

# *The Body is (not) Here*

## Franko B's Archive



Image © Hugo Glendinning

14 February 2020 - 1st May 2020 / Tuesday - Friday, 9.30am to 5pm

## The Franko B Archive

In 2008, Franko B donated his archive to the Theatre Collection where it is part of the Live Art Archives. It contains over 30 years of material relating to his performances, exhibitions, screenings, visual art, collaborations and work as an artist, curator, lecturer, musician and mentor. The archive holds video and audio recordings, photographic stills, publicity material, published material, interview transcripts, contractual agreements, correspondence and personal ephemera. The collection also contains approximately 40 objects that featured in Franko's performances or installations, including several items and garments fashioned from the remains of bloodied canvas from performances.

In Spring 2018, the Theatre Collection was awarded a Research Resources Award by the Wellcome Trust to catalogue and conserve the archive, making it accessible to the public as part of a project entitled *Challenging Archives: Delivering research access, public engagement and the curatorial care of the Franko B archive*. The catalogue is now available online and contains almost 2,800 entries supplemented by contextual information from Franko, who has worked alongside the project team.

This exhibition marks the end of the Wellcome funded project and includes a symposium at Arnolfini in Bristol exploring the challenging nature of archives, alongside a series of free public events. To find out more about these please pick up a leaflet in the exhibition or visit the Theatre Collection website (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/theatre-collection/>) where you can also read reflections and responses to the archive from our writers-in-residence, Maddy Costa and Mary Paterson, who are producing a small publication exploring their archival encounters (<https://theatreollection.blogs.bristol.ac.uk/>).

## Interpreting the Archive

This exhibition catalogue contains a number of different voices, each of whom have interpreted the items on display, suggesting different ways to approach, engage and think about Franko's archive.

Each theme (Body and Biography, Body and Performance, Queer Bodies and Inside and Outside the Body) within the exhibition is introduced by a short text from the curatorial team, providing additional context within which to view the selected items. This is followed by a numbered list of every item on display alongside a short descriptive entry taken from the online catalogue (to find out more you can use the catalogue number starting FB to search for an item (<http://www.calmview2.eu/bristoltheatrearchive/calmview/>)).

Some of the objects have additional texts, many of which have been written by participants of introductory workshops to Franko's archive. These include responses from medical students on the BA Intercalated Medical Humanities degree and the MSc Human Geography: Society and Space, members of the University's staff LGBT+ Network, as well as entries from the Franko B Project Archivist and the specialist textile conservator who has worked on some of the objects shown in the exhibition.

Together with Franko's own voice which can be heard in the exhibition via an audio recording, these different responses to the archive provide a multitude of interpretations, underlining the breadth and richness of material found within Franko's archive.

*Please be aware that the exhibition contains adult themes and content, which may not be suitable for all audiences. We encourage discussion about the content of all our exhibitions; visitors are invited to talk to a member of Theatre Collection staff if they would like further information.*

## ***The Body is (not) Here***

*“My work is about what it is to be human...”*

The human body looms large throughout the archive of visual artist, curator and teacher Franko B; when we encounter Franko’s archive we encounter Franko’s body.

Coming to recognition during the rise of performance and live art in the 1990s, Franko’s deeply autobiographical work presents the body as both a site and a material. His body is visible throughout the exhibition via documentation of performances and exhibitions, captured in personal photographs, described in vivid detail within publicity material and press cuttings, or hinted at by its absence through objects, traces and the residue of performances.

Like Franko’s work, these bodily traces can challenge the way we see, feel and experience the world around us, suggesting that the archive too can ask us to consider ‘what it is to be human’.

Seen in the exhibition painted head to toe in ghostly white or oil-slick black, Franko’s body has been described as a ‘blank canvas’ and an ‘empty page’ – a ‘container’ ready to hold all our stories. Yet, never far from the surface, Franko’s symbolic tattoos betray this notion, revealing intimate details about the specifics of his own life. By interweaving both these personal and universal stories Franko’s body and his archive become spaces open to interpretation; spaces within which pain, suffering, pleasure, activism and affirmation are all experienced.

By drawing attention to both the material and ephemeral nature of the items on display, *The Body is (not) Here*, provides audiences with multiple encounters with Franko’s body and the body of his archive. Visitors are encouraged to consider their own flesh and blood (and subsequent experiences with life, death, suffering and love), exploring not only the body as language, but the language we use to describe both our own bodies and the archive.

## ***Body and Biography***

*“I have always been obsessed with bodies...”*

Franko has often suggested that to understand his work you must also understand where his work comes from. This can be done by looking at personal and professional images, words, symbols, and traces of his body within the archive.

Franko B was born in Milan in 1960 and spent much of his troubled childhood within Red Cross institutions, separated from his family. He later left Italy moving to London in 1979, where he lived in Brixton during a period that encompassed punk culture, squatting and the race riots.

Inspired by an evening class in ceramics, Franko enrolled at Camberwell College of Arts in 1987, completing a foundation degree before undertaking further study at Chelsea College of Arts and Byam Shaw School of Art. Even as a student Franko's work was concerned with the human body, first as a subject for large-scale paintings and later exploring it through photography and film, using his own and others bodies as subject, material and site.

Described as an 'open textbook', Franko's body tells the story of both his life and his art. Featuring heavily throughout both are symbols of a red cross and a red heart, which are seen here in images captured over a number of years. They appear as inky memories upon his skin, lit-up in neon upon the gallery wall, or smiling out at us like a row of statues inlaid within a set of discarded dentures.

These symbolic signs later merge with the scars of past works and performances, creating a tapestry of word and image – upon the body, throughout his work and within the archive – reminding us of the fragility of both life and love.

