9 SCRIPTS FROM A NATION AT WAR

A COLLABORATION BETWEEN
SHARON HAYES, ASHLEY HUNT, KATYA SANDER,
DAVID THORNE AND ANDREA Geyer

November 22, 2008 – January 18, 2009

Artists’ Roundtable: Saturday, November 22, 2pm
Moderated by Julia Bryan-Wilson

Public Reading: Saturday, January 10, 1-6pm

Combatant Status Review Tribunals, pp. 002954-003064
A five-hour public reading of transcripts of tribunals held
at the U.S. military prison camp at Guantánamo Bay.

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The Danish Arts Council and the Swing Space Program of the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council
and was developed, in part, during a Fellowship at the Vera List Center for Art and Politics at the
New School, New York.

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LLC. Free gallery admission underwritten by generous support from Ovation TV. The Standard
is the official hotel of REDCAT.

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Gallery Hours: noon-6pm or intermission, closed Mondays
Always free
We are alone with our voices, our many, incommensurate, visions.

Claire Pentecost

In camera:

9 Scripts from a Nation at War

in camera:

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We are alone with our voices, our many, incommensurate, visions.

In many ways 9 Scripts is more about speaking in. Speaking out presents a distance between the will of organized sovereign individuals and that of a sovereign authority—the state or its representatives. This distance is essential to both parties, and it must be bridged by insistently expressive, witnessed by the many, in a space we call public, the space where individuals and relatively autonomous collectivities openly perform the complex democratic activity of becoming civic. Four decades after the struggles of the Free Speech Movement in that space is much harder to find. The distance between individuals and between the individual and the state is both everywhere and nowhere. 9 Scripts locates it within each of us.

The players in this work, whether actors, self-enunciators, or some indeterminate fusion of the two, do not merely read scripts, they speak themselves into roles and speak roles into selves. The scripts, or more precisely their enactment, produce both distances and intimacies—both near and implied. What’s striking is their demonstration of these distances and intimacies as they appear to occupy the same space, which in itself is internalized and external.

To wander through these videos is to inhabit a set of dispersed subjectivities. Even though the enunciations have been fixed by the recording and playback apparatus, their spatial and temporal contingency is undermined by invisible redistribution. Each video is a potential entry point whose internal relations will be reiterated and recontextualized in different spaces of response in one or more of the other videos.

I watch a screen fill with type, the painstaking transcription of interviews with Iraq war vets whose voices are heard in fragments, replayed as often as necessary for the transcriber’s labor of fidelity. Elsewhere I see too of those veterans remaking and correcting parts of that transcription, filling their own words back to their voice, to be spoken yet again on a stage in an empty auditorium.

In another video, I watch actors rehearsing bits, either alone with a camera or beside impassive listeners, who are heard as the sound of the world moving on. This fabric of the world is the context of the demand for free speech in public space.

9 Scripts also occupies a university, but not to reproduce the recognizable signifying practices that became icons of political resistance in an earlier time. In many ways 9 Scripts is more about speaking in. Speaking out presents a distance between the will of organized sovereign individuals and that of a sovereign authority—the state or its representatives. This distance is essential to both parties, and it must be bridged by insistently expressive, witnessed by the many, in a space we call public, the space where individuals and relatively autonomous collectivities openly perform the complex democratic activity of becoming civic. Four decades after the struggles of the Free Speech Movement in that space is much harder to find. The distance between individuals and between the individual and the state is both everywhere and nowhere. 9 Scripts locates it within each of us.

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