Liminoid Life: Ritual & Performance in the Art of Linda Mary Montano

by

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Abstract
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*Liminoid Life: Ritual and Performance in the Art of Linda Mary Montano*
Thesis directed by Professor Brianne Cohen

The American performance artist Linda Mary Montano has created a career based upon performances that deftly navigate the space between the public and personal, liminal and liminoid, and extraordinary and mundane. In this thesis, I examine how her performances have successfully framed her identity as perpetually liminoid. Because Montano views her art as an extension of life and vice versa, she has uniquely positioned her body of work at a curious analytic border. By analyzing her performances as part of her day-to-day life, I am able to uncover the ways in which she specifically structures her artworks to reflect a perpetually transitionary identity.

In my first chapter, I examine her performances *Anorexia Nervosa* (1981) and *Mitchell’s Death* (1977) within the context of personal identity, artistic motivation, and construction of ritual. In my second chapter, I examine Montano’s establishment of her own identities as transitional by analyzing her video work *The Seven Spiritual Lives of Linda Montano* (1996) and her public performances as Bob Dylan and Mother Teresa of Calcutta (1992 – ongoing). My third chapter introduces Montano’s most expansive and exemplary artwork, *Dad Art* (1998 – ongoing) and analyzes its impact on Montano’s open-ended art practices as well as how it reflects on my thesis of Montano’s eternal liminoid status. Throughout my thesis, I argue that Montano’s use of ritual structure, and specifically rites of passage, succeeds in providing a liminoid framework for her life and art. Additionally, I argue that Montano’s artwork creates opportunities for performance to be perceived as a non-structured state of being. My research
links these arguments to create a thorough analysis of the potentialities of performance practice as exemplified by Montano.
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# Table of Contents

**Introduction** ........................................................................................................................................... 1

**Chapter 1: Personal Rituals** ...................................................................................................................... 14

  - Introduction ............................................................................................................................................. 14
  - Endured and Enduring ............................................................................................................................. 14
  - Reciprocal Audiences ............................................................................................................................. 24
  - Biographies of Ritual .............................................................................................................................. 28

**Chapter 2: Liminoid Lives** ...................................................................................................................... 34

  - Introduction ............................................................................................................................................. 34
  - Recording the Self ..................................................................................................................................... 34
  - Artist / Lifeist ........................................................................................................................................... 41
  - Liminality and Transformation .............................................................................................................. 44

**Chapter 3: Performance for Death, Death for Performance** .................................................................... 49

  - Introduction ............................................................................................................................................. 49
  - *Dad Art* ............................................................................................................................................... 50
  - Labor and Self Through Grief .............................................................................................................. 59

**Conclusion** .............................................................................................................................................. 65

**Bibliography** ............................................................................................................................................ 70

**Appendix 1: Images** .................................................................................................................................. 74
List of Figures

Figure 1: Linda Montano, *Seven Years of Living Art 1984-1991*, 1984.................................74

Figure 2: Linda Montano, *Anorexia Nervosa*, 1981..............................................................74

Figure 3: Linda Montano, *Anorexia Nervosa*, 1981..............................................................75

Figure 4: Linda Montano, *Anorexia Nervosa*, 1981..............................................................75

Figure 5: Linda Montano, *Mitchell’s Death*, 1977.................................................................76

Figure 6: Linda Montano, *Seven Spiritual Lives of Linda Montano*, 1996.............................76

Figure 7: Linda Montano, *Seven Spiritual Lives of Linda Montano*, 1996.............................77

Figure 8: Linda Montano, *Seven Spiritual Lives of Linda Montano*, 1996.............................77

Figure 9: Linda Montano, *Bob Dylan*, 2014.........................................................................78

Figure 10: Linda Montano, *Mother Teresa of Calcutta*, 2011.............................................78

Figure 11: Linda Montano, *Dad Art*, 2018...........................................................................79

Figure 12: Linda Montano, *Dad Art*, 2018...........................................................................79

Figure 13: Linda Montano, *Dad Art*, 2018...........................................................................80
Introduction

On December 8, 1984, Linda Montano clothed herself in a single shade of red and began her experimental performance Seven Years of Living Art (Figure 1). Throughout this performance, Montano spent the next seven years dressed in a single color tone that corresponded to a chakra; she also spent several hours a day in a room of the same color listening to a tone that corresponded to said color. She changed the color each year, ensuring the practice reflected each of the seven chakras. After finishing the performance on December 7, 1991, Montano then proceeded to recreate the same performance under the same boundaries, but backwards, in Another Seven Years of Living Art (1991-1998). These performances summarize her artistic philosophy: “that all is art, that I am art, and more accurately, that I am living art, a living sculpture.”

Montano was born in 1942 in the small upstate New York town of Saugerties, NY. Raised in an extremely strict Irish-Italian Catholic household, Montano joined the Order of the Maryknoll Sisters at the age of 18. She began creating art after she left the convent due to severe anorexia nervosa. Many of her artworks have focused on experimenting with performance and the structures of daily life, thus imbuing her artwork with a personal and novel context. Montano’s artistic career has consisted of making art from the mundane, undertaking and analyzing the personal in relationship to different artistic processes, and ultimately creating

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4 Linda Montano, Anorexia Nervosa, video art, 1977, 53:30 – 53: 37 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yaxcwo2M7d8&t=3167s&ab_channel=LINDAMARYMONTANO.
holistic Art / Life experiences for her own growth as well as, though secondarily, for public consumption.

Art / Life as an artistic philosophy is predicated on the notion that art and life are inseparable and often indistinguishable, particularly in the context of performance. Montano’s Art / Life philosophy is closely related to the work of Allan Kaprow. Kaprow is best known for originating the Happenings, a series of performance interventions that occurred in the late 1950s and early 1960s. These Happenings blurred the definition of art, and Kaprow often discussed the necessity for expansive characterizations of what art does in the face of consistent reinvention. His work was fundamental in establishing a theoretical framework and concrete artistic background from which performance art arose in the 1960s, and the implications of terming art as life and life as art extend into the artwork of many performance artists, including Montano herself. Montano’s focus on experimentality and Art / Life, perhaps to the extent where she could be considered Kaprow’s spiritual successor, is highlighted by the title she has given her collaborative artist workshop, “The Art / Life Institute.” Though Montano never directly studied under Kaprow, her work at The Art / Life Institute expands on Kaprow’s ideals of performance practices. Just as Kaprow emphasized that performance is an experimental and participatory practice, Montano creates an environment that allows for collaboration and creative exchange within the Institute. Thus, she has positioned her work under a similar framework as that of Kaprow.

The focus, themes, and influences of her artwork have evolved throughout her career, which begun in the late 1960s, but Montano has always centrally maintained the attitude that the

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6 Patrick, *Across the Art / Life Divide*, 12.
boundaries of her artistic practice are undefined. She has been reluctant to refer to a singular
definition of how her artwork carries out its structural interventions. Additionally, she does not
limit herself to any one medium, nor does she follow the conventional mores of what
performance art can be.

This very lack of definition is what gives Montano’s work its richness. As an artist, she
has chosen to adopt her self and her approaches to life throughout distinct embodied practices as
the main media of her body of work. Thus, these personal links allow for Montano’s work to be
expressive and self-constructive; her work is inimitably related to what she has experienced,
reacted to, and changed throughout her lifetime. Montano artworks become radical because
many of her performances are simply daily routines that would not be indistinguishable from
daily life were it not for Montano’s framework. Montano allows the mundane to become altered,
amplified, or surreal within the conditions of the performance.

What does this mundanity imply? Montano’s work is not banal or unengaging despite
being fundamentally rooted in the structures of day-to-day life. Rather, the everyday becomes a
point of origin for Montano’s examinations of how life – particularly her own – shifts
imperceptibly until significant change is impossible to ignore. Her focus on her own experiences
and relationships adds a lens of personal significance and relatability to her body of work.
Throughout her unique experiences, Montano places importance on how these events have
impacted her personally and privately, but also on their overarching and public-facing effects.

Particularly significant is Montano’s own focus on reliving or reexperiencing (through
both constructed and spontaneous performance conditions) meaningful events that have altered
the course of her life. Montano’s work often resituates trauma as productive and an inextricable
aspect of her Art / Life journey. By creating performances that reenact or recreate moments of
personal significance, Montano seeks to relive moments of emotional impact, as well as attempt to process and understand why these moments have been so significant. Her reenactments through performance are radical acts of personal expression, given that they refer to past experiences with certain emotional and even psychological urgency.

Some of her works, like the performance *Mitchell’s Death* (1977), combine emotional impact with physical pain by showing Montano processing her estranged husband’s death with needles on her face. Others, like *Dad Art* (1998 – ongoing), a multi-medium work of art that focuses on Montano’s experiences caring for her ill father, document physical and psychological turmoil as it occurs. Regardless of how Montano approaches her trauma in her artworks, focusing on the impact of her individual traumas and experiences is crucial to any study of Montano’s work, particularly in discussing how she engages with Art / Life practices.

In her artistic practice, Montano tends to look back on significant events that have changed the course of her life and her identity. These include: her experiences as a religious sister in the Order of the Maryknoll Sisters of St. Dominic; her struggle with a severe eating disorder, *anorexia nervosa*; her exit from the Catholic church; her ex-husband’s death; her eventual return and continually evolving relationship to Catholicism; her role as a caretaker for her father during his long illness; and her parents’ deaths. Many of Montano’s performances analyze, relive, or document these experiences. Through the performance acts they are reframed as accessible, public, or even able to inspire feelings of solidarity.

These affective events – some documented as they occur, others reconstructed or recreated within adaptable environments – are a key framework for Montano’s artistic explorations. Her trauma and experiences become source texts for individual artworks, guiding
the intentions of her Art / Life practice and grounding Montano in the tradition of other artists whose work may be considered personal or confessional, such as Hannah Wilke or Nan Goldin.

Though Montano comes of age and begins creating art at the height of second-wave feminism and during the inception of explicitly feminist art, she has shied away from explicit demonstrations of a feminist nature within her work. Montano instead focuses on her individual experiences and conceptual interests as guiding forces within her work. Though some works, for example Anorexia Nervosa and Dad Art, can be analytically termed feminist, Montano does not explicitly refer to feminism within her artwork.

Beyond just guiding and informing how Montano’s work is developed, her deeply impactful experiences operate as points of return for Montano’s work. Montano thus consistently uses these personal cornerstones in order to confront or alter her identities. These thematic similarities and consistent recurrences create a sense of consonance and resonance throughout her body of work.

Montano’s body of work is exemplary of the powerful ways in which trauma and emotional depth can be harnessed and adapted into constructive, precise, and strong works of art. Each performance and artwork is personally productive and embedded in her personal, emotional growth and healing. In addition to the importance of the aforementioned subjects and themes, particularly the connections to personal experiences present within Montano’s performances, her work is uniquely significant because of the structures within which it takes place. Structurally, Montano’s body of work is reflective of and engages with personal ritual due to its recurring thematic focuses. Montano reproduces themes, such as religious devotion or grief, and reenacts situations, such as her father’s illness or the experience of finding out her estranged husband has died, inorganically. However, she frames them as processual, thus repetitively engaging with and
centering these experiences, and consequently herself and her identities, as unresolved and reoccurring. In other words, the circumstances, build-up, and emotional consequences of these events continue to impact her life through their resurgence and reexamination in her artwork.

Montano’s recognition of the large-scale impact of these events within her life adds to the importance of their development as personal rituals. Because Montano adheres to Art / Life – thus emphasizing the consonance of artistic practice and day-to-day life – the recurrence of the personally impactful themes affects Montano’s own life. Because of the significant emotional weight involved in recreating narratives of pain, and Montano’s firmness in framing her life as art, her performances are not just discrete events, but interconnected parts of her life. This consistent repetition and connection to day-to-day life is wholly ritualized, specifically in the context of rites of passage. Her performance events are not limited to a singular or defined moment, but become embedded in the fabric of her life.

Therefore, it is necessary to examine her performances not just for their artistic value, but for the personal impact that they have on Montano. Rather than viewing her pieces solely as artistic interventions, they must be considered within the context of her personal life. Though they are rooted in structures of reenactment, they are individual moments of exceptional, personally contemplative power for both Montano herself and her audiences. Each performance is thus a new personal event and moment with its own contemplative and self-reflective meaning.

This is particularly crucial when analyzing performances that reflect on significant events that have marked a period of transition for Montano, such as her father’s illness or her experience with disordered eating. As Montano reconstructs or analyzes the effects of these circumstances in her life, she is participating in her own rites of passage. Rites of passage are
diverse and multitudinous, but they all follow a similar structural process by which the ritual is completed and perceived. According to sociologist Victor Turner, each rite of passage has three consecutive phases: separation, liminality, and aggregation. When these phases are concluded, those who have participated in the ritual have effectively changed their status within a given social group. Some examples include transitions into social adulthood, such as through debutante balls or graduations, or transitions into belonging to specific social groups, such as in fraternal organization initiation rites.

