excerpts from the scores of
Permeable Structures:
A Performance Essay
in Stereo

by
Laura Elrick

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In the image, a film still from Erewhon by Jane and Louise Wilson, it is dusk. The dilapidated skeleton of a greenhouse extends past the frame. We look through the beams (some now fallen, an assembly of right angles, diagonals and parallels) into a purplish sky where billowing clouds lie suspended over the silhouette of a darkened wood. This earthly composition is then doubled by its reflection in a wide, but shallow pool of rainwater that lies where we, the viewers, seem to stand... in what was once the “inside” of the now open, abandoned structure. So that beams, dark wood, and billowing clouds, appear to extend both upwards into the sky and downwards into the earth, both out away from the structure and into its very depths, each impulse mirroring the other, like some kind of inkblot of the social psyche.

Sunset – that highly commodifiable natural phenomena, redolent of a propertied nostalgia for the tranquil. And Dark Wood – a typically European trope, suggesting the fearful blindness of being inside a social order whose agents remain hidden, literally naturalized, in a forest of threatening, if faceless forces. Can be seen – through the remains of a human structure – a process we call “a building.”

Žižek has written of this as “the materialization of ideology” where “The Unconscious is outside, not hidden in any unfathomable depths."

Yet Erewhon seems also to suggest the inverse – that what we think of as subjective experience might be something more akin to an abstraction – where a projection of the past's desires (deflected, translated into institutional frameworks) filters out through the present and is personalized, real-time.

Fantasies in Permeable Structures is a text through which this performance can be rendered – what you are hearing now is not the text itself... but rather a series of core samples, or, if you wish, root-like probings, around which the delicate soils of meaning shift... the human structure, the literature, through which “the landscape” is seen.
on a plane then
be it
soaring cage
shrunken time

geography
distorted
distorted
our hearts
appeared

locals?
some island
a sea
paved
coordinates

shrink wrapped
remade

(we navigate
teens
on the pavement
solitudinous... solitudinous...)

maybe
maybe
to the
to the
bar?
bar?
locked
will help?
will help?"
drove
our eyes averted.

until at last
we're back
we're back
on the
North
of this
“Landscape”
in Brooklyn
Imperium

the soils
shadowless
“sprouts”
how things grow how things grow
out
out
in the worst of conditions
I seem

well...something

Fake it.

well

UNPROFESSIONAL  UNPROFESSIONAL
DEVIANT  DEVIANT
FAILING  FAILING

ahumm well, I...I just um...you know

there's no present

here

Communicate:

eheer

just

a little worried

about

political eye?

muck

Lit

East River

beneath

the sun

stewish  stewish

to feel
disoriented

repression.

to protect
tendency.

prior method  prior method

Inc.  Inc.

(may we?

our clits

with gavels)

just

a little worried

about

political eye?

muck

Lit

East River

beneath

the sun

stewish  stewish

waves  watts

the sea...  the sea...

location.  location.

weak.  weak.
what
pleasure
we are...
invariably
morning
the objectivated
news
diffuse
I forgot
weeping
expenditure
reiterated
involuntary
note
beneath
weeping fruits:

It wasn't
it was never
I it was
black smoke
(Black Hawk
sputtering
blurred as
wave seekers
wings
they fly –
in 'forget mode'
jammed
to be ripped

and
plummet...
laughing
to the insults
begins
again and
streams
We who under a dappled
radiance of radiance along the paved road
reverses
follows
speeding in a car
shadows
midday
growth
this route
for what?
returns
peace
in a violent wind
backwards
from the geometry
mercy
... withdraws

what.
and throws it
gets out of control
so that predictions
mass
this space onward
error
progression

There must have been –
blackberries along the road
steady steering
quick
outside
speed
is
conscious
if not
GRUNCH

animal
means
True sap
me craving
me

in Vermont.

the grounds

patters

Moscow

Jakarta

velvet
clubs

on bikes
to the Hollywood

short line

short life

we're getting
a lot out of

we're getting
expensive

The Gates

soft persuasion

liberal

trees

Malaysia

Brutal sap

You may
to the front

(the war)

They were
tiny

walking

the plantation

they waved

truck, bouncing

over red earth

giggling

and

shy as

dust kicked up around

the mirrors

kids

sang
In The Production of Social Space, Henri Lefebvre writes:

“No space disappears in the course of growth and development: the worldwide does not abolish the local. This is not a consequence of the law of uneven development, but a law in its own right... Social spaces interpenetrate... superimpose themselves upon one another. They are not things...

ATMOSPHERIC FLOWS—such as the formation of clouds in updrafts, and dissipation of clouds in adjacent downdrafts, manifested in the commonplace occurrence of clouds in a row.

Light spills down on a disorienting continuum of urban grids; place appearing only as point instead of in transition. You start to walk. A dirt road cuts up a hill diagonally, a flock of bicyclists moving up it in a thick curving paste. Electric towers and wires, vehicles, mud where a sidewalk might be. Are we in San Francisco? ...Are we in Seoul?

"Text imbricated with outside, a wall is waves."

- Mei-Mei Berssenbrugge

Lefebvre: “Like energy in a material form such as a molecule or an atom, social energy is both directed and dispersed; it becomes concentrated in a certain place, yet continues to act upon the sphere[s] outside [it].”

...and from Freud, a real personal favorite: “This recollection provides a second reason why you must have been worried by your suspicion that your device might have gone wrong.”

The chaos of superimposed regularities... Great movements, vast rhythms, immense waves...

What you are hearing now is not the text itself.
Permeable Structures: A Performance Essay in Stereo was first performed at New Langton Arts, in San Francisco, September 29, 2005, in the Performance Writing series curated by Jocelyn S aidenberg and Brandon Brown. The full score is 55 pages.

The performance consists of poetry for two voices, interspersed with several sections of prose “commentary.” Ideally, the poetry sections should be performed by the same voice, one of them pre-recorded, the other live (though it is also possible to use two different live voices). Each vertical column signifies one voice, and the amount of space between words or phrases suggests the temporal relationship between voices. In some places the voices overlap, either totally or partially. All language in the poetry sections of the scores was drawn from my book Fantasies in Permeable Structures (Factory School, 2005), which is Vol. 1, No. 2 of the Heretical Texts series, edited by Bill Marsh.

excerpts from the scores of
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belladonna* production and design, Bill Mazza.
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belladonna* is a reading series that promotes the work of women writers who are adventurous, experimental, politically involved, multi-form, multi-cultural, multi-gendered, impossible to define, delicious to talk about, unpredictable, dangerous with language.

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