

Folie à Deux

Felix Bernstein
&
Gabe Rubin

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Felix Bernstein/Gabe Rubin

David Lewis Gallery, Summer 2018

88 Eldridge Street, Fifth Floor, New York, New York 10002

Folie à Deux explores the melodramatic partnership of madness & queerness in drag & transgender performance. Rubin & Bernstein work at the intersection of noise, camp, and poet's theater. The film *Madame de Void* and surrounding installation draw on psychosexual scenarios from Klossowski & Stein; Fassbinder & Lacan; Masoch & Mishima. Set in balance by the seesaw that transfigures them into unhappy playthings/and the caesura that slashes one into the other.

In their cinema of regression (a projectile narrative film) the pair re-vamps Marquis de Sade as Madame de Void—the vanity of the void in waiting. Being permanently between the Sade's 120 days of Sodom & Void's 101 dogs of Gomorrah but unable to endure waiting on the stage to convert waiting into weight—they hang off the ledge of compulsory ridiculousness, compulsory hysteria, and compulsory critique. Installed in multiple enclosures, the artists play house, using their selves as transitional subjects—since *our bodies our selves* are always in the eye of the withholding beholder, always seeing not sawing; re-viewing not reviewing.

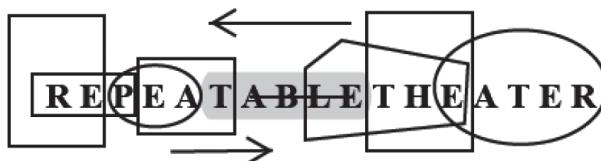
In this diagnostic case study, the artists outline their anemic theater & philosopher Kyoo Lee looks at the ontology of the dog as the being that always already spots our blind spots, and looks at the *transbaroque* style.

THE REPETABLE THEATER Kyoo Lee

"Baroque," in its genesis, that comes out fundamentally "imperfect" (*barroco*, an imperfect pearl in Portuguese) or perfectly irregular in self-un-coordinating or homo-hetero-distancing, would be something more and other than a historically referenced (17th–18th centuries), genre-specific (European, architectural, musical, etc.) style of declarative decoration. We, now three for two, would rather see it as something of a "secondarily unnecessary" and but or perhaps perhaps necessarily self-seconding contempo-re-stylization of the classical, a hyper-ornamentalized allegory or allegorical doubling of the baroque itself or, say, tripling like the "third sex" gone crypto-singular, turning, in fact, contra-mimetic at every turn as if already in transit, translated, transferred, transposed, translocated somelsewhere in its very auto(hetero)mobility, so why not then, we might as well say, *transbaroque* to begin with—just pass the note, says the one badly transitioning here n+ there blurring the line or better still just blocking the port with its ass between passing n+ non-passing, with its transass, itself a silent passage in the shiny transbody, the bye-bye of the urinary binary, again carry on n+ pass the bloody note, will you?

...SEE?

...SEE?



Re Their unaVOIDability

Re The Transbaroque Auto-theoreading of M. de Void

Re The Transbaroque Auto-theoreading of M. de Void,

Their UNAVoidAbility

➔ (see)

1. Re		T	H	E						
2. The			R	E						
3. Eat(er)			R	E	P					
4. Pea				P	E	A				
5. Table					E	A	T	(E)	(R)	
6. able						T	A	B	L	E
7. Rep							A	B	L	E
8. Lethe	L	E	T	H	E					
➔ (saw)										

NOTABLE NOTATION Kyoo Lee

THE phallus? M/mystery M/mastery necessarily mis/identified, mis/taken “as an ideological—as *the* ideological—myth” needs to be remasturbated, remassaged if not digitally remastered, the un/necessary voiding of which could be “disrupting image’s relation to itself,”¹ which is to say that “a social demand of the couple on the couple to be *the couple*” is the demand of “genital oblativity.”² Articles becoming testicles n+ testicles nipples n+ nipples pushing their envelopes—how or why?—and or why not n+ so what? Again *c'est* THE question—returning with a joyful mournful trail mix, not unlike Adam n+ Eve out to lunch in your garden.³