When considering rites of passage, it is important to focus on the transformative stage, as that is where the events that facilitate the passage or transformation occur. There are three stages in rites of passages: the separation stage, the liminal or liminoid stage, and the aggregation or incorporation stage. During the separation stage, those who will be undertaking a rite of passage leave their traditional daily structures behind. During the aggregation or incorporation stage, these individuals return to their traditional structures and to undertake new social roles. The transformation or passage itself occurs during the liminal stage. Crucially, the transformative stage is overall a stage of subversion, wherein norms, customs, and traditional states of being or belonging are altered through the process of creating a new state. This stage can be distinctly termed liminal or liminoid; though similar terms, there are key differences between them.

According to Turner, a liminal period is one that emphasizes traditional roles and statuses, is oriented towards large-scale and conventional social structures, emphasizes collectivity and institutional habit, and, significantly, is “eufuncional,” or crucial to the

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persistence of a society and its structures. In other words, liminal periods are overwhelmingly centered through large-scale networks and prove to be significantly associated with the success of cultural standards. In contrast, a liminoid experience is experimental, often highly personal or of minimal large-scale impact, and can even be characterized as a response or critique to traditional societal boundaries. In this theory, the main, starkest difference between liminal and liminoid is the scale at which the rite takes place and whether or not it is primarily societal or personal. As described by Turner, who is credited with defining the term, the liminoid is what one “plays with” as opposed to what one “works at.” Liminoid rites are framed as those which are optional, even if personally fulfilling. Contrastingly, liminal experiences are those that are required or expected, and often hold societal importance aside from an individual’s own reaction to them.

Turner specifically argues that the characteristics of the liminoid correspond to Western categories of leisure, such as art and sport. Specifically, any activity wherein an individual is able to refrain from obligations and where they are able to alter structural boundaries can be termed leisurely and possibly liminoid. The liminoid stage, instead of reflecting and preparing for traditional roles as in liminal stages, operates completely separate from the roles and structures of everyday life. As part of a rite of passage, the liminoid is immensely personally oriented, and mainly serves for an individual’s exploration and growth. Any changes that come from a liminoid phase are not often widely recognized and perceived by society at-large as fundamental or crucial to social development.

10 Turner, “Liminal to Liminoid,” 84-86.
12 Turner, “Liminal to Liminoid,” 86.
In this thesis, I argue that Montano’s use of rites of passage within performance serves to frame herself as perpetually liminoid. By examining artworks such as Mitchell’s Death, The Seven Spiritual Lives of Linda Montano, and Dad Art, I point out the specific moments of transition that Montano recreates in her work. In these artworks, she creates liminoid representations of her past by emphasizing transition and shifts in her identity. Her recreations of rites and moments of passage are deeply personalized to her own history, and these performances typically face little day-to-day consequence. Performance as a genre can be termed artistic, and thus leisurely and liminoid. The routine quality and extensive nature of many of her works ensures that they are mostly done for self-reflection and personally oriented growth. This is particularly evident because documentation is not always thorough in her performances or public. Therefore many performative actions remain private. This privacy underscores that Montano’s performative rites do not engage or model traditional structural rites of passage; the change that may stem from their occurrence would be centered mostly around Montano’s own sense of recognition and would not affect societal hierarchies.

Furthermore, she is never fully integrated back into society, nor does she seek to become so. Rather, her work reframes, recreates, and relives the moments of liminal transformation while never fully completing a transformation or passage into a new role. Montano’s rites of passage are never – and can never – become complete, because there is no space for aggregation. Her focus is on examining how liminoid transformations alter her states of being, and how day-to-day life precipitates constant, yet indiscrète change.

I argue that Montano explores these identities as a facet of Art / Life, and that the structures of this performance practice center the liminoid as a consistent point of return. Because of Montano’s focus on Art / Life, and on experiencing the events of her life as
continually artistic, she chooses to focus on the moments of irrevocable transformation as significantly developmental. These moments of transition become benchmarks for Montano’s artwork, and cause her Art / Life interventions to become purposeful and powerful beyond simply being call-backs to previous personal experiences.

Some scholars, such as philosophers Gerhard Lischka and Peggy Phelan, have critiqued and analyzed the impact of Art / Life on the structural boundaries of art. Art / Life artistic philosophies, such as the one Montano has adopted in her work, fundamentally argue for a perception of art that can potentially encompass all interactions and experiences of day-to-day life. Art / Life creates a framework from which any event or occurrence in an artist’s life can be analyzed as an artistic intervention. Lischka argues that performance art has always served as a middle ground between concerns of an artistic nature and day-to-day life. Art / Life creates a framework from which any event or occurrence in an artist’s life can be analyzed as an artistic intervention. Lischka argues that performance art has always served as a middle ground between concerns of an artistic nature and day-to-day life.14 This theorization becomes central to any analysis of Art / Life, where boundaries between performance and daily activities dissipate even further. He and Phelan both make the argument that performance has become a necessarily boundless medium because of shifting dynamics between the real and the performed. Because societal roles are vast and no longer clearly divided, performance can be analytically termed pervasive or unending.

There are few studies of Montano’s work, and thus far, articles published about her work tend to focus on analyzing pieces individually as opposed to examining their interconnected characteristics. Thus, my analysis serves to fill in this notable gap in the literature. Beyond studying Montano’s work, my thesis is the first holistic analysis of the connections between

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15 Gerhard Lischka, “Performance Art/Life Art/Mediafication,” 138.
Montano’s life and art. Furthermore, it establishes potential directions for future analysis, both of Montano’s work and of the state of performance art.

Throughout this thesis, I will analyze the work of Linda Montano through the framework of ritual theory. I argue that, despite the public-facing qualities of some of her performances, Montano overwhelmingly creates art that is inseparable from the boundaries of her day-to-day life; as such, Montano’s work is starkly self-reflective and internally oriented. Her performances are not constructed for audience reactions, but as lengthened and expressive ways for her to process her liminoid status. This is radical in a genre wherein observation and audience experience become crucial to defining and conceptualizing different interventions.

Furthermore, I argue that her liminoid status becomes perpetual through these very performances. Due to her focus on Art / Life, this results in a conceptualization of the performance space as a crucial part of everyday life. Because Montano engages with the structure of rites of passage in many of her performances, and because Montano embraces Art / Life as a guiding principle and method in her work, she becomes liminoid within each recurrence of a rite of passage.

In the first chapter, I introduce Montano biographically, focusing on the key personal moments she returns to in her performances. While examining these key events, I also analyze the recurring themes that Montano often engages with in performances. These include: Catholicism and religion; the usage and construction of ritual; endurance as virtue and path; Art / Life; mental illness; divorce; death; and the expression and change of varied facets of identity. I focus on analyzing Mitchell’s Death and Anorexia Nervosa, two performances which attempt to reconstruct and reanalyze experiences of trauma and transition that happen early in her career.
Within my second chapter, I delve into the ritual aspects of Montano’s work. I analyze her video work *The Seven Spiritual Lives of Linda Montano* (1996) and her ongoing performances as Bob Dylan and Mother Teresa of Calcutta. In particular, using Arnold van Gennep and Turner’s theorizations on rites of passage and liminality, I explore how Montano creates unique rites of passages through her performances. In studying the structures of these rituals, I argue that Montano is framed as perpetually liminoid. Furthermore, I study how these rites of passage contribute to Montano’s own preoccupation with shifting and occupying new identities. Finally, in my third chapter, I analyze the significance of *Dad Art* and its structural uniqueness. Within *Dad Art*, Montano argues that endurance and emotion are significant to her identity. This is a complex characteristic when considering the effects of her liminoid identities and her incomplete or recurrent transitions. I also explore how Montano uses trauma, grief, and death as tools for self-analysis within Art / Life. Furthermore, I establish why it is significant that Montano uses her personal experiences as guiding forces for her artwork.

In my conclusion, I explore paths for future research on Montano’s artwork. I note that Montano’s artwork has effectively created new directions for the analysis of performance, particularly as it pertains to issues of documentation, the power and impact of Art / Life, and the boundaries of performance practice. I summarize my argument of Montano’s liminoid status and draw future lines of questioning for performance studies based upon my analytical considerations. Significantly, I consider how Montano’s radical artworks are not simply impactful for analysis of her career and work, but for analysis in the fields of performance, art history, and ritual studies.

Throughout this thesis I ascertain the importance of studying performance interventions within the context of Art / Life. I further determine the ways in which Montano’s liminoid
identity creates opportunities for new directions in performance studies. This study is merely the first step into analyzing the ways in which ritual does not just inform personal performances but changes the ways in which it is constructed and perceived.
Chapter One: Personal Rituals


Introduction

In this chapter I introduce the recurring themes present in Linda Montano’s performances. In almost six decades of artistic production, Montano has produced a broad body of work. Often personally oriented, her artworks seek to bridge the gap between the public and the personal, the secularly spiritual and the devoutly religious, and the performative and the mundane. In my analysis, I explore how Montano’s life has influenced her artworks. I focus on the explicit moments of recurrent return that Montano centralizes within her work.

Specifically, Montano chooses to evaluate how her experiences have impacted the structures of her life. Moments such as her entry to and eventual departure from the Order of the Maryknoll Sisters or her ex-husband’s death are vividly explored and made relivable through the structure of her performance practice. I argue that she uses performance as a tool to reframe herself as perpetually transitionary. Her use of ritual structure echoes an intense personal focus on moments of change, impact, or even trauma. Thus, this chapter seeks to place Montano’s work in a personal context in order to uncover how her performances are informed by these moments of personal transformation.

Endured and Enduring

Endurance has been a constant in Linda Montano’s life. Montano describes becoming obsessed with the idea of endurance as an effect of her strict religious upbringing, highlighting that endurance (or lack thereof) became linked to concepts of guilt, shame, and penance early in
her youth.\textsuperscript{16} Endurance was not merely positioned as something that should be tolerated – to Montano, endurance is ecstatic and all-consuming.\textsuperscript{17} Thus, enduring became a guiding force and an ultimate, tangible state to be devoted to.

Because Montano’s interest in endurance is linked to her Roman Catholic faith, attempting to consistently endure becomes a personally physical link to her religious devotion. In other words, Catholicism and its tenets are de-abstracted through focusing on physical acts of endurance. Being in a state of endurance becomes a tangible and accessible representation of the sacrificial themes that are cornerstones of the Catholic faith. Through this, Montano’s endurance and sacrifices are morally affirmed.

Beyond the personal significance of Catholicism, the environment Montano was raised within was crucial to establishing her relationship to suffering, performing, and enduring. Her family was Irish-Italian and strictly Roman Catholic, and they ensured Montano’s youth was marked by constant opportunities for and occasions of penance. Her early experiences with endurance were not just physical – kneeling for long periods at church and experiencing disordered eating as prematurely as when she was 7 – but also emotional. Particularly strong was Montano’s feeling of inadequacy when presented with the potential of death.\textsuperscript{18} From an early age, Montano was concerned with how sin or other shortfalls would impact being able to achieve salvation after death.\textsuperscript{19}

Her devotion to the Church in her youth was such that before devoting herself to art, she devoted herself to Christ. After a year attending the College of New Rochelle, a Catholic


\textsuperscript{18} Montano, \textit{Letters from Linda Montano}, 123.

\textsuperscript{19} Montano, \textit{Letters from Linda Montano}, 123.
women’s college, Montano joined the Order of the Maryknoll Sisters at the age of 18.\textsuperscript{20} Life within the convent was physically and emotionally demanding. The Sisters lived in silence at all times except for an hour a day, engaged in taxing physical work, and enjoyed little personal freedom. Mealtimes were a particular source of stress because during meals, the names and biographies of saints and martyrs were read aloud.\textsuperscript{21} As in many other religious orders, novices were typically burdened with the brunt of the domestic work undertaken within the monastery, such as upkeeping the grounds and maintaining indoor areas tidy.

The harsh environment of the convent cannot be unlinked from its inextricable focus on furthering one’s Catholic faith through displays of devotion that ensure spiritual growth. Within religious life, moments of pain and difficulty are presented as opportunities to deepen and strengthen one’s connection to Christ. Furthermore, one’s individual pain is often purposefully minimized by comparisons to the suffering of Christ at the moment of crucifixion. Thus, to any member of the convent, the austere, difficult, and occasionally painful experiences of nunhood become psychologically and emotionally tied to feeling as though one’s religious devotion was genuine and analogous to Christ’s devotion to humanity.

Montano wanted to join the convent in hopes of healing, through religion and missionary experiences, from what she describes as “emotional wounds,” mostly precipitated by the circumstances of her detached relationship to her family.\textsuperscript{22} She has long been clear about the ways in which her family life has influenced her artistic output, both positively and negatively. In *Letters from Linda M. Montano*, she describes family relationships and experiences as a

\textsuperscript{22} Linda Montano, Personal interview with author, recorded on January 20, 2021.
“memory bank, […] reason for doing, […] mystery to solve and blood to honor.”Accordingly, family and youth are the eternal points of return and guidance for much of Montano’s work.

