

PRACTICING THE UNREMARKABLE: THE PHOTOGRAPH AS PERFORMANCE

by Cara Brostrom

The Performance:

A teapot, a stranger, a very clean house; *diary of the unremarkable* is a participatory enquiry into photography as both time-based medium and phenomenological encounter.

Prior to the installation, 15 participants were invited to contribute short texts based on a series of images. The artist then created an image in response to each text. The process culminated in a series of photographic works inspired by everyday narratives which were anything but unremarkable. The project constituted a curious collaboration between everyday objects, participants, language, artist, technology, image and spectator.

The installation was divided into two parts: The first room contained a collection of artifacts, assembled to evidence the process which scored the photographic practice. The audience was invited to peruse, contribute, lift the lid or open the cover and peek inside. The inner room held the series of images created in response to each participant's contribution, as well as the artist herself. There was also an audio component to this part of the installation. These audio guides were distributed at the entrance to the inner room.

The Commentary:

Much like describing a photograph of oneself, *Practicing the Unremarkable: the Photograph as Performance* attempts to describe the creation of *diary of the unremarkable* from both inside and outside the process, making use of theory and personal observation.

A narrative account of the creative process is interwoven with both photographic and performance theory concerning construction of identity, concepts of time, and the tension between truth and fiction in photographic documentation. These elements serve to compel the reader towards an understanding of the ultimate aims of the creative project; those of addressing an engaged viewer in the final installation. A reflection on a process guided by intuition, as well as the specific curatorial choices made for the installation, further situate the photograph itself as the site of performance for both photographer and viewer. The commentary goes one step further in considering the life of the photograph beyond its role in this performance.

DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed (candidate)

Date

STATEMENT 1

This work is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where ***correction services** have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote(s).

Other sources are acknowledged (e.g. by footnotes giving explicit references).
A bibliography is appended.

Signed (candidate)

Date

[*this refers to the extent to which the text has been corrected by others]

STATEMENT 2

I hereby give consent for my work, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

Signed (candidate)

Date

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MA Practicing Performance
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I woke up one _____ morning _____ in a _____ of my own _____ .
adjective past-tense verb noun adjective noun

I woke up one rainy morning caught in a web of my own fleshy contemplation. My sleep had been full of nightmares, knowledge, fairies and magic and I couldn't help but feel a sense of loss in arriving at this precarious position between dosing and wakefulness. I rose with regret from my lonely bed, with whom I share an intimate understanding, and in the kitchen, hoping to find something with which to satiate the absurdity of my situation, I was suddenly struck by a clear and simple thought, which, if you come closer, I will share with you now:



A FAILED ATTEMPT TO PHOTOGRAPH REALITY

How foolish of me to believe that it would be that easy. I had confused the appearance of trees and people with reality itself, and I believed that a photograph of these transient appearances to be a photograph of it. It is a melancholy truth that I can never photograph it and must always fail. I am a reflection photographing other reflections within a reflection. To photograph reality is to photograph nothing.

-Duane Michals

She is perched on her chair, some unknowable culmination of all this knowing precisely arranged to see and be seen. In her left hand she holds an egg. It is brown, and its brown-ness classifies it as exotic and un-American. Resting on the floor below the egg is a glass bowl. It is empty. In her right hand a whisk is waiting, *it* is waiting. What is it waiting for? What can the egg, the whisk, and the woman do in this un-domestic space? Or, what *can't* they do? Her situation is absurd, her aspirations contained, her intentions concealed.

I am in position. Not too high with the whisk, clearly reveal the egg, leaning more than in the last attempt. I imagine how I must look were I to be standing in the center of the room. As I wait for the click of the shutter, I have the sneaking suspicion I have made some lasting and cataclysmic contribution to my own mortality.

I sat there. There I sit.

This photograph is not evidence of an event. It is a record of the unreal, a portrayal which betrays. This betrayal is both revelatory and deceptive. This image, when considered in its own flow of time, participates in a narrative of which it is but a slice, a moment suspended as whisk in air, or body in action. The narrative betrayed by the image, when met with the viewer's potential for imagination, is inestimable. The actual unfolding of events which led to the construction of the image betrays this potential for understanding by anchoring the content of the image in empirical reality. Through resistance of a single-reading of the image, the image which at first seems to document a past performance instead *becomes* the site of performance.¹

¹ "In his essay, he [Barthes] suggests that images have three levels of meaning: an informational level; a symbolic level; and a third level, which is more "obtuse" or elusive. He depicts the latter as located "on the back" of the obvious signification of the image... The role of the third meaning is to resist a single reading of the image." Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, p. 57, as quoted by Karen Henry, "The Artful Disposition: Theatricality, Cinema, and Social Context in Contemporary Photography," *Acting the Part: Photography as Theatre*, p. 152.

