

Transposition indicates an intertextual, cross-boundary, or transversal transfer, in the sense of a leap from one code, field, or axis into another, not merely in the quantitative mode of plural multiplications, but rather in the qualitative sense of complex multiplicities.

The term “transposition” refers to mobility and cross-referencing between disciplines and discursive levels. I rely on transposable notions that drift nomadically among different texts—including those I authored myself—while producing their own specific effects. Transposable concepts are “nomadic notions” that weave a web connecting philosophy to social realities, theoretical speculations to concrete plans, concepts to imaginative figurations. Transdisciplinary in structure, transposable concepts link biotechnology to ethics and connect them both with social and political philosophy. Moreover, I inject feminism, anti-racism, and human rights as an extra booster of theoretical energy and then let nomadic flows of becoming run loose through them all.

Rosi Braidotti, *Transposition: Aesthetico-epistemic operators in Artistic research* Leuven University Press, 2018 (Ed. by Schwab, Michael)



DUCHAMP

Janis Mink



TASCHEN

This exposition of a urinal as art may be called “appropriation,” “ready-made,” and so on but, in its most basic operation, it simply consists of the gradual transposition of the urinal in question into art.

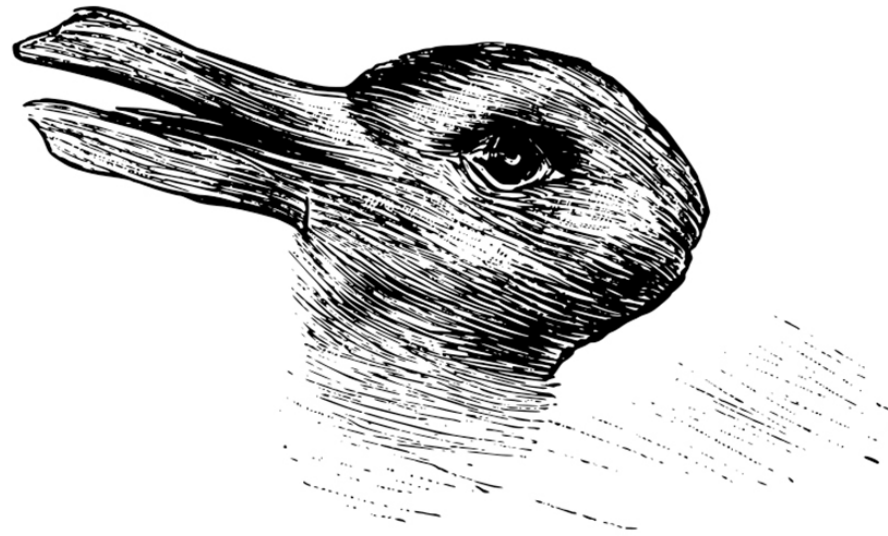
Transpositions and, hence, expositions do not necessarily alter the world by materially changing their objects; what changes in a transposition are the interrelations of material objects in the world and, hence, the difference of meaning that those objects carry across distinct positions. “Meaning” here is attributed to material con- stellations and not to a secondary act of interpretation, although interpreta- tions, being material in themselves, also have an impact on those very constel- lations and, hence, on their meaning.

“Infra-thin”: Duchamp’s neologism

Thierry de Duve’s (2005, 160) more general point—that “the infra-thin separation is working at its maximum when it distinguishes the same from the same, when it is an indifferent difference, or a differential identity”—is, thus, more helpful for an understanding of the complications between structures of identity and structures of difference enacted in a transposition. Hence, in a theory of transposition, what may initially have looked like a contradiction—is it, or is it not the same thing that we see before and after the transposition?—when embraced, becomes the bridge to a new kind of thinking in which contradictions belong to the material conditions of reality. Not knowing what a thing precisely is may offer better access to understanding its complexities than fixing it in a reductionist notion of identity.



Welche Tiere gleichen ein- ander am meisten?



Kaninchen und Ente.

