

treatment

My final project “What Now?”, originally six, but presently two talking heads, directly assaults the viewer and later apologizes. For this project actors and non-actors alike will be directed to probe both their memories and current situations in order for the piece to conjure emotions of anger and remorse. The performers will be directed to yell at the camera and demoralize someone, then, in an instant, apologize. It is meant to mimic, in *TV time*, abusive relationships, where the performer is the aggressor, and the viewer, as in most media (visual art, TV, and film), is the passive recipient.

I will not give the performers a script. Instead, I will direct them to draw from their personal emotional experiences and make them ambiguous enough so as to be universally identifiable. The six talking heads allude to different types of relationships: a long distance correspondence, the invasion of space, a wife scolding a partner, an unmarried couple, a parent and child. These controlled emotional experiences explore the issues of the grotesque in love. This is the primary reason why the space it is installed in must be small and intimate, where the viewer feels trapped.

The installation will be in the outdoor covered archway between Ryerson and Echhart buildings, on the University of Chicago Campus. I’ve decided to install this in a public space rather than in a typical exhibition venue (theater or gallery) for an important reason: the work should catch the viewer off-guard, which will engage the passerby in a spontaneous situation, because mass media infiltrates every crevice of culture and personal space. The academic culture at the University of Chicago seems not to acknowledge the ways in which it is affected by mass culture and media. It likes to think of its cultural home as the ivory tower, denying its involvement in fundamental contemporary issues.

Two almost identical 30-minute looping videos will be projected onto two opposing surfaces: on the North arch will play a continuous loop of characters, without visual distortion, and on the South arch will play an experiment of sorts, because that loop will consist of the same edited piece that plays on the North arch, but I will apply some kind of visual distortion to the footage to further the concept of emotional abuse. I’m still working on the specifics of this.

The two projections will run simultaneously and engage the performers in a virtual confrontation with one another. The viewer is trapped in the middle of this, confused about what to do, who is being addressed, and how to react. My intention is that a viewer will stand there numb and ask “what now?” *What Now?* Is a question we ask ourselves when in a domestic relationship where our partner starts to be aggressive, or starts to yell. “What have I done now ?” “What will they do next ?”

This project is a starting point in a larger project that will encompass more age groups and address other domestic relationship scenarios.

[• • N O T E : the particular strength of this treatment is that it successfully explains the specific reasons/motivations for various aesthetic choices: why an installation? Why configure the installation this way?, etc.]