I have chosen the performed photograph as my practice, and the practice of everyday life as my performance. An opportune arrangement, considering the photographic image is by now a staple of human experience. The process of scoring the performance for the camera will be one of fragmentation and reorganization, a collaboration with others which serves not only in the creation of content but in the blurring of first and third-person perspective. The chosen mode of self-portraiture further complicates the facets of self-construction at play. This process and its resulting documentation are brought before the audience in a performative act of seeing, as installation imbued with postdramatic presence. Here, the portraits animate their audience by acting as sites of varied temporal tenses and phenomenological encounters.

And so I set out to exploit the photograph's performance in three ways: It's treatment of the subject in daily life, the performance of the subject for the taking of the photograph and it's interaction with the spectator in a performative moment of seeing.

SETTING THE SCORE

I begin with the debris of my everyday. I attempt to dismantle a single day and in so doing I enter my own domestic landscape as both performer and observer. I endeavor to list, in one brief document, the contents of my day (see fig. 1). Edits are made, time compressed, action scripted; already reality is turning into a kind of fiction. I seek to separate myself from myself (this private self which resides in mundane domestic activities). To this end, I transpose this list into image. In this simple act of distancing and documentation, language *composes* the photograph instead of captioning it. The residue of my daily action clings to the domestic objects with which I surround myself, and they offer little protest in assuming a still-life pose for my camera (see fig. 2).

This series of photographs document a string of events which hint at my actions while remaining detached from them. To further distill the content I invite others to transform these images from my day back into language. I set a simple score for my 15 participants to follow:

1. Select three images.
2. Write a three sentence narrative which incorporates these three images.
3. Restrict the text of the narrative to one side of a 3 x 5 inch notecard.

Over the course of a few weeks I meet individually with each participant. I make a record of each meeting, noting time and place in a diary (see fig. 3). I give them their instructions, and as they write I also write a brief narrative of our encounter. I then record them reading their text to me (exhibit A). At the end of each meeting I act as if I have forgotten to take a photograph of them while they wrote their narrative, and so each participant recreates the scene of their writing for my camera (see fig. 4). The data I collect during our meetings will serve to somehow inform and unpack the final work, though I will not know exactly how until later in the process.

I trust the process. I move intuitively within it. This allows me to accommodate and incorporate the unpredictability of practice, essential to the aims of this project. I cannot strong-arm the result. It will be a derivative of all that has come before and every curatorial choice must be made in its own present tense. As I build the structure, my reliance upon it will free me to be more fantastic than I could hope for on my own.

The structure enables all to write interesting texts, and most have chosen to appropriate my photographed objects into their own first-person narrative (see fig. 5). The way I have shaped their contributions lends the whole work a cohesive quality to which I am able to comfortably claim authorship. Reality is now three times removed, and I smell fiction which tastes of truth. I am building my methodology and I sense that the way forward is a performative engagement with the accumulated material. I am cultivating a cycle of action/language/image and I set myself the task of responding to each 3-sentence narrative with a composed self-portrait. Initially considered a practical exercise, these photographic responses will prove to form the bulk of my final work. Like Vito Acconci's *Blinks* and *Throw* I too will draw attention to the link between text, image, and performed act, but unlike Acconci my documents will be shadowed with both the traces of authentic

activity and the presence of an event which never took place.²

I set about creating slices of imagined reality. I compare my task to those of performance artists who, either in an effort to document an ephemeral work or simply to bring before an audience an unwitnessed performance, deviate to actions staged for the camera. As Anne Marsh writes of this genre of work; “The performative aspects of the photographs needs to be considered – there is no document being recorded. These are not real scenes captured by the camera as mute witness. These pictures are made as art.”³ My images may be likened to these pictures “made as art” but they differ in their intention. The pictures described by Marsh are initially rooted in a performance, whereas mine are rooted in the narrative given to me by another. I can perhaps draw a closer similarity to Manuel Vason’s ambitious project whereby his photographs of contemporary performance artists “attempt to signify ideas rather than document their actuality.”⁴ But do these documents “fool” the spectator into believing an event took place, or do they invite us to make inferences, to weave narratives, to perceive occurrences outside the frame? This invitation, whether based in reality or fiction, creates imagined performances. How might my performance for the camera of these narrated events facilitate in me an “imaginary possession of a past unreal?”⁵

With all of this in mind, I step in front of the camera. I am alone for the taking of most of the self-portraits. I feel self conscious when in public places, composing the shot, setting the timer, posing myself in the frame, and repeating this over and over again. I worry someone will steal my camera. I become hyperaware of the processes by which a body is constantly in motion. My digital preview screen allows me to be obsessively precise with the outcome of each image. I compose every fiber, finger, and fold of fabric. This sort of still-life precision is not at home in the public arena and I begin rising early in the morning to avoid neighbors and pedestrians. These are private performances,

² “The outcomes of specific, prescribed activities, these ‘Photo-pieces’ defer to the *performance* of photography itself, implicitly claiming a status as ‘documentation’ in order to produce a movement between the photograph and the photographic act by which it is shadowed.” Kaye, “Displaced Events,” 181.

