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Art 325

*Within the Moment: Layers to Yes* – Artist Statement

*Within the Moment: Layers to Yes* is an introspective performance piece that explores the intricate, layered process of asserting personal consent. The piece challenges the common understanding of consent as a simple, binary exchange through symbolic gestures, body movement, color, and a distorted audio dialogue. It emphasizes the power of choice, vulnerability, and the internal discussion that informs consent, offering a personal exploration of autonomy in moments of decision-making in romantic and sexual contexts.

The form of the performance—layering eleven white shirts, each inscribed with a word representing a step in my personal consent policy—directly reflects the complexity and intentionality of consent. Each shirt is removed consecutively, asserting the unfolding of my internal dialogue and the gradual process of self-affirmation. The accompanying audio, my voice reverbed and slowed down, represents my thought process, inviting the viewership to hear the careful, sometimes hesitant, yet persistent path toward my final “Yes.” The audio employs lengthy pauses towards the beginning, alluding to the notion of time needed to make informed decisions. Yet, throughout the piece, the audio picks up in speed, with minimized time, which seeks to address the chaotic yet exciting moments when consent is determined to be genuine within heated moments.

The color projections in the room begin with red, symbolizing hesitation and boundary-setting, transitional through pink, purple, blue, and teal, and ultimately ending in green, representative of my agency within my affirmations. These colors, reminiscent of stop-and-go cues, understand the non-verbal aspects of communication that are integral to understanding consent. The combination of the performance, distorted audio, and changing colors creates an immersive experience that reflects the tension and liberation inherent to my moments of choosing personal autonomy.

The white shirts and undergarments symbolize societal constructs of purity and self-awareness. Stripping away these layers represents the act of removing external influences and accessing my true self. The final moment, when I stand in my undergarments with the word “Yes” plastered, celebrates the vulnerability and power of self-determined consent. Within this moment, the green color flashes in and out, furthering the external comprehension that I am proclaiming my consent. The culmination encapsulated both the emotional fragility and empowerment involved in asserting my boundaries.

This performance draws from the larger rhetoric surrounding consent and bodily autonomy, engaging with movements like #MeToo and the ongoing conversation of sexual agency among women. Artists such as Yoko Ono (*Cut Piece*, 1964), Cassils (*Becoming an Image*, 2012), and Adrian Piper (*The Mythic Being*, 1973-75) have similarly explored the body as a site for self-expression, vulnerability, and resistance. These works interrogate power dynamics,

consent, and identity through direct, often provocative, engagement with the audience. Drawing from these works, I deepened my personal understanding of self within broader contemporary contexts, leading to my deliberate choice to tear off my shirts—an act that asserts the power of my body within the observed space.

Additionally, this piece connects to the historical and ongoing struggles of bodily autonomy, specifically through a femme lens, including the feminist movements of the 20th century and the continued fight for agency in sexual and romantic contexts. By centering the internal process of consent, *Within the Moment: Layers to Yes* challenges the oversimplified, externalized view of consent, offering a personal, introspective exploration that emphasizes the importance of self-determination.

By chronicling my internal dialogue of consent, this performance positions consent not as an isolated, binary moment but as a continuous, reflective practice rooted in personal agency, autonomy, and clarity—an ongoing process that demands both self-awareness and courage to assert.

Documentation (under Final Unit):

<https://www.artbykriss.com/art325>