and often headless jaunt into the particularities, the euphoria, and even the banalities of everyday experience.»²⁴² As discussed in chapter one, the individual feels alienated in its modern existence and starts to question its personal presence worth. The role of art in culture can be understood through the theory of social analysis of Herbert Marcuse and the notion of dissent. The opposition towards the other that characterizes manifesto writers is reflected not in a simple opposition but as a dynamic of cultural change within an aesthetic that reflects and contradicts the dominant reality, what is accepted as true. As constituted by Marcuse:

Art reflects this dynamic in its insistence on its own truth, which has its ground in social reality and is yet its “other.” Art breaks open a dimension inaccessible to other experience, a dimension in which human beings, nature, and things no longer stand under the law of the established reality principle. The encounter with the truth of art happens in the estranging language and images which make perceptible, visible, and audible that which is no longer, or not yet, perceived, said, and heard in everyday life.²⁴³

This observation relies on Marxist aesthetics, which understands art as a revolutionary discourse that assumes that the political and the aesthetic tend to coincide in the revolutionary content and artistic quality. As the aesthetic manifesto will pursue the same mode of presentation, the manifesto writers present themselves as the keepers of ‘truth’. Marxism suggests that art needs to represent society and its struggle in order to connect with the present and initiate change. A realist mode that does not take into account the transcendent possibilities of art, as Marcuse notes when criticizing the Marxism view:

Sprengel Museum), eds. by A. Gebbers, U. Kittelmann, B. Dogramaci, R. Spieler, S. Tutton, J. Paton, London, Koenig Books Ltd, 2015, p. 93.

²⁴² M. T. Pifer, *Dissent and the Dynamics of Cultural Change. Lessons from the Underground Presses of the Late Sixties*, New York City, Taylor & Francis, 2019, p. 120.

²⁴³ H. Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension: Toward a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics* (1977), tr. eng. by H. Marcuse and E. Sherover, Boston, Beacon Press, 1978, p. 72.

Art cannot abolish the social division of labor which makes for its esoteric character, but neither can art "popularize" itself without weakening its emancipatory impact.²⁴⁴

To divide art from the material production it allowed it to delineate the reality of society and as such, it challenges the reality established by others to determine the 'truth' by creating a fabricated world that expresses the reality perceived by the artist. Therefore, a dissenting view of reality deconstructs through art the reality formed and maintained by the dominant norms and values. New ways of seeing and interpreting reality are reassembled and replaced. With a shift after WWII, the modernist experiment altered into a postmodernism fragmentation. The grand narratives that drove modernism and incited industrialism were understood as a product of a misleading rationalism. Thus, postmodernism fragmentation:

saw the elevation of subjectivity, individual truth, and the disintegration of prevailing grand narratives that once informed social and international relationships, and personal behavior.²⁴⁵

Individual experience of one's reality is expressed seeking to uphold the true meaning of experience in the power of the 'new' that required change from the existing structures. Art remained a dissenting force that as its etymology reveals - 'Dissent' derives from the Latin 'dissentire', meaning to differ in sentiment or feeling - what it indicates is an act of persuasion and not of revolution.²⁴⁶ Revolution forces change with acts of coercion instead dissent enacts changes with the use of one's cultural sentiments with imagination, with an act that can raise consciousness in others. The desire to express individual subjectivity creates a space of dissent, where interpretation is necessary to construct meaning. Action creates a dissenting aesthetic by resisting, reimagining and creating to develop a sense of reality. Against

²⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 21.

²⁴⁵ M. T. Pifer, *Dissent and the Dynamics of Cultural Change. Lessons from the Underground Presses of the Late Sixties*, New York City, Taylor & Francis, 2019, p. 122.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 123.

consumption, the process of change engages culture in a dissenting practice by breaking the established reality and defining another one.

Rosefeldt's film installation starts with two sequences that are intertwined in image and text: the prologue (Fig. 2) and the homeless man (Fig. 3). The artist decided to frame the other movements and sequences within the Marxist critique of capitalist society context. Therefore, viewers perceived *Manifesto* as dissenting from the capitalist and industrial values of production and progress, as a critique and personal view of the present day. By using the text collage as the monologue and deciding to depict everyday characters this conjunction of forms revealed that placing art in the present day transforming the viewers understanding of reality. Art in all its artistic expressions is related to reality and experience. By placing the historical manifestoes in a living contemporary context Rosefeldt gives reality its meaning by portraying it as always changing. Meaning is never fixed because it must be achieved. As such, some historical manifestoes deny meaning and some open up interpretation in their development of reality.

The artist aims to engage in this development of meaning by not focusing on the origin and historical value of the manifestoes but by showing their relevance in pursuing reality and their truth. To deny the original meaning of the manifestoes means to unlearn what was known and thought to open up new points of departure. The artist enabled the reimagination of their rhetorical devices and their significance in the present moment. As Marcuse has asserted:

The truth of art lies in its power to break the monopoly of established reality (i.e. of those who established it) to define what is real. In this rupture, which is the achievement of aesthetic form, the fictitious world of art appears as true reality.²⁴⁷

In Rosefeldt film installation the first sequence at the installation venue is the prologue (Fig. 2), which depicts a sparkling fuse against a black background. The flame sets off a firework at the end of the fuse shown in the next sequence (Fig. 3). The artist staged the sparks of the burning cord to invoke a firework. In a single long

²⁴⁷ H. Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension: Toward a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics* (1977), tr. eng. by H. Marcuse and E. Sherover, Boston, Beacon Press, 1978, p. 9.

take, the burning fuse is shown in slow motion and at the end of the ten-minute take, the fire and sparks reach the opposite end of the screen from where they started. The burning fuse is not immediately recognizable because of the blurred imagery. The blurring is purposeful in referencing the historical manifestoes utilized in the monologue, invoking a critique of modernity and its belief in progress. It is also a confrontation with the world as the individual intends it, its reality. Furthermore, the burning fuse symbolizes the demolition of the traditional views with what the political and then aesthetic manifestoes desired, an explosive force for a call to arms. As Gebbers and Kittelmann have stated:

Along with the impetus of intentionality and performativity, a mood of departure and subversion is literally ‘inscribed’ within them, as Rosefeldt’s introductory film both reveals and obfuscates. This indeterminacy is deliberate.²⁴⁸

Starting with the very manifesto which had a decisive influence on all future manifestoes, especially artistic one’s, the ‘*Manifesto of the Communist Party*’ (1848) by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. This prototypical model set the tone, rhetoric and action-oriented nature of future manifestoes even those whose gesture of refusal and non-action is rooted in a new beginning. «All that is solid melts into air»²⁴⁹ creates an ambiguous link between the original text from which the fragment is quoted from and the subsequent texts collaged from Tzara’s ‘*Dada Manifesto*’ (1918) and Soupault’s ‘*Literature and the Rest*’ (1920) and the image of the burning fuse. While one manifesto advocated for political revolution the other historical aesthetic manifestoes question the significance of writing a manifesto. Rosefeldt demonstrates how artistic absorption of the manifesto form remains political in a call for a cultural revolution. As noted from Marx and Engels, the bourgeoisie itself could not exist without regularly revolutionizing all relations of society because the conservation of

²⁴⁸ *Julian Rosefeldt: Manifesto.*, Exh. cat. (Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne; Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Sprengel Museum), eds. by A. Gebbers, U. Kittelmann, B. Dogramaci, R. Spieler, S. Tutton, J. Paton, London, Koenig Books Ltd, 2015, p. 83.

²⁴⁹ ‘Manifesto of the Communist Party’ in K. Marx and F. Engels, *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works in two volumes*, Vol. I, Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955, p. 37

the old modes of production in unaltered form was the condition of existence for the previous industrial classes. What distinguished their epoch was uncertainty and agitation and the working class was ignited to overthrow capitalism.

Rosefeldt also emphasizes with this opening quotation the anger and age of those who wrote the '*Manifesto of the Communist Party*' (1848). Marx was twenty-nine and Engels twenty-seven when they wrote the manifesto that transformed the intellectual and political world. At a young age, they revolutionize not only politics but art itself:

A fierce attitude, associated with a gesture towards a radical new beginning, a devastating critique of the old order, sets the stage for the powerful self-determination and self-invention of the artist. This always occurs in the light of the new, the unprecedented, or previously unthought of.²⁵⁰

Manifesto shows the individual characters and their personal struggles, their interactions and their cultural traditions. Consequently, the prologue's (Fig. 2) glowing fuse shown in darkness is mirrored in a daylight scene, the homeless man sequence (Fig. 3).

The homeless man sequence (Fig. 3) starts with the image of the burning fuse that falls consumed and charred into a little pile of ash. A reminder to not forget what was represented in the preceding sequence, the thread in all the scenes is a fuse heading towards explosion, to create the 'new'. As Gregori has noticed:

Every manifesto makes a claim to be a fireworks show, and this holds for the following 12 projections as well.²⁵¹

Then three elderly women are shown setting off fireworks with great excitement. The image is reminiscent of a scene in Michelangelo Antonioni's (1912–2007) movie '*La Notte*'.²⁵² As Rosefeldt has stated:

²⁵⁰ *Aesthetic Theory*, eds. by D. Mersch, S. Sasse and S. Zanetti, Zurich, Diaphanes, 2019, p. 184.

²⁵¹ D. Gregori, *Film Artist Julian Rosefeldt: "Manifesto" and "Masquerade"*, "The Theatre Times", 13 June 2017.

²⁵² '*La Notte*', directed by Michelangelo Antonioni, Italy/France, 1961, 122 min.

she's cycling out of the town to run away from the constraints of her marriage and sees three teenagers in the field firing rockets in the sky. For me, this is a beautiful symbol of her possible freedom.²⁵³

Rosefeldt's enactment of Antonioni's film transforms the protagonist of the movie (played by Monica Vitti) into a homeless man and the three young men become three older women who celebrate like school children. The setting is similar in both films, a depicting a post-war environment. The countdown to the rocket launch ends with 'zero' and as such the rocket represents the zero-point in history that the historical manifestoes talk about, the new departure. The camera then lets the viewer see from a drone point of view the fireworks exploding in the sky and the camera then turns to the homeless man, who looks straight at the viewer with an astonished look and breaks the fourth wall by looking into the camera. The drone view continues showing us the context in which the homeless man is walking into, a spy tower on Teufelsberg located in West Berlin. The structure was built after WWII and was used by the American intelligence agents to shadow Soviet troops in East Germany. Blanchett's voice-over starts while we see the homeless man wander between ruins. The first phrase we hear is from Fontana's 'White Manifesto'(1946) denunciation against apolitical art:

We are continuing the evolution of art. The ideas are irrefutable. They exist as seeds within the social fabric, awaiting expression by artists and thinkers.²⁵⁴

Blanchett's monologue is composed of texts of critique of elitism and capitalism, collaged from historical manifestoes written by Lucio Fontana (1899–1968), the John Reed Club of New York (1932), Constant Nieuwenhuys (1920–2005), Aleksandr Rodchenko (1891–1956), and Guy Debord (1931–1994). In these texts, the artists

²⁵³ B. Swinson, *Text as pure thought and pure poetry: Julian Rosefeldt on Manifesto*, "Creative Screenwriting", 25 May 2017.

²⁵⁴ *Julian Rosefeldt: Manifesto.*, Exh. cat. (Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne; Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Sprengel Museum), eds. by A. Gebbers, U. Kittelmann, B. Dogramaci, R. Spieler, S. Tutton, J. Paton, London, Koenig Books Ltd, 2015, p. 8.

demand to abolish commodities, wage labour, technocracy and hierarchy and want life itself to become art. The utopian outlook is underlined with a Situationist critique, Rosefeldt placed this sequence in a ruined image of the city relating to the historical movement opposition to urban transformation. As Blanchett's character declares the monologue in a thick Scottish accent, she passes a baboon located on rubble while the homeless man ascends to the top of the building where he uses a megaphone to continue the monologue in the direction of an inhabited modern city. The situation becomes rather clear, the homeless man is a victim of circumstances and understands that there is nothing to lose, and the viewer recognizes the class discrimination that the historical manifestoes are talking about. As «his anarchic cries for freedom from oppressive commercialism echo around decaying remnants of modernity»²⁵⁵ the victim of capitalism utters critiques of the consumerist appropriation of art. Rosefeldt utilizes irony to create conflict between the words of the historical manifestoes and the character's depiction. After all, the seriousness of the social and cultural critique of the capitalist society of the artist manifesto is being portrayed by an individual screaming through a megaphone to an empty audience, screaming at the world a collage of historical manifestoes. All the rhetorical devices utilized by the manifesto genre reverberate in nothingness, no one is listening but the spectators.

The scene ends with an industrial landscape and Debord's '*Situationist Manifesto*' (1960) and last words of the monologue resonate in the stillness of the space:

To those who don't understand us properly, we say with an irreducible scorn:
'We, of whom you believe yourselves to be the judges, we will one day judge you!'²⁵⁶

Architecture is a strong metaphor in this sequence, Rosefeldt utilizes it in the film installation whether to reinforce or contradict the monologue uttered by Blanchett's

²⁵⁵ G. Bola, *A moving medley of manifestos*, "Apollo. The international art magazine", 13 November 2017.

²⁵⁶ *Julian Rosefeldt: Manifesto.*, Exh. cat. (Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne; Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Sprengel Museum), eds. by A. Gebbers, U. Kittelmann, B. Dogramaci, R. Spieler, S. Tutton, J. Paton, London, Koenig Books Ltd, 2015, p. 9.

characters. The artist employs the space in an enigmatic way in order to engage the viewer and activate its interpretation in understanding the significance with the scene, as such «the architecture becomes an alienated place to the text that the action unfolds».²⁵⁷

The image of the burning fuse appears for the third time in the sequence where Blanchett character is a Tattooed punk (Fig. 5). The scene begins with a close-up of plates of half-eaten food, coffee cups and empty beer cans. The space is represented as a chaotic environment where everyone is drunk and under the influence. The objects and space support the character's depiction of the historical manifestoes collage. Rosefeldt depicts a private party in a backstage area of a performance venue while the camera pans away from the refuse to show us the club environment and the people drunk and tired but still partying on. There is no voiceover during this nearly four-and-a-half-minute shot, which ultimately descends on Blanchett's drunk character and then the camera cuts to a closer shot, «she sighs, tosses a crushed can, and begins her manifesto.»²⁵⁸ The monologue is portrayed with an English accent as and as a drunken rant where no one of the participants take her seriously. Her fury is shown by kicking objects and throwing food around until she settles on a chair having said what she had to express in a moment of explosion. She invokes Arce's 'A Strident Prescription' (1921), a Mexican movement influenced by Futurism and the political pursuits of Marxism. In an unusual combination of artistic internationalism and political nationalism, the Stridentists saw themselves as revolutionary, both artistically and politically and aimed to a formal and linguistic experimentation. They invoke the annihilation of the past with the first sentence Rosefeldt chose to start his monologue: «To the electric chair with Chopin!».²⁵⁹ As Blanchett sits down on the chair she lights up a cigarette and the voice-over starts. The camera shows a close-up of the lighting and burning of the cigarette that invokes the prologue imaginary, where the firework has not yet been set off. «Rosefeldt uses

²⁵⁷ G. Yalcinkaya, *Julian Rosefeldt celebrates "anti-architecture" in new movie Manifesto*, "Dezeen", 28 November 2017.

