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“The Modern Performance Art vs. Traditional Theatre: The Division Between the Contemporary and the Conventional”

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Performance Art vs. Theatre

Performance art and theatre are both rooted in the same practices and ideas. Performance art is an art form that utilizes the human body as a tool for creating art. It has no boundaries and past performance pieces have proven that the options are limitless. The human body acts as a type of canvas in which the artist manipulates however they wish, whether it is on the body itself or the movement or placement. Theatre does the same thing, using people to tell stories that illuminate real life situations in a scripted and rehearsed manner. However, while theatre has become a commercialized and popular form of entertainment, performance art remains more taboo and outlandish. Both these practices ultimately have the same goal: to garner a response, a reaction, an emotion from the audience.

Methodology

Through research of contemporary art pieces as well as the wide breadth of performance types, I aim to find both divisions as well as merging points within the realm of performance. I am also conducting interviews with various artists, educators, enthusiasts, and other professionals within the arts.

Future of Performance

As we transition into a world that is focused on the new and contemporary, it is becoming easier for people to communicate and therefore collaborate. By gathering aspects from each other, performance art and theatre have the opportunity to create something entirely new and unique. Our world could not exist without art; we live in a society that thrives on creativity and advancement in all realms. As we move forward, we must recognize that art transforms. Theatre has been a significant part of life since the classical times but has since lost some of its lasting power. On the other hand, contemporary performance art has thrived in its ability to be boundless and provocative. In eliminating the restrictive terms of theatre, drama, acting, performance art, and simply calling performance as such, we are also decreasing the expectations and therefore limitations that come with them.