

# SITE CITE CITY

(SF works : Jan-June 2007)

On the occasion of Artifact reading @ Oakland Art Gallery, March 22, 2008. To be performed: parts one (at OAG) and two (at the bar) of “The Jhoke.”

*(draft stage, as in “the whole world’s a”)*

**BARGE : Oakland : 2008**

**David Buuck**

I like you happy for not shopping the way  
 Frank you Lisa for not shopping the way  
 Frank you Jules for not shopping the way  
 Frank you Donald for not shopping the way  
 Frank you Leahy for not shopping the way  
 Frank you Christine for not shopping the way  
 Frank you Thomas for not shopping the way  
 Frank you Peter for not shopping the way  
 Frank you Joan for not shopping the way  
 Frank you Casey for not shopping the way  
 Frank you Kevin for not shopping the way  
 Frank you J.C. for not shopping the way  
 Frank you John for not shopping the way  
 Frank you Katie for not shopping the way

**MARKET STREET DETOURS**

I had disembarked at the Embarcadero, platforming myself into some semblance of public figuration. The bay area rapidly tranced it, from the resident base camps to the clamor and throng. Up and out into the punctuated street-sprawl, shadowed by the public directives. Heaved out then into the scablands, street-rocks popping against the undercarriage of the survival carts. Billboards tower as trees might shadow that. The turn lanes apropos of the new gold rush. Steetside is saddle leather, limbered for the pickets. 425,258 a day, fro and bending to it.

On Market Street the photographic gaze scans clockward, scaled to the souvenir postcard. I mixed in with the other arrivants, heading towards the arcades and galleries. The architecture had been designed to both embody & deny the scarred social landscapes, the outpost shunts breaching the pavement like so many possible futures stunted and repealed. At 2:06 p.m., about half an hour into the parade, a bomb exploded just south of Market Street, near the Ferry Building. Urbanism in this case being the organization of various infrastructures for the movement of labor and capital. Asking for change is illegal without a permit to protest. For every tree, a citizen breathing.

At Market and First, it's always May 1907, July 1916, March 2003, the bruised bodies tangled up in history's bare reckonings. Beneath the pavement, the beachhead, delineated as civic works and daze, hotwired to the ambulatory transit machines. Anti-blueprints wheatpasted up and down the battlements. Palimpsest mappings across the power lines grid into historical reckonings. Here's where Tom Mooney didn't bomb the war parade. The signage says here that you're there now, reading that there here. Bits of sex flake off the billboards and drift down to the sidewalk, ready-to-wear as social syntax, trafficking that. The future belongs to the passersby.

Marshland once penetrated as far as the corner of then and now. But there I was, across the street from here. Beneath the beach, the pavement, chalked with slogans for sidewalk sales. 528 billion gallons of water. What history there is of these waters and of contiguous lands is to be found only in the statutes and decisions of the courts. The banking fraternity weathered the storm fairly well and continued their functions of ministering to the financial needs of the swiftly growing city. At 3rd and Market, I cross into 1905, the traffic staged for the promotional film crew. What doesn't burn will melt, into disremembered celluloid, bruised & speckled brickwork, as the timer tends towards the full-stop.

Each intersection a chore wheel. Looking at that there, so it's a different world, or worlding oneself differently, the urban articulated through the activated citizen-flesh as street-flow, as body-traffic. That's how I took the next turn of events, with willful breath and breadth of tactics. Reading the news there by virtue of its happening just-now, right here amidst ourselves. The pavement sliced for text and meta-text, slits that eat bicyclists. Abstracted maps, hacking that, fine-tipped instruments recompose that traffic-pack. As a survival-cart might push ahead, in writing, ever-futuring in spite of. Tomorrow's yet visible in the rear-view mirror.

Where Turk meets Market, the streetcars spilled out into Bloody Tuesday. This then is what will have been, as pre-enactments for the battles to come. So therefore then, the 1500 bike racks, the biogeomorphic lulls & volleys. When the engineer had completed his map of Market Street, what was regarded as the abnormal width of the proposed street excited part of the populace, and an indignation meeting was held to protest the wanton disregard for the rights of landowners; and the mob, for such it was, decided for lynch law. So this is still happening now and here. For every breeching citizen, a tree branching, casting shadow-plays. What arteries channel what traffic towards what ends?