²⁵⁸ D. Venning, *Manifestos for Theatre and Nation*, "Performing Arts Journal", Vol. 42, Issue 2 (125), 2020, p. 90.

²⁵⁹ *Julian Rosefeldt: Manifesto.*, Exh. cat. (Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne; Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Sprengel Museum), eds. by A. Gebbers, U. Kittelmann, B. Dogramaci, R. Spieler, S. Tutton, J. Paton, London, Koenig Books Ltd, 2015, p. 23.

this image as a metaphor for burning down and burning out.»²⁶⁰ Therefore, the futility of life and its pursuits is shown as the character has become aware of the fact that even transgression has confirmed the rule, but one must keep on trying. The manifesto collage invokes Arce's 'A *Strident Prescription*' (1921) and Huidobro's 'We Must Create' (1922) historical manifestoes. Huidobro's 'Creationism' privileges the act of creation over imitation and his manifesto does not feature the political manifesto speech act or rhetorical conventional forms because was structured more like an essay. As Puchner asserts:

there are no numbered points, no coinage of an ism, no rivalry with specific other movements let alone a celebration of futurist speech acts.²⁶¹

The voice-over ends and Blanchett's starts to utter the monologue once more. In the closing shot, Rosefeldt references Jeff Wall's 'The Thinker' (1986), which in turn is referencing Rodin in positioning a man wearing black and sitting near Blanchett's character in the famous position. The gesture of repetition is continued through the citation of the image, giving what is cited a new meaning and correlation.

This sequence depicts rebellion, the foundation of the manifesto genre, in a post-modern moment where it is recognized as failed. Nothing changes but that does not mean that it always did not or that hope is lost. Set in a dissenting point of view that questions reality and desires. A desire to question reality is encapsulated in Arce's collaged words:

Who of us is the most sincere? Those of us who purify and crystallize ourselves through the filter of personal emotions? Or all those 'artists' whose only concern is to ingratiate themselves with the amorphous crowd of a scanty audience? – An audience of retrograde idiots and blacklegging art dealers?

My madness has not been reckoned with.²⁶²

²⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p. 89.

²⁶¹ M. Puchner, *Poetry of the revolution: Marx manifestos, and the avant-gardes* (2005), Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2006, p. 170.

²⁶² *Julian Rosefeldt: Manifesto.*, Exh. cat. (Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne; Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney;

As we witness Blanchett's rebellion in uttering dissent, she invokes the discard we find rarely and the violent freedom it promises, confronting us with the past and what has been done to find ourselves in a post-modern condition. As Nietzsche argues, traditional values should be abandoned and reestablished where no moral life can be found.²⁶³ As such, we must question our own reality.

2.3.1 Context: balancing irony, solemnity and irreverence

The environments in the film installation resemble staged sets, establishing an allusion to realism. In the artist view, this allusion implies that the relationship between the individual and the world has been emptied of its reality. The images show no indication of their degree of authenticity creating a state of indeterminacy. Rich in cinematic and painterly tones the artist utilized the theatrical potential of each setting to intensify the characters of the sequences. As Rosefeldt has stated:

As an artist who studied architecture and works with film, I don't see these disciplines as far away from painting and sculpture.²⁶⁴

The artist utilized spaces that are typical of society's environment as fictional creations or employs places that are restricted to the public, depicting them only for their façade. Rosefeldt questions our capacity to perceive the environment in relation to the past, history and the power that resides in them. This play between the past and the present state of the structures questions our relationship with the given context. As underlined by Roman:

His staging's reference fictional universes so as to arouse curiosity about situations that are strongly inspired by the organization of our daily lives.²⁶⁵

Sprengel Museum), eds. by A. Gebbers, U. Kittelmann, B. Dogramaci, R. Spieler, S. Tutton, J. Paton, London, Koenig Books Ltd, 2015, p. 23.

²⁶³ M. Buldaç, G. H. Eren and S. Canoğlu, *Semiotic Analysis of Julian Rosefeldt's Manifesto*, "Quarterly review of film and video", Vol.37 (4), 2020, p. 335.

²⁶⁴ *Julian Rosefeldt: Manifesto.*, Exh. cat. (Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne; Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Sprengel Museum), eds. by A. Gebbers, U. Kittelmann, B. Dogramaci, R. Spieler, S. Tutton, J. Paton, London, Koenig Books Ltd, 2015, p. 99.

The architectural background selected by Rosefeldt is an influential factor in his practice. In *Manifesto* the artist decided to have an ‘anti-architecture’ spatial approach. The spaces depicted and chosen underline the monologue’s characteristics and the representation of the characters, bringing the text and persona into relevance. To induce the viewer to question the relationship between the context and the monologue the artist decided to not re-establish the relationship with the space and to not bound the architecture with certain definitions (such as a narrator or an announcer). Hence, «a hierarchical relationship between the manifestos, personas, and spaces and spatial components»²⁶⁶ is established. The artist transformed industrial landmarks into alienated places as examples of ‘anti-architecture’. The film installation was almost exclusively shot in Berlin and as Rosefeldt has indicated:

On a hidden level, the film is a life declaration to Berlin, although I don't depict Berlin as Berlin [...] There are no emblematic buildings that people know and recognize.²⁶⁷

The locations span from the Vattenfall waste resource centre, the Klingenberg power plant and the library designed by Herzog & de Meuron for Brandenburg University of Technology. The ‘anti-architecture’ approach implies that the locations are not recognizable in their functionality thus creating a tension between the setting and the text material. Architecture is treated as a set, that does not reinforce the reconstruction of the situation depicted but is a complementary element that serves as an enigmatic touch.

The collaged texts do not relate in content or reference to the settings of the scenes, and neither does the role of the protagonist or the character portrayed. Instead, Rosefeldt decided to transfer the historical manifestoes into specific locations and social and aesthetic contexts. Rosefeldt presents this transference as an intermedial

²⁶⁵ M. Roman, *On Stage The Theatrical Dimension of Video Imaged*, Bristol, Intellect Books Limited, 2016, p. 24.

²⁶⁶ M. Buldaç, G. H. Eren and S. Canoğlu, *Semiotic Analysis of Julian Rosefeldt's Manifesto*, “Quarterly review of film and video”, Vol.37 (4), 2020, p. 328.

²⁶⁷ G. Yalcinkaya, *Julian Rosefeldt celebrates “anti-architecture” in new movie Manifesto*, “Dezeen”, 28 November 2017.

movement between the film scenes, implying a historical transfer between the past and the contemporary circumstance, the scene and the film sets. This transference can also be noticed in the historical texts which question the political, artistic notions and the reality of everyday life. Rosefeldt utilizes the manifesto genre by making use of the scene, performance, staging and spectacle to draw the viewers' attention to the fluidity and contingency of the historical manifestoes concepts in the moment of transference. In *Manifesto* image and text are given equal priority and as the thirteen collaged texts trace a path through the arts and their history and so do the images by guiding the viewer through the history of these media and their protagonist.

To create his text collages, Rosefeldt studies the speech rhythms of the various authors and in doing so reveals surprising parallels between them; the same musical, synesthetic approach is also used to compose his images.²⁶⁸

Rosefeldt connects the text and the image metaphorically by establishing a connection between them or by antithetically using irony and parody. An ambiguity comes forth in the contrast between text and image because the historical proclamations seem out of context in our present condition. This occurs because our understanding of the present has changed and Rosefeldt underlines this by using irony.

In the sequences where irony is used, the artist separated the historical texts from the practice of the producers of such texts, as such Rosefeldt focused on the rhetoric and made them newly accessible by contextualizing them in contemporary and often absurd situations. Distinct friction between the spoken words and Blanchett's performance is mirrored in the form and the content, creating an ironic critique of the historical manifestoes. As the artistic creation and spectatorship reveal the political form, Rosefeldt allowed irony to critique the message delivered by the historical texts. The ironic view is utilized to illustrate a disruption informed by the text and image, revealing the impossibility of constructing a narrative. Therefore, as Sennett

²⁶⁸ *Julian Rosefeldt: Manifesto.*, Exh. cat. (Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne; Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Sprengel Museum), eds. by A. Gebbers, U. Kittelmann, B. Dogramaci, R. Spieler, S. Tutton, J. Paton, London, Koenig Books Ltd, 2015, p. 85.

states, to employ irony is a «logical consequence of living in flexible time, without standards of authority and accountability»²⁶⁹ A self-destructive characteristic that stipulates that people do not challenge power because no one and no authority recognizes worth. Nothing is taken seriously because the terms in which one describes and illustrates the present are always subject to change. In place of the drive to alter and revolutionize the present state of affairs, irony is utilized in their place. As Rorty describes, irony is employed because of the awareness of contingency and fragility of the self, of believing that nothing is fixed.²⁷⁰ By stipulating that everything is meaningless, an ironic view is utilized as a way of dealing with the disappearance of fixed points, a post-modern condition. However, Rosefeldt decides to resort to a type of irony that does not lead to immobility by using, as Lorusso indicates,

a sort of meta-irony, which implies the ability and willingness to find the ironic detachment itself ironic, contextualising it on a social level.²⁷¹

Furthermore, by employing Cate Blanchett as the sole protagonist the artist subverted expectations in all the sequences. No angry men are declaring their truth but on the contrary, except for the homeless man, all the characters are women who offer the monologue as an interior thought intended for themselves using the voice-over technique or by voicing the monologue to a presumed audience. The monologue and the filmed image are connected in showing someone functioning in a normal contemporary situation. As such, the monologue becomes the testimony of the inner struggle of the character portrayed. As the texts do not postulate or explain the images the emphasis resides in the rhetorical proclamation and declamatory style. What is being uttered are alternative possibilities for action, but these actions are never performed in the moving image thus the characters are presented as discussing among themselves or to themselves for the possible action to be taken. The artist

²⁶⁹ R. Sennett, *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism*, New York, Norton, 1998, p. 91.

²⁷⁰ R. Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 73-4.

²⁷¹ S. Lorusso, *Entreprenariat: Everyone is an Entrepreneur, Nobody is Safe*, Netherlands, Onomatopée, 2019, p. 230.

adds a level of tension contrary to the peaceful images depicted, generating the thought process that occurs before taking action. The appellative nature of the manifesto genre amplifies this tension, and a detachment from the situation is created through the «verbalizations and subsequent rationalizations» that occur in the monologue speech.²⁷² The historical manifestoes artist communicated sociopolitical ideals and their approaches required elaboration and explanation, wanting art to be the expression and the driving force behind a sociopolitical and cultural change.

The manifesto genre and its connection between image and text define a medium that wants to control its reception in order to be understood. Therefore, Rosefeldt's film installation draws from the concept formulated by Guy Debord's '*The Society of the Spectacle*' where he defined relationships and experiences as mediated by the visual images.²⁷³ The availability of images and text has made the individual message lose its distinctive quality and impact. As the desire to communicate grows and Rosefeldt reflects on our need for manifestoes on how and why they can be reimagined.

Rosefeldt re-engages the complexity of questions regarding art and politics in the context of the twenty-first century by using dramaturgy. Dramaturgy is central in articulating an alteration between image and action, between observation and immersion.²⁷⁴ The collaged text functioned within the dramaturgical construction of the moving image by reimagining their political potency. Blanchett's different roles are intended by the artist as a dramaturgical means to give the historical manifestoes demands a paramount meaning. The performative act does not refer to the significance inherited in the texts but generates meaning through action. The correlation between text and image creates a micro-rupture through the unsettlement and disruption of the action performed by Blanchett. Rosefeldt focuses on the contemporary prevalence of the façade over content in our daily communications. This is pursued by opposing text and image and by creating dissonance and

²⁷² Julian Rosefeldt: *Manifesto.*, Exh. cat. (Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne; Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Sprengel Museum), eds. by A. Gebbers, U. Kittelmann, B. Dogramaci, R. Spieler, S. Tutton, J. Paton, London, Koenig Books Ltd, 2015, p. 86.

²⁷³ G. Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967), tr. eng D. Nicholson-Smith, New York, Zone Books, 1995, p 12.

²⁷⁴ P. Eckersall, H. Grehan, *The Routledge Companion to Theatre and Politics*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2019, p. 337.

contradiction, delineating an idealism of the past transported in contemporary society.

An anti-architecture approach

Julian Rosefeldt recalls the proletarian origins of politicization with his portrayal of a worker in a garbage incineration plant (Fig. 10), the scene starts with a view of a monotonous modernist housing development where the working-class lives. The camera cuts in one of the apartments and depicts the morning routine of a single mother by showing her making breakfast and preparing for work as a methodical action. The relationship between the monotonous buildings and the lives of those who reside in them is established through the persona. Blanchett's voice-over starts immediately when the camera moves into the house of the factory worker, stops while she is waking up her daughter and as she is getting out of the house and then restarts and accompanies her all through her drive to work and stops as soon as the camera shows the garbage incineration plant. While she drives through the city on her scooter, architectural texts are heard from the historical manifestoes written by Bruno Taut (1880–1938) and Antonio Sant'Elia (1888–1916).

