



private areas to remain hidden, save for a brief, seemingly accidental flash of pubic hair from one. They didn't really urinate, they didn't shit. It was a sanitized enactment of defecation, performed while reading quotes from *Perspectives: At the Convergence of Art and Philosophy*, an overview of contemporary art in Iceland by eight curators with degrees in philosophy (Reykjavik Art Museum, 2011).

By reading quotes to us from other people's writing, the artists reinforced their role as objects in the work. They are the canvas we paint on. We take the pictures, they stand and pose. Women—white, young, beautiful, educated—their bodies and life stories supposedly laid bare before us, offered as material goods for our consumption. It's funny work, but is it more than an elaborate art-world in-joke? What does this act of performing 'nakedness', of 'object-ness', mean? I have my theories, but the work itself suggests that theory is, well, a pile of shit.

Performance art is literally, actually alive, and consequently feels risky, for both sides. These experiments left me laughing and full of questions. I was especially charmed during those moments when the artists couldn't quite conform to their use of bodies as objects, and we'd catch a tender flash of humanity—Spanx tags, pubic hair—peeking out from underneath.