³ Marsh, *The Darkroom*, 252.

⁴ Keidan, *Exposures*.

⁵ Sontag, *On Photography*, 9.

choreographed for my camera lens. Due to the domestic subject matter of my project, most of the photographs are taken at home. It is a relief to work in my own private space. I find it easier to offer an indifferent and self aware gaze to the camera when I am both subject and photographer. In the photographs I am often unable to recognize myself in these private expressions, captured when no one else is around. I thought I knew myself from the photographs taken of me by others, but it seems I follow a different expressive code when photographed unconventionally.

DE/CONSTRUCTING IDENTITY

In his essay concerning photography and the portrait as performance, Henry M. Sayre writes: “The self [...] is a kind of theater, an ongoing transference of identity, an endless acting out.”⁶ This treatment of the self resonates in both the participant narratives and my photographic response. Each text reflects its author in the words chosen and offered to me, and I begin to see that the way I photograph their words is inherently a reflection of my self. I may be performing a self constructed by others, but this work of self-portraiture is, as Michals describes, also a disguised self-portrait.⁷ My presence behind the camera, my unique framing of reality, projects upon the subject/object (me) her own desires, wishes, and ways of seeing herself in her world. This “solipsistic expression of the singular self” is as unavoidable as Sontag implies. Yet as I photograph myself I doubly appropriate the objective world in both the taking of the picture and my own self-conscious presence within it.⁸ This double-dealing perhaps too literally illustrates Sontag’s observation that “the camera makes everyone a tourist in other people’s reality, and eventually in one’s own.”⁹

This play with first person perspective is rich in its potential for complicating the gaze of the other in the performance environment. I have arranged myself in a ‘pose.’ The

⁶ Sayre, *The Object of Performance*, 57.

⁷ Michals, *photos sequences texts 1958-1984*.

⁸ Sontag, 122.

⁹ Sontag, 57.

nature of the pose is such that its only anticipation is that of being looked at.¹⁰ As subject/object I would be lying if I claimed the pose was for myself alone. I can see the camera before me, I have placed it there and I know what it requires of me.¹¹ Thus a duality of private/public emerges: my private performance before the apparatus is also a temporally displaced public performance. As performer I am familiar with the requirements in presenting myself before an audience in a live performance. What the camera offers by way of mediation is an opportunity for my private self (at least that which I proffer to the camera) to become visible in an overwhelming world via *detachment*. Walter Benjamin describes this sort of self-alienation “by means of the apparatus, like estrangement felt before one’s appearance [Erscheinung] in a mirror.” Only now this rupture is detachable and transportable “to a site in front of the masses.”¹² From a series of mundane and private actions, through a process of fragmentation and distancing, it is through photography that I hope to entice my audience to re-conceive these performed images as both real and imagined process, instead of the simple poses they appear to be.

TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE

In an effort to engage the audience with this series of self-portraits, I consider ways of framing the photograph as a time-based medium. The work thus far holds two processes in juxtaposition; what the spectator imagines between images or images and text, and the process by which the images were actually created. In an essay reflecting on the work of Vason, Joshua Sofaer writes that the photographs perform between the “temporal and its representation.”¹³ All photographs may essentially be understood as a process, but how can I introduce flow to a moment seemingly frozen in time? Kelly Nipper’s images seem to unfold over time, making use of photography’s ability to perform.

¹⁰ Sayre, 53.

¹¹ “Clearly, the very presence of the camera alters its object; it is the camera that defines and requires the moment’s very staginess.” Sayre, 53.

¹² Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of its Mechanical Reproducibility,” 113.

¹³ Keidan, *Exposures*.

Evergreen (A, B, E) is a series of three photographs depicting, from top to bottom: an empty stage; a man on stage with a microphone, stand and cable; a stage with a microphone on a stand and a cable stretched out of the frame.¹⁴ Nipper shifts the subject of the photograph from the observable content to what the viewer *experiences* while viewing the triptych. Responding to Nipper's work, Gloria Sutton writes, "the real action takes place outside of the frame of the image," turning photography "into a *phenomenological experience*."¹⁵

The key lies in opening the image up to its own temporality. In this spirit, I experiment with still images in series. In some cases, my photographic response¹⁶ to an offered text consists of 3 images viewed side by side. Later in the process, I create responses which consist of 2 or 4 images in one frame. Still, the question remains, how can I animate a singular image? I find the answer within my existing body of material. I agree with Sayre's assessment of Michals's photographs when accompanied by his own text.¹⁷ When viewed alongside my photographic responses, the texts provided by my participants serve to open up the meaning of each image. The performance therein lies between the text and the image, in the animated viewer as phenomenologized encounter.