Taut's unshakable belief in the power of architecture to completely transform the world, his 'Wandervogel' romanticism, and his enthusiasm for the new materials of glass, steel and concrete shatter against this woman's everyday existence.²⁷⁵

The characters journey from home to work is shown through the architectural history of the twentieth-century buildings of Berlin and the monologue's utopian ideals end up visually at the grandiose garbage incineration plant. The panorama of grey and large-scale buildings was supported by the monologue and then we see the worker begin her job at the incineration plant, after the camera depicted her moving between the floors in an elevator of the building. During this part of the sequence, we see the

²⁷⁵ *Julian Rosefeldt: Manifesto.*, Exh. cat. (Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne; Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Sprengel Museum), eds. by A. Gebbers, U. Kittelmann, B. Dogramaci, R. Spieler, S. Tutton, J. Paton, London, Koenig Books Ltd, 2015, p. 85.

character perform banal activities and her voice and physicality emphasize a boring daily routine, narrated through the images of architectural buildings. This images are referenced from the cinematic works of «Claude Chabrol, Aki Kaurismäki, the Italian Neorealist Pier Paolo Pasolini and, once again, Michelangelo Antonioni.»²⁷⁶ The text and image are in great contrast, especially in the part where the character is working. As she manoeuvres the crane from within a glass booth, Blanchett's voice-over utters Taut's collaged manifesto:

Hurray for purity!

Hurray and hurray again for crystal, for the fluid, the graceful, the angular, the sparkling, the flashing, the light – hurray for everlasting architecture!²⁷⁷

The dissonance between the monologue and the appeal to celebrate the form and beauty create unease while seeing the worker's job performed. The contrast between the text and image re-evaluates the idealism of the last century by depicting the reality of the working class and the struggle of the character placed in a crystallized society where her job and function is to manage waste. «All is no longer shiny and new. Form erodes, and trash accumulates».²⁷⁸

An anti-architecture approach is also used in the scientist sequence (Fig. 11). The space was created with a futuristic atmosphere in mind through visual expressions and Rosefeldt preferred to not present directly the spaces and architectures utilized. Rosefeldt employed a landmark designed by Herzog & de Meuron, the library of the Brandenburg University, located in the German city of Cottbus, south of Berlin (Fig. 17). The curved structure is located on an artificial hill on the university campus and Rosefeldt combined shots of the building's exterior and the library's interior staircase (Fig. 18) which is a bright pink freestanding structure, which is filmed by the artist from above to create a spiralling effect. The building is depicted as a 'solitary landmark' at the very beginning of the sequence (Fig. 17). Then the camera cuts to the elevator capsules gliding up and down completely automatically, showing people

²⁷⁶ *Ibid*, p. 89.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid*, p. 17.

²⁷⁸ P. Eckersall, H. Grehan, *The Routledge Companion to Theatre and Politics*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2019, p. 339.

in white protective suits walking around inside the building.²⁷⁹ The scientist character and setting is inspired by Gabo and Pevzner's *'The Realistic Manifesto'* (1920). Their artistic practice was motivated by the ideas and forms of science and engineering which reflected the progressive political and social powers that shaped the modern world. In fact, in 1920–1921 Gabo produced the first kinetic sculpture which consisted of a metal rod that oscillated by means of a motor to produce a virtual volume in space.²⁸⁰

The voice-over - an omnipresent computer voice that sounds throughout the entire building - starts in correspondence with Blanchett's character first close-up, the character is dressed in white protective gear. The monologue presents the Supremacist/Constructivist movement, also known as geometric abstraction, and Rosefeldt collaged historical manifestoes from Gabo and Pevzner's *'The Realistic Manifesto'* (1920), Malevich's *'Suprematist Manifesto'* (1916), Rozanova's *'Cubism, Futurism, Suprematism'* (1917) and Rodtschenko's *'Manifesto of Suprematists and Non-Objective Painters'* (1919).

The character is seen exploring the facility and descends through the spiralling stairs to enter a laboratory. The spiral staircase appears again as a company logo on the protective suit worn by the laboratory staff and Blanchett's character (Fig. 19). As Spieler notes, the spiral staircase image is:

a tongue-in-cheek reframing of the Black Square into an esoteric spiral nebula logo in a colour and design typical of Olafur Eliasson.²⁸¹

The spiral shot of the spiralling staircase summons specific references and additional meanings to the space and text. Visually it references Marcel Duchamp's *'Anemic*

²⁷⁹ G. Yalcinkaya, *Julian Rosefeldt celebrates "anti-architecture" in new movie Manifesto*, "Dezeen", 28 November 2017. Herzog & de Meuron conceived the structure as a 'solitary landmark'.

²⁸⁰ C. Lodder, *Gabo, Naum (1890–1977)*, 'The Routledge Encyclopedia of Modernism', Taylor and Francis, 2016.

²⁸¹ *Julian Rosefeldt: Manifesto.*, Exh. cat. (Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne; Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Sprengel Museum), eds. by A. Gebbers, U. Kittelmann, B. Dogramaci, R. Spieler, S. Tutton, J. Paton, London, Koenig Books Ltd, 2015, p. 90.

Cinema' (1926) as well as Stan Brakhage's writings who will be collaged by Rosefeldt in the Teacher sequence (Fig. 14).²⁸²

The spiral shot of the spiralling staircase is further invoked starting with the definition of 'Suprematism', which entails the domination of colour within the light. Malevich explored colour in light in his paintings from 1916 to 1918 in various approaches, including using spinning discs and projectors to cast rays of light onto a white screen of pure light. This resulted in the discovery that spinning discs produced centrifugal forces, and he thus called his paintings, 'Supr[ematist] Construction of Colour' where construction referred to force.²⁸³

In entering the laboratory, the scientist comes face to face with a suspended monolith. This strange black object lingers in a technology sanctum made of golden forms that resemble soundproof materials. The monolith is placed in the middle of the room instead of in the corner, where Kazimir Malevich's '*Black Square*' (1915) claimed itself as an icon. Furthermore, Malevich's work of art has been transformed into a three-dimensional body similar to the monolith of Stanley Kubrick's '*2001: A Space Odyssey*'. The movie is also invoked before Blanchett enters the laboratory, in a poster of a Neanderthal (adopting the pose of Rodin's '*Thinker*', from 1902) attached to an office door. The viewers gaze is directed towards the poster because at the opposite side of the still image there is an emergency exit, a white rectangle, that suggest a presumed exit from the story (Fig. 19). The square is invoked a number of times to associate these images to Kubrick's movie and Malevich's painting. The sequence ends with Malevich's '*Suprematist Manifesto*' (1916) words:

Only dull and impotent artists veil their work with sincerity.

Art requires truth, not sincerity.²⁸⁴

Breaking reality's illusion with irony

²⁸² H. Ljungbäck, From Art Gallery to Movie Theatre, AM Journal, No. 15, 2018, p. 136.

²⁸³ P. Railing, *Malevich, Kazimir Severinovich (1879–1935)*, 'The Routledge Encyclopedia of Modernism', Taylor and Francis, 2016.

²⁸⁴ *Julian Rosefeldt: Manifesto.*, Exh. cat. (Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne; Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Sprengel Museum), eds. by A. Gebbers, U. Kittelmann, B. Dogramaci, R. Spieler, S. Tutton, J. Paton, London, Koenig Books Ltd, 2015, p. 29.

Rosefeldt focuses in particular on the action-oriented and authoritative gesture of the historical manifestoes in order to re-imagine and transfer the rhetoric to altered contexts. The interaction of certain images with the collaged text fragments produces an ironic view that brings forth a certain playfulness, treating the artist subject matter against a sacralized notion of the work of art and its producers. As Rosefeldt has stated:

Being an artist myself I know that humor is quite important to art. We often pretend to know exactly what we're doing and why we're doing it. It's all the opposite, of course, so there's insecurity in the film.²⁸⁵

The most humorous sequences are the Newsreader and reporter (Fig. 13) and the Teacher (Fig. 14) sequences. The text reinforces the disruptive characteristic in conjunction with the context creating an ironic narration of the film sequence.

The Newsreader and reporter sequence (Fig. 13) starts with a three-minute-long tracking shot that travels in the studio sky depicting the lights utilized in a television news studio. Emphasis is given to the machine rather than on the light itself. As such, Rosefeldt focuses on the technical means of creating a cinematic illusion. The voice-over starts voicing Sol LeWitt's collaged manifesto: «Ideas can be works of art.»²⁸⁶ Sol LeWitt (who named the conceptual movement) and other conceptual artists excluded objects and used thought in their place, carrying out a revolution that questioned the traditional definition and form of art, utilizing 'conveyor means' (such as documents, photographs, maps, sketches, and videos) to invoke the idea.

While the voice-over of the collaged historical manifesto of Sol LeWitt continues, the camera depicts the newsreader before the televised programme starts filming and the last minutes' signals from the set crew. When the programme starts the camera zooms in until the frame is the same as what is seen by a television audience. A monologue formed by conceptual artist manifestoes it uttered by an aggressive

²⁸⁵ S. Rezayazdi, *Turning 13 Installation Screens of Cate Blanchett Into One Single-Screen Feature: Julian Rosefeldt on Manifesto*, "Filmmaker Magazine", 9 May 2017.

²⁸⁶ Sol LeWitt, 'Paragraphs on Conceptual Art' (1967) in *Julian Rosefeldt: Manifesto.*, Exh. cat. (Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne; Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Sprengel Museum), eds. by A. Gebbers, U. Kittelmann, B. Dogramaci, R. Spieler, S. Tutton, J. Paton, London, Koenig Books Ltd, 2015, p. 48.

parody of a Fox News reporter, which «cannily raises the spectre of fake news».²⁸⁷ The historical manifestoes denounce the commodification of art and assert that the idea and the creative imagination is what constitutes the work of art. The newsreader utilized a firm tone and harsh enunciation to convince the implied audience of the news presented. Rosefeldt adds a narrative component of the spoken speech tied to the programme context as ‘Good evening’ and ‘Thank you’ which are not part of the historical manifestoes. The uttered monologue, directed towards the audience, starts with Sturtevant’s ‘*Shifting Mental Structures*’ (1999) collaged manifesto:

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. [Rosefeldt addition]

All current art is fake, not because it is copy, appropriation, simulacra or imitation, but because it lacks the crucial push of power, guts and passion. All of man is fake. All of man is false. Not only because he cheats and lies with charming ease and hates and kills with determined speed, but also because man’s new cyber form is Man as God.²⁸⁸

The radical statements of artistic intent of the conceptual artist selected by Rosefeldt transform into ordinary tv news items. Therefore, the newsreader monologue can be understood as a critique of media and fake news. The social criticism becomes visible and is developed in a new perspective. Continuing Sturtevant’s collaged historical manifesto, the Newsreader turns towards the reporter on another screen on her side and they begin discussing art through the historical manifestoes collages of Sturtevant: ‘*Shifting Mental Structures*’ (1999) and ‘*Man is Double Man is Copy Man is Clone*’ (2004) and Piper’s ‘*Idea, Form, Context*’ (1969). The reporter and the Newsreader are interpreted by Cate Blanchett and both the characters are named Cate, creating a humorous interaction. As the camera cuts from one to the other, they repeat the fact that they have the same name by saying ‘let’s hear from Cate’ or ‘back to you, Cate’ acknowledging *Manifesto*’s performativity and the mimetic nature of Blanchett’s craft. Furthermore, the duplication of the persona is related to

²⁸⁷ L. Francis, *Julian Rosefeldt: An Artist’s Manifesto*, “Port magazine”, 15 November 2017.

²⁸⁸ *Julian Rosefeldt: Manifesto.*, Exh. cat. (Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne; Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Sprengel Museum), eds. by A. Gebbers, U. Kittelmann, B. Dogramaci, R. Spieler, S. Tutton, J. Paton, London, Koenig Books Ltd, 2015, p. 48.

the prominence of text as an emblematic element in the news. The newsreader underlines the concept that 'we' are deceived by a false artistic understanding and that conceptual art is limited in its creation, the reporter responds with concepts that emphasize the manipulative and hypocritical attitude of the media. Consequently, a confrontation of the rhetoric between the newsreader and the reporter is accentuated, as one is enclosed in the sterile environment of the tv studio and the other, the reporter, is standing in the rain wearing an all-weather jacket under an umbrella, surrounded in the storm of the real world. The duplication of figures ends by revealing that the outdoor shoot was constructed as the studio footage, as the reporter has just uttered that truth can be different from how it seems. After the interaction between the two Cate's is terminated, the newsreader utters her conclusive thought to the implied audience:

So conceptual art is one way of making art; other ways suit other artists.
Conceptual art is good only when the idea is good.²⁸⁹

The camera cuts to the reporter under the rain when the shooting of the programme has just stopped and reveals the rain generator and the wind machine, a dramatic simulated illusion. During this revelation, Blanchett's voice-over comes from a distant monitor (probably depicting the news programme) and summarizes in its collaged form Piper's '*Idea, Form, Context*' (1969) manifesto:

Idea, form, context. Idea: The existence of an idea is necessary and sufficient for the existence of art. Form: The existence of form is necessary but not sufficient for realizing an idea. Context: The existence of context is necessary but not sufficient for form through which an idea has been realized.²⁹⁰

In revealing the illusion of the special effects, the idea of the rainfall is presented rather than the reality of rain. Therefore, an intellectual presence is necessary and sufficient to make art, beyond the existence of forms. Furthermore, after exposing the

²⁸⁹ *Ibid*, p. 49.

²⁹⁰ *Ivi*.

equipment the illusion is switched off, confirming the newsreader top story at the start of the news report: « All current art is fake».²⁹¹

Rosefeldt displays a strong interest in deconstructing the illusion of cinema, he constructs a space to criticize traditional studio filmmaking. Rosefeldt appropriates the same techniques and turns them onto themselves. A self-reflexive tendency preceded in the history of experimental filmmaking, exploring and exposing the process and the particular proprieties of the media. Furthermore, since the 1990's Rosefeldt has explored the idea that reality is itself a mirror, an illusion masking a further illusion. The artist imagery is permeated with the emptiness of Postmodernism, as everything mirrors everything else with no possibility of transcendence, resolution or conclusion. As Berg has stated:

As in the settings of Julian Rosefeldt, everything is part of an all-encompassing machinery of illusion, mise-en-scene, and artificial emotion, behind which, however, the agony of repetition, boredom, and the plunge into nothingness always lurked.²⁹²

The cinematic machine is an allegory for the production of reality, the machine that is society. The machine produces a construction of reality, and the construction takes the form of an image creating the effect of make-believe. The aim of the cinematic image is not to represent reality as it is but a perception of it. Consequently, a deeply rooted assumption in mistrusting images comes forth as they tend to falsify and hide the essence of real life, manipulating the viewer. Image and representation are described in an understanding of one or the other: «image or reality, make-believe or truth, appearance or idea, and so on.»²⁹³ Reality versus fiction, in respect to contemporary art, has seen the promise of piercing the image until it uncovers its secrets by making its production visible, presumably towards reality. Promising a glance into how reality is manufactured is the initial step to assume power over it. Although, undoing the images and uncovering the mechanism behind the illusion

²⁹¹ *Ivi.*

²⁹² *Julian Rosefeldt: Film Works*, eds. by S. Berg, A. Franke, K. Gregos, D. Thorp, Ostfildern, Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2008, p. 10.

