

Holding Hands

Text by William Wheeler & Antonia Baehr
edited by Antonia Baehr

We work as a duo and switch places between director and performer from rehearsal to rehearsal, developing two shows simultaneously and cross-influencing each other's work.

Here we stand.

You are so cute - and you are too. We have obviously different personalities but we are holding and beholden to each other. Sometimes I think our hair is really the same color. But your center of gravity is somewhere else than mine. The more synchronized we appear, the more differences get visible. Whose will are we following? We form a singular organism with one or two minds. You are gay in everything you do and I like being dyke beside you. We see different ways of surviving - changing towns together, always one home and the other one not. Why did we go to the movies to cry? What goes on in your face while the great passions affect the Star's face? We are both obsessed, stubborn, slow (compared to the rest of the world) - and in love with details. But I don't know if I would have matched us up five years ago. Of course we've both changed a lot but sometimes I think that I change because of what we do together. Maybe we are merging slowly like two icebergs, so slowly that we don't even notice it.

Repeating...

When I first start doing something and repeating it I become immediately bored, as if I'm focused more upon the act of repeating. I can't find anything to hold onto at first, but then something happens like a memory, or a song starts playing in my head. I like to sing songs out loud or in my head over and over again. When I can hear this song, then I can smile or cry. I can always cry everytime I hear this song, and then I think about all of the other times I've cried to this song, what I was doing then. Then I repeat the emotion, but it's always a new emotion. I can always dig up a new feeling that I didn't have before.

I like to deal with boredom. It's so relaxing to be bored.

I like it when humor and wisdom comes out of repetition. The latter makes me ask questions about freedom and happiness, what they are and if they have anything to do with each other.

Repeating something over and over over a long period of time - several months for example - makes me realize how time passes, how seasons change, how you have changed. The gestures, the things we do remain the same and the surroundings change. On our rehearsal videotapes for example I see us, doing the same things once with rosy cheeks wearing summer cloths and obviously sweating, once paler and shivering in pullovers.

Sometimes I get bored again and I have to stop repeating, like when we take breaks in rehearsal. I forget completely about what happened. I do it again later. I feel different. I'm angry again. It looks completely the same to me. I feel different. I feel confused, and then refreshed.

Being or feeling young and unstable and working with repetition stubbornly has an enjoyable absurd taste to it, the challenge of having set the rules for a game and just following it until the end - and then realizing that the end has vanished. I recognize myself in a gesture, the way to drink a cup of coffee or how to cut the Frühstücks

egg. There I know it's me, me again, and I feel like in a train looking out the window and the landscape passes by. And here I am, with you, always you again, in this compartment.

... a feeling.

A feeling is something unfinished. It's something that comes before the words, die Aussprache. Usually when the words are there to describe it - "Why are you crying?" - the feeling is already gone. But if I ask you "Why are you laughing?" then you might laugh even more by explaining yourself. You try to add words to the laughter but your laughter is swallowing your words up. And then I start laughing too - I can't resist mirroring you. My emotions and my words often seem in conflict.

It is when I write this, when I have to put this into words. It is all the risks I take and all the hopes I have that the time of risk will be over soon. It is when I feel like I have the wrong way of seeing things. It's being in circles or like a growing body on the other side. I am cold or I am warm. That is a feeling or the ground for many other complex states of the mind. Are feelings universal? Is that an interesting question at all? In any case, they build a strong web for and in my memory.

When I realize that I feel something, I realize that I am aware. That creates longing in me. What I desire, is that awareness.

It exhausts me. Sometimes I sense that the only way to put my finger on it is to tell what it does to me. It makes me ask questions that are too simple and can never be answered. It makes me wonder how people see me. It is seeing.

Could you watch a play like a landscape or a face where feelings pass by like light weather changes?