ABSTRACT

BLEEDING WARRIOR:
VIENNESE ACTIONISM, BODY AND MASCULINITY

Ulla Angkjær Jørgensen, University of Aarhus, Denmark

Presented at Gender and Power in the New Europe
5th European Feminist Research Conference
20 – 24 August 2003, Lund University, Sweden

In an analysis that uses both aesthetic and culture theoretical arguments, this paper discusses the Austrian artist Günter Brus’ radical body actions of the 1960s as indications of a masculinity-project. The paper argues that Brus’ expressionist and dynamic body actions, which are usually read as neo-avant-garde scandal seeking happenings at the edge of a bourgeois society, may point to more profound culturally significant implications of body and even gender. The analysis interprets the skin as metaphor for a masculine shield that Günter Brus seeks to break in his actions. Finally, the male body is discussed in light of the latest research on masculinity.