

The Excess Of Elements In *The Chromatic Diet*¹

Melanie Kitchens O'Meara

1 chromatic . . . *adj.* . . . **1 a:** of or relating to color phenomena or sensations **b:** highly colored **2:** of or relating to chroma **3 a:** of, relating to, or giving all the tones of a chromatic scale **b:** characterized by frequent use of nonharmonic tones or of harmonies based on nonharmonic tones . . .

2 chromatic *n:* ACCIDENTAL 2 . . .

2 ACCIDENTAL. INCIDENTAL. ADVENTITIOUS . . . : not part of the real or essential element of something . . .

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (197, 7)

Sophie Calle displays *The Chromatic Diet* in her book *Double Game*, which is the result of her collaboration with the writer Paul Auster. *Double Game* is a colorful scrapbook that consists of torn out pages from Auster's novel *Leviathan*, photographs, lists, written descriptions, and other observations by Calle. The collaboration was initiated when, in *Leviathan*, Auster modeled the character of Maria on the character of Calle. In the novel, Maria "plagiarizes seven works by . . . Calle (*Suite Venitienne*, *The Wardrobe*, *The Striptease*, *The Shadow*, *The Hotel*, *The Address Book* and *The Birthday Ceremony*)" and "adds two imaginary works," one of which becomes Calle's *The Chromatic Diet* (Macel 26).

On the first page of *Double Game*, Sophie Calle and Paul Auster thank each other for "permission to mingle fact with fiction" (i). Just as Auster used Calle as inspiration for the fictive Maria, Calle uses Maria "to turn . . . Auster's novel into a game" about herself and her work (001). In part I, Calle explores "the life of Maria and how it influenced the life of Sophie" (iv), displaying two new works based on the imaginary works by Maria, namely, *The Chromatic Diet* and *Days Under the Sign of B, C, & W*. In part II, Calle explores "the life of Sophie and how it influenced the life of Maria" (iv), reprinting all her pieces for which Maria took credit in *Leviathan*. In the same section, Sophie pastes in pages from Auster's book in which Maria is described and writes on

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the pages in red ink as if she is a teacher correcting a student's paper. Her editorial marks include comments, additions, deletions, and substitutions. On page sixty, for instance, she writes "hello Maria" and changes Auster's phrase "since the age of fourteen" to "since the ages of 27," inserting her own history into Maria's history, which is based on Calle's history. In part III, Calle lists a few rules Auster has suggested she live by for a year. Very like *Double Game* itself, the rules are "one of the many ways of mingling fact with fiction, or how to try to become a character out of a novel" (002-003). In general, then, *Double Game* is about how one's character and art are invented from the restoration or citation, the performance, of prior practices and expressions rather than springing anew from some autonomous source.

On Maria:

Some weeks, she would indulge in what she called "the chromatic diet," restricting herself to foods of a single color on any given day. (Auster 67)

In *The Chromatic Diet*, Calle documents seven monochromatic meals she made and apparently ate during the week of 8-14 December 1997. Six of the seven photographs are displayed on separate pages in four by four inch squares. Beneath each photograph is a caption that identifies the day, color, and food items drawn from Auster's novel or added to the menu by Calle. The seventh photograph is a large rectangle of approximately nine by twelve inches that spreads across two pages and depicts a black tablecloth set with all six of the prior meals.

Like a photograph in a food magazine, each place setting and morsel of food appears to be precisely arranged, and all items in each photograph are of the same color with alterations in the hue, value, and intensity or saturation of the color. A monochromatic harmony rather than a harmony of complements is at play. Likewise, all the place settings are photographed from an aerial view and "seen flat, as pattern, from above" (Hughes 14). Each is set similarly on a solid colored background. At center and claiming the dominant focus is a dinner plate with the main dish. From the viewer's perspective, a fork rests to the left, a knife to the right, and a spoon above. A drinking vessel stands above the spoon. There is a napkin to the left of the knife, and a dessert plate with fruit, cheese, or sweets rests above the knife and napkin. While similar in general composition, the settings vary in the types of napkins, plates, cups, utensils, and foods Calle arranges. The orange setting consists of ceramic plates, thick plastic utensils, and a tall plastic cup. The red plates appear to be plastic with red plastic picnic utensils and a red plastic goblet. The white plates could be plastic or ceramic with picnic utensils and a small plastic cup. The green dinner plate is ceramic while the dessert plate is iridescent plastic with picnic utensils and a plastic goblet. The yellow place setting is identical to the green, as is the pink. Beneath each photograph is a caption that identifies the day, color, and food depicted, centered to look like a menu.