This animation relies on its own temporal framework. Again referencing Vason's project, Lois Keidan observes: "By creating images for the camera, the collaborators have dispensed with the problematics of time, space and action inherent in performance documentation and achieved something else."¹⁸ At this point in the process, this "something else" remains unresolved in my work. I have created a series of photographs, each with its own time, an imaginary time of constructed events. Yet each image bears its own practical understanding of time. In his endorsement of a theory of performed photography, Paul Jeff identifies a need to recognize the medium as "absolutely a

¹⁴ In describing this series of photographs it was very difficult not to depict action, as no action actually occurs within the frame.

¹⁵ *Vitamin Ph: New Perspectives in Photography*, 196.

¹⁶ All 15 photographic responses are available in the *Appendix* of this volume.

¹⁷ "[T]he moment he *writes*, the moment the compulsion to interpret the image takes over, the meaning of the work *exceeds* the frame itself. And once the work is so opened – as it inevitably is – to the interpretive act, we are invited to read a different story from the one Michals tells [.]” Sayre, 60.

¹⁸ Keidan, *Exposures*.

spatio/temporal concern in equal measure.” This recognition, he adds, is “essential to reinterpret the photographic act as time-based medium.”¹⁹ Jeff’s photographs are a function of his process, indeed are replaced by his process as his audience witnesses the photographing stage and in his use of instant materials. While this sort of transparency is successful in unfolding the photographic process for the viewer, it also closes down an interpretive act which relies on perceptions of imagined time.

In the performance *traces*, dancer/choreographer Tanja Råman and dbini industries use digital photography live onstage to document within a single frame the traces of Råman’s movement over time in the performance space.²⁰ In the dark, with small lights affixed to her body, she dances before the open shutter of a floor-mounted digital camera. The long exposure allows her to paint her movements as streaks of light. At the end of each sequence the audience is shown a projection of the final image. I am interested in this approach myself, inviting the audience in to witness the live production of the self-portraits. However, I observe in myself tension between the definitive nature of this exchange and the imaginative re-interpretation I seek. In viewing the documentation of the dance I have witnessed only moments before, I can only remember what I have just seen, instead of re-imagine the movement to which the image testifies. As an act of memory it is successful, but I am unable to enter the image and make it anew. In my own photographic project, can the memory of the making of the image and its imaginary life coexist, side by side, simultaneously creating dissonance and a new potential for comprehension and expression?

PORTRAYAL / BETRAYAL

I find a guiding notion in Bourdieu’s question: What does the image *portray* (inside the frame)? What does the image *betray* (outside the frame)?²¹ As object, the portrayal

¹⁹ Jeff, <http://www.morebeautifulthangod.com/>.

²⁰ Tanja Råman and dbini industries, *traces*, Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff, UK, 5 September 2009.

²¹ Bourdieu, *Photography: A Middle-Brow Art*, 7.

depicted within the photograph remains static.²² The site for experimentation lies in betraying the betrayal of the image. I think of Sophie Calle's *Appointment with Sigmund Freud*, an installation at the preserved home of Freud. She displays her own personal objects and photographs alongside those of Freud, a juxtaposition which conjures up questionable narratives and provokes looking, instead of passively allowing it. This pairing goes so far as to free her photographs from their subservience to her own personal and private history. By opening up the image to new interpretations outside the frame, perhaps Calle's *Appointment* best evidences Jeff's description of a contemporary shift in photography, "towards intervention and fiction and away from the phenomenon of empirical observation."²³

This shift away from the documentary quality of the photograph may be compared to the fictional narratives found in filmic representations. Here, the fictive and the real cohabit, residing within a medium which seems to offer far more possibilities for objective documentation than photography. Yet neither fiction nor reality takes precedence over the other. Photographer Jeff Wall takes his inspiration from the cinema, hiring and directing actors, manufacturing light conditions, and even manipulating the conditions of nature for his images. He describes each of his photographs as "an experiment in the gray area between the theatrical and the real."²⁴ Despite this similarity to film, photography retains a power in misrepresentation unmatched by the extended narratives of the cinema by the very assumptions which grant it supposed superiority as a document of reality.²⁵

Bearing this in mind, I return to the first meaning of the double meaning of *betray*. At the root of it all, I have a photograph standing in as record of an event. It typifies all of the issues plaguing performance documentation wherever the photograph testifies as evidence of an event. In my presentation of a performed practice before the camera

²² "In the image [...] the object yields itself wholly, and our vision of it is *certain* – contrary to the text or other perceptions which give me the object in a vague, arguable manner[.]" Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 106.

²³ Jeff, <http://www.morebeautifulthangod.com/>.

²⁴ Goldberg, "Photos That Lie – and Tell the Truth."