There I am down on 5th and Market, walking around with some string and a camera. Site-writing's embodied thought in action, charged and aware of positionality in mediated space and cross-cut vectors of power. Stringing together some sentences, then, as theorizing sentence. Site-exercises being then framing devices for daily practice. "Writing" as feint to draw attention to the thinking-body in socialized & activated space. "Siting" as feint to draw attention to the socialized & activated body in thinking-writing. Here's some language I gathered elsewhere, practicing string theory as urban historiography. The parts left out are out of sight, hidden behind the street-signs. The knots are punctuation, blister-bait. Like all histories, and all maps, you have to believe it to see it.

By now, I will have hopped on the streetcar to transport myself back to this time. Civic life-work as self-education spheres, active in willfully shared praxis, the performative as equal-and-not-equal-to the pedagogical, each nonetheless danced into being through the shared breath and sweat. But I couldn't kick the habitus. So what's haptic, at 6th and Market, the detoured gaze reflected back to me in every cracked brick, every skinned knee. Duration without narrative is the length of a city street, its history under constant erasure, staged as urban renewal. Beyond the breach, the paved meat-works, having been labored into concrete relations, scrubbed clean but never clean enough. It's the stains that sing the counter-verses, charting dance-steps for the new cartography.

It's the not-writing that strings me along. The erasure-carts hum down the sidewalks, sucking up ifs ands or butts. To panhandle is to gold rush, as cellphone is to finance. Live, work, loft. It's the not-looking that fills the frame, each image-capture a stage-set for real estate theater. I proposed some counter-blocking as street-signing for pre-enactments, fugitive works and plays. For every bank branch, a citizen breaching. Rehearsals are always happening again, so I re-scripted a string of sentences, then sung them through the body-strum. Leaning against the building, the letter S, the letter E, the letter X. It's the knot-writing that ropes me in.

Meanwhile, I had an experience, and it lasted about this long. This is the transcript of it, except that it can't be that, this. So I texted "I'm writing this now," but that was in the past tense, and I had no future address to send it to. Typologies that think atypically will have been what's not-yet, yet writing that now, as pre-enactment, new scripts for counter-stagings. Writing back is not going back but being here, as sentences tend to move one forward. I just sat & wrote it down and wrote it out, as long as a piece of string, which unravelled down Market Street. The sentences are chunky but the paragraphs are soft architecture. So I'm inside one of them now, building prose-blocks as pre-enactments for counter-habitation.

It's 2003 again, and the march down Market Street draws property lines into stark relief, the financial district mappings tied to the calvary leather. I pulled myself through the outlying fencing and attempted some impromptu poetics in the suddenly expanded field. My white-meat disco-body tried to initiate some contact improvisations within the general panic, but crisis management doesn't rock the off-beats, what with the beatings over at Fifth and Mission. 500,000 citizens. Unbuckled from clock-time, we detoured from the blister-packs, splintered into counter-scripts for para-site-specific civic relations. Each body a mobile biological weapon, a counter-factory, disassembling social syntax into new choreographies of rage & desire. Don't read the line; play it out.

I hadn't planned to plan that splat, but the templates cried out for mediation. Because the city had been talking back, in fetid thought-balloons and pop-up ads, enticements in spatial terms made all the more sexual by the numerous coin slots and for rent signs. The consolidated debt-works, a cross-hatched matrix of abstract relations, blistered through the swollen ranks. I decided to throw some language at the problem, but the problem flung it right back at me. It wasn't so much that I was more held-together then, but moving like this put the language in my mouth that way. Down the alleyways, the not-yet-converted warehouse sweatshops, tendered into not-yet-living-wage-rate poly-fleece. Celebrate the fabric of our livelihoods, at not-yet-raging-living-rates. Don't tend the line; break it.