MONDAY : ORANGE

Menu imposed:

Puree of carrots

Boiled prawns

Cantaloupe melon (Calle, *Double Game* 014)

Below, I use the performance practices of the Bauhaus Stage Workshop and the Theatre of Images, specifically the spectacular surreal operas of Robert Wilson, to investigate Calle's *The Chromatic Diet*. For the most part, I concentrate on how and to what effect formal aesthetics is used in each practice to compose imagery, understanding from the start that the application of the principles and properties of visual forms does not equate necessarily to an aesthetic of formalism, or the a-social, a-historical autonomy of the art object.

In *The Chromatic Diet*, Calle composes and displays seven photographs of monochromatic meals that correspond to each day of the week. In contrast to the bulk of Calle's work, *The Chromatic Diet* makes explicit and reflexive use of formal aesthetics so as to investigate the limitations and possibilities, the discipline and creative excess of composing food and photography in terms of visual elements. In this way, *The Chromatic Diet* bears direct links to the conceptual and practical concerns of the Bauhaus Stage Workshop and Theatre of Images. While the former is based solidly on the exploration of visual principles, the latter applies them implicitly. Highly crafted in formal aesthetic terms, Wilson's imagery aims to spark the "interior screens" or the imaginations of his viewers (Wilson quoted in Counsell 180). *The Chromatic Diet* and the Bauhaus Stage Workshop operate in a similar manner, prompting the viewer to make (or stumble upon) social-cultural as well as personal connections and meanings as they interact with the imagery.

To investigate the performative elements of Calle's *The Chromatic Diet*, I created a generative performance titled *Food Dance: A Spectacular Opera in Seven Acts*. Like Auster's and Calle's menus—which impose content and color restrictions of the composition of each meal—I impose content and form restrictions too as detailed in the "Kitchens O'Meara" menus I list prior to each act. My aims are similar to those of Auster and Calle, who each engage in a series of "double games" to investigate the *art of character* as based in the restoration and citation of prior practices and expressions. My restrictions double theirs and also double the different concepts and practices I discuss. Over the course of *Food Dance*, I sequence the restrictions in an accumulative manner, a choice that results in my acknowledging the active role I play in investigating and creating the performance. Calle's investigative narrative generates my own, encouraging me to embrace and reflect on my role as an Archeologist of the Present. It is my hope that *Food Dance* prompts the reader to do the same, leaving plenty of room for him or her to adjust the meanings of the noted role in light of his or her experiences.



FOOD DANCE: A SPECTACULAR OPERA IN SEVEN ACTS

ACT I MONDAY: ORANGE



Narrator of *The Chromatic Diet*: As imposed by Auster, on Monday, Maria-Sophie ate orange “carrots, cantaloupe, [and] boiled shrimp” (Auster 67). Displayed on Sophie’s dinner plate are six boiled prawns tenderly placed with tails facing outward atop a layer of pureed carrots. On the dessert plate, moon shaped slivers of cantaloupe line up one under the other like six delectable smiles. A glass of orange juice “completed [Auster’s] menu” and Calle’s meal (Calle, *Double Game* 014).

Narrator Tracking Calle: Yve-Alain Bois contends *The Chromatic Diet* photographs are “much too neat to be genuine Calle” (36). Bois describes “genuine Calle” as “people . . . shot from the back, the framing is slapdash, the scale inconsistent, etc: all the signs of an amateur’s job are there. . . . She treat[s] . . . photographs as sheer vehicles for information,” a form of note taking (36). Further, Calle does not always make the photographs she displays, but delegates others to do so. For instance, for

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Twenty Years Later, she asked her mother to hire a private investigator to follow and make photographs of her. For this and other reasons, such as the very details Bois criticizes, Christine Macel terms Calle's work an "investigative narrative" (20). Her slapdash, unfocused, note-taking style of photography is embedded with the persona of a private eye trailing and taking pictures of people and things undetected until the results of the investigation are displayed in a gallery or book. In other words, Calle's typical form and style of photography are intentional because they help her tell stories about the process of investigating unfamiliar subject matter and, more broadly, the poetics and politics of voyeuristic picture taking. Her art form is reflexive about not/knowing and always seeing partially.

