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Chapter 4

On the Impossibility of a Re-exhibition:

Mike Kelley's *Day Is Done*

4.0 Introduction

In 1966, American minimal artist Carl Andre exhibited his series *Equivalents I-VIII* at the Tibor de Nagy Gallery in New York (Fig. 4.1). Each *Equivalent* was made of 120 sand-lime bricks layered two deep, organized in a rectangular configuration that was a variation of the number sixty. For instance, *Equivalent VIII* was made of two layers of six bricks wide and ten bricks long, whereas *Equivalent VII* was made of two layers of six brick long and ten bricks wide. Even though arranged differently, all *Equivalents* had the same height, mass and volume. At the end of the exhibition, a collector acquired *Equivalent VII*; the other seven *Equivalents* stayed in the artist's collection, which led him to sell the remaining bricks back to the factory where he had obtained them. In 1969, a gallerist asked Andre to recreate the series *Equivalents*, with the exception of number VII. As the factory producing the sand-lime bricks had closed its doors, the artist had to use a different kind of brick: firebricks. Nowadays, if all *Equivalents* were to be exhibited together, one of them would be different from the seven others, as it is made of a different type of brick.¹ In the case of Andre's *Equivalents*, it is not necessarily their spreading to different collections that would make their re-exhibition as an ensemble impossible, or at least odd, but its material constituent. Since seven of them are now made of firebricks and one of sand-lime bricks, they are no longer equivalent in height, mass or volume. What the example also shows is that even if created in the context of a series, the *Equivalents* were considered by the artist as eight individual works of art and have been spread across different collections.

The inaugural exhibition of certain artistic projects or artworks can be done on a large scale (conceptually, physically, and/or economically), making it impossible to be sold thereafter as a whole. Consequently, a possible distribution strategy is to fragment the artwork and to make the fragments or "offspring" available on the art market as individual works of art. This is the strategy that American artist Mike Kelley has adopted for *Day Is Done*, exhibited at the Gagosian Gallery in New York in 2005. The 25 video/sculpture installations that constituted the large-scale installation *Day Is Done* were sold separately. In addition, in the years that followed the 2005 exhibition, the artist made alternative configurations of the project: a film and a book. Nowadays, the title *Day Is Done* refers to many things at once: an exhibition, a large-scale installation, a film, and a book. Moreover, *Day Is Done* is only one part of an ongoing project that the artist began at the end of the 1990s entitled the *Extracurricular Activity Projective Reconstruction (EAPR)* series. This series is developing in

¹ On this matter, see Martha Buskirk, *The Contingent Object of Contemporary Art* (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 2003), 30-31.

a very organic way and the great number and variety of offspring make its presentation, distribution and preservation particularly challenging. The present chapter focuses on the socialization of *Day Is Done* in particular, but nevertheless relates it to the *EAPR* series when necessary.

In the preceding chapter, the scripting of Douglas Gordon's *Play Dead; Real Time* focused on its re-exhibitions because it was mainly during those instances that the identity of the work was shaped. The scripting of *Play Dead; Real Time* involved studying one artwork that had different versions. The socialization of Mike Kelley's *Day Is Done* evolved differently because of the scale of the project and also its distribution history. The original project *Day Is Done* has by now many offspring, some of which are editioned, others not. In this chapter, I reconstruct the life cycle of *Day Is Done* and I analyze its creation, the events leading to its first manifestation, its inaugural exhibition *per se*, its fragmentation, and finally, the re-exhibition of its offspring. The *de-description* of the life cycle of *Day Is Done* helps identify the mediators that have shaped its identity. Throughout the chapter, I describe the scripting process of *Day Is Done*, which involves describing some of its offspring at some point. As the project has a great number of offspring, I could not study the socialization of each and every part. I selected a few that serve as examples.

In this chapter, I use the metaphor of a tree to describe the scripting process of *Day Is Done*. The roots of the tree are the mediators that led to the making of the work. As I will explain later, some reviews of Kelley's exhibitions of the late 1980s and early 1990s triggered the creation of an entire body of work. The trunk of the tree is the exhibition *Day Is Done* that took place at the Gagosian Gallery in 2005. Finally, the branches of the tree correspond to the moment when the scripting process was rerouted, when the offspring of *Day Is Done* were spread to different collections.

This chapter first provides background information on Mike Kelley; it discusses his exhibition practice and how he proceeds to mediate his own work (4.1). In the second section of the chapter, after explaining the background of the *EAPR* series, I begin the scripting of the first phases of the life cycle of *Day Is Done*: the pre-exhibition publications, the inaugural exhibition and the reception of that exhibition (4.2). In the third section, the fragmentation of the work and its distribution are detailed and the acquisition and re-exhibition strategies of a few private collections and public institutions are examined. This section of the chapter also shows how certain offspring of *Day Is Done* continue to relate (or do not continue to relate) to the larger body of work to which they belong (4.3). In the fourth section, alternative configurations of the project – a catalogue and a film – are studied, and their connections to

the 2005 exhibition theorized (4.4). In the conclusion of the chapter, I discuss the challenges of *de-scripting* such a large-scale project (4.5).

4.1 Mike Kelley's Artistic Practice

Prior to beginning the *de-scripting* of the life cycle of *Day Is Done*, in this first section of the chapter, I introduce Mike Kelley's artistic practice. I do so in order to demonstrate how his production is developing in a very organic way, that most of his works are created in the context of series and that some series are born of other series. The inaugural exhibitions of these series hold a special place within the artist's exhibitions, as they are large-scale and it is often the only occasion that all components of a series will be displayed together. Therefore, I propose interpreting these inaugural exhibitions as *landmark exhibitions* within Kelley's artistic production. As I will explain below, I adapted the definition of landmark exhibitions advanced by art historian Reesa Greenberg. Finally, in this section, I also deal with the texts that the artist writes to accompany most of his projects, what he himself calls his "functional writings." I analyze their purposes, as later on in the chapter, I frequently refer to the texts accompanying *Day Is Done* and reflect on their use in the scripting of this project.

Mike Kelley and his *Landmark Exhibitions*

Mike Kelley was born in Detroit, Michigan in 1956. He has been living in Los Angeles since 1976. He obtained a Bachelor in Fine Arts from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor in 1976 and a Master's in Fine Arts from the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia (Cal Arts) in 1978. At the University of Michigan, Kelley received a formalist art education, strongly influenced by abstract expressionist painter Hans Hofmann. At the California Institute of the Arts, most of Kelley's teachers were conceptual artists, such as John Baldessari, Michael Asher, Laurie Anderson, Douglas Huebler and David Askevold. Kelley therefore evolved in an artistic environment where the idea, the concept and the process prevailed over the end result (the art object). For instance, Douglas Huebler, the faculty member who was in charge of supervising Kelley more closely, was performing interventions that required a system of documentation witnessing them: photographs, maps, and drawings; all accompanied by descriptions. Huebler's *Variable Piece #46* is made of a series of sixteen black-and-white photographs and a statement – short and factual. The text informs the viewers that Huebler and Donald Burgy played a Ping Pong match on February 3, 1971; that Huebler won; that the photographs were all taken at one-minute intervals with the exception

of the one taken when the match ended; and finally, before the date and the artist's name, the following: "16 photographs, (none designated by its place in the sequential order) join with this statement to constitute the form of this piece."² Within Huebler's practice and that of many other conceptual artists, the statements did not accompany the artworks, but were an integral part of them. As I will argue below, statements and written texts have become crucial over the years in Kelley's artistic practice. Yet, there is a major difference between Kelley's statements and those of Huebler. For the latter, the statements are an integral part of the artwork, whereas for the former, they are written to accompany and to frame the reception of his artistic production. They are not a constituent part of the artwork; they are the artist's sanctioning narratives and contribute to the scripting process.

For the 1978 graduate show at Cal Arts, Kelley produced a series of birdhouse sculptures with the aim of clearing his mind. At first, he consulted how-to manuals, and after making a few, he started to make variations such as a house for a tall bird, a house for a wide bird, and a Gothic birdhouse. Kelley later stated: "I think even though the birdhouses were ridiculous they were acceptable within the terminology of the time because they were reductive, they were primary structures of a sort."³ They befitted the conceptualist aesthetic of the time. At Cal Arts, Kelley also started doing performances. His work at the graduate show caught the attention of curator Richard Armstrong, who was working back then at the La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art. Armstrong invited Kelley to present a series of performances.⁴ All of Kelley's performances were planned well in advance and based on a detailed script. The preparation of the performances also included the making of objects, which for him were "props for verbalization;" they guided the writing of the script of the performances.⁵ At the end of the 1970s and in the early 1980s, Kelley predominantly did live performances, sometimes alone, sometimes in collaboration with other artists such as Tony Oursler, Don Krieger, Jim Casebere, Michel Smith and Bob Flanagan.

In 1986, performance ceased to be Kelley's main artistic medium. Firstly, because the artist did not want to be ghettoized as a performance artist; secondly, because his performances were becoming more and more complex and were taking a very long time to

² Huebler's statement and some of the photographs of *Variable Piece #46* are reproduced in: *Origin and Destination: Alighiero e Boetti, Douglas Huebler*, ed. Marianne Van Leeuw and Anne Pontégnie (Brussels: Société des Expositions du Palais des Beaux-Arts de Bruxelles, 1998), 114-115.

³ "Mike Kelley interviewed by John Miller in Los Angeles on March 21, 1991," in *Mike Kelley*, ed. William S. Bartman and Miyoshi Barosh (New York: A.R.T. Press, 1992), 7.

⁴ The series of performances was entitled *Mike Kelley in Performance*. See Armstrong's recollection of their encounter and first collaborations in his essay "In the Beginning," in *Mike Kelley: Catholic Tastes*, ed. Elisabeth Sussman (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1993), 43-55.

⁵ "Mike Kelley interviewed by John Miller," 8.

rehearse, sometimes up to half a year; thirdly, because they were too expensive to produce; and finally, because the last project he got involved with – *Half a Man* – seemed to him that once started, could never end, because its topic, the social notions of sex, was part of the culture at large. Kelley wondered: “How do you end something that is part of the culture at large?”⁶ Instead of presenting *Half a Man* as a performance piece that would address gender and identity formation, the artist developed it over five years as a body of work comprised of a series of banners, stuffed animal works, arenas, paintings, dialogues, drawings and photographs.⁷ The last chapter of this series, entitled *Craft Morphology Flow Chart* (1991), consists of stuffed animals and dolls displayed on several tables; black-and-white photographs of each stuffed animal and doll with a ruler placed next to them to show their actual size; and a drawing of a few soft toys made by an archeological illustrator (Fig. 4.2). In this work, Kelley intended to address the pure material nature of the crafts and simultaneously used three systems of representation. First, the organization of the crafts was done by categories, according to their shape and the fabric used to make them. Second, all of the stuffed animals exhibited had been photographed next to a ruler so that viewers would know their exact measurements. Third, some of the crafts had been drawn in black-and-white in an archeological drawing style.⁸ Displayed in such fashion, the dolls recall how bodies are kept in a morgue or how archeological artifacts are shown in museums. Moreover, the precise measurements of the soft toys and the documentation of some of them through drawings also draw connections with systematic approaches practiced in the institutions mentioned above.

The development of *Half a Man* through different chapters or phases and over a certain period of time is very representative of Kelley’s artistic practice, which can be characterized as serial and polymorph. As Kelley’s artistic production develops in an organic way, some series trigger the making of new series, and most of them are also created with the means of different mediums: performances, installations, sculptures, paintings, drawings and books. The artist has the habit of first presenting his series in one of his representing galleries because he finds that he has more control over the show.⁹ It is also a manner of being responsible for their framing. The exhibition itself becomes a medium. It is, however, an irreproducible medium; the exhibition will happen only once, and at the end of it, the works on display will be sold to different collections. Also, the artist has stated that he is not

⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁷ Most of Kelley’s “arenas” are made of found stuffed animals displayed on a blanket.

⁸ Kelley has briefly written on this work in his text “In the Image of Man,” in *Carnegie International 1991*, vol. 1, ed. Lynne Cooke and Mark Francis (Pittsburg: Carnegie Museum of Art, 1991), 94.