## WALL & CASE 1: Body and Biography

1. **Black and white photographic portrait of Franko B**, c.1992, photographer unidentified (possibly Jamie McLeod), FB/1/7/1/1/1
2. **Black and white photographic portrait of Franko B**, c.1995, photographer Housk Randall, FB/1/7/1/1/5

*"What stories does Franko B tell with his body? How does he pose, what images does he accept over others? What scars are visible? What lives have been lived in this skin? What stories are told by his choices? What is intimate?"*

Student in MSc Human Geography: Society and Space

3. **Black and white photographic portrait of Franko B**, c.1995-2000, photographer 'Ashley', FB/1/7/1/1/8
4. **Photograph** of Franko B in front of collaged artwork, 2000, photographer unknown, FB/10/1/9/1
5. **Photograph** of Franko B's tattooed head, c. 2000-2003, photographer unknown, FB/10/1/9/6
6. **Exhibition catalogue** for *Shelf Life* exhibition at Two10 Gallery, published by Wellcome Trust, 2000, FB/3/2/4/1/1
7. **Photograph** of Franko B in front of artwork, possibly taken in Franko's flat, September 1998, photographer unknown, FB/10/1/5
8. **Invitation** to Franko B / Zhang Huan *Posizione e Deposizione* exhibition opening at Galleria Pack, Milan, Italy, 2008, image by Manuel Vason from the collaboration *I Feel Nothing* in 2003, FB/3/2/27/1
9. **A sketch** of Franko B by Kamal Ackarie (Franko's collaborator on the performance piece *Don't Leave Me This Way*, black pen on white paper, 2006, FB/2/8/1/2/4
10. **Black and white photograph** of Franko's head inside a cross, c.1995-2000, photographer Renzo Chiesa, FB/1/7/1/1/9
11. **Postcard** of *Because of Love* sent by Franko as a birthday contribution to *Tate Liverpool is 25* display, 2013, FB/3/2/43/1

12. **Photographs** from the opening of *Full of Love* exhibition at Marena Rooms Gallery, Torino, 2007, FB/3/1/16/2/1
13. **Four pin badges** of red cross, red heart, red equals symbol, and 'oh lover boy', sold at *Oh Lover Boy* exhibition/performance, 2001, FB/2/6/2/1/5
14. **Invite** to the exhibition *Mama I Can't Sing* at Last Order(s), London, 1996, FB/3/1/1/1/1
15. **Black rimmed glasses** donated as too scratched to wear and Franko's prescription in right eye changed after cancer treatment, 2013-2018, FB-9-3-4

*“Franko B’s work is often about vulnerability. If you’ve ever had to wear glasses for daily life, you know the vulnerability of not wearing them, especially around others. Might performing without his glasses have created another layer of vulnerability? Might it have provided a distancing, a cushion to soften gazes, reactions? Might it have been to separate experiences of the performer between artist/actor and viewer?”*

Student, MSc Human Geography: Society and Space

16. **Top plate of dentures** with gold detail on teeth which reads '22 LOVER', c.2015, FB/9/3/5

*“The artist is as part of the art as the performance itself. Franko B has become a piece, a canvas, a gallery etc. His tattoos, teeth and glasses are part of a constant show, some change regularly. Surprisingly, the ones that you would expect to change the most are very representative of Franko B (glasses) while his teeth change in almost every performance he made. In the absence of Franko’s living gallery there are pieces that can evoke the missing body of an artist known for his performances and living art.”*

Student, MSc Human Geography: Society and Space

*“A set of dentures worn by Franko. The cross motif is used frequently throughout his work, potentially referencing his time in the Red Cross orphanage and a possible religious allegory.”*

Medical student, Intercalated BA in Medical Humanities

## ***Body and Performance***

*“All of my art embodies ‘me’, and my body is always present in my work whether the form is a live event, a photograph or an object...”*

Franko's work is often discussed within the context of live art, yet his archive suggests a wider framework, revealing the breadth of his practice as a visual artist, incorporating sculpture, painting, textiles and performance.

His early work sits alongside a group of artists, such as Ron Athey, Orlan, and Stelarc, whose body-based performances pushed the limits of both the human body and the audience. Their work centred around its 'liveness', often placing the viewer in the uncomfortable role of a voyeur; witness to a host of actions including pain, suffering, and sadomasochism.

Documented within the archive, Franko's first performances took place in fetish clubs such as FIST, followed gradually by invitations from art institutions. Franko's first performance in this new environment was *Mama I Can't Sing (Part II)* in *The Ripple Effect* a showcase for new artists as part of *Rapture: The Body, Ritual and Sacred Practice* season at the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) in 1995. He took part in a number of significant programmes, including *Totally Wired* (ICA, 1995), the *National Review of Live Art* (Glasgow, 2001), *Marked: A season of work exploring the body as site, metaphor and material* (Arnolfini, 2002) and *Live Culture* (Tate Modern, 2003).

Seen throughout the archive, the body remains central within Franko's work. In 2006 his work *Don't Leave Me This Way* (represented by photographs, technical notes and publicity material) used flashing lights to 'burn' an image of his body on the audience's retinas. In other items on display, the body appears in sculptural and stitched form, or as a teaching aid, embodied by a blindfold and rope which were used in a recent workshop during which participants were attached to a partner for specified length of time.