On Maria:

Some people called her a photographer, others referred to her as a conceptualist, still others considered her a writer, and in the end I don't think she can be pigeonholed in any way. (Auster 66-67)

Narrator of Formal Aesthetics: Formal aesthetics are a perspective, discourse, and practice based on the elements of composition, visual composition in this case. The basic elements of visual composition are point, line, shape, color, and texture, and general attributes include the realization of "harmony, balance, contrast, and unity in variety" (Broudy quoted in Campbell 78). Advocates of formal aesthetics claim that the noted elements are at work in all nature and culture based systems because they are the visual manifestation of the physical world. E.g., color is the result of light rays absorbed by or reflected off material objects. In *Picture This: How Pictures Work*, Molly Bang provides a delightful and helpful introduction to the basic concepts and practices of formal aesthetics.

According to Bang, humans respond to the elements in primary and secondary ways or what she calls "natural constants" and "secondary associations" (74). Our primary response is instinctual or survival based. For instance, we tread carefully or stay put, perhaps asleep, when light rays are absent and it is dark because we might stumble and fall down otherwise. We respond to sharp objects (angular lines and shapes) with care or caution because we have learned they can hurt us. Secondary responses are determined by culture and context, such as associating the dark and the color black with evil in western cultures and rebirth in some eastern cultures, or viewing sharp objects as militaristic or phallic or simply "male." Since secondary associations are not "essential" to the elements, formalist critics tend to ignore them in their analyses of visual works whereas other critics, viewers, and artists who are concerned with formal aesthetics too may well consider both primary and secondary responses.

Narrator of The Bauhaus: The Bauhaus or "house of building" was a post World War I interdisciplinary art school founded in Weimer, Germany, in 1919, by the

architect Walter Gropius.² The school was dedicated to the experimentation and application of visual elements with the express aim of crafting aesthetically pleasing, functional, and affordable objects and buildings (Smock 3). In this way, the school followed the democratic lead of “Weimer culture,” hoping to “address a broad audience, directly and with constructive, economical means” (Hughes 80). Due to early fits of Expressionism on the part of both students and faculty, the school failed to produce the building designs promised the Weimar community and, in 1925, the Bauhaus was forced to move to Dessau.

There, housed in an “all steel, concrete and glass” building of a constructivist bent (Hughes 199), the Bauhaus began to meet its pedagogical and aesthetic aims more consistently than it had in Weimar. While emphasizing architectural design, the school offered a diverse curriculum with courses in print-making, color theory, drawing, painting, photography, wood and stone sculpture, textile and furniture design, weaving, book binding, wall painting, urban development, and theatre, the latter dedicated to the Bauhaus Stage Workshop. Rather than individual projects, the students and faculty collaborated on large practical projects that benefited the school and community. They also hosted elaborate parties and festivals, each based on a theme pertinent to Bauhaus concerns, such as white, kite, lantern, and metallic themes. In a diary entry from February 1929, Oskar Schlemmer offers a wondrous sense of the metallic party:

A children’s slide covered in white sheet metal led one past innumerable gleaming silver balls, lined up and sparkling under spotlights, right into the heart of the party, but first one had to pass a tinsmith’s shop. Here the need for every sort of metal could be filled; there were wrenches, tin cutters, can openers! A stairway, of which every step gave out a different tone, a true ‘backstairs joke’ . . . led to the tombola; here one could not, to be sure, win folding metal houses and ‘living machines,’ but things almost as good: steel chairs, nickel bowls, aluminum lamps, lovely cakes with a bit of glitter, and natural and unnatural art. But then on to the realm of true metallic pleasure. Bent sheets of foil glittered and reflected the dancers distortion, walls of silvered masks and their grotesque shadows, ceilings studded with gleaming brass fruit bowls, everywhere coloured metallic paper and the ever-beautiful Christmas-tree balls, some of enormous size. The Bauhaus band had dressed festively in coquettish silver top hats, and it launched into the music with great *élan*, rhythm and verve. On the stage, bolts of foolishness dropped from leaden tongues; there was an amusing ‘ladies dance’ performed by men, and a sketch in which, to be sure, metal was represented only by the spike of a helmet; these two numbers satisfied everyone’s desire to laugh and look . . . [A]nd thus for one night this house of work was transformed into the ‘high academy for creative form.’ (quoted in Whitford 278)

Concluding with a playful poke at high art, Schlemmer’s account demonstrates how the Bauhaus inter-mingled the study of formal aesthetics with play and performance.

² The term “Bauhaus” has history in the German *Baubutten* lodges where, in the Middle Ages, masons and designers lived and worked together building medieval cathedrals (Hughes 192).

