



Clara Lacasse

SO SO SILKY SILKY SILK: SCORING YELLOW TOWEL

first performed on September 4, 2018
 SBC Galerie d'art contemporain, Montreal, Canada
 performed once in 2018

DANA MICHEL / MICHAEL NARDONE

Montreal, Canada

SO SO SILKY SILKY SILK: SCORING YELLOW TOWEL DANA MICHEL / MICHAEL NARDONE

In the performance writing residency “So So Silky Silky Silk: Scoring *Yellow Towel*,” we set out to create a score of Dana’s iterative, improvisational choreographic work “Yellow Towel.” We were curious how this performance might translate into the shape of a book.

We began with a series of questions to address the itinerant and obscure aspects of the work: What is legible in the movement of performance? What traces do its ephemeral moments leave? How to notate the duration of gesture, of utterance? To what extent, and how specifically, does the performance exceed any capacity for its documentation? While focusing specifically on “Yellow Towel,” these questions opened up to a number of textual and ethical issues concerning performance and inscription that are global in their concern: Who performs, for whom, to what ends? Who writes, who records? What are the techniques and technologies that mediate performance? How might a score function as a vital element of a work without fixing in place its desired fugitivity?

We had the gallery for six weeks to explore this idea and to begin constructing the score. We set up a space to write amid an array of documents, objects and materials used in the research and performance phases of “Yellow Towel”—Dana’s personal diaries, documentary videos, transcripts of the choreography and iterations of her original script. These materials informed the score, while also forming the basis of an emerging archive in the gallery.

Our presence amid these objects and materials, in the context of a gallery that was open to the public, ended up becoming something more than an archive. The act of our writing slid sideways into an exhibition. This came with an unexpected tension: between the performing-performer’s body on display, present with the things as a residue of an original performance of “Yellow Towel” (a concept we questioned in tracking and tracing the movement of the performances to construct the score) and the absent-performing-body that was also present with the things on display, presented as though they were part of a proper (if such a category exists) exhibition.

Throughout this time, we designed the schematic for the book—as a performance and archive in and of itself—and composed the first third of the score, which we intend to complete in the coming year.