

RESEARCH: SITES AND SPACES

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Entitled *Staging Research*, part two of *Reading Performance: An Annotated Bibliography in Real Time III* focuses on artists whose literature and theoretical research become a performative process that takes shape within the exhibition space. At the heart of their practice, text serves as both the primary source and the actual physical material for the work. Also exploring the specific nature of exhibitions as discursive sites, this section brings together various artistic approaches in installation work, performance or publication. In addition to a selection of reading material illustrating the dialogical relationship between performance and text, two projects by artists Sophie Bélair Clément and Mathieu Grenier are examined as examples of *mise en abymes* that highlight the performative quality of the research process behind the works, and give it new form through documentation.

These examples help to broaden the reflection on the textual sources pertaining to performance by including a variety of paratextual elements—some used by the artists as a medium, others produced in parallel to the works. Inspired by Gérard Genette's definition of paratext as a "heterogeneous group of practices and discourses" that accompany the work so that "one does not always know if [...] they belong to the text or not, but in any case they surround it and prolong it", this section of *Reading Performance* proposes to investigate the role of textual production as an integral part of a performative process.

The literature on display at Artexte about Grenier's *Symposium* project is divided into two parts—preliminary research and dissemination—in a new layout that combines documents from historical archives and paratextual elements from a previous exhibition at Le Lobe, in Chicoutimi, in 2015. This project is the result of prolonged research in the archives of Chicoutimi's International Environmental Sculpture Symposium in 1980. Grenier's investigation first led him to various elements about the history of the event, especially its section dedicated to performance art, which is now considered an important part of the history and development of this discipline in Quebec. The challenges of documenting performance as an ephemeral form is revealed in the printed material—programmes, posters, photographs, and texts—compiled by Grenier. Throughout this project, the artist sets about to appropriate the process of documentation by generating interviews and correspondence with the artists who participated in the 1980 Symposium, gathering testimonies made more complex by the passage of time. The inherent performative nature of this approach is illustrated at Artexte by a particular layout where paratexts and artefacts commingle so as to create a back and forth between the different temporalities mentioned, namely the historical event itself, its documentation, investigation and finally its subsequent reinterpretation and appropriation as a medium.

This echoes Bélair Clément's dynamic, with the integration of *Conversations*, a lecture originally presented with Vincent Bonin at VOX, on December 13, 2012. As part of *Reading Performance*, this conversation around Bélair Clément's work *Salle Proun: mur, bois, couleur, 1923 (1965,1971,2010)* was the object of a re-reading, the recording of which was then superimposed on a slideshow projected during its first iteration. Images of research in the archives and museum reserves along with photographs of Bélair Clément's work scroll on as a dialogue with Bonin cites the artist's correspondence and various observations during production. In choosing this type of intervention, the artist clearly demonstrates the importance she lends to making visible the network of relationships that unites protagonists, and underlies the emergence of the work. The paratextual production showcased in the exhibition is presented as both the medium of the performance and its documentation. Form and content allow for reflection on the issues surrounding the status of the author, as the full complexity of his or her position is revealed using an approach that questions the inclusion of a given historical object in theoretical discourse through a combination of reproduction, appropriation and reinterpretation.

To continue reflection on the dialogue between text and performance, the proposed selection of publications and artists' books include *Voyage de têtes avec Sylvie Cotton*, by Francys Chenier and Juan Ortiz-Apuy's *A Map of the Empire of Language as a Place of Struggle*, two publications that utilize the strategies of cartography to both show and give access to the site of research. The different notions of the artist-as-researcher put forward here have demonstrated how the recording of a process and the treatment of the paratexts generated around a given work can be carried out as part of the artist's practice, as it oscillates between critical distance and proximity. The idea that text, as it relates to performance, does not need to be reserved for critics and theorists truly takes shape in this section of the exhibition as one of the recurring and fundamental concepts of *An Annotated Bibliography in Real Time*.

1 Genette, G. (1997). *Paratexts. Thresholds of Interpretation*. Translated by Jane E. Lewin. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.1.