While clearly crafted in terms of design principles of harmonic unity and variety, the party also allowed the faculty and students to test “metallic pleasure” on and through their bodies in space, resulting in unpredictable surprises, such as “lovely cakes with a bit of glitter,” grotesque as well as beautiful imagery, and “bolts of foolishness.” Thereby, the group experienced a “collective feeling of kindred spirits” who countered “ingrained customs by means of their “creative” play with form (Bax 30).

Unfortunately, such play in the Germany of the time could not last long and, in 1932, the school was forced to move to Berlin, whereupon it was dissolved by Hitler in 1933. Several faculty immigrated to the United States where they established Bauhaus schools. Anni and Josef Albers opened Black Mountain College in North Carolina in 1936, and the New Bauhaus in Chicago was established by Laszlo Moholy-Nagy in 1937.

Narrator of Theatre of Images: As termed by Bonnie Marranca, Theatre of Images was an avant-garde movement of the 1960s and 1970s that favored a style of theatre where visual and acoustic imagery prevailed over a coherent dramatic plot (Marranca ix). Published in 1977, Marranca’s study, *The Theatre of Images*, highlights the work of Lee Breuer, Richard Foreman, and Robert Wilson, mentions the contributions of such companies as The Living Theatre and The San Francisco Mime Troupe, and anticipates the continued popularity of the genre in experimental circles of theatre and performance today. Whether past or present, a theatre of images attempts to create stage pictures that highlight their highly crafted painterly or sculptural qualities as compared to creating a verisimilitude and largely supportive *mise-en-scene* common to popular realistic theatre (Marranca x; Goldberg 184). A montage or collage of diverse, seemingly arbitrary image fragments also is characteristic of the genre as is the treatment of performers as media, no more or less important than the other stage elements. Since the common causal relationship between images is absent or estranged by the composition, a theatre of images often creates fictive realities that are “dream-like” and “surreal” (Counsell 183, 185). As a result, the audience is prompted to draw on “alternative modes of perception” (Marranca x), becoming active co-producers of the experience and its meanings. Arguably, and recalling Calle’s investigative narratives, the same prompt encourages viewers to realize, if not the primacy, the partiality of sight in how we relate to and make sense of the world.

Menus Imposed:

Auster

Carrots

Cantaloupe

Boiled shrimp

[Orange juice]

Calle

A layer of pureed carrots

Six cantaloupe crescents

Six prawns atop puree

Orange juice

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Formalism

Light

Aerial view

Stuck in a pigeonhole

Characters:

Figure
Nude Figure

House lights fade to black. The audience stops talking. They sit still and fix their eyes on the proscenium stage in front of them.

Dvořák's *New World Symphony* fades in.

Cast from above, a white light rises slowly to define a 12x16' rectangle on the bare floor of the stage C.³ Hold for 5 minutes.

Music fades out slowly. Hold for 2 minutes.

Lights fade to black slowly. Hold for 1 minute.

In black for a half minute: a loud, slow, continuous ripping sound.

Then silence for 1 minute.

Cast from above, an orange light rises slowly to define a 6x6' square on the bare floor of the stage C. Hold for 3 minutes.

Figure, dressed in neutralized orange overalls, enters UL. Figure carries a black box with both hands. Figure X on a horizontal line to UC, makes a sharp turn, and X on a vertical line to just above the orange C square where the Figure puts the box on the floor.

Figure uses angular movements to open the box and remove a stack of square orange papers, an orange mixing bowl, black scissors, and a roll of white duct tape. Figure places the items in a horizontal line across the center of the orange C square. Figure removes a black boom box from the box and places it just UC of the orange C square.

³ In *Food Dance* I use blocking shorthand to indicate positions and movement on stage, which are determined by the performer's perspective looking at the audience. UR refers to the up right part of the stage; UC to upstage center; UL to the up left part; CR to the center right part; C to center stage; CL to the center left part; DR to the down right part; DC to downstage center; and DL to the down left part of the stage. X indicates the performer should cross or move or is crossing or moving from one position on stage to another.

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Figure picks up the empty black box and X UC on a vertical line. Figure makes a sharp turn, and X UL on a horizontal line. Figure exits UL. Hold for a half-minute.

Figure enters UL without the black box. Figure X UC on a horizontal line, makes a sharp turn, and X on a vertical line to just above the orange C square.

