

# EMERGENCY

gazette

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## A WORK IN PROCESS

▶ Begin Here

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I can't begin my day without my computer. This betrays a lack of faith in process. What's your process? Let's interview you about it.

What everyone wants to know: your secret process. Do you shave pencils to get started? Watch bestiality flicks? Get out the bucket and paint the house? Go for a walk? Write a letter to a friend? Nothing is more contagious to catching process than talk of process from another. I'll show you your process if you show me mine. What do you use? A typewriter, a computer, a pencil? What model? What make? Where can I get one?

Strange that process should be so connected to the mystical endorsement of products by celebrity artists involved in process. You know it! Can you can a dandelion? Can you can-can? It's a process and if you ask me again I'll punch you with the red mittens of process. The dim lands of barbecue sauce are in the process of being drained. Put up your dukes. Count Process is here. Count process in. Dare to betray it and you're fucked. What does it matter what anyone else thinks, as long as you're alive in the process? What process did you use? I get hot by heating pins and needles, needles and pins. I like that process. You could tell 'em by their process.

Do you work on a word processor? Are you a food processor? Yes. Oh my God, you are a food processor and you are so small! You should process this. Process this!

Why is it that we are so curious about process? But you have to find your own process. Mimicking another's never works. It might inform your own in a constructive way, but only after you've forgotten it, made peace with giving up on it in disgust. Process. I miss it. And when it's there, I don't know it. It is a guest passing through the house, who leaves before you've learned her name. She is a guest. She is new every time. There is no refrain.

▶ Start Here

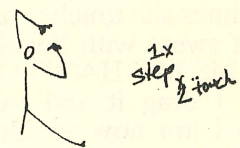
These thoughts come from my experiences in my day job, as a pianist playing improvised music for dance classes, where I get many of the ideas about improvisation which I apply to our theater and video work.

My playing for dance classes is a kind of microcosm of what we are doing in our improvised theater work. It is a simpler, clearer, more straightforward form of improvisation, yet the technical issues involved are all exactly the same, as are the challenges.

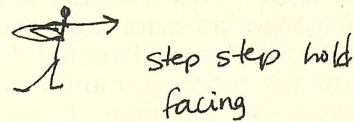
In class, the teacher will first demonstrate a short dance exercise, which I then have to play for while the students perform it. While the teacher is demonstrating the exercise, I try to pick up the mood, energy, and feeling of the movement. I often get ideas of what to play (a lyrical waltz, clashing dissonant tone clusters, "something in D minor," etc.). Sometimes I get several contradictory ideas. ("It should sound like Beethoven." "No, it should sound like the Eurhythmics.") Sometimes I get absolutely no ideas at all.

I stay aware of ALL of my ideas, but I don't DECIDE what I'm going to play. Then, when I start to play, I play whatever feeling right. I play by physically FEELING the music. With each new

then to left w/block arms



then to right claws across face level



gasp arms up as if to dance Fingers lead - but don't touch - 3 slow steps around 1/2

from the notebook of Michelle Stern, a performer in Gale Gates et al.'s production So Long Ago I Can't Remember (A Divine Comedy), coming in April.

If something is alive and jumps out at you and clings to your neck like a starved koala bear in a world without eucalyptus leaves, it has been born of process. If it stays back and looks at you, judges you with preconceived ideas about you, then the process by which it was made was product-oriented, pace advertising or contemporary theater. Do it in three weeks and get out, get on with it—the rent! OH! Process is a red carpet on a stage. No it's not. It is in you. Unspool.

Your application will be processed. Processed cheese.

Process is the never-ending carpool that never quite arrives at work because people keep getting in and pressing you further against the window pane until you realize your head is out the window there is no glass and you can breathe.

Filip Marinović writes plays, poems, and theatrical hybrids

phrase of the music, I try to physically and emotionally feel the rhythm and mood of the music more, using my whole body.

What happens to the ideas I had beforehand? Occasionally, one of the ideas I had was such a good one that what I end up playing "by feel" is very close to what I had originally imagined. Sometimes, I discover that my ideas were way off the mark, that they were based on a misunderstanding of what the teacher was asking for, and I very quickly find that what I end up playing is totally unlike my original ideas. Most often, I find that what I end up playing "by feel" contains some elements from the ideas I had beforehand, but is about 10 times better than anything I could have thought of. It is always shocking how this method allows completely polished, refined, subtle music, with phrasing that sounds as if it took months to compose, to simply "pop" out of nowhere.

