

The Book of the Play

Peter Stickland

The Book of the Play

First published in Great Britain in 2002 by gf2, Soho, London. email art@galleryfine.co.uk

First Edition August 2002 1000 copies

© 2002 Peter Stickland

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any storage and retrieval system, without the prior permission in writing from the author.

This book was made possible by financial assistance from Chelsea College of Art and Design, The London Institute.

THE LONDON INSTITUTE

ISBN 1870540581

Cover and Frontispiece photographs, Alexandra Beazley Styling, Roddy Gibson Production and layout, Dennis Mariner Printing, OB Print



The Arrival

A Play by Peter Stickland

Performance by Andrea Parry

Photographs by Alex Madjitey





The Book of the Play is one of the objects used in an Exhibition called The Installation of the Play. The book contains the text of a play called The Arrival. The books are exhibited in the gallery as a single block and visitors are invited to take a copy. On the walls of the gallery are a number of the photographs that appear in the book. The scale of these photographs are life size as illustrated on the front cover.



The cast of The Arrival are as follows:

The Man He is dressed as described in the play.

The Woman She is dressed as she appears in the photographs.

The two Billboard Assistants

They are dressed in leather outfits as worn by motorcyclists.

The Narrator

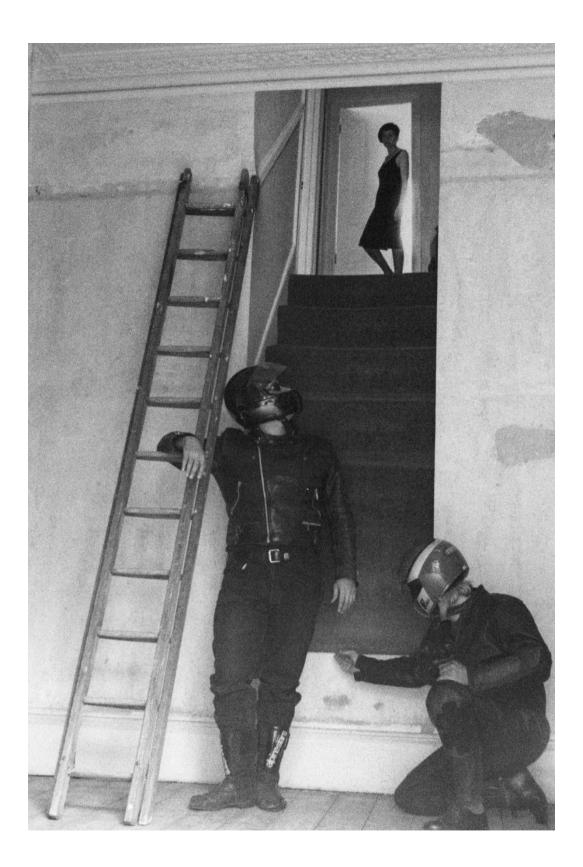
A male voice, played on the tape recorder.

Throughout the performance, the Man carries the portable tape recorder. It plays the text of the narrator and the sound of footsteps.

At the start of the play, the first image is already on the wall. Each Act begins at this doorway. Next to the doorway is a freestanding coat stand.

ACT ONE







A man enters with a portable tape recorder, playing the sound of footsteps. The two assistants have pasted an image of a woman over the doorway. The same woman enters. The man turns the tape off.

M I didn't expect this heat at midday. I can even hear the sound of my blood boiling.
 W Everyone says that it is quiet here I expected you to say something about it.

He takes off his coat and lies on his back, using the coat as a cushion. The assistants, with ladder, staple a new doorway to the wall. The man talks to himself.

I keep going. If I keep her will she go? I'll keep her. If I go, does she go? I'll keep on. If she keeps on with him and goes, will I go on with it? He's going to. She keeps going to go. To keep her, I must go on. Keep going. Are we going to go for keeps? Keep it for keeps? Going keeps you going. We will keep it. Is it going to go on?

He stands and goes to the next doorway. The assistants disappear. The man returns and lies down again. The woman talks to herself in the distance.

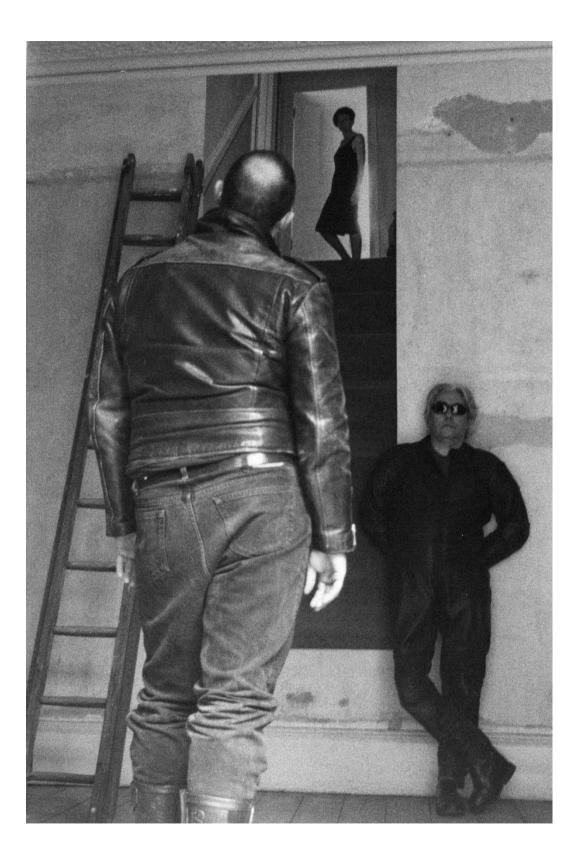
Keep going. Keep on going. I'll keep him going. Keep him going on. Keep it on and go. If you're going to keep it, go on. She's yours for keeps. You are going to. She's not going, you're going. You are going to keep it. When you go, she goes and keeps it going. It keeps and keeps. He kept going to go. Will you? On and on. Go on. Keep on.