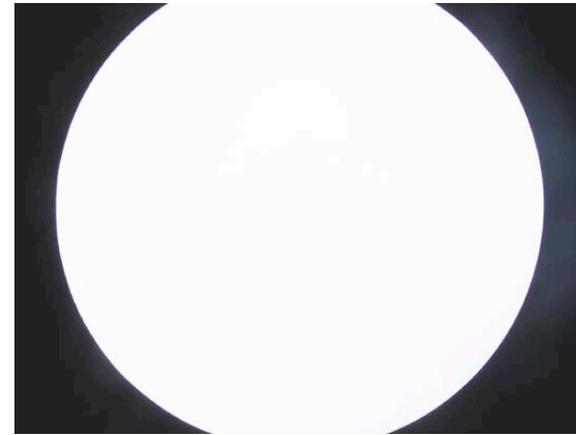
So attitudes are latitudes — as lattes clear the lanes. Beneath the pavement, the beechwood benches shake to the trembling of the trains. Shaded in the faded colors of another era's future tense. Stacks of taxed patter, splattered into street-wax. The rope is for underlining all the sexy parts. The needle in the slits scratches out the statistics, assembles the municipal records, from the gaggle to the latch. The physical distance between the zero crossing and the peak of the groove modulation marks the measure of the music. Twitch it into the bloodstream, but don't yet eat the shredded scripts. They're biofuel for the next of our kind.

The pay-toilet on Market and Leavenworth won't accept a token of my depreciation. Down in the terminal shafts free-floating factoids assemble into parsable grammars of sex and trade. But this isn't yet my full-stop. From out of the breach, bodies branch out into street-level clusters, the secret histories of the city transported by shoe-grime and underground weather systems. Walking on water, paved over for cars that exhaust themselves, fuming over bygone creeks and riverbeds. 2,200 tons of carbon dioxide. Pay the toll to punch the clock to bridge the gap 'twixt pass and passenger. Meter made that ticket script; insert coin in slot for more time.

### THREE GEMS SIT

There used to be a freeway that overpassed Market Street here. I was on it when I took this shot for you. These gaps lead down to the underground railways. Almost immediately after the bombing started, the downtown intersections were shut down by protesters. These photos were taken, and then taken away. For every hoarse throat a saddle sore, as the mounted police tally up. 200,000 gallons a day. I was being shadowed by a private defective, but it was only me in 1993. I hadn't planned to plant that. The self is a copy machine; it contains multiples. The screeching streetcar brakes reek of sex and body-grease. There's no going back; just watch where you walk, as you don't want to get soiled in the data-flow.

An anachronistics of the work at hand, as anti-systemic thinking-through. Here, then, it's 1993, & I'm on Minna at 8th Street, pushing up against the buildings. They named the side-streets after the brothel-madams. It wasn't so much that I was more put-together then, but that when I would unravel there'd have been less length to the line. Alleyways are so the real estate can breathe and fluctuate, as the unwanted make odd lots into parasitical shelter. The self is a series of paragraphs, fondled into rank speech-acts & punctuated body-tics. 2,438 arrests. I multiply containers, archival footage of chance encounters between the public & private, circa 2007, as prosthetic body-wraps, pulled from the flat files and pressed into service. For every tree, a catalog of leave-takings, saddle-stitched into historical guidebooks. Use your body to write your own maps, & I'll look for you on the dance floor.

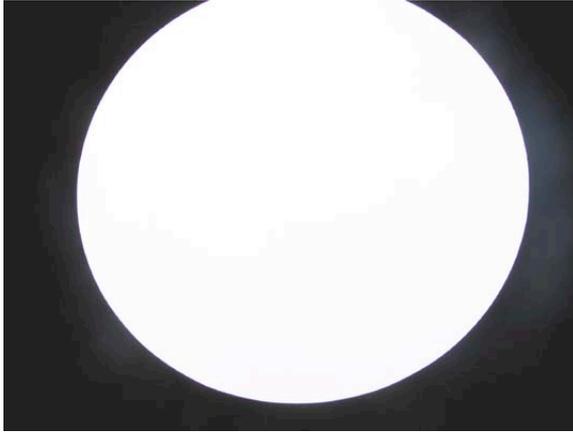


#### 4a

When did 3 hrs of experience become so frightening? A kind of waiting room, yes, but for what? The centerpiece cannot hold the space. Traffic circulars as ambient technics. Not my kind of theatricality. What does it mean to be bored? First timecheck. 9 minutes. Pen down to sit.