It seems so simple. The difficulty is that my intellect, the part of me that comes up with so many clever musical ideas, is SO convinced of how clever the ideas are that it has a million reasons why I should really play the music based on my idea rather than on my feelings.

The only way I've found to successfully avoid the seduction of the intellect is to consciously remind myself to not make any decisions beforehand. I still do that,

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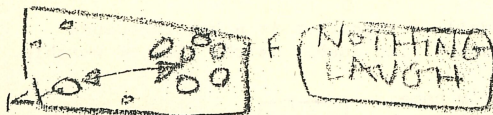
I discovered that, in a rehearsal, if I quiet down and walk onto the stage as the actors are performing a dialogue, I can sometimes feel a series of emotional reactions, as if I am the one being spoken to. I stand behind the actor, and in some very fragile way I can feel what the character feels, I suppose what the writer may have felt when he wrote it.

This, I found a little disturbing. I think this feeling is what the phrase "to get inside the play" refers to. It is disturbing because it is not about form or art or an idea. It is not about creating a world; it is only an emotional transference, a game of pretend or a trick, like blurring your eyes, and by imagining yourself into this situation, this conversation, you know what is being felt.

It is disturbing because I don't know what it's for, this practice. It seems to drive me further and further into my own emotion, to reinforce, if not my world-view, then certainly my pre-existing perceptual machinery which grinds on and on relentlessly, insufferably always the same and the same so that there I am again, at this or that familiar moment: the one of alienation, the one of shame, the one of bottomless shapeless longing, the one of delicious melancholy, rage, elation, lucidity like a bright white light.

I watch Lars Van Trier's DANCER IN THE DARK and the real moment of heartbreak (juxtaposed to the hyper-intentional and irresistibly sentimental moment when she, with the noose around her neck, starts singing a beautiful crystalline song) is after the hanging, when the authorities step forward and draw shut the curtain. A limit to limitlessness.

Yelena Gluzman is talking about directing



20 or 30 times a class, in 4 or 5 classes a day, after 18 years of playing. This applies to our rehearsals and our discussion about "having ideas" while improvising, and what to do with them.

It's a common mistake to think that "being intuitive" means "don't think about anything" or "just do it." What I'm suggesting is that being intuitive doesn't involve turning off or ignoring ANY part of your brain.

On a related note, I understand very well the temptation to give yourself agendas, extra things to try to "work on" or "do" in rehearsal. "Perform in the proper scale." "Use the entire space." "Relax." Even "try not to do too much" becomes something you try to DO. Its very hard to accept the fact that the work will always come out best, no matter what, if you focus only on doing ONE THING: immersing your sponge like vocal line into each whole moment in the performance, and opening yourself so you become even more fully saturated with the feeling of that moment. (When you're actually performing it, it feels like you are performing one simple action.)

David Finkelstein is talking about acting and improvisation (from a letter to an actor)

David Finkelstein's weekly experimental TV-show, LAKE IVAN EXISTS, is shown Saturdays at 4:30 on channel 67, (RCN channel 111).

Process. Not in this life anymore, not for her: Sarah Kane killed herself. And I love what I know about her, do I therefore worship her? Certainly not. But I want to live on without her. I will conceive a performance project.

First there was this idea about a separation achieved by invisible borders. You should be in the same room. Face to face. The room should change constantly. Plastic banners. A hexagonal construction. Fragments. Confusion. Text. I have to write a dramatic answer to her last play. I want to perform at P.S.122. That's a place I'm sure she has been to. Was. Call them. Ask about how to apply. My question is: how could you kill yourself when I was there to love you?

She's damn much better than me. Was. Her language is English. Not mine. How can I go further, beyond my personal secret with her? I can't dance, but I will try to move you anyway. You missed a plane that crashed. 20 questions I ever wanted to ask. Dates. Tons of dates. Good ones. And bad ones. Find out about the band Joy Division. She loved a woman. I know she did. Personals. Clean. What do she and Solanas have in common?

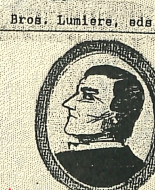
Examine her body. Open the corpse. Bitter pills. I am late. As usual. Build a model of the performance space. Set design. Explain this thing to your lover. Drafts. Lost. Lost. Live. Love. Is the tape on right now?

How would you stage BLASTED? Ask other people if they knew somebody who killed himself. Go out more. Should I fly over to London and annoy all the people I know who knew her. I want to draw her picture. She is wandering around in the backyard. It happened to be night-time that day. We aren't in New York. How long do you plan to stay on in the tub?