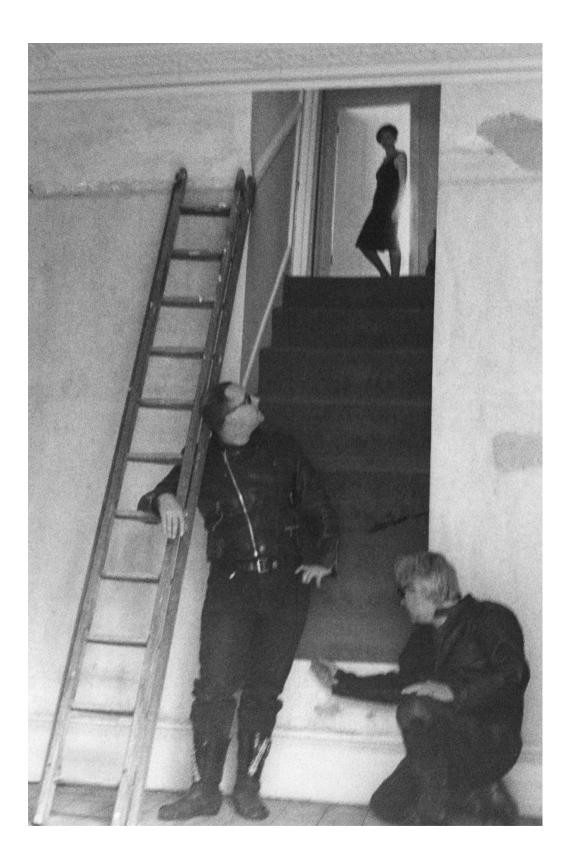
The woman returns and the man stands up. He looks at her, expectantly. She picks up his coat, checks the pockets, shakes it and hangs it on the clothes stand.

W I see you are still wearing your hangups. Do you remember the two motorbikes?
 M Yes, I remember the two motorbikes.
 It's so hot. I can't breath with the coat on.

The two assistants enter with paper and glue. They peel off the first image and drop it on the floor. They begin pasting new images of the woman onto the first and second doorways. The man turns on the tape.







ACT TWO

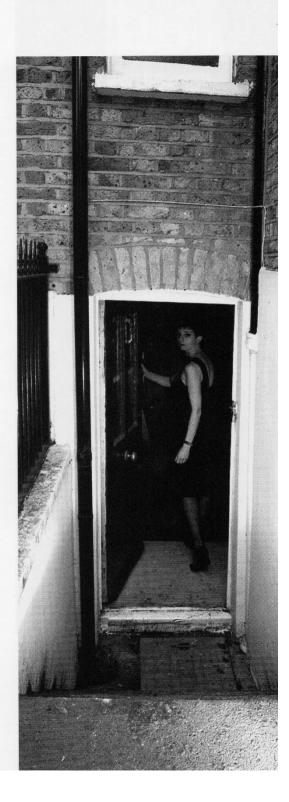
"Do you know what time it is"? he asks. "I want to be careful. When I get there, I will see you". Gina is thinking about her new, good looking, boots. Jack thinks she is thinking about Chris. He walks more slowly and on arrival they're not as late as he had expected. At first the room appears to be full but they manage to find a place to stand.

I don't gerit He got what he got by seeing to it. See? See what I've gol? White dot see? Will get to the you? Is gering you what! what I got I don't see you. I don't get to the what she saw in him. See saw, see say, Getting what you get by seeing what you see and getting it, is getting to see?

The billooked assistants periford the first and second integers of the womanin first decentrary Tacy data term on the floar and tears, the wamen total to beam in the distance, but she directs has words to the man

Get you You don't see it. You don't see What you get, what he gets, what she gets, Do you see me? You we got to see me and get on Get it? It gets to you? you don't get it. They now it. They got to see Got to see that you've get to see it. You get it. It got you You've been gotssee? Get on, You get what you see, me. That's all that you've got.

An and a solution of the model with a solution in the solution of the solution





The room is filled with the sound of footsteps. Hard shoes echoing in the street. The assistants enter with ladder and staple gun and fix a third doorway to the wall. The woman enters. The man turns the tape off.

M Its too hot to go on walking in the height of summer. I didn't expect it.
W I didn't expect the heat to get to you.
Do you like the peace and quiet here?

The woman takes his hat off, places it on the stand and leaves. The man follows and looks at the new images on the first and second doorway. He talks to himself, until he reaches the third, vacant, doorway.

I don't get it. He got what he got by seeing to it. See? See what I've got? What do I see? Will I get to see you? Is getting you what I get? Will you see to it? Will I see? He got what I got. I don't see you. I don't get to see what she saw in him. See saw, see saw. Getting what you get by seeing what you see and getting it, is getting it. See?

The billboard assistants peel off the first and second images of the woman in the doorway. They drop them on the floor and leave. The woman talks to herself in the distance, but she directs her words to the man.

Get you. You don't see it. You don't see what you get, what he gets, what she gets. Do you see me? You've got to see me and get on. Get it? It gets to you if you don't get it. They saw it. They got to see. Got to. See that you've got to see it. You got it. It got you. You've been got. See? Get on. You get what you see, me. That's all that you've got.

