

7:00pm, Dec 14 - The Part of No Part - Part 2

7pm, December 14, 2012

Part 2: Costumes by Tiziana La Melia

Curated by Dan Starling

221A is please to present *The Part of No Part*, an artwork curated by Dan Starling that invites five artists to each design a part of a performance by concentrating on one aspect of it: sound, costumes, staging, choreography, script. Conceived in episodic fashion, *The Part of No Part*, began in September 2012 when Julia Feyrer composed the soundtrack, which took the form of a five hour terrestrial pirate radio broadcast from the rooftop of the parking garage at the corner of Main and Georgia in Vancouver.

From the perspective of Art History, modern art's intellectual superiority (heroic self-congratulation) over design is fully justified since designers are able to avoid confronting the abyss of their own desire due to one thing: the client's desire. Designers can "play the game" with little problem since their desire is simply to fulfill the client's desire. Conversely, detached from the guild or systems of patronage, modern artists are tormented by the enigma of the question of the other's desire. *Che vuoi?* (what does the 'Other' want from me?) and ultimately propelled by the question, "how do I know what I want?"

So the story goes: while costume designers are busy making costumes to fulfill whatever desire they've been presented with, it is only in art that we can ask the question: what *is* a costume? But does this stereotypical theorization still hold? It is capitalism that turns the question around and affects design and art equivalently in its speculation about desire. For if something is produced that does not fulfill a need or a want, *whatever* it may be, it does not exist. To what degree is art in our society fulfilling the desire to be unproductive or for failure? In a state of super-abundance, less becomes more.

Are we too proud to be exploited as designers are? Should we be realistic and accept the game even though it may diminish our opportunity to confront the question of what it is we want to achieve as artists today? Could this be the story that we are trying to tell? On Friday December 14, 2012 at 221A, Tiziana La Melia's performance will present the costumes aspect of *The Part of No Part*.

Tiziana La Melia uses performance to fuse poetry, costumes, painting and sculpture. La Melia has made works that confuse the line between object and subject, making sculptures that resemble entities and dressing up performers in sculptural costumes. In her piece *Script for Three Voices* (2010) her sculptures and paintings become "actors" alongside live performers who take on the qualities of objects. She has studied at the University of Guelph (MFA 2011), Emily Carr and SFU. She recently exhibited at *Exercise*, Vancouver.

100-221 E Georgia
Vancouver, BC
+1 604 568 0812
hello@221a.ca
Tues-Fri 10am-5pm
Sat 12-5pm

Notes from the Overcoat and the Undercoat

A Script for Costume

Written by Tiziana La Melia for The Part of No Part

Narrated by Casey Wei on December 14, 2012 at 7:15 pm
Performed by Dan Starling on August 30, 2013 at 8:15 pm

INTRODUCTION

... Hello. . everyone :) Thanks for coming :) Feel free to get a drink. Zone in and out. Walk around. Leave to smoke. Enter, exit. Sit. Lean.

ok

I hesitate to

confess

I felt deeply troubled when I considered how unusually delicate and insubstantial the moon is. The moon, as everyone knows, is usually made in Hamburg, and they make a complete hash of it.... The moon is manufactured by a lame copper....

&

since

I couldn't fill the room up with the scent of perfume, I decided to fill the room up with a few breath swatches.

The Overcoat started when I substituted the dream of Baudelaire's jacket, all ripped and frayed, with that of Gogol's Akaky Akakievich. I got a little mixed up doing this while at the same time indexing silk scarves from Schiaparelli, the *mise en abyme* of a Hermes trompe oile design, the constructivists repetition and sports motifs, Balla's futurist suits. . . and so on, on a syncretic blog. What did a scarf have to do with the overcoat? I was thinking it would be good to hide one up my sleeve, covered in the scrawl of this script of coats.

What was it that I wanted to be? I got distracted by russet potatoes and the designs they promised. The table began to look like an oil spill happened to Turin's horse. Or that after the daughter undressed the father she would return to the kitchen table and carve religious shapes into her uneaten dinner. Did I become a bit more Akaky, whose only friend was the hallucination of the overcoat he was forced to buy in parts, made by the local tailor, too snobby to fix the nightgown of cloaks?

You see, Akaky pleaded: ‘ I’ve er . . . come . . . P, that overcoat you know, the cloth . . . you see, it’s quite strong in other places, only a little dusty. This makes it look old, but in fact it’s quite new. Just a bit . . . you know . . . on the back and a little worn on one shoulder, and a bit . . . you know’.

