Taking the works of Yayoi Kusama as a case, and using affect as a theoretical lens, the article presents an affective performative analysis of Yayoi Kusama’s *Accumulation Sculptures* (1962). By shifting the discourse of participation away from ‘active participation’ it focuses on the ability of art to create participatory objects that enable a mode of undirected participation.

The active participation of the public is seen by many museums as a means to create a democratic platform with and for all, which can build bridges between different social groups and give them a voice. Well-intentioned participatory projects, however, often end with the visitor being cast in the role of the ‘good’ citizen in a democratic game, the rules of which are established in advance. Critics call this approach to such projects ‘interactive’ and not actually participatory, since it is not possible for the participants to question or change the rules of the game itself. They argue that for participatory strategies to make a difference, i.e. have a political impact, they should not only analyse established social values and knowledge, but also have the potential to transform them.

In this article I aim to analyse a series of artworks entitled *Accumulation*...
Sculptures (1962) by the Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama (b. 1929), viewing them as ‘participatory objects’ that enable a social and material form of audience participation. I draw inspiration from the sociologists Noortje Marres and Javier Lezaun’s theory that not only subjects, but also the everyday objects and materials we surround ourselves with have political potential, because they participate actively in the formation of political collectives or communities. I argue that Kusama’s Accumulation Sculptures can similarly be seen as participatory objects, since they set the stage for a sensory participation in art that can create connections here-and-now among the audience.

My analysis of Accumulation Sculptures draws on Kusama’s own curatorial experiments in the 1960s, when she used her studio in New York to exhibit her sculptures and installations. In Kusama’s curatorial experiments, the works were not exhibited as autonomous art objects representing a specific artistic value or intention. The accumulations were instead arranged as a collection of participatory objects that with a political force of their own were capable of bringing the audience together in a shared, affective art experience.

Theoretically the article is based on the performative aspect of the art exhibition in the sense of ”the work that exhibitions themselves do, on and through audiences.” My main focus is on understanding how an artwork in an exhibition context can be framed as an object with a material agency of its own that can work in this way. I will therefore analyse Kusama’s Accumulation Sculptures as what the political theorist Jane Bennett calls ”vibrant things with a certain effectivity of their own.”

In her political philosophy, Bennett uses the concept of ‘thing-power’ to redefine the relationship between nature and culture, and between humans and their environment, i.e. the materiality surrounding them. Materiality cannot be understood as a passive, manipulable, neutral entity, as in poststructuralist theory, where discourse alone is seen as being active in creating the framework for the generation of meaning. Humans and materiality, human and non-human bodies, are fundamentally entangled in a shared, ontological network structure, and therefore exist in a mutual, constituent relationship. I see Kusama’s sculptures as material objects that actively intervene in the world of things, in the social and political
everyday materiality that people are part of. I will use Jane Bennett’s concept of ‘thing-power’ to analyse how Kusama’s Accumulation Sculptures are shaped by this material force and are capable of converting traditional power and knowledge structures into a social space for collective experience and alternative knowledge production. The sociologist Bruno Latour also considers society to be constituted by more than people and their actions. Objects also can act on and react to other things, people, spaces and situations: ”They too act, they too do things, they too make you do things.” Latour’s theory on the social and political agency of objects, which Jane Bennett’s neomaterialist theory also draws on, is used in this analysis to clarify the political potential I consider Kusama’s participatory projects and exhibition environments to possess. Here the point of the article is that her accumulated sculptures anchor the viewer in a ‘potential space’ where the boundaries between subject and object and body and things is blurred, and where the individual has the opportunity to renegotiate their position in the world. Here I draw inspiration from the art historian Jo Applin’s analysis of Kusama’s installation *Infinity Mirror Room – Phalli’s Field* from 1965, which Applin sees as creating ”a ’potential space’ in which viewers, as subjects, experimented with new modes of being and living.”

I see Kusama’s accumulated objects and exhibition environments as creating similar, potential spaces, which open up for alternative ways to be engaged and be together in the public realm. The audience’s participation in an art exhibition can take cognitive, linguistic, affective and bodily forms. Most exhibitions prioritise the written and spoken word in didactic communication with their audience. All forms of participation, however, have a material or sensory dimension that is not about communicating institutional knowledge or a pre-established social opinion to the audience. Methodologically, I use the analysis to project a so-called ‘participatory gaze’ on Kusama’s works that both involves and risks the body and the social space the viewer shares with the work, as well as with other viewers.