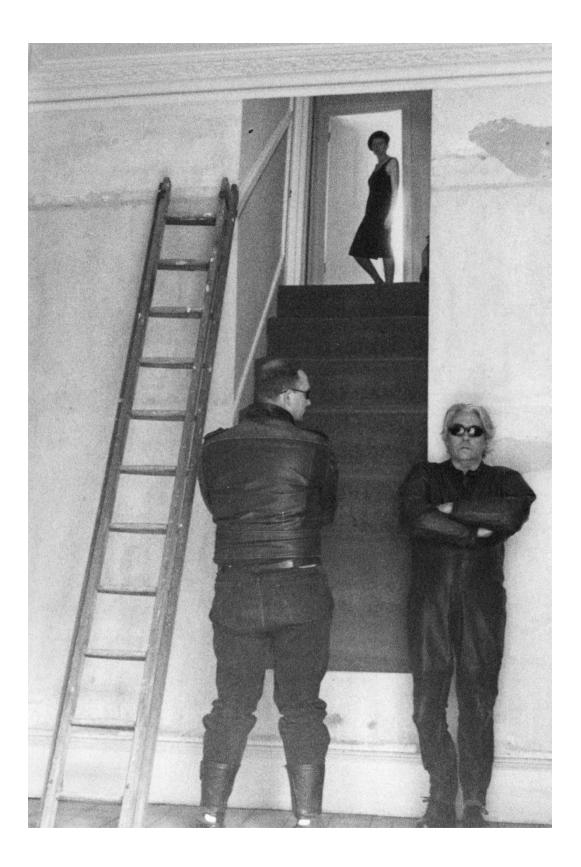
The man looks at the paper on the floor as he walks slowly back to where he had started. He is joined by the woman. She watches as he repeatedly throws his hat at the stand, in the hope of landing it on the hook.

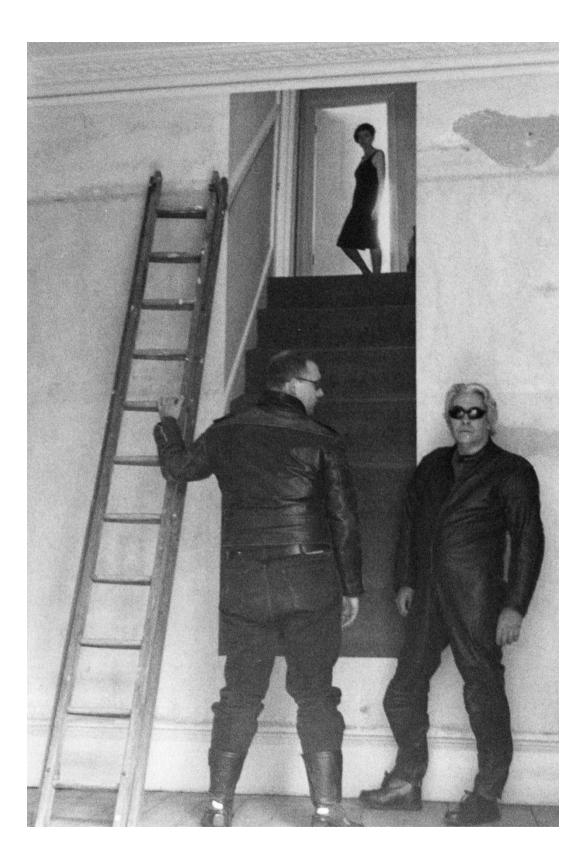
W I don't expect that you'll be let off the hook. You said you remembered the bang?
 M Yes, I remember the bang. At midday, in this heat, I have to change my clothes.

The two assistants enter with paper and glue and begin the task of pasting new images of the woman onto the first, second and third doorways. The man, still carrying the portable tape recorder, turns it on.

Gina had taken a drink and opened the book. She had said nothing since finding a place to stand. Unexpectedly, they were not late for the start. Jack had waited for her to arrive. She found it difficult walking across the snow and refused to be hurried. She glanced down at her new boots. They looked good and were very comfortable. At the height of her impatience with Jack's nagging to hurry along she had said, "I want to be careful. If I get there, I might see you". Jack thinks Gina's thinking about Chris.

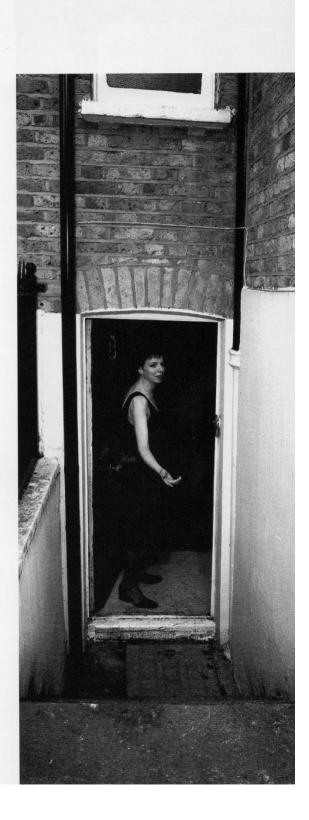






ACT THREE

"Do you know what time it is"? he asks."I want to be careful. You appear not to be looking". Jack shrugs and slows down his walk. He keeps a few paces in front. He thinks her thoughts are with Chris, but Gina is thinking about her new pair of comfortable boots. Despite the good treads, she makes her way carefully, and is especially slow at the junctions of street and sidewalk. The time for the performance to begin has already passed. They did not expect the place to be so full, but found somewhere to stand. Jack hands her the drink he purchased at the bar. She takes a gulp, and says nothing. She looks at the book and then looks up expectantly.



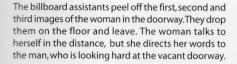


The room is filled with the sound of heavy footsteps in the street, resounding against hard facades. The assistants enter with a ladder and staple gun and fix a fourth doorway to the wall. The tape is turned off.