A “**multistable image**” displays a similar ambiguity where a single image can host two different esentations in such a way that when I see the one, I seem unable to see the other, and vice versa. Accordingly, an arbitrary object (the urinal) can be looked at as a work of art (Fountain), or a work of art can be looked at as an arbitrary object, but not both at the same time without flattening the one into the other. Hence, multistable images are first aesthetic and not representative objects; they only represent when they have broken down into a specific image at the price of the disappearance of all other possible images in what may be called the background noise of the picture. As Mitchell reminds us following Ludwig Wittgenstein’s engagement with the famous “Duck-Rabbit” picture, there is a productive state before such breakdown if one does not lament the lack of representation but rather celebrate its open potential.

Transpositionality and Artistic Research

Assuming the importance of transpositionality for contemporary art, the **intertwinedness** of knowledge and non-knowledge under conditions of receding ontological stability describes the context within which artistic research can be epistemologically situated. In other words, if research is seen as directed play between difference and identification, non-representational notions of knowledge need to be sought whose epistemological strength does not come from what the world is believed to be—ontology—but from qualities emergent from the very operations of research: its “active state and not the result” (Duchamp, Notes 26, quoted in Judovitz 1998, 134).



A team of Dutch designers have created Pig Chase -- an app for interspecies entertainment that playfully pits iPad users against real-life pigs, who might otherwise only meet one another on a plate.

Transposition and photography

The tension between representational and aesthetic paradigms bears heavily on the history of photography and, more generally, on the history of technical images (Flusser 2000) as such. Photography as an essentially technical process would have naturally fallen on the representational side of things, suggesting that it could not be a suitable form of art under aesthetic conditions. **How can we see a photograph, and beyond this, any document or data in general as transpositional and not just as a representation? What kind of apparatus can support and potentially intensify the transpositional?**

Consisting of a simple material move, a transposition can be understood as a more basic process than a representation. A photograph is first a material object and a transposition of a material situation (“the scene”) before and beyond any interpretation has taken place. When this transposition is understood as representation, a second process becomes active in which the difference that the transposition materially installs between objects is reduced in the service of a specific identity function between the two that does not just confirm what we already know or what we have already seen but which invents new relationships that could not have been anticipated.

conventional notions of “representation” may be defined as impoverished transpositions where the structures of identity (representation) overshadow those of difference (transposition). For instance, while we know that a photograph offers only a representation of the photographed, we usually only challenge the form and not the identity of what we see. Were we to look at a photograph through a theory of transposition, though, we could also engage in a more radical play of identity and difference.

ROLAND
BARTHES

Camera
Lucida



Reflections on Photography

TRANSLATED BY RICHARD HOWARD

“I cannot reproduce the Winter Garden Photograph. It exists only for me”

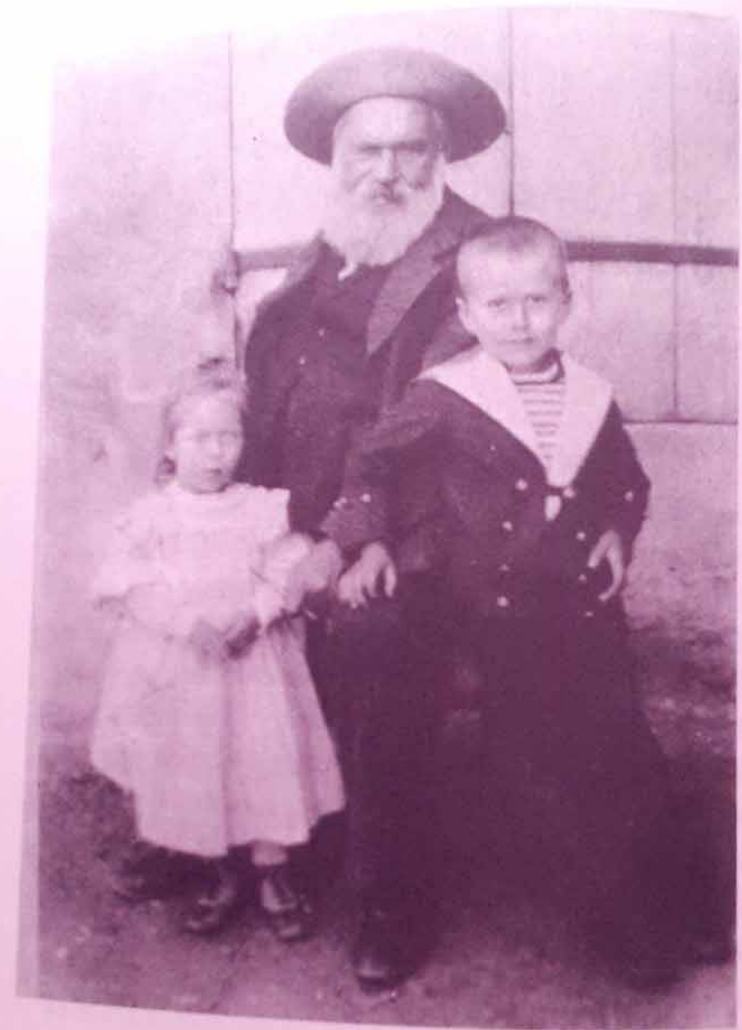
[Barthes (1981) 1993, 73]

