

PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT

This agreement is made on ____/____/____

BETWEEN:

1. The artist referred to herein as the punchee
2. The participant referred to herein as the puncher

(1) _____

Full name of the punchee (printed)

(2) _____

Full name of the puncher (printed)

CONTEXTUAL REFERENCE

On the 19th of November 1971, Chris Burden conducted a performance piece called *Shoot*. The artist made an agreement with a friend to be shot at close range. Burden used his body as a means by which to express the complex relationship between himself as the solicitor of the service, and an individual who is being asked to commit an act of violence. The bullet was merely meant to graze Burden's arm, but he moved slightly and was shot directly through the arm.

Burden aimed to explore violence within the context of the social and political conditions of the time (the Vietnam War from 1955 to 1975, in which many young men were forced into militant roles, as well as the increasing displays of graphic violence and uncensored imagery across various media sources). He aimed to confront society's desensitisation to violence by exposing an

audience to an act of violence. Burden is thus considered to be embracing the reality of pain and suffering.

He reminds us of the corporeality of our lives and physical bodies, whilst simultaneously exploring an interesting and unusual relationship between himself and the shooter.

When we ask somebody to harm us, what determines their willingness to engage in the act? If any, what moral responsibility does that individual have over the consequences of their actions?

How does this impact what they think and feel about themselves, as well as the person who has been harmed?

THE PRACTICALITIES OF THE PERFORMANCE

This artwork involves a contractual performance agreement between the (1) **punchee** and (2) **puncher**, in which the puncher punches the punchee.

Prior to the performance, the (2) **puncher** is filmed and requested to state their name and relation to the (1) **punchee**. They will also state that they understand that they are in no way liable for any damage caused or injuries sustained.

The puncher may, under no circumstances whatsoever (regardless of any damage caused or injuries sustained) apologise directly, indirectly, or by insinuation or suggestion through any means of communication (whether verbal, non-verbal, written or visual), both before the act commences, and over the course of the interactions between the involved parties post-punch.

Following the (2) **puncher's** punch of the (1) **punchee**, the (1) **punchee** will shake the hand of the (2) **puncher** and thank them for their participation. The (2) **puncher** may respond if they wish, but their response may not be an apology in any capacity, nor any form of enquiry regarding whether the punch hurt.

Following the performance, the (2) **puncher** will be briefly interviewed on their experience of the performance.

(*)The following questions will be asked:

1. Have you ever punched someone before?
 - If so, how was this different?
 - If not, what was it like?
2. How did it make you feel?
3. Do you feel morally conflicted or somewhat responsible for the action even though you were requested to do so?
4. How does this impact the way that you feel about yourself?

THE AIM OF THE PERFORMANCE

This performance piece is positioned as an investigation into morality.

When requested to perform an act of violence at the request of a willing party, what are the emotional and personal moral repercussions? Who can and cannot harm someone physically? What role does the relationship between the (1) **punchee** and (2) **puncher** play in a participant's willingness to hit someone, as well as the way they are able to hit someone? How would/could this impact the connection between the involved parties going forward?

Is a favour still a favour if someone is harmed in the process?

CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT

1. I, _____(FULL NAME OF PARTICIPANT/PUNCHER), the (2) **puncher**, hereby agree to be filmed for the purpose of a performance piece in which I will punch _____(FULL NAME OF ARTIST/PUNCHEE), the (2) **punchee** on the ____/____/____ (FULL DATE).
2. I acknowledge and understand that I will under no circumstances be held liable in any capacity for any injuries sustained or damage caused to the (1) punchee.
3. Before the act, I consent to a filmed interview in which I will state:
 - my name
 - my relation to the (1) **punchee**
 - an acknowledgement of the fact that I will not be held liable for any damage caused to the (1) **punchee**.
4. I solemnly vow to **refrain from apologising in any capacity**, whether directly, indirectly, verbally, non-verbally, visually or through written communication, both before the act or at any point in time in my relationship with the (1) punchee post-punch.
5. I consent to a brief, filmed interview in which I answer the set of questions aforementioned in the contract following the action (*).

Date signed: ____/____/____

Signed: _____

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT (puncher)

Signed: _____

SIGNATURE OF ARTIST(punchee)

Signed: _____

WITNESS SIGNATURE

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