

FOUR IMAGES

Adam Overton, Nov 2005

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written and performed 16 Dec 2005 for the *Voiceovers* series at Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, curated by Karl Erickson.

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for those in attendance
in a large room perhaps
each Image lasts around 3 to 5 minutes [or more]
all actions in each Image are performed simultaneously
one person signals when to begin and end each Image

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PREPARATION / PREAMBLE

To ALL

we are about to perform a piece exploring alternative strategies for communication. through the enactment of four semi-static images or poses, each of which lasts for around 3 to 5 minutes [or more], the participants who take part will come into close proximity with a partner, taking turns emitting and listening

participation is not mandatory, but is requested of everyone in attendance

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please find a partner [a friend, lover, acquaintance, stranger, ...]
assign yourselves the following roles: partner ONE and partner TWO

silently take a few moments to think of a *statement of significance*, or *something worth saying*
[a word, a sentence, a speech, ...]
[perhaps something profound, or something banal]
[perhaps something to say to your partner, or to the world, or to yourself]
don't state it out loud; you may reveal it after the performance if you like, or perhaps you will never reveal it

feel free to change your statement between the sections of the performance if you feel the need to

the following images / poses will involve observing our own and our partner's physiological activity, such the heartbeat, breath, and blinks. it is important to try *not* to control these activities as much as is possible, and to instead simply allow these processes to unfold naturally

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IMAGE ONE

[N]Ever-Diminishing Threshold: Eye-To-Eye, Mental Screaming

To ALL

stand across from your partner so that you are standing facing each other at opposite edges of the room; stare deeply into each other's eyes and observe your partner's blinks; try not to control your own blinks

check the pulse on your neck with your fingers [you should find it located near the front of your throat, on either side]

silently repeat your statement of significance *in your mind* [*not out loud*] at the rate of one-word-per-pulse; repeat your statement if and when its end is reached

while standing across from one another at the edges of the room, this internal speech should begin as an internal *whisper*

whenever your partner blinks, take one small step forward; repeat this act until you are both standing as close as possible to one another while still maintaining eye contact

with each footstep, your internal statement should gradually increase in volume; by the time you and your partner are standing eye-to-eye, you should be internally screaming your statement

other than this internal screaming, the room should be silent

the Image will end when everyone is standing eye-to-eye with no more steps to take;
please begin...

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IMAGE TWO

Talk Me In the Eye [ONE to TWO]

To Partner TWO

comfortably stand or lean while observing the following actions that Partner ONE performs

To Partner ONE

when the signal has been made to begin,

place your open mouth over and as close as possible to one of your partner's eyes

you will then very loudly sound out your statement [perhaps even yelling it] one syllable or sound at time for the duration of an entire breath [one sound per breath]; with each new breath, advance to the next syllable or sound

continue this process [and repeat it if necessary] until the signal to end has been given

To Partner TWO

silently stare into your partner's mouth

To ALL

please begin...

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IMAGE THREE

Look Me In the Ear [TWO to ONE]

To Partner ONE

stand or lean comfortably, staring forward with eyes open, observing

To Partner TWO

stand to the side of your partner with an eye pressed peering into their left ear; you should be so close that he or she is able to feel your eyelashes when you blink

meanwhile and simultaneously,

- 1) with your left hand cover your partner's open eyes so that you can feel his or her blinks, and
- 2) with your right hand check your partner's pulse at the wrist or neck

while maintaining eye contact with your partner's ear, quietly whisper [out loud] the first sound or syllable from your statement of significance in the rhythm of your partner's heartbeats; repeat this sound over and over again, and advance to the next sound whenever you feel your partner blink into your palm
continue this process [and repeat it if necessary] until the signal to end has been given

To ALL

please begin...

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IMAGE FOUR

Drip [ONE to TWO]

To Partner ONE

sit comfortably on the floor, perhaps cross-legged or with your legs stretched out
let your arms hang down, relaxed

To Partner TWO

lie down face up on the ground, and lay your head in your partner's lap
look up at your partner who is looking down at you, and lock eyes for the duration of the Image

while reclining, check your partner's pulse at the wrist
you will use your partner's heart rhythm as the rate at which to silently mouth your statement of significance, a word-, syllable- or sound-per-pulse

To Partner ONE

lean over your partner looking down, peering into their eyes for the duration of the Image;
attempt to drip one or more tears from your eyes into your partner's eyes, nostrils, or mouth;
if possible, silently repeat your statement of significance *in your head* during this period, with the hope that it might in some way attach itself to the tear that might soon be released

To ALL

if and when partner ONE manages to drip a tear onto or into partner TWO's face, both of you should cease your previous actions, and while still maintaining eye contact both hum an audible pitch of partner ONE's choice until the signal to end the piece has come

please begin...