Her early childhood life was marked by illness (a milk allergy in her infancy was only the first symptom of her weakened immune system) and overwhelming strictness, with her parents directing practically all of her extracurricular time towards the Catholic faith. Montano has expressed that within her familial relationships, all members of her family performed their roles – as mother, father, or daughter – successfully, but within a state of alienation. Their performances were internally oriented and did not translate to initiating traditional moments of familial bonding and relationship growth. Ultimately, her childhood was largely devoid of intergenerational conversation or meaningful communal experiences with her family.

Thus, the taxing experiences of life within the convent deeply affected Montano and contributed to her emotional turmoil. Not only was the environment itself challenging to adjust to, but Montano had distinctly hoped to resolve her emotions about her family, receive attention and a sense of community, and grow through emotional mentoring and nurturing. None of that was accomplished, and many of her emotional issues were starkly worsened after becoming a novice. Though she had sought out religious life as a salve and replacement for the vacuum of emotion in her childhood, the circumstances of religious life were not conducive to the openness and companionship that Montano so craved.

Instead of a space for openness and growth, the convent became a place where Montano returned to her earlier fixations on enduring and suffering as a way of demonstrating religious

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25 Montano, Interview.
26 Montano, Interview.
27 Montano, Interview.
28 Montano, Interview.
devotion and personal strength. Former patterns of compulsive endurance returned, and the most alarming of these was the exacerbation of Montano’s fixation with food. Though Montano had faced several instances of disordered eating in her youth, her most overwhelming experiences with it came while she was in the convent.

Montano explores her eating disorder in several performances, most notably *Anorexia Nervosa* (1981) (Figures 2-4). This video performance consists of Montano interviewing four anorexic women. The questions are largely about their relationship to food, their bodies, and anorexia as a concept and disease. Many of them describe anorexia developing in their youth; they characterize the disease as originating subtly but quickly becoming psychologically uncontrollable. One hour and one minute long, the performance ends with Montano herself being interviewed about her own experiences with developing anorexia. In each of these interviews, the interviewer is off-screen and purposefully anonymized. Though presumably the interviewer is Montano herself, this is unclear, as the only reference to the interviewer’s physical presence is a microphone present in on the edges of the final two interviews.

The artistic process of the video performance is simple and direct. The initial four interviews take place in neutral and calm, yet distinct, locations. The final interview – Montano’s own – is set in a more cluttered environment, with knick-knacks and random objects haphazardly placed around Montano. Notably, all of the women included in the interviews are white, in young adulthood, and could be considered traditionally attractive. All of the women appear thin, though not emaciated. Thus, because of the similarities within each of these subjects, the interviews only give viewers a narrow and fractioned view of what the potential experiences of anorexia nervosa look like.
Montano’s own experience is the most relevant for this analysis. In her section of the video performance, she describes her relationship to fluctuations in weight and changes in eating habits. Not only was she forced to gain weight before entering the Order, but Montano also transitioned from struggling to consume food before becoming a nun to enjoying the process of eating past the point of satiety once cloistered. Because nunhood was conditional to gaining weight, Montano began to associate her relationship with food as tied to the strength and willpower of her religious devotion. Montano continuously gained weight while in the convent, and after almost two years as a novice, she began dieting in tandem with another nun.

The diet began as portion control, but soon spiraled into much harsher self-imposed restrictions. Her guiding force at the time was the ecstasy that came from the process of controlling her portions and hiding food. After she begun dieting, she started to experience overpowering bursts of energy that were often channeled into outdoors groundskeeping activities. In this process, anorexia became an emotional, spiritual, and physical release. The combination of endurance and self-control was crucial, as anorexia became a viable outlet for both religious and personal expression.

By the time Montano looked at her body in a mirror and realized a diet had become disease, she weighed only 82 pounds. Because of the unforgiving and strict environment she found herself in, Montano felt uncomfortable speaking to her superiors or fellow novices about seeking help, though she had been required to confess the actions to a priest daily. However, her superiors were conscious of her illness and had already determined that, unless she recovered,
Montano would not be allowed to remain in the convent. Because she would likely not be admitted into postulancy, the next phase of monastic life after the novitiate, Montano decided to leave the convent on her own terms and begin a secular lifestyle.

In clinical and sociological studies, anorexia nervosa is commonly positioned as a physical response to emotional and psychological stressors. For example, some anorexic women describe ceasing to eat because they were uncomfortable with the shape their body took upon pubescence; thus, their motivation is largely physical. Other women position anorexia as a battle for self-determination and control of how one is perceived both internally and by others. Others still position anorexia as a reaction to attempting to deconstruct or analyze a personally difficult or traumatic event. Nearly all of these origins are represented in Montano’s *Anorexia Nervosa*.

Some anorexic women, including Montano, have described pleasure in the processes of anorexic behavior, and several scientific studies have attempted to conclude why. A Swedish study of anorexic behavior suggests that dopamine, a hormone that is correlated to pleasure, is released as a consequence of food restriction. In some cases, the release of dopamine may contribute to the development of anorexia nervosa in women who begin short-term diets. In others, this hormonal reaction is a result of the body rewarding itself for reaching an arbitrary goal. Thus, the pleasure many anorexic women take in suppressing their appetite and punitively controlling what they eat is not just wholly psychological but can be termed physiological as well.

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Because the disease is spontaneous and often untraceable in cause, many women struggle with identifying when they fully became anorexic. Anorexia is oftentimes reactive to changes in key phases of life. Growth spurts, alterations in family dynamics, instances of physical or emotional abuse, significant births or death, and other revolutionary moments in young adulthood are all incredibly impactful and sometimes directly lead to the formation of anorexia in a woman. The interviewer in Anorexia Nervosa – Montano – attempts to uncover why the disease originates and how it progresses in each of the subjects’ lives; many of them describe being unaware of anorexia becoming a problem until it was too late.

Previous analyses of Anorexia Nervosa have emphasized that the sparse environment of the interviews and the casual, non-performative tone of the video evoke a Freudian, therapeutic and psychoanalytic context. Though the interviewer guides the women through standardized questions, each interview provides a unique focus because the interviews emphasize each woman’s personal experience. The performance is centered on each woman’s individual experiences with the disease, as opposed to attempting to clinically describe anorexia. The performance aims to both normalize the experiences of anorexia and warn about the disease’s insidiousness. The candidness of the subjects interviewed is heightened when considering that anorexia was still a relatively unknown and misconstrued ailment at the time.

For Montano herself, anorexia was a way to exercise control and agency over her life and appearance in the midst of adapting into a lifestyle that she was unsuited for. In other words, anorexia presented itself as a side effect of her emotional immaturity and unhappiness at the time she entered religious life. In Anorexia Nervosa, Montano describes that her earliest experience

41 Brawner, “Linda Montano, Anorexia Nervosa and an Art of Hunger,” 131. Anorexia would remain relatively unknown until Karen Carpenter of the pop band Carpenters died as a result of her struggle with the disease in 1983.
with disordered eating began when she was 7 years old. This experience stemmed largely from anxiety that came from being bullied while in school, which led to her refusing food and compulsively vomiting daily, which resulted in her hospitalization.\textsuperscript{42} This purge cycle stopped when, once in the hospital, Montano vocalized her anxieties around attending school.\textsuperscript{43}

Though many of the women interviewed described their anorexia as associated to how they are perceived by others, it is notable that Montano associates anorexia strictly to being in the convent. This point is underscored when she emphasizes that, on the day as she left the convent and went to dinner with her family, she was able to eat a full lobster meal.\textsuperscript{44} Though eating a full meal is not in and of itself a sign of healing from anorexia, it is a large and mobilizing step to the process of recovery from disordered eating.

Montano is not unique in her characterization of religion as an influential and dominant psychological force in her development of anorexia. Many religious women, particularly Catholic nuns, have suffered from anorexic behavior that can be traced to beliefs of a religious nature.\textsuperscript{45} The Catholic Church has long emphasized fasting as an acceptable and holy practice, and it is still highly encouraged during the Lenten period, though some Catholic theologians and writers have begun to emphasize the relationship of disordered eating to this practice.\textsuperscript{46} Though fasting may become compulsive and uncontrollable, this is not always recognized as a negative or harmful behavior.

\textsuperscript{42} Montano, Anorexia Nervosa, 50:15 – 50:42.
\textsuperscript{43} Montano, Anorexia Nervosa, 50:33 – 50:40.
\textsuperscript{44} Montano, Anorexia Nervosa, 54:04 – 54:09.
\textsuperscript{45} For more detail, please see Carolyn Walker Bynum’s thorough analysis of female Eucharistic devotion and disordered eating within Catholic practice in Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion (New York, NY: Zone Books, 1992), 119-150.
Saints such as Catherine of Siena, Angela of Foligno, and Alpaïs of Cudot suffered from what has been termed “inedia” or “anorexia mirabilis.” With some slight variations in circumstance, the disease presented itself to each of these women as their refusal or inability to consume any food that was not the Eucharist. In miraculous anorexia, the main driving force of the disease is not the compulsion to change one’s physical appearance, but rather the aspiration to become holy at all costs. This relates to Montano’s own admission that, in her youth, she was driven by the desire to endure as much pain as possible in order to achieve sanctity.

Suffering under anorexia mirabilis was not contemporaneously perceived as penance or pain; it was ecstasy, glory, and privilege to only be able to consume Eucharist in the earthly realm.

Lydia Brawner’s article, “Linda Montano, Anorexia Nervosa, and an Art of Hunger,” cites similarities between the disordered eating habits of famous religious women and Montano’s own anorexia. Brawner describes the ascetism of religion as encouraging punitive and self-destructive behavior, particularly because Catholicism encourages modeling one’s life after Christ’s. Ascetism and eroticism have been linked, particularly in the context of the Catholic Church, by religious scholars who argue that Christ becomes a figure of desire through His inaccessibility and holiness. This furthers the perception that suffering, particularly through restriction of desire, can be observed as a pleasurable and fulfilling experience.

Recent scholarship on anorexia, such as Emma White’s *The Spirituality of Anorexia: A Goddess Feminist Theology*, expands on anorexia as secularized ritual in response to traditional

49 Montano, Interview.
50 Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, 126.
52 Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, 134.
expectations of womanhood. In some cases, the expectations of womanhood – particularly expectations of what a woman is supposed to look like, how she is supposed to behave, or how she is allowed to express her sexuality or individual identity – result in anorexic behavior as a form of self-control. These scholarly interventions describe the body and self-image as a novel socio-secular religion.

Montano herself does not perceive her anorexia as stemming from body-image issues. To Montano, anorexia is an internalized disease, driven mostly by her desire to endure as much as possible in order to achieve holiness. Thus, though her anorexia was not manifest through traditional rites of devotion (such as only consuming the Eucharist or only allowing oneself to eat after praying or undertaking other personal sacrifices), it is distinct from traditional characterizations of anorexia. Like Catherine of Siena before her, Montano’s disease is beyond the earthly realm; her anorexia transcends and reaches upwards towards the yearning for sanctification.

**Reciprocal Audiences**

After leaving the convent and beginning her recovery from anorexia, Montano returned to her studies at the College of New Rochelle. But endurance remained a guiding force in Montano’s life, and she found a new outlet for it through art. Not only did art become an overall expressive means of release for Montano’s emotions, but it also gave her moments of ecstasy and bliss as suffering and enduring had once before. After finishing a degree in sculpture, she

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continued her studies with a Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of Wisconsin, Madison.\textsuperscript{54}

Art was both tool and product; it enabled Montano to analyze herself while creating tangible and witnessable moments of expression. It became a “source to reveal [her] pain,” while moving beyond experiencing suffering as all-consuming.\textsuperscript{55} Therefore, through and by performance, Montano’s endurance was no longer internalized and debilitating. Rather, it was productive and unencumbering. Turned outward, the burdens of emotional trauma become bearable.

Many of her earliest performances are exclusively endurance-based; Montano describes herself as insisting audiences “give [her] attention […] and witness [her] long-term commitment.”\textsuperscript{56} Not only is her own emotional and physical relationship to the endurance acts necessary, but she demonstrates a distinct need for outside validation of her sacrifice. In other words, to be sacrificial is not enough: others must understand and witness her sacrifice and its effects.

However, in many of her early works, the audience is strictly voyeuristic. Montano sought to replicate the structures of her own family dynamic, where performance was guided not by interaction, but by how one was perceived.\textsuperscript{57} Just as she had been perceived and normatively recognized as daughter, regardless of how she was treated in practice, Montano seeks for her audience to recognize her within the roles she performs, regardless of whether or not they are active outside of the performance space.