## CASE 2—Body and Performance

17. **Press cutting** from *Now* magazine with article about Fierce International Performance Festival with an image of *I Miss You* performance at Antwerp, by Niko Raes, c.2000, FB/2/5/3/1/4
18. **ICA events programme** for *Totally Wired: Science, Technology and the Human Form* season showcasing body and performance art, with listings for *Mama, I Can't Sing (Part III)*, and *I'm Not Your Babe*, 1996, FB/2/3/2/1/3
19. **Programme** for Fierce International Performance Festival, one of the UK's most daring international contemporary arts festival, with listing for *Aktion 398*, 2002, FB/2/4/16/1/1
20. **Transcript** of interview between Ron Athey and Franko B including a discussion of Franko bleeding in performances, performing at FIST and Torture Garden, responses to his bleeding performances, performing at Eurokaz Festival in Croatia, Franko's childhood, studying at university, and his final performance of *I'm Not Your Babe* at Cardiff, and ideas for *I Miss You*, c.1997, FB/8/2/5
21. **ICA programme** for May 1996 listing *I'm Not Your Babe* performance as part of *Totally Wired: Science, Technology and the Human Form* season showcasing body and performance art, 1996, FB/2/3/2/1/1
22. **Programme** for *Marked: A season of work exploring the body as site, metaphor and material* at Arnolfini, Bristol, listing screenings of *I'm Not Your Babe 1 (Part 1)*, *I Miss You* and *Milk and Blood*, 2002, FB/3/3/4/4/1
23. **ICA booklet** for *Totally Wired: Science, Technology and the Human Form* season showcasing body and performance art, 1996, with essay about Franko B by Dr Rachel Armstrong, 1996, FB/2/3/2/1/2
24. **Programme** for Performing Bodies series with listing for *I'm Not Your Babe* shown as part of an evening of screenings titled *Ecstatic Repetitions*, at Tate Modern, London, 2000, FB/3/3/4/1/1

25. **Flyer** for National Review of Live Art, at The Arches, Glasgow, 2001, FB/2/4/13/1/3
26. **Flyer** for *The Ripple Effect* (the ICA's monthly platform for new artists) advertising a performance of *Mama I Can't Sing (Part II)*. Franko B's first performance was part of this series during *Rapture: The Body, Ritual and Sacred Practice* season, 1995, FB/2/2/2/1/1
27. **Programme** for *Rapture: The Body, Ritual and Sacred Practice*, with listing for performance of *Mama I Can't Sing (Part II)* as part of *The Ripple Effect*, 1995, FB/2/2/2/1/2
28. **Flyers** for *Introducing Virus Magazine* event with screening of performances and a debate with Franko B as guest of honour at Fura in Lonato, Italy, 1997, FB/4/1/1/1
29. **Leaflet** for *Introducing Virus Magazine* event in Ljubljana, Slovenia, 1997, FB/4/1/1/2
30. **Flyer** for *Virus Magazine Estensioni* event curated by Francesca Alfano Miglietti featuring images (and listings) from *Mama I Can't Sing* photographic series and *I'm Not Your Babe* performance, 1997, FB/4/1/1/3
31. **Resin artwork** containing photographs of Franko B. In one he is painted white wearing a head cone for performance of *Aktion 398* with his assistant, Stuart Barclay, wearing medical whites and face mask, possibly taken at Triple X Festival, Holland, 1998. Artwork made as one of a series of resin blocks in Italy 1999-2000, FB/9/2/2/2

31. **Contact sheets** featuring man posing in a cage, taken and possibly printed by Franko B who had his own darkroom at the time and was often asked to take photographs by friends and acquaintances, c.1991-1995, FB/1/2/2

*"One of the complexities of cataloguing an artist's archive, is the blurring of personal and professional/art and life, which is particularly apparent in Franko's photography, as seemingly personal photographs can often feature in his visual art and video works."*

Project Archivist

33. **Photograph** of Franko B wearing oxygen mask, possibly printed by Franko B who had his own darkroom at the time and was often asked to take photographs by friends and acquaintances, c.1991-1995, FB/1/2/2

34. **Flyers** for FIST club nights (at which he had also performed) featuring photographs taken by Franko B featuring BDSM, bondage and fetish imagery, c.1994-1998, FB/1/3/1/1

35. **Contact sheets** of Franko B and friends preparing for performance at FIST club night, featuring images of Franko B wrapped in bandages with blacked out eyes and sewn lips, and Stuart Barclay (who later became his assistant) and friend dressed in military uniform acting as security and doormen for the club night, 1995, photographer Jamie McLeod, FB/2/1/3

*"Some of my favourite material from the archive are the photographs that show the transformation of Franko's body as he prepares for his performances. This early example before a FIST club night performance shows the extraordinary bodily transformation in the most ordinary of spaces."*

Project Archivist

36. **Leaflet** detailing the technical requirements for *Don't Leave Me This Way* performance, 2006, FB/2/8/1/2/3
37. **Sketch** planning different stages of performance and lighting, for *Don't Leave Me This way*, blue pen on plain card, 2006 (sketch not by Franko B), FB/2/8/1/2/5
38. **Two photographs** of promotional shots for *Don't Leave Me This Way* performance, c.2006, photographer unknown, FB/2/8/1/3/1
39. **On Tour magazine** published by the British Council opened to an article by Lois Keidan on Live Culture and featuring an image from *Oh Lover Boy* series by Manuel Vason, 2003, FB/2/5/8/1/9
40. **Three photographs** of art work by Franko B including *I Miss You*, 2003, *Love in Times of Pain*, 2008, and part of a stitched canvas, undated. All signed on the reverse by Franko B as proof of authentication, 2013-2015, photographer Hugo Glendinning , FB/1/7/4
41. **Death and Romance: a workshop with Franko B booklet** detailing workshop held at Palazzo Lucarini Contemporary, Trevi, Italy, in 2016 with photographs by Riccardo Dogana, FB/4/4/1/10/2
42. **Blindfold** used for a workshop activity at *Stalker - A Franko B Workshop* held at Maubourguet, France, in May 2019, in which participants were led around by a partner, FB/4/4/1/15/5
43. **Piece of rope** used as part of an activity at *Stalker - A Franko B Workshop* held at Maubourguet, France, in May 2019, in which participants were attached to a partner for specified length of time, FB/4/4/1/15/4