⁹ Karsten Löckemann and Stephan Urbaschek. “A Telephone Conversation with Mike Kelley, August 2008,” in *Mike Kelley*, ed. Karsten Löckemann and Stephan Urbaschek (Munich: Sammlung Goetz, 2008), 91.

interested in spending his “life travelling around the world setting up old artworks.”¹⁰ In opposition to Douglas Gordon, who is involved in most of the re-exhibitions of his works, Kelley is greatly involved only when he presents new artworks and series. After that, he leaves it to others to display them. But when he is involved, as with Gordon, the entire exhibition becomes, in most cases, a large-scale installation.

Since the inaugural exhibitions of Kelley’s various projects imply a unique staging and are often the only occasions for viewers to see the entire series together, I suggest interpreting these exhibitions as *landmark exhibitions*. Usually, the term landmark exhibition is used to refer to exhibitions that have marked the collective memory because of their inclusions of new artistic forms, non-conventional readings, or new ways of seeing art. In the field of contemporary art, exhibitions such as *When Attitudes Become Forms* or *Les magiciens de la terre* are considered landmark exhibitions.¹¹ As art historian Reesa Greenberg contends, “We think of exhibitions as moments in time – isolated points – and refer to extraordinary exhibitions as stations or landmarks – spatio-temporal points, implying a journey where an historical path or line paused and was re-routed.”¹² Transferring this remark to a different scale, rather than applying it to the histories of exhibitions at large, apply it to the exhibition histories of one artist; in the case of Mike Kelley, I propose to use the qualification landmark exhibitions to speak of the artist’s inaugural exhibitions of his series. Indeed, since the series are displayed as a whole only once, or in some cases, travel to a few venues prior to being fragmented, Kelley’s inaugural shows are extraordinary. At the end of the exhibition, the path of a specific series is re-routed, or more precisely, the series is divided. The fragmentation of his exhibitions will be discussed further in the chapter, when I explain how it occurred with *Day Is Done*.

Framing the Reception: Mike Kelley’s “Functional” Writings

As stated above, Mike Kelley prefers presenting his series for the first time in art galleries rather than museums, as he feels that he has fewer restrictions. Rather than having to collaborate with a curator, he is free to frame his works the way he wants to. In addition to his

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 92.

¹¹ The exhibition *When Attitudes Become Form: Works, Concepts, Processes, Situations, Information* was curated by Harald Szeemann and presented in 1969 at the Kunsthalle in Bern. The exhibition revolved around artistic gestures and acknowledged the creation process as an integral part of works of art. The exhibition *Les magiciens de la terre* was curated by Jean-Hubert Martin and held at the Centre Georges Pompidou and the Grande Halle de la Villette in 1989. It was the first time in France that contemporary non-occidental art was presented.

¹² Reesa Greenberg. “Remembering Exhibitions’: From Point to Line to Web,” *Tate Papers*, issue 12 (autumn 2009), accessed July 4, 2011, <http://www.tate.org.uk/research/tateresearch/tatepapers/09autumn/greenberg.shtm>.

involvement in setting up inaugural exhibitions of his series, Kelley also produces texts to accompany his work, texts that he calls his “functional” writings, to differentiate them from his other writings on the work of other artists or the art world.¹³ Since the very beginning, Kelley has been writing statements on his work, but he has done it even more systematically as of the mid-1990s, a period during which he became increasingly dissatisfied with the reception of his work, which was interpreted biographically even though his production was not intended to be autobiographical. By putting his intentions down on paper, Kelley positions himself not only in the production, but also in the reception pole of his oeuvre, as his texts contribute to orienting and framing how his artworks will be interpreted.¹⁴ Therefore, in the scripting process, it is important to pay attention to the reviews in order to notice the similarities and discrepancies between the artist’s statements and how his works have been received. Kelley also gives public lectures and gives interviews.¹⁵ This seems to be a strategy to control the reception of the work, to counter the misinterpretation of his intentions on the part of the critics and the public. As he argues, in the preface of *Foul Perfection: Essays and Criticisms*,

The essays were not labors of love, rather they were a response to my dissatisfaction with the way my work was being written about critically. I decided I had to write about my own work if my concerns were to be properly conveyed. Also, I was not pleased with how contemporary art history was being constructed, so I felt it was my duty to raise my voice in protest and write my own version – whenever I could.¹⁶

Kelley’s functional writings are the first public instantiations of the scripts of his artworks. More precisely, they are the artist’s sanctioning narratives. They constitute the part of the script that deals with the conceptual features of the artwork. They contribute to framing the reception of his works. Kelley’s functional writings do not include *auctorial prescriptions*, i.e., instructions on how to display the work. The installation instructions are not made public, they are given to institutions who own or who will be exhibiting one of his

¹³ Mike Kelley, “Preface,” in *Minor Histories: Statements, Conversations, Proposals*, ed. John C. Welchman (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 2004), xii.

¹⁴ In his functional writings, the artist explains the conceptual origins of specific projects. Kelley’s writings have been assembled in two different books edited by John C. Welchman. *Foul Perfection* gathers Kelley’s essays and criticisms on the work of other artists and *Minor Histories: Statements, Conversations, Proposals* assembles texts on his own artistic practice along with interviews he gave.

¹⁵ See for instance the conversation between Mike Kelley and John C. Welchman at the Walker Art Center (June 2, 2005, 105 minutes), accessed July 4, 2011, <http://channel.walkerart.org/detail.wac?id=2007>; and the lecture given at the Centre Pompidou in 2006: “Vidéo et après: Mike Kelley,” (March 6, 2006, 136 minutes), accessed July 4, 2011, <http://www.cnac-gp.fr/Pompidou/WebTV.nsf/0/256050E7964BA029C1257451004DACBD?OpenDocument&sessionM=4.1&L=1>.

¹⁶ Mike Kelley, “Preface,” in *Foul Perfection: Essays and Criticism*, ed. John C. Welchman (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 2003), viii.

works. In the second chapter, I also insisted on comparing the sanctioning narratives with the artist's realizations. In this case, this would imply comparing what the artist has written on a specific project and how the project manifests itself in the exhibition space. This is a necessary step in the *de-description* of an artwork since it will expose the discrepancies (if any) between the artist's sanctioning narratives and the framing and display of the artwork.

Though Kelley's written statements are useful to understand his intentions and are one of the first physical manifestations of the artwork's script, as curator Anne Pontégnie pointed out, these statements "to some extent castrated [the artist's] critical reception."¹⁷ By being so involved in the reception pole of his artistic production, Kelley has established the boundaries for his critical reception and has therefore left little room for interpretation to anyone engaging with this work. In a way, by being so precise in his writings, Kelley goes against the very nature of his artistic production, which can be interpreted on so many levels. With his texts, he is trying to "fix" his artworks, to freeze them in time, which in the end is very much against the nature of how his artistic production evolves. As Anne Pontégnie argues, "Mike Kelley is setting out to do something so multiple, in both its form and its content, and so indivisible in its internal consistency, that it is almost impossible to freeze a 'moment' in it that could be understood, despite the exhaustiveness of the information given."¹⁸ The relationships between Kelley's functional writings and his artworks will be further discussed later in the chapter once I begin the scripting of *Day Is Done*, since analyzing the artist's sanctioning narratives is a part of the process to retrieve the artwork's script.

4.2 Day Is Done and the Extracurricular Activity Projective Reconstruction Series

In this second section of the chapter, I begin the scripting of *Day Is Done*. This first requires contextualizing this work within the *Extracurricular Activity Projective Reconstruction*, the series to which it belongs. Then, I study the first phases of the socialization of *Day Is Done* that are connected to its making and its inaugural (and only) exhibition. I argue that the socialization of the work began before it was even exhibited, with the pre-exhibition publications and the press release. Contrary to the launching of some of his other series, Kelley did not publish a text on *Day Is Done* until two years after the exhibition took place. Nevertheless, as I show, he still attempted (and succeeded) in framing the reception of his

¹⁷ Anne Pontégnie, "Educational Complex Onwards 1995-2008," in *Educational Complex Onwards 1995-2008*, ed. Mike Kelley and Anne Pontégnie (Zurich: JRP|Ringier, 2009), 1.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

work through the means of published interviews and an article written by art historian John C. Welchman.

The *Extracurricular Activity Projective Reconstruction Series*

The starting point of the series *Extracurricular Activity Projective Reconstruction* was Kelley's reaction to the critiques of his work from the 1980s and early 1990s, a period during which he created artworks using soft toys and various craft materials. Some critics interpreted that body of work as if the artist was dealing with child abuse. For instance, the first comment Ralph Rugoff made when he interviewed Kelley in 1991 was: "The dolls and stuffed animals in your work often evoke objects left at the scene of a child abduction."¹⁹ Or, in his review of Kelley's mid-career retrospective presented at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1993, Robert Hughes commented on the artist's soft sculptures in these words: "the effect really depends on the nakedness with which Kelley presents the toys as elements in a free-form psychodrama about threat and vulnerability; they're like the dolls that witch-hunting lawyers use to elicit the evidence of children in abuse prosecutions."²⁰ As Kelley recalls, "Everybody was going on as if these works were somehow about child abuse, though I had never thought of them in those terms. I related them more to the commodification of emotion: familial bonds, binds, obligations, emotional repayment, and things like that."²¹ This discordance between the artist's intentions and a part of the reception of his artistic production – and I say a part because not all critics read the words in terms of child abuse – raises questions about who is in charge of the meaning of the work. The artist meant to say one thing and it was interpreted as something else.

In light of such responses to his work, Kelley came to the conclusion that we are "caught up in a conspiracy to push the idea that we [live] in a world governed by sexual abuse," and thus decided to make this very conspiracy the subject of an artistic project.²² In Chapter Three, I pointed out that the exhibition reviews played a double role in the *de-scription* of *Play Dead; Real Time*: they mediated how the artwork has been received and they were a source for identifying other mediators. In the case of Kelley's *EAPR* series, the reviews of his previous exhibitions triggered the theme of the series and thus influenced the identity of the works in this series from the start. Kelley's first creation in reaction to the

¹⁹ Ralph Rugoff, "Dirty Toys: Mike Kelley Interviewed," in *Mike Kelley*, ed. Thomas Kellein (Basel: Cantz, 1992), 86. The interview was first published in the winter 1992 issue of *XXIst Century*, 4-11.

²⁰ Robert Hughes, "Dolls and discontents," *Time* 142, no. 24 (1993): 85.

²¹ Mike Kelley, "God, Family, Fun, and Friends: John C. Welchman in Conversation with Mike Kelley," in *Institutional Critique and After*, ed. John C. Welchman (Zurich: JPR|Ringier, 2006), 346.

²² *Ibid.*, 347.

misreading of his work was *Educational Complex* (1995), an architectural model composed of all the schools he attended and his childhood home (Fig. 4.3). When Kelley couldn't remember a particular room in a building, he represented it with a blank space. *Educational Complex* was first exhibited in 1995 at Metro Pictures, New York, and displayed among other series also inspired by memories of a traumatic nature that the artist produced concurrently, such as *Timeless/Authorless* (1995). This series gathers 15 black-and-white photo-text works, which resemble blown-up newspaper clippings. The texts are either restaurant reviews from newspapers in cities where Kelley has lived, studied or exhibited his work, or "recovered memories" of abuse he suffered in childhood. Some photographs from high school yearbooks accompany the texts.

To fill up the blank spaces left in *Educational Complex*, Kelley began a series of videos entitled *Extracurricular Activity Projective Reconstruction*. This series was strongly inspired by his readings and research on Repressed Memory Syndrome (RMS). Defined in Kelley's own words, RMS "is the notion that memories of traumatic experiences can be completely and unconsciously blocked out and made inaccessible to the conscious mind." He further adds that

[m]any therapists who champion the idea of Repressed Memory Syndrome believe that all memories dredged up during therapy are true. This is the kernel of the debate: one camp defends the notion that in almost all cases recalled memories of childhood sexual abuse are historically true, while another camp argues that these memories are often fantasies, or are even unwittingly implanted in the patient by the therapists themselves.²³

In the field of psychiatry and psychology, the theoretical concept of Repressed Memory is very controversial.²⁴ In the excerpt quoted above, Kelley summarizes the two main positions in the debate. One well-known case that Kelley had in mind was the McMartin Preschool case, the trial for which lasted throughout the 1980s. Allegations of sexual abuse were made against the McMartins, the family in charge of the preschool. Parents of children attending that institution claimed that their children had said they had been abused in secret tunnels

²³ Mike Kelley, "Missing Time: Works on Paper 1974-1976, Reconsidered," in Mike Kelley, *Minor Histories: Statements, Conversations, Proposals*, ed. John C. Welchman (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 2004), 61.