Anne-Fatma Porst is a performance artist from Germany, currently working in NYC.

Handwritten notes: "AT something jumpstart", "Cushas to side of room in SILENCE", and a crown drawing.

from the notebook of Karin Coonrod, when she directed King Lear



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# REVIEW

**HYPER REAL AMERICA**  
Thru Feb 11, Wed-Sat at 8pm,  
Sun at 3pm. La Tea Theater,  
Clemente Soto Velez Center, 107  
Suffolk St, 886-4551. \$10/\$12.

It has been five days since I saw HYPER REAL AMERICA and I still can't get the thing out of my head. Like the high school boy who opens the play with an irremovable bullet in his head, I find it hard to dislodge the fleshy sprawl of it from my psyche. Images of offices and school rooms, hospital rooms and bathrooms, students becoming teachers, becoming doctors, becoming business executives, office workers, corpses, appear for a second and then are replaced by another image, like our lives on the overpopulated earth. This play is overpopulated by bodies, overlapping, screaming dancing and speaking. The language is sometimes inaudible, but not because the performers have slacked on their elocution lessons. Rather this is an epic play cataloguing the decay in America. The decay of language, the decay of the body, of education, of leisure, of love, of our own inalienable right to breathe.

The play works by an alternation of painterly washes, tableaux sweeping across the entire stage, with large gestures, composed so that every point of the stage receives equal amount of attention and focus, (the best way to view it might be through blurred eyes, the way one looks up at the Pleiades to see them all at the same time) and sharp dialogue-driven set pieces, which pick up a motif from earlier in the play and act as the raw glue between the snakes links, that it may coil and uncoil at intervals with the sparks of fragment friction.

Josh Fox and his INTERNATIONAL WOW COMPANY collaborated on the expansive text, which shoots off into endless digressions, only to come back from every point to a high school boy with a bullet in his head. Is this some demented delirium dream? We wish. It is in fact a series of X-rays of our lives, hung on the laundry line of the prescribed narrative of a life in America. Go to school, get fucked up, get fucked, get dead, go to work, get fucked up, get fucked, get dead.

Or: get a friend. "To have a friend one must be a friend." (Ralph Waldo Emerson). The one element that unifies the entire play and keeps it from becoming hurricano'd goulash is the compassion of the direc-

## LISTINGS

### LAPA

The American premier of Daniil Kharms' post-Futurist super-play. Music by Dave Reaboi & his orchestra; Directed by Yelena Gluzman & Matvei Yankelevich as part of the Secret Theater Project. Clemente Soto Velez, Milagra Theater, 107 Suffolk. \$10/\$5. 718-243-0446. ONE NIGHT ONLY! Thurs., Feb 22, 8 pm.

### HEADPHONE FOLLIES

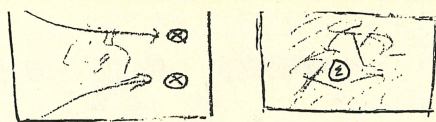
Some of NYC best downtown performers try to, in real time, imitate vocal sounds they hear over headphones; each night has a different cast. It's all Josh Fried's idea. Feb 3-Mar 10, Saturday nights only, 10:30pm. See [www.echonyc.com/~joshua](http://www.echonyc.com/~joshua) for more info on Joshua Fried. HERE, 145 6th Ave, 647-0202. \$12.

### POETRY PLASTIQUE

34 poets and artists push poetry off the page. Curated by Jay Sanders and Charles Bernstein. Opening Feb 9, 6-8pm. On Feb 10 at noon, a symposium moderated by Marjorie Perloff and at 6pm, screenings of films by Michael Snow, Hollis Frampton and David Antin. Marianne Boesky Gallery, 535 W.22nd Street.

### SEVEN YEAR ITCH

Not the film but the play, directed by the whimsical Stephanie Ansin. Feb 14-17, Wed-Fri at 8, Sat at 3 & 8. Horace Mann Theater, 120th St & Broadway, 854-3408. \$10/\$5.

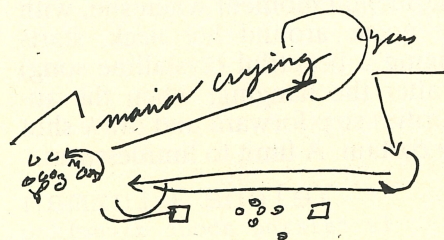


tor and the company. They are never judging the characters from the inside. There is, despite the opening narrative bluff of the boy with the bullet in his head, no subjective viewpoint to guide us through this ecstatic and horrifying experience. Different activities take place on opposite ends of the stage and the space between them is what heats up our attention, an invisible magnet.