²⁹³ *Ibid*, p. 102.

tends to enforce the illusion it was trying to expose because, as Rosefeldt tries to perpetrate, behind the image lies another image. The act of concealing itself is the power of the medium. Following Franke observation:

We observe construction, but construction that is merely an end in itself, self-reproducing. The film does not invoke an image of redemption by means of a higher truth, but only a fracture that runs through reality: a reality that is a reality effect, is based upon the oblivion of its simultaneous production.²⁹⁴

The duplication of the persona is invoked in another sequence, the puppeteer (Fig. 9). Repetition is evoked by emerging the character in a state of psychic isolation, wedged into a repetitive gesture that evokes traumas linked to the inability to be part of society which has lost its collective spirit. As showed by Rosefeldt, a reality perceived in its theatricality arises in dull or inconsequential actions «that nevertheless acquire great intensity in the existential solitude of characters».²⁹⁵ The action is subsequently subverted into the absurd by depicting the common act as repetitive and it is analyzed by the artist analytically and ironically. As Rosefeldt has stated:

Humor is a great tool to manage life, [...] it's certainly something that I observed a lot in our daily rituals. I find them highly absurd. We don't question them so much anymore but once you start investigating, you find a lot of funny things.²⁹⁶

In the puppeteer (Fig. 9) sequence Rosefeldt invokes absurdity and the uncanny by choosing a mannequin workshop as the setting to the mostly voice-over monologue composed of Breton's '*Manifesto of Surrealism*' (1924) and '*Second Manifesto of Surrealism*' (1929), which includes extracts from Fontana's '*White Manifesto*' (1946). The sequence starts with a tracking shot that depicts a gallery of mannequins

²⁹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 105.

²⁹⁵ M. Roman, *On Stage The Theatrical Dimension of Video Imaged*, Bristol, Intellect Books Limited, 2016, p. 22.

²⁹⁶ I. Soetomo, *Architecture, Film and The Poetry of Art Manifestos with Julian Rosefeldt*, "Whiteboard Journal", 4 March 2020.

portraying depictions of leaders, statesmen and other personalities from world history such as: Fidel Castro, Vladimir I. Lenin, Mao Zedong, Yassar Arafat, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Pope John Paul II, Mother Teresa, Albert Einstein and Marlene Dietrich. In between there are various associations of characters that begins combining great thinkers and artist that by the end of the tracking shot become rather ominous in their associations: the camera depicts Karl Mark next to Sigmund Freud; Yuri Gagarin and John Lennon; Yoko Ono beside Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler. The tracking shot is accompanied by the text collage of Breton's '*Manifesto of Surrealism*' (1924). it is interesting to note that the mannequin was a metaphor that the Surrealist progressively used. As Spieler indicates:

In the legendary *Exposition internationale du Surréalisme* of 1938, the wonderful exhibition as *Gesamtkunstwerk* choreographed and staged by Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dalí and others, a row of specially decorated and dressed shop window mannequins constituted the central motif.²⁹⁷ [author's cursive]

The tracking shot and the voice-over end when Blanchett's character is depicted shaping her own alter-ego. She transforms the mannequin in her hand from a male-looking bald head into an image of herself, clothes included. In a close-up shot, the camera depicts the wig being secured to the head of the mannequin with needles, reminiscing the voodoo doll. When finished composing the mannequin, Blanchett starts uttering the monologue directly at the doll as if the mannequin was speaking, bringing it to life. This can be associated with the Surrealism movement, as life is discovered in a different reality, away from the control of reason and reflecting the subconscious. The mannequins performance also conveys art into a three-dimensional space referencing to the Spatialism movement. The only part of the collaged text that uses Fontana's '*White Manifesto*' is when speaking about the subconscious: «The subconscious shapes, composes and transforms the

²⁹⁷ *Julian Rosefeldt: Manifesto.*, Exh. cat. (Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne; Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Sprengel Museum), eds. by A. Gebbers, U. Kittelmann, B. Dogramaci, R. Spieler, S. Tutton, J. Paton, London, Koenig Books Ltd, 2015, p. 90.

individual.››²⁹⁸ Furthermore, the puppeteer alludes to the various metamorphosis that Blanchett assumed in *Manifesto*. As the dialogue is composed of historical manifestoes, functioning as ironic commentaries on the action shown in the moving image, the viewer cannot engage with the lives of the characters depicted by Blanchett. Despite her transformations, the viewer is supposed to recognize the actress as herself. Therefore an aesthetic distance and focus on the star performer emerge and it is highlighted in using the notion of the doppelgänger and alter-ego. Furthermore, the viewer is both kept conscious of the viewing process and therefore kept at a distance, remaining active in recognizing the surroundings of the scene depicted and is also implicated in interpreting the narrative proposed. Consequently, Royoux's notion that the 'cinema of exhibition' can be applied to Rosefeldt's work as «participation in the construction of a narrative that makes the viewer the infinite 'subject' of the work»²⁹⁹

Rosefeldt self-reflexivity and use of irony are well explicated in the epilogue, the teacher sequence (Fig. 14). The sequence starts with a tracking shot that depicts school children that are ten years old in a classroom. The voice-over starts after two minutes and voices the collaged manifesto of Brakhage's *'Metaphors on Vision'* (1963). The epilogue is concentrated on historical film manifestoes. Rosefeldt decided to focus on the ironic aspect on how filmmakers allegedly work in opposition to the rigid Hollywood traditions of narrative and as a continuity, subsequent cinema and filmmakers have formed their own set of rules. The voice-over stops while the camera shows Blanchett's character preparing the assignment for the class, she gets up from her desk and starts explaining to the class the assignment: how to execute a 'proper' film according to the principles of Jarmusch's *'Golden Rules of Filmmaking'* (2002) and von Trier's and Vinterberg's *'Dogme 95'* (1995). She starts with the words written on the smartboard taken from Jarmusch's historical manifesto (Fig. 20). The statement that the teacher conveys to the class, is the subject of the lesson to be learned. As in the newsreader and reporter sequence (Fig. 13)

²⁹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 37.

²⁹⁹ *Cinéma, Cinéma: contemporary art and the cinematic experience*, Exh. cat., eds. by J. Guldmond, Eindhoven, Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, 1999, p. 21.

words are added by Rosefeldt to shape the context and account for the viewer. The school teacher begins her lesson:

Now, nothing is original. OK? [Rosefeldt addition]

So you can steal from anywhere that resonates with inspiration and fuels your imagination.³⁰⁰

The words are uttered while mimicking what she is saying to be better comprehended by the children. Blanchett's monologue stops at the collaged historical manifesto of Jarmusch, after emphasizing on the smartboard another concept taken from Jean-Luc Godard (Fig. 21):

And don't bother concealing your thievery – celebrate it if you feel like it. In any case, always remember what Jean-Luc Godard said: 'It's not where you take things from – it's where you take them to.'³⁰¹

As the assignment has been given, the monologue segment collaged from von Trier's and Vinterberg's '*Dogme 95*' historical manifesto continues represented as corrections and clarifications given by the teacher to the children, given individually and collectively, while they are colouring. Consequently, Jarmusch's historical manifesto is then contradicted in content by von Trier's and Vinterberg's '*Dogme 95*' historical manifesto. As Rosefeldt states in regard to the teacher sequence, remembering school as getting different opinions and points of view on the same subject by the same person.³⁰² Therefore, contradiction is newly emphasized in communication between the individual and the collective.

As the children are always shown listening or drawing, they are perceived as artists. Although what the teacher perpetrates is «a theory of the fundamental impossibility

³⁰⁰ *Julian Rosefeldt: Manifesto.*, Exh. cat. (Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne; Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Sprengel Museum), eds. by A. Gebbers, U. Kittelmann, B. Dogramaci, R. Spieler, S. Tutton, J. Paton, London, Koenig Books Ltd, 2015, p. 52.

³⁰¹ *Ibid*, p. 53.

³⁰² L. Francis, *Julian Rosefeldt: An Artist's Manifesto*, "Port magazine", 15 November 2017.

of creating an original work, or even simply of thinking in an original way.»³⁰³ The class is then encouraged to repeat and rhetorically confirm the instructive principles, becoming a doctrine to be learned. The guidelines that are given by the monologue are ironically transformed into their opposite, instead of letting imagination guide their creation, the children must memorize and follow an order. The school bell rings, and the children are free to assimilate what they have learned in class. As the lesson ends, the camera moves from the classroom to the schoolyard where the children went to play. Rosefeldt uses slow-motion, as at the beginning of the scene when portraying the classroom, to allude to the styles of direction cited in the manifesto collage. By doing so, the artist slows down the plot and moves the focus from the action to the image.

At the same time, Blanchett's voice-over speaks the words of Herzog's '*Minnesota Declaration*' where the filmmaker admires stylization because it creates new realities:

Fact creates norms, and truth illumination.

There are deeper strata of truth in cinema, and there is such a thing as poetic, ecstatic truth. It is mysterious and elusive, and can be reached only through fabrication and imagination and stylization.³⁰⁴

The discrepancy between image and text is illustrated by Rosefeldt in concentrating on the performative impression produced, losing the appellative context of the manifesto. A discrepancy illustrated in the inconsistency generated from the character's action and the contextual meaning of the texts is transferred into a humorous and ironic element. The sequence turns the manifesto genre into a minimal narrative element, entering into a performative conflict with the dogmatic core of the manifesto genre. The continuity of the scene is not interrupted by a revolutionary gesture and the doctrinal character is given another perspective: a cheerful and fluid performance. The only break given, is embedded in the disruption between text and

³⁰³ *Aesthetic Theory*, eds. by D. Mersch, S. Sasse and S. Zanetti, Zurich, Diaphanes, 2019, p. 188.

³⁰⁴ *Julian Rosefeldt: Manifesto.*, Exh. cat. (Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne; Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Sprengel Museum), eds. by A. Gebbers, U. Kittelmann, B. Dogramaci, R. Spieler, S. Tutton, J. Paton, London, Koenig Books Ltd, 2015, p. 53.

context where the irony emerges between what the teacher invokes and the context in which she utters it.

Another discrepancy can be noted between the teacher's aspect and clothing and the provenance of the historical texts. Most of the historical manifestoes were written in the twenty-first century but the school teacher's hairstyle and clothing reference the 1980's. Subsequently, Rosefeldt develops a double image of the persona, the character is part of the present time, but the clothing and her aspect are not, as such Rosefeldt recontextualized the persona as well as the texts. As such, a play is found between the original and where it is taken from, correlated to the indications given by the historical filmic texts.

As Rosefeldt has stated, this teacher sequence (Fig. 14) illustrates his approach to *Manifesto* by following Jarmusch's statements, stealing from everywhere to compose the monologue and citing filmmakers through his moving images.³⁰⁵

³⁰⁵ S. Rezayazdi, *Turning 13 Installation Screens of Cate Blanchett Into One Single-Screen Feature: Julian Rosefeldt on Manifesto*, "Filmmaker Magazine", 9 May 2017.

Conclusion

Rosefeldt's work of art *Manifesto* enacts through repetition different gestures of interpretation, deconstruction and parody. In the work of art the face of the protagonist, Cate Blanchett, appears in twelve of the thirteen sequences and is given a pivotal function. The face embodies the monologue composed of the collaged historical manifestoes and accentuates the historical distance from their original environment to a new contextualization. The dogmatic character of the historical manifestoes is transferred through repetition into another perspective and thus interpretation.³⁰⁶ The historical manifestoes become film scenes that suggest a historical transfer between the original context and the contemporary circumstances where they are performed. A repetitive transference occurs in the monologue itself where the self-reflexive nature of the political speech act is situated in questions concerning the politics of art and scenes of everyday life. As Freud suggests, repetition is a way of remembering and it is achieved by Rosefeldt through the act of transference implied in the speech act itself.³⁰⁷ Closely related to dramatism, the protagonist embodies the monologue and the historical manifestoes themselves, enabled by the speech act which is understood in Austinian terms.

In re-imagining the characters portrayed by the actress, Rosefeldt emphasizes characteristic traits of the face in utilizing in his camerawork the close-up technique. This suggests a distinct relationship between Blanchett's face and the text, where the face is turned into an object where the image and the text can communicate. Therefore, this communication is enacted through the actress performance and through the concepts explicated in the manifesto speech act. As Naumann states, this relationship «dissolves the traditional alliance between the portrait and the representation of character.»³⁰⁸ Hence, the visual element connecting all of the sequences is the protagonist's face, as the assembled and collaged historical

³⁰⁶ Transference is a form of understanding or interpretation that is capable of revealing some truth without which that truth is inaccessible, transference is a tool to transfer one's knowledge and point of view to a person that is listening, it is a tool utilized in the conversation and speech act. For further references see M. Svorai, *An Aesthetic Study of Transference as a Form of Understanding*, "The Jerusalem Philosophical Quarterly", Vol. 53, 2004, pp. 69-85 and B. Naumann, 'Facing the Text: Julian Rosefeldt' in *Aesthetic Theory*, eds. by D. Mersch, S. Sasse and S. Zanetti, Zurich, Diaphanes, 2019, pp. 177-97.

³⁰⁷ M. Svorai, *An Aesthetic Study of Transference as a Form of Understanding*, "The Jerusalem Philosophical Quarterly", Vol. 53, 2004, p. 77.

³⁰⁸ *Aesthetic Theory*, eds. by D. Mersch, S. Sasse and S. Zanetti, Zurich, Diaphanes, 2019, p. 178.

manifestoes do not relate to the setting of the scene, nor the role of the protagonist or the characters she embodies. The face acts as a means to transfer the artist interpretation and speech act in the location and social and aesthetic contexts. Blanchett's face becomes a contribution to the continuity of *Manifesto* as a whole. As an iconic, visual, expressive and performative element, Blanchett's face is always recognizable due to her fame as an actress, even if the face is transformed through the masks of the character's role. As Belting observes in contemporary culture, a «hidden interplay between prominent faces which the media continually brings into circulation and the anonymous faces of the masses»³⁰⁹ is brought forth.