²⁴ On this topic, see: Milton Rosenbaum, "Childhood 'Screen Memories.' Are They Forgotten?" *Psychosomatics* 39, no. 1 (January-February 1998): 68-71; Bessel A. van der Kolk and Rita Fislis, "Dissociation and the Fragmentary Nature of Traumatic Memories: Overview and Exploratory Study," *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 8, no. 4 (1995): 505-525; and Richard J. McNally, "Debunking Myths About Trauma and Memory," *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry* 50, no. 13 (November 2005): 817-822.

situated underneath the building, which led to an excavation in 1990. The searches turned out to be a dead end and all charges against the McMartin family were dropped in 1990.²⁵

When Kelley began working on the *EAPR* series, he decided to assume

that all the things that I can't remember are traumatic, and I'll fill in the holes in my memory with traumatic fictions – reversing the traditional 'family romance'; instead of replacing my boring memory with an idealized past, I would replace it with a dramatically worse one.²⁶

Just as Kelley's scripts of his performances in the 1970s and 1980s were inspired by props he created, the scenarios of the videos of the *EAPR* series were inspired by photographs that he found in high school yearbooks and in his local newspaper. Some of the photographs used in the series were also used in the series *Timeless/Authorless* discussed above. The photographs gathered by Kelley do not depict standard school events, but rather certain rituals such as ceremonial and religious performances, Halloween, equestrian events, and end-of-the-year plays. The story lines of the different scenarios of the videos stemmed from descriptions of traumatic events the artist had read in the literature on Repressed Memory Syndrome. In the *EAPR* series, the artist intertwines details of his own biography with recollections of popular films, cartoons, and literature. Therefore, the "personal and 'mass cultural experience' are treated equally as 'true' experience."²⁷ In refusing to differentiate between personal recollections and the narratives of mass media, Kelley provided different representations of abuse. When confronted with Kelley's works, the viewers cannot identify which traumatic events the artist has experienced and which ones he has not.

As part of the *EAPR* series, Kelley sets out to make 365 videos, one for each day of the year. To date, 32 of the planned 365 videos have been exhibited; the first one of the series was presented in 2000 at the Emi Fontana Gallery in Milan (Fig. 4.4 to 4.7), the following 31 videos were shown together in 2005, gathered under the title *Day Is Done*, at the Gagosian Gallery in New York. Once the 365 videos are completed, Kelley intends to show them

²⁵ See: Robert Reinhold, "The Longest Trial - A Post-Mortem; Collapse of Child-Abuse Case: So Much Agony for So Little," *The New York Times*, January 24, 1990, accessed July 4, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/1990/01/24/us/longest-trial-post-mortem-collapse-child-abuse-case-so-much-agony-for-so-little.html>.

²⁶ "Missing Space/Time: A Conversation Between Mike Kelley, Kim Colin, and Mark Skiles," in Mike Kelley, *Minor Histories: Statements, Conversations, Proposals*, ed. John C. Welchman (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 2004), 327.

²⁷ Mike Kelley, "Extracurricular Activity Projective Reconstruction #1 (A Domestic Scene)," in *Minor Histories: Statements, Conversations, Proposals*, ed. John C. Welchman (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 2004), 238.

during a 24-hour period starting at midnight and ending the next day at midnight with a grand finale: a donkey basketball game.²⁸

It is a photograph of two men performing in a play that inspired the first video of the *EAPR* series entitled *Extracurricular Activity Projective Reconstruction #1 (A Domestic Scene)* (Fig. 4.8).²⁹ Since the subject of the photograph was a play, Kelley decided to write a script that would last a half-hour, like the early television dramas did. As Kelley explains, these dramas “were basically plays performed live on television.”³⁰ The script was also influenced by the work of Tennessee Williams, Saul Bellow, and Sylvia Plath.³¹ The black-and-white video stages two men living together, in poor conditions, in an apartment where furniture is chaotically arranged: the stove stands in the middle of the room with a single bed placed in front. There is no table or chair, and the organization of the space does not make sense. One of the men is extremely agitated, and on the verge of being suicidal; the other is trying to calm him down while also trying to dominate him. The “domestic scene” created by Kelley is quite dramatic. The 30-minute episode creates a schizophrenic atmosphere from which there seems to be no way out: no way out of the apartment (the entire scene takes place there), and no way out of the situation (such a lifestyle is not fully embraced by society).

Like many previous projects of Kelley’s, *EAPR #1 (A Domestic Scene)* exists in many forms (or configurations) all sharing the same title: an installation (that has been acquired by François Pinault); a single-channel video, which is distributed by Electronic Arts Intermix in New York;³² and a series of photographs, sold in a limited edition of five. The installation version of the work comprises the stage set on which the video was shot which is placed next to a monitor that plays the 30-minute video. A series of photographs was displayed on a gallery wall next to it. To explain his intentions, and consequently, to frame the reception of this work, Mike Kelley wrote a text to accompany this work. When the work was displayed, the text was either included in the press release or printed in the exhibition catalogues.

Looking into the exhibition history of the installation version of *EAPR #1 (A Domestic Scene)*, it can be noticed that the configuration of the work has changed after its inaugural

²⁸ Mike Kelley, *Day Is Done* (New York: Gagosian Gallery & New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), 464.

²⁹ The same photograph has also been integrated into Kelley’s photo-text work *Timeless/Authorless #11* (1995). In the latter, which looks like a blow-up of a newspaper clipping of the *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger*, the text is a part of Kelley’s “Recovered Memory #4.” See Mike Kelley, “*Timeless/Authorless: Four Recovered Memories*,” in *Minor Histories: Statements, Conversations, Proposals*, ed. John C. Welchman (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 2004), 274-291.

³⁰ Mike Kelley, “Extracurricular Activity,” 240.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² See “Mike Kelley – *Extracurricular Activity Projective Reconstruction #1 (A Domestic Scene)* on the Electronic Arts Intermix Website, accessed July 4, 2011, <http://www.eai.org/eai/title.htm?id=695>.

exhibition. When first exhibited, the stage set could not be installed as seen in the single-channel video *EAPR #1 (A Domestic Scene)*, as the exhibition space of the Emi Fontana Gallery was not big enough. For this exhibition, the stage set was presented differently (see Fig. 4.4 to 4.7). Starting from the second exhibition of the installation version of *EAPR #1 (A Domestic Scene)*, the work was always presented in spacious spaces, enabling it to be shown as in the video, as was the case in Brussels in 2008, for instance (Fig. 4.9). This example shows the importance of delving into the exhibition history of a work, since its inaugural exhibition is not always a referential one. In the case of this particular video installation of Kelley's, its display got settled after the second exhibition. In Chapter Five, the reader will see that it can take up to twenty years for works of art to get a more or less stable display.

In this brief *de-description* of how the *EAPR* series came into being, I pointed out a number of mediators involved in its life cycle. First, there were some exhibition reviews of Kelley's antecedent exhibitions that provoked the artist to create a series on his fictional abuse, showing how influential reviews can be in shaping the identity of an artwork. Second, I wrote about the found photographs coming mainly from high school yearbooks that inspired the artist to write the scenarios for the videos of the *EAPR* series. To return to the metaphor of the tree used in the introduction of this chapter, the exhibition reviews and the found photographs correspond to the roots of the tree; they are mediators that were used to inspire and create the artwork. Third, I mentioned the text that Kelley wrote on *Extracurricular Activity Projective Reconstruction #1 (A Domestic Scene)*, which is a sanctioning narrative part of the artwork's script. The text acts as a mediator of the artist's intentions and was written by Kelley in order to orient the reception of the work. The text contributes to the socialization of *EAPR #1 (A Domestic Scene)* in that it explains the conceptual foundations of this artwork. Fourth, using the example of the first video installation of the *EAPR* series, I illustrated that the exhibition space is also a mediator in the life cycle of an artwork. In the case of *EAPR #1 (A Domestic Scene)*, the display of the stage set used for the making of the video, which the artist has sold as an installation, had to be modified – uniquely for the inaugural exhibition – to fit into the gallery. Judging from later displays, the stage set has subsequently been presented as seen in the *EAPR #1 (A Domestic Scene)* single-channel video. The *de-description* of this first chapter of the *EAPR* series has illustrated just how polymorph Kelley's projects are. In the following sub-section, I will proceed with the *de-description* of *Day Is Done* and show how its socialization has evolved.

Day Is Done: A Landmark Exhibition

Five years after the inaugural manifestation of *EAPR #1 (A Domestic Scene)*, Mike Kelley released another chapter of the *EAPR* series: *Day Is Done* (Fig 4.10). This time, the work was presented in Kelley's New York art dealer's gallery, the Gagosian Gallery. Above, I have suggested interpreting Kelley's inaugural exhibitions of his series as *landmark exhibitions* within the history of his exhibitions, as it is often the only occasion that all offspring of the series will be exhibited together. Since in *Day Is Done* the visitors were presented with most of the constituents of this second chapter of the *EAPR* series, I contend that it was a landmark exhibition. In this sub-section of the chapter, I study how the socialization of *Day Is Done* took place; I examine the pre-exhibition publications, the inaugural exhibition and the reception of the exhibition.

The exhibition *Day Is Done: Extracurricular Activity Projective Reconstruction #2-32* opened at the Gagosian Gallery on 24th Street in New York on November 11, 2005. For this show, Kelley integrated the videos *EAPR #2* to *#32* into 25 video/sculpture installations so that viewers could see the props and decor used in the making of the videos while also watching the video projections. The artist explained that his intention with *Day Is Done* "was to create a kind of spatialized filmic montage: a feature-length film made up of multiple simultaneous and sequential scenes playing in architectural space."³³ In order to avoid complete chaos, a synchronization system ran the videos from three different spots simultaneously so as to avoid playing them all at the same time. Consequently, the visitors had to choose to view one of the three videos from one of the three locations in the gallery; when finished, they had to move throughout the exhibition space to view the other video(s) in a similar fashion. Kelley wanted to create an "experience akin to channel surfing" for the visitors.³⁴

Kelley's inspiration for the scenarios of the *Day Is Done* videos, like in the case of *EAPR #1 (A Domestic Scene)*, stemmed from black-and-white yearbook photographs, many of which represented song-and-dance numbers. With the help of Scott Benzel, Kelley composed the extremely varied musical tracks (techno, country, gospel and Broadway musicals) heard in *Day Is Done*, and Kate Foley choreographed the dance numbers. In a text, Kelley stated: "My narrative glue consists of a thin plot in which workers in an undefined

³³ Mike Kelley, *Day Is Done*, 463.

³⁴ John C. Welchman, "1000 words: Mike Kelley Talks About *Day is Done*," *Artforum* 44, no. 2 (October 2005): 235.

‘institutional workplace’ attend a yearly grand spectacle.”³⁵ The videos integrated the decors and props used during the shooting, and feature scenes such as a train dance number; the Virgin Mary’s crowning; a lonely singing vampire; a motivational speech; and a chicken dance.