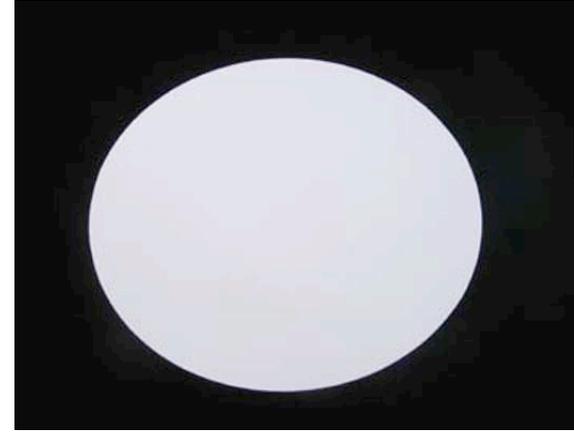
#### 4b

Birdflight punctuation the bowl of light. I have to do that in order to done have. Am I performing anything? The space performs me, pen down to cite that. Here come whispers. "It's overcast, so it's not working as well." Spooky vocal effects, a curvilinear concrete poetics. A paragraph is a bundle of thoughts-in-time.



#### 430a

Rain, fog-chill, hovering microclimates. The flower doesn't fall, it's chucked in from above. Forgot I brought the flask to forget. The body doesn't know just how to sit, as sitting is. Could be. Keep turning-in twds tactile things. The foot's vibrational arch-tautonics, structures up & out as ankle-seenting.

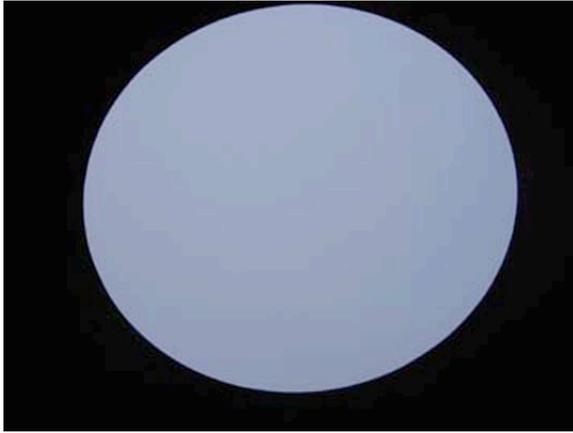


#### 5a

Just had an hour of check in, in what, 15 minutes? Should it take an hour to read what took an hour to compose? It's the social acoustics that bend the notes—but the sky is white/guano. Public Restroom Relations. Bomb shelter paratactics, at contrapuntal nodes of movement, pen down to city-nature, sit down to open as.

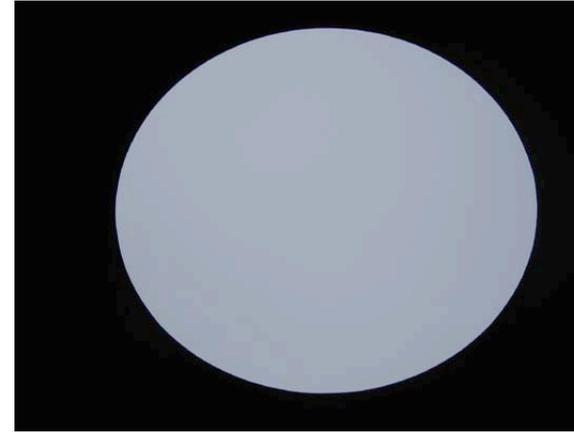
#### 5b

That I was not yet attuned to desire, was one way of finishing that thought-balloon. Post-it notation ~~says that was here before I was~~. I was my own come-down, which at least gave me the illusion of control. Where did this (*illegible*) originate, & under what conditions? Blue jeans, brown sneakers, shirt, sweater, & vest-jacket. The light is pale, & my body has its frames (framing devices). Bend down to site, then pen it as cite, as sight-writing.