²⁵ "Photographs [...] seem, because they are taken to be pieces of reality, more authentic than extended literary narratives." Sontag, 74.

instead of an audience, I participate in the limits of my own representation. The documentation of this ephemeral act is, according to Kaye, a kind of ‘secondary’ image and remains unfinished, incomplete.²⁶ As Phelan writes, “performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance.”²⁷ Perhaps this “something else” other than performance is, well, performance. A performance deferred until that time when it is finished; made complete in a performative moment of “all-seeing,” an interactive exchange between the art object and the viewer.²⁸

Indulging in some questionable tactics concerning authenticity and deceit, it is my intention to upset this relationship between performance and its documentation by placing the document at the center of the event. If the original performance is deferred, it is in order to make way for a new performance with its own unique existence.²⁹

ARCHITECTURE OF AN INSTALLATION

I have my content and a theoretical foundation upon which to build an installation. How I present these images will define the audience’s role and of all the modes of performance, installation is the most appealing. It will move my photographs out of an exhibitionary attitude and into one of process. I decide to leave the theatre space behind, the studio is too laden with its own expectations. If performance exists in the gap between theatre and visual art, I am going to lean to the visual art side. I find a small gallery space. Its rough-hewn quality is advantageous for a site of process *and* presentation. Perhaps the most appealing aspect of this space is the journey. To reach the room requires traveling through the building, up the ornate staircase, underneath portraits and still-lives and into a light-filled and paint-splotched artist’s studio before finally reaching the destination.

²⁶ Kaye, 179.

²⁷ Phelan, *Unmarked*, 146.

²⁸ Phelan, 146-7.

²⁹ “In even the most perfect reproduction, *one* thing is lacking: the here and now of the work of art – its unique existence in a particular place.” Benjamin, 103.

For the installation, I am interested in exploring three tenses of the photograph; the time of the photographer, the fiction-time of the action, and the spectator's present time.³⁰

I divide the gallery into two rooms (see fig. 6). In the first room I gather artifacts which evidence my practice. It seems I have outwitted myself at my own game. In order to share with the audience my process as photographer, I must rely on the dissemination of various forms of documentation, including photographic, created throughout the process. This is a transitional space, towards an animated spectator, and I want this to be a tactile, sensory experience. I bring in the objects which formed the basis for the participant narratives. Their inclusion extends my everyday living into the public space. I include the series of still-life portraits of these objects, tied many iterations ago to a seemingly insignificant day in my life. Their presence mediates the reality of their 3-dimensional counterparts, a pre-emptive exercise in looking. The diary of our meetings as well as the photographs of my participants performing participation invite those who were not one of the 15 to initiate their own understanding of the creation of the texts by making connections between the documents on offer. In the corner is a video camera playing back on its small LCD screen a time-lapsed version of what it recorded as I constructed my self-portraits.

The second room, or inner room, holds the series of self-portraits. It is in this room that the fiction will be made. The curatorial choices I make in this room have everything to do with addressing an activated viewer; this is not simply about seeing, it is about engaging. The photographs are small, cultivating an intimate experience, a one to one relationship with the image which asks the viewer to come closer and peer inside. I sequence the images in the space chronological to the order in which I made them. I am wary of constructing my own narrative relationship between the images, but too purposeful to randomly select a sequence. I am aware that in the making of each self-

³⁰ A derivative of Barthes's description of a photograph by August Salzmann, taken near Jerusalem in 1850: "[T]hree tenses dizzy my consciousness: my present, the time of Jesus, and that of the photographer, all this under the instance of 'reality' [...]" Barthes, 97.

portrait I had knowledge of what came before, and in keeping to my order of creation I situate my process underneath the surface of the work. Perhaps this will somehow drive the viewer towards a cumulative moment, perhaps not. I aim to encourage flexible strategies for engagement. The structure of the installation will free the viewer to be fantastical.

Animation is the key to unlocking the fiction-time of the photograph. I want it to exist for my viewer as it does for Barthes; “The photograph itself is in no way animated [...], but it animates me: that is what creates every adventure.”³¹ Taking my cue from Barthes, Bourdieu, and Michals, I animate the content outside its frame, in the space between image and text, between sight and sound. I offer everyone entering this space an MP3 player containing the text recordings made by my participants. These provide additional strategies for engagement. The headphones maintain intimacy. They construct a singular experience for the first-person viewer viewing my first-person self-portrait, narrated by another speaking in the first-person. Some look first then listen. Others listen, then look. Or listen and look. Or just look. Or just listen. By allowing choice as a variable for approaching the work, I encourage the sustainability of engagement for each viewer for the duration of his or her experience. This, coupled with the counterpoint of image and language, animates the onlooker’s mind. This animation incites the performance, an imagined performance of a real fictional day in my life. Just as the photograph animated me, so now it animates you.³²

To this I bring my own physical presence to highlight your present time as spectator. I am sitting in this space with you. From my point-of-view a series of images extends back through time, my time. I watch as you cross the room, as you become drawn into each image, or not. I am looking at you as you look at me. I have prepared for you a peep show, which requires you to be peeped upon. My private self drawn out into the public sphere, offered to you in such a distanced way, I am able to catch a glimpse of your private self in the exchange. You forget yourself for a time, but soon become aware of

³¹ Barthes, 20.