Since the *EAPR* series was a fastidious project with a high production cost, the artist had to find the financial means to realize it. In 2005, his association with art dealer Larry Gagosian, the same dealer representing Douglas Gordon, turned out to be a strategic one. Indeed, Gagosian offered Kelley “vast gallery acreage and major financing for the artist’s most complex installation to date.”³⁶ An artist’s association with such an art dealer means that the value of their work on the market is increased and it guarantees them a great connection with buyers. The Gagosian Gallery has been a mediator of importance in the life cycle of *Day Is Done*, as it contributed to its socialization in different ways: it provided the artist financial means to realize this large-scale project, it provided the exhibition space to present it, it increased the chances of the artist to have reviews on account of the gallery’s good visibility, and it put the artist in contact with many buyers.³⁷

Other events, namely, the pre-exhibition publications occurring prior to the opening of *Day Is Done*, also contributed to its socialization. The Gagosian Gallery is known to extensively advertise its upcoming shows in art magazines, “not so much to attract customers as to reinforce the Gagosian brand, keep gallery artists in the public eye, and reassure previous buyers that “their” artist is being promoted.”³⁸ This time, however, Kelley’s show was not only advertised, it was written about and discussed to a great extent even before the exhibition opened. On October 26, 2005, a little less than three weeks before the opening of the exhibition, the Gagosian Gallery sent out a press release.³⁹ Sending out a press release a few weeks before the opening of an exhibition is common practice. The purpose is to create a number of expectations for the press, visitors and potential buyers. In the press release, *Day Is Done* was described as “a feature-length ‘musical’ composed of thirty-two separate video chapters.” It was also indicated that the artist had found the initial images for this project in

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ David Rimaneli, “Night of 1,000 Dealers,” *Artforum* website, last modified November 16, 2005, <http://artforum.com/diary/id=9845>.

³⁷ The acquisition of the various offspring of *Day Is Done* will be discussed later on in this chapter, but at this point, it can be mentioned that most of the offspring were acquired by private collectors, some of them regular customers of Larry Gagosian.

³⁸ Don Thompson, *The \$12 Million Stuffed Shark: The Curious Economics of Contemporary Art* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 35.

³⁹ Press release: “Mike Kelley: *Day is Done*,” Gagosian Gallery, October 26, 2005, accessed July 4, 2011, <http://i1.exhibit-e.com/gagosian/3fcc6928.pdf>. In the press release, Kelley’s title project is spelled *Day is Done*, but since the artist always spells it *Day Is Done*, it was decided to spell it “Day Is Done” throughout the chapter.

high-school yearbooks. Finally, the press release announced that this project was going to exist in many forms; the large-scale video installation on view at the Gagosian Gallery would be only one of them.

In addition to the press release, prior to the opening of the exhibition on November 11, 2005, strategic media handling took place. The pre-exhibition coverage of Kelley's upcoming exhibition reached an unprecedented level in the artist's career. Two major international art magazines – *Artforum* and *Flash Art* – published interviews and articles on *Day Is Done*. In October 2005, “1000 words: Mike Kelley talks about *Day Is Done*” was published in *Artforum*. A short introduction written by John C. Welchman, an art historian specializing in the work of Mike Kelley, preceded the artist's text. Welchman was familiar with the content and the creation context of the coming exhibition and gave a description of what to expect: “an ambitious multiplex of thirty-one videos and associated sculptural ‘stations.’” He also contended that the exhibition was “reactivat[ing] Kelley's long-career investigation into the social mutations of desire and repression.”⁴⁰ Welchman's introduction was followed by Kelley's statement, which began with a description of the *Educational Complex* and his intention to fill the blanks in the architectural model with the *EAPR* series. Kelley then summarized what he had done in *EAPR #1 (A Domestic Scene)*. Finally, in the last section, he described how the videos would be presented (in sculptural islands), how he planned to use the space at the Gagosian Gallery, his working method for the creation of this chapter of the project, and concluded with his desire “to create a contemporary *gesamtkunstwerk* that is not utopian in nature but is an extension of our current victim culture.”⁴¹ The three pages dedicated to Kelley's *Day Is Done* in *Artforum* also included many color photographs of *Educational Complex*, of *EAPR #1 (A Domestic Scene)* and a few video stills of the videos included in *Day Is Done*. The text in *Artforum* set the stage for the visitors and ensured that they would arrive well-informed and prepared to see the artist's latest artistic creation. The text can also be interpreted as one of the first public instantiations of *Day Is Done*, not as the prescriptive part of the script (that contains information on how to display the work), but as a gathering of the artist's sanctioning narratives.

The November-December 2005 issue of *Flash Art* dedicated nine pages to Kelley's latest production. It included an exclusive interview with the artist conducted by John Waters

⁴⁰ John C. Welchman, “1000 words,” 233.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 235.

and an article – again, by John C. Welchman.⁴² In the interview, Kelley spoke of his intention to create 365 videos, explained how he was going to transform the space of the Gagolian Gallery to suit its large-scale installation, and addressed the presentation logistics of the numerous projections. Kelley and Waters also discussed the great variety of themes dealt with in the 31 videos. Towards the end of their conversation, whereas Waters shows great enthusiasm and tells Kelley that he has made an epic, the artist lucidly answers: “That could be a problem: this whole thing could just be one enormous vanity project.”⁴³ The artist reveals his awareness of the danger of such an ambitious project, of which he had only completed the first two chapters at that point in time.

In his article “Day is Done: The False, the Real and the Memory in Mike Kelley’s Thirty Two Stations,” John C. Welchman wrote about memory, and also gave a few examples of the videos included in the exhibition *Day Is Done*. The publication of Welchman’s text prior to the opening of the exhibition also meant that a critical discourse on this chapter of the *EAPR* series began even before the public had had the chance to see it. Welchman’s article was based on conversations with the artist, the text published in *Artforum* mentioned above, on photographs and the viewing of single-channel videos later integrated into the video/sculpture installations. In *Flash Art*, he was able to reflect on the relationships between the yearbook photographs and the videos, and also the subjects addressed in *Day Is Done*. As he wrote, “One of the most interesting issues that this work raises is the idea of falsity – especially the nature of the ‘false’ as it appears in accounts of False Memory Syndrome that have long interested Kelley, and inform *Day is Done*.”⁴⁴ The very last sentence of his article prepared the visitors for the spectacular features of the exhibition: “Unraveling a serpentine spiral of song and dance cunningly filtered through myth and memory, fact and fantasy, Kelley has ordained here a mesmeric event-structure that knits art and popular masquerade into a tragic-comic Technicolor dream-coat.” The descriptions of the work he provides make it seem as though Welchman had seen the exhibition. If the reader of this article did not pay attention to the date of publication, he/she could believe that it was in fact a review of the exhibition and not a pre-exhibition publication. It served to prescribe the exhibition layout on the basis of Kelley’s ideas.

⁴² John Waters, “Mike Kelley: You Have Made an Epic,” *Flash Art* 38, no. 245 (November-December 2005): 54-58 and John C. Welchman, “Day is Done: The False, the Real and the Memory in Mike Kelley’s Thirty Two Stations,” *Flash Art* 38, no. 245 (November-December 2005): 59-61.

⁴³ John Waters, “Mike Kelley,” 58.

⁴⁴ John C. Welchman, “Day is Done,” 60.

The pre-exhibition publications were an efficient way to publicize *Day Is Done*. But, more importantly, the tactic of publishing articles and interviews in two major art magazines showed an attempt to frame and orient the reception of *Day Is Done*. Similarly to technical objects that come with an instruction booklet clearly expressing their intended use, the press release and the texts published in *Artforum* and *Flash Art* were means of communicating the artist's intentions to the visitors. These publications constitute the first public instantiations of *Day Is Done*'s script. They are not *auctorial prescriptions*, as they do not state how to install the artwork in the exhibition space, but they address its theme, its coming into being, the artist's sources of inspiration, and the mediators involved in its making. In the analysis of the exhibition reviews, I will point out how successful the framing of the exhibition was.

The opening of *Day Is Done* took place on the evening of November 11, 2005 and reviews of the evening described it as quite an event. Art critic and curator David Rimaneli reported that upon his arrival at the Gagosian Gallery, he faced a queue stretching along West 24th Street, New York and noticed that bouncers were present to control the crowd. Once inside the gallery, he was told that all New York dealers were present, and European dealers as well.⁴⁵ So, the opening of the exhibition attracted a large crowd and it shared similarities with a night at the discotheque where one has to line up outside along a velvet rope under the supervision of bouncers. The discotheque atmosphere continued when the crowd entered the gallery, since Kelley had staged *Day Is Done* in a spectacular manner. The gallery space had been opened up, lights were coming from everywhere (projections, spots, etc.), music was included in many of the projected videos, and the entire installation was very colorful.

Day Is Done's debut attracted a great crowd, but also caught the attention of many critics; reviews were published in newspapers such as the *New York Times* and the *Village Voice*, and in major art magazines such as *ARTnews*, *artpress*, *Art in America*, *Frieze*, and *Art US*. Most reviews were extremely positive. For instance, Stephen Maine asserted that "Mike Kelley's transformation of this ordinary space was a technical feat, but the visual and auditory barrage of *Day Is Done* [...] was equaled by the humor and pathos of its subject and the intelligence of its design."⁴⁶ In *ARTnews*, Barbara Pollack spoke of a "tour de force exhibition" and qualified Kelley's *Day Is Done* as his masterwork.⁴⁷ The pre-exhibition publications are not explicitly mentioned in the reviews, with the exception of Steven Stern's review published in *Frieze*, but the contextualization of the project in the various reviews

⁴⁵ David Rimaneli, "Night of 1,000 Dealers."

⁴⁶ Stephen Maine, "Mike Kelley at Gagosian," *Art in America* 94, no. 3 (March 2006): 146.

⁴⁷ Barbara Pollack, "Mike Kelley. Gagosian," *ARTnews* 105, no. 2 (February 2006): 130-132.

seems to indicate that the critics had been well informed of the creation process and the artist's intentions with his *Day Is Done* project.⁴⁸ The scripting process of this artwork seemed to have been done smoothly; the reviewers of the exhibition reacted to the exhibition in the framework determined by the artist in the press release and in the pre-exhibition publications. In other words, Kelley's sanctioning narratives had been well understood. This point also stresses their importance in the scripting of this work. The exhibition reviews stayed within the framing established by the artist's sanctioning narratives and the pre-exhibition publications.

The *de-description* of the inaugural exhibition and its reception done in this part of the chapter led me to reflect on different types of documents that are part of *Day Is Done*'s scripting process. An artwork's script includes exhibition reviews as well as the artist's installation instructions (floor plans, a list of equipment to use, directives for the adjustments of projectors, etc.). These documents have different purposes and are intended for different people. The exhibition reviews are mediators of how the work has been received, and they can also help identify other mediators in its life cycle. Whereas the exhibition reviews will be read by a greater audience (museum staff, gallery staff, artist, art dealers, people interested in the arts), the installation instructions will be interpreted only by the mediators involved in putting the work on display, and, on rare occasions, by researchers. They affect the socialization process differently, as the latter lead to the exhibition of a work, and the former follow the exhibition of a work. Still, both are essential to the artwork's socialization.

Fragmenting *Day Is Done*

The size of the installation *Day Is Done* and Kelley's high-ranking position in the international market made it impossible for the work to be sold as a whole. Acquiring it would have been too expensive for any institution.⁴⁹ Therefore, the life cycle or the journey of *Day Is Done* had to be re-routed: to continue to exist, not as an exhibition, but as a series of works, the large-scale installation had to be fragmented. It is a distribution strategy that Kelley and his dealer had thought of in advance. To prepare the ground for buyers, it was already announced in the press release that: "*Day is Done* will exist in several forms."⁵⁰ Also,

⁴⁸ Steven Stern, "Tomorrow Never Comes," *Frieze*, no. 97 (March 2006): 112-119.

⁴⁹ For example, the video/sculpture station *Transmission* (one of the 25 installations included in the exhibition *Day Is Done*) was sold by the auction house Christie's on March 17, 2009 for €35,000 (\$45,000). This indicates that the price for the entire installation *Day Is Done* could reach up to 25 times this amount. Accessed July 4, 2011, http://www.christies.com/LotFinder/lot_details.aspx?intObjectID=5180279.

⁵⁰ See the press release on the Gagosian Gallery website, October 26, 2005, accessed July 4, 2011, <http://i1.exhibit-e.com/gagosian/3fcc6928.pdf>.