 M I am so hot. My body refuses to walk any further. Do you always work in this heat?
 W I didn't expect to. Would you say that the quiet here was beyond your expectations?

The woman leaves. The man takes off his jacket, shakes it, and puts it over his shoulders. He follows the woman and looks closely at the new images on the first, second and third doorways. He talks to himself until he reaches the fourth, vacant, doorway.

She appears to look for him. He looks at her. Her looks are apparent. She appears and he looks. Look at her looking at him. Look at him. I look at him and he appears to look at her. Apparently my looks are not looks. How does that appear to me. Look at me. Look at me looking at you. Look. You appear not to look, but you look. I am looking.



When I appear, do you look at me? Do you look for me to appear? Apparently you are looking at me. Look, you appear to me to be looking for me. Are you looking? Do I look like I'm looking for you? I am looking at you. We, apparently, are both looking. I appear as the one who is looking for you. Look at me. Who is looking for you? Who am I?

The man starts his walk back, careful of the paper on the floor. The woman remains, still engaged in her monologue. She then returns to the start, takes off the man's jacket, checks the pockets and puts it on the stand. The man searches his trouser pockets.

W You expected to pocket something. Do you remember other sounds, like shouting?
 M Yes, I remember the shouting. How long am I expected to walk these hot streets?

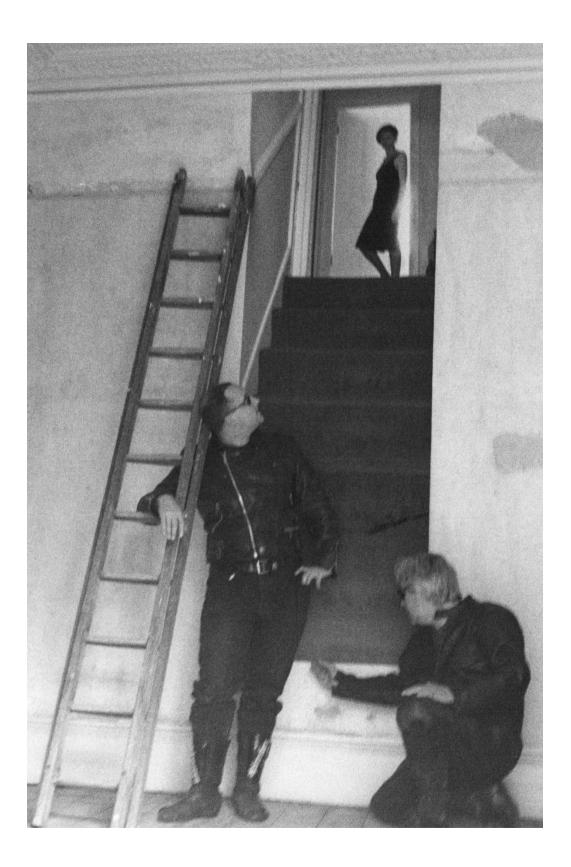
The two experts in the art of pasting enter with paper and glue and begin pasting the new images of the woman onto the first, second, third and fourth doorways. The man looks around and starts the tape.



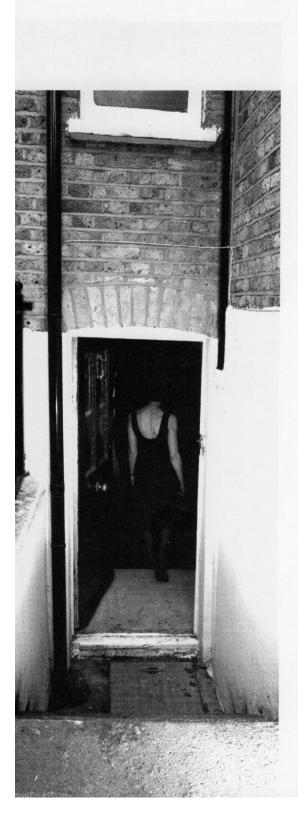
Gina had taken a drink and opened the book. She had said nothing since finding a place to stand. Unexpectedly, they were not late for the start. Jack had waited for her to arrive. She found it difficult walking across the snow and refused to be hurried. She glanced down at her new boots. They looked good and were very comfortable. At the height of her impatience with Jack's nagging to hurry along she had said, "I want to be careful. If I get there, I might see you". Jack thinks Gina's thinking about Chris.



ACT FOUR







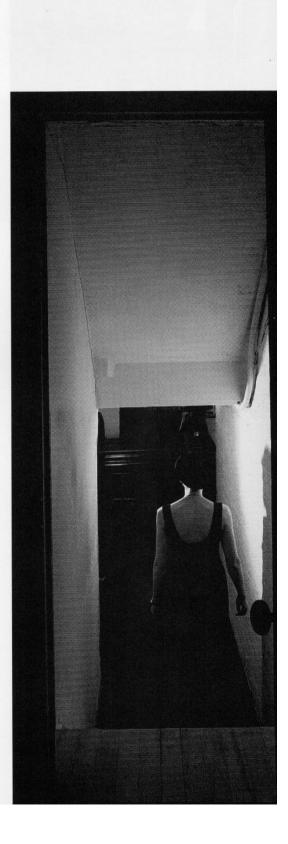
"Do you know what time it is"? he asks. "I want to be careful. Why do you feel that you must count every minute". Jack expects her to hurry, but he slows his pace to match hers. He didn't expect to. Gina frequently glances down at her new, comfortable red boots with the good treads. She is especially slow at the junctions of street and sidewalk where the snow is deep and could cover her boots. They still have three blocks to go. Jack crosses the last street on 'Don't Walk', to the reception of a car horn. He waits for Gina, who waits for a 'Walk' signal before crossing. He pulls off his gloves and counts the money in his wallet to pay the entrance. Jack pays the girl at the door, who gives Gina the books. The gallery is filled with the noise of the audience and, unexpectedly, they are not late. "Drink", he asks Gina, and heads straight for the bar. They find a place to stand and Jack hands her the wine. Gina says nothing and takes a drink. She looks at the book and then looks at the photograph. She expects someone.