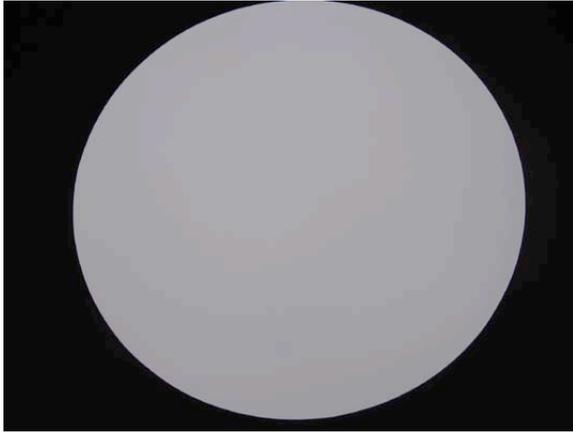
### 530a

So I'm being watched, too, now in the coldening. Bladder pacing for blood-heat & pseudo-cinema. The image is upside-down—as an argument for the softening gaze, gauze-eyed for hazy fog-cones—? How deep can writing go via shallow effects of sight-tripping? Tour of the body in sensing-time. Species-thinking, thru frames of planetary weather. The paragraph is a site for non-site markings. Pen up to sit up to open out in site.



### 6a

Trigger vs. cause. We've been told that rage is the most crucial element. So what is performance writing? The delayed onset reaction as a lumber threshold event. No time to be sick like this that now. Living thru the crisis is a bodily gnosis that pinches back. The bio-feedback chamber gathers paragraphs. Had to condition oneself to the social structures, or six cameras here & there. So—whose cinema, whose performance? Captured as, sights up, penned in.



### 630a

No, that was in Muir Woods, and really it was just a shack. It's like watching TV, except you have to do (more of) your own thinking. Point is, I'm producing writing, which shifts the problem to what *kinds* of writing, & twds what, rather than mere discover re to write in some abstract (*illegible*) social tense. That's at least 25 minutes from now, if the starlight channel doesn't come on first. Pen down, sitting up for set-ups; steps.

### 630b

Om, he said, or suggested into the gaps of socialized silencings. As the cycle roars past on side-streets the breathing's activated in one's other body. So not it's greened, the sky a bearded old man, chanting that. To want to slice through the ankles of that, the tendons & the stockings & the stalking-talking. Overtones lurk as harmelodic registers of architectural presence. Which is one form of the verb "to California." Just over the lip of it, sensing that crisp edge of birds-egg tintings. Pen down & exit.

## REPORT



### (DATE REDACTED)

10:30 am - On scene.

12:05 pm - No activity noted. Delivery truck pulls next to surveillance vehicle parked on (REDACTED) St., blocking view of residence. Surveillance vehicle moves to find alternate location.

12:10 pm - Subject vehicle, green (REDACTED), observed traveling westbound on (REDACTED) St. toward Martin Luther King Jr. Way (MLK). Mobile surveillance initiated. Subject vehicle traveling southbound on MLK toward (REDACTED).

12:15 pm - Visual of subject vehicle lost. Surveillance vehicle delayed at red light.

12:23 pm - Visual of subject vehicle regained in area of Bay Bridge toll booth. Subject vehicle moves quickly across three lanes to FasTrak lane and proceeds onto bridge. Surveillance vehicle blocked by traffic and unable to continue.

12:25 pm - Attempt to locate subject vehicle on Bay Bridge and into San Francisco. Unable to locate subject vehicle and surveillance terminated at (REDACTED) exit from Hwy. 101.

### (DATE REDACTED)

9:15 am - On scene at (REDACTED) St., Oakland, CA. No activity noted. Window coverings are closed and subject vehicle parked in driveway next to residence. Series of orange, green, and grey lights flash intermittently from interior.

1:00 pm - No activity. No one exits or enters the residence. Subject vehicle remains parked as described. Surveillance terminated.