Kelley has claimed that he was not interested in selling leftovers or objects witnessing past performances or exhibitions, and later stated in an interview that he “felt that the individual set pieces should be able to stand on their own as things, so [he] designed the sets as sculptures from the start.”⁵¹ Even though first presented as part of an ensemble, the artist thought they could stand-alone as well; they did not need to be exhibited in the presence of the other components of *Day Is Done*.

Similarly to *EAPR #1 (A Domestic Scene)*, which has different configurations (or offspring) – editioned single-channel video, installation, series of photographs – *Day Is Done*’s offspring consisted of first, 25 video/sculpture installations; second, sculptures and props that were not included in the 25 video/sculptures stations; third, the limited series of photographs (an edition of five for each of them); and fourth, the preliminary drawings made by the artist prior to the shooting of the videos. Other offspring of the series were created or reconfigured in the years following the *Day Is Done* exhibition and are discussed in the fourth section of this chapter (4.4).

The closing of the exhibition *Day Is Done* corresponded to the end of a phase in its life cycle: its offspring were then beginning a life of their own, they would no longer be manifested in the presence of the other offspring of the series. The spreading of the offspring also corresponds the moment when the scripting process was rerouted, branching off in different directions. In the following section, by *describing* the life cycle of some of the offspring of the series, I analyze what happens to the scripting of *Day Is Done*, and whether or not it continues to evolve.

4.3 The Offspring of *Day Is Done*

In this third section of the chapter, I take up the scripting of *Day Is Done* at the moment when the exhibition was taken apart, when the different offspring were sold to different collections. Therefore, the scripting process branched off in different directions. The fragmentation of *Day Is Done* at the end of the exhibition in 2005 signified the end of the possibility to re-exhibit it in such a fashion as was seen at the Gagosian Gallery. In theory, if all the offspring were reassembled, it would be possible to restage *Day Is Done* as initially shown, but in practice, it is a very unlikely option, as the offspring are numerous and spread worldwide (Appendix 2). Indeed, different parties have acquired offspring of *Day Is Done*, mainly

⁵¹ Glenn Phillips, “Mike Kelley,” in *California Video: Artists and Histories*, ed. Glenn Phillips (Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute & The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2008), 128.

private collectors. For example, the Munich-based collector Ingvild Goetz acquired three installations: *Woods Group*, *Joseph Supplicates*, and *Lonely Vampire*; the French collector François Pinault, owner of the installation version of *EAPR #1 (A Domestic Scene)*, purchased *Pink Curtain*; the Miami-based Rubell family acquired *Fresno*; the Broad Art Foundation in Santa Barbara acquired *Gym Interior*; and the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam bought *Black Curtain* and *Switching Marys*.⁵²

In order to better understand how the scripting process was rerouted and branched off in different directions after the exhibition at the Gagosian Gallery in 2005, the two following sub-sections will describe the socialization process of five offspring of *Day Is Done*, namely *Woods Group*, *Lonely Vampire*, *Joseph Supplicates*, *Black Curtain* and *Switching Marys*. It will also address the following question: by acquiring two or three “fragments” of *Day Is Done*, were the Goetz Collection and the Stedelijk Museum creating sub-groups of the large-scale project? To answer this question, I will study the exhibitions of these offspring.

Black Curtain and Switching Marys in the Collection of the Stedelijk Museum

Two video/sculpture installations of the series *Day Is Done* were acquired by the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam: *Black Curtain* and *Switching Marys*. To this day, even though the institution owns two offspring of the series, they have never been exhibited together. In this sub-section of the chapter, I study the socialization of these offspring: I discuss how they have been “framed” in thematic exhibitions and how they have been related to *Day Is Done*. I also discuss the installation guide provided by Mike Kelley’s studio.

Switching Marys is a three-channel video installation in which the technical equipment has been visually integrated (Fig. 4.11 and 4.12). The installation’s three projectors are hung on a ladder along with Mary’s blue cape and her flower crown, and the speakers are displayed on a Greek column and stumps. Two of the projection screens are oval and present two images of Mary in alternation: in one, Mary stands on a stump with her arms down and her palms open towards us; in the other, she stands on a fake Greek column with her arms up and palms turned towards the sky. The projections of these images give the impression that they are sliding from one oval screen to the other. The two oval screens face a third screen onto

⁵² To this day, I have been able to find 11 of the 25 video/sculpture stations (see Appendix 2). Since their acquisition by museums or private collectors, they all have been exhibited at least once. Amongst the ones I was able to trace, two were acquired by a museum (the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam), and the nine others by private collectors or foundations. When I contacted the Gagosian Gallery to inquire if all the fragments of the *Day is Done* exhibition had been sold, the staff of the gallery said they could not provide me the information I was looking for due to their privacy policy (Email from the Gagosian Gallery, January 29, 2010). See also Appendix 3 for an (incomplete) exhibition list of the offspring of *Day Is Done*.

which is projected a video depicting the crowning of Virgin Mary by a little blond boy who has to climb up a ladder (one of the installation's props) to put a crown of flowers on her head. In the second part of the video, Mary is portrayed as a hag and is seen chasing and screaming at the little boy, accusing him of ruining the most important day of her life. While standing on the ladder, the young boy turns around and blinks in a mocking way at the crowd while putting the crown on Mary's head. The video, at first peaceful and beautiful, suddenly becomes suddenly scary and traumatic. Towards the end, when the evil Mary catches up with the young boy and corners him, he starts shouting "No, no – Bray's Burgers, next door, basement, motorcycle gang! I want to wake up!" while flashback images of Bray's Burgers hamburger stand (site referred to in other *EARP* video scenes as one of abuse) are projected.⁵³ This last scene of the video shows "recovered memory" sequences. *Switching Marys* is certainly one of the greatest illustrations in *Day Is Done* of Repressed Memory Syndrome since the little boy is having flashbacks of a traumatic event.

Black Curtain, the second offspring acquired by the Stedelijk Museum, is a two-channel video installation in which the two projection screens are separated by a black curtain. The projections show two dance performances from *EAPR*. The first video, *EAPR #14 (Modern Dance)*, is a somber, 3:30-minute modernist dance performed in silence. The second video, *EAPR #15 (Goth Dance)* is a 2:59-minute Goth dance performed to a techno pop song. In both videos, performers dance with a black curtain in the background. In the installation, the videos are played one after the other, and visitors are invited to go on the other side of the curtain to view the next projection. The costumes worn by both dancers are displayed on the structure holding the curtain. Part of the *Day Is Done* series, *Modern Dance* and *Goth Dance* are meant to be entertaining distractions for the staff working in the *Educational Complex*.

In 2006, the Stedelijk Museum's director, Gijs van Tuyl, had planned to show *Switching Marys* and *Black Curtain* in *Below the Surface*, an exhibition presenting the museum's recent acquisitions. The show was held in a temporary location situated in a former post building (the 'CS building'). When the two works were installed in this site, their viewing turned out to be chaotic; they were placed too close to one another, and there was no synchronization system that allowed for only one of the video/sculpture installations to run at a particular

⁵³ During a lecture given in Paris, Kelley said that it is a place in Detroit where he was abducted by motorcyclists when he was a teenager. See: "Vidéo et après: Mike Kelley," March 6, 2006, 136 minutes, accessed July 4, 2011, <http://www.cnac-gp.fr/Pompidou/WebTV.nsf/0/256050E7964BA029C1257451004DACBD?OpenDocument&sessionM=4.1&L=1>.

time.⁵⁴ Therefore, it was decided to exhibit only *Switching Marys*. Nevertheless, in the *Stedelijk Museum Bulletin*, van Tuyl indicated that the institution had acquired two parts of Kelley's *Day Is Done* project and added that "Each part presents the re-enactment and resuscitation of an extracurricular high school activity: carnival plays, religious passion plays, dressing up sessions, hazing rituals, reviews, All Hallows, Christmas festivities and so on."⁵⁵ The text in the *Bulletin* thus related this fragment of *Day Is Done* to the whole.

In *Below the Surface*, *Switching Marys* was presented with recent acquisitions of the Stedelijk Museum. In the explanatory text, van Tuyl explained the aim of the exhibition:

with this exhibition an attempt has been made to sketch the opening lines of a contemporary narrative – albeit a hybrid narrative without a linear storyboard. The exhibition was composed as a symphony with six passages that together comprise a diversified, rhythmic whole, embracing themes such as human existence, violence, death, good and evil, aesthetics and ethics, art and politics, media, magic and religion; in brief, all the aspects of the human condition.⁵⁶

Within the so-called symphony with six passages, Kelley's *Switching Marys* was displayed in proximity to (or "appropriately prefaced by," to use van Tuyl's terms) a photograph by Philip-Lorca diCorcia of a lit pole dancer. *Switching Marys'* inaugural exhibition outside of *Day Is Done* thus took place in the context of an exhibition addressing a large scope of topics. The framing of *Switching Marys* within that exhibition remained rather open.

In December 2008, *Switching Marys* was reinstalled in the Nieuwe Kerk, in Amsterdam, as part of the exhibition *Holy Inspiration: Religion and Spirituality in Modern Art*, which showed artworks from the Stedelijk Museum collection. As stated in the exhibition booklet distributed to the visitors, the works in the exhibition "reflect[ed] religion as experienced by a range of twentieth-century artists." Further, it was indicated that: "*Holy Inspiration* exhibits the evidence of a Christian iconographic tradition that remains very much alive; of influences exerted by Eastern religions; and of how feelings of religious connection to nature can be expressed through art."⁵⁷ In one of the three videos that have been integrated into the video/sculpture installation *Switching Marys*, Kelley revisits the popular ritual that is May Crowning. Linked to another video of the *EAPR* series where a young girl wins a beauty contest, in *Switching Marys*, the same young girl is depicted as the Virgin and is given a flower crown. In this work, the artist connects events of popular culture – beauty contests – with religious rituals – May Crowning – and mixes their related iconography. In the

⁵⁴ Conversation with Gert Hoogveen, Chief of the Audiovisuals Department at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, July 24, 2008.

⁵⁵ Gijs van Tuyl, "Below the Surface," *Stedelijk Museum Bulletin*, no. 1 (2007): 60.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁵⁷ Stedelijk Museum, exhibition booklet *Holy Inspiration: Religion and Spirituality in Modern Art*, 2008, np.

exhibition catalogue, Marty Bax classified Kelley's work among contemporary artists who "use religious (especially Catholic and Orthodox) iconography to comment critically on today's welfare society." Other artists exhibited in the show, such as Gilbert & George, Damien Hirst, Julian Schnabel and Bill Viola, were also classified in this group.

Of the two offspring of *Day Is Done* owned by the Stedelijk Museum, only *Switching Marys* could be included in this exhibition, as the content of *Black Curtains* does not address religious iconography. And even though the *EAPR* series and *Day Is Done* were described in the exhibition catalogue, it is the religious scene depicted in *Switching Marys* that led to its inclusion in the exhibition. This time, the Stedelijk Museum framed *Switching Marys* in an exhibition that highlighted its religious features. In the exhibition booklet, the visitors were informed that "Catholic rituals are central to the *Extracurricular Activity Projective Reconstruction* video project."⁵⁸ No other comments on the *EAPR* project itself, or on the inaugural 2005 exhibition of *Day Is Done*, were provided. The exhibition catalogue though, gave a short explanation of the *EAPR* series and its starting point: the architectural model *Educational Complex*. The catalogue also mentioned that *Switching Marys* was first installed in the *Day Is Done* exhibition held at the Gagosian Gallery.⁵⁹

The framing of *Switching Marys* in *Holy Inspiration* contrasted to the loose framing of the work done when it was exhibited in 2006 as part of the new acquisitions of the Stedelijk Museum. In *Holy Inspiration*, the catholic ritual of the May Crowning was put forward. Thematically speaking, the content of the work was directly addressed. In the exhibition booklet, the emphasis was put uniquely on catholic rituals. In the catalogue, a very short description of *Switching Marys* broadens the interpretation suggested in the exhibition booklet, as it also mentions other themes at the core of the *EAPR* series such as repressed memories, traumas, rituals and extracurricular activities. Among all the framings of the offspring of *Day Is Done* studied in this section of the chapter, this one is by far the one that addressed the very content of a specific offspring more directly.

