

Panel 24
Art, Performance, and Writing

**The Body as Battleground:
Intermedial Self-Expression and Social Critique in Abel Azcona's
Extreme Performance Art**

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This paper examines the radical intermedial practices of Abel Azcona, a Spanish performance artist whose autobiographical and politically charged works push the boundaries between self-expression and social commentary. Through a close reading of select performances, such as *Empathy and Prostitution*, *Kissing the Vatican*, and *The Weight of the Cross*, I demonstrate how Azcona's body becomes a living site where personal trauma, religious critique, and sexual identity intersect in raw, often disturbing forms. His practice exemplifies a convergence of performance, visual installation, and narrative, wherein the artist's own physical suffering is not only a mode of expression but also a provocation: an invitation to the viewer to confront repressed cultural taboos and inherited social expectations.

Drawing on theories of embodiment, intermediality, and trauma aesthetics, this paper situates Azcona's work within the broader turn toward the body as both medium and message in contemporary art. I argue that Azcona's art destabilises traditional distinctions between private and public, artist and audience, visual and textual, rendering his performances as intermedial provocations that force a reconsideration of what it means to "witness" art. Ultimately, this paper suggests that Azcona's oeuvre offers not only a poignant case of postmodern catharsis but also a critical model for understanding how extreme body art challenges us to rethink the ethics, aesthetics, and impact of contemporary creative expression.

Biography

Boston Ang Jia Le is a philosophy undergraduate at Nanyang Technological University. His research explores the intersection of aesthetics, trauma, and contemporary art, with a focus on intermediality and body politics. He is particularly interested in how visual and performative practices transform personal pain into collective commentary.