“If Barthes refuses to reproduce the Winter Garden photograph, it cannot be for the reasons given in the bracketed apology that has so often been taken at face value.

If Camera Lucida recounts a “true story” of Barthes refinding his mother in a photo of her as a child, then the photo must surely be the one reproduced later in the text with the title “The Stock” (“La Souche”). If the mother as child is younger than five, and if she and her brother stand with their grandfather (rather than alone in a conservatory), her pose, her expression, and the position of her hands exactly match Barthes’s description of the Winter Garden photograph. It is therefore my belief (or my fantasy) that the Winter Garden photo is simply an invention, a transposition [sic] of the “real” photo (“The Stock”) to a setting that provides Barthes with the symbolism of light and revelation appropriate to a recognition scene and to his inversion of the camera obscura of photography into a chambre claire.”

Diana Knight (1997, Roland Barthes, or the woman without a shadow, p. 138)

concretely, in *Camera Lucida* we are told that there is a relationship between the absent Winter Garden photograph and Barthes's dead mother; we may say, the Winter Garden photograph is as absent as Barthes's mother is dead. In other words, through the absent Winter Garden photograph, *Camera Lucida* can become to us what the photo itself is to Barthes, a form, in which an absence can be experienced. This experience is, of course, not simply an omission, but an absence is made present for Barthes through the photograph (his mother) and for us through the book (photography). Since it is clear that the Winter Garden photograph will never mean to us what it means to Barthes, his decision not to show it on the one hand blocks a route along which we would be led to compare our respective responses to the photograph, while, on the other hand, it opens up the possibility that the book itself can become a transposition of photography. In this way, then, *Camera Lucida* not only can be about photography but also can be a work of photography.



The Stock

AUTHOR'S COLLECTION

$$\frac{\textit{Photograph of Fountain}}{\textit{The Blind Man}} = \frac{\textit{Fountain}}{291}$$

despite the fundamental differences between a photograph and a book, or a urinal and an artwork, transpositions work insofar as they make the formula and hence make demonstrably possible what until then may have looked like an impossibility. In effect, the transpositional logic of contemporary art has irrevocably broken the functional and, thus, representational limitations of what under conditions of modernity used to be the role of the medium. Photography can no longer be reduced to its technical support (the camera, etc.); likewise, art has no basis anymore in specific objects or specific practices. In other words, transpositional operations have added new possibilities to art.