Yet, in *Holy Inspiration*, the presentation of *Switching Marys* in the exhibition space turned out to be problematic. In the Nieuwe Kerk, the work was displayed in its own space with black-painted walls and ceilings, and a carpeted floor. The only light in the space was provided by the three projectors and one spot light directed on a sidewall of the room to help the visitors circulate in the space and towards the exit. However, unlike previous exhibitions,

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Marty Bax, "Mike Kelley," in *Holy Inspiration: Religion and Spirituality in Modern Art*, ed. Marty Bax (Amsterdam: De Nieuwe Kerk, 2008), np.

the videos were played with the volume at a minimum, attenuating the effect of the scary video scene projected on the rectangular screen. When the exhibition first opened, the Stedelijk Museum staff set volume for the sound according to Kelley's precise instructions but once the exhibition opened, the staff working at the Nieuwe Kerk decided to keep the volume at a minimal level because the soundtrack bothered them.⁶⁰ Most probably unaware of Mike Kelley's auctorial prescriptions on the setup of the sound, the staff of the Nieuwe Kerk did not respect the exhibition modalities of *Switching Marys*. The soundtrack of this artwork is very important as the sound intensifies throughout the 5 minutes and 10 seconds of the video loop. In a way, what happened to Kelley's piece shown in *Holy Inspiration* could be seen as analogous to a situation in which the guards of a certain museum room were to decide to temporarily cover a part of a painting arguing that they found the color or the figure disturbing. Within the four possible forms of intervention established by Madeleine Akrich that users can make on dispositifs – displacement, adaptation, extension and diversion – what took place here is an adaptation.⁶¹ The staff of the Nieuwe Kerk (the "users" in an ANT vocabulary) introduced a modification to the exhibition modalities prescribed by the artist in order to avoid being irritated by the installation soundtrack. This example of the misreading of the script or even ignorance of the script's existence can lead to a presentation that fundamentally altered the artwork's manifestation and impact.

Earlier in the chapter, I have stated that the pre-exhibition publications of the exhibition *Day Is Done* were the first public instantiations of the series' script. When the offspring of *Day Is Done* were sold to institutions and private collectors, very detailed installation guides accompanied the installations. For instance, in the curatorial files at the Stedelijk Museum, one can find a ten-page installation guide for *Black Curtain* and a nine-page installation guide for *Switching Marys*.⁶² Each guide begins with a brief description of what the installation consists of. For instance, *Black Curtain* is described as such: "This work consists of a free standing frame on casters which supports a curtain with valance, two alternately playing video projections, and two framed photographs."⁶³ The rest of the guide contains installation photographs of the installation as displayed at the Gagosian Gallery; a detailed floor layout, instructions on how to assemble the different components of the work: the curtains, the

⁶⁰ Email from Gert Hoogveen, Chief of the Audiovisuals Department at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, December 22, 2009.

⁶¹ Madeleine Akrich, "Les utilisateurs, acteurs de l'innovation," *Éducation permanente*, no. 134 (1998): 79-89.

⁶² See curatorial files at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, consulted June 28, 2011. A copy of these installation guides is also kept in the Audiovisuals Department.

⁶³ Installation guide of *Black Curtain*. See curatorial files at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, consulted June 28, 2011.

screens, the electronics; recommendations on the adjustments of the image and sound; precisions on where to hang the photographs; specifications of the lighting adjustments, and so on. Some measurements are very precise, as for instance the distance between the two screens and the curtains, but some of the installation decisions are left to the institution, as for instance the placement of the photographs. The guide stipulates that the photographs should be hung in proximity to the video they correspond to, but that they “do not have a set determination and should be hung with the architecture of the space in mind.”⁶⁴

These installation guides produced by Mike Kelley’s studio are prescriptive and inform the people in charge of displaying the offspring of *Day Is Done* in the exhibition space of the different steps to follow in order to install the artworks according to the artist’s will. They do not provide deep insight into the content and themes of the artworks, but they aim to ensure that even if displayed outside of the large-scale installation *Day Is Done*, their individual settings will be as close as possible to how they were displayed at the Gagosian Gallery in 2005.

Since being acquired by the Stedelijk Museum, *Switching Marys* and *Black Curtain* have only been exhibited in group shows though never at the same time nor next to one another. (*Black Curtain* was exhibited in *Eyes Wide Open*, another exhibition in which the Stedelijk Museum presented its latest acquisition, along with artworks from the Monique Zajfen Collection.)⁶⁵ Such a presentation strategy has given them a life of their own, freeing them, but only partially, from their inaugural exhibition context, especially physically and also thematically, as it was done, for instance, in the exhibition *Holy Inspiration*. In the next section of the chapter, I will *describe* how the Goetz Collection has chosen to exhibit its three *Day Is Done* offspring.

Woods Group, Lonely Vampire, and Joseph Supplicates in the Goetz Collection

When the exhibition *Day Is Done* ended at the Gagosian Gallery, Munich collector Ingvild Goetz bought three video/sculpture installations: *Woods Group*, *Lonely Vampire*, and *Joseph Supplicates*. With the selection she made, Ingvild Goetz gathered installations representative of different photograph sources that inspired Kelley’s project: men dressed as vampires (*Woods Group* and *Lonely Vampire*); people wearing Halloween costumes, especially horror-related (*Woods Group*); and photographs of ceremonial and religious spectacles (*Joseph*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Eyes Wide Open – New to the Stedelijk & The Monique Zajfen Collection*, Stedelijk Museum CS, Amsterdam, 22 December 2007 – 1 June 2008, accessed July 4, 2011, <http://www.stedelijk.nl/oc2/page.asp?pageid=1756&url=/detectflash.asp>.

Supplicates). *Woods Group* includes the videos *EAPR #6*, *#7*, *#7A*, *#7B* and *#7C*, grouped into a four-channel video installation. The videos are projected on screens attached to a chain-link fence. Elements seen in the videos are also displayed in the installation: artificial bushes (referring to the real bushes shown in the videos) and some of the wizard, vampire, druid and wandering ghoulish costumes. *Lonely Vampire* is an installation comprising the stage set in which the video *EAPR #20* was shot. The video is projected onto the back of the set and in this video, a half-hidden man, dressed as a vampire, sings behind a curtain while making gestures to control the movements of a wooden chair. The set looks like a small stage on which a motorized wooden chair spins in front of a curtain while behind it a monitor runs a 56-second loop taken from a 1950s science fiction B movie showing an astronaut adrift in outer space. Finally, *Joseph Supplicates*, another single-channel video installation, features the video *EAPR #23 (Joseph Supplicates)*, depicting the scene of Joseph asking Mary's parents for their daughter's hand in marriage. In the video, Mary and her parents are sitting on folding chairs placed in a row, and Joseph is kneeling down. In the installation version of *Joseph Supplicates*, the three chairs are aligned on a platform facing a double-sided screen onto which the video *EAPR #23* is projected. In front of one of the chairs (in the video this chair corresponds to Mary's) is a kneeling figure replicating Joseph's lower body. Connected to the platform, there is also a metal extension supporting the rack of ritual rods used in the video sequence.

After being acquired by Ingvild Goetz, *Woods Group*, *Joseph Supplicates*, and *Lonely Vampire* were loaned to the Contemporary Arts Centre Wiels in Brussels for the retrospective, *Mike Kelley: Educational Complex Onwards 1995–2008*.⁶⁶ As indicated in the exhibition title, the starting point of the exhibition was the architectural model *Educational Complex*, and, as stated on the institution's website, the show was "conceived as a history, in which every work forms a chapter. Its unfurling allows to understand how and why Mike Kelley has, since 1995, made use of the notion autobiography to explore, in a poetic way, the forms of power and the power of forms."⁶⁷ The architectural model *Educational Complex* (1995) was on show on the first floor of the centre. Many works also linked to the *Educational Complex* were presented in that exhibition such as *Repressed Spatial Relationships Rendered as Fluid* series (2002), a group of mobiles actualizing the drawings taken from memory for the *Educational Complex*. On the top floor of the Contemporary Arts Centre Wiels, the three

⁶⁶ *Mike Kelley: Educational Complex Onwards: 1995-2008*, Contemporary Art Center Wiels, Brussels, 12 April – 27 July 2008. Curator: Anne Pontégnie.

⁶⁷ Website of the exhibition *Mike Kelley: Educational Complex Onwards: 1995-2008*, Wiels, Brussels (12 April – 27 July 2008), accessed July 4, 2011, http://www.wiels.org/site2/event.php?event_id=17.

video/sculpture installations belonging to the Goetz Collection were presented alongside the series of photographs of *Day Is Done* and the installation *Extracurricular Activity Projective Reconstruction #1 (A Domestic Scene)*.

In Brussels, *Woods Group*, *Lonely Vampire*, and *Joseph Supplicates* were shown as autonomous entities; each being identified with its own wall label. This showing at Wiels constituted the inaugural exhibition of these offspring as individual works of art. Spreading the video/sculptures in the gallery contrasted with the set up used in the show at New York's Gagosian Gallery where islets were very close to one another, staged in a "labyrinthine sequence," and where the only source of light in the exhibition space came from the numerous projections, creating a very hypnotic atmosphere.⁶⁸ This initial arrangement also gave a sense of density to the display and the visitors were completely immersed in the artwork. Granted more space in Brussels, the installations could run continuously without one disturbing the exhibition of another (Fig. 4.13 to 4.15). Since they were so spread out in the exhibition space, it contributed to emphasizing that they were three distinct installations rather than parts of one large-scale installation. Besides, whereas the *Day Is Done* presentation at the Gagosian Gallery required a transformation of the gallery space and completely engulfed it, the offspring, as displayed in Brussels, did not necessitate any intervention on the actual exhibition space. Since the space at Wiels was not overcrowded with projections, stage sets, props and sculptures, it was easier for the visitors of that exhibition to focus on one installation at the time.

Withdrawn from the ensemble that composed *Day Is Done* in 2005, the meaning and the reception of *Woods Group*, *Lonely Vampire*, *Joseph Supplicates* shifted. When confronted with *Day Is Done*, viewers could intuit a certain narrative flow, as some of the characters are included in different scenes and in different video/sculpture stations. Indeed, some of the characters in the videos integrated into the *Woods Group*, *Lonely Vampire*, and *Joseph Supplicates* installations are part of other videos in the series; therefore, they migrate from one screen to another, from one moving tableau to another. For instance, the character of Mary seen in *Joseph Supplicates* is also part of videos included in other installations that were exhibited in *Day Is Done: Picking a Mary, Switching Marys, Procession Ramp, and Candy Cane Throne*. Therefore, when the three video/sculpture installations acquired by the Goetz collection were shown as part of *Day Is Done*, the visitors were invited to follow a certain tread, to make connections between the varied video/sculpture islets. In Brussels, neither in

⁶⁸ John C. Welchman, "Fête accompli," in Mike Kelley, *Day is Done* (New York: Gagosian Gallery; New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), 467.

the wall text nor in the exhibition booklet, were these works individually discussed. At each occasion, more emphasis was made on the artist's intentions with the series than its content. No explicit clues were given to the public as to what *Woods Group*, *Lonely Vampire* and *Joseph Supplicates* were actually about. Like all of subsequent exhibitions of *Day Is Done*'s offspring, an emphasis was put on discussing the body of work as a whole rather than the different works constituting it. Even if the scripting process was rerouted at the end of the 2005 exhibition, a very strong connection still existed between the offspring as individual works of art and the body of work to which they belonged. This suggests that each of the offspring does not acquire its own separate scripting process but remains rooted in the inaugural exhibition.