As in life, when it is passionately and lucidly lived, there are no strangers in this play, only friends who have not yet met. But when they do! What do you get? A promenade of loose doors dancing between new lovers, a couch where a junky dealer and an uptight business executive unexpectedly snuggle, a doctor spooning with a recent patient who is now a corpse, a professor becoming a comatose student, a mother becoming an aria becoming a school teacher becoming a mother, a backdrop becoming a window onto a real New York street with pedestrians and cars traveling it, fucked as we are in here, but moving, always moving, to meet another, or to seek another, or to become another.

This play explores the processes of day-to-day existence at different stages of American life with love and compassion and recognizes that healing comes from the most unexpected corners of our psyches and that our only chance to be healed is to be open to all of them, to place ourselves in the center of the fire where the shaman snipers can find us in their sights and fire. The running time weighs in at three hours, and like the sign says on the door to the theater, it is "worth every minute", because we are running toward an illumination, and not away from life.

Filip Marinović  
*thinks you should run  
out and see this play*



Well of Execution is a heterogeneous space. Its double is the site of worship.

I'm home.  
I love you. **MURDER**

BURIED UNDER FICTION  
FICTITIAUDE

copied from the notebook  
of Jay Scheib, from when  
he directed HERAKLES, at  
Chashama in December 2000.

### DIDO QUEEN OF CARTHAGE

David Herscovits and Target Margin Theater present Chris Marlowe's play. Tue-Sat at 8, Sun at 3 & 7. Ohio Theater, 66 Wooster St, 358-3657. \$15.

### BINDLESTIFF FAMILY CIRCUS

The Bindlestiffs' 6th Annual Cabaret. Thru March 10, Thu-Sat at midnight. Present Company Theatorium, 198 Stanton St, 420-8877. \$15/\$10 for clowns in make-up.

### VALERIE SHOOTS ANDY

Randy White directs Carson Kreitzer's play about Solanas' 1968 attempt to kill Warhol. Featuring glitter, guns, and girls. Feb 10-Mar 4, Thu-Sat at 8pm. Present Company Theatorium, 198 Stanton St, 420-8877. \$15/\$10.

### UP YOUR ASS

The play, actually written by Valerie Solanas, was at the core of her out-of-control dispute with Warhol. Presented by George Coates Performance Works, after a run in San Fran. Feb 7-25, Wed-Sun at 8pm, Fri & Sat at 11pm. PS 122, 150 1st Ave, 477-5288. \$20.

Begin Here

I move my shovel from the table. (I take the candles from the table, carrying three in each hand with my fingernails in or touching the wax and two in my pocket.) Not long later I catch and drag away the person who stopped clapping too soon. I enjoyed the opera. (But not much.)

I yell about scaffolding and leaving, am stopped by the Sketchbook. I remove my clothes on lines "Do you like my flesh, Carpeta?" Sketchbook starts scratching at my back. Her breasts and crotch under her dress. (A little pain.) Sometimes I feel desire. Sometimes I clutch her. Sometimes I bleed. She straightens my arm and sometimes she touches one of my beads of sweat with her finger. SHE SLAMS MY HAND ON THE TABLE. I drag it and exit. (Both quickly.) I am now an idea. (Open first aid box on wall. Take out alcohol wipes. Eli wipes my back; the pads are black and a little red. It burns. This is who I am.) I am no longer an actor and when I return for the funeral I am not there. I follow the procession and emerge undressed on the rake. I am no longer an idea.

I am painted. She squeezes a bottle of red paint on my neck it is cool sometimes I look at the audience. I usually have to go to the bathroom. I fall spread eagled with others on the platform. The paint is cool and it drips on the rake. One butt-cheek tightens on the wood. I stare at the lights. (They do not stare back. To be alone.)

Sailors enter drunk and I rise. Fully tightened, I march, stiff. I believe in lies. I am growing my hate. I try to speak. I move my jaw, push air out. (There is another, a young and beautiful boy in a striped shirt. He stares at me and I am sad for him I try to speak to him but nothing comes out. I try to speak to the audience). Sketchbook cannot speak either, but in a different way. I feel it is part my fault and I can leave. So I leave at first slow then quick my legs pull me offstage. Once leaving where I am and was becomes terrible.

