

# ***Two responses after the reenactment of Gina Pane's 'Discours mou et mat' (1975).***

Imri Sandström and Clara López Menéndez

Hello, my name is Imri. I was part of the audience when *Reflect Soften Matte Discourse* (2011) was performed in Stockholm. This text was written about that experience, and I later read it as a part of the rehearsal in Copenhagen (2011):

I sat very close to the performance, I was sitting right in front of the mirror, to my left, diagonally in front of me was the glass.

Physical anxiety, body memories of anxiety. It's hard to know what came from the work, the scene itself and your actions and movements, and what came from the audience's reactions. The situation is of course the work; you cannot extract one from the other.

An, almost like a phobia: shattered glass can make me panic, it gets in everywhere and it cuts and I believe that my experience of the glass was a strong factor for my anxiety, that it was significant.

It was even hard to get home that evening. I know that it's different for people, and that I at times have strong anxiety and feelings of unreality. It was like that that night. My friend, who I was there with, spoke about self-injury and memories. So we talked about that, and it seems important to mention her memories, but that was not my own experience.

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I thought a lot about our history, or rather our performance art history. Pane, Abramovic, Accardi, Mendieta, Burden, etc., how they work and what they are when they are told, retold and represented in image. This is how we, (I say we and by we I mean people who are related to this art history as a living ongoing process and that in one way or another have to do with it), this is how we often experience it. Then as fiction, inevitably as fiction, story, pictures. The body is often black and white. Audiences are figures, standing verticals as if placed there - on the side, and even if you sometimes see some facial expressions, it is this thing about presence. The presence is obviously not there, but where you sit when you look at the scene, and in that context, and how many of us have not sat in our kitchen with a beer or cup of coffee in one hand and a pen in the other and referred to and owned these histories? As we refer to and own everything that comes our way that we find important. For we see and understand and think that this is of importance and then we think about in which way. And we create our various versions, readings, histories, fictions.

So I think of that history and how we own it and what it is and how it has affected the perception of performance art as a genre, although a very broad one. To see something reenacted live. To break the body as a live event. A kind of social realism? For it is something very real. Very realistic. It is what it is - and its history - its referents back, tentacles back - its history fictions. And you ask about the choreography in it, it's right there I guess. If music is Organized sound, then is choreography Organized movement? I believe the correlation is there, organized movements and also a certain amount of inevitable improvisation. Cause it's body and the body is not

a constant. It cannot follow an exact pattern.

*(Walk to other mic)*

Organized movement. What and how it is when you watch it from a distance, and what and how it is when you are inside it. The scene is different this time. Everything is different.

The sensation of referring to - creating the fiction, owning the history - is now very present. The rehearsal in Copenhagen as another point in history to relate to. As I sit in my kitchen with my pen and my paper re-contextualizing, creating this history, I picture us here in Glasgow, still, but in a different way, doing just that.

The scenes of the video, the objects on this stage, I know them well by now. They have transformed into props, into tools. Sitting in Sweden writing this, I can easily imagine the stage, the ball hitting the head with blunt repetitive thumps. The unknown woman behind me, not unknown anymore. The situation is new, but our own history, Pane, reenacting, rehearsing - retelling - the languages, esthetics and rhythms are ongoing and familiar. A collaborative reaching, our tentacles back, now touching.

It's both as if placed in a timeline - a chronology, but also: the repetitions are not copies but versions and retellings, in physical layers that seem to fold in on each other, making the experience extend in both time and space - Connected, but not uniform movements, displacing specific historical acts, specific broken bodies and breathings.

Now as a co-writer of this story, I seem to have gained some level of control. Though, there is this unsettling fact that flesh is still flesh, that the notion of control is deceiving.

My name is Clara. I was the naked body of a woman in Stockholm, when we re-enacted the piece for the first time, as I am that naked body tonight. The following are some reflections I gathered after this experience and which I read in our previous rehearsal in Copenhagen (2011):

To feel the loss, the powerlessness about the beloved one's suffering, perceived in such a physical way, bodily and not visually, and therefore so unaccustomed, till the extent of unfathomable confusion. Rendering oneself unable of any action.

The loss of control. Where is the control? And where is the limit? Feeling the course of the event, the course of a fact with the hands tied behind my back, tied without ropes, or perhaps yes, tied with ropes made of love and respect, that although get questioned, in the air, when the other one's suffering is transformed into one's own torture.