44. **Mixed media collage** by Franko B of: textile items of blood stained canvas; post office £20 bronze currency bag; cross stitch panel of domestic scene with red cross cut out design; cloth crosses and hearts; material relating to trip to Belgrade; a technical drawing of *Bleeding Kit*; sketch of toy ambulance by Franko B; magazine cuttings including front cover of *Virus Mutations*; image of body scoring work *If You Love Me Really Love Me Please Hurt Me*; various images of Franko B, Darcy Bustle, the Queen, Paul Burrell, Saddam Hussein, Osama Bin Laden, Halle Berry, Tony Blair, Paula Ratcliff, dissected heart, back of sailor's head, man and woman in matching bathrobes and slippers; postcards including *Bleeding Man* neon work by Franko B, a push button, flyers for McDonalds and club nights; receipt for Britart Commodities for artwork *Circle (centrepoint)* by artist 'Lynn'; Self Adhesive Chest Wig fancy dress item; UPS envelope; Jiffy Bag with unknown contents addressed to Kris Canavan; packet of sterile latex gloves; ticket stub for performance of *Still Life* at SLG; blank evaluation questionnaire from The Whitechapel Gallery for *A Short History of Performance: Part One* exhibition covered in red ink (potentially blood), c.2002, FB/9/2/6

45. **Recording** of Franko B discussing different aspects of the archive, including the mixed media collaged work (FB/9/2/6)
46. **Colour giclée photographic print** of Franko B performing *I Miss You* at Kunsten Festival des Arts, Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels, Belgium, 2005 by Hugo Glendinning, recent acquisition: uncatalogued

*“He’s painted himself white. He’s hidden his tattoos and become art. His body is now an object, not Franko B, but still him. Red, white, black, colours used by clowns in their performances. Clowns are often sad, vulnerable and their performances very physical. Blood in the 1980s and 90s was political, perhaps he is trying to reclaim blood as a personal thing, his own paint to use in a melancholy performance”*

LGBT+ Staff Network member

## **Queer Bodies**

“...*insignificant, unsafe, untrusted, landscapes, gender, benders, replaced, insignificant, brothers, destroyed, killings, wrongs, for, honour, whose?...*’

Franko’s work and Franko’s body are both personal and political, with his sexuality as a gay man never far from the surface, giving visibility to a number of issues.

Within the archive the politicisation of Franko’s own body begins with images of work produced whilst at art school, such as *Not by Benetton* (1991), produced as a parody of the United Colours of Benetton advertising campaign using racial diversity.

During this period he also made a number of works in reference to homophobic legislation, including *Section 28* of the Local Government Act which prohibited the promotion of homosexuality by local authorities, and high profile legal cases such as ‘*Operation Spanner*’, in which 16 gay men were prosecuted for consensual sadomasochistic activities. In response, Franko scored words upon his back such as ‘Freedom’ and ‘Protect Me’.

The act of bloodletting within Franko’s work can also be viewed as an act of protest, such as against the ban on giving blood as a gay man. Within this context blood (and images in the exhibition of Franko’s bleeding body) can be seen as highly politicised. They reaffirm the ‘liveness’ of Franko’s body as opposed to pain or death (as often associated with the blood of gay men during the AIDS crisis).

Other queer bodies documented within the archive are seen through the lens of pornography (used in collages and resin works) as well as photographs of Franko engaged in sexual acts, blurring the physical boundaries between life and art. Similarly, emotions also intertwine, as seen in the above quote from *Insignificant* (2015) in which Franko tussles with language, attempting to define the notion of love.

## Case 3—Queer Bodies

47. **Contact sheets** of photographic series titled *Not by Benetton*, parodying the United Colours of Benetton advertising campaigns (on the theme of racial diversity) taken by Franko B, featuring three men posing together, c.1991, FB/1/1/3/2/1
48. **Framed photograph** of three men posing together as part of *Not by Benetton* photographic series parodying the United Colours of Benetton advertising campaigns (on the theme of racial diversity) taken by Franko B, c.1991, FB/1/1/3/2/2

*"A frame with a cracked backing board and snapped string. It could have been hung in his, mine or your home. Old and withered edges encase a photograph stained with what? Darkroom chemicals? Age? Or was it taken out and passed amongst friends? Is it the stain of a greasy thumb print of a gallery employee? The photo rattles and moves loosely in the frame. The sitters laugh and pose in a pile on the floor. Skin contrasts and touch moulds them together as one, no longer 3"*

LGBT+ Staff Network member

49. **Photograph** of two naked men holding a basketball, c.1991-1995, photographer Franko B, FB/1/2/2
50. **The Oberon Book of Queer Monologues** edited by Scottee, published by Oberon Books, London, 2018, opened to contribution from Franko B with piece titled *Insignificant*, 2018, FB/8/4/12

*Insignificant*

Franko B (2015)