Figure bends from the waist and presses “play” on the boom box. Dvořák’s *New World Symphony* fades in. The sound quality is faint and tinny.

Cast from above, a white light rises slowly to define the 12x16’ rectangle on the floor of the stage C.

Figure X to the center of the orange C square and picks up the duct tape. Figure X on a vertical line to the UC edge of the white rectangle, makes a sharp turn, and X on a horizontal line to the UR corner of the white rectangle. Figure bends from the waist and pulls the edge of the tape from the roll. The tape makes a ripping sound. Figure attaches the tape to the floor at the UR corner and, in clockwise motion, proceeds to outline all edges of the white rectangle with the white tape.

Figure turns full front at the UR corner of the white rectangle. Holding the duct tape in the right hand, Figure bends both elbows, thereby raising both arms slowly, as if holding a box. Figure pauses and then lowers both arms. Figure continues to repeat this movement.

Nude Figure enters CR walking at a moderate pace, in profile, and with a slight smile. Nude Figure X on a horizontal line to and through the orange C square, and exits CL. Nude Figure does not hold a watering can in her right hand.

Figure ceases the repetitive arm movements. Figure X to the UC point of the white rectangle, makes a sharp turn, and X to the center of the orange C square. During Figure’s X, the white rectangle fades out.

Figure uses angular movements to divide the stack of square orange papers into six piles according to color and texture.

The first stack contains thick orange paper.

The second stack contains thin orange paper.

The third stack contains thin shiny paper in a gold amber tint.

The fourth stack contains thin handmade paper in a burnt orange shade.

The fifth stack contains thin paper of matte consistency in a burnt orange shade.

The sixth stack contains ribbed paper in a medium amber shade.

Figure uses angular movements to place the orange mixing bowl upside down on a piece of thick orange paper. Figure pulls an orange pencil (e.g., Ticonderoga) from the

front pocket of the neutralized orange overalls and uses it to trace a line around the orange bowl. Figure cuts out the **large thick orange paper circle** with the black scissors.

Figure places the orange mixing bowl right side up on another piece of thick orange paper. Figure uses the orange pencil to trace a line around the orange bowl. Figure cuts out the **medium sized thick orange paper circle** with the black scissors.

Figure places the medium sized thick orange paper circle on a piece of thin orange paper. Figure uses the orange pencil to trace a line around the paper circle. Figure cuts inside the outline with the black scissors, making a **small thin orange paper circle**.

Figure places the small thin orange paper circle on a piece of thin shiny orange paper. Figure uses the orange pencil to trace a line around the paper circle. Figure cuts inside the outline with the black scissors, making a **thin shiny orange paper circle** that is one half inch smaller than the small thin orange paper circle.

Figure places the medium-sized thick orange paper circle on 6 pieces of thin shiny orange paper. Figure uses the orange pencil to trace a line around the paper circle. Figure cuts out the 6 medium sized circles. Figure takes each circle and cuts through it on a curve, making **6 crescent shapes of thin shiny orange paper**.

Figure places the orange mixing bowl upside down on a piece of thin orange handmade paper. Figure uses the orange pencil to trace a line around the orange bowl. Figure cuts a curvy edge 1" inside the outline with the black scissors, making a **thin orange handmade paper circle that is not uniform**.

Figure folds a piece of **thin orange paper of matte consistency into a 4x8" rectangle**.

Figure cuts a piece of **ribbed orange paper into 3 6x1" rectangles**.

Figure places the small thin shiny orange paper circle on 6 pieces of ribbed orange paper. Figure uses the orange pencil to trace a line around the paper circle. Figure cuts out the circles. Figure takes each circle and cuts through it on a curve, making **6 crescent shapes of ribbed orange paper**.

Cast from above, a white light rises slowly to define the 12x16' rectangle on the floor of the stage C.

Figure X UC on a vertical line, makes a sharp turn, and X UL on a horizontal line. Figure exits UL. Figure immediately reenters with the black box held in both hands.

Figure X UC on a horizontal line, makes a sharp turn, and X on a vertical line to the center of the orange C square where the figure puts the box on the floor.

Figure uses angular movements to put the leftover scraps of orange paper, the orange mixing bowl, the black scissors, and the role of white duct tape into the black box.

Figure picks up the box with both hands and X UC on a vertical line, makes a sharp turn, and X UL on a horizontal line. Figure exits UL. Hold for a half minute.

Figure enters UL without the black box. Figure X UC on a horizontal line, makes a sharp turn, and X on a vertical line to the UC point of the white rectangle. Figure makes a sharp turn and X on a horizontal line to the UR corner of the white rectangle where Figure turns full front.

