

What was it like?

Someone once said to me that performance is the only type of artwork where, as the artist, your perspective is totally different from the viewers. You are in it, part of it and looking out, whereas the viewer is external and looking in. It's very strange to be asked, "What was it like to perform this piece of work?" Most people ask how the work went or what it was about – not about the actual, physical sensation of performing the work.

This piece of work is called Draft Hands, and I performed it at The Rag Factory in London in 2006:

I was thirsty.
I felt a connection with each person.
I wanted people to follow the rules of the performance.
I hoped that even those who didn't interact directly would be interested in the actions I was performing.
I lost track of time.
I worried my route would get in the way of other performances in the space.
I worried my smile would fade.
I was aware of other performances happening around me and caught glimpses of them: a woman on a sofa drawing lines of lipstick across her neck, a woman knelt on the ground taping the floor.
I felt one shirtsleeve ride up to my elbow and stay there.
I enjoyed studying the contours of the wall with all its blemishes.
I felt annoyed that someone wasn't playing by the rules, and anxious that I couldn't find a way to bend my rules for her.
I often felt a tap on my shoulder.
At the beginning I wasn't sure if anyone would interrupt me.
I thought people would see how dry my lips were.
At times I was slightly off balance when stooping to the ground.
I enjoyed looking people in the eye.
I didn't want people to be scared of approaching me so I made sure I smiled at each person who did.
I worried the sign would fall off my back when I leant over.
I became angry when a man wouldn't take me seriously.
I enjoyed the proximity of whispering in people's ears.
I liked folding pieces of paper as if they were a gift.
I felt exhausted by the intensity of interaction with visitors.
At times I felt my smile was not as full as it should have been.
I was surprised when I turned around and recognised one visitor, someone I'd not seen in many months.
I didn't want my mum to approach me more than twice.
I was relieved when told my slot was over.
I emerged after changing feeling very recognisable.
I felt happy with the piece, but had reservations about the way I'd interacted with some of the audience.
The next day I felt the performance in my legs.

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