\textsuperscript{54} Montano, “Resume”.
\textsuperscript{56} Montano, \textit{Letters from Linda M. Montano}, 124.
\textsuperscript{57} Montano, Interview.
Performance artists are almost always uniquely conscious of the importance of audiences as witness. Peggy Phelan has defined performance as contingent “through disappearance”; audience members are consequently the only ones able to rescue performance from inmemorability and vanishing. Each performance act is necessary fleeting due to its temporal and ephemeral qualities and can only be taken out of this transient existence through witnessing. Performance’s distinguishing quality is its capacity to create art from action, a transformation that cannot be identified without observers or witnesses.

In reference to her audiences, Montano says that she “couldn’t exist without them,” and expresses that her early audiences, beyond mere onlookers, were also crucial to defining her performances as art. This contrasts to later works wherein the audience is not only removed from the actions she undertakes, but is also not even considered necessary to the completion of a piece. The role of audience and artist is complex; perhaps even more complex are the ways in which Montano adapts and changes their relevance from piece to piece and throughout her career. As I describe in my third chapter, Montano’s practice eventually encompasses performances that are almost wholly private, such as Dad Art (1998 – present), which is evidentiary of the major shifts in Montano’s relationship to audiences. Thus, these early interventions, where audiences are key in allowing Montano to term her performances as artistic practice, are merely the first step in her experimentation with visibility and the need for an audience.

Within her early career works, Montano’s identities become legitimized through and by her own visibility. Her roles as divorcée, widow, and artist – identities that can be considered

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disconnected from normativity and certainly from how Montano’s life was envisioned within her conservative upbringing – must be validated externally. For Montano to consider her performances successful, audience members must witness how Montano sees and conveys herself in order for her expressions to be considered sincere, authentic, and validated. Scholars such as Deborah K. Ultan have argued for liveness and witnessing as the main characteristics that make performance transformative, an argument that is also relevant in my analysis of *Mitchell’s Death*. In addition, audiences are able to accept the nuances of Montano’s life in such a way that her identities are not viewed as necessarily binary or essentialist. Montano does not seek legitimization from traditional state apparatuses, such as church authorities or governmental agencies. Rather, she is motivated by recognition and visibility from her audiences.

Early in her career, audiences were explicitly necessary in order to bridge the divide between endurance as art and endurance as a personal endeavor. Later on, Montano employs shifting requirements upon her audiences after becoming comfortable in her Art / Life philosophy. Though audiences certainly remain part of her artistic production, they are more consistently implicated as participants in a piece than they are impartial or distanced observers. Montano no longer uses artistic expression as a solely self-reflexive tool, but she allows her audiences to also grow, heal, and express themselves within the performances she originates.

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Biographies of Ritual

As her career as an artist developed, Montano increased her creative output considerably when she began to take teaching positions at various upper-learning institutions. She created over 30 unique performances in the time between her graduation from her MFA program in 1969 and her ex-husband’s death in 1977. 61 This early stage of Montano’s career is marked by unrecorded performances, many of which were spontaneously created. Significantly, many of her earliest performances are largely conceptual and not necessarily based on Montano’s own experiences. In other words, though they are often expressive of Montano’s concerns, they do not biographically relate to actual occurrences in Montano’s life.

A major turning point in Montano’s early career occurred in August of 1977. At this time, Montano’s ex-husband, Mitchell Payne, died. Descriptions of his death vary, from Montano’s personal assertion that he was murdered by a friend, to Martin Patrick’s claim that he was shot during a robbery, to Montano’s description in Mitchell’s Death of a witness to his death informing her it was a “gun accident.” 62 This occurred a year and a half after Montano and Payne officially divorced. After Montano and Payne’s formal separation in 1975, she began a relationship with experimental composer and sound artist Pauline Oliveros. 63

Montano produced four performances regarding Payne’s death: A Tribute to Mitchell Payne (1977), “Z” (1977), Mitchell’s Death: Mourning (1978), and Tribute to Mitchell Payne (1978). The most well-known of these is Mitchell’s Death: Mourning; Montano approaches the

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61 Montano, “Resume”
63 Shank, "Mitchell's Death," 43-44. See also “Burger King and the Avant-Garde” in Letters from Linda M. Montano, 64-69.
other performances as practice and preparation for the recorded video performance. All of the performances exemplify the functions and meanings of performance art to Montano at this time in her life; the performative space is a space of healing, therapeutic understanding, and self-reflectivity through outward expression.

*Mitchell’s Death: Mourning* (Figure 5) is one of Montano’s first recorded video performances. It consists of a 22-minute-long video of Montano recounting the circumstances of her ex-husband’s death and its aftermath in a chant-like tone. Significantly, I argue that this series is Montano’s first artistic rite of passage, as her reperformances of the variations *Mitchell’s Death* serve to continually frame herself as processing grief. Though because of their divorce, she is not quite widowed, she must still reckon with what happens when someone who she shared intimate and private parts of her life with has died. This transition impacts Montano’s construction of her own identity and is furthermore reaffirmed as transformative by the audience-based structure of *Mitchell’s Death*.

In the performance, as she speaks, her gaze remains on the floor. The video is recorded in black-and-white and there is no decoration or detail to the environment around her. She is seen in a close zoom from the chin up, with harsh lighting framing her face. Montano’s voice remains monotone and somber throughout the performance, despite the despair present in her account and the acupuncture needles that pierced her face. Notably, emotional pain is intertwined with physical endurance. Montano ties the emotional pain of her separation from Payne and his death to the pain of the needles in her face. Though Montano emerges onstage with the needles already

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65 Ultan, “From the Personal to the Transpersonal,” 35.
placed, a video plays throughout the performance of Montano’s backstage preparation, including herself inserting the needles on her face.\textsuperscript{66}

Additionally, this is the first recorded example of Montano appropriating ritualized concepts and iconography in order to assist her in legitimizing and creating her own rituals. Namely, Montano appropriates chanting as meditative and religious practice, and includes instruments from different cultures as part of the background of her performance. For example, Gregorian chants, the reading of the Quran, and traditional Buddhist chants use similar tonal practices. Because of the similarity between Montano’s voice in \textit{Mitchell’s Death} and how other religious texts are traditionally read, she creates consonance between the events of Payne’s tragic and unresolved death, and religious texts of a traditionally moral character. Though it is unclear precisely how Payne dies, it is evident that the event was mired in needlessness and shock. Through the performance, Payne’s death thus becomes transformed from a mundane, though tragic event into a religiously connoted incident. Due to the religious contexts Montano includes in the performance, it becomes affected with the circumstance of untimely death, violent slaughter, and religious sacrifice.

Montano’s dialogue throughout the performance is a factual reconstruction of how she found out Payne had died. She describes the conversations and occurrences that came after Payne’s death, as well as how her own emotional state shifted through the days that followed. Montano wrote the text she reads shortly after the events had transpired, in order to maintain authenticity with regards to her emotions and experiences.\textsuperscript{67}

\textsuperscript{66} Shank, “Mitchell’s Death,” 45.

\textsuperscript{67} Shank, “Mitchell’s Death,” 48. The text can be read in full in Shank’s article or on Montano’s blog at: https://lindamarymontano.blogspot.com/2012/03/motchells-death.html
Chanting and the sacrality of speech and text is not the only thematic relationship to religion present in *Mitchell’s Death*. In its original, public performance, Montano adjusted the lighting so that she resembled the shape of a cross; as she chanted, Oliveros played a Japanese bowl gong and Montano’s friend Al Rossi played a *shruti* box.\(^68\) The bowl gong relates to elements of Japanese Buddhist practice, while the *shruti* box is used in Hindu ceremonies.\(^69\) Additionally religiously significant are the acupuncture needles she uses, which are not arranged on her face based on traditional acupuncture practice but rather accommodated based on what Montano thought was most visually striking.\(^70\) Thus, at this time, Montano shows her willingness to creatively appropriate religious rites in order to best accommodate the needs of her own personal rituals.

Because Montano is markedly choosing to return to a distinct moment of pain, and because of the decidedly religious environment of the performance, it is clear she is engaging in one of her first distinct artistic rites of passage. Each of Montano’s performances about Payne are about his death and her reaction to it; notably, she approaches Payne’s death as a static moment in time to which she becomes tethered. The instant of death creates the opportunity for transformation, but Montano does not allow herself to move through the transformative passage. By placing her transformations in present moment of performance, she does not let herself reach the moment of completion and aggregation. She always returns to the same moments of pain and trauma of finding out her ex-husband has died. The performance always involves her reading through a log of her emotions and experiences of finding out Payne had died, thus in each

\(^{68}\) Shank, “Mitchell’s Death,” 48.
\(^{70}\) Shank, “Mitchell’s Death,” 48.
performance she returns to the moments of discovery and transformation involved in the initial experience.

For almost a year of her life, her performances all revolve around healing from and personally analyzing the circumstances of Payne’s death. The incessant repetition of the thematic and psychological experiences that surrounded her grief makes it so Montano has endless opportunities to present herself to an understanding audience. She returns to the liminal moments after Payne’s passing in order to allow the audience to experience and witness her sorrow. To have grieved alone does not provide closure, but to have been seen grieving and have thus gained a sense of communality and solidarity allows Montano to move forward.

After the final, completed performance of *Mitchell’s Death*, Montano’s artistic creation departs radically from its original genesis. In Montano’s new phase of artmaking, her work becomes notably more experimental, exploratory, and based in the long-term. This is also a time when many of the structures of Montano’s life alter considerably. Shortly after Payne’s death, Montano leaves the Catholic church and begins studying Non-Western philosophies, most significantly Buddhism. She begins practicing martial arts, takes several teaching appointments in California and New York schools, and begins to create multi-disciplinary and collaborative work. These changes in her life exemplify how Montano’s art attempts to complete or reframe liminal and liminoid rituals. It is only through the continual reperformance of *Mitchell’s Death* that Montano is finally able to leave her grief behind and accept her new identities. The complications of her sorrow are unmade upon allowing the audience to gaze upon her sorrow as performance, thus allowing her to work through the processes of grief within performance and, eventually, through her own life.

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71 Montano, “Resume.”
This link between art and life, within which Montano uses performance to explore her own life and eventually guide her in adopting or processing new identities, is a cornerstone of her artistic processes. It is reflective of her focus on Art / Life and becomes further highlighted in her later career, when works such as *Dad Art* become processual and actionable markers of her personal growth. As Montano’s career continues to unfold, she breaks down the barriers of personal and public, thus creating an artistic path that requires or, at the very least, prefers the structure of performance as a guiding force for personal analysis and growth.
Chapter 2: Liminoid Lives

Introduction

This chapter focuses on Montano’s relationship to identity, the liminal, and the liminoid, in the context of her body of artwork. I focus on the video The Seven Spiritual Lives of Linda Montano (1996) and Montano’s public performances as Bob Dylan and Mother Teresa (1992 – ongoing) as the most crucial interventions wherein she performs and explores shifts in identity. In my study of these works, I employ sociologist Erving Goffman’s study of the performance of everyday life and introduce the conceptual structure of rites of passage, as developed by anthropologists Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner. Broadly, I develop and expand on how Montano’s use of liminality is a cornerstone of her artistic practice. Specifically, I argue that Montano’s use of rites of passage through performance is significant for the field of performance studies because her novel and unorthodox adherence to ritualized Art / Life creates new venues for personal expression and self-analysis in art.

Based upon theories of liminality and transition, I argue that Montano’s artwork, and by extension her life, is doubly liminoid. Montano is liminoid as an artist because she repeatedly engages with the liminoid, transition, and rites of passage within her artwork, both structurally and thematically. Furthermore, she becomes liminoid outside of performance because, due to her focus on Art / Life, even when she is not engaged in an active or structured performance, she continues to perform. Additionally, her status as artist and performer makes her liminoid, per Victor Turner’s definition of the term.

Recording the Self

Much of Montano’s artistic creation in the 1980s was focused on her project, Seven Years of Living Art (1984-1991). As described in the Introduction, this work was a highly ritualized
and organized project, wherein Montano only wore outfits of a particular color, and went daily to a room of this same color while listening to a tone that represented the color. The color was associated to a chakra and would change yearly. With this work, Montano aimed to maintain a routine and demanding project in order to motivate herself to be consistently in a “state of art.”

This practice was highly time-consuming because of its demanding physical requirements, such as requiring her to stay in one room for four hours a day and listen to a tone for three hours, and most of the performances Montano undertook at the time were directly related to the project.

However, while practicing its successor, Another Seven Years of Living Art (1991-1998), which consisted of Seven Years of Living Art performed backwards, Montano resumed creating separate and unique performances and video artworks. It is within these mid-career artworks that Montano began to reflect not just on recent experiences, as had been the case with Anorexia Nervosa and Mitchell’s Death, but on the direction of her life as a whole. Particularly, Montano’s works become oriented towards the discovery and analysis of crucial moments when her life transformed.