Backstage I grow. Before re-entering I write in (green, yellow or orange) chalk "HATE" on the inside of my coat. It is black; it has gold trim and gold buttons, ripped beneath both arms. I enter on my legs. Assume stance. Bend stare at bucket water is still. I stand water hits the man in front of me I begin filling the Admiral's cups. Faster. Whistles. Faster. I begin making sound, barks, parts of words. My ass is shown and I am spun by my shovel growing dizzy I fill water. Whistle. Faster. Death sometimes makes me be dead. I shout at the audience. One time: "You are too fucking far away. I can't see you. Only the gold light on your heads. I can't see you. Where are you? I am not here."

I fall. Whistle. I rise. Death brings out a blue plastic kids chair. I smash it with my shovel and it disappears. A piece of plastic hits me near the eye. Death brings out another chair. I stare at her. It breaks. Another. It breaks. Another. I wait. The chair is white. Death moves the noose. It is swinging toward my head (once) it is also white (always). I acknowledge that it is white and that it is a noose for hanging. I break the white chair. Assume posture the noose is behind me now I turn in front a doll is hung. I notice by way of broken chairs the stage floor. I take steps. It is different. I move. Readjust posture. I go to downstage platform I begin to shout. New words. "Arreat. ARR-EE-AAT." Death enters and I stare at her. She is beautiful in the Admiral's coat. I get the bucket. Present glass bent over. I cannot give or let go, Death should not throw water. The Admiral takes his coat I thrust the glass in his face.

Water spills. I am forced to sit through a trial. My shovel is against my neck. Time passes while I am still. Someone enters and begins to gather us with a yellow rope. I notice what he is doing, but I don't know why. He finishes. I use my shovel to help me up.

I am my coat I hang on a hanger in the dressing room.

I am soldier everywhere. I have broken chairs. My hate is ripe. My hate is everywhere. It is no longer mine. I want to be killed. I know what being killed is because I am the Survivor. My legs are knives and my shovel a knife of sorts too in the air. I fill water from bucket, Turk is drenched, Admiral is dead like no one else. I leave him. I am to die. I approach AUDIENCE, am next to the table, begin to SHOUT. I am not here. I am my words which are not mine but their own and I am theirs and they are not words they are me. Who is me and my words hate at the audience. They feel my hate, but it is hate without anger and in this way pure. I hate them because I will survive. I hate them because I have to. I hate them because they are watching me. I begin to shout and their heads like turnips turn their stupid faces at me. There are eyes. I shout, "WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU LOOKING AT?" "I CAN SEE YOU I CAN SEE EVERY ONE OF YOUR FACES." Once, "SHE's laughing. SHE's covering her ears, WHY THE FUCK ARE YOU COVERING YOUR EARS?" Once, "FUCK YOU. FUCK YOU. FUCK YOU. FUCK YOU. FUCK YOU. FUCK YOU." against advancing table. I tell them about death. I can feel death, where she is, when she's behind me. She loves me. She loves to make me dead. Once, I see someone move to point a camera at me and I am hated because I feel my vanity and because I think he is sleeping with the director and because he is recording me and because I can't see his face. "GET THAT FUCKING THING OUT OF MY FACE YOU COCKSUCKER." I see death's hands. My face is dead. I am half crouched. I am dead. I am still. I hear nothing. I love. I wait till death passes and I move again like I moved before.

I am not done. I march up and across the rake I DO NOT USE THE STEPS to where people sit at a different table covered in trash, and they are waiting for me and I begin to bark like a human and they bark like dogs. Sometimes I am made to be dead all over again. Two men who do not understand begin to move the table. I bark at them. They do not stop. I bark. Sketchbook spins me, parts my coattails to show my ass, Eli is saying "gone now gone now CRY OF THE BLOOD." I bark and my bark is a cry of blood because it makes my shoulders move. It is not a cry of blood. Things stop. Lights go out. I disappear. No time passes. Lights go up. BARK. Spin. Shovel. Kill. Red ribbon means stop forever. I am no one. I wait for "NO." I hear "yes." Shiver to watch her leave with him. I feel my heart run out of my pores and evaporate like the world. I realize I am acting again. I love them clapping. I watch them who sit all as one leave. I realize I am the audience and they who were the audience are now here the actors. I welcome them here because they are leaving, and I can't help smile because they interest me because they do not know who they are. Sometimes the ribbon falls.

Nathaniel Farrell is a performer. He played the part of the Soldier in Howard Barker's SCENE FROM AN EXECUTION, in November 2000. This essay is an excerpt from his "Notebook of the Soldier and Survivor of the play Scenes From an Execution."