

MATERIAL ACTION IMPROVISATION

For Michael Pisaro

Adam Overton, Nov 2005

premiered 3 Dec 2005 at Il Corral, Los Angeles

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Notes on the premiere performance

The first performance of this piece occurred just east of Hollywood at Bob Bellerue's space Il Corral. I performed it solo with an amplified 3/4-size classical guitar laid flat on the floor, with my body hunched closely over it.

I broke the "improvisation" up into 4 separate sections:

I.

In the First Section, I whispered sounds from the word 'Revolution' into the guitar's sound hole. My process was to repeat the first syllable sound over and over at the rate of my heart's pulse. Then whenever ready to move on, I advanced to the next syllable sound, looping back around when I finished the word. In addition, each time I blinked I quickly tapped the open strings with my fingers. I determined where to hit the strings based on where I was currently located within the word, for instance 'R' was located at one end of the fingerboard, and 'n' was located at the opposite end.

I repeated this process for as long as was necessary.

II.

In the Second Section, I continued whispering into the sound hole of the guitar. This time I whispered / sang a syllable per breath of the following statement:

die alone or die alone

In addition, for each breath / syllable I placed a finger on a different string. With each blink, I very slightly moved my finger back-and-forth on the string so that it made an audible shifting sound. I changed strings with each new breath.

III.

For the Third Section I performed a waltz. I checked my pulse, and for every third beat I spit onto the guitar, aiming for the strings. I did this until my mouth was completely dry and spit-less.

IV.

In the Final Section, it's hard to hear on the recording but I very quietly whispered the following 2 phrases into the guitar, one at a time:

talk me in the eye
look me in the ear

For each blink, I whispered one of the two phrases in its entirety, and after a handful of repetitions switched to the other phrase. Meanwhile, I had placed the side of my palm on the guitar string and slightly but audibly shifted it with each utterance.