

VISITOR REPORT

by Staci Bu Shea

on Constantina Zavitzanos' *Entrophy*
with Angelo Custódio and Pedro Matias,
S*an D. Henry-Smith and Geo Wyex

Performance(s)

Saturday 30 September 2023, 15hr & 18hr
Splendor
Nieuwe Uilenburgerstraat 116,
1011 LX Amsterdam

The event was also live-streamed on zoom

'Constantina is in love with everybody.' That's what I learned while reading the folded brochure made for the collaborative performance *Entrophy*. But before I arrived I already knew it. Tina invited three artists to play a 'yes or no' twenty questions game inspired by physics and 'absolutely nothing' to co-determine a score that was performed twice on Saturday, 30 September at Splendor in Amsterdam; the first time at 15h and the second at 18h. The opening citation phrase is asserted as an outcome following 'a distinct flow of time', drawn from the three artists' responses to Tina's questions 'are you in love with "anybody" "somebody" and "everybody"'. Tina, the questioner, chose to also answer this one since they are, indeed, in love with everybody. Among a more elaborate and poetic explanation in the text about the score, I thought disclosing this bit exemplifies Tina's contribution to their collective in/capacity and our shared need: love. I certainly felt loved by Tina that evening. Access, which is love, is absolutely embedded in their work. All of these layers of access to multiple immaterial and material forces co-shape the experience of the score, and who shows up and how. Media's in/accessibility is an opportunity and potential to gather as more and less than every *body*. I unfolded the brochure to find Tina's photograph *h(ours)* (2023) as a poster, eyed the flame and folded it back up. Anticipation stirred, the performance was about to start.

The theatre space of Splendor as well as those involved in this project held a relaxed atmosphere. Even if it's more work because of all the moving parts, that's what happens when intention is set and access prepped, and the capacity for an improvisational attitude welcomes chance and discovery. The cafe area was filled with many people from the arts community that I like very much and for a moment I felt as though it was my birthday. At the start, curator Sara Giannini clearly introduced the work and provided an overview about the event's various entry points. I always feel more settled when accessibility is prioritised.

I sat in the front row for both performances, so unfortunately I missed the experience of the infrasonic seating area, but I was able to clearly see the TV monitors with captions, image and audio descriptions. The performance started with Tina's disembodied voice, on Zoom in New York, Eastern Standard Time, filling the space with an image description of the room we were in, and was the red thread through the performances without taking the shine off the three performers. The stage floor featured a table covered in a black cloth with a silver platter tea tray on top; a microphone stand bent over the table and a microphone stand at standing height; an electric guitar on a stand and a large speaker; and additional mixers, lights, bowls and other objects off to the side.

S*an D. Henry-Smith, in a beautiful skirt, brought a tea set over to the table and pulled the guitar over their head and started with some chords and reverb (first performance audio description of this guitar sound was an 'annoying vibe', second performance was softer and melodic). S*an sang some resonant words for which Tina also chimed in, 'an impossible sustain, sustains us'. There was a reframe with each refrain, rhymes and relays, apostrophe, epistrophe and so on. S*an then moved to the table and using pedals captured the sound of pouring tea and clinking cups into a loop. The amplification of tea pouring sounded as if the tea was entering and settling down inside of me. S*an went back to the guitar to round out. After finishing they placed an Action bag at the corner of the table.

I was very, pleasantly surprised to learn that Geo Wyex was underneath the table that whole time, and in fact he remained there for his performance too, eventually popping his head in and out. The table and cloth started to jostle from below, and from that below space various objects started to appear through some openings in the tabletop. Geo's gloved hand with

long, jagged nails tossed Ping-Pong balls, golf balls and a disco ball. Tina described the Action bag, introducing that Action is like a mix of a Walmart and bodega. There were fart sounds coming from different speakers in the room and it was funny. Joan Armatrading's song 'I'm Lucky' entered the space, 'Living for right now / and it's L I V I N G / when I'm here with you', and I felt that. Geo started to speak and sing, he was looking at and counting stars, asking to trade our balls for his balls. The table moved across the floor, down the path in between audience seating, and departed through the double doors (with a little help, singing 'can you please open the door?').