(PAUSE)

I wandered the aisles of Value Village, Fabrictime and Dressew, admiring the clothes, telescoping in on connotative jerseys, sheer green nylon covered with appliquéd ducks and wondered, who is this for? I wondered what Akaky wanted and realized we both now had to cut down. For him, not for lack of work and need—but savings. For me, because I was my own tailor “No, I can’t mend that.”

Not yet.

Inside the labyrinth there was no time to draw, in a double articulation of radial teenage patchwork, tucking in paranoiac forms and fixing up some notes for a few garments. The costume guidebook gave me step-by-step instructions on how to distress but I just couldn’t drop the grand piano Tarantino style.

PART ONE

The Undercoat

Some mulberry and a worm. A paragraph is mentioned as silky.

Stained and discoloured garbs covered with dust.

The tailor refuses to patch up his nightgown.

Were they powder coated?

The parsley in the shadow of the bookshelf flops over, pointing towards the old tread.

Words falling out of my mouth like cloaks.

Hoods.

O

Sheer, cold nights.

COSTUMES:

Undercoat: Red cotton long underwear, jewellery, watches, chains, rebar, ball chain, mirrored plastic, a film of beer.

Hat #1: Spaghetti No 6, paper, foam head, pastels, clay

Hat #2: Spaghetti No 3, The Vancouver Sun, 1914? foam head, pastels...

Curtain #1: Light blocker

Curtain #2: Rayon

Curtain #3: Privacy film, oil on duralar, chandelier chain.

Scarves: Silk, muslim, dye . . .

Dead Tree: Coat rack, headlight, coloured gel . . .

Voice: APC trench coat, dad’s T-shirt, tights...

Block of Steps: A rotating cast of characters on Yvonne and Ada’s back steps of the rectangular hold.

1.

³⁸ ...Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners. ³⁹ And you shall have the tassel, that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the LORD and do them, and that you may not follow the harlotry to which your own heart and your own eyes are inclined, ⁴⁰ and that you may remember and do all My commandments, and be holy for your God.

Maybe it's how it resembles a bell but when you ring it you hear the weight of fabric bangs.

2.

I was nineteen when I thought, "my overcoat, besides being covered all over in stains, had gone out of fashion ages ago. Nowadays they're all wearing coats with long collars, but mine were short, one over the other. And you couldn't really say the cloth had been waterproofed."

Peeling up the scotch tape to find a turtle neck inside sent prickles down his spine. Jersey band around neck,

The woman remembered the train that stopped in Naples and the man lifted a wing of his trench coat to show a fabulous store of stolen trinkets. The chance to buy a glint, so that when you are afraid its steady glim will cradle you softly to sleep.

The man I remembered before decides said "to have a mantle made out of my new uniform, which I'd worn over twice, I decided to make it myself, so that those crooks shouldn't ruin it, and shut myself up in my room so that nobody would see. I had to cut it up all with a pair of scissors, because the style's completely different."

Gertrude said, "Coats are principally overcoats. Hasten to overtake them."

Charles said, "Trousers tucked into incarcerating gaiters, short, the entire equipment of these men has taken upon itself the special personality of being more solidly backed, more squarely set on their feet, more erect than ordinary mortals can be."

...

"A sentence is why they were folded. Please have it folded."

"Garments were a separate desire pleasure. She made hours a desired separated measure."

"Net and some silk"

"So far, the only thing that had stopped me was not having any royal clothes. If only I could get a hold of a cloak. I would have gone to a tailor but they are such asses."

PART TWO
The Overcoat

A rabbit and hay. A sheep and some grass. A goat and a mule.

G.S. page 230 “Soon lay spook. Spook tie. Spook tie told top.”

Writing letters to E.F. and S.K. on Saturday afternoons.

Starved so long to get it. Feel so. Plainly like less monkish for one night only.

Hardly rich, never idle, blasé, uniform, obedient, tidy, unmysterious.

Fruit of the loop cantalope along a hat rim.

COSTUMES:

Overcoat #2: virgin wool and cashmere, lamp, page of interest, coloured gels, chair? cement

Voice: APC trench coat, dad’s T-shirt, tights...