Frustration and anger provoked by the inevitability of the pain, that it is not an option or freely chosen, but instead an unavoidable part of the journey.

But condensed into spectacle for the senses it turns cruel. Power and caused potentiality. Caused? Held? Transported through the gesture, poetic? Almost vital, despite the highly connoted and the commonplace attached to the word.

Confusion.

What is the source of that confusion? Almost rage. The need to restrain the suffering, own and other's, apparently through violence when the usual coordinates have been transformed or articulated into a perpetual/continuous recreation or delusion, when the habit of the "common perception" has been diffused or fragmented into a paralysis of objects, conventions and small complacencies. Here and now. But again, of course, we still find ourselves in that "privileged remote space", where the extreme without control is possible within some boundaries.

So when the extreme is contemporary and lived, parallel to one's own instant, it manifests its brutality and rampant harshness without compassion or mercy. Instead it feels relentless in its disciplined deployment of cruelty, moreover being intertwined with the unavoidable segments of the absurd that comes along with existence, even in its most solemn incarnations.

And being forced to give my back to that, being forced to face the wall by a super-structure based in habit and trust, put an outrage's taste in my mouth.

In some efficient way, this rather rustic re-presentation of power systems evidences buried issues, or maybe questions, as usual, obviated by everyday life's survival. However, the powerless sensation, the helplessness, the absence of communication or verbliness's failure, keeps present, internally. Apparently within.

The incapacity of an "a priori" decision to conceive the corporeal implications it entailed. Without listening to the body, which shudders and complains in its way while violence manifests itself. Confusion. Powerlessness. Frustration. Anger. Betrayal. Exposure.

I can't recall that I had specific memories in mind when I was laying. I was concentrated on the wall. On the bricks. And on every perceptual insight that would come for behind. And the emo-

tional and unexpected overload which that brought up/with. I remember breathing. I remember the feeling of my legs. Almost like a restless meditation.

Pain comes. Pain reminds me of the vulnerability of myself, of my body. How soft I am. How easy to penetrate in a non verbal way. Brings me closer to an earthly perception of myself that I rather forget for long periods of time. Pain is something I don't miss. Pain is something that happens as existence does and that goes inseparably with it. Pain is something that can bring pleasure in a fair amount, in the way it works. Pain scares me.

I'm not sure of how pain works towards an audience; I don't know how the audience deals with pain, the precise emotional implications. I know it works. I know it hits. I know it hit me as I were an audience or just a part. It performs transformations. It reminds, brings up each other's pain. One's own and the one of the one beside you. The possibility of pain, the fact that pain hurts, touches and brings us together. We suffer alone but when the object and subject of suffering is shared the suffering is common and becomes a link. A matter of communion. An element of involuntary complicity. It creates contexts that are experienced together. It creates memories of visual facts and experienced feelings that help me to be closer. Perhaps pain is more of a mean, a way through, a connector, than an event itself.

My object was the wall. The wall was everything I could see. Everything I could interact with. The wall was the horizon and visual reality across 20 cm. The wall was towards where I was facing and the blockage of my sight. The implementation of my other senses went through the fact that the wall was there and that was all I could see. The limited quality of my seeing tuned up my ears, which captured every single move, breath, sigh, shout, crash, etc. My body became an amplifier for those vibrations that populated the crowded room, which flowed rapidly through the dense and sticky atmosphere. And the skin turned into a receptor for the slightest change in the temperature, of the most superficial scratch of the glass, it noticed the smallest and the greatest gasp. Those were the objects with which I interacted while the performance was happening.

My desire was on you and you know it. My desire was to leave and I didn't do it. My desire is to do it again if I have the chance to do it.

I felt you had the power. I already said I felt absolutely powerless. My power went through breaking the agreement in which we had already decided.

An investigation on reasons, on effects and affects, on the accomplishment of instructions as orders, on the possibility of the translation of meanings or interpretations through time and space. On the attachment of new implications and necessities with the re-enactment. On the creation out of the inspiration that the given sources provide. On the understanding of those inputs that come diffused through untold histories.

To know how it feels. To know that it feels. To get to know that the documentation responds to the realization of a series of acts whose power and dimension cannot be apprehend through its photographic documentation. How it feels to be there, although it was not there, it was here. And now.