Rosefeldt utilizes Blanchett's iconic face to accentuate the variations of the masks which enable the speech act to perform and inhabit the role. This is activated at the moment when repetition and transference converge from the monologue to the film settings and contexts. The performative articulation of the historical manifestoes and their transformation into action required a particular spatial environment which Rosefeldt transposed into a contemporary social setting and then transferred through the film installation to a public space as the art venue. In transforming the actress appearance, Rosefeldt utilized masking to give the face a single fixed expression and transformed the face into a different character. The performative dimension of the speech act which constitutes action makes up the reality in accordance with the audience. As the manifesto speech act manipulate its reader or listener to perform an act, Rosefeldt utilizes this characterization in the monologue, employing Blanchett's face to convey its different gestures of interpretation. As Svorai has noted: «the speech act of analysis constitutes not only the subject of analysis but also a relationship.»³¹⁰ As the viewers recognize Blanchett's face, this knowledge is included in the events occurring in the film installation, as the face is depicted in the moving image and in the monologue. Therefore, the face and the monologue have no connective relationship and a confrontation between them occurs informing a dissonance that creates a distance with the viewer, where the speech act invokes action, but no action described by the monologue is performed.

³⁰⁹ H. Belting, *Face and Mask: A Double History* (2013), tr. eng. by T. S. Hansen, A. J. Hansen, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2017, p. 215.

³¹⁰ M. Svorai, *An Aesthetic Study of Transference as a Form of Understanding*, "The Jerusalem Philosophical Quarterly", Vol. 53, 2004, p. 80.

The common notion about the legibility and informative value of a facial representation implies that the depiction of a face conveys meaning about the person portrayed, in *Manifesto* this is not the case. The artist dissipates the conventional relationship between the depiction of the face and the representation of the character as the cinematic presentation of Blanchett's face creates a disruption with the text. As the face is masked for the twelve roles, the face acts as a means of transference with the context. Disruption is evoked in the face and in its representation because of its relationship with the monologue, the performance and the historical manifestoes rhetoric. Consequently, Rosefeldt rejects the disruptive gesture of the historical manifestoes speech act and assumes a reflective attitude towards the genre. The artist takes the moments of disruption that evokes the collaged text to alter the various historical manifestoes texts and moving images utilizing an interpretative approach of repetition and citation. This is enhanced by positioning the disruptive nature of the genre into the continuity of the moving images and the contemporary sets. This approach gives the monologue new meaning by enhancing its performative role in dramatism. The continuity of the performance alters the rhetorical characterizations of the manifesto genre, adjusting their appellative, excessive, disruptive, and dogmatic features. As such, the manifesto genre invokes different forms of interpretations, the viewer is confronted with the historical manifestoes as an uttered monologue in a staged setting that does not connect with the collaged texts. Furthermore, the face of the protagonist and the settings do not correlate to the revolutionary and historic significance of the historical manifestoes. The historical manifestoes lose their dogmatic original characterization in the recontextualized setting and Rosefeldt questions their performative nature in the contemporary setting. Using the face of the protagonist as a repetitive gesture is indicative of the performative character of the moving image. As the installation poster shows (Fig. 1), the face of Cate Blanchett has a significant effect on all twelve variations of the characters performed, as the individuality of the actress transpires through the masks and the roles she assumes, therefore the viewer perceives an individual in different roles. This enables *Manifesto* to become a coherent work of art because it represents one face in twelve roles, and as such Blanchett embodies different manifestoes all

authored by the same person, Rosefeldt.³¹¹ Hence, the artist assesses the mechanism of the historical manifestoes speech act by using Blanchett as the sole speaker, allowing the manipulative and aggressive character of the historical manifestoes to recede, as for their content, and bring forth the artist practice and interpretation of the manifesto genre. This maintains the reworking and performance of the monologue to become an independent element in the film installation. The disguise of Blanchett's face is the incentive and force behind the actions performed, by masking and defamiliarizing the actress's face Rosefeldt allowed the actress to assume a different identity and embody the historical manifestoes. The spoken words are detached from the identity of the actress becoming a more general yet fundamental articulation.

Blanchett was the main element that allowed the historical manifestoes to be embodied, and not simply illustrated. Rosefeldt re-engages the complexity of questions regarding art and politics in the context of the twenty-first century by using dramaturgy. Dramaturgy is central in articulating an alteration between image and action, between observation and immersion. As such, the collaged text functioned within the dramaturgical construction of the moving image by reimagining their political potency. Blanchett's different roles are intended by the artist as a dramaturgical means to give the historical manifestoes demands a paramount meaning. The correlation between text and image creates a micro-rupture through the unsettlement and disruption of the action performed by Blanchett. Rosefeldt focuses on the contemporary prevalence of the façade over content in our daily communications. This is pursued by opposing text and image and by creating dissonance and contradiction, delineating an idealism of the past transported in contemporary society.

To reinterpret and question the genre's existence, the conveyance of the historical into the contemporary enabled Rosefeldt interpretative approach, allowing the texts and settings to be infused with irony, solemnity and irreverence and contextualize the historical manifestoes speech act into locations, scenes, roles and images. The artist treats what has come before and his medium with a self-conscious and self-reflective

³¹¹ *Constructions of Media Authorship. Investigating Aesthetic Practices from Early Modernity to the Digital Age*, eds. by C. Heibach, A. Krewani, I. Schütze, Berlin/Boston, De Gruyter, 2020, p. 18. As Schütze indicates: Even when art is produced in large studios or by a large team, the identification with a single author is decisive.

approach to the manifesto genre. The sense of belatedness and self-reflexivity of the manifesto genre transpires in asking if the manifesto is still relevant today. Rosefeldt as an artist and filmmaker explores the boundaries of a historical and artistic interpretation, inscribing the work of art as a homage to the aesthetic manifesto as a literary form, inviting the viewer to consider the social, political contexts that shaped the artistic disruption. This is accomplished by reconstructing and collaging the historical manifestoes into a monologue delivered by a female performer in a contemporary setting. As the manifesto genre is a literary document that is both poetic and political, Rosefeldt focuses on its performative power, by accentuating the distance between viewer and text and correlating the historical difference of image and historical text to inform how times have or have not changed since the historical declarations. As Bola states:

These manifestos have, over the years, been revered, rejected, or reinterpreted. The biggest reward of the film is the ability to hear their words anew.³¹²

The manifesto genre becomes intersected with its contemporary relevance when one understands its importance as a pedagogical tool, learning from history and the words of those who formulated them. Rosefeldt decided to overwhelm the viewer with the intrinsic poetic quality of the historical manifestoes to inspire and encourage a critical view of society and aesthetics. Viewing the artistic and cultural ideals and voices as a corrective role in contemporary society that should regain its voice.

As Rosefeldt states: «Maybe there is a need, in our time again, for words.»³¹³ Therefore, the manifesto genre is viewed as enabling an engagement with society and the role of the individual in assuming a tool for change. The artist anachronistic and individual interpretative gestures of the manifesto genre demonstrate that, especially in Blanchett's performed characters, the manifesto genre in its historical value remains present in their speech act that evokes a novelty in art and society. The written text functioning through the theatrical and performative characteristics of the

³¹² G. Bola, *A moving medley of manifestos*, "Apollo. The international art magazine", 13 November 2017.

³¹³ R. Pogrebin, *Cate Blanchett Morphs a Dozen Times in 'Manifesto'*, "The New York Times", 25 October 2016.

speech act enables the written words to be interpreted and applied in the different historical and social contexts of the present moment.

The artist self-reflexivity is embedded in the deceptive character and fragility of reality evoked by the moving image. Replacing such notion with the pursuit of classification in the collaged monologue and the desire for comprehension is exemplified in the contemporary settings. This sense of embeddedness is articulated in a sense of futility where:

The desire for comprehensive order has given way to the conviction that any attempt to create ordering inevitably contains the seeds of new disorder.³¹⁴

The individual historical manifestoes collaged in the monologue are timeless in their desire to change the present through art's novelty, but *Manifesto* as a whole has a different relevance that is set against the socio-political scene in a post-modernist point of view. Consequently, shifting our perception of the prevalent system through visual and audio discord, *Manifesto* explores the present critical discourse of performance art and multi-media presentations in our current time.

Rosefeldt shows that all cinematic communications consist of a set of performative speech acts, demonstrated through the speech act of the manifesto. This is achieved through the arrangement of the texts into a thematic category and the characters that enable the presentation of the texts collage. The artist aimed to engage with the historical manifestoes as expressions of a young generation, as a living material and less as art history, not as 'monuments' as regarded by art historians. This was achieved by recognizing the performative aspect of such manifestoes which were meant to be uttered, spoken and shouted. Rosefeldt freed such manifestoes from the weight of art history research and gave them a new life by relocating them in the present time. On a textual level, it is significant to point out the heterogeneity aspect of the different historical manifestoes from diverse historical periods made homogeneous to be performed. Therefore, as the texts do not postulate or explain the images the emphasis resides in the rhetorical proclamation and declamatory style. Additionally, what is being uttered are alternative possibilities for action, but these

³¹⁴ Julian Rosefeldt: *Film Works*, eds. by S. Berg, A. Franke, K. Gregos, D. Thorp, Ostfildern, Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2008, p. 13.

actions are never performed in the moving image thus the characters are presented as discussing among themselves or to themselves for the possible action to be taken. The artist adds a level of tension contrary to the peaceful images depicted, generating the thought process that occurs before taking action. The appellative nature of the manifesto genre amplifies this tension, and a detachment from the situation is created through the «verbalizations and subsequent rationalizations» that occur in the monologue speech.³¹⁵

To indicate that the manifesto genre has contemporary relevance as *Manifesto* suggests, the work of art was analyzed through the aesthetic and interpretative gestures of repetition following Reyburn aesthetic theory. Rosefeldt makes extensive use of the rhetorical method of repetition in its persuasive and interpretative form, indicating variations within its structural unity. Repetition as interpretation highlights that meaning can be reviewed and revisioned. Furthermore, as the work of art is examined through repetition, which Rosefeldt adopts as a rhetorical and interpretative look on the manifesto as a genre that is correlated to mimetic desire and as a genre embedded in the rejection of mimesis represented in the manifestation of ‘ressentiment’. Consequently, Rosefeldt uses parody, repetition, interpretation to speak about the contemporary while invoking the past. Rosefeldt connects the text and the image metaphorically by establishing a connection between them or by antithetically using irony and parody. An ambiguity comes forth in the contrast between text and image because the historical proclamations seem out of context in our present condition. This occurs because our understanding of the present has changed from a modernist to a post-modernist point of view and Rosefeldt underlines this by using an interpretative and self-reflective approach. By understanding the sequences through these interpretative gestures, *Manifesto* was contextualized in Herbert Marcuse’s notion of dissent. The manifesto genre is inquired in its many aspects as a literary document that can be poetic, political and performative. As the socially formative and transformative effect of the manifesto genre goes beyond the sphere of art, it invokes the declamatory form to speak urgently to the present of the

³¹⁵ *Julian Rosefeldt: Manifesto.*, Exh. cat. (Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne; Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Sprengel Museum), eds. by A. Gebbers, U. Kittelmann, B. Dogramaci, R. Spieler, S. Tutton, J. Paton, London, Koenig Books Ltd, 2015, p. 86.

present. It was stipulated that the opposition towards the other that characterizes manifestoes writers is reflected not in a simple opposition but as a dynamic of cultural change within an aesthetic that reflects and contradicts the dominant reality, what is accepted as true and relevant. Therefore, a dissenting view of reality deconstructs through art the reality formed and maintained by the dominant norms and values. New ways of seeing and interpreting reality are reassembled and replaced. As the desire to express individual subjectivity creates a space of dissent, where interpretation is necessary to construct meaning, action is performed by creating a dissenting aesthetic by resisting, reimagining and creating to develop a sense of reality. Consequently, the artist decided to frame the historical movements and sequences within the Marxist critique of capitalist society context. Therefore, viewers perceived *Manifesto* as dissenting from the capitalist and industrial values of production and progress, as a critique and personal view of the present day. By using the text collage as the monologue and deciding to depict everyday characters this conjunction of forms revealed that placing art in the present day transforms the viewers understanding of reality. As such, by placing the historical manifestoes in a living contemporary context Rosefeldt gives reality its meaning by portraying it as always changing. Meaning is never fixed because it must be achieved. The artist aims to engage in this development of meaning by not focusing on the origin and historical value of the manifestoes but by showing their relevance in pursuing reality and their truth. Therefore, the artist denied the original meaning of the manifestoes to unlearn what was known and thought and open up new points of departure. Consequently, the artist enabled the reimagination of their rhetorical devices and their significance in the present moment. Finally, by questioning the manifesto genre and the contemporary reality Rosefeldt enacts the various characterizations that define a manifesto to put forward its dissenting view of reality. Much more could have been said about the film installation and artists practice with a media study frame of reference, but for the present thesis, the correlation between the historical manifesto genre and rhetoric was the guideline to examine *Manifesto*'s confrontation and gestures of interpretation between the moving image and the monologue. Repetition, citation, parody and irony were the guidelines to reveal the manifestoes relevance in contemporary society, examined by the post-modern practice of

Rosefeldt to reveal a call to action. In a dissenting form where the action is merely discussed, and consequences and reality are brought forth through the moving image as reimagination is performed.

In *Manifesto* image and text are given equal priority and as the thirteen collaged texts trace a path through the arts and their history and so do the images by guiding the viewer through the history of these media and their protagonist. As such, the collaged texts do not relate in content or reference to the settings of the scenes, and neither does the role of the protagonist or the character portrayed. Instead, Rosefeldt decided to transfer the historical manifestoes into specific locations and social and aesthetic contexts. Rosefeldt presents this transference as an intermedial movement between the film scenes, implying a historical transfer between the past and the contemporary circumstance, the scene and the film sets. As such, Rosefeldt provides an example of more thoughtful discourse. As Rosefeldt has stated:

Every word of these manifestoes is beautiful and full of meaning, often utopian, sometimes prophetic. But always worth reading or listening to.³¹⁶

³¹⁶ R. Pogrebin, *Cate Blanchett Morphs a Dozen Times in 'Manifesto'*, "The New York Times", 25 October 2016.