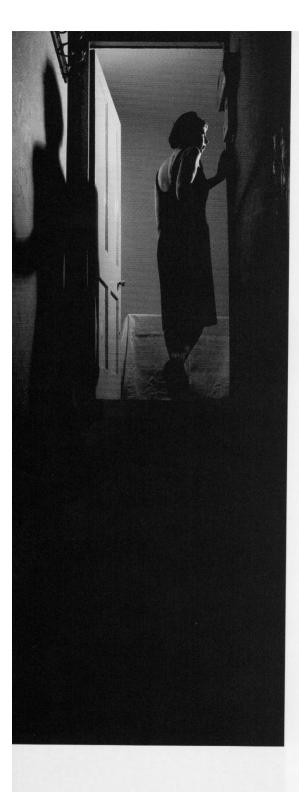
The room echoes with the sound of steel tipped shoes walking through narrow streets. The assistants enter with a ladder and a staple gun and fix a fifth doorway to the wall. The man turns the tape off.

 M I must find a place in the shade to rest my feet. Can we stop? Can you wait for me?
 W Forget your feet, you must keep going. You will get used to the heat and the quiet.

The woman leaves. The man takes his tie off and unbuttons his collar. He follows her, carrying his tie with him. He looks at the new images on the first, second, third and fourth doorways. She walks faster and further away from him. He talks to himself until he finally reaches the fifth, vacant, doorway.

She feels that I count. I feel that she feels that he counts. He counts on her feeling it. I don't count on it. I felt she could be counted on. She counted on me. I feel I don't count. Does she count on that feeling in me. Does he feel that? Is that what counts? My feeling could count. I'm feeling discounted. If he's counted in, then she should count me out.





The billboard assistants peel off the first, second, third and fourth images of the woman in the doorway. They drop them on the floor and leave. The woman, after talking to herself in the distance, moves to a position behind the man. She addresses her monologue to his back and pulls at the tie in his hand.

You don't count if your not counting. Can you feel me counting? Feel it, you felt it. You were counting. Count. I am counting on you counting it. I feel that you can count. Count on me if you feel that you can't count. Don't count what you felt, feel yourself counting. That counting feeling is what counts here. You can count on it. I feel you are counting.

The man starts his hazardous walk back. The woman remains, still engaged in addressing her words to him. Later she follows the man and makes a gesture of stopping his return by pulling at his tie. When they are back at the start, she pulls the tie out of his hand, wraps it around the clothes stand and ties it in a knot.

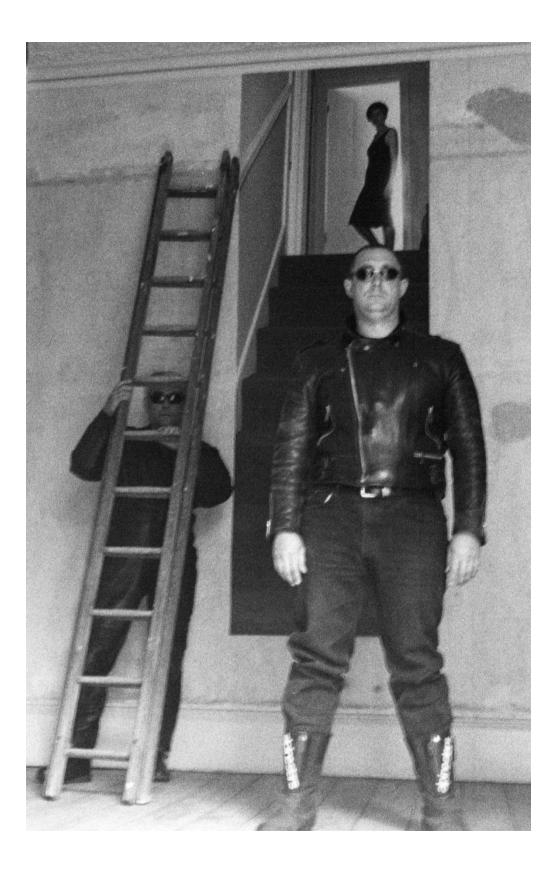
W What ties have you if there's nothing there? Remember your name being called?
 M Yes, I remember my name being called.
 And you, who are you, working in this heat?

The professional street graphic artists enter with paper and glue, and begin pasting new images of the woman onto the first, second, third, fourth and fifth doorways. The man looks around and starts the tape.



Gina drank and said nothing. She held her glass and her book and looked expectantly at the wall and the photograph. She stood listening to the noise of the audience; the expectation of things about to begin. Jack had said a few words to Jodie at the bar before returning. He had thrown his money at the girl on the door and said nothing. She did not expect this. Gina had looked at him counting the right money from his wallet before paying the entrance. He didn't say that he always expects her to be late. She waited for the 'Walk' sign and practically fell over when she heard the car horn blast at Jack. He had hurried across the icy road, against the 'Don't Walk' signal. Gina walked carefully around the places of deep snow, so as not to damage her boots. He said that he expected her to walk faster, but for the last three blocks he had walked at her speed. Gina frequently glanced down at her new fur-lined, red boots with the deep treads, and said she didn't expect to get such a practical and comfortable pair. At the height of her impatience with Jack, she had said to him, "I just can't count on you". He could always count on her to make him feel that she was thinking about someone else.