Figure bends both elbows, thereby raising both arms slowly, as if holding a box. Figure pauses and then lowers both arms. Figure continues to repeat this movement.

Nude Figure enters CL walking at a moderate pace, in profile, and with a slight smile. Nude Figure X on a horizontal line to and through the orange C square, and exits CR. Nude figure does not hold a watering can in her right hand.

Figure ceases the repetitive arm movements. Figure X to the UC point of the white rectangle, makes a sharp turn, and X to the center of the orange C square. During Figure's X, the white rectangle fades out.

Figure uses angular movement to:

Place the **large thick orange paper circle** DR in the orange C square.

Place the **medium thick orange paper circle** UL of the large thick orange paper circle.

Place the **small thin orange paper circle** UC of the large thick orange paper circle.

Place the **small thin shiny paper circle of a gold amber tint** inside the small thin orange paper circle.

Place the **6 thin shiny paper crescents of a gold amber tint** in a row, tips facing upward, atop the medium thick orange paper circle.

Place the **thin handmade paper circle of burnt orange and imperfect curves** atop the large thick orange paper circle.

Place the **thin matte paper rectangle of burnt orange** to the far L of the large thick orange paper circle.

Place the **3 ribbed paper rectangles of a medium amber shade** directly to the R, to the L, and above the large thick orange paper circle, the first 2 rectangles standing vertically, the 3rd horizontally.

Place the **6 ribbed orange paper crescents of a medium amber shade** in a circle atop the thin handmade paper circle of burnt orange and imperfect curves.

Figure stands DC just in front of the orange C square, facing upstage.

Cast from above, a white light rises slowly to define the 12x16' rectangle that frames the orange C square that frames the orange colored circles, crescents, and rectangles contained within. Hold for a half minute.

Figure X to the boom box adhering to the edges of the orange C square. Figure bends from the waist and presses "stop" on the boom box. Figure picks up the boom box with both hands and X UC on a vertical line, makes a sharp turn, and X UL on a horizontal line. Figure exits UL.

Over the course of 2 minutes, the light that makes the orange C square intensifies, while the light that makes the white framing rectangle fades to black.

The orange C square glows in the dark.

Within it, the **small shiny circle of a gold amber tint** and the **6 shiny crescents of a gold amber tint** reflect the most light, the upward facing tips of the crescents seeming to smile.

The orange light bumps to black.

ACT II
TUESDAY: RED



Narrator of *The Chromatic Diet*: The menu for Tuesday was red and included “tomatoes, persimmons, [and] steak tartare” (Auster 67). In the center of Sophie’s dinner plate is the steak tartare, topped with half of a cherry tomato facing down. Around the tartare are eight cherry tomato halves equally spaced and separated by slivers of roasted red peppers. Every other cherry tomato half faces up, exposing its seeds, while the other halves face down. Rather than persimmons, Calle ate pomegranate seeds, which are on the dessert plate. She completed the menu with a glass of red wine.

Narrator Tracking Calle: Sophie Calle was born in France in 1953. Her parents divorced when she was three, and she grew up in Paris raised by her mother and seeing her father on Sundays. After graduating from high school, Calle started college, but soon dropped out to travel the world. She left Paris and did not return for seven years. While traveling, Calle worked temporary jobs, making just enough money to support her bohemian lifestyle. In Ardeche, France, she sold jam and honey at a market and, in the United States and Canada, she worked and traveled with a circus. In an interview with Christine Macel, Calle recalls that most of her “movements were

dictated by decisions to do with leaving . . . and being with men” (76). Her life followed that of another.

While living with a photographer in California, Calle was given a 35mm camera, and she began to make photographs. When she returned to Paris in 1979, at age twenty-six, the city was no longer familiar to her. She had no friends, no partner, and no work, and so she moved in with her father. To reacquaint herself with Paris, she watched and followed people doing what they did and, as such, what was familiar to her, namely, following the lead of others. According to Calle in a lecture she gave at the European Graduate School in 2004, she allowed others to determine her movement and eventually used her “encounters . . . as pretexts for her works” (Pacquement 15). She “acquir[ed] a curious attachment to the people rather than to the places they took her,” photographing her “unknowing accomplices” and keeping a detailed journal of their time together (Irmus 7, 6).