³² See fig. 7 for photographic documentation of the installation.

your own awareness. Together, in this shared space, we provoke this postdramatic performance through our own self-reflexive awareness of looking.³³

I sat here. Here I sit.

My presence compounds “the Real and the Live.”³⁴ My live presence validates the reality of me in the image, and invalidates the reality of the image itself. I am the pivot upon which the time of the photographer, the fiction-time of the action, and the spectator’s present time rely. I fulfill the role of the solipsistic photographer. I am the centerpiece to each documented action, and I am here with you now. The photograph is a fiction, contaminated with and confronted by the real. In our final moments together, I want to pull back the curtain. I want to undo all this doing. I want to share with you those solitary moments behind the camera.

When I look, all I see is an empty chair, three white walls, and the present potential for an omelet, the enjoyment of which has already been deferred.

When you look at me, you see a woman, perched on a chair, arranged to see and be seen. My situation is absurd, and all I aspire to make out of my current predicament is one, perfect photograph.

I set the timer, click the shutter, and run.

³³ Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, 103-107.

³⁴ “For the photograph’s immobility is somehow the result of a perverse confusion between two concepts: the Real and the Live: by attesting that the object has been real, the photograph surreptitiously induces belief that it is alive [...]; but by shifting this reality to the past (“this-has-been”), the photograph suggests that it is already dead.” Barthes, 79.

She knows: "To take a photograph is to participate in another person's (or thing's) mortality, vulnerability, mutability."³⁵

Time has turned the tables. Each photograph is a small catastrophe. A bed I no longer sleep in. A house I no longer live in. A country I no longer inhabit.

He knows: "The photograph is mortal: it flourishes a moment, then ages."³⁶

I am thinking now of a photograph of my grandmother. She stands on the front stoop of a house. The house is unknown to me. In the photograph, she is very near to my age at this moment. She stands with her husband, my grandfather. She is in his arms. She wears a wool suit of the era, dark lipstick, and smiles. She is charming and beautiful and young and unbearably light.

She is. And she is not.

³⁵ Sontag, 15.

³⁶ Bathes, 93.



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ADDENDUM

figure 1: the contents of my day (in list form)



figure 2: the contents of my day (in image form)