### (DATE REDACTED)

10:30 am - Begin to depart area enroute to (REDACTED) to determine if subject departed residence on foot prior to initiation of surveillance. Subject observed through rear view mirror hurrying down front stairs and

moving quickly to vehicle. Subject is a Caucasian male, mid 30's, approximately (REDACTED) tall, slim build wearing (REDACTED), brown cap, and maroon work boots. Subject carrying book bag or computer bag. Subject enters vehicle and departs area.

10:35 am - Subject vehicle parks parallel on (REDACTED) St. just north of (REDACTED) Ave., Oakland, CA. Subject exits the vehicle and walks briskly to and enters (REDACTED) on corner of (REDACTED) and (REDACTED).

11:00 am - Investigator enters (REDACTED) to determine actions of subject. Subject observed seated just inside front door and to the left at small table near window, with back to window. Subject, with (REDACTED) in hand, converses briefly with (REDACTED) seated to his right, mid 30's, approximately (REDACTED) tall with long light brown or dark blonde hair, wearing (REDACTED) with neck scarf, white (REDACTED) and blue jeans. Subject scans interior of (REDACTED) briefly. Subject appears to stare off across (REDACTED) as if in thought. Investigator departs at 11:10 am.

12:44 pm - Subject observed through window standing and milling about. Photographs of movement obtained

1:52 pm - Subject exits (REDACTED) alone and scans area in all directions. He is observed milling about on the sidewalk at the corner with his hands in pants pocket to protect against chill wind. He pulls small (REDACTED) from his pocket and places in his mouth. He is looking down at sidewalk as he walks, again with hands in pants pockets. No discernable purpose of this activity is noted. Subject removes cell phone from pocket and dials. He holds cell phone to his right ear and mills about. Unable to determine if he is actually talking with anyone or simply listening. He is looking down and walking in an exaggerated manner. Subject places right hand over forehead and rubs the area of his forehead and eyes with a strong squeezing motion. Subject continues to mill about and walks several feet up (REDACTED) Ave. toward rear of (REDACTED). He turns and walks back slowly. His facial expression demonstrates contemplation, as he walks back toward the front of the (REDACTED), apparently taking no notice of the (REDACTED) and traffic as he strides by. Subject reaches the front of the (REDACTED) and lifts his head to look ahead of him. His gaze appears to be fixed in front of him as he walks northbound on (REDACTED) Ave. to the end of the (REDACTED). Subject immediately turns about and walks slowly but with determination back to the front door of (REDACTED) where he enters at 1:57 pm and disappears from view. Photographs of Subject's activities are obtained.

2:42 pm - Surveillance is terminated.

## PROPS

The wet was night. Buuck had passed the buck, halfway into bookdom, containers brimming, the foreground a beachhead of total footnotes. Time for the live-feed, and I was hungry for whatever wouldn't chap me further. As I entered the mediated feeding stage, I could feel the sticky buzz of the hive, present & willful, in active durational space. I sent out my scent, if only to clear a space in which I might be of some consequence, in however small an orbit. Chin up, chest out, wrists & ankles, scent it out. There was a photograph I was outside of. I could not make him. I wasn't happy to see myself like this, so it must've been a gun in my pocket. He was a hard act to follow.

The unsolved world is all that is the unsolved case. If Buuck hadn't been invented, he would have to exist. Who else would file the reports? So I sat and began to read. I red, I blue, I oranged into gray areas. I tried to sneak up on myself, but was boxed out. I could not make him out. I read, "between missions I cease to exist. I am what I've done, and that's not very pretty, but being ugly is better than being nothing." Which was in the stage directions, so I acted it out. Chin up, chest out, wrists & ankles, scent it out.

So the next part goes like this. There was that thing there, in front of us, & I said that thing to you. Am saying it. In writing. I could not make him out of objects. Being in space as a durational act of presence. Chin up, chest out, wrists & ankles, scent it out. It was here in the written report, which means it's happening now, I read. There was a photograph I was outside the frame of. But there he was too, beyond the doubt of a shadow. So I reached into the inbox, and took a reading, if only to give it backbone.

Here's an example of what I am writing, I read. I was getting down on myself, so I literally had to get over myself. But I could not make him out of language. I tried to stay true to form, but it kept leaking. Chin up, chest out, wrists & ankles, scent it out. The containers activated the space with economic precision. You could set your clock to them, or set your drink on them. Bind, don't brake it to book it, I said, while reading. I couldn't contain myself, so I bent & ambled.