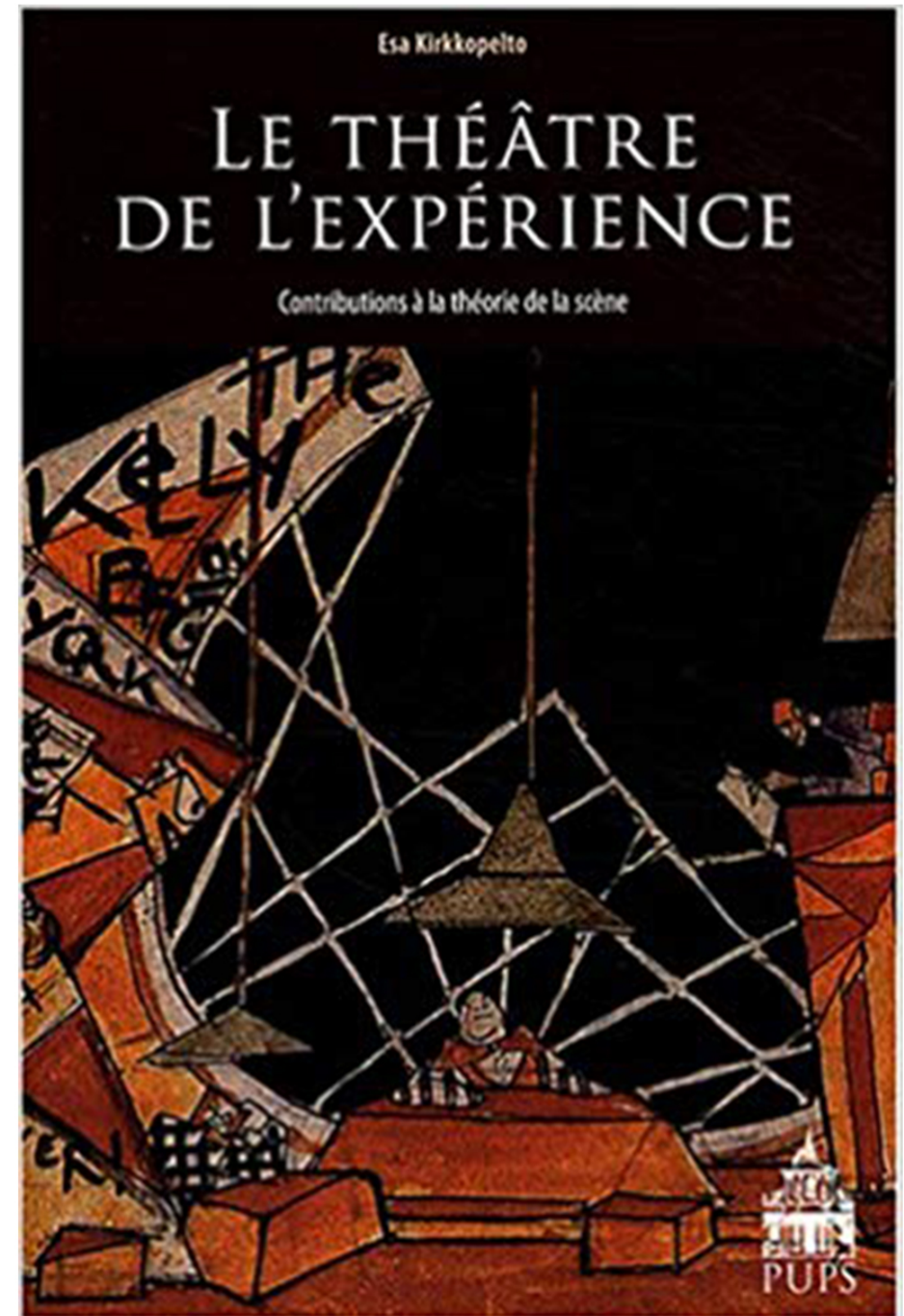
$$\frac{\textit{Winter Garden photograph}}{\textit{Barthes}} = \frac{\textit{Camera Lucida}}{\textit{"us"}}$$

Artistic Research from the point of view of Michael Schwab

- * “Artistic research” through its active involvement in creating transpositions, and hence models rather than representations or sequences, may thus be relieved of philosophical explanations.
- * philosophy represents a discourse different to artistic research.
- * Artistic research as a field of practice needs to negotiate its border not only with philosophy but also with other disciplines that explain how transpositions function in places where the notion of “sequence” also seems to feature prominently.
- * the task of the artistic researcher is not only adding to the sequence but also transposing it—inventing a new origin.