A few months later, in 2008, the Munich-based Goetz collection organized an exhibition of over 40 works by Mike Kelley. *Woods Group*, *Joseph Supplicates* and *Lonely Vampire* were included in the show and, as in Brussels, they were shown in the same room, once again distanced from one another, allowing for all projections to be run at the same time (Fig. 4.16 and 4.17). In Munich, the space was certainly the brightest of the three (New York and Brussels being the other two), as ceiling lights were also used. This situation contributed to a change in the viewer's experience of the works as they were no longer in a dimly lit space. Through the press release, the visitors were informed that with *Woods Group*, *Lonely Vampire* and *Joseph Supplicates*, the Goetz Collection was presenting "three of the most important works from the series."⁶⁹ This statement was not further explained or justified in the press release or in the exhibition catalogue. The reading of the interview published in the catalogue informs us, however, that *Woods Group* is one of Kelley's favorite installations of the *EAPR* series. The artist states: "it is a kind of forum for the presentation of my writing. It contains videotapes of actors speaking various dialogues that are very abstract – somewhat similar to the kind of writing I did for performances in the 1980s."⁷⁰ Perhaps an installation such as *Woods Group* can be interpreted as a key one within the body of work of *Day Is Done* as one of the videos projected stages a vampire delivering a motivational speech to the workers of the Educational Complex. In the very beginning, the vampire insists on the importance played by assemblies and claims that "They not only provide a respite from the daily work schedule, through them we are exposed to speeches, music, drama, and other

⁶⁹ Press release of the exhibition *Mike Kelley*, Goetz Collection, Munich (1 December 2008 – 25 April 2009), accessed July 4, 2011, <http://www.sammlung-goetz.de/index2.php?lang=en&pn=exh&m=past>.

⁷⁰ Karsten Löckemann and Stephan Urbaschek. "A Telephone Conversation," 92-93.

uplifting forms of communication.”⁷¹ During assembles, workers also “witness the seasonal plays... and crown the yearly ‘Joseph’ and ‘Mary,’ who are chosen from our ranks.”⁷² By hearing that a Joseph and a Mary ought to be selected, the visitors could then make a connection with the installation *Joseph Supplicates* that was presented in the same room. And, seeing that a vampire was giving a motivational speech in which he celebrated events, music and dramas, links could be made to *Lonely Vampire*. These connections could be made in Brussels and in Munich, since the three works were presented alongside each other in both exhibitions.

Since their acquisition by the Goetz collection, *Woods Group*, *Lonely Vampire*, and *Joseph Supplicates* have been shown together on two occasions, first in Brussels in 2008, and then in Munich in 2008-2009. It seems as though these three fragments have been fixed in a presentation mode that links them together, creating a mini-version of *Day Is Done*. They might fail to reproduce the “event” feature of the inaugural showing of *Day Is Done*, but they nevertheless show a representative sample of the re-enactments created by Kelley inspired by photographs and the literature on repressed memory syndrome. The socialization of the three installations acquired by the Goetz Collection is much more intertwined than that of the two installations acquired by the Stedelijk Museum, as the latter two have not been exhibited together. Though part of the same collection, their socialization did not occur concurrently. Yet, in 2010, when a selection of the collection of media art works owned by Ingvild Goetz was presented at ZKM in Karlsruhe, only *Woods Group* featured in the exhibition.⁷³ Therefore, the socialization process of the three works owned by Ingvild Goetz was rerouted, since it was not the mini-version that was shown, but only *Woods Group*. Nevertheless, the exhibition catalogue included mentions of the three works in addition to an entry on the single-channel video *Extracurricular Activity Projective Reconstruction #1 (A Domestic Scene)*.⁷⁴ In fact, the catalogue gave the impression that the three artworks that had once been part of the large-scale installation *Day Is Done* had been included in the exhibition. The text in this catalogue is made up of long quotations of Mike Kelley’s 2007 text on *Day Is Done*, to

⁷¹ Excerpt from video *EAPR #6 (Motivational Speech)*. See also the libretto in Mike Kelley, *Day is Done* (New York: Gagosian Gallery; New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), 521.

⁷² Mike Kelley, *Day is Done*, 521.

⁷³ *Fast Forward 2: The Power of Motion. Media Art Sammlung Goetz*, ZKM, Stuttgart, 18 June – 3 October 2010. Curators: Peter Weibel, Gregor Jansen, Andreas Beutin, Ingvild Goetz, and Stephan Urbaschek. Accessed July 4, 2011,

http://www02.zkm.de/fastforward2/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1&Itemid=12&lang=en.

⁷⁴ Stephan Urbaschek, “Mike Kelley,” in *Fast Forward 2: The Power of Motion. Media Art Sammlung Goetz*, ed. Ingvild Goetz and Stephan Urbaschek (Karlsruhe: ZKM and Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2010), 278-281.

which I will come back later in the chapter, and of the essays that appeared in the catalogue of the *Mike Kelley* exhibition held at the Goetz Collection in 2008.⁷⁵

To this day, in the various exhibition-accompanying publications, the offspring of *Day Is Done* are still framed and interpreted from the perspective of their belonging to a larger body of work. No extended formal interpretation of their individual content has been made so far. The owning institutions of these works have adopted quite a paradoxical position: they display them as autonomous entities, but the iconography of the installations acquired has not been extensively analyzed in publications – rather, the accompanying information always relates the individual works to the series as a whole. On account of the framing that has occurred so far, I assert that the mediation of these works done via wall labels, exhibition booklets, and exhibition catalogues, contributes to treating the exhibition of these works outside of the *Day Is Done* exhibition as *partial manifestations*, as if “some parts or aspects [...] are momentarily or definitively inaccessible.”⁷⁶ The emphasis has been put on how their entire project came into being and on what the visitors could not see, rather than discussing the content of the individual works the visitors were facing.

The *de-description* done in this part of the chapter has shown that even if the offspring of *Day Is Done* are considered individual works of art, when interpreted, more attention is paid to the body of work to which they belong than their unique content and theme. They remain strongly connected to their inaugural exhibition at the Gagosian Gallery. Within the genealogy of the project, more emphasis is always paid to the ancestor – the *Day Is Done* exhibition of 2005 – than to the offspring. In the next section of the chapter, I will discuss alternative configurations of *Day Is Done*, the book *Day Is Done* and the film *Day Is Done* that the artist made after the exhibition at the Gagosian Gallery. I will highlight their role in the socialization of the overall project *Day Is Done*.

4.4. Alternative Configurations of *Day Is Done*

The previous section of the chapter focused on discussing and analyzing the *exhibited* components of the *Day Is Done* project. In this section, I describe phases of the life cycle of *Day Is Done* that occurred after its 2005 exhibition: namely the release of the film *Day Is*

⁷⁵ Mike Kelley, “Day Is Done,” in *Day is Done* (New York: Gagosian Gallery; New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), 461-465. Karsten Löckemann and Stephan Urbaschek, ed. *Mike Kelley* (Munich: Sammlung Goetz, 2008).

⁷⁶ Gérard Genette, *The Work of Art: Immanence and Transcendence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 211.

Done that took place in 2006 and the publication of the catalogue *Day Is Done* that occurred in 2007. The aim of this section is to show that all offspring of *Day Is Done* – the video/sculpture installations discussed above, the film, and the book – have to be considered as part of a whole – the project *Day Is Done* – and that the socialization of this project continues to take place because of its offspring.

The Film *Day Is Done*

In 2005-2006, Mike Kelley made a film with the videos integrated into the exhibition *Day Is Done*. Whereas the video *EAPR #1 (A Domestic Scene)* was realized in the tradition of early television dramas, with this alternative configuration of *Day Is Done*, the artist wanted “to weave a large group of *Extracurricular Activity Projective Reconstructions* into something resembling a feature-length musical film.”⁷⁷ Indeed, the film, available on two DVDs, lasts 169 minutes and gathers dance and song numbers along with a few spoken scenes. This film offers the *Day Is Done* project another distribution possibility and is certainly, of all the different configurations of *Day Is Done*, the easiest format to present. It is also the one that allows the broadest diffusion as it can be rented and screened in theaters, in festivals as well as in museums. Aside from the book, to which the next section of this part of the chapter is dedicated, it is one of the most affordable offspring of the project.⁷⁸

In the film, the videos *EAPR #2 to 32* are not edited in order. After the opening credits, the film begins with a view of the Educational Complex (not Kelley’s architectural model, but in this occurrence, Cal Arts, the art school Kelley attended for his Masters degree). All of the film’s scenes either take place in the complex or in its surroundings. After hearing the whistle of a train (i.e. “choo-choo”), viewers are introduced to the first three characters of the film executing a train dance in the institution’s corridors. Their dancing throughout the building serves as intermissions between different first scenes of the film. The sound of the train whistle’s serves as a warning that it is time for all the workers to gather for a motivational speech. Vampires, ghouls, devils, goths and other kinds of carnivalesque characters are leaving their offices and heading outside guided by a druid, which will lead them to a stage where the Motivational Vampire will give his speech. Four workers – forming the Woods Group - will leave to wander in the complex’s woody surroundings, but most workers will

⁷⁷ Mike Kelley, *Day is Done*, 507.

⁷⁸ Like the single-channel video of *EAPR #1 (A Domestic Scene)*, *Day Is Done* is also distributed by Electronic Arts Intermix. See *Electronic Arts Intermix* website for the fees, accessed July 4, 2011, <http://www.eai.org/titleOrderingFees.htm?id=14349#terms>.

either participate in or attend to different dance and song numbers of the yearly grand spectacle.

As critic Paul Young has suggested, *Day Is Done* is “more of a collage than a typical narrative film.”⁷⁹ It is made of many short scenarios based on specific photographs. In the film, to indicate to the viewers that a scene is a re-enactment of a photograph, Kelley has inserted title cards. For instance, prior to the motivational speech, the title *Extracurricular Activity Projective Reconstruction #6* appears, but the subtitle (*Motivational Speech*) does not. Kelley not only assembled the videos in a non-numerical way, he also divided them into fragments. For instance, when presented in the installation version, the video *EAPR #7B (Woods Duo)* lasts 9:22 minutes. In the film version, the video has been divided in 6 fragments that are intertwined with other *EAPR* videos.

With the film, Kelley turned *Day Is Done* into a structured carnivalesque delirium. I use the term structured since a lot of editing has taken place. Contrary to Sven Lütticken, who interprets Kelley’s film *Day Is Done* as a by-product of the exhibition, I consider the film as another configuration of *Day Is Done*; it is one of the project’s offspring.⁸⁰ Kelley did not plainly edit the videos in numerical order, he rethought the project and “intermixed [the videos] into meandering semi-narrative.”⁸¹ Making a film out of the assembled videos is a process that is typical of Kelley’s artistic production: every body of work the artist creates includes artworks created with a great variety of mediums.

Since the re-exhibition of the large-scale installation *Day Is Done* is unlikely to happen, the release of the film *Day Is Done* contributed to the socialization of the project, as it gives the public the opportunity to see all the videos that were shown in the large-scale installation at the Gagosian Gallery. Its launching had the effect of rerouting the scripting process of the project. It is another offspring that now circulates in the art world. Like the other offspring of *Day Is Done* – the 25 video/sculpture installations – discussed above, it is considered by the artist as an individual work of art. I would like to suggest that it also plays a key role in the scripting process of *Day Is Done*, being a single-channel video reconstruction of what the artist had done through the means of an exhibition in 2005. The broken narrative of the film helps understand how all the video/sculpture installations are intertwined.

⁷⁹ Paul Young, “A Video Portrait’s Odd Inspiration,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 20, 2007, accessed July 4, 2011, <http://articles.latimes.com/2007/jan/20/entertainment/et-kelley20>.

⁸⁰ Sven Lütticken, “Viewing Copies: On the Mobility of Moving Images,” *e-flux*, no. 8 (2009), accessed July 4, 2011, <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/view/75>.

⁸¹ See the text on the DVD box of *Day Is Done*.

In section 4.3 of the chapter, I have argued that in their framing, the 25 video/sculpture installations were always strongly connected to the body of work to which they belonged. In the reviews of the film *Day Is Done*, the ancestor – the 2005 exhibition – is also always referred to.⁸² This supports my conclusion that, although the scripting process “branches out” in different directions with the emergence of the offspring, it never loses the connection with its core. The 2005 exhibition is still looming large in the background of all of *Day Is Done*’s offspring.