*Love, insignificant, this, insignificant, body, insignificant, powerless, insignificant, never, insignificant, democracy, insignificant, pain, insignificant, life, insignificant, shit, insignificant, fuck, insignificant, artist, insignificant, I, insignificant, mediocracy, insignificant, deleted, insignificant, self, insignificant, promoted, insignificant, love, insignificant, more, insignificant, love, insignificant, beyond, insignificant, reason, insignificant, wounds, insignificant, sound, insignificant, refugee, insignificant, performance, insignificant, education, insignificant, falling, insignificant, undesired, insignificant, identity, insignificant, forced, insignificant, sucked, insignificant,*

prostitution, insignificant, deluded, insignificant, untouchable, insignificant, life, insignificant, useless, insignificant, hypocrite, insignificant, obscure, live, pricks poison, fear, numb, disappointment, insignificant, me, insignificant, scum, insignificant, anal, insignificant, rebellious, insignificant, bad, insignificant, ghetto, insignificant, untidy, insignificant, secure, insignificant, insane, insignificant, what, insignificant, marginalised, insignificant, heroes, insignificant, irrelevant, unbearable, intimacy, living, dead forbidden, dying, for, nothing, brain, washed, by, ignorance, and, stupidity, optimistic, insignificant, self, opportunistic, isolated, destruction, more, possibilities, insignificant, beautiful, insignificant, corrupted, insignificant, landscape, insignificant, unfamiliar, insignificant, ticking, insignificant, time, insignificant, no, insignificant, mission, insignificant, philistine, insignificant, doubt, insignificant, everything insignificant, front, up, unfriendly, playground, again, egotistic, society, trust, given, dying, entertainment, profit, from, discarded, chaos, diseases, firing, elemental, emancipated, dignity, terror, taken, a, way, conflicts, opportunistic, never, fragment, power, certain, land, moral, insignificant tortured, betrayals, home, lover, insignificant, wanted, insignificant, I'm, insignificant, not, insignificant, fucking, insignificant, christ, insignificant, compromised, murdered, destabilised, fired, up, abandoned, mental, visiting, everything, nothing, aspiration, slaved, respiration, resting, overdose, wars, pain, more, community, invisible, ones, rejected, naked, power, never, fired, profit, unknown, forgiven, hurt, unhealthy, marriage, abuse, trust, anarchic, dishonest, for, ever, poverty, overwhelming, irrelevance, mother's, no, listen, to, your, heart, we, need, to, be, revolutionary, ours, existence, is, abused, warmth, insecure, birth, greed, murder, on, your, knees, all, your, life, not me, nothing, matter, every, thing, matters, insignificant, maniac, insignificant, discontinued, taboos, ghettos, living, transmission, bastard, believe, over, you, son, free, dirty, not, masochist, poisoned, free, insecure, insignificant, dislocated, insignificant, missing, insignificant, sleazy, insignificant, lost, insignificant, cowards, time, less, anti, insignificant, social, insignificant, state, insignificant, obsolete, insignificant, love, insignificant, deprived, insignificant, removed, insignificant, site, insignificant, mean, insincere, raping, others, meaningful, tired, questioning, freak,

mentoring, powerful, liar, everything, civilisation, hunted, let, down, boys, virus, pricks, lonely, hurting, yet, speed, saunas, delinquent, demoted, dreamers, useful, hurt, inspiring, love, insignificant, shameless, local, lust, I, was, naïve, pain, stoned, religion, supportive, platform, policing, our, desires, meeting, hope, electricity, encounters, cold, inside, hot, inside, coward, fear, outside, you, unloved, unsupported, water, deported, drowning, marked, luck, taken, immoral, love, journey, bureaucrats, desire, outsider, time, abandoned, energy, sex, waste, unfortunately, academics, insider, bad, unfair, politician, trust, meat, innocent, help, nights, lost, days, mother, streets, asking, renting, air, crying, years, of, abuse, dreamer, library, wanker, spanked, glory, over, returning, earth, maybe, in, defense, last, I, have, desire, emotional, home, also, policing, selling, hole, us, them, nausea, fascist, speaking, choices, free, whole, sisters, hate, betting, running, sadist, instability, stupid, luck, abusing, making, cash, abused, fagot, homeless, for, one, moment, I, believed, that, i could, make, a, difference, instead, to, waste, time, to, hate, hanged, sharks, networking, machine, insignificant, salt, victim, fear, of, failure, blinded, bleeding, friends, vomiting, alone, dejected, affected, effected, sour, sleep, what, I, have, not, done, wrong, talking, at, deluded, resentful, touch, the, sky, because, no, body, else, was, present, sweet, revenge, impersonal, institution, tronized, irrelevant, schizophrenic, more, hurt, discouraged, loved, respect, wanted, education, granted, I'm, only, powerless, patronized, irrelevant, schizophrenic, more, hurt, discouraged, loved, respect, wanted, education, granted, I'm, only, traveling, through, I, have, rights, animals, autocracy, and, time, yes, homeless, development, stealing, for, profits, insignificant, marginalised, insignificant, integrity, insignificant, dead, insignificant, people, insignificant, breeding, insignificant, love, insignificant, help, hard, in, replaceable, lovers, left, promoting, insignificant, station, insignificant, unsafe, untrusted, landscapes, gender, benders, replaced, insignificant, brothers, destroyed, killing, wrongs, for, honour, whose?, insignificant, performance, insignificant, life, insignificant, going, no, where, lives, lost, for, what, killings, for, oil, killing, for, others, lands, killing, for, gold, stealing, lives, bitterness, live, big, dick, pain, dignified, policing, burden, traffic, x, overrated, bruised, tyrant, in, tolerance, pain, food, arts, beyond, relate, hold, me, hold, my hand, dreamer, undesired, impossible, flesh, crashing, out, sick, un, safe, house, opera, homosexual, I, want, sisters, irrelevant,