Illustrations



Fig. 1. J. Rosefeldt, *Poster for the installation Manifesto.*



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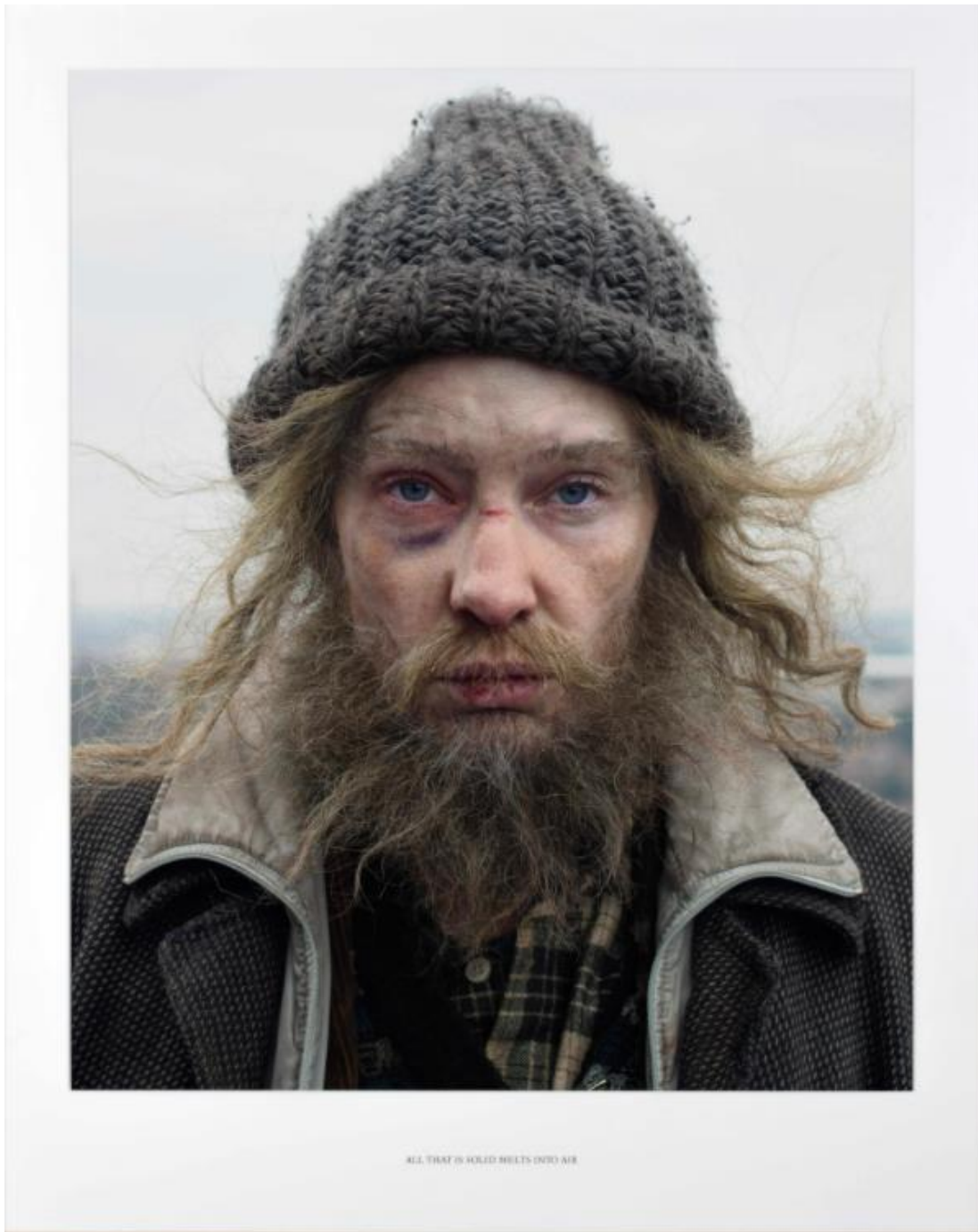


Fig. 3. J. Rosefeldt, *Manifesto (Karl Marx, 1848)*, 2015/2017, LightJet print, 170 x 135 cm.

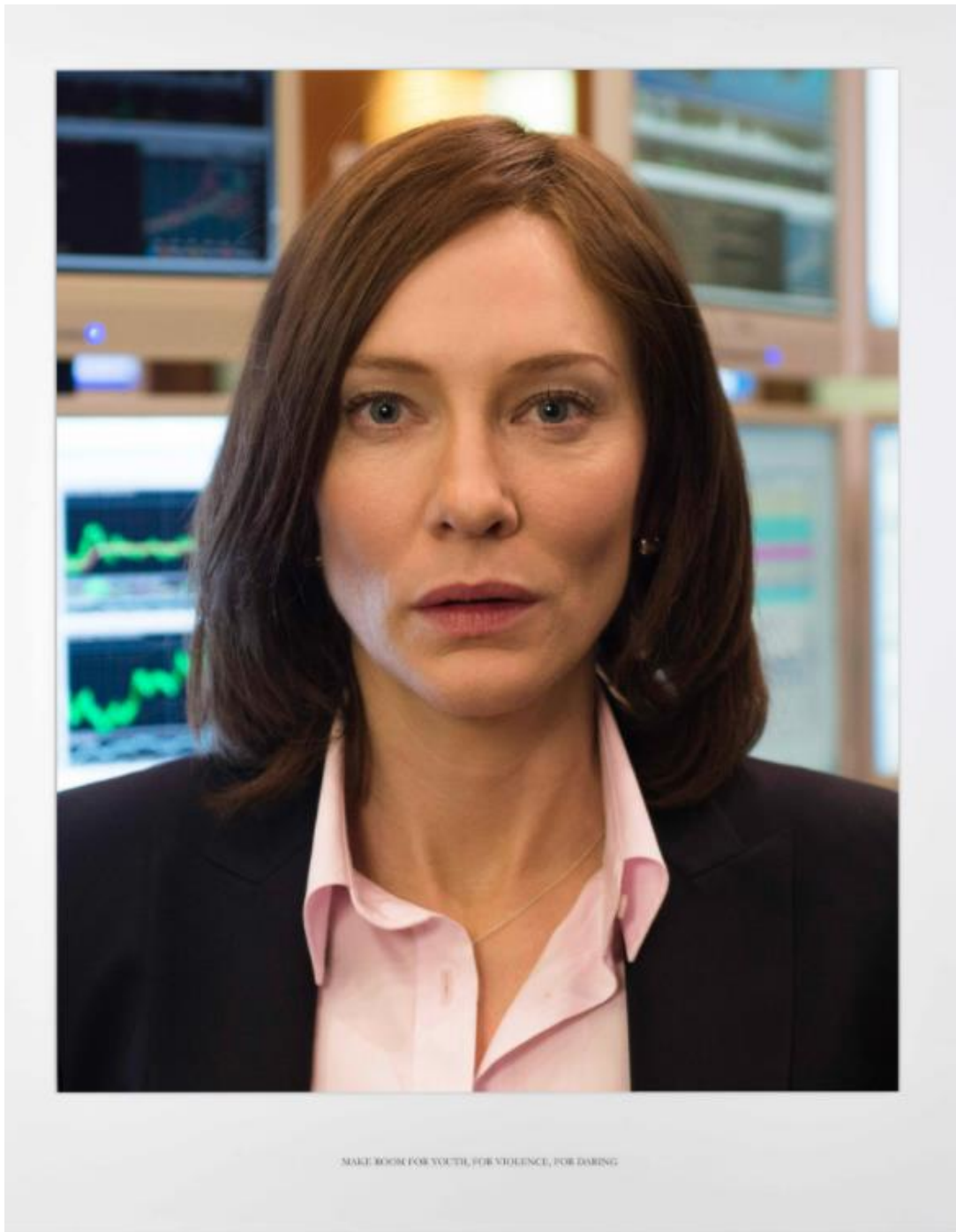


Fig. 4. J. Rosefeldt, *Manifesto (Umberto Boccioni, 1910)*, 2015/2017, LightJet print, 170 x 135 cm.

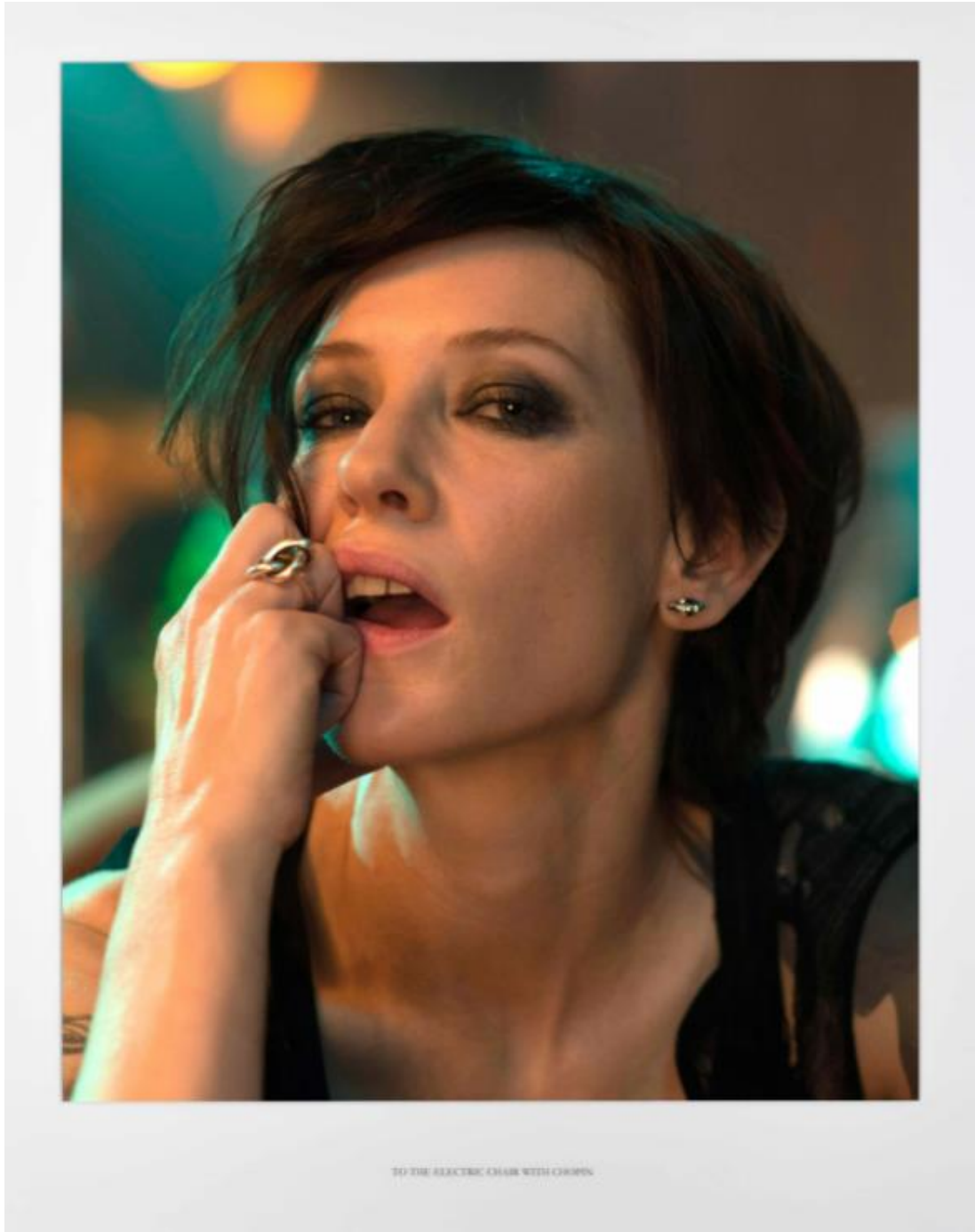


Fig. 5. J. Rosefeldt, *Manifesto* (*Manuel Maples Arce, 1921*), 2015/2017, LightJet print, 170 x 135 cm.

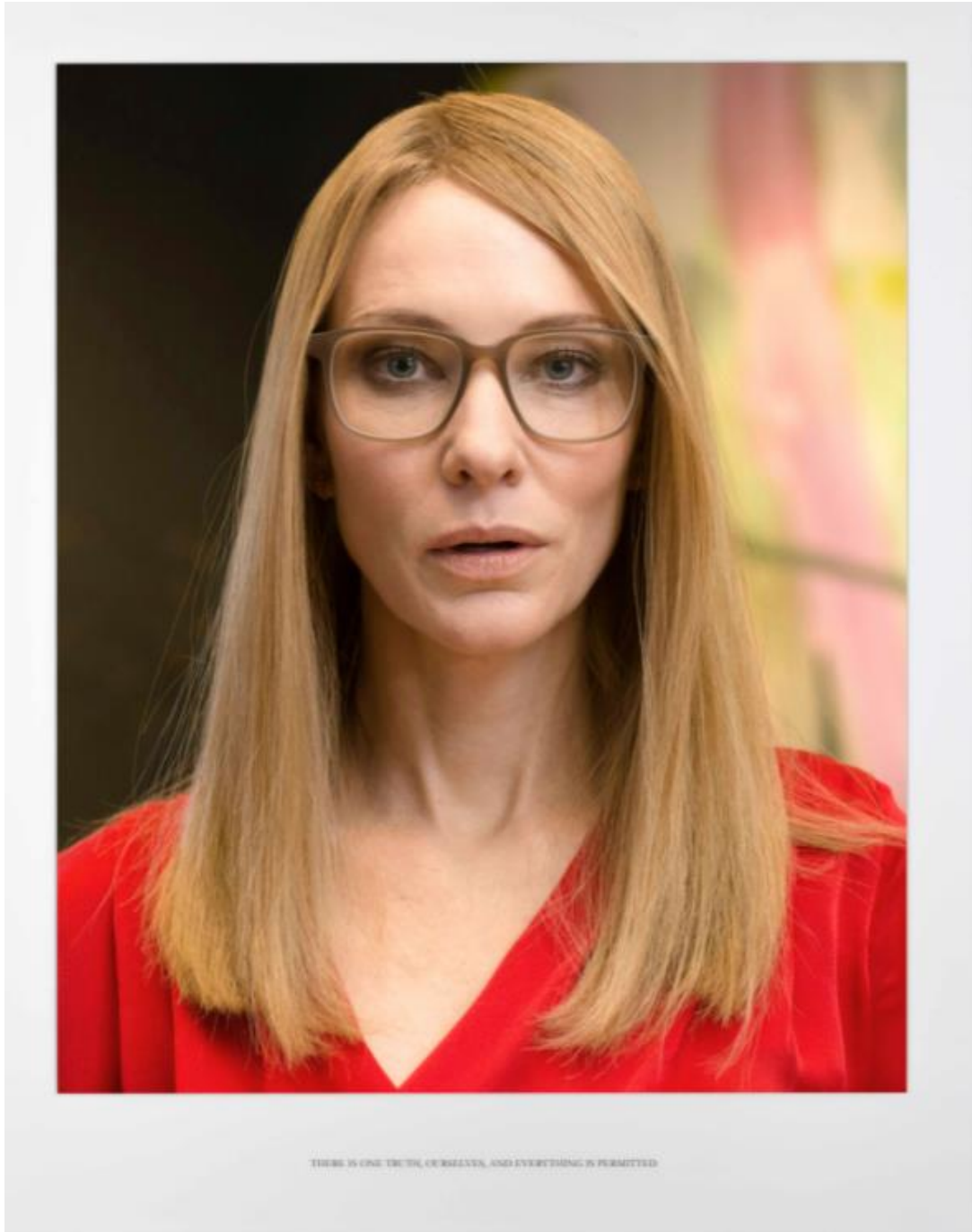


Fig. 6. J. Rosefeldt, *Manifesto* (Wyndham Lewis, 1914), 2015/2017, LightJet print, 170 x 135 cm.