The video work The Seven Spiritual Lives of Linda Montano (Figures 6-8) exemplifies these focuses. Seven Spiritual Lives of Linda Montano is a semi-autobiographical video work, in which Montano examines periods of significant spiritual growth and transition in her life. The 13-minute video tells the story of “Flower Girl,” a character based on Montano’s own life, focusing on how Flower Girl chooses spiritual and religious paths throughout her life. Yet Montano narrates the video from a detached perspective, never alluding to herself as an

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74 Montano, “Resume”
individual subject and instead positioning herself as an independent narrator. Throughout the video, each of the depicted life paths seem to define the main character’s identity as she becomes captivated by and eventually painfully immersed in the structures of others’ lives. In other words, the piece attempts to mediate and deconstruct how Montano’s shifts in identity have occurred, and what impacts they have had on the progression of her life.

The video begins with the unnamed narrator (Montano) describing Flower Girl, a curious child born in a mountainous and watery environment. Flower Girl desires knowledge, traveling, dancing, and horse-riding, but is shocked and startled upon leaving the cave from which she emerged. The environment of the outside world is shocking and fear-inducing to Flower Girl, and she is struck by the concepts of death and suffering. Though confused and scared, particularly about death, Flower Girl decides to imitate those around her in order to succeed and conquer the challenges presented to her. These challenges and the identities of the people she imitates remain vague, but it is clear that Montano is describing her conservative Catholic youth. This is evidenced by the fact that this first section is titled “Catholic Life,” and is accompanied by imagery of Christ being crucified and pictures of Montano in traditional First Communion clothes.

However, Flower Girl quickly becomes disillusioned by this new lifestyle and expresses sadness, anxiety, and shame. Thus, she decides to leave this lifestyle and begin the search for a new one. She returns to the cave where she was born and swims in search of a new structure upon which to organize her life. In each section, Flower Girl discovers a guiding force and role

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75 Linda Montano, *The Seven Spiritual Lives of Linda Montano*, video art, 1996, 0:18 - 0:49 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E7nTaL996Wg&t=450s&ab_channel=LINDAMARYMONTANO
77 Montano, *The Seven Spiritual Lives of Linda Montano*, 1:28 – 1:36
78 Montano, *The Seven Spiritual Lives of Linda Montano*, 1:36 – 1: 55
79 Montano, *The Seven Spiritual Lives of Linda Montano*, 2:10 – 2:18
model, is quickly disillusioned and becomes wracked by feelings of shame, and then departs that lifestyle in search of a new and fulfilling one. This cycle is repeated throughout the first five sections of the video.

The video consists of seven sections, each titled after a significant guiding force in Flower Girl’s (and therefore Montano’s own) life: Catholic Life, Nun Life, Yoga Life, Buddhist Life, Feminist Life, Natural Life, and finally, simply Life. The first five sections repetitively describe Flower Girl’s cycle within each life. She is usually enthralled by an individual, whom she seeks to copy in order to break the cycle of guilt and shame stemming from the Catholic Life, but finds that she is unable to live genuinely happily. She finds herself “locked in guilt” and unable to find joy through merely imitating others.80

Each section shows Flower Girl’s compulsion to revert back to the foundational behaviors that came from the Catholic Life, where she described a desire to seek out pain and suffering. Repetitively, Flower Girl feels this suffering and consequently is pleased by and through her pain. She also remains conscious of the fact that she is always imitating others and never actively creating or pursuing an independent identity. These feelings compound and cause her to be burdened by guilt, and to relieve this she seeks out a new life path that she hopes will fulfill her needs and align with her internalized identity.

It is only in the last two lives that Flower Girl’s emotional state and motivations shift. In the Natural Life, Flower Girl swims back to the cave where she was born, and instead of departing in search for a new lifestyle, she stays inside and dreams.81 When she eventually leaves the cave, she sees people that “were from another time” and sang songs around a campfire.82

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80 Montano, *The Seven Spiritual Lives of Linda Montano*, 4:01 – 4:15
Though she desires to imitate them in order to be as happy as they are, she realizes that she could not really become like them. Instead, Flower Girl decides to stop considering goodness and badness as the main moral categories in life, and finally moves forward from the cycle of finding joy in suffering. As she moves forward, she thanks all of her spiritual guides for the knowledge they shared, and realizes that to progress and discover her own identity she must fully embrace different aspects of the previously explored life-stages. Finally, in the last section, titled Life, Flower Girl is able to accept death and reject fear in order to live happily and freely.

Consistent motifs throughout the video include religious imagery, such as Christ being raised on the cross, and images of flowers, clouds, and fields. A clip showing Joan of Arc crying and being crowned, taken from the 1928 silent French film La Passion de Jeanne D’Arc (The Passion of Joan of Arc), is overlaid throughout the first five segments. Throughout the video, in addition to Montano’s narration, the sound of an infant crying and babbling is audible. In some sections, Montano includes photographs of herself as she lived through certain life stages – such as Nun Life or Yoga Life – while in others she includes photographs of her mentors throughout these stages, all of whom remain unnamed.

Structurally, Montano’s description of Flower Girl’s life resembles traditional fairy tale formats. The video’s narration emphasizes concepts of fantastical transformation and growth. The story is temporally placed “a very, very, long time ago,” thus giving audiences a sense of fictiveness and longevity, as well as an explanation from which they can accept fantastical or unlikely events. The events of the story are structured to enhance repetition and symmetry, with Montano consistently repeating Flower Girl’s internal monologue, “I will walk like you, I will

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83 Montano, The Seven Spiritual Lives of Linda Montano, 6:34 – 6:51
84 Montano, The Seven Spiritual Lives of Linda Montano, 6:52 – 7:05
85 Montano, The Seven Spiritual Lives of Linda Montano, 7:40 – 8:30
talk like you, I will dress like you, I will think like you, then I won’t be bad anymore.” Beautiful and compelling imagery, moreover, such as blooming flowers or natural landscapes, is juxtaposed alongside haunting or disturbing concepts of self-inflicted suffering and masochism. This combination of the dangerous and the appealing compels readers (and, in this case, viewers) to attempt to understand, desire, and explore the realm of the imaginary. This thematic combination of beauty or joy and pain or darkness is parallel to Flower Girl’s own psychological associations, specifically, her perception that suffering is directly conducive to happiness, and vice versa.

Significantly, the story concludes with the narrator explaining that the story is truly unending. Flower Girl still revisits the cave and continues to explore and dream. Thus, Montano brings the story of Flower Girl into a repetitive and relivable context. By claiming that Flower Girl’s story is essentially unending, Montano allows herself to continue her search for self-identity and opens the possibility to further transitional periods in her life.

It is also relevant that, though Montano is the narrator and the work’s title is directly referential to the autobiographical context of the work, she never truly admits that she is her own subject. Despite the images from Montano’s life and the pertinent biographical details, Montano only allows the audience to understand the video as the story of Flower Girl. Thus, she approaches her own life from a separate and distanced perspective. Though the title is self-referential, the narrator remains anonymized, and Flower Girl is never connected to Montano herself, except through grainy photographs of herself in her youth that would only be recognized

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by those close to her. This is an attempt to reflect on herself objectively, without explicitly
acknowledging her own connection to the story being told.

This self-reflexivity signals a burgeoning shift in Montano’s artistic priorities. By looking
towards the past, Montano begins to address aging, transition, and growth, whether overtly or
more in a subliminal way. Specifically, she centers individual moments and decisions as
particularly directive for the course of her life, thus framing them as rites of passage. Each life-
phase of the video moves sequentially through the processes of separation, liminality, and
aggregation. This focus on deconstructing and reapproaching moments of transition is further
underscored by Montano’s exploration of how her identity shifts within each of these moments.

Transitional events in The Seven Spiritual Lives of Linda Montano are key because they
represent shifting benchmarks in Montano’s personal and public identities. When Montano
relives or recreates these periods of transformation in art, she actively alters the structures of her
identity. Choosing these moments and their thematic implications as moments of consistent
return for her art creation is significant because through them, she is able to continually and
repetitively transform herself. Additionally, this attempt to reconnect or reexamine her past
through art is a significant departure from her performances that are based upon creating new
experiences, such as Seven Years of Living Art. While in previous performances such as Seven
Years of Living Art, Montano sought to experience her life in the context of artistic creation, in
these later works she delays new opportunities for change by focusing on analyzing the past
without being active in the present, as the video work is always temporally detached.87 Though
her performances often focus on actions of the past, they become continually present simply by
being performed. In contrast, this video work is effectively always stuck in a moment in time that

87 Montano, Letters from Linda M. Montano, 159.
cannot be brought to the present through creation. By regressing through art to a moment that has already happened, she pauses the development of her life and seeks to further process the past before allowing herself to continue to evolve.

**Artist/Lifeist**

Sociologist Erving Goffman indicates possibilities for performance outside of traditionally structured performance spaces, such as the theater, in his book *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life* (1959). In exploring how individuals alter their actions based on external factors, Goffman presents a definition of performance that moves beyond the structures of traditional arrangements wherein there is a distinct performer and an equally distinct audience. Though the first theorizations of performance emphasized this division between audience and artist, typically exemplified by the separation provided by a stage, Goffman innovatively explores how many performances are interactive processes shared equally by all participants in an interaction. By utilizing concepts of performance in his study, Goffman provides the opportunity for performance theory to begin to encompass practically any element of human behavior.

Goffman postulates that performance is not necessarily even deliberate or conscious, and that performance can thus encompass a wide range of day-to-day behaviors, so long as they attempt to affect how one is perceived. Though the root of performance is generally outwardly oriented, some performances are so natural or expected that they are undertaken for personal and private benefits. In these cases, a performer is unaware that they are performing and believes their subconscious performance to be an accurate representation of their internal beliefs and

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impulses.\textsuperscript{92} In his analysis, cynical performers or those who are aware of their performances as a false or altered presentation, may engage in their performances because it is what is expected of them by their audiences and thus a natural expression of their societal roles.\textsuperscript{93}

Significantly, Goffman asserts that the most suitable definition of performance is as extensive as “all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants.”\textsuperscript{94} This broad perception is notable when studying Montano’s work, particularly given her adherence to an artistic philosophy that does not differentiate between actions of day-to-day life and artistic creation. In other words, her performances do not always require a conscious or present audience, and she creates performances that are based upon their mundanity and lack of visibility. When considering Art / Life and its impact on Montano’s artwork, one can easily ascertain the benefits of performance as a genre within her practice.

Though Montano’s formal education in art is sculpture-based, her shift into performance began as early as her MFA defense, \textit{The Chicken Show} (1969). This work consisted of Montano exhibiting nine live chickens in minimalist and large-scale chicken wire cages. Based on this piece, she created a performance entitled \textit{The Chicken Woman} (1972) where she dressed up and behaved like a chicken. It was her first foray into multi-medium creation, a practice that continues to guide Montano’s artwork to this day.

Montano is not limited to self-reflexivity through her own past. Since 1992, Montano has engaged in a series of public performances where she assumes the identities of various personally impactful figures (Figures 9-10).\textsuperscript{95} These individuals, whom Montano describes as her

\textsuperscript{92} Goffman, \textit{The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life}, 28-30. See also: Goffman, 77-78.
\textsuperscript{93} Goffman, \textit{The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life}, 28-30.
\textsuperscript{94} Goffman, \textit{The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life}, 26.
\textsuperscript{95} Montano, “Resume”
“gurus,” include saints, like Mother Teresa, and singers, like Bob Dylan and her friend, Paul McMahon. The performances often take the form of Montano wearing the subjects’ traditional attires (for example, the customary habit for the Missionaries of Charity when performing as Mother Teresa or scarves, wigs or a hat, and a fake mustache when performing as Bob Dylan) and interacting with audiences through these subjects’ roles. During these performances, Montano temporarily detaches herself from her own identities to instead perform through the facsimiles of these individuals’ public-facing personalities. Because of this, the performance space becomes a space for liberation, alteration, and discovery, where Montano is able to explore her concrete self – in other words, her body and actions – through the lens of another’s behavior. By occupying others’ identities, she also examines the overlap between her own personal experiences and those of her role models. Essentially, she uses others’ identities to self-reflexively describe, filter, or analyze her own.

Like her early endurance-based works, which depended upon audiences being conscious of her sacrifices, these performances rely upon audiences recognizing her transformations and interacting with Montano as though she is the subject whose behavior she attempts to imitate. However, though both Montano and her audiences are aware of the fact that it is all a performance, neither acknowledges it. This is similar to how Goffman conceptualizes the performance of day-to-day life, where even if all performers understand their actions to be fictitious performances, they must still be undertaken in order to ensure that social morals, statuses, and identities are upheld. Thus, both Montano and her audiences mutually delude one another into believing and practicing this mutual performative illusion.