I got drunk from some sloppy cursive. I wrote it half a sleep. I read it and woke up. It seemed like it could fit. Making it fit. The shirt was a bit slavish. This was the last part:

Maybe I arrive at a face when I apply eyeliner to the top lid, to the top edge where the tip of liquid eyeliner meets the lashes that protect my eyes from the pulverizations of bodies and things. I draw a line with a rule; I can’t also draw a line around the contours of my mouth. We used to watch our mothers do this. My mother gave me some red lip liner in my Christmas stocking one year because or after I asked her once, how to keep ones lipstick to last longer. I touch this liner in its case but never use it. You can use either eyeliner or lip liner - did I read this in Cosmo one time on an airplane? Or do I do both like Dolly Parton, who told the interviewer she told her mother, I want to look like that beautiful lady I saw on the street.

When I consulted Emily with the partly fabricated memory, she wrote back:

Tiz, I’m also not sure if it was winter or summer, but I know I’m confused because you also wrote a poem about Christmas shopping at the bay downtown—you shared it in a workshop in Jeff’s class (Fall 2004). Fall 2005? He called it ambient poetry. [...] I could only only hope that we would be friends. It’s so secret, just so that we would stand later at a Clinique counter later—can’t count years now—and pick makeup and sneak an extra bag for Martina. Martina more than us.

I use the bag a lot, well I thought but I’m realizing it sits now, with the soft dust that only lands on extra cosmetic bags from Clinique gifts in my closet in New West. Filled with plastic or thin metal or what I would have called jewels but now want a more precise name.

What I can confirm, Clinique clinician, is that I didn’t buy mineral makeup—there was a phase of that, over but not then. I bought the same liquid I was always using. Something sucked. Then I almost blew the cover you drew around you in a poly bag for Martina: the woman told me, seeping skeptic, “she asked for one for her sister.” At least I wasn’t as Canadian (as the first Jeff would say to us—in an office in the undergrad student union office when our class went over time: “there was a group in there already but they were very Canadian and polite and offered to leave”) and we went in there and he also said a line that said “in the words of Christina Aguilera,”and something about ‘dirty.’ And now I can’t remember how the words went how his line lined ‘em). Anyway I wasn’t Canadian enough to quite undo the cover. Cover up.

It’s too bad we can’t buy our makeup together all the time; arrive at these conclusions. Sun in the afternoon office or mineral dust smoke and makeup mirrors.

PAUSE

On page 231 Gertrude says: “In the agreeable, in the agree silk great or in the action not a shape or paid a sacrament to be a real coal leaf or pass. A curtain, next sugar rest, rent sugar rent not a smell not a smell salt.”

A return to what started it all. No cascade of leaves. “He gave no thought at all to his cloths: his uniform was not what you might call green, but a mealy white tinged with red. His collar was very short and narrow, so that his neck, which could not be called long, appeared to stick out for miles, like those plaster kittens with wagging heads foreign street-pedlars carry around by the dozen. Something was always sure to be sticking to his uniform - a wisp of straw or piece of thread.”

THE SUBSEQUENT PARAGRAPHS CONSIST OF TWO VOICES. EMAIL EXCHANGES. ADJUST SPEED OF READING FROM VOICE TO VOICE. ONE SLIGHTLY FASTER, THE OTHER SLOW AND SERIOUS.

Within the luminous and inimitable shade of green is there a beverage, piss yellow, dozy and succulent? Any beverage knows it’s weak under light; it clutches to taste with the ends of weak fingers. The empty bottle of scotch is filled with water—this bottle is clear and the label, which is neatly peeled off, somehow looks more repulsive when under the desk lamp you notice the streaks of glue still visible. “I wish drinking was always as beautiful as when

it's starting, Rachel. But maybe then I wouldn't stop." (PAUSE) "The cloak is ready now... Maura screamed when I put it on." "Have you seen the scream that is red with green?" ... Who writes this shit?"

Is the day a popsicle dipping into the inlet? The day is that which you wonder at, not understanding how it rises as mud from the sea, having entered as afternoon dessert. The night reveals the Christmas decoration from within the tall condo across the street. "I keep thinking of your father at Christmas." "He let his gold watch dangle outside his waistcoat and pays thirty rubles for a pair of shoes." "I don't know—but have you seen this watch; it moves at the same speed as the earth turns on its axis."

