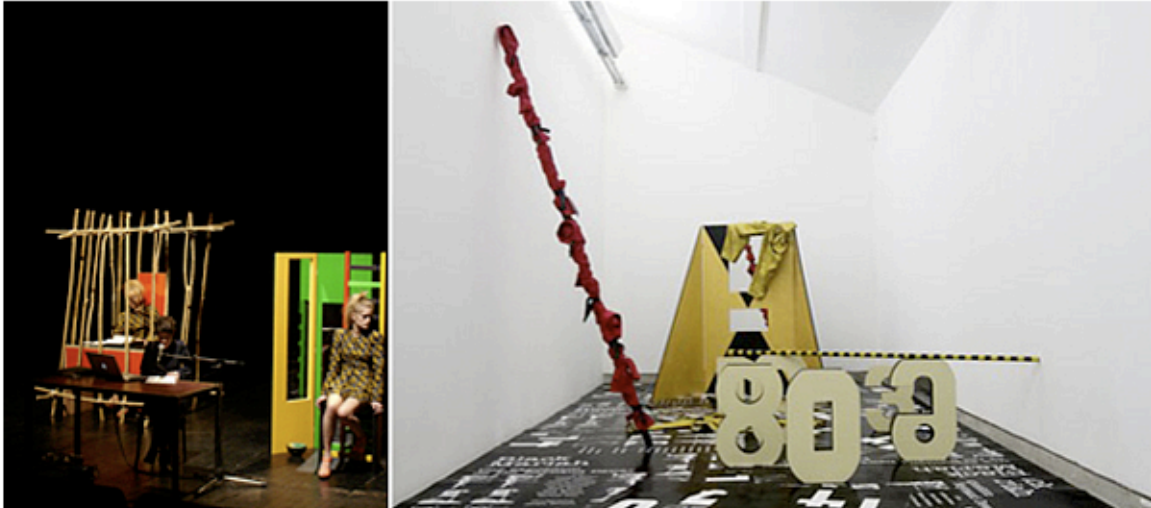


Mary Mary

Fiduccia, Joanna; Artforum, January 2010

Lili Reynaud-Dewar

01.20.10



Left: Lili Reynaud-Dewar, *Antiteater*, 2009. Performance view. Right: Lili Reynaud-Dewar, *Black Mariah (The dancers' films & performance objects)*, 2009, two fabric jackets, six leather skins, two painted wooden panels, DVD performance documentation, 55 1/8 x 47 1/4 x 19 5/8". Installation view, Pougues les Eaux, France, March 2009.

Lili Reynaud-Dewar engages a motley fold of influences in her performances and installations—from gender theory to Rastafarianism to the origins of cinema—presented by a cast of collaborators that includes her mother and burlesque performer Mary Knox. Her exhibition "Antiteater" at the Frac Champagne-Ardenne opens January 21.

THE PERFORMANCE is really the starting point for this exhibition. Unlike my previous work, which has always been staged autonomously inside an exhibition space, this performance occurred over the course of an evening of productions celebrating the Frac Champagne-Ardenne's twenty-second anniversary. I displayed four objects or groups of objects onstage, all of which I've used in performances before, from *Love = UFO* to *Black Mariah* and *The Power Structures, Rituals & Sexuality of the European Shorthand Typists*. The principal idea was that I would show archival footage of past performances while talking about them—however, instead of describing what you actually saw onstage or on-screen, I talked about various sources that inspired the work, from Sun Ra to cartoons to Donna Haraway's "Cyborg Manifesto." Meanwhile, performers reenacted one another's roles onstage behind me, each one taking on the part of another in the mode of Fassbinder's *Antiteater*, in which all members of the company were constantly shifting positions.

In the exhibition, the video of the performance is projected onto a really large wall that Marine Huggonier used for her exhibition this fall at the FRAC. She had also used this wall to project a video that was between cinema and documentary. I thought it might be interesting to give this wall a different purpose, namely, to host the document of a performance, one in which I talk at length about the notion of a filmed performance and its relationship to theater and live performance, theater and cinema, as well as performance and video.

The projection is reflected in a huge mirror on the opposite wall, so that visitors are somehow trapped between these two large surfaces. In this way, the audience that is present for the performance will be replaced by the audience present for the exhibition. In the same room, I am also showing the performers' costumes, which were designed by Mathieu Bernard. In another room are the original sculptures, displayed all together—which is something I've never done before. I hope it will function to create relations among these very different projects.

Mary Mary

Though this is a completely new step for me—I've never been onstage with the performers before, nor have I ever presented the film of a performance outside of an installation—it nonetheless is an extension of how I've worked in the past. I always take something from a previous project and use it in the next one, creating a different situation with similar objects or similar performers. But here, for the first time, I was able to get all the performers I have worked with so far together onstage—like a working troupe.

I wanted my role in all of this to be quite funny. I think there's a sense of humor in placing yourself onstage and trying, if not actually to *justify* the work—because the justification is not the meaning—then to make yourself look as though you are somehow doing this by supporting the performance with language or discourse. In a way, this restrains the audience from their desire to enjoy the performance without having to listen to the artist talk about it. The exhibition accentuates this, because while visitors come to see the show, they will have to hear my voice constantly. A voice will always accompany the video, one you cannot escape. Compared with my previous shows, and *Black Maria* in particular, which was completely silent, this one will leave you with a certain sound, the sound of an exhibition.

— As told to Joanna Fiduccia