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## IS IT MY BODY?

Curated by Antonio Grulli

Opening Tuesday 29 May

Until 3 August 2018

In the famous film *Rock My Religion*, from 1984, **Dan Graham** makes the connection between the world of musical subcultures, such as punk, and the world of religious subcultures, in particular the Shaker communities in America. The work is an assembly of music, stories, lyrics and videos, which show how the body, both in music and in religion, can be a tool of communication, ecstasy and building block of a community.

This work best sums up the ideas and the reflections that form the basis of this show: *Is It My Body?* brings together the work of four artists (Roger Ballen, Vanessa Beecroft, Jacopo Benassi and Dan Graham) who have made the perception of the body, both their own and others', a central element of their work, developing it through collaborations with musicians, singers and bands coming from the world of international pop music, as well as from sound art and subcultures.

The body has long been an essential instrument for music, especially for the musician as performer. And also the interpretation given by those who listen and "watch" music performed today is an equally crucial point of view. We can all recall how music, in many cases and especially in adolescence, was the first language of the discovery, recognition, and construction of our perception of our physicality. But the works in the show also allude to how often this awakening can be intertwined with a not so peaceful acceptance.

Grotesque portraits, mad figures, disturbing and unsettling situations, theatrical and often veiled in irony, these are the subjects of **Roger Ballen**, in whose work the body is seldom a pleasant element. It is the same type of aesthetic that distinguishes one of the most interesting and innovative musical groups of recent years, the South African group Die Antwoord, for whom Ballen directed the music video *I fink u freeky*, on display.

Completely different is the body, usually female, drawn, photographed, and put in performance by **Vanessa Beecroft**. The artist, now based in Los Angeles, has in recent years formed an intense collaboration with the musician Kanye West, for whom she has put on a performance during the presentation of his clothing line, in addition to supervising the direction of some of his music videos. This show is presenting a series of her drawings that represent the most intimate part of her work regarding the body.

Throughout his career, **Jacopo Benassi** has tirelessly photographed musicians, singers and bands. But that's not all: the bar Btomic, which he created and ran in La Spezia for a number of years, was an essential part of his art, an exhibition/performance space that hosted concerts and sound "actions" that he himself would then photograph. This use of the theatrical dimension is often found in the performances that Benassi has done solo or in collaboration with other artists, often linked to the idea of portrait or self-portrait.

The title of the show - *Is It My Body?* - is taken from a book that collects texts by Kim Gordon, the singer and bass player of Sonic Youth, the band with whom she has done a cover of the eponymous song written by Alice Cooper.

Antonio Grulli