bodies, language, dirty, baby, experimental, with, hypocrisy, support, alone, psychopath, class, out, wars, clear, mothers, desire, birds, angel, more, less, time, murdered, forgotten, let, down, by, who, supposed to protect, you, marginalized, Or, deluded, ?, indelible, youth, reflection, ecstasy, less, fear, creep, infections, consumed, sounds, fathers, selfish, rated, slowly, more, waste, corrupt, soul, politics, irreplaceable, archive, museums, blood, clubs, self, angst, pimp, pleasing, stupid, attention, wounds, same, lover, for, ever, immigrant, x rated, individuality, arrogant, seeker, bourgeois, petty, brother, fierce, scum, cum, for, ever, to, ignorant, sharks, love, awake, uncompromised, love, again, ready, to, dance, history, running, unfriendly, riots, under, right, wing, centre, more, pain, censorship, mess, insignificant, less, insignificant, insignificant, selfish, insignificant, insignificant, wrong, stories, fierce, insignificant, less, insignificant, sweet, insignificant, public, insignificant, stupidity, selfless, insignificant, inspiring, insignificant, driven, insignificant, attention, insignificant, promise, insignificant, details, insignificant, insignificant, illegal, sick, liquid, security, losers, never, significant, contrived, insignificant, untouchable, insignificant, dreams, insignificant, for, insignificant, dreamers, insignificant, I, insignificant, have, insignificant, language, insignificant, on, insignificant, my, insignificant, side, insignificant,

*I have Language on my side, I have language on my side*

51. **Postcard** from collection for *Fil Rouge* exhibition at Nonostante Marras, Milan featuring images of stitched canvases from exhibition, 2013, FB/3/1/24/1/1
52. **Leaflet** for *Four in Ten: An evening with artist Franko B*, which included a trip to the *Untouchable* exhibition and an opportunity to discuss mental health issues affecting the LGBT community, 2012, FB/5/3/1/1

53. **Photograph** of Franko B with friends on sofa including Kris Cavanaugh and Vaginal Davis, 25 May 2003, photographer unknown, FB/10/1/9/5

*"These photographs were taken whilst Franko was attending Fierce! Festival's 'Visions of Excess' event, co-curated by Franko's friends and fellow performance artists, Ron Athey and Vaginal Davis. Fierce! Festival in Birmingham has often hosted Franko's performances including 'I Miss You' (2000), 'Oh Lover Boy' (2001), 'Aktion 398' (2002), 'Don't Leave Me This Way' (2007) and 'Because of Love' (2013).*

Project Archivist

54. **Postcard** of *Mr Disclaimer and I (with friends)*, a collage work with a photograph of Franko B and Melvyn Bragg from The South Bank Show television series, bordered with pornographic playing cards, c.1998, FB/1/7/2
55. **Franko B's handwritten notes** for lecture presented at Body-Space: Architecture and the Contemporary Body symposium at the University of Sheffield, 2003, FB/4/1/6/3

## In and Outside the Body

*“I strive to use the body in a way that does not take away its dignity, by being responsible to myself, as well as to the work. I work to create a language that touches on the things that show us we are not alone. We are all bleeding inside...”*

Franko’s archive contains multiple traces of his physical body, which are particularly visible within the artworks, documentation and objects which relate to his bloodletting performances.

In many of the photographs on display Franko’s tattooed skin is hidden beneath an opaque coat of white body paint, creating a canvas upon which to bleed. Captured mid-performance they hint at the intimacy and collaborative nature of his work – an experience that still feels potent, even within its documentation.

Remnants of these intimate performances also exist in examples from the series, *Haute Couture* in which canvases used as floor covering in various bloodletting performances have been transformed (by fashion designers) into items of clothing. Although splattered with Franko’s blood, on display they suggest the absence of a body.

In contrast, technical notes, such as the detailed map of the ‘catwalk’ in Antwerp for *I Miss You*, or a list detailing the disposal of human tissue and medical equipment for a performance of *Still Life*, reveal the physical practicalities of Franko’s work. Whereas, the used blood-bag and artwork *The Bleeding Kit* remind us of the medical precautions required in order to perform these works. Together these objects, works and traces show both the ‘inside and outside’ of Franko’s body and his work.

## Screen:

56. **Digital images** of *I Miss You* performance at Live Culture, Tate Modern, 2003 - taken by Hugo Glendinning / Digital images of performance of *I Miss You*, performance preparation painting Franko B white and after performance washing paint off - taken by Hugo Glendinning, 2005 / Digital images of performance of *Oh Lover Boy* and performance preparation including Franko being painted white - taken by Hugo Glendinning, 2005 / Digital images of *Still Life* performance at NRLA, Glasgow - taken by Hugo Glendinning, 2005

## Tall costume case:

57. **Pair of laced boots** with wooden heels made from blood stained canvas (from one of Franko's performances) made by Lee Benjamin for *Made to Measure Haute Couture* collection, c.2000, FB/9/2/1/1

*"The boots look like a child's drawing of boots, big heels, round laces, impossible to walk in. The blood splashes have gone to black, the canvas of the boots so delicately sewn. His ordeal of losing blood is now a beautiful, comical pair of boots; joy found in the results of suffering."*

LGBT+ Staff Network member

*"When does blood on clothes become discursive rather than just inconvenient – for me it is when that blood is cast as deviant e.g. menstrual blood representing failed pregnancy, or potentially HIV infected blood...Archiving blood counters this by giving it value and earning space to spend time and thought with the blood. How do visitors see their own blood when it leaves the body – waste to be disposed of or something of meaning?"*

Student, MSc Human Geography: Society and Space

58. **Three sections of fabric with flag designs** (one Union flag and two sections resembling the USA flag spattered with Franko's blood from a larger work titled *They Shoot Children Don't They?* (referencing the 1969 film by Sidney Pollack) created in response to the invasion of Iraq in 2003. The installation was produced the same week as his seminal performance *I Miss You* at Tate Modern, 2003, FB/9/2/9

