

**NO  
BIO**

Körperkonfiguration / Body Configuration  
Aufbeugung / On Diffraction  
Zuwendung / Allowance

A body lays on the ground, prostrated, in the middle of a city. There is no traffic, or other persons. It is a drowsy midweek afternoon, or the city has been abandoned for a mandatory holiday.

Maybe a photographer is holding back watching crowds while the performer poses, but I have the feeling that these photographs are self portraits, and have been taken as the result of a longer term interaction. Further they are not of a 'self', but rather of a body, an object transfigured to conform to its landscape. Can a body do this perfectly? In one picture, a bit of stomach fat falls over a wall, forming itself to a 90 degree angle. In another, the body is stretched around the curved edge of a street corner. But a human body contains no right angles or perfect curves; we are made of odd shapes that cannot be imitated by simple Euclidian tools.

Firstly I think of Darwin, of how we are structured as a series of consequences determined by necessity. But then, continuing to look at this picture of a body on the street, I do not see how our forms are now necessary to the forms we have built to house and serve them. Of course thumbs are needed to hold a door handle etc., but our systems, our bodies as sexed beings, things that hold us back with illness, wretched deformities, stench of fluids, bodies as unending biological machines of food and shit, this historical body is replaced in these pictures by a modern body, a body that is finding freedom of these constraints (in geometric perfection). Although the actions here performed exhibit a dancer's restraint. A problematic fissure occurs.

Secondly the presentation of the figure in space reminds me of a 'specimen', an object preserved at a crucial moment. Specimen though, brings to mind a withered being from another time; specimens exist in horror stories, come to life, disobeying the order of our world in their gooey, un-angular forms. But In another picture triangles loom above the body, giving a 3 dimensional exhibition of the attempted form. The body tries to become geometrical, but it remains a body. Why would

one want to become geometrical? Why would one prostrate, as if praying or submitting, to order?

In these pictures there is not a diametrical opposition between the 'natural' body and the 'orderly' space. Is the body here claiming both, or is it trying to do away with the distinctions that we associate as opposites? Order = Development, Nature = Consequence, is this equation obsolete? If so do we need a new equation of how we interact with our historically defined roles? Must we start taking into consideration not only what we are, but also what we have created as part of our determinations that obtains a consequence?

#### Food for the Spirit

There are fourteen black photographs. Technically they are black and white photographs, but all of them are so dark and shiny, from a distance they appear as dark squares on a white wall.

There are fourteen pictures of the same woman taking a picture of herself in the mirror at unknown time intervals. We know that she has been reading Kant while taking these pictures. It is summer, very hot, and the person is indoors. I think she is in a ground floor apartment: it has grating or metal shutters in the background, and the apartment is very dark, although it seems to be light outside. The windows are grubby, crusted with years of soot from passing cars. Between the photographs the days seem to go by: she is tired, she is clothed, then unclothed, sweaty, hair down, then hair pulled back, a sullen look on her face, big eyes drooping under the weight of the heat. She looks trapped in a self-determined exile.

It takes just a second to take a picture. What happens between pictures is infinite comparatively. So what can the picture record? It does not here literally capture the passing of time; one does not see the progression of any narrative, or sequence. But somehow time is of utmost importance while looking. First, the impression is so immured in the surface of the photograph, the faint details of the print are hard to decipher initially. Because of very low contrast you must stare for longer than usual, and then you see a face. She is looking at herself this way, you realize, not you. The stare is a long one. She has not arisen suddenly, picked up the camera, stood in the marked spot, and snapped. The body appears to be moving slowly, in still frame. How is this? Why does she appear with the heaviness of a ghost? It looks as if eternity occurred whilst pressing the button of the box camera, and her eyes have the cast of 19th century portraits of American Frontiersmen.

She appears to be in a dream. Nothing is happening. But despite the lack of action, you can still infer emotional or psychological changes: there have been slight adjustments in the way she sees herself. Between the frames, a stop motion photograph is taking place, over a time dictated more by the mind, or the spirit, rather than the strict laws of physics.

### I Am Awake in the Place Where Women Die

We see a dark black and white image, which is possibly a photographic reproduction of a large installation at night. There appears to be glowing letters on a structure with slanted rays of light touching the letters and extending diagonally into the sky. At first the letters appear to be lit from an above, unknown source: perhaps a spaceship, a cloud parting, a blimp. Or on second thought the beams could be coming from within this stone, which from the outline of stairs at the bottom appears to be a monument, or more appropriately a gravestone.

Has this monument been constructed to project this text into the night sky?

I am reminded of stone circles, alien ships, and messages in a bottle. Who is sending out this message and who is supposed to be receiving?

I envision the 'I' in the text to be positioned somewhere above the picture, sending the message down. The images that come to mind of what surrounds the 'I': a gray voiceless mass of phantasmagoria, abandoned concrete sculptures, the sound of a winter forest.

But asking where women might 'die' is a more appropriate question than imagining where they might go after death (the text says that 'I' is awake where women die (verb), not awake amongst the dead). Because this statement is projected onto, or from, a monument/gravestone, it appears to be a commemorative structure (could this work function like the rows of red and blue military bouquets lined up neatly, or the hastily constructed conglomerations of candles, flowers, and pictures stacked against a wall, or the black onyx-like Vietnam war memorial?). But it says 'women die', as if they all die similar deaths. I conclude it may refer to dying of abuse, as this is a common end amongst women of all trades, disciplines, classes, races, ages.

The ambiguous placement of the monument is frightening, as is the angle of that light. Somewhere there is a consciousness that is watching as thousands of women fall silent, repeatedly, to their death, or so it says.

The light in the picture is frozen; it is unchanging. If one were to see the live installation the light would be silently undulating and sparkling, flooding the text, setting it on fire.

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(Melissa Gordon 2007)