I can satisfy my hunger with the warm and crusty bread I baked, but will this suffice as a costume? The labour still stuck to your hands can't not be worn; I'll see it long before the weight in your abdomen. I moved the heavy stacks of paper to the supper table, to clear up areas for sketching ideas for scarves. "I'll get him the exact same scarf this year. He won't notice. There's a box in the basement I clear things into every January anyway." "To see her dress lying there, more like air than a dress." "Like some deafening abstraction, right? Like having to think about there being air around for breathing?"

* OPTIONAL: PICK UP JEAN GENET AND READ UNDERLINED SELECTIONS FROM PAGE 101.

There is a factory mass-producing Napoleon's hat, or Napoleon hats. Plunder in collars plenty in collars. Each costume is a day [I wonder about the laundry]. The laundry drips into the bathtub, a few articles still soak in the tub: a sixties style smock I picked up the other day, a merino wool v-neck pull over, and a cotton fishnet sweater. "But would it hurt to get him something different, even for your own sake?" "The task of perception entails pulverizing the world, but also one of spiritualizing its dust." "Yes, but also like Simone Weil working in a factory: that kind of abstraction."

It is nice to gush when an old woman does an overcoat you adore, but is it ok to look from the Mac screen to the suffering jade caressing the carpet because its arms are too long for its support, and to look back and forth and still not have a single costume finalized? My plectranthus amboinicus is nearly dead—and I still decorate the weight of my pockets with a broken brass key. At the end of the pocket a bobby pin. "I have my own life to mend—I can't always tend to his too." "I was so worried I put my socks and shoes on and hurried into the..." "I would like to ride in whatever vehicle she would make in a factory. I can't decide what speed it might move at..."

Will clearing off the tables prompt me to commence working? Work is inevitable. Work happening when I am gaze through the dragging succulent green. "You probably just need more plants. You're less bitter when we have more plants."

Can you remember the name of that succulent that died in the summer? Do you want to get another, maybe a couple more?" "The more short lived a period, the more susceptible it is to fashion." "Speed is a fashion, like a five-block walk."

How will I dirty my elbows? Even the ocean looks at the dirt of your elbows as it passes over you—even each angle is dirty, the movements a study for the jade. Reacting to the answers with description. "Talking to you is like a description of my life." "As he speaks, the words fall from like cloaks." "Their words falling from their mouths. Maybe they just came from the dentist with a frozen mouth. At least it was winter."

Do I call Eric the mechanic and pray it's just a dislodged clip? A question is a call. The list on 'fashion all her life', 15 poems beside reproductions of four "separate pokers" "Better than trolling through the lives of others in their poems plump with thinking and word choices they wasted hours on." "One glance at that little stool where she puts her tiny foot when she steps out of bed. And then, over that tiny foot, she starts pulling on her snowy white stocking." "All the girls that got more beautiful with the passing hours, the ones that left us with their jackets so quick we couldn't see. Or didn't remember soon after."

I placed my to-do list ... recto, do I put it verso and read the to dos? The list moves so less lightly, with recto responses to verso requests. So maybe as much elaboration as description "They help me get away from myself. Sometimes I need some air." "He gave no thought at all to his clothes: his uniform was not what you might call green, but a mealy white tinged with red." "I remember a Harris Tweed coat. And a pocket square. That at least is still with me."

Questions are the largest labour; they are the most effusive and burgeoning gowns. The gown is flat against the sliding door "I changed my mind. I'm not going. I need less air tonight, especially the air of others, the smell of their lungs." "I decided to have a mantle made out of my new uniform, which I'd worn only twice, I decided to make it myself, so that those crooks shouldn't ruin it, and shut myself up in my room so that nobody would see. I had to cut it up all with a pair of scissors, because the style's completely different." "Style is sometimes just like undressing."

The print may fade slowly, edging its image toward greater sympathy with the wall. Its corners perhaps punctured, or fitted between some scotch and wall. "I'll just get my father scotch this year. I don't care." "So far the only thing that stopped me was not having any royal clothes. If only I could get a hold of a cloak. I would have gone to a tailor but they are such asses."

A list of people whose ideas, words, emails, events and bodies have been utilized in *Notes for the Overcoat and the Undercoat*:

Book of Numbers (Wikipedia: Tassel), Charles Baudelaire, Walter Benjamin, Emily Fedoruk, Jean Genet, Nicolai Gogol, Chris Kraus, Shane Krepakevich, Yvonne Rainer, Dan Starling, Gertrude Stein, Bela Tarr, Richard Tuttle, Casey Wei.