96 Linda Montano, Interview with the author.
97 Goffman, *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*, 40-44.
In these pieces, Montano connects to Goffman’s theories of performativity and allows for performance to move from a formal or structured practice to a medium that can be employed in almost any situation. Particularly, her performances are scarcely documented and based on a series of experiential and non-repeatable interactions and are thus new presentations of everyday life. They are unstructured and based solely on replicating certain states of being and feeling through the lens of Montano’s influences. Other works, such as *Seven Years of Living Art* and *Another Seven Years of Living Art* were also not documented rigorously. This positions endurance as almost newly personally motivated, as opposed to undertaken for the pleasure or interest of an audience.

These transitional identities and performances, where she is neither fully herself nor fully transformed into her subjects, are the focus of many of Montano’s own internal analyses. Though uniquely dependent on how Montano is perceived by external audiences, they become self-directed and meditative experiences where she suspends the mechanisms of her day-to-day life. It is significant that Montano’s performances are largely focused on projecting a superficial identity that is based upon these individuals’ public personas. In other words, she is not seeking to genuinely represent these individuals’ private and personal processes. Rather, she presents them superficially: they become blank canvases of exploration, through which her own identity can be filtered.

**Liminality and Transformation**

As previously described, many of Montano’s works are structured so that she is able to relive and reanalyze significant moments in her life. These moments are often highly emotional and framed as pivotal in the course of Montano’s life. By making these events the subjects of artistic interventions, Montano places them into a context where they become alterable and
removed from their previous structural boundaries. These events become transitional and malleable due to Montano’s embrace of hybridity and multivalence.

However, even as Montano’s work directly pursues new ways of thinking and exploring the past, she remains tethered to the basic structures of rites of passage. The anthropologist Arnold van Gennep originated many of the first theories regarding the organization and progression of rites of passage. In his seminal book *The Rites of Passage*, van Gennep establishes that each society engages in personal and public expressions of ritual. Some of these societies have extremely similar structures and motivations, thus implying that these rites are inherent to human nature.\(^\text{98}\) These rites are foundational for the development of social structure, and typically dictate or define how certain individuals can behave and what societal privileges they have access to.

Van Gennep focuses on the different kinds of rituals, defining categories such as dynamistic rituals (rituals that are based upon abstracted and metaphysical powers), contagious rituals (those that are based on direct and physical capabilities for transmitting certain characteristics), direct rituals (through which action purportedly occurs immediately), and indirect rituals (those that aim to influence or initiate a new, uncontrollable set of actions).\(^\text{99}\) He also defines positive and negative rites, articulating that positive rituals seek to create an action or result while negative rituals are constructed to avoid a certain negative effect.\(^\text{100}\) By arguing that all rituals fall into these categories, though in different proportions and strengths, van Gennep provides the basis for consistent analyses of ritual interventions. Significantly, van

\(^\text{99}\) Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, 7-8.
\(^\text{100}\) Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, 9.
Gennep argues that though all rituals engage with these categories, that does not mean that they are only defined by their conformity to these groups.\textsuperscript{101}

Furthermore, van Gennep also introduces the specific subdivisions of rites of passage. He postulates that that each rite of passage is divided into three stages all centered around the concept of liminality: the pre-liminal or rite of separation, the liminal or rite of transition, and the post-liminal or rite of incorporation.\textsuperscript{102} Additionally, he also proposes that not each stage is necessarily significant or a priority to all individual rites.\textsuperscript{103} That is to say that though each rite of passage includes each of these phases, they are not always equally emphasized or formalized, which creates new opportunities for dynamic expressions of ritual.\textsuperscript{104}

Though the terminology and frameworks that van Gennep provides are crucial to studying the construction of ritual and rites of passage more generally, anthropologist Victor Turner’s studies of liminal behavior are vital to understanding how ritual is performed in art. Turner’s work on rites of passage serves to define and expand how liminality is experienced. Though he elaborates broadly on Van Gennep’s definitions of the stages of rites of passage, his most crucial contribution for the purposes of this study is the differentiation of the \textit{liminal} from the \textit{liminoid}.

Turner proposes that the liminoid is structurally similar to the liminal, but that it corresponds to spaces of leisure and play, while the liminal is typically associated with work, order, and propriety.\textsuperscript{105} Its connection to play makes it related to a subversion of traditional

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\textsuperscript{101} Van Gennep, \textit{The Rites of Passage}, 11. Derivations from these categories and specific differences in rituals are typically because of distinct societal necessities, such as the need to maintain dead bodies away from a community in the case of funeral rites. See also: Van Gennep, \textit{The Rites of Passage}, 189-194.
\textsuperscript{102} Van Gennep, \textit{The Rites of Passage}, 11.
\textsuperscript{103} Van Gennep, \textit{The Rites of Passage}, 11.
\textsuperscript{104} Van Gennep, \textit{The Rites of Passage}, 11.
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social norms and rules. Beyond being commonly associated with play, the liminoid is specifically tied to visual and performing arts, sport, and hobbies.\textsuperscript{106} The liminoid is also often coupled with individual projects that do not always have societal repercussions, contrary to liminal behavior, which tends to signal transition to a community at large.\textsuperscript{107} Consequentially, Turner’s description of the liminoid overwhelmingly aligns with the purview of art in contemporary American society, and thus is apt for usage in my analysis of Montano’s artwork.

Thus, because performance generally falls under the confines of liminoid, some scholars have suggested that liminality within the field should be redefined as any transformative impulse derived from performance, not simply limited to a specific action or moment in time.\textsuperscript{111} Performance’s unstable nature indicates that the effects, impacts, and transformations that come from within it are likely limited to the domain of performance itself.\textsuperscript{112} Therefore, performance becomes a liberatory state wherein the conventions and norms of traditional day-to-day life can disrupt themselves. Because performance is not part of the structures of daily life, and its effects are limited to acts of performance, it has little consequence and allows for its participants to undertake genuine, radical actions.

Performance is consequently an exaggerated and dramatized venue for explorations of the self and reality that do not consequently affect one’s identity and standing outside of performance. Because performers and their audiences are united through the performance, the effects of any intervention are shared and witnessed. However, because performance as a whole does not operate in a state of consequentiality with relation to real-world structures and is known to have evolved from structures of play and mimicking, the audience and performer are able to

\textsuperscript{106} Turner, “Liminal to Liminoid,” 86.
\textsuperscript{107} Turner, “Liminal to Liminoid,” 85.
both abandon their performances of everyday life. In other words, because performance is liminoid, each performance space allows for individuals to be able to move beyond their performances of everyday life and instead interact through a subversion of social norms.

Just as Goffman argues that performance cannot be limited to a pre-planned set of actions undertaken on a stage, Montano’s focus on Art / Life creates the opportunity for performance structure to become almost entirely abolished. Because she has explored how her own life becomes art and how art becomes her life, Montano is essentially always in an eternal state of performance. The performance space becomes unending and non-dependent on audience reception or visibility. Montano suspends normativity through the performance space but, more importantly, she suspends the concept of a removed or separate performance space. Effectively, her practice allows for performance to be concretely conceptualized as unescapable and universal. Her artwork is emblematic of a performance practice that is liberating and ubiquitous.

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Chapter 3: Performance for Death, Death for Performance

Introduction

In this chapter, I continue my analysis of Montano’s focus on performance as a form of creation that is necessarily boundless and endless. As is evident in my previous two chapters, Montano’s work contains a stark focus on experimentality and continuity. She chooses to frame her performances in such a way that she is able to consistently re-perform them, thus never truly completing them. Montano also radically departs from standards of documentation and structure typically present in performance within the latter half of her career. By analyzing Dad Art (1998–present) (Figures 11-13), a temporally and conceptually extensive performance that remains ongoing, I will explore how Montano’s artistic process has generated opportunities for the expansion of the concept of performativity.

Within art historical scholarship, Montano’s Art / Life philosophy presents an issue regarding documentation, structure, and external influence. Particularly problematic is the lack of structured documentation and the potential for performances to be wholly private and thus unable to be accurately studied. However, within the specific context of Dad Art, Montano resolves this by the extensive use of video documentation and public presentations. She demonstrates awareness of how the self-imposed boundaries of Art / Life can be personally beneficial, but also recognizes the necessity of public acknowledgement for the art-making process.

Furthermore, I will conclude my analysis of Montano’s usage of rites of passage and the liminoid. In my study of Dad Art, I will substantiate my claim that Montano uses her artwork as a way to consistently position herself, her identities, and the world around her as perpetually transitioning. Dad Art allows for the liminoid and the liminal to interact with one another, as her liminoid framing of death interacts with the liminal experiences of grief she carries in her artistic
and personal lives. The unique circumstances of her performance practice emphasize open-endedness and ever-shifting outcomes. Additionally, Montano seeks to make the consequences of her acts of labor and grief visible, though she obscures the actual actions by emphasizing the private nature of the work. Dad Art both reveals and conceals moments of pain, grief, and action, thus probing into the nature of artistic representations of personal moments.

Dad Art magnifies Montano’s previous focus on constant renewal by actively challenging the finality of death. Furthermore, it also emphasizes the lack of division between artistic interventions and daily life within Montano’s body of work. Thus, the radical conclusions of this performance serve as a natural culmination to the concerns Montano has expressed within art throughout her career.

Dad Art

Though Montano has centralized experimentality and personal experience in her works throughout her career, Dad Art perhaps most exemplifies these aspects in her catalog. Dad Art is not simply a performance, but an experimental and experiential artwork. The performance has taken on varied contexts as the circumstances of Montano and her father’s relationship have changed. The performance instantiates the crux of Art / Life by focusing on framing the mechanisms of day-to-day life as artistic interventions. While some of Montano’s previous works have involved performance through reliving and reanalyzing past personal events, Dad Art is unique because it began as events were unfolding. Instead of being retrospectively analytical, like Mitchell’s Death and Anorexia Nervosa, Dad Art began while the emotionally taxing events occurred.

Furthermore, Dad Art is also structurally unique. The piece is divided into personal and public performances and documents that are technically unrelated in form and action but cannot
be unlinked. The first portion of Dad Art is a seven-year-long personal interaction and performance between Montano and her father, which she describes as a “ritual of mourning.”\(^{114}\) The secondary portion is the video documentation of these interactions, which Montano only shows publicly when she is present. The first distinct stage of Dad Art is thus a long-term performance of interactions that occurred between Montano and her father, and the documentary records of said performance.

However, Dad Art did not end after Montano’s father’s death in 2005. Montano reframed Dad Art into an extensive public performance that is based upon certain events, memories, and emotional responses that occurred while Montano cared for her father. This performance is recurring, but due to its significant dependence on audience interaction, remains ever shifting. These public performances are also often documented, but due to the large number of individuals that are present and active in the performance, the documents do not present a holistically accurate record of each performance.

Dad Art began in 1998 when Montano left her teaching post at the University of Texas, Austin – where she was an assistant professor of performance – after being denied tenure.\(^ {115}\) She had taught at the university since 1991, the year her seminal work Seven Years of Living Art (1984-1991) ended. Upset because her academic career had effectively concluded, Montano moved to upstate New York, where she had been born and where her father lived at the time.\(^ {116}\) Montano moved to Kingston, New York, a town located less than 20 minutes from her hometown of Saugerties. Kingston was was also where the studio in which many of her earlier


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works were developed, the “Art / Life Institute,” was located.\textsuperscript{117} Guided by what she terms “her good inner voices,” she began taking care of her father, Henry Joseph Montano, in his old age.\textsuperscript{118}

For the first three years after moving back to Kingston, Montano became her father’s companion and assisted him with housework and errands.\textsuperscript{119} At this time, Montano envisioned creating a collaborative artwork with her father.\textsuperscript{120} This initial artwork, which shifted dramatically after 2001, consisted of a performance in which Montano and her father videotaped certain aspects of their day-to-day lives, such as meals and recreation. Montano was motivated to create a record of how she and her father began to get to “re-know” one another in old age.\textsuperscript{121} This time period represented a significant shift in their relationship. Their relationship was no longer simply that of a father and daughter but had changed into an equal and genuine friendship.\textsuperscript{122}

For the first two years after Montano returned to New York, she did not perceive their video collaboration to be artistic in nature.\textsuperscript{123} However, she began to become interested in exploring how they both aged and grew within this new framework of their relationship.\textsuperscript{124} Montano describes her father as “playing with death” and teaching her how to interact with the structures of aging and eventual death.\textsuperscript{125} These concerns about aging, death, and transitional

\textsuperscript{117} Montano, “Miscellaneous Things From Website”
\textsuperscript{118} Montano, “Women in Performance: Interview with Moira Roth”
\textsuperscript{120} Montano, “Miscellaneous Things From Website”
\textsuperscript{121} Linda Montano, “Old Age, Sickness, and Death in the Videos of Linda Mary Montano.”
\textsuperscript{124} Knowles, Heartney, Monk, Montano, Ehn, and Marranca,”Art as Spiritual Practice,” 28.
\textsuperscript{125} Knowles, Heartney, Monk, Montano, Ehn, and Marranca,”Art as Spiritual Practice,” 28
relationships were the initial focus of their collaboration. This original performance had two interchangeable titles, *Dad Art* and *Blood Family Art.*

However, Montano’s father suffered a debilitating hemorrhagic stroke in 2001. The stroke, the result of a head accident while in physical therapy, left Montano’s father permanently incapacitated. He went from a lively man who enjoyed the television show *Wheel of Fortune* and linguini and clam dinners, to needing permanent, 24/7 care. Montano thus had to transition from a friend and daughter to a permanent caretaker. In addition to this new role, she assumed the larger responsibility of care manager, in charge of supervising and directing hired caretakers.