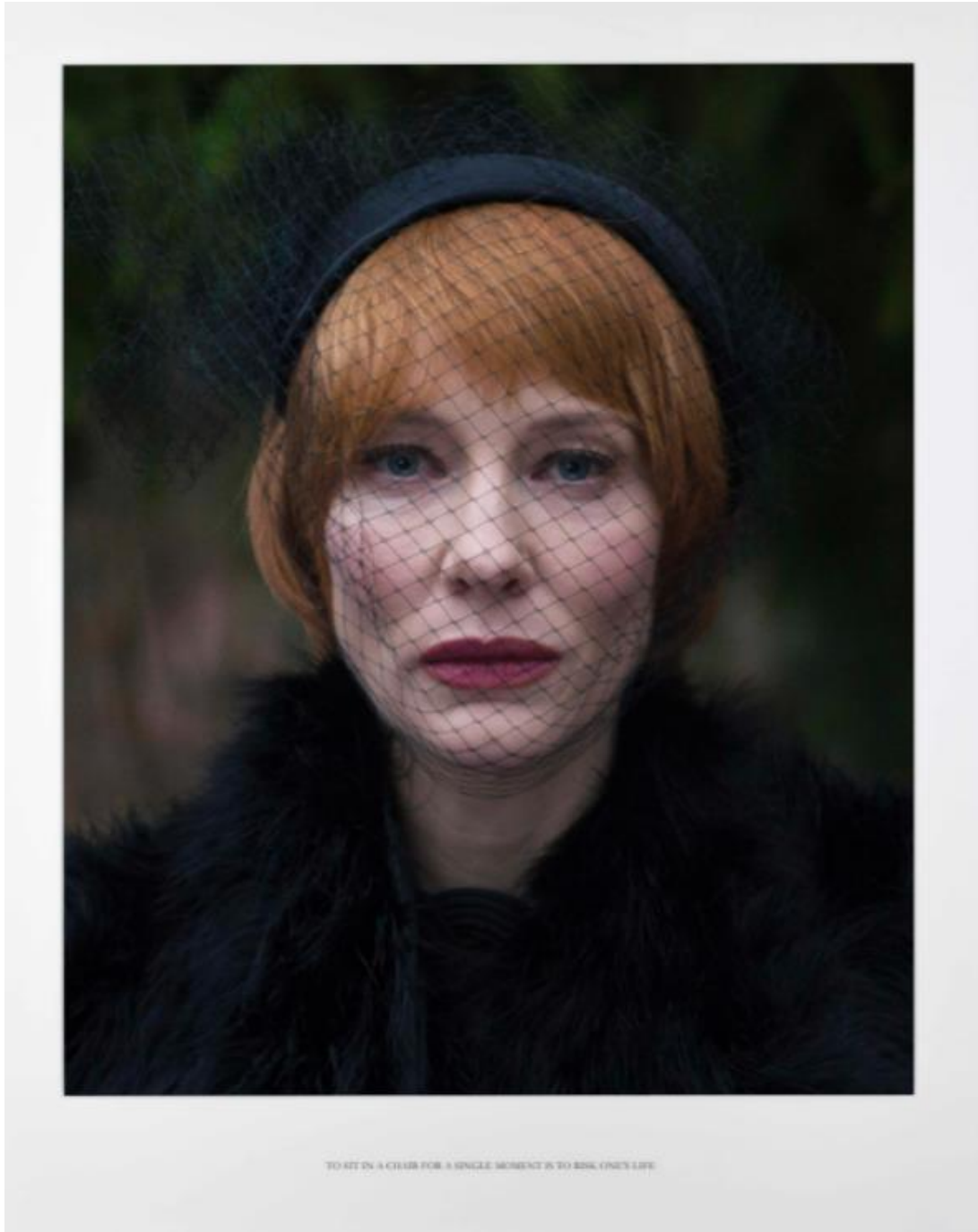


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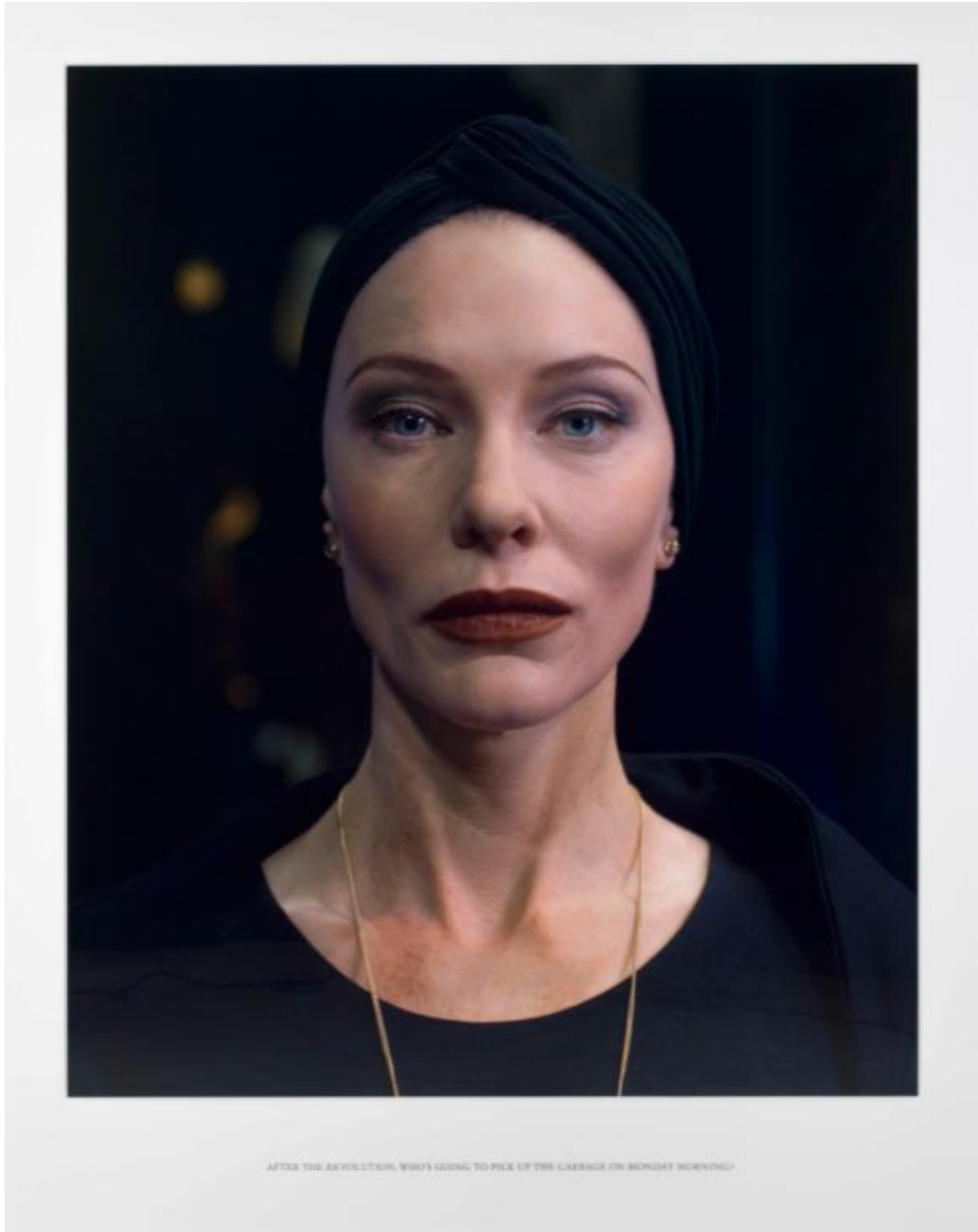


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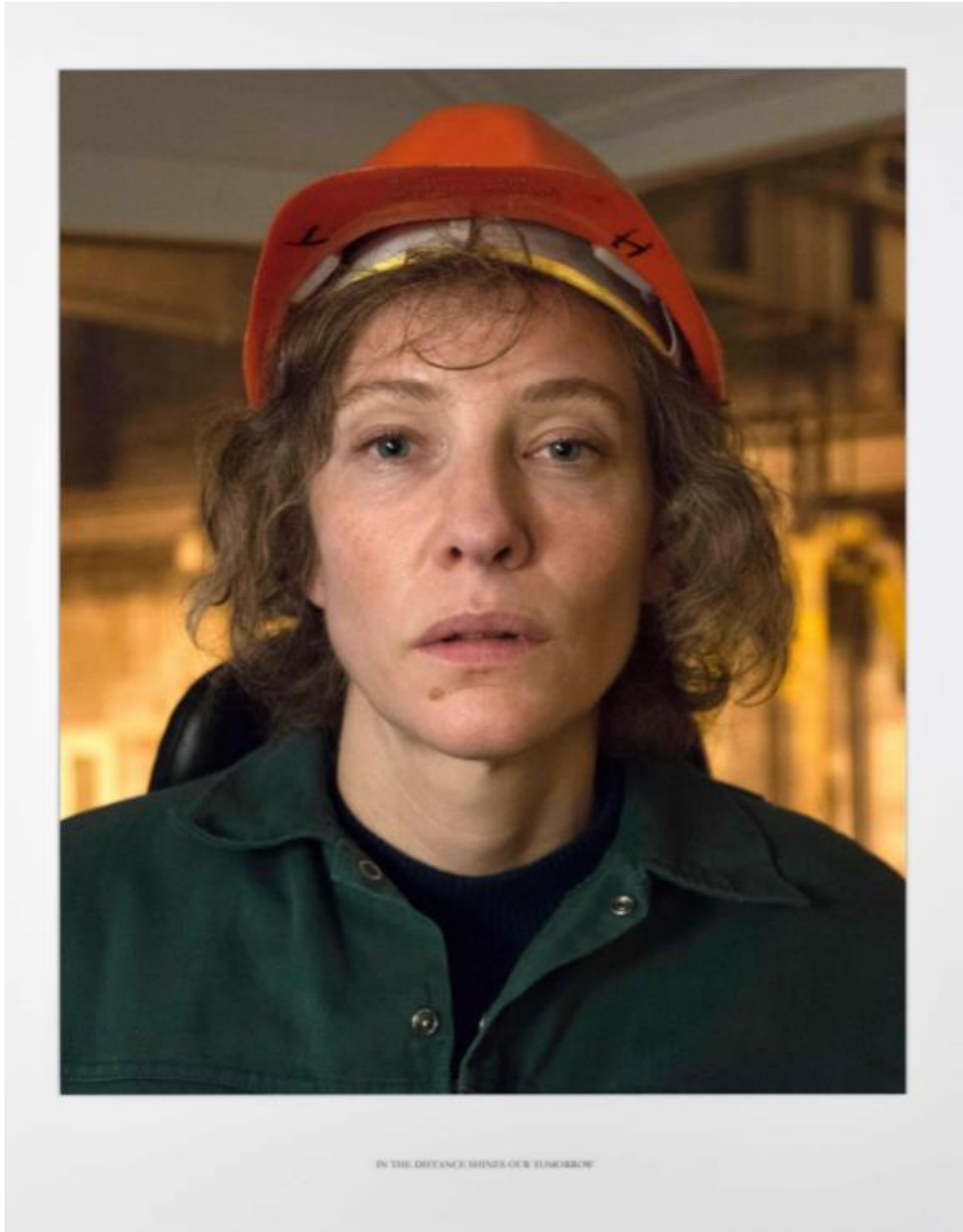


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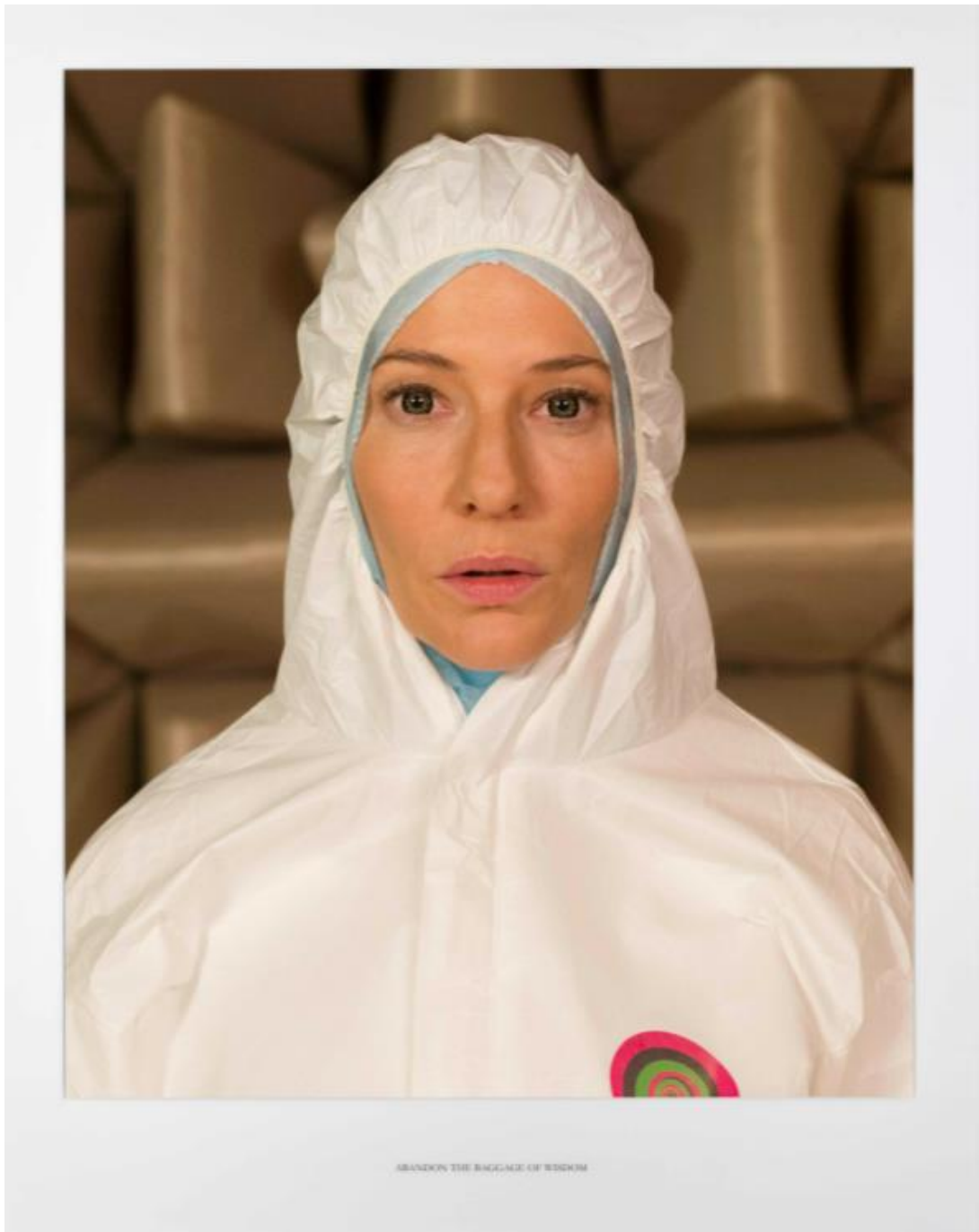


