

Lausanne, May 6, 2023

Good evening,

For many reasons, the performance that was supposed to take place has finally been cancelled.

Indeed, the text that was supposed to accompany an ironing session of the fabric presented here ended up being obsolete, before it even existed. The performance was to be the third in a serie of absurd artist presentations that I created during my Masters in Visual Art.

The first of these performances was a collage of artist statements without sense, during which I gradually sweated a black liquid, and where, metaphorically, the artist drowned in his own reflection after an opening. Afterwards, I had pursued the same approach during my diploma jury, for which I appropriated myself a text by the sociologist Yael Kreplak on the dynamics of discourse in art. The conference followed a dance solo in which I progressively lost my costume to end up in a fluorescent green mini thong. The situation was perfectly grotesque, I was almost naked and very sweaty in front of the audience.

The two experiences had been conclusive and I wanted to continue in this direction, this time by making a link with my research on tapestry. The idea was to approach the question of speculation in the art world, through pieces whose fragility would be confronted with their manufactured and commercial equivalent.

So I was taking as my first example the tapestry of the Apocalypse, which was made around 1380, and which had progressively lost its value, ending up being partially cut up and used as a horse blanket around 1800.

The anecdote was speaking to me, and I was able to use it to make the connection with the development of capitalism and the implications of the Indian trade in the creation of a globalized system.

All these elements were to allow me to criticize the dynamics of the art world and the setting in competition of its individuals. I quoted Lee Lozano who wanted to be an art dreamer more than an art worker, and I described her last performance in which she left the art circuit.

One of the conclusions of this passage was that the perfect artist, in the eyes of the market, must be dead. Dead, and thus with a closed production, is indeed the best way to raise artist's ranking.

I was going to tell all this while ironing, revealing at the same time the drawing that is here on the reverse side of the fabric and that we only see very little of in its current presentation. I had planned to start ironing my shirt, eventually my pants as well, all this to end up flattening my hair with the iron.

There's something about the whole wrinkling, steaming, stroking thing that I kind of liked. When I was a kid, my mother used a press instead of an iron. She could better swallow the mountains of cloths sorted by color. It's probably a personal perception, but in clothing, I always feel like I'm seeing bodies multiplied. The more a sweater has been worn by the entirety of my siblings, the more I like it. The potential of a shell that is interchangeable is particularly appealing to me.

If you were to pull one of the threads of this jacquard, it could come apart entirely. Each of the seven colors of which it is made could spill out onto the floor in a shapeless pool, a spider's web that has lost its ties.

I am particularly fascinated by this assembled but intrinsically divisible aspect.

I also realized later that I prefer the back of the fabric rather than the front. This is why my piece is presented upside down.

To tell the truth, I am not very interested in the purpose of the work itself.

It was in realizing this lack of interest that I realized that my performance was actually giving importance to the wrong side of the paradigm, and that I would be unable to get any lightness from it.

In the same way Lozano leaves art to better belong to it, my performance is thus cancelled, to continue to exist.

Thanking you for your attention,

Jean-Marie