RE Anal-Retentive n+ Intensive Care Gone Allegro—Cyclical—like Canine Conspecific Coprophagy: Start, re-imagine, “this thing,” so they said, with an interspecies translation including transmigration, yes, let us: a dog eating poop (including and frequently its own) in the opera house of being, of animated being

REPeated, eaten, doggedly, obscenely, successively before n+ after the show, each prop at the end of the show going pop, poop, pooh poohaha haha r we winning Winnie the poor tiger, “equally unknowing of the real and the ideal” cuz

PEA or pee, p or q, the question is, ““being is seeming is dying on the stage”” all the same especially in the doghouse where hot dogs merge with wet pet dogs even in the year of the dog, not the same as the year of dog-eating, mind you, but u r turning every pea into part of pee anyway, “converting the waiting into weight,” so

EAT(ER) the queer repeater from a 3rd corner, get the perpetual crumbling of the 4th wall, welcome the coming of a “2nd” gestation, 1st & 4most, n+ get ready to enter that site for soiled solidarity, that transite as a stranger 2 welcome 2 ur own

TABLE...

ABLE

LETHE Forget me not, Myosotis, O My Sötis, in this “labyrinth of a memory devoid of all others,”⁴ “I’d like to take you to a movie/in a world

1. Jacqueline Rose, “Sexuality and Vision,” *Vision and Visuality* (ed. Hal Foster), p. 118.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid, p.113.

4. Ibid.

5. Cf. Adam and Eve by Paracelsus in Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, p.146.

6. Christine Buci-Glucksman, *The Madness of Vision: On Baroque Aesthetics*, p. XVII.

without a death wish/On a night under the fireworks in heaven," and I'll try n keep my Plato playdough nice n moist, not all the time though, I'm not Saussure, you see, not sure where Saussure is these days, either, so hurry home honey, happy n strong.⁸

7. Brian Fallon's Song, *Forget Me Not*.

8. Cf. Sawako Nakayasu, *Hurry Home Honey: Love Poems 1994–2004*.



GABE RUBIN | FELIX BERNSTEIN have presented film, music, and theater at MOCA Los Angeles, Issue Project Room, Anthology Film Archives, and the Whitney Museum of American Art. At the Whitney, they staged and exhibited Bernstein's libretto *Bieber Bathos Elegy* (2016). They directed and performed in *Victorine* by Mayo Thompson and Art & Language for the 2012 Whitney Biennial. Also at the Whitney, Rubin performed in Jill Kroesen's *Collecting Injustices* and Bernstein in Andrew Lampert's *Synonym for Untitled. Folie à Deux* is one stage of their Mimeology that traces a queer history of transformal, repellant, abjective performance. Excerpts have been presented at Southfirst Gallery, Das Unbehagen, University of California in Los Angeles, School of Visual Arts, and Carnegie Mellon University.

FELIX BERNSTEIN is the author of the poetry collection, *Burn Book* (Nightboat), and a book of essays, *Notes on Post-Conceptual Poetry* (Insert Blanc Press). His work was selected as a best of 2015 in *The New York Times* and *Artforum*. His writing has been featured in *Flash Art*, *Spike Arts Quarterly*, *Poetry Magazine*, *Hyperallergic*, and *Texte Zur Kunst*.

GABE RUBIN makes sound work that examines the indeterminate artifice of age, gender, and vocal range. He has released music with Wee Space Tapes, and has forthcoming work with Wild Flesh Productions, and the Queer Trash music series. His film *Boyland* was selected for the Brooklyn Film Festival and the MIX Queer Experimental Film Festival (2015), and he has shown video work at Vox Populi Gallery in Philadelphia. Rubin was featured in the transmasculine photo series *American Boys* by Soraya Zaman and Shelley Hirsch's performance *Book-Bark-Tree-Skin-Line* for Blank Forms.

KYOO LEE is a Professor of Philosophy, Gender Studies and Women's Studies at John Jay College and The Graduate Center, CUNY. She is the author of *Reading Descartes Otherwise: Blind, Mad, Dreamy, and Bad* (2013) and *Writing Entanglish: Come in Englysshing with Gertrude Stein, Zhuangzi...* (2015).