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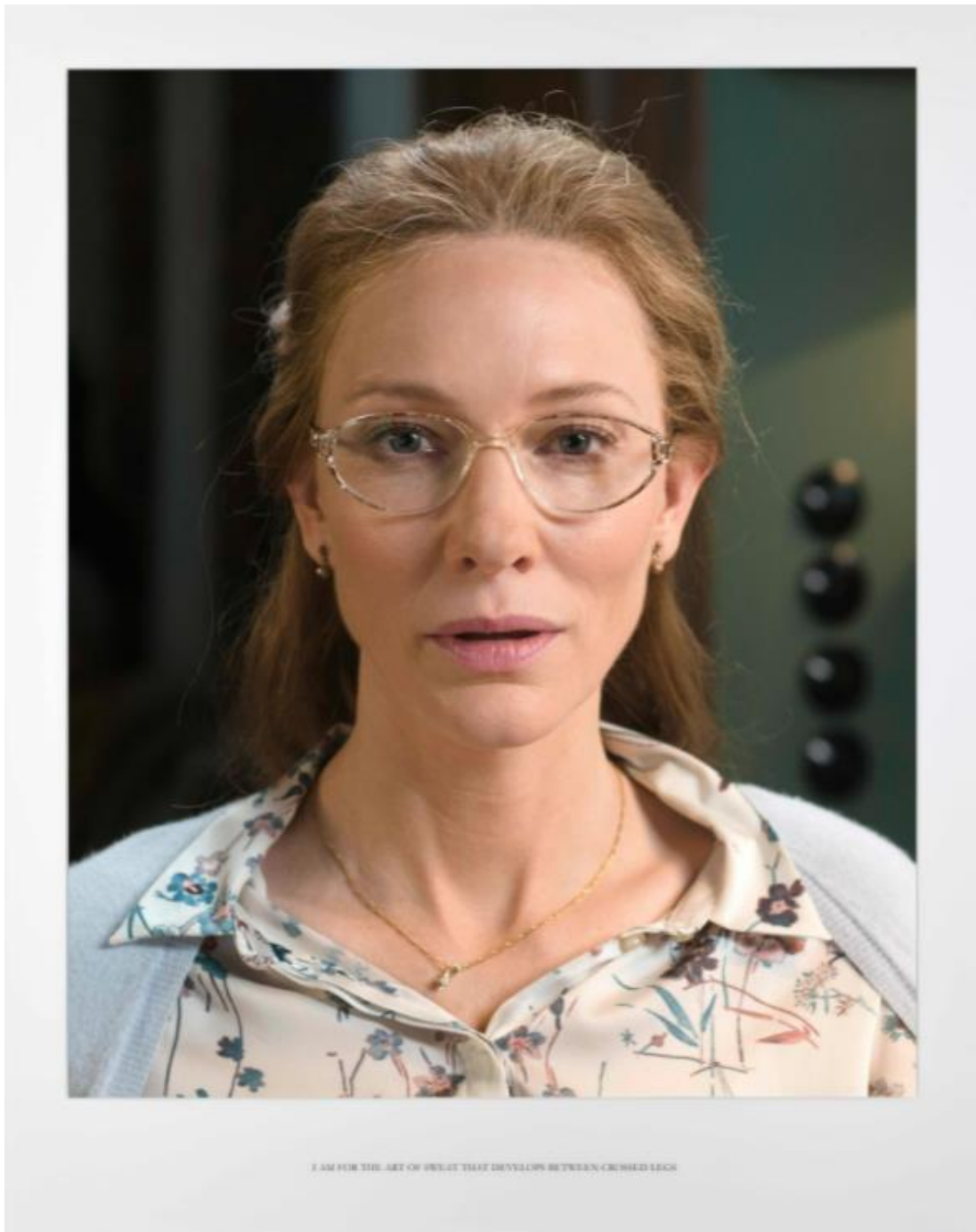


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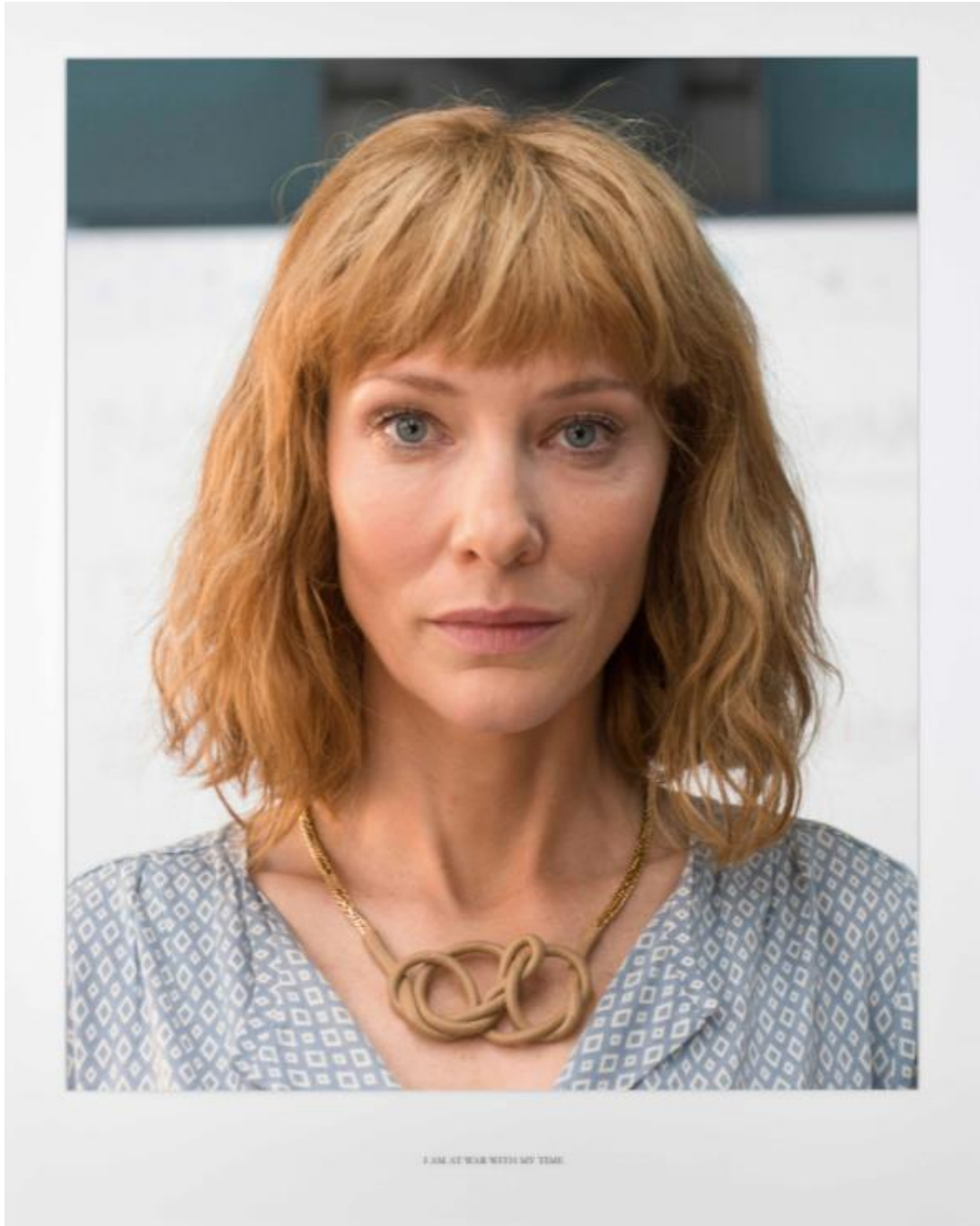


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Fig. 19. J. Rosefeldt, film still entering a room *Manifesto* (Scientist).

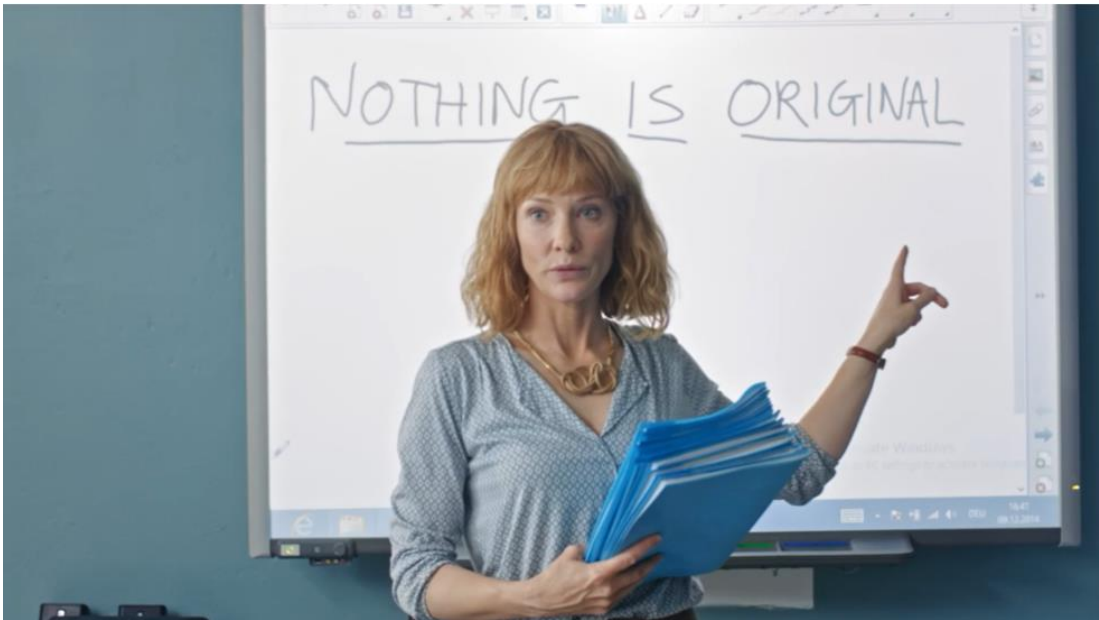


Fig. 20. J. Rosefeldt, film still smartboard 'nothing is original' *Manifesto* (Teacher).

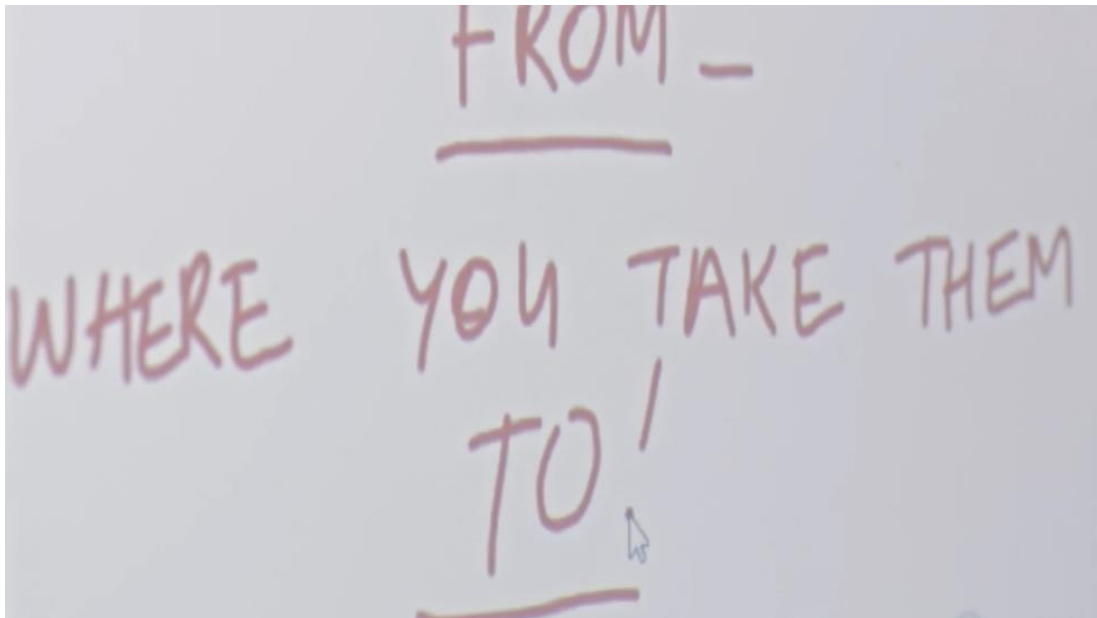


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Fig. 17. J. Rosefeldt, J. Rosefeldt, film still *Manifesto* (Scientist) of the library of the Brandenburg University designed by Herzog & de Meuron in Cottbus, Germany, courtesy: [Website of Julian Rosefeldt, Manifesto, Suprematism/Constructivism](#) [last access: 27/01/2022], © Julian Rosefeldt 2019

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