figure 3: record of each meeting

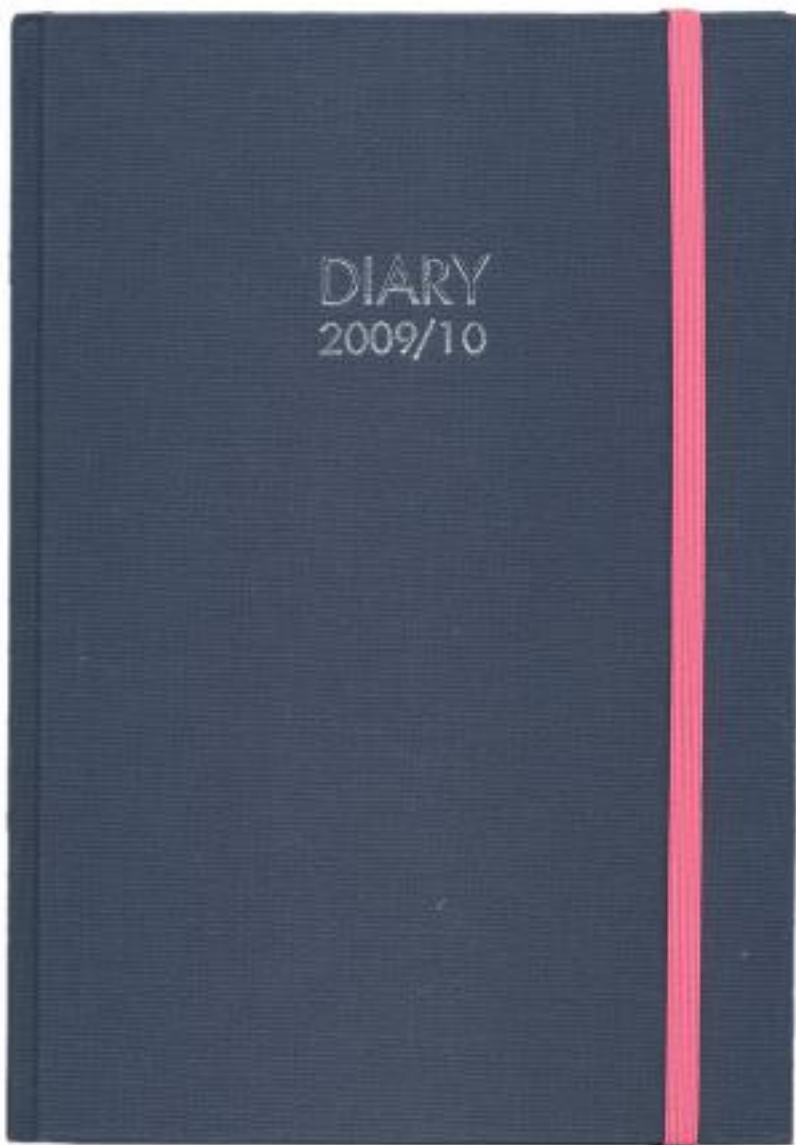


figure 3: record of each meeting (continued)

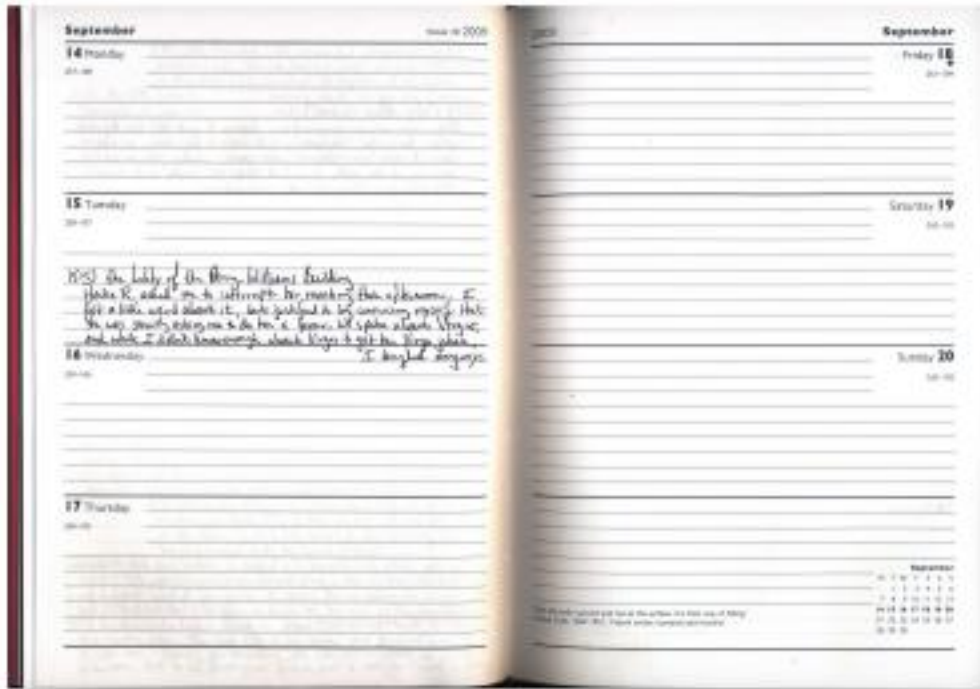




figure 4: participants restaging scene of writing



Chris

My first day of since this was worse than I expected. I now have a more intimate ~~new~~ understanding of my toilet's nooses and corners. Writing over this note exhausts me, and I will now send me to bed.

Shannon

~~The gray out today today like every other day. Everything is just do it was before and with the latter.~~

It's clean in here but maybe I should clean again, clean more Fairy for the dishes or Dove for my back. Or maybe I should wash the sheets.

Caroline Medina

There is real enough time in the day trying to do multiple things ~~take~~ up so much time. Shaving, changing, cleaning, going running. To do everything in one day is impossible.

SWEAD

I woke up at 11:33 and immediately put on my running shoes. As I started my run it started to rain gently. A nice warm rain summer rain. ~~the~~

Aditi

I woke up really late that morning of the 11th June 2009. No plans were made for that day so I went for a run during which I met a stranger who I needed to see my toilet. I invited him in my house and he washed my dishes while I went back to sleep.

SARAH

11:33 I finally got up and face the day. I put on my favorite pink hockey shirt and pick up the apple a distance stranger gave me, which I was holding in the park the previous day.

Temper, like Adam, you came into my bed. One bite of the apple was all it took. Now, all I am is an entry in your diary along with your shopping list.

The "I" next, a love for an apple in place. The apple is "found" for our words. Food, apple and "I" become feeding for our souls.

figure 5: participant contributed texts

Do I make a three egg omelette or a two egg omelette and save one egg for salads at breakfast?
It's 11.33 but 5 months ago
I bet it wasn't raining in April so much so it is now.

The Fairy came towards me in an overly cheerful manner, thins up, quipp up hair and some strange fluffy nappies, none bigger than fairy, white and at great. I had already eaten three of the eggs, white, a one North-
put a moment of expectation on how the crisp crack on crack as the shell cracked and the yolk slid down my throat. I held the apple, never from before or similar but the apple as on the 'fairy bottle' needed to be eaten.