ACT FIVE



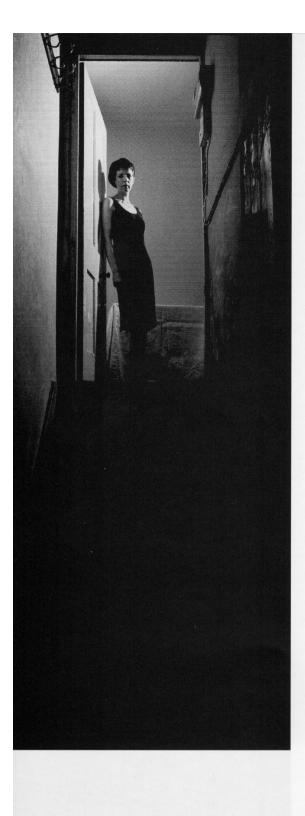




"Do you know what time it is"? he asks. "I want to be careful. Can you just try to understand what I'm saying". Jack didn't expect her to say it like this and decided to say nothing. He started to walk at her speed and watched her, as she looked at the buckled, fur-lined, red boots that she had just purchased. Gina was watching them walk along the sidewalk; the best treads she had seen on any sole. The snow was deep between street and sidewalk and she took great care in crossing it. After three blocks of this, Jack became careless, and walked on the 'Don't Walk' sign. Gina jumped at the sound of a car horn, which was directed at Jack who was sliding across the ice in the middle of the road. She was waiting for the 'Walk' sign and joined Jack as he was counting out dollar bills, his gloves between his teeth. They go in together. Jack says nothing to the girl on the door. This is unexpected as she knows him. He grabs the tickets and Gina is given the books. The performance has not yet begun; just the noise of an expectant audience. Jack asks Gina if she would like wine. She nods and he goes to the bar. Chris was serving, so he stays to watch him before buying his drinks from Jodie. He joins Gina and they find a place to stand. Jack hands her the glass. Gina says nothing, takes a gulp of wine, opens the book and looks up unexpectedly. On and on through the streets, a man walking, his hard shoes resonating against the buildings. The assistants enter with ladder and staple gun and fix a sixth doorway to the wall. The man turns the tape off.

M I feel I'm counting every footstep. Try to understand, this heat is too hot for me.
 W I can't see what your getting at and you don't appear to look where you are going.





The woman leaves. The man takes his shirt off and puts it on his head, partly covering his face. He follows the woman and studies all the new images on the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth doorways. The woman appears to be waiting for him as his pace gets slower. He talks to himself, but addresses her, until he reaches the sixth, unoccupied, doorway.

I try to understand, but try to understand what? Its so trying. Do you understand that I'm trying. Do you try to understand that? Try. Try this. I can understand that trying to understand isn't understanding, or I can try. Do they understand? Did they do it by trying or by understanding. Can I try by trying? I understand that trying can be understood.

The billboard assistants peel off the first, second, third, fourth and fifth images of the woman in the doorway. They drop them on the floor and leave. The woman speaks before the man finishes his monologue. She delivers her monologue to him loudly, from a distance, and then stands in front of him, directing her words at his shirt covered face.

I am understanding. Is it understood that an understanding has to be tried? You are trying. They understood, I tried it on them. I try it on you and you try to understand what they understood. What do you understand? Its your understanding I'm trying to have you understand. There's trying and trying. Try to try what they tried. Try by trying less.





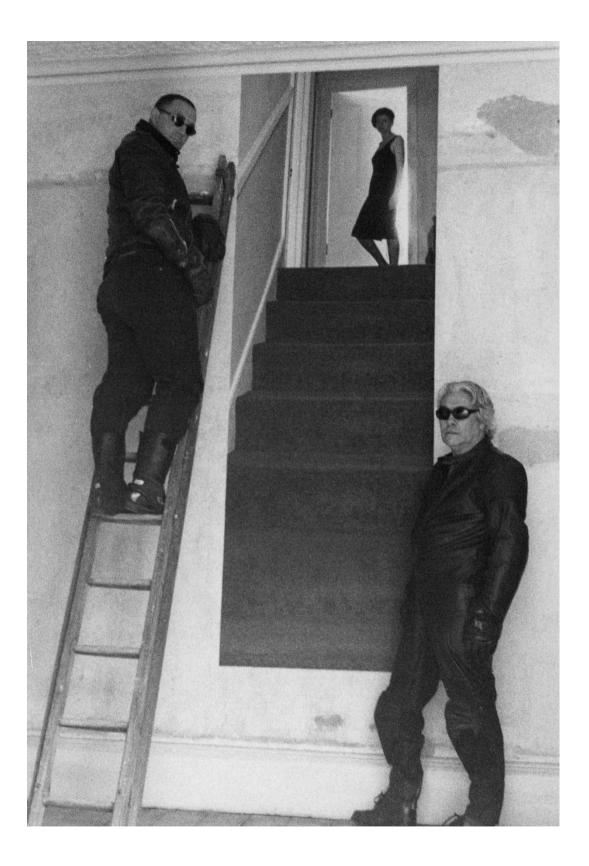
The man starts his walk back, carefully looking down at his shoes. The woman remains, directing her words at him. She then follows the man and guides him to stop him slipping on the images. Back at the beginning, she takes the shirt off his head and offers it back to him. He refuses it and she hangs it on the clothes stand.

 W They will expect you to keep your shirt on. There were other sounds, like a car siren.
 M Yes, I remember the car siren. Everyone carries on working, even when it is this hot.

The leather clad bill posters enter with paper and glue, and begin pasting new images of the woman onto the first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth doorways. The man sits down and turns on the tape.