*"These pieces speak to me about the impact of warfare on all sides of the conflict – the blood stains represent the impact of warfare on the individual bodies of the casualties as well as displaying the damage of conflict to our collective conscience. The blood on the flag – the symbol of collectivity and sameness – suggests there is blood on the hands of many Western countries and points to increased division, difference and exclusion."*

Student, MSc Human Geography: Society and Space

59. **Waistcoat** made from blood stained canvas from Franko's bleeding performances by Vicky Vicious for *Made to Measure Haute Couture* collection, c.2000, FB/9/2/1/2

*"Over time the cotton fabric will start to yellow as a result of the natural process of cellulose degradation (ageing). It will also become more brittle and inflexible for the same reason...Over time also the blood stained areas (and possibly areas with other stains) will degrade more quickly than the bare fabric because the iron in the blood is corrosive. Eventually discs of fabric matching the blood stains will break away from the surrounding fabric as the cotton fibres degrade leaving holes. Again, nothing can be done to prevent this as the problem is a result of the inherent nature of the artworks."*

Textile Conservator

60. **Photographs** of Franko performing *I'm Not Your Babe* at the ICA, 1996, Nicholas Sinclair, FB/2/3/1/2
61. **Photographs** of Franko B performing *Aktion 398* with his assistant Stuart Barclay in medical overall and mask, 1998, photographer Jolanda Kempers, FB/2/4/2/2/2
62. **Black and white photographs** of Franko B relating to *Mama I Can't Sing* photographic series used as publicity for performance of same name. Some of the images were taken outside of Franko's flat in Waterloo and others on the street under the arches near Waterloo Station, c.1995, photographer Nicholas Sinclair, FB/1/7/1/2/1
63. **Photographs** of Franko performing *I Miss You*, as part of the *Skin Deep* season curated by Lois Keidan and Catherine Ugwu at De Beweeging, Antwerp, Belgium, 1999, photographer Niko Raes, FB/2/5/1/2/1

*"This photograph is from Franko's first performance of the iconic 'I Miss You' in Antwerp. Whilst cataloguing the photographic and audio-visual material of every 'I Miss You' performance, I've been most surprised at just how unique each performance is. It is not only the variety of performance spaces from an outdoor courtyard in Ljubljana, Slovenia to the vast Turbine Hall at Tate Modern, but also the differing audience reactions and Franko's own body shape."*

Project Archivist

64. **The Bleeding Kit** is an artwork conceived by Franko (made with Paul Khera) in response to questions about the bleeding process in his performances. It contains 8 aspirin, 1 pair of rubber gloves, 2 pre-injection swabs, 1 tourniquet, 2 IV cannula, 1 hypodermic needle, 1 hypodermic syringe, 2 heparin solution and 2 transparent plasters, 2001, FB/9/2/7

*“This piece I can’t help but think is quite playful. The medical language on the information sheet mimics the technical, regulatory language of medicines, but we know the context from Franko’s performances, that this will be used (or materials like it) in a completely different context of an art performance. The piece also raises the question of where we expect to bleed – giving blood in a medical context is seen as normal and clinical, while blood letting outside of this context is viewed differently, often controversially. I am also reminded of what sociologist Domingo Memmi has written about rights to the body – that no where do we really have a ‘right’ to do what we want with our own bodies.”*

Student, MSc Human Geography: Society and Space

*“The kit contains Aspirin which increases your ability to bleed, as well as Heparin which is an anti-coagulant used to stop blood clotting. Normally these drugs would only be given to treat illness – not just to cause bleeding. The kit also contains cannula, cleaning swabs (before inserting needles to bleed a vein), tourniquet and plasters. Everything needed to take blood in a healthcare environment – except there would normally be collection bottles or a cannula collection device. These are conspicuous by their absence – if this kit was used blood would not be contaminated.”*

Medical student, Intercalated BA in Medical Humanities

65. **Blood Bag** containing residue of blood. The bag is likely to be from a bleeding performance at Triple X festival in Amsterdam, Holland in 1998, where Franko performed *Aktion 398* and the installation *Aktion 434*. Franko used blood bags to collect his blood in advance of performances which was then kept in a fridge until required. For example, for *Mama I Can’t Sing* strips of cloth would be soaked in blood and wrapped around Franko’s head, FB/9/3/1/3

*“A piece of medical equipment labelled but now smeared and dotted with blood. A trace of a performance, a trace of a body – but not just any body, Franko’s body. Is it an artwork in itself? Does it become one in the archive? How does an artist make a record of an event, a performance for the future – for a future audience?”*

Student, MSc Human Geography: Society and Space

66. **Press Cutting** from *The Observer* with an article titled 'Life Support' by Debbie Lawson, on the relationship between Franko B and his assistant Stuart Barclay, 2000, FB/8/2/21
67. **Photographs** of Franko performing *I Miss You*, Beaconsfield, London, 2000, photographer 'Nico', FB/2/5/2/3/1
68. **Contact sheets** of Franko performing *I Miss You* at Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels, including pre and post performance, 2005, photographer Hugo Glendinning, FB/2/5/9/3/1
69. **Map** of the performance space at Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels for *I Miss You* performance, 2005, FB/2/5/9/2/3
70. **Photograph** of Franko B performing *I Miss You* at Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels, 2005, photographer Hugo Glendinning, FB/2/5/9/3/2
71. **Contact sheets** of Franko performing *Still Life* at the National Review of Live Art in Glasgow, photographer Hugo Glendinning, 2005, FB/2/7/5/3/1
72. **Sketches** and notes made by Franko about running order of the performance of *You Make My Heart Go Boom Boom*, 2001, FB/2/7/1/2/1
73. **Performance report** for *Still Life* detailing the disposal of material, safety of the artist and audience, and audience control and monitoring, 2002, FB/2/7/2/2/3
74. **Virus Mutations magazine** featuring image of Franko B covered in a sheet with blood seeping through from body scoring, 1999, photographer Nicholas Sinclair, FB/2/3/4/1/1
75. **Selection of promotional postcards** produced between 1993-2003 showing works including *We Don't Party Anymore*, 2005, *I Miss You*, 2000, *Bleeding Man*, 2003, and *Homes and Garden*, 1995, FB/1/7/2
76. **Virus Mutations magazine**, featuring article on *Made to Measure* series of Haute Couture garments made from blood stained canvases from Franko bleeding performances, 2001, FB/8/4/1/13