Transposition is a method of invention with roots deep in the modal dynamics of the real, which for the very same reason is capable of being addressed in accordance with this method.

Artistic research is interested in the reality of art, not in art as part of the given reality and not as its representative.



Work of Art as Analyst as Work of Art

Laura González



Photo by SHELLBURNE THURBER series of “on the couch”

Transposition: Transposition is a tool that enables something, rather than a context or a discipline. In transposition, art and psychoanalysis are not separate; a transposition is more than its elements. The result is not an impoverished version of each of the elements, or a new element diluted by passing through something. By the binocular vision of transposing art through psychoanalysis, one does not see two added elements, but a new object in three dimensions (Watts 2016).

Analyst: Evenly-hovering-attention is a state of reverie or meditation allowing the mind to be aware of more than one dimension at once, refusing to make one thing more important than others. It is akin to listening with a certain indifference, but with engagement and interest. Also named free floating attentiveness, evenly- hovering-attention requires both this **indifference and this engagement**. The analyst is in the position of the subject-supposed-to-know (*sujet supposé savoir*), and whatever knowledge she or he holds is only supposed. The analysand believes the analyst holds the key to her or his symptom, but the position is only illusory—even though this illusion is what brings the analysand to the consulting room—as knowledge cannot be found in any subject, but, instead, in the intersubjective relation (Evans 1996, 197).

Transference: “the phenomenon whereby we unconsciously transfer feelings and attitudes from a person or situation in the past onto a person or situation in the present. The process is at least partly inappropriate to the present. . . . It is the transferring of a relationship, not a person. Only an aspect of a relationship, not the entire relationship, is transferred”

Laura Gonzales doesn't consider transference as transposition: In transference, an element (the emotion) is taken from a situation and put into another. Identifying and analysing what is transferred and where it comes from furthers the treatment. Transposition implies a move, a swap or an exchange of something considered whole, of a score or a collection (rather than an element or a note for example). I am considering transference as a part of the clinical setting, and where the transposition is located is in the encounter between viewer and work of art. This trans- position takes place through the clinical setting, making the work the analyst and proposing a new encounter between viewer and work. The relation between analyst and analysand, as I have described it, is not that distant from the one between viewer and work of art, which is why a transposition is possible.

Shellburne Thurber takes this relationship between art and analysis a step further. Between 1999 and 2000 she took around seventy five photographs of analysts' consulting rooms in their North and South American offices, documenting and putting into public view the privileged enclosures in which the work of many unconscious psyches had been made manifest. Thurber's images represent a double play, as they call on both enigmatic encounters: the one occurring in the analytic room, between analyst and analysand, and the one that takes place in the gallery space, between viewer and work.

The work of art here is linked to meta-transference through Thurber's image, and the image of Freud within her image. By introducing Lacan's Hysteric into the encounter, it will become clear that the example supports my argument of work of art as analyst.

The style of its construction and arrangement references the infinitely reproduced Warhol portraits of, for example, Marilyn or Mao. Is this an attempt to commodify the master, to exorcise his power by means of reproducing his image?



(Left) Felix Gonzalez-Torres's Untitled



(Right) Newtonville, Mass.: Blue Couch with Multiple Portrait of Freud (2000)

Institutional paradox

Back to Esa Kirkkopelto's essay : "Artistic Research as Institutional Practice." (2015) where he has analysed how artistic research can be seen as a continuation of institutional critique, we can clearly spot a paradoxical relationship between artistic research and the university.

"Mignon Nixon (2005, 52) explains that what gained Shellburne Thurber access into analysts' rooms in the Massachusetts area was the "Harvard letterhead," as she held a fellowship from Radcliffe College. The institution, rather than the project, opened for her the door towards the completion of her photographic series. The dominance of the institution as a holder of knowledge (instead of the work of art or the artistic process itself) has echoes of the Discourse of the Master. Indeed, according to Lacan (2007, 148), the university goes further: its role is to elucidate it."

In fact institution plays a paradoxical role by limiting and at the same time enabling the research