Because it was in the report, I took an exaggerated walk around a box of goods. I was trying to get a feel of him, to sniff him out. Chin up, chest out, wrists & ankles, scent it out. But I could not make him out of context. There was a photograph I was outside the frame of reference for. But I'm here now, in writing, on the screen, I read. I was waiting for him to read me my chapters and versus, when the container ship docked at the bay-port. I climbed aboard, & prepared to give or take a reading.

## SOME REMARKS ON POETS THEATER

PT performances are not plays. Some poets can write good plays, but most cannot and should not. If a poet writes a great play, it should not be PT, but should be in a book instead.

At the same time, neither is PT merely skits or sketches. PT is a scripted *event*. That is, PT is written solely to occasion the getting together of the cast and the audience.

Writers of PT tend to spend either too little or too much effort on their scripts. The Goldilocks credo should always apply. Remember, it's (only) *poets theater*.

PT only occurs during the performance of the piece in front of others (and, often, at the bar afterwards).

No budget. Props and costumes should be homemade and/or cobbled together from what folks have at home.

Anti-illusionism. Props are only ever props, not the things they are meant to represent. "Actors" are not their roles, but just people (or, if you can't get any people, poets).

Rigorous amateurism. Under-rehearsedness. Minimal stage directions. Serious silliness. Counter-professionalism. Backstage open bar. Improvisation, ad-libs, unscripted laughter, mistakes & missed cues; in short, spontaneous life-art happening between the line readings.

Even if lines are memorized, it's still a *staged reading*.

No real actors. If a "real" actor appears in PT, it tends to make the audience blush on the actor's behalf. There shouldn't be trying, but being there doing it. Non-actors shouldn't be expected to play their role, but to play themselves performing their role.

For every performer, at least one friend in the audience.

PT should generally not be recorded. It's generally not pretty to look at on video, and the audience tends not to fit in the frame.

All PT video, film, or neo-benshi performances should aspire to be at least as interesting as you-tube.

PT tends to have a lot of in-jokes, and tends, for better or worse, to be oriented towards the coterie. Jokes in PT are funny mostly because the audience is laughing together. This is how coterie get to know themselves.

The broader the code, the wider the coterie.

The best poets theater would be everyday life, with each person playing themselves. Total coterie, with everyone in on the jokes. In short, spontaneous life-art happening between the players.

## Notes

Parts of "Market Street Detours" previously published in "Between Above and Below," with Amanda Huguen & Jennifer Starkweather, San Francisco Arts Commission, 2007. Other elements arose from the (de)tour of their "Art on Market Street" project in May 07, and the subsequent reading at Electricworks Gallery in SF in June. My thanks to AH & JS for encouraging my participation in this project.

"3 Gems Sit" is a partial transcription of a sit(e)-specific event inside James Turrell's "Three Gems" installation in the de Young Museum's Sculpture Garden. I sat from 4-7 pm, photographing the sky on the half-hour & writing the experience. April 07.

"Report" is partial transcript from private investigator hired to follow DB around, in order to construct a self-portrait through the technics of surveillance. Jan 07.

"Props" is a section from *The Treatment*, forthcoming from Tangent. Jan 07.

"Some Remarks on PT" was apparently written in June 07.

Inside cover from March 19, on the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 'official' beginning of "Shock and Awe."

Partial archive of BARGE activities & tours can be found at:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/24889946@N08/>

<http://youtube.com/dbuuck>

in the STR Anniversary of the "official"  
beginning of Shock & Awe: 19 March 08

Fuck you Should for not stopping the war  
Fuck you Stay for Not Stopping the war  
Fuck you Stay for not stopping the war  
Fuck you Jerry for Not Stopping the war  
Fuck you Kevin for not stopping the war  
Fuck you Tony for not stopping the war  
Fuck you you for not stopping the war  
Fuck you very for not stopping the war  
Fuck you Andrew for not stopping the war  
Fuck you Stephanie for not stopping the war  
Fuck you Bob for not stopping the war