On Maria:

That was more or less how Maria stumbled into her career as an artist. (Auster 69)

Narrator of Formal Aesthetics: A line begins at a point in space and can extend in any direction. Lines can be curved, straight, horizontal, vertical, or diagonal. Lines also can return on themselves and make a shape, such as a circle or square. Lines and shapes also can be inferred by separate points in space, the viewer imagining the lines that connect the points, such as is the case with a constellation of stars. In contrast to angular lines and shapes, we tend to associate curved lines and shapes – such as the maternal womb, the curve of an embrace, a group gathered in a circle, a smile – with safety, protection, and comfort. Our primary response to horizontal, vertical, and diagonal lines and shapes is based on the physical force of gravity and how it affects things, particularly our bodies. A body is most stable when it is horizontal because it has given into gravity and cannot fall down. Likewise, horizontal lines and shapes seem secure because they cannot fall on us. Hence, we tend to associate horizontal lines, shapes, and compositions with stability, calm, tranquility, passivity, or immobility (Bang 42). Because vertical bodies, lines, and shapes “rebel against the earth’s gravity,” requiring immense energy to remain erect, we associate them with strength, power, action, upward growth and mobility (Bang 44). We also view them as dangerous or in danger since they can fall down too. Diagonal bodies, lines, and shapes imply motion or are in motion because they are somewhere between repelling and giving into gravity (Bang 46). They are active and exciting, as is the case with the questioning tilt of a head, a diagonal cross on stage, a toddler’s walk, or the branches of a tree.

Narrator of The Bauhaus: The Bauhaus Stage Workshop was developed by the sculptor Oskar Schlemmer, who joined the school in 1921. Concerned with physical forms in three-dimensional space, Schlemmer’s extension of sculpture to the stage made perfect sense. Schlemmer’s aim was “to approach all . . . material from a basic and elementary standpoint” – i.e., a formal aesthetic standpoint – and, as such, the

human body was understood and treated as equal rather than superior to space and the other materials and media used, such as costumes, props, projections, and sound (Schlemmer 81).

The result was a number of experiments or dances, as they are called often, where “the logical-intellectual content . . . of a work of literature” (Moholy-Nagy 52) was replaced by “plots’ [that] consist of nothing more than the pure movement of forms, color, and light” (Schlemmer 88). For instance, in a piece called *Slat Dance*, long white slats are attached to the hinge points (the waist, shoulders, elbows, hips, and knees) of a performer dressed in black. Placed in a black stage space, the three-dimensional mass of the performer’s body disappears while the body’s lines of motion are accentuated by the white linear extensions. “By freeing its physical mechanics . . . the body . . . demonstrate[s] its own mathematics.” Thereby, it “bring[s] space to life by expressing it as a frame consisting of lines” (Schlemmer quoted in Whitford 246). The plot of *Slat Dance* then tells a story about a performer using her body to investigate the linear and angular properties of space and the body. For Schlemmer, the experiment taught him about the felt volume or stereometry of space. He writes:

“Space, like all architecture, is a form consisting of dimensions and proportion. It is an abstraction in the sense of being in opposition to, if not actually protesting against nature. . . . By means of the verticals described by the moving, dancing figure a stereometry of space comes into being . . . out of basic geometry, out of the pursuit of the vertical, horizontal, diagonal, circle and curve. If we imagine space to be filled with a soft plastic mass which registers the dancer’s movements as a sequence of negative forms, we should see from this example the direct relationship of the geometry of the plane to the stereometry of space.” (quoted in Whitford 246)

While I appreciate Schlemmer’s specific discoveries regarding space, I also appreciate how the abstraction of the human body in space results in lively unpredictable results and that performance is the means for realizing the same. Performance shows me how visual elements, such as white lines in a black space, perform. Further, by means of the performed abstractions, I find my life “reflected with a new immediacy” as Rudolf Arnheim predicted. Since reading about *Slat Dance*, I often imagine how my movements shape and are shaped by the negative space I move through, as if I am leaving angular and curved traces in the air. In fact, I would like to stage the same experiment with curved extensions to see what the alteration might tell me about the body’s movement in space.

As in *Slat Dance*, most of the Bauhaus dances cast the performer’s body in an abstract form by means of props such as slats, costumes, full-face masks, and movement. Generally, the alterations integrate rather than segregate the human body and space, showing how they act with and upon each other. They also conceal the individual traits of each performer while they reveal a social character of earnest investigation, a duplicitous attitude toward mechanization, and a good bit of whimsy very like that found in Schlemmer’s account of the metallic party.

