

Old News

On Thursday last week, Brian Fuata, one of the curators of *Restaging Restaging*, emailed me to say that he could extend the deadline for this text until August the 26th (tomorrow, from where I am right now, or, for you if you are reading these words at the *Restaging Restaging* event this Sunday, last Tuesday). This was the second extension granted by Brian; he had already, once before, moved the deadline from the 15th to the 23rd. In the email on Thursday he cautioned that we will be cutting it (time, that is) ‘diamond sharp fine’. The time is 9.35pm. It’s Monday. It’s the 25th day of August, 2014 in the Gregorian calendar, MMXIV, the 14th year of the 3rd millennium, the 5th year of the 2010s, about 1.5 decades into the 21st century, Common Era. It’s less than two years after the end of the last cycle of the Mayan calendar. It’s dinnertime. Chinese year 4712; a year of the horse. The tide right now is quite low but on the rise. The moon is about to be new, but by Sunday it will be 5 days into its 29.53059-day cycle. My uterus and ovaries are maybe a third of the way through their roughly 28-day cycle, which is not an endless cycle. I’m turning 30 this year. It has been more than 13 billion years since the Big Bang. A couple of hundred thousand years since humans started. 222 years since the French Revolution, which was to herald a new calendar, starting at Year One. But that didn’t work out. The season in Sydney is winter, though at midnight on Sunday it will turn to spring. The sun is down. I know a woman who is 9 months pregnant and should be giving birth any minute, or maybe already has, or is giving birth right now (my now or yours). It’s also the night before this text is due. On Friday – last Friday, for me; two Fridays ago for you, who is over there on the night of August the 31st, which doesn’t exist yet – I met Frances Barrett, one of the artists performing for this *Restaging Restaging* event. We met in a bar, at 6pm. Actually I was about 10 minutes late, because time moved quicker than I did. We talked about the work she was (is, still, from where I am, without you, in time) planning. She was working with a BDSM dom and asking him to do whatever he wants to her, in front of the audience. Actually, she told me, the person is a ‘switch’, which means he can take the position of either dom or sub. But Fran wanted (wants) a dom. She’s very good at submission. Even when she is performing on her own, her body is usually dominated by the extreme conditions she sets up. She has to submit to the designated process; endure it, be underneath it. She told me, on Friday night, that the title of this work will be *My safe word is performance*. Two days later, on Sunday, I met Matthew Prest, the other artist performing in this iteration of *Restaging Restaging*. By Sunday I mean yesterday. My yesterday, not yours; although it’s not impossible that I also meet him on your yesterday, as in this Saturday. It’s not likely, but there are (were) 6 full 24-hour cycles between me (now) and you (then), so almost anything could (have) happen(ed). Even in a single 20-minute slot of time, there are endless unknown possibilities. When I met Matthew on Sunday he told me that his performance, *Rave On*, will feature a car, techno music, some crappy domestic appliances, and, possibly, his 8-year-old son. For his allocated 20 minutes he wants to draw out states of trance and desperation, as he moves towards the audience in gradual procession. He told me that he doesn’t want to make performance work that exists for the purposes of its own documentation; he wants to address the fleeting present of the time of the event. And here I am writing, for some sort of posterity, a text to accompany something that lasts for only 20 minutes, only once, and hasn’t yet happened. There’s a chance that I’ll be with you when you look at these words on Sunday night – and you, whoever you are, almost certainly exist right now, on Monday night, though you do not (yet) know that this – this text, this moment when you are reading it – exists, or will exist, or will have existed. An alleged paradox that is often cited to discredit the notion of time travel goes like this: if you could go back in time and impact past events you could foreseeably prevent your grandmother from meeting your grandfather, which would mean that you would never be born, since your conception relies on the meeting of these two people in the past – but if you were never born you wouldn’t be able to go back in time and prevent the reproductive sex that your grandparents had, which would then mean that you would have been born after all, and so on. But how about this: go back in time and seduce your young grandparent; conceive a child with them and thereby become your own grandma or grandpa. In the first instance you have to flip endlessly between existence and non-existence; in the second you don’t have to do anything at all, because it turns out that you’ve been your own grandparent all along.

- Amelia Groom

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