There is no time for reading the book this morning, the day awaits.
There are many things to do so I put my trousers on I make a list so as not to miss anything

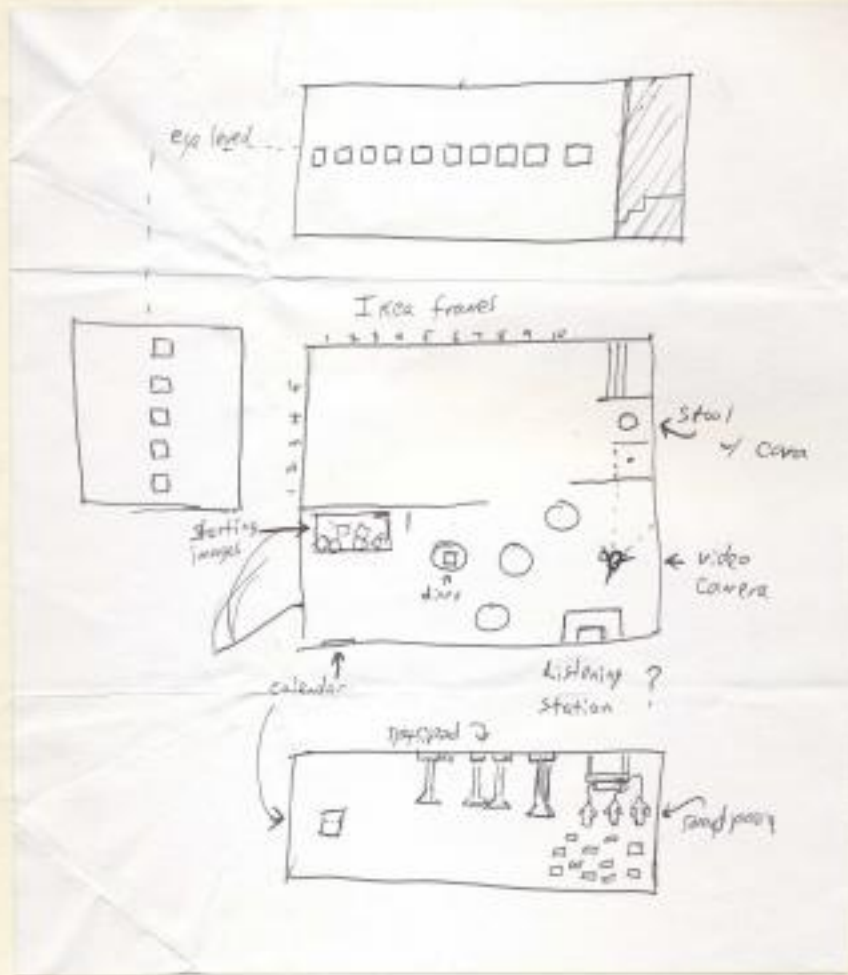
Lower R
Waking up at 1133 is not good especially when you have to be at a wedding by midday, nightmare! No time to make the bed, only enough time to shower 5 mins, dry hair and makeup 5 mins and select an outfit this requires 105 of time, 5 mins to decide it has to be the bird dress, my favorite!

I woke up one rainy morning and decided to change three things in my life. At first I decided to start jogging, as next I decided to eat more fruit like apples and finally I decided to spend less time in front of my new laptop.

My hair has become a burden to me, I used to be so proud of it. I looked in the garden, made my own bed, painted and arranged. Now I spend all my time at the keyboard and all I see is the broken bed that was, the status that has come off its hinges, the washing machine without a lid, the fridge that ~~was~~ ~~was~~ ~~was~~ but ~~was~~ ~~was~~ ~~was~~ the bed that won't fit.

The effort is never only itself, even if, as Grouche Marx said, 'apple is apple'. It is not from the context of the domestic to the space of the theatrical, the egg, the shell, the stem of ~~the~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~ becomes sign, a prima intention; yet their journey is never entirely, for here as they retain their individuality, intrinsic materiality and objecthood. The egg may start in the bed but be born, or better, into narrative expectation.

figure 6: layout of the gallery



3 prints, 36"
1 print, 53" x 40" x 4"
18 inches between each print

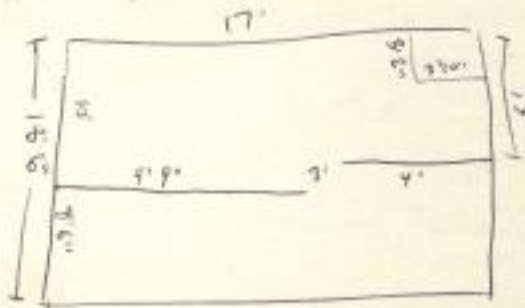




figure 7: photographic documentation of the installation



APPENDIX





