77. **Pages** from *Virus Mutations* magazine featuring an article on *Made to Measure* series of Haute Couture garments made from blood stained canvases from Franko bleeding performances, 2001, FB/8/2/24
78. **Poster** for *Now You Know Me* exhibition and performance of *Aktion 398* at Klaus Engelhorn, 2001; image from *Oh Lover Boy* series taken by Manuel Vason, FB/3/1/8/1/6
79. **Poster** for *Love Letters* exhibition at Sicilia Queer 2017, Palermo, FB/3/1/30/1/8
80. **Poster** for *Young at Heart Old on the Skin* exhibition at Palazzo Lucarini Contemporary in Treviso, Italy, 2019, FB/5/10/2

The Theatre Collection would like to thank the project funders the Wellcome Trust for their support, the *Challenging Archives* Advisory Committee for its guidance throughout, and Franko B for his continuing collaboration and commitment in sharing his archive with the public

# **The Body is (not) Here**

## **Programme of special events**

### **Exhibition tours:**

12.30-1pm, various dates (February & March), Theatre Collection,  
21 Park Row,

Bristol, BS1 5LT

Free (no booking required)

Join us for our series of free, themed lunchtime exhibition tours, led by individuals and groups who have been involved with the *Challenging Archives* project. These informal tours will guide audiences around the exhibition providing a different interpretation and perspective each time, along with opportunities for questions at the end.

Further information is available through the Theatre Collection webpage: <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/theatre-collection/>

### ***Franko B and Dr Maria Fannin In Conversation***

6.00pm, 4 March 2020, Theatre Collection, 21 Park Row, Bristol,  
BS1 5LT

Free (booking required): <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/franko-b-and-dr-maria-fannin-in-conversation-tickets-92689214937>

Visual artist, curator and teacher Franko B will be joined in conversation by human geographer Dr Maria Fannin, whose research delves into the 'tissue economies' of blood and other substances, drawing on feminist approaches to health and medical technology. Gaining recognition during the rise of performance and live art in the 1990s Franko's work has included the practice of bloodletting, which will form part of this fascinating discussion into the language we use to discuss the giving and receiving of blood in society. Touching on both the personal and the political, the conversation will explore the provocation for Franko's practice as well as its reception, considering what happens to the human traces of these performances once they enter the archive.

Booking and further information is available through the Theatre Collection webpage: <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/theatre-collection/>

## ***Writing with the Archive Writing Workshop***

Led by Mary Paterson and Maddy Costa (Challenging Archives Writers-in-Residence), 6-7.30pm, 10 March 2020, Theatre Collection

Free (booking required: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/writing-with-the-archive-with-mary-paterson-and-maddy-costa-tickets-92694494729>)

What are you expecting to find in the archive? What else might be hidden there, ghostly in the corner of a photograph, a whisper caught in a fold of paper? Join Mary Paterson and Maddy Costa, Challenging Archives Writers-in-Residence with the Franko B archive, for a writing workshop using Franko's archive as a tool for creative research and inspiration.

Booking and further information is available through the Theatre Collection webpage: <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/theatre-collection/>

## **Symposium:**

### ***Don't Leave Me This Way: Accessing and Activating the Franko B Archive***

10.15am-6pm, 6 March 2020, Arnolfini

Free (booking required: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/symposium-accessing-and-activating-the-franko-b-archive-tickets-92685399525>)

Framed around the archive of artist, curator, and teacher Franko B, this one-day symposium of talks, performance and discussion, featuring artists, archivists, writers, curators and researchers, looks at the multitude of different ways in which archives can be accessed, activated and animated.

The day will open with an 'in conversation' between Franko B and Lois Keidan, Director of the Live Art Development Agency, and will also include a performance from the project's writers-in-residence Mary Paterson and Maddy Costa, as well as discussing a variety of challenging archives from Franko's own to the Bishopsgate Institute's LGBTQ Erotica and Pornography Collection.

Booking and further information is available through the Theatre Collection webpage.

## **Moving Bodies: Franko B's Archive**

7 and 8 March 2020, Dark Studio, Arnolfini

Free (no booking required)

*Moving Bodies: Franko B's Archive* celebrates the archive of artist, curator and teacher Franko B, who rose to prominence in the 1990s due to his extraordinary body-based performances often involving the practice of bloodletting.

Featuring iconic performances such as *I Miss You*, *Still Life* and *Oh Lover Boy* along with archival footage, this 45 minute screening of newly digitised material filmed over Franko's extensive career can be viewed throughout the weekend, coinciding with the symposium '*Don't Leave Me This Way*' at Arnolfini (6 March), and an archival exhibition *The Body is (not) Here* at the Theatre Collection (14 February – April), where Franko's archive is held.

*Please be aware that the screening programme contains adult themes and content, which may not be suitable for all audiences. Please contact Arnolfini or the Theatre Collection if you would like to discuss content in advance of viewing*