Montano continued filming and documenting the routines of their life with a video camera, as she had done in the years when her father was still able-bodied and of lucid mind. She did not originally intend for this documentation to be part of an artistic project, nor did she perceive it as a continuation of their earlier, unfinished collaboration. Rather, she perceived the process of documentation as a way for her to physically and emotionally remove herself from the trauma of seeing her father’s suffering. In other words, Montano was able use video recordings as a way to extricate herself from the realities of the situation, instead choosing to process those emotions at a later time.

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126 Knowles, Heartney, Monk, Montano, Ehn, and Marranca, “Art as Spiritual Practice,” 28
128 Montano, “Old Age, Sickness, and Death in the Videos of Linda Mary Montano.”
129 Montano, “Old Age, Sickness, and Death in the Videos of Linda Mary Montano.”
130 Montano, “Old Age, Sickness, and Death in the Videos of Linda Mary Montano.”
At the suggestion of a hired caretaker, Montano’s father began creating paintings as a form of physical and mental therapy while recovering from his stroke.\textsuperscript{133} These paintings, which Montano has described as abstract expressionist, were her father’s main recreational focus in the years after his stroke.\textsuperscript{134} At times, he would paint for up to 12 hours a day.\textsuperscript{135} Montano’s father’s paintings are exhibited at public \textit{Dad Art} performances, underscoring the therapeutic importance of art-making and the familial artistic bond Montano and her father shared.

Montano’s father died in 2004, at which time the documentation process for \textit{Dad Art} ended. After recording his funeral service, Montano began re-watching the videos she had created during her father’s illness. After a memorial service at which she showed some clips from the recordings, she gathered small audiences in order to exhibit an edited video compiled from clips she had recorded during her father’s illness. These private exhibitions eventually expanded to public \textit{Dad Art} performances.

The public performances of \textit{Dad Art} consist of many different segments, all occurring at once, and lasting approximately two to three hours. Central to the performance space is an edited video of Montano’s father in his illness, compiled from the recordings Montano created. The video is two hours long and contains clips of him eating, painting, visiting doctors, resting, and undertaking other day-to-day tasks with the assistance of Montano and other caretakers. The video is occasionally captioned with details of her father’s life, all addressed to her father. The captions are clearly directed towards Montano’s father, and seek to remind him of his life before and after the stroke by alluding to his trumpet-playing skills, saints to whom he was devoted, and his sleeping habits, among others. This underscores the personal and private nature of the

\textsuperscript{133} Montano, “Old Age, Sickness, and Death in the Videos of Linda Mary Montano.”
\textsuperscript{134} Montano, “Old Age, Sickness, and Death in the Videos of Linda Mary Montano.”
\textsuperscript{135} Montano, “Old Age, Sickness, and Death in the Videos of Linda Mary Montano.”
artwork, as there is no reference or acknowledgement of an audience within the video. Additionally, it breaks down the barriers of death, as she speaks to her father as though he remains present in the performance. This further contextualizes the ways in which Montano seeks to relive and reframe the past through her performances.

While the video plays in the background, Montano sings seven of her father’s favorite songs. She performs one every twenty minutes. In order to call the audience’s attention, a Master of Ceremonies rings three bells and blows on a whistle before each of Montano’s song breaks. The songs she sings were part of her childhood, as her mother and father would often perform them in a musical group they were a part of in the 1930s and 1940s. In some live performances this is done with a live piano accompaniment, while in others Montano simply plays a music recording as backing to her vocals. As she sings, dancers surround the stage. As a coda to each song, Montano sings a short refrain to a gland, such as the pancreas, the thymus, and the thyroid. This is in reference to Montano’s religious and spiritual beliefs, which combine elements of Catholicism, Buddhism, and Eastern medicinal practices.

Throughout the performance, there are at least three different stations expressly situated for audience interaction. Collaborators, whom Montano terms “artists / lifeists,” are responsible for being the main points of contact with the audience members within these stations. At one station, the artists / lifeists provide audience members with (unofficial) counseling, particularly regarding their emotions and experiences with the subject of death. Montano does not instruct these counselors to give advice, and they simply listen to audience members’ concerns with little-to-no reply other than acknowledgement. At another station, artists / lifeists give audience members water, which Montano describes as her father’s “vehicle of life/not life” after his
The water can come in different forms: a glass of water for drinking, a spray of perfumed water, or even a bowl containing water that the audience members touch and place on their bodies at their discretion. This is done so that audience members can experience water as a life-giving medium, just as Montano’s father did. Analytically, viewers are able to observe relationships to traditional Christian baptismal rites. The remaining station allows visitors to dictate letters directed to Death. The artists / lifeists at this station wear death masks and personify death. The performance ends with a ceremonial and ritual burning of the “letters to death” that audience members chose to write. As a conclusion or epilogue to the performance, there is a procession, after which Montano and the audience dance and interact on the stage or central performance space as a closing ceremony. The performance ends with an informal question and answer session.

This performance is far more embedded in clear structures of rites of passage than many of Montano’s other liminoid and liminal artworks. The work has clearly delineated separation, liminal / liminoid, and aggregation phases. For example, Montano and the participants are separate from the structures of life within the performance venue. They are allowed to suspend their traditional norms and explore the space without repercussion. They become liminal or liminoid as they participate in interactions with Montano and the artists / lifeists. Finally, they are aggregate into their day-to-day structures and the ritual is closed through the burning of the letters and the final procession.

137 Montano, “Old Age, Sickness, and Death in the Videos of Linda Mary Montano.”
140 https://lindamarymontano.blogspot.com/2012/05/linda-montanoeventsperformancesworkshop.html
Neither Montano nor the Emcee direct audience members to visit the aforementioned stations sequentially. Rather, they are allowed to freely move around the performance space, interacting or not interacting with stations as they see fit. As these distinct interactions occur, the structure of the performance is independently developed by each audience member. For example, a performance may not necessarily make use of each of the stations, depending on how audience members approach and interact with the space. Some audience members may decide to bypass one or two of the stations, while others yet may choose simply to be bystanders and observers. In some performances, audience members are able to publicly share their experiences about the process of dying, death, and grief throughout the duration of the performance. This heightens the collaborative nature of *Dad Art*, as the focus is not solely on Montano’s own grief. Even as individuals share their personal memories and musing on death, the video continues, and other members of the audience are able to visit separate stations. Thus, each performance becomes emphatically individualized. No attendee will have the same experience.

Thus, all participatory members of the audience are co-performers. This is because they actively alter the performance space depending on how they interact with the stations, what portions of the video they choose to view, whether or not they dictate letters to death, or how they choose to move through the performance space. Though they were not present during the original performance, where Montano cared for her father, they are necessary for the restructured, public *Dad Art* performances. To an extent, the performances occur explicitly for the audience members to witness Montano’s father’s illness and process of death, as Montano has already experienced it. It is the audience’s interactions that create the work of art, which is particularly evident by the usage of their letters as part of the closing, aggregative ritual of the performance.
Interestingly, Montano does not think of this piece as art.\textsuperscript{141} She has referred to it as “life,” “secret,” and, explicitly “not art.”\textsuperscript{142} Regardless, the piece clearly fits into Montano’s own standards for Art / Life creation. Because of its deeply private context, \textit{Dad Art} is exemplary of the focus on reliving and reanalyzing personal events that Montano has espoused throughout her career. However, crucially, in this piece Montano demonstrates a reliance on the audience that is exemplified through the performance structure itself. Though she had expressed wanting audience attention within earlier pieces, such as the endurance projects briefly mentioned in Chapter One, the very structure of \textit{Dad Art}’s public performances depends on having a participatory and active audience.

Not only is \textit{Dad Art} a way for Montano to process her father’s illness and death, it is a way for her to begin to consider what her own death will be like. While \textit{Dad Art} was in its earliest stages, before her father’s stroke, she had described her father as teaching her about death.\textsuperscript{143} This becomes tangible and present as the video changes context after her father’s stroke. Death is no longer abstracted but is realized and even presented through the film. Thus, Montano is able to not only learn about death, but also become witness to and part of the process of dying.

It is important to note that though no performance of \textit{Dad Art} is the same, each performance relates to and expands upon the same source materials and structures created by Montano at the time of her father’s illness. Thus, each performance is part of the continuous \textit{Dad Art} project. The video is neither available online, as many of her videos are, nor is it ever exhibited without Montano present. While Montano’s father was still alive, she did not watch the

\textsuperscript{141} https://lindamarymontano.blogspot.com/2015/07/death-in-my-artmitchells-death-benaresh.html
\textsuperscript{142} https://lindamarymontano.blogspot.com/2015/07/death-in-my-artmitchells-death-benaresh.html
\textsuperscript{143} Alison Knowles, Eleanor Heartney, Meredith Monk, Linda Montano, Erik Ehn, and Bonnie Marranca,”Art as Spiritual Practice,” 28
video recordings that she was creating. Rather, she waited until after his death to begin viewing them in order to be able to reexperience her father’s last years.144

Though the framework for the original, personal Dad Art performance – Montano’s father’s illness and Montano’s acts of caregiving – have disappeared through death, the opportunity for the work to change remains active. Montano is able to recreate the emotional circumstances of caregiving through the structures of the public Dad Art performances. These emotional circumstances are the ones that she sought to distance herself from, through the use of video recording, at the time that they occurred. It is the ultimate show of regeneration and expansion in art: to acknowledge and experience death, and continue.

**Labor and Self Through Grief**

Through her career, Montano has previously shown a focus on creating artworks that delve into and expand on the processes of everyday life. However, Dad Art is the most radical of these Art / Life works. Within this work, Montano not only positions interactivity, spontaneity, and collaboration as the central structure of the work. Rather, she also makes the major argument that even the mundane acts of repetitive caregiving are art. This echoes the work of performance artist Mierle Laderman Ukeles, whose “Maintenance Art Manifesto” (1969) asserts that modernity and progress are dependent on acts of mundane labor.145 Ukeles then proceeded to create artworks that consisted of her acts of household labor, such as Maintenance Art Tasks (1973), which consisted of photographs of Ukeles doing day-to-day activities such taking care of her children or folding laundry. Just as Ukeles decided to publicly exhibit her acts of maintenance as art, Montano decides to conceptualize the labor of caretaking as an artistic

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144 [https://lindamarymontano.blogspot.com/2012/05/linda-montanoeventsperformancesworkshop.html](https://lindamarymontano.blogspot.com/2012/05/linda-montanoeventsperformancesworkshop.html)
intervention. By following in this tradition of framing labor as art, Montano frames her own, more untraditional labor, as an inextricably feminist performance.

Though scholars, such as Hiʻilei Julia Kawehipuaakahaopulani Hobart and Tamara Knees, have highlighted care as a means for radical survival, Montano shies away from considering her labor as part of a strategy of political action. She does not position care as praxis or as radical act, nor is her care and labor centered on herself. Significantly, she is engaging in a strategy of combining her traditional labor – art – with a more untraditional or neglected form of labor – social care – in a public context. This results in a public recognition of her labor, such as that which Hobart and Knees argue for when they claim publicly visible labor is part of collective action.

These contexts of labor and care become even more groundbreaking when considering the original context of Dad Art before her father’s stroke. The initial intention for the work was simply to create a study of how Montano and her father performed their individual roles in relation to one another. The performance shifted significantly after the stroke, but the focus on exploring personal actions as artistic at the very moment that they occurred remained. In other words, Dad Art is perpetually spontaneous and unstructured, whether considering the initial interactions between Montano and her father or the later performances with public audiences. The shifting focuses and volatile structures of the performance radically showcase the flexibility and spontaneity of performance action.

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In previous Art / Life performances, like *Seven Years of Living Art* or Montano’s Bob Dylan and Mother Teresa performances, Montano’s performative focus was guided through certain structural limitations and regulations enforced by the performance space. For example, the structure of *Seven Years of Living Art* imposed strict boundaries on Montano’s daily actions by forcing her to spend time each day dressed in a color and sitting in a specific room while listening to a singular tone. Similarly, Montano’s Bob Dylan and Mother Teresa performances require Montano to dress up as the aforementioned individuals and interact with public spaces and individuals in the guise of these new identities.