The article refers to the exhibition *Yayoi Kusama - In Infinity*, which was shown at Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Denmark in 2015. This was the first time I experienced Kusama’s art. In the exhibition cata-
logue, the curator of the exhibition Marie Laurberg writes in her essay ‘Deep Surfaces’ that: ”Kusama’s art practice from the 1960s to the present cultivates an aesthetic revolving around the affective.” Laurberg uses the concept of affect to ”illuminate the intensification of the relationship between the works’ emotionally charged surfaces and the viewer’s body that distinguishes her art.”

This article is not an analysis of the exhibition and its thematic focus on Kusama’s affective aesthetics as such, being based instead on Kusama’s accumulated sculptures and environments from the 1960s in order to address their affective capacity to gather diverse objects, materials and bodies in a collective environment that can act with a political agency of its own.

**Kusama’s Accumulation Sculptures**

Yayoi Kusama is a Japanese artist and author born in 1929 and based in Tokyo. During her long-standing career in both Japan and New York she has worked in numerous media, including painting, film, photography, sculpture, literature, performance and installation art.

Kusama’s *Accumulation Sculptures* (also called Aggregations), the earliest of which is from 1962, consist of a series of sculptures where commonplace, everyday objects (found on the streets of New York) are covered with hundreds of stuffed, hand-sewn, white fabric phalluses, some small and thick, others firm and long or bent. These soft, flexible fabric penises grow and spread in clusters like fungus growths on the hard surfaces of a ladder, an ironing board, an armchair and a sofa, etc.

In these sculptures, the otherwise powerful, phallic form seems empty of content, appearing almost like living, organic material. According to the art critic Chris Kraus, Kusama incorporates the psychoanalytical and gender-political discourses of the 1960s in these works as if they were a material – a piece of fabric or a lump of clay that can be modelled, divided and folded ad infinitum. In this way – according to Kraus – Kusama gives physical form to a critical investigation of society’s psychosocial discourses and structures, which Kusama feels limit the social and sexual lives of women. It is, in other words, the cultural and gender-political representations of the material body as a passive, dead and manipulable object able to be controlled, sold and consumed that is sub-
ject to critique here. It is, however, important to note that the repetition and accumulation of the phallic form also gives the works an ambiguous sense of embodiment, which makes them appear as both dead and living objects that can fascinate and repel, join and divide, as both organic and natural objects and inorganic and synthetic objects, as soft (feminine) and hard (masculine), as homogenous and heterogeneous.

In the exhibition *Yayoi Kusama – In Infinity* at Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, a selection of the accumulation sculptures were arranged on a round white platform in the middle of the gallery. The surfaces of the sculptural objects extended three-dimensionally into the space like arms that would grab you if you got too close. The installation of the objects on this elevated platform invited the audience to move around the works and view them from different angles. In this way, the curatorial framing sets the stage for a visual meeting between the audience and the work, where the focus was on the physical experience and visual decoding of the objects’ aesthetic forms and possible meanings. But the objects themselves seemed to want to activate the viewer’s sense of touch, thus shift-
ing attention from what the works meant to how they would be to touch, and how it would feel to move in the social space they seemed to create together. Since the works could not be touched, and visitors were not allowed to step onto the platform and move among them, we can only imagine how it would feel to physically sit in the chair and run our hands over the furniture. The curatorial framing of the works set the stage for the representation of tactile contact, i.e. an imagined sensing and experience of how the objects affective materiality would feel against the skin, and what effect this physical sensation would have on our bodies, thoughts and emotions.

’Affect’ is a concept that comes from the Latin term affectus, meaning passion or emotion. Since the mid 1990s, affect theory has been a central and much-discussed area of research in many fields of art and culture. Today scholars in disciplines like museology and curatorial studies are interested in understanding how art (exhibitions) can produce and circulate affect through the interaction of works, people and spaces, and how these can be analysed. Spinozian and Deleuzian inspired affect theory distinguish between the concepts of affect and feelings or emotions. Affect is not the same as definable feelings like happiness or sadness, which are felt and articulated by an individual. Feelings include something more than affect, since they presuppose an interpretation of an often barely perceptible bodily change. For a Deleuzian affect theorist like Brian Massumi, this distinction between affect and feelings also implies that affect has no specific content or even meaning. They are ”energetic intensities” or ”forces”, as Deleuze calls them.

Kusama’s accumulated sculptures strive to have an impact on my sensory, living body. The works’ affective capacity to create relationships and influence other objects and bodies does not, however, seem controlled by the intention to produce and circulate specific feelings, thoughts and knowledge among the participating viewers’ bodies. On the contrary, the works seem to generate effects at a more immediate and almost imperceptible level. The juxtaposition of different kinds of soft and hard forms and surfaces seems to create a form of friction or tension, or release a kind of affective energy into the space that can make other objects and bodies vibrate and engage. For Massumi, affect is linked to the small
shocks, the almost imperceptible small changes that occur in our bodies when we are confronted by our social and material surroundings:

”Affect is for me inseparable from the concept of shock. It doesn’t have to be a drama. It’s really more about micro-shocks, the kind that populate every moment of our lives. For example a change in focus, or a rustle at the periphery of vision that draws the gaze towards it. In every shift of attention, there is an interruption, a momentary cut in the mode of onward deployment of life.”

Affect is thus best defined as a biological or physical change in the body, a vague or indefinable bodily shift that can feel like trembling excitement for one person and uneasiness for someone else. A group of people can therefore have a shared affective experience of something like an artwork, but the experience can generate many different feelings and thoughts. Van Alphen explains:

“As Affects can arise within a person but they can also come from without. They can be transmitted by the presence of another person, but also by an artwork or a (literary) text. They come from an interaction with objects, an environment, or other people. Because of its origin in interaction, one can say that the transmission of affect is social in origin, but biological and physical in effect.”

As Van Alphen emphasises, affects – unlike feelings – do not belong solely to the subject, because they arise in social interaction or friction with an artwork, other people or environments. Which is why I do not see Kusama’s affective artworks as psychosomatic expressions of the artist’s personal traumas, feelings or thoughts, an interpretation suggested by many art critics, curators and Kusama herself: ”I began making penises in order to heal my feelings of disgust towards sex. […] It was a kind of self-therapy.”

I consider Kusama’s use of psychoanalytic discourse as a more or less conscious attempt by the artist to thematise a powerful discourse’s ability to (per)form the experiential material it tries to explain.

The coupling of different objects and materials in the accumulation
sculptures represents an attempt to establish a new affective connection between the audience and the world of things, i.e. the physical world that surrounds us. The works make visible that in this sensory tension things are given a life of their own, an affective agency, which whilst it may not change the body of the audience can set it in motion. In this way, Kusama’s affective objects – curatorial framing permitting – can activate and mobilise the audience to participate, i.e. sense, feel, think and act in the exhibition space as social agents on an equal footing with the exhibited art objects.  

The sculptural objects thus have their own material-affective agency, which has the potential to generate physical changes in viewers and set bodies, feelings and thoughts in motion. The objects can produce such affects and effects, not because they are endowed with any specific intention, spirit or meaning, but because as Jane Bennett writes ”they are alive in their complex relationships, entanglements” with other objects and bodies. Their ’thing-power’ consists precisely of ”the curious ability [...] to animate, to act, to produce effects dramatic and subtle” in the objects and bodies they interact with.  

The accumulation sculptures therefore stand as assemblage works, where the body is connected to a ‘thingness’, and the ‘thing’ with a sense of embodiment. On the round platform at Louisiana Museum of Modern Art the sculptures were grouped so as to make it clear that the body and the thing are connected in a shared ‘vibrating’ materiality that seems to grow and extend with its own unpredictable and uncontrollable energy.  

Affective Bodies  
Throughout the 1960s, Kusama continued to cover found objects like high-heeled shoes, an armchair, dresses, a boat and a shop dummy with hand-sewn phallic forms, plastic flowers or macaroni. Here Bruno Latour’s concept of the body is an interesting angle to explore what kind of body/embodiment is (per)formed in Kusama’s accumulation sculptures. Latour is less interested in defining what a body ‘is’ (e.g. biologically or physically), than how a body emerges in interaction with the world and is thereby “moved into action”. He describes the body as ”an interface that be-
comes more and more describable as it learns to be affected by more and more elements.”

Usefully in the context of Kusama’s sculptures, he understands the living, sensing body as an accumulation or the accumulated effect of numerous large and small affective encounters or clashes between the human and non-human ‘bodies’ that fill our everyday lives. In this sense, the body emerges in an infinite, accumulative process of affects and effects. As he writes: “to have a body is to learn to be affected, meaning ‘effectuated’, moved, put into motion by other entities, humans or non-humans. If you are not engaged in this learning, you become insensitive, dumb, you drop dead.”

Kusama’s Accumulation Sculptures are also not formed as autonomous, self-constituted objects subject to the distant gaze of the viewer, but vibrate in the room as almost human, affective ‘bodies’ – open, amassed and receptive to the affective gaze of other bodies. Jane Bennett, drawing on the work of the philosopher Baruch Spinoza, defines this affective body as a social body “in the sense that each is, by its very nature as a body, continuously affecting and being affected by other bodies.” These thoughts are also reflected in some receptions of Kusama’s practice. Marie Laurberg writes that Kusama’s Accumulation Sculptures transform ”the surface of the objects into an erotically loaded “skin” that meets us in the space, as a body. It is in the play between this body and ours that meaning emerges.” The art historian Jo Applin also identifies this almost erotic desire in Kusama’s art to – momentarily – merge with unfamiliar bodies and become one with the material world surrounding them: ”A moment of unity, of coming together and blending with other bodies and the surrounding environment.” In other words, the works materialise a longing to create a social space where new connections between the subject and the material environment – the world of things – is made possible.

**The Exhibition as a Participatory Environment**

From the mid 1960s Yayoi Kusama started to use exhibition spaces – often her studio in New York – to create experimental and immersive spatial ‘environments’, as she called them. It was in these exhibitions
that she started to stage the works as objects that create a social situation the viewer can participate in. In a 1962 interview, she no longer identifies as a painter but as an ’environmental sculptor’, i.e. an artist whose works include and shape the physical space that surrounds us in an exhibition. In her studio she created an exhibition situation where her accumulation sculptures were gathered in a cluster, a densely packed assemblage, which in contrast to the display at Louisiana Museum of Modern Art physically showed how the active materiality of the works extended into the exhibition space, which became a complex, enveloping, sensory space for the shared bodily and social actions of the artist and the audience. The sculptures’ sculpting of the exhibition space as a performative zone for bodily and social action was entirely absent from the museum’s mounting of the works, where the exhibition space remained a traditional, modernist white cube in which the work and the viewer had separate social and material lives.

In the photograph from her studio, Kusama also dramatizes her own artist’s role as an anonymous, insignificant bodily figure, which with no conceptual distance intervenes in and virtually merges with the rampant exhibition environment. Through this curatorial framing, Kusama puts the status of the artist as a powerful subject on the line. Here, in

the midst of the installation, she peeps out as the figure of an artist who stands neither above nor beyond the physical world of objects she has created. She is apparently without complete control of the living materiality that surrounds her and that she apparently consists of herself. The body of the artist appears on the one hand to be naturally connected to and ‘at home’ among the protrusions and proliferations of the exhibition environment, but on the other strangely trapped or confined. Kusama’s blank expression in the middle of the installation encourages me as a viewer to take her place or enter the material assemblage on the same terms as the artist. As a viewer, however, it can be difficult – visually – to find your bearings in the overcrowded exhibition space and identify where the human subject begins and the almost human objects end. Kusama’s curatorial staging creates a participatory environment that should ideally be experienced from within. The material objects’ vibrating surfaces call for a subject that is capable of letting their body sink into, be immersed by, touched by and moved by the shared, vibrating materiality of the works and the space. In other words, Kusama’s curatorial framing opens up for a direct and immediate physical experience of being intimately connected to and anchored in the exhibition space – as an object among other objects. Kusama’s accumulations of things and materials facilitate a bodily sense of no longer being at a distance to the world of things, but of instead being both captured and strangely energised or empowered by the vital energy of things. Here it becomes clear that the affective art object has the social energy to establish an open and dynamic network, a social web where different elements can enter, merge and shift in an increasing number of material connections. When, as here, the objects are arranged in groups, it becomes clear that their compound materiality also sparks a new social (dis)order or infrastructure in the exhibition space, because in their affective encounter with the works, the audience are also given an opportunity to experience how each of them is already entangled in the social community or collective of affective bodies established by the exhibition.

In this kind of performative exhibition situation, where new social relationships between the work, the body and the space are established, what Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel call ”a field of enactment” is constructed,
in which not only human bodies but also material objects can act and interact as social agents: “the things themselves are also actors for action. The object options and objects fields serve as the medium for actions. Art as a social construct helps construct the social.”

Kusama’s material objects construct a social space where the traditional relationship between an active subject and passive object is replaced by a new material reality where the subject and object are experienced as different bodies interwoven in one, boundless, ontological ‘flesh’ – what Bennet calls ”a dense network of relations […] a web of vibrant matter.”

The Affective Gaze

In another photograph of Kusama in her studio, she nestles in the sculpture *My Flower Bed* (1962). Wearing matching clothes, she lies in the red heart of the sculpture, allowing herself to be enveloped by the work, safe like a foetus in its womb. Yet at the same time, the sculpture rises threateningly above Kusama, like a flesh-eating plant in the process of devouring her. Kusama thus inserts the female (artist’s) body as an almost organic part of the carnal body of the work, and here too performs the sculpture as a social event where the boundaries between the body and the thing, between the person and the material environment, almost dissolve. In this photograph Kusama performs the sculpture as a ‘participatory object’, and in doing so challenges the audience to enter a similar performative exchange with the materiality of the work, opening their bodies to its affective force and form.

In the photograph, the work is framed by the artist-performer

directing a detached yet intense gaze at the viewer. It is a gaze devoid of any illusion of psychological content that the viewer can immerse themselves in or identify with – “I am here – but nothing” to use the title of another of her works. In a way, it is only the work that looks back in an empty gesture that corroborates the material reciprocity the work assumes between the subject and the object, between the one looking and the one being looked at. In this way, the artist’s calm gaze mediates the dream of carnal unity between body and thing, the self and the other, the subject and the object. Kusama performs the dream of the affective encounter in which the artist and the viewer meet as equals who are born and die, appear and disappear as subject and object before each other’s gaze.

In Kusama’s curatorial framing, works like Accumulation Sculptures and My Flower Bed are presented as objects that mediate what the cultural analyst Mieke Bal calls ‘the participatory look’. Bal describes the participatory look as a ‘democratic’ look involving and risking the body and the social space two people or a person and an object share. In Kusama’s own framing, the viewer’s (in my case, the interpreter’s) distant and rational gaze is replaced by a participatory look in which the body has to be involved to feel the affective force of the work. My material body has to be involved to become what Jane Bennett calls ”caught up in it” and become part of the work’s vibrating, carnal materiality – on the same terms as the artist. Kusama’s affective works thwart the analytical gaze through the lack of objective knowledge and subsequent lack of control over the object of its analysis. The gaze is blurred and unfocused, and fails to reveal any clear-cut meaning that can confirm what I already know or think about the artist as a person, for example. It is an affective gaze that in a way disturbs or distorts the picture of what I think I see and know about the world.

Affective Forms of Knowledge
Kusama’s participatory exhibitions construct a social and material environment that can seem intimate or unfamiliar, safe or disturbing – or both at once. The affective encounter with the works does not appear as a meeting with the intention of generating specific, identifiable
feelings and thoughts for the individual subject, but rather as striving to bring the audience together in a shared art experience that each of them might feel and think very differently about. In doing so, the works construct – to the extent that we have access to them – a democratic space open to everyone to sense, feel, think and act within. Kusama’s New York studio represented the ideal setting for the formation of such an alternative social environment, since as a physical place it was both public and private. It is as if Kusama’s staged ‘environments’ manage to break down the inner infrastructure of both private and public space, creating instead a collective site for experiences where the inner and the outer, the singular and the common, the affective and the discursive, the personal and the social, are juxtaposed as two active materialities that interact with each other and mutually (per)form each other.

This could be described as a potential arena of experience and knowledge where we can sense what we cannot yet imagine, and experience what we do not yet know. Van Alphen sees affects as opening precisely this virtual space for “the not yet known.” In this sense, affectivity can be seen as a non-conscious and bodily way of knowing what can still only be sensed or felt. As Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth write: “Affect […] is the name we give to those forces – visceral forces beneath, alongside, or generally other than conscious knowing.”

The proliferation of the material phallus form, which threatens to spread and cover every surface of Kusama’s accumulation sculptures and exhibition environments, creates an infinite space for experience and insight where social meaning is not yet readable, but only sensed in its fluctuating, unpredictable material form. Kusama’s accumulated works and environments therefore challenge me as an interpreter, alongside the other participants, to dare to enter and lose myself in this ‘virtual’ realm of knowledge and feel how the affective force of art can shake the epistemological foundations beneath my feet. The meaning of Kusama’s affective works should, as I see it, remain a potent and indomitable material energy, the affects and effects of which might well accumulate in my body, but which cannot be represented – also not in an analysis like this.
Exit

Kusama’s participatory objects and environments thus invite social and material audience participation, but without dictating how we as participants should experience, feel, think and act. In other words, the accumulation sculptures create the setting for a form of audience participation, which with a term used by Irit Rogoff and Florian Schneider is ‘undirected’, i.e. without artistic or curatorial control or social rules to be adhered to. On the contrary, in the affective encounter with Kusama’s objects and installations, the subject is on shaky ground and has to renegotiate the relationship to themselves and their surroundings.

In his essay on Kusama’s art ‘Love Forever’, the art critic Olivier Zahm writes that the affective meeting between the work and the viewer is not an erotic encounter in which 1+1 equals 2, but a meeting where 1+1 equals many: ”the Deleuzian artist made the ’I’ flee, exploding into a cloud of coloured dots,” as he writes. For Kusama, the affective art experience provides an opportunity to momentarily sense how the individual body can connect to the world and become one material object among many, one subject among many, one polka dot that can circu-
late freely and aimlessly in an infinite multitude of teeming polka dots. In the installation *Obliteration Room*, the audience are encouraged to stick coloured polka dots on the white walls and surfaces of the gallery, making the contours of the room and the objects in it disappear. The installation thus dissolves the modern white cube, transforming it into a dizzyingly boundless environment in which the established social structure of subject and object dissolves. *Obliteration Room* creates an affective environment that reaches out to viewers to unite them in a chaotic joint and self-organised movement or swarm in which the individual viewer (or polka dot) is given the opportunity to enter a multiplicity of relationships to the other viewers (and polka dots). In this affective encounter with the art object, a political situation is created in which all bodies, artists, curators, works, viewers, etc. can function and interact as social agents in the same social and material network. Kusama’s art and her curation of it possess this force to create affective alliances that can embrace different bodies, emotions and thoughts, and unite them here and now in a shared experience. In this way, art and the art exhibition have the political capacity to transform the hierarchical power and knowledge structure of the public realm, and create an alternative space where the body can be set in motion, interact and function in multiple ways.

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NOTES


5 Bennett, p. xvi.

6 Bennett, p. xvi.


9 Here I draw inspiration from the cultural theorist Mieke Bal’s concept of the participatory look: “It is a participatory look that is different from ‘participatory observation’ – the long-standing ideal of anthropology […] The difference between participatory observation and participatory seeing is […] the difference that art can make. To put it bluntly, the former remains objectifying, the participation disingenuous; the latter is self-risking.” See Mieke Bal, Endless Andness: The Politics of Abstraction According to Ann Veronica Janssens, London: Bloomsbury, 2013, p. 8.


11 Laurberg, p. 28.


14 Alphen, p. 23.

16 Van Alphen, p. 23.

17 Chris Kraus, p. 108.

18 Jane Bennett defines a social agent as “a source of action that can be either human or nonhuman, it is that which has efficacy, can do things, has sufficient coherence to make difference, produce effects, alter the course of events”, Bennett, p. viii.

19 Bennett, p. 6.

20 Bennett defines assemblages as “ad hoc groupings of diverse elements of vibrant materials of all sorts.” Bennett, p. 23.


22 Latour, p. 206.

23 Latour, p. 205.

24 Bennett, p. 21.


26 Applin, p. 66.


28 Kusama is thereby one of the first artists to work with installation as an art form, something called ‘environments’ at the time.

29 Kusama is quoted as saying: “The nets I have painted had continued to proliferate until they had spread beyond the canvas to cover tables, the floor, the chairs and the walls. The result of the unlimited development of this obsessional art was that I was able to shed my painter’s skin and metamorphose into an environmental sculptor.” See Applin, p. 33.

31  Bennett, p. 13.

32  Even though the sociologists Marres and Lezaun do not address the art object and art space in their analysis of the political agency of things, Kusama's affective art objects seem to open up for precisely this material from of participation in striving to transform the modernist white cube of the gallery into a political stage, and the passive spectator into a participant in a collective, political movement.

33  Bal, pp. 8-9.

34  Bennett, p. xv.

35  Van Alphen, p. 30.