Once Geo and his table left the space, Angelo Custódio and Pedro Matias, cloaked in matching silver anti-imaging technology, gathered their mics, mixers, bowls of water, lights, etc. from against the wall into the centre of the stage floor. The pace changed again, now softer with ethereal sounds and whispers. Pedro read swirls of text from a large sheet of paper on the floor. Angelo's voice poured into mic'd bowls of water under glowing infrared light. Tina contributed in melodic measure in the dark, they said 'we tried the Ether Phone the other day'. At this point in the performance, I lost track of where or who I was. A projection on the back wall featured abstract amorphous moving images as if exploring the inside of an artery.

As I attended both iterations of the score, the first time held a novelty that stewarded neurogenesis. The second performance of the score, having some semblance of what to expect and feeling our collective potential, I could notice more details and in that sense, time didn't feel slower or faster than the first iteration. Considering the traditional format of matinee and evening showings as an intention of sameness, this score performed twice felt more like sex with someone new for the first and second times. Neither instance eclipses the other, but to wager a second time is where desire and chance meets trust.

ABOUT THE EVENT

Constantina Zavitsanos's *Entropy* was a performance programme (on site and online) conjured with the performers Angelo Custódio and Pedro Matias, S*an D. Henry-Smith and Geo Wyex who co-created the presented work through an experimental score belonging to no one. Two consecutive performances of *Entropy* took place at Splendor in Amsterdam on Saturday 30 September 2023.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Staci Bu Shea is a curator and writer living in Utrecht. Their projects centre aesthetic and poetic practices of social reproduction and care work and related manifestations in interpersonal relationships and daily life, community organising and institutional practice. In 2019, they embarked on a study trajectory called *Poetics of Living* with art historian Rizvana Bradley to explore already existing and emerging non-normative forms of living together in consideration of rapidly changing discourses around sexuality, health, communal life and death. Currently, Shea is working on a transdisciplinary research project called *Dying Livingly* (2021–present), an exploration into what it means to live intimately with death and grief, with artistic and cultural productions that form a bridge with their practice as a holistic death care worker.

ABOUT THE VISITOR REPORT

At If I Can't Dance we see the visitor report as a method of documentation. The affectual, relational and embodied nature of performance work is not always easily captured in audio-visual formats. To supplement such formats, If I Can't Dance commissions written visitor reports, which are meant to offer subjective responses to a lived experience of a work and its context. The visitor report is, therefore, not to be confused with a critical review. It is first and foremost a form of witnessing. The people commissioned to write the report span a range of positions and practices within and outside the field of art.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Entropy was commissioned by If I Can't Dance as part of Edition IX – *Bodies and Technologies* (2022-2023). The commission was led by programme curator Sara Giannini.

Concept: Constantina Zavitsanos
Initiator of the score:
Constantina Zavitsanos
Performers and co-creators of the score:
Angelo Custódio and Pedro Matias,
S*an D. Henry-Smith and Geo Wyex
Curator and production manager:
Sara Giannini
Stage manager: Annick Kleizen
Set design: Constantina Zavitsanos
with the performers
AV: Leroy Chaar
Light design: Marion Tränkle
In-house technician and floor manager:
Thomas Myrmel
Live-stream production: Hans van Eck,
Barry Jonas and Zsolt Szederkényi
Production assistance:
Sancha Meca Castro
NGT interpreters and Dutch CART:
Faye Schippers and Clarissa van den Elzen
ASL interpreters: Candace Davider
and company
English CART: Veerle Haverhals
Audio description on-site and online:
Constantina Zavitsanos
Front of house team: Naomi Collier Broms
and Sancha Meca Castro
Accessibility advisors:
Staci Bu Shea and Annick Kleizen
Zoom production advisors:
Patrick Mahaney and Lauren Parrish
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