Gina's expectant face, with glass and book in hand, was a picture. She had taken a good gulp of wine and had said nothing to Jack since entering. Before finding a place to stand, she had watched Jack watching Chris behind the bar. She expected it. He bought the drinks from Jodie, who said she was expecting again. Gina always asked for wine, but he made a point of asking her. Jack did not expect the performance to start late, or such numbers of people attending it. Gina was given the books, after he passed the girl on the door without saying anything. This was unexpected, as she knew him. Gina watched Jack, holding his gloves between his teeth as he counted out the crisp dollar bills on the sidewalk. She expected his stupid behavior in the street. After waiting for the 'Walk' sign, she had walked slowly across the last street. Having seen him spin on the ice, there was no way that she was going to end up spinning. She had nearly slipped when the car horn blasted at Jack. Walking on 'Don't Walk', was unexpected. He had walked slowly for the last three blocks and had said nothing following the remarks by Gina."I didn't expect you to talk about the time all the time. I expect you to try to understand." She admired her new boots and looked at them in an unexpected way, almost as if they were walking the sidewalk by themselves. The red leather and silver buckles clearly visible in the street lights. Boots of such comfort and practicality, mixed with good looks, was not what she had expected to buy.

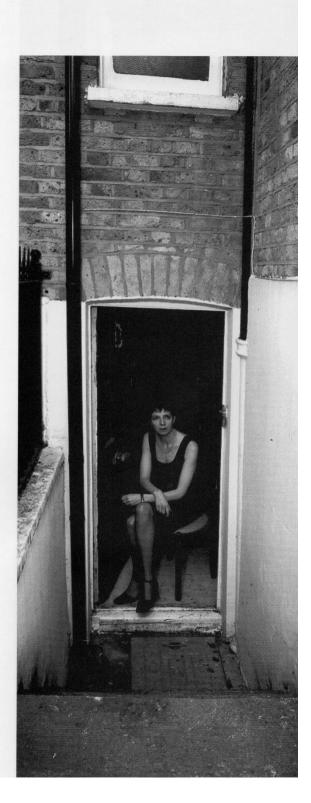


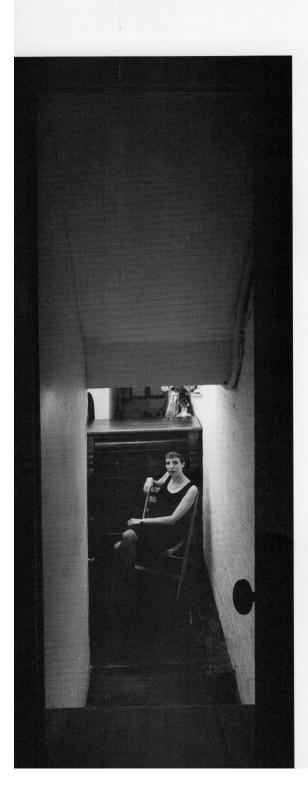




ACT SIX

"Do you know what time it is"? he asks."I want to be careful, and I don't care what you say or expect". He expects her to hurry, but he doesn't say so. Jack accepts he has to slow down. He doesn't expect to be on time, with Gina slowly admiring her boots walking along the sidewalk. He is careless on the snow and she is careful, especially at the junction of street and sidewalk, where it is impossible to know what to expect of the snow, or its depth. She jumps at the blast of a taxi horn, which is directed at Jack. He is crossing against 'Don't Walk' and spinning on the ice in the middle of the road. She nearly looses her balance and shouts at him. Gina waits for the sign to read 'Walk' before she crosses. When she joins him, Jack has pulled off his gloves and is holding them between his teeth while counting out the new dollar bills. They go in expectantly. Jack throws the bills on the table, says two, and grabs the tickets. Gina is handed the books. The girl on the door expects Jack to say something, as she knows him. He can hear a large audience in pre performance mode and accepts that his expectations of lateness can be discounted. The audience are more than expected."Red wine"? he asks, and is off to the bar before Gina has time to say yes. He slows down when he sees Chris at the bar and expects to see him looking for Gina. He buys the drinks from Jodie, who says she is expecting again. Jack asks if she was expecting it. He returns to Gina and they find a place to stand before he hands her the drink. She gulps at it, says nothing, opens the book and looks expectantly at the picture on the wall. A man enters with a portable tape recorder, playing the sound of footsteps.





The room reverberates with the sound of a man's footsteps echoing through streets. The assistants, with ladder and staple gun, fix a seventh doorway to the wall. The man stands up and turns the tape off.

M I feel that I've caught up with myself.
 I can't hear my blood boiling any longer.
 W I didn't expect it. Say it will happen after a number of counts. Children like to try that.

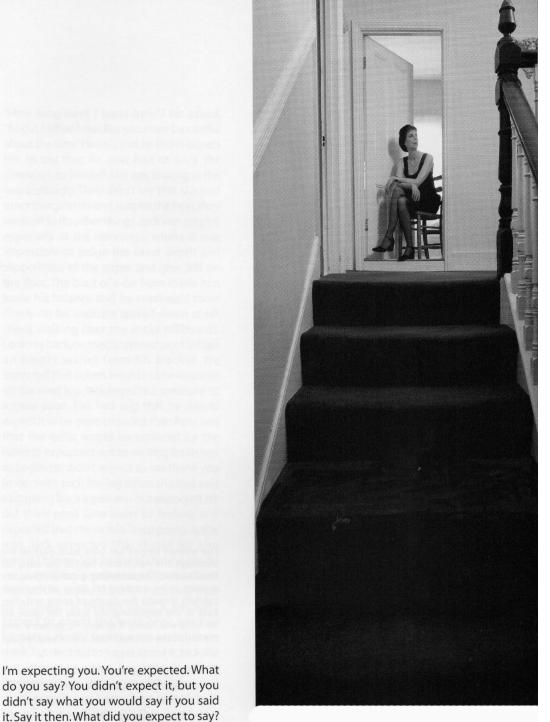
The strown of the deput. She jumps at the black of a text hom, which is threated at lack, his is crossing against. Don't Walk, and broad, the meach increases not balance and allocat shim fains with the transport of the lack has pulled off ing globals and is bounding them between the teech while in expectantly, lack throws the tables of the potenties on the new dollar bills. They go broad the books, the globals and the bills, the case respective of the global in the teach here a large softence in proble and the teach here a large softence in proble and the teach here a large softence in proble and the teach here a large softence in proble and the teach here a large softence in proble and the teach here a large softence in proble and the teach here a large softence in proble and the teach here a large softence in proble and the teach here a large softence in proble and the teach here a large softence in proble and tools expected in the teach the teach of the teach here is the teach the teach of the softence in the teach and the teach of the softence in the teach and the teach of the softence in the teach and the teach of the softence in the teach and the teach of the softence in the teach and teach in the softence in the teach and the teach of the softence in the teach and the teach of the softence in the teach of the teach of the softence in the teach of the teach of the softence in the teach of the teach of the softence in the teach of the teach of the softence in the teach of the teach of the softence in the teach of the teach of the softence in the teach of the teach of the softence in the teach of the teach of the teach of the softence in the teach of the teach of the teach of the softence in the teach of the teach of the teach of teach of teach of teach of teach of teach The woman leaves. The man takes his vest off and rolls it like a boxing glove around his hand. He follows the woman and studies the images in the first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth doorways. He punches the palm of his empty hand with his vest boxing glove. The woman is sitting on a chair when he reaches the seventh doorway. He has no way of walking up there. He talks to her.

Do I expect the unexpected? I don't expect so.I didn't say so.I didn't expect to say that I did expect you. Can I say that I said it when I didn't say it? I didn't expect you to say so. Did you say it? Did you say I was expected? Who said that you should say that I was expected? You are expecting me. Did I expect it? I expect I said what I said.





The billboard assistants do not enter and the new images on the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh doorways remain untouched. The paper on the floor remains. As soon as the man starts his speech, the woman stands, moves around the back of the chair, which she holds, and addresses her words to the man. They speak alternately and, for the first time, they appear to be engaged in a dialogue.



it. Say it then. What did you expect to say? I didn't expect you to say that. So, say what you expect and expect that what you say will be expected. I'll expect it when you say it. It is said of you that you expect to say it.



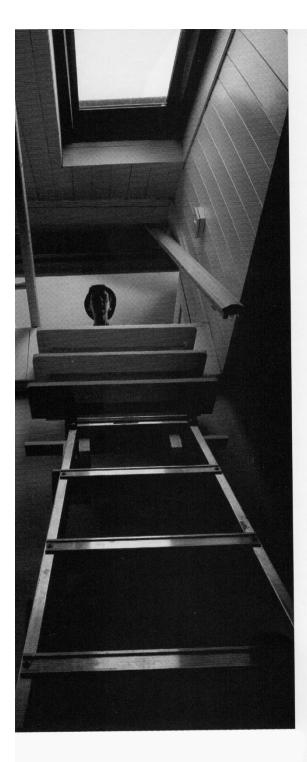
The woman begins her walk back past all the doorways. The man follows behind. She turns her head to see if he is making good progress. He appears to be watching his shoes as they walk carefully through the depths of paper and glue. Back at the beginning, she takes the glove off his hand and hands it to him. He throws it over the top of the clothes stand, with some feeling.

W It's over. Do you remember the taxi? It hit you. You fell as you walked on 'Don't Walk'.
 M Yes, I remember the taxi. And my legs.
 Have I been walking in this heat since then?

The woman takes his shirt off the stand and helps the man to put it on. She pushes him in the direction of the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh doorways. The man walks on and turns on the tape.

"How long have I been here"? he asked. "About half an hour. But you must be careful about the time". He said that he didn't expect her to say that he now had to walk the doorways by himself. She was looking at the two assistants. They didn't say that she had other things to do and, despite the heat, they went off to do other things. Jack was careful, especially at the doorways, where it was impossible to judge the exact depth and slipperiness of the paper and glue left on the floor. The blast of a car horn made him loose his balance and he continued more slowly on his walk. He looked down at his shoes walking over the sticky billboards. Looking back, he tried to remember. He took an empty wallet from his pocket. He expected that tickets would not be required on the next leg. Jack expected someone to appear soon. She had said that he should expect it to be more crowded than here, and that the quiet would be replaced by the noise of expectant voices waiting for things to begin. He didn't expect to say thank you to her with such feeling when she had said that going back again was not expected. He did think what Gina must be feeling, and expected that she would keep going as she was. Jack expected that things for him would change. She had said that he would see everything coming together. He didn't feel that this would count for much and then he changed his feelings about it. He didn't expect to count the walk or to see the footsteps. He did feel that he would like a drink, but decided to forget about it. Jack did not expect to see a bar here. He then stopped to pick up an empty wine glass and unexpectedly turned the tape recorder on. The place was filled with the sound of a woman walking. It was the noise of quick footsteps, of small, light heals resonating through the narrow streets. He expected to keep going. He had the feeling of going on.





The sound of the woman's footsteps continues. The assistants return with a new image and a ladder. They staple this new photograph to the right of the last image, joining the two together. They exit. The sound of footsteps on the tape is now overlaid by the man's familiar footsteps. The footsteps are not in step. The man stops, takes off the portable tape recorder and lays it on the floor. Eventually, the footsteps become synchronised and the sound stops. The man walks offstage.