The Catalogue *Day Is Done*

About two years after the end of the *Day Is Done* exhibition, Yale University Press and the Gagosian Gallery published the catalogue *Day Is Done*. It contains over 450 pages of installation shots and video stills, and reproductions of Kelley’s drawings of the props and costumes used in the making of the videos. It also includes different texts – sanctioning narratives written by the artist, i.e., “*Day Is Done*,” “Scene Notes,” “The Music of *Day Is Done*,” an essay, “Fête accompli” written by John C. Welchman and a libretto, which gathers all the dialogues and lyrics of the different video/sculpture installations. In his texts, Kelley describes his working method, explains his intentions, and identifies his sources of inspiration. Two CDs of music come with the catalogue as well. They gather all the music composed and recorded by Kelley and Scott Benzel. The catalogue *Day Is Done* is a great source of information for those who haven’t seen the exhibition at the Gagosian Gallery. Still, it gives the viewer a different experience than does the exhibition. Indeed, videos are not like paintings; they cannot be reproduced by another means such as a photograph. They can be described in words, but cannot be confined to one single image.

In the first section of the chapter, I have discussed Kelley’s functional writings, the texts he writes to accompany his works that have the purpose of clearly indicating his intentions, and serve to frame the reception of his exhibitions as well. When *Craft Morphology Flow Chart* was first presented at *Carnegie International* in 1991, Kelley’s text was printed in the catalogue. When the first chapter of the *EAPR* series was exhibited at the Emi Fontana Gallery in 2000, Kelley’s text on the project was given to the visitors of the exhibition in the form of a leaflet. In the case of *Day Is Done*, prior to the opening of the exhibition, Kelley published a text of one thousand words in *Artforum* and gave interviews. One could have

⁸² See for instance the following reviews: Holly Willis, “Mike Kelley’s *Day Is Done*,” *LA Weekly*, January 19, 2007; and Paul Young, “A Video Portrait’s Odd Inspiration,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 20, 2007, accessed July 4, 2011, <http://articles.latimes.com/2007/jan/20/entertainment/et-kelley20>.

expected that his framing of the project would cease there. However, the artist decided to expand his initial text and included it in the book *Day Is Done* published almost two years after the exhibition. I assert that the book contributed greatly to the scripting process of *Day Is Done*. Indeed, in this publication, the artist has reached an outstanding level of documentation of this chapter of the *EAPR* series, which could not have been attained if the book had been published concurrently with the exhibition. It would not have been as elaborate. Being published after the exhibition gave the artist a certain distance to choose what would remain of *Day Is Done*, and how he wanted the exhibition and its conception to be remembered. Inevitably, the book is an incomplete script, as it does not speak of the fragmentation of the project, as it does not enumerate the numerous collections and institutions that acquired the work, nor does it reflect on what to expect in the future. It serves to understand the conceptual background of the project and helps readers and researchers visualize what the 2005 exhibition looked like. Yet, it does not include a series of auctorial prescriptions on how to install the offspring in the exhibition space, like the ones included in the installation guides of the 25 video/sculpture installations discussed in section 4.3 of the present chapter. It is a great tool of reference which ought to be complemented by other documents, such as installation guides, exhibition reviews, and so on.

Even if advertised as a catalogue on the Gagosian Gallery website, I would argue that its status is in between an artist's publication and a standard exhibition catalogue.⁸³ I use the term artist's publication and not artist's book as the artist's book is an artwork and *Day Is Done* – the book – is not an artwork but depends on an artwork, more precisely on an artwork that took the form of an exhibition in 2005. Among the usual functions of an exhibition catalogue, Anne-Mœglin-Delcroix states that the catalogue is at least an artwork's trace or the memory of an exhibition; it is a scientific and critical tool written by experts on the topic; and by authenticating the artworks and in acknowledging their importance, the catalogue contributes to establishing their value as artistic products on the market.⁸⁴ Similarly, Klaus Scherübel contends that the exhibition catalogue

functions alongside artworks and the exhibition of those works by granting them a degree of permanence while simultaneously guaranteeing their public existence. It also conditions the current or future perception of artworks via the content of its critical commentaries and the quality of the documentation and information it contains. Thus,

⁸³ See the Gagosian Gallery website, accessed July 4, 2011, <http://www.gagosian.com/exhibitions/24th-street-2005-11-mike-kelley/publications/>.

⁸⁴ Anne Mœglin-Delcroix, "Du catalogue comme œuvre d'art et inversement," *Cahiers du Musée National d'art moderne*, special issue "Du catalogue," no. 56/57 (1996): 96-97.

not only is the catalogue a tool for mediation, but it is authoritative within the art system.⁸⁵

Day Is Done – the book – is indeed a tool for mediation: it acts as the memoir of the 2005 exhibition, it includes the essay of scholar John C. Welchman, and it documents the project by different means (artist's essay, photographs, drawings, libretto). In the end, it contributes to the acknowledgement of the existence of this project and its varied offspring in the different spheres of the art world. Even though Kelley has stated that the different offspring were individual works of art, in his text "Day Is Done," he mainly speaks of *Day Is Done* as an ensemble. Despite the fact that the exhibition has taken place and that the video/sculpture installations have been spread to different collections, one is still given the impression that he/she could see *Day Is Done* as a whole again. I argue that despite the almost impossible re-exhibition, *Day Is Done* still exists precisely because of the various mediators that scripted the work and in spite of its physical fragmentation.

John C. Welchman's essay published in the book makes it more explicit that the exhibition has taken place and is a thing of the past. His essay's title, "Fête accompli," is a play on words. When read in French, it contains a mistake, as "fête" is a feminine word, so the author should have written "fête accomplie." Welchman plays with the words "fête" and "fait" that sound alike, and rather than writing "fait accompli" (a thing that has already happened), he writes "fête accompli." Indeed, the day of the people working in the *Educational Complex* is done, they have attended the yearly grand spectacle. Their day fulfilled with carnivalesque events is over. Just as he had announced already in 2005 in *Artforum*, *Day Is Done*, the exhibition, was "Kelley's chicken dance around the art world."⁸⁶ His essay published in the book reflects on how the artist has done so, and discusses the different themes addressed in the 25 video/sculpture stations.

In contrast to the reception of the 2005 exhibition and of the film released in 2006 that was generally extremely positive, the reception of the book *Day Is Done* has been quite negative. For instance, deputy director of the magazine *Art Monthly*, Ian Hunt, has qualified Kelley's catalogue as a "heavyweight production" and

part of a trend to gigantism that shows money talking between galleries and publishers, and readers innocently seeking information and enlightenment feeling like so many country cousins. The Kelley volume, glossy documentation of an elaborate mixed-media work, is coherent, arranged as chapters following on from photos of extracurricular activity from high-school yearbooks, and of course there's wit and

⁸⁵ Klaus Scherübel, "Tractatus Logico-Catalogicus," accessed July 4, 2011, <http://www.voxphoto.com/english/expositions/tractatus/tractatus.html>.

⁸⁶ John C. Welchman, "1000 Words:" 233.

interest to be found in it, but it also feels like failure to edit and a lost chance to appropriate the available commodity form, the music DVD.⁸⁷

Hunt's suggestion of appropriating the DVD format for documentation of this project is an interesting one. Indeed, the photographs, texts and music of *Day Is Done* included in the catalogue cannot replace the moving tableaux that composed the large-scale installation. This can prompt one to wonder why the artist has decided to publish all the dialogues of the *EAPR* videos #2 to 32, and also accompanied the book with two CDs of music, but did not provide any video recordings of the installation at the Gagosian Gallery. In the *Library Journal*, D. Bryant compared the publication to the 2005 exhibition and stated: "as a book, it simply disappoints. Not recommended."⁸⁸

In these two reviews, the authors express their disappointment, as the book failed to re-enact the exhibition, but I would argue: so would any kind of documentation. The catalogue should not be envisaged as a replacement of the exhibition, but as a complement. By publishing the libretto, which is a compilation of the songs and spoken material of *Day Is Done*, Kelley gave readers the opportunity to take the time to engage with the abstract texts that he wrote having been influenced by photographs of carnivalesque events depicted in high school yearbooks. Therefore, I suggest considering this book, and the film as well for that matter, as another offspring of the project *Day Is Done*. To return to the metaphor of this project proposed in the introduction, the book is a branch of the tree. Engaging with it implies not only taking into account the branch, but also the entire tree. The *de-scription* of *Day Is Done* carried out throughout the chapter has shown how intertwined all offspring are with one another.

4.5 Conclusion

The chapter began with a very brief description of the fragmentation of Carl Andre's *Equivalent*s series. In the case of the *Equivalent*s, their re-exhibition as an ensemble is made impossible as one of the eight *Equivalent*s is made of a different type of brick than the seven others. Nevertheless, the interpretation of each one of them is always made in connection to

⁸⁷ Ian Hunt, "Summer Reading," *Art Monthly*, no. 308 (July-August 2007): 45. Hunt comment on the heavyweight production can also be taken literally as the book weights 8,5 pounds (approximately 3,9 kg).

⁸⁸ David Bryant, "Kelley, Mike & John Welchman. *Day is Done*," *Library Journal*, issue 13 (15 August 2007): 84.

the series to which they belong.⁸⁹ Throughout the chapter, the *de-description* of the life cycle of Mike Kelley's *Day Is Done* has shown how the identity of this work has been shaped over time. *Day Is Done* is only a chapter or a part of the *EAPR* series that Kelley began in reaction to the critical reception of some of his earlier bodies of work. Since his works made with soft toys and other craft materials had been interpreted by certain critics as though they were about him having been abused, Kelley began a series dealing with (fictional) abuse and traumas. This series was also inspired in large part by literature on Repressed Memory Syndrome. The exhibition reviews of his earlier production have been mediators that triggered the very making of the *EAPR* series.

The section of the *EAPR* series scrutinized in this chapter, *Day Is Done*, is an artwork that initially took the form of an exhibition. As I have argued in the chapter, it was a landmark exhibition. The scale of the installation shown at the Gagosian Gallery made it impossible to be sold as a whole, which led to its fragmentation into 25 video/sculpture installations. The artist and his art dealer had already planned this fragmentation prior to the opening of the show. The spreading of the offspring into different collections meant that from that point on, the works would be exhibited outside of the context in which they were born. The *de-description* of some of the re-exhibitions of the offspring has shown that different strategies have taken place. For instance, the Goetz Collection acquired three offspring, as if attempting to create a mini-version of *Day Is Done*. On two occasions (in Brussels and Munich), *Woods Group*, *Lonely Vampire*, and *Joseph Supplicates* were exhibited in proximity to one another. Nevertheless, when exhibited together or alone, the interpretation of the offspring usually pays more attention to the body of work to which they belong rather than to the offspring themselves.⁹⁰ This leads to the conclusion that rather than ceasing to socialize after it was spread to different collections, *Day Is Done* continued to socialize through its offspring. The 2005 exhibition remains the backbone of any interpretation of the offspring. The present chapter has shown how the scripting process of *Day Is Done* has evolved over time and how it branched off after the 2005 exhibition, but despite the fragmentation and the release of other offspring, a film and a book, all parts still very strongly refer back to the 2005 exhibition, both conceptually and thematically. To allude, one last time, to the metaphor of the tree, I suggested that the roots of *Day Is Done* can be found in a part of the critical reception of

⁸⁹ See for instance the description on the Tate website, accessed July 4, 2011, <http://www.tate.org.uk/servlet/ViewWork?workid=508>.

⁹⁰ The framing of *Switching Marys* in the exhibition *Holy Inspiration* organized by the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam is an exception.

Kelley's artistic production from the 1980s and early 1990s. It is these reviews that led him to begin the *EAPR* series to which *Day Is Done* belongs. The trunk of *Day Is Done* is its 2005 exhibition held at the Gagosian Gallery. Finally, *Day Is Done*'s tree branches are the many offspring that were released on the market after the 2005 show.

Engaging with *Day Is Done*, no matter from which angle implies the study of a network in which numerous offspring and mediators interact. Using *scripting* as a concept, and *de-scription* as a method gave me the ability to discern the exact details of the socialization process of *Day Is Done*, identify all the mediators involved in its life cycle and their respective influence, and thus better grasp the identity of the work. Instead of seeing the offspring as individual works, my *de-scription* has shown that each of them in fact connects back to the center: the 2005 exhibition.