However, *Dad Art* is unique because it does not contain a specific limitational guide for how it was originally performed. In other words, the only actions that were necessary for the piece were simply the day-to-day interactions between Montano, her father, and the caregivers. There are no required activities other than what is necessary in Montano’s father’s care, thus imbuing the piece with a sense of mundanity and personal significance.

Montano has argued, in her personal writings, that Living Art or Art / Life can simply be based upon a personal and private contract that an artist creates for themselves.¹⁴⁹ In other words, all that is needed for a performance is the internalized knowledge by an artist that they intend to create art. Though the artist may enforce specific requirements, as Montano did with *Seven Years of Living Art*, Montano contends that separating a certain period of time and naming it artistic, through “purpose and intent,” creates Living Art.¹⁵⁰ She clearly believes that Art / Life can be privately oriented, but encourages artists to create documentation in ways that feel naturally corresponding to the performance.¹⁵¹

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¹⁵⁰ Linda Montano, “Living Art.”
¹⁵¹ Linda Montano, “Living Art.”
Interestingly, the documentary and structural uniqueness of *Dad Art*, though related to feminist performance, functions as a reversal of the structures of previous interventions in this genre. For example, Ukeles’s *Maintenance Art Performances* (1973) is able to make the traditionally private processes of women’s domestic labor public.\(^{152}\) By positioning maintenance work as that which “sustains the change,” Ukeles prioritizes the role of these actions and emphasizes their essential qualities.\(^{153}\) Her performance, alongside her earlier manifesto, creates the opportunity for Ukeles to frame daily, mundane tasks of maintenance as part of her artistic projects. Ukeles seeks to appropriate the structures of public labor and alter them by making the traditionally private highly visible.

Conversely, Montano’s labor is almost entirely private. Even though the public performances of *Dad Art* rely on audiences, the initial and private performance is private, personal, and unrecoverable. Furthermore, even within public performances, the focus is not on Montano’s acts of caregiving. Rather, these performances center the experience of death and grief, as opposed to centering Montano’s labor and maintenance. The video shown during *Dad Art* performances, for instance, contains images from Montano’s father’s illness but notably does not focus on the specific acts of caregiving. Though Montano’s own philosophy centralizes how the mundane and routine processes of daily life can become artistic, she makes a conscious choice to let the mundane remain in the realm of the private.

Thus, when Montano re-performs *Dad Art*, the effect is to consistently present a liminoid identity. In the performance, she relives the process of her father dying and reoccupies a space of grief. The structures of rites of passage are present throughout the performance,

\(^{152}\) Molesworth, “House Work and Art Work,” 82.

emphasizing how Montano and her audiences are transformed. For example, the separation stage, where Montano begins the process of transformation by disconnecting from her social identities, begins when the audience and Montano unite in the exhibition space. The transformation (or liminal / liminoid stage) is present throughout the entire performance: when audiences watch the video, interact with stations, and listen to Montano singing, they are witnessing her changes in identity. Finally, after the video ends with images from the funeral and the letters to death are read and burned, Montano and her audience become aggregate back into external social processes through the ritual procession and closing ceremony. Each time Dad Art is performed, Montano re-becomes a grieving daughter and the keeper of her father’s memories. She mediates the audience’s acts of witnessing and asks them to accompany her in the process of mourning.

Even though audiences are present within this rite of passage, the performance remains liminoid. A liminal transition implies public, societal acknowledgement of the change in identity. Here, the transition is purely liminoid because is limited to an audience that understands Montano’s passage is restricted to the duration of the performance. The rite of passage is limited to each spontaneous and individual audience. Additionally, the performance does not genuinely affect Montano’s identities outside of the artistic space. Montano has completed her formal transitions – in this case, the transitions of losing her father – before the performance. However, this transition becomes relivable and tangible in the performance space. Additionally, her transition of grief is open-ended and incomplete throughout both the performance and her day-to-day life, thus representing a uniquely liminal aspect of her work. Thus, her liminoid transition of the act of witnessing death and her liminal transition of grief both comingle and coexist throughout Dad Art.
Dad Art serves is the conclusion of the concerns Montano has expressed throughout her career. Here, she frames the day-to-day as art without the need for audience reaction – a complete shift from her need to be witnessed by audiences for her endurance in her early career works, as described in Chapter One. Furthermore, it is radically Art / Life in context, highlighted by the fact that Montano did not even consider her interactions with her father as art when they began to occur.

Though Dad Art is born out of Montano’s acts of selfless labor in accompanying her father through illness, it is clear that she does not want the audience to validate or witness her labor. Similarly, she does not want societal acknowledgement of her transitions of grief. Rather, she wants the narrow observers within her performance audience to witness her grief without attempting to assist her in her healing process. Montano does not want relief from her labor and her grief; rather, she seeks solidarity. She wants this audience to share in grief with her by interacting with the tangible representations of death. By reliving and re-transitioning through grief, Montano is able to personally reconnect to the experiences of care and nurturing that are now gone. Through Dad Art, Montano addresses a wide scope of concerns she has expressed throughout her career about public visibility, the confines of the personal, and how day-to-day life can create catalytic change. Making grief public, accessible, and visible is a radical act: one Montano chooses to relive each time Dad Art is performed.
Conclusion

In this thesis, I have explored and analyzed the progression of Linda Montano’s body of work. By chronologically assessing the processes of Montano’s work, I have identified the ways in which she continuously represents herself as transitional or liminoid. Additionally, I have examined how Montano deftly engages with the structure of performance through her Art / Life practice. I have positioned the importance of spontaneity, the mundane, interactivity, and personal experience as central to how Montano carries out her artistic practice. Furthermore, I have established how Montano’s artworks are radical due to her subversion of traditional expectations for performance and her incorporation of private or unwitnessable actions within her performances.

Throughout her career, Montano has created opportunities for performance art to be able to encompass private action and personal or even secretive actions. One could perceive Montano’s work as a logical conclusion of Goffman’s assertion performativity’s presence in each aspect of everyday life. However, where Goffman argues for a study of daily and non-structured performances initiated by individuals who, consciously or subconsciously, seek to influence others’ perceptions within the structures of day-to-day life, Montano’s performances make day-to-day life an artistic project. In other words, Goffman argues that performance is an inextricable part of daily life, while Montano’s performances make the case that life itself can become performance. While Goffman’s focus is on performance as a necessary facet for the navigation of life and social mores, Montano’s use of performance is revelatory because artwork is not positioned as a mechanism for survival. Rather, experiencing life as art and art as life, as

Montano has done, results in a philosophy that prioritizes the ways in which the mundane can be elevated towards sacrality and transcendence.\textsuperscript{155}

Montano’s artwork is based precisely on making the mundane sacred. This is exemplified by her use of ritualized behavior, the recurring motifs of Catholicism (such as her repeated references to nunhood) and Eastern spiritual beliefs (most exemplified by the use of chakras as guiding forces in \textit{Seven Years of Living Art} but present in almost every work created thereafter), and her focus on transforming situations and experiences that she has lived through into part of her artworks. Whether through her consistent interventions in performance or through her use of video media, Montano has often looked towards her own life as the inspiration for her artistic interventions.

This focus was epitomized by \textit{Dad Art}, which was not only based on her experiences but framed her life, at the moments at which it occurred, as inherently artistic. \textit{Dad Art} functions as a natural conclusion to Montano’s artistic ethos, and as such includes elements which elevate or exaggerate her previous central themes. For example, Montano includes clear references to moments that are unknowable and unobservable for the audience, such as her father’s death, which furthers the link between the private or personal and the artistic in her work. Furthermore, she deeply ritualizes the performance space by engaging with repetitive moments of clear transition, which are markedly announced in the work.

The use of ritual as an element of her artwork is why it is significant to define Montano as liminoid. She does not simply present a ritualized façade in order to aestheticize or complement her work. Rather, she meaningfully interacts with rites of passage in order to attempt to understand and analyze her own past. Particularly interesting is her focus on the

\textsuperscript{155} Linda Montano, Interview with the author.
transitionary moments that mark a new stage in her life, such as leaving the convent due to a battle with anorexia, her husband’s death, or her father’s long illness. However, as I have shown throughout this thesis, Montano’s transitions cannot be defined as liminal.

Though she often focuses on reframing the moments in which her life has changed as part of her artwork, these transitions are limited her audiences. There is no overarching social structure that Montano is affecting with her performances, and her interventions are restricted to her interactions with her audiences. She focuses on creating personally significant moments of transition that may not hold value when the performative action has concluded. In other words, her transitions typically have no bearing on how she or her identities are perceived once she has left the space of the performance. Thus, she is clearly engaging with the frameworks of liminoid behavior as defined by Turner.

Scholars such as Kim Skjoldager-Nielsen and Joshua Edelman have argued that there are no concrete “analytical benefits” to evaluating any given artwork as representative of the liminoid. I refute this, by emphasizing that although the liminoid may not create societal impacts in the same ways as the liminal, its effects remain powerful within the specific context of an art-world community. Montano’s performances may be geared towards and around her own personal experiences, but they affect the status of performance by carving out new directions and potentialities for performativity.

Theories of liminality focus on transitions that create significant social and personal change. When Montano embraces and employs the liminal, she engages in the same structures as traditional rites of passage. The crucial point of difference is the limited effect of these liminal moments. Montano’s purposefully limited rites of passage continue to create valuable points of

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study, regardless of their narrow societal influence, because they are significant to the study of performance. By allowing performance to stand as a proxy or even become intertwined with life, the possibilities of the liminoid become expansive and impactful.

However, these possibilities are precisely what this thesis has left unexplored. The link between Art / Life and liminality or the liminoid is a significant direction for further research of Montano’s artwork, beyond the examples I have provided here. Because of her melding of art and life, and the emphatic lack of distinction between the two present in her later work, her work is capable of establishing a turning point in the study of liminality. Though Turner has implied that art and leisure are almost always liminoid, due to their limited impacts, work like Montano’s shows that opportunities for social interaction between art and life are burgeoning.

I have also left affect untouched throughout this thesis, but it is clearly a crucial component of Montano’s work. Her unequivocal focus on moments of deep personal loss and trauma guides much of her work throughout her career. By using moments of illness, pain, confusion, and death as cornerstones of her work, Montano clearly asserts the significance of these events on the structures of her life. Loss is present in her work to an enormous magnitude, and many of the transitional moments shown in her artwork grapple with how to endure and grieve. Rupture of tradition or normativity is a main focus of rites of passages, and this focus on her own personal transitional moments can easily be linked towards liminoid action as well.

Additionally, I have not fully expanded on how Montano’s work links to feminist art of the 1960s and 1970s. Though Montano’s initial interventions as an artist were in this time-period, she shows a distinct focus on the personal that places her at odds with other artists at the time. Montano never attempts to seek out or position her work around political analysis, and as such Montano does not fully engage with feminist performance of the 1960s and 1970s. Except
for *Anorexia Nervosa*, her artwork is focused on internal processes and personal interventions. Therefore, she does not fully engage with a dismantling or an analysis of how her identity as a woman has impacted the ways in which she navigates the world, which is a focal point for many feminist artists at the time.

Though Montano’s work has focused on similar concerns throughout her career, there are many unanswered questions regarding the direction of her work, the analytical and scholarly frameworks from which scholars should consider her artwork in order for full analysis, and the paths and potentialities for performance art that Montano’s practice has illuminated. Her focuses on audience, suffering, endurance, ritual, and the elevation of the mundane contain significant parallels to the direction of recent performances. Thus, though Montano remains a relatively understudied artist, her performances have been pivotal in the evolution of the field of performance.

I close by considering new directions regarding what the future of both ritual performance analysis and studies of Montano’s work will look like. Her work brings forth rich questions, particularly regarding the state of performance in a world where the mundane is able to become art. In what ways does this connection of the mundane to the artistic create opportunities for art history to shift towards a study of personal histories? Can ritual and identity become standard points of focus when considering performance as a field? Perhaps most importantly, what does it look like when art and life are no longer separate, but seek to become united ways of personal expression and social navigation?
Bibliography


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“Linda Mary Montano,” Clara: Database of Women Artists, last modified
Appendix 1: Images

Figure 1: Linda Montano. *Seven Years of Living Art 1984-1991* (Mercer Street Window, New Museum, New York,) 1984.

Figure 2: Linda Montano. *Anorexia Nervosa*, 1981. Video performance.
Figure 3: Linda Montano. *Anorexia Nervosa*, 1981. Video performance.

Figure 4: Linda Montano. *Anorexia Nervosa*, 1981. Video performance.

Figure 7: Linda Montano. *Seven Spiritual Lives of Linda Montano*, 1996. Video performance.

Figure 8: Linda Montano. *Seven Spiritual Lives of Linda Montano*, 1996. Video performance.

Figure 11: Linda Montano. *Dad Art*, 2018. Performance.

Figure 12: Linda Montano. *Dad Art*, 2018. Performance.
Figure 13: Linda Montano. *Dad Art*, 2018. Performance.