In one of the many Space Dances Schlemmer and his students staged, the social character noted above is evident and specified in terms of the primary colors of yellow, red, and blue. In addition to the details Schlemmer offers, imagine the performers in unitards that are padded so as to accentuate the curves of the upper front torso and the hips and buttocks. Imagine round, somewhat puffy body shapes:

“. . . a white square, filling the whole stage, has been outlined on the black stage floor, in which a circle and diagonals have been inserted. A fellow in yellow tights comes tripping on stage and traverses it, hopping hurriedly along the white lines. His head is inserted into a globular mask made of colored sheet metal. A second fellow in red tights, also masked, steps on the white lines and paces along them with generous steps. Finally, a third one, in blue tights calmly strides across the lines. The individual movements of the three encounter each other, interpenetrate, and dissolve in the most diverse figures. Three gaits of the human body – three characteristics of color – three characteristics of form, all of them inextricably linked: yellow, pointed hopping – red, full paces – blue, calm strides.” (Schlemmer quoted in Wingler 157).

As Lisa Flanagan points out, the piece provides a “basic illustration of the dimensional tensions of the stage space” activated by the three bodies and their different types and patterns of movement (125). The differences are determined by the color worn by each performer and secondary associations common to it. Like a canary, yellow is sunny and joyful, marking the space in staccato bursts of color. Red is bold and confident, fully inscribing his lines of red on the space. Blue is tranquil and peaceful, like the ongoing flow of a river.

Menu Imposed:

Auster

Steak tartare
Tomatoes
Persimmons

Calle

With cherry halves
And red pepper slivers
Pomegranate seeds
A glass of red wine

Kitchens O'Meara

Formal aesthetics
Felt volume
Characters of form
Earnest investigation

Characters:

Performer A & Performer B
Performer C & Performer D
Performer E & Performer F
Swarm of 20 Performers
Three Performers with Sticks
A Nude or Naked Woman

Melanie Kitchens O'Meara

Bright lights rise.

Performers A & B enter CR. Performer A is dressed in a bold red padded unitard and leads with long proud paces. Performer B is dressed in a pink padded unitard and shadows Performer A, taking two short steps to every one of Performer A's long steps.

Performer A stops on the seventh step and turns with a large, swooping motion to watch

Performer B who taps out a three step shuffle (right, left, right/left, right, left) and then skips merrily in place waving her arms in the air.

Performer A laughs loudly and broadly: "HA HA HA HA HA HA"

Performers A & B X to C where they adjust their walk, stop, shuffle, and laugh to a clockwise pattern that indicates a large square. Each stop, shuffle, and laugh occurs at a corner of the square.

Performer B makes a loud slurping sound irregularly.

Performers A & B repeat the noted action until the end of the act.

Performers C & D enter CL. They are dressed in bold red padded unitards with upside down red mixing bowls on their heads. Performer C's mixing bowl is much larger than Performer D's.

Performers C & D X to C with long proud paces. They stand full front 2' apart in the center of the square made by Performers A & B.

Performers C & D chatter to no one in particular.

Performers C & D crouch *very* slowly to the floor in unison. They sit on the floor and extend their legs straight out in front of them. They take the bowls off their heads and place them in their laps. They lower their torsos to the floor *very* slowly, the bowls on their stomachs. They lie prone on the floor without moving for 2 minutes save for the bowls that rise up and down as the performers inhale and exhale.

Performers C & D raise their torsos *very* slowly, replace the bowls on their heads, and stand up facing the audience full front.

Performers C & D chatter to no one in particular. Then, they crouch *very* slowly to the floor in unison, repeating the noted action until the end of the act.

Swarm of 20 Performers enter from DL. They are dressed in dark red padded unitards and large red mouth-masks that are shaped like a crescent or a smile. In their right hands are sparkling red pom-poms, which they hold straight up in the air.

The Swarm swarms as a mob around the stage in a circular pattern. Occasionally, they stop abruptly and shake their pom-poms furiously. Then, just as abruptly, they stop shaking their pom-poms and swarm again. Occasionally, the swarm swarms offstage for a few beats and then re-enters, swarming, stopping, shaking their pom-poms furiously, and swarming again. They repeat the noted action until the end of the act.

Three Performers with Sticks and dressed in pink padded unitards enter DR. With a mincing gait like that of Performer B, they X from DR to UL passing through the center of the square made by Performers A & B and over the bodies of Performers C & D.

Three Performers with Sticks climb atