

ATTEND! Comrades! Fellow citizens! ATTEND!

We gather to make a new theater, a THEATER of PURE ATTENTION! Let us begin with some inspiring words from our compatriot in the manifestation of new theaters, ANTONIN ARTAUD: "We cannot go on prostituting the idea of theater whose only value is in its excruciating, magical relation to reality and danger. Put in this way, the question of the theater ought to arouse general attention, the implication being that theater, through its physical aspect, since it requires expression in space (the only real expression, in fact), allows the magical means of art and speech to be exercised organically and altogether, like renewed exorcisms."

DANGER! MAGIC! THEATER! SPACE! EXORCISM!

Danger is our condition. Magic is our possibility of transformation. Space is our public reality. Theater is what makes us a public. Exorcism is our way forward!

MANIFESTO for a THEATER of PURE ATTENTION

CITIZENS!

At all times, you are being watched! Well do you know that in plazas, in city streets, in municipal buildings, in shops, in offices, even in the hallways of your own apartment buildings, cameras are tirelessly recording. Every transmission of your voice, every message, every mail, every post, every keystroke is logged in some windowless building filled with endless stacks of quivering servers. We are a public which is always in public. How then is it possible to think, to DREAM, to FEEL, to CHANGE? Our only hope, my friends and comrades, is a new form of public action, an invisible and unsurveillable solidarity, an alchemy of dramatic presence, a THEATER of PURE ATTENTION!

The Theater of Pure Attention is a theater of PURE GATHERING. It is a theater of infiltration. It is BOLDLY SECRET. The THEATER of PURE ATTENTION does not pit itself against other forms of theater, or other forms of art. It pits itself against the habitus of institutions, of states of control, of removal of the public from public spaces. What theater makes is a public, and that public is constituted by a collective act of attention - by attentive copresence. The THEATER of PURE ATTENTION returns to the originary conditions of theater, conditions which have been radically imperiled: a gathering together, a freedom in public - not merely the external freedom of appearances but the critical internal freedoms of attention and solidarity. Our great comrade WILLIAM JAMES saw that free will consists entirely of our capacity to direct our attention. Where attention goes, action follows. The THEATER of PURE ATTENTION, then, is the foundation of a new ethics and a new form of political action.

Of what does such a THEATER consist?

The THEATER of Pure ATTENTION is no less than an infiltration of any and all collective space by imperceptible players, plays, and audiences. The PLAYS: Plays in the Theater of Pure Attention are movements of directed attention on the part of the players. The players betray no outward sign, but enact a series of attentional gymnastics and mental hieroglyphics. The STAGE: The stage of the Theater of Pure Attention is anywhere and everywhere. No platform is needed, no institution or invitation. Indeed, the Theater of Pure Attention is by its nature an invasive permeation of even the most highly controlled spaces: prisons, airport security lines, public transportation, government buildings, museums, lecture halls. The PERFORMERS: While the Theater of Pure Attention can be performed by anyone, virtuosic actors in this theater are those who can move their attention undetectably, who can perform internal acts with absolutely no exterior manifestation. Attentional audiences, too, must simultaneously strive for this virtuosity. ATTENDING: How to see the Theater of Pure Attention? Comrades, you need only be made aware of its existence. The signs are hidden in plain sight. As members of the audience you are furnished with a time and place, so that you might know when and where to direct your attention. And you are given script, transmitted in secret, written or memorized, so that you might know the hidden meanings indicated by the player's most subtle and ordinary actions.

I urge you, my fellow citizens, to ATTEND closely. You are at the birth of a NEW THEATER, an alchemical reversal of attention's polarities, a recovery of its magical potential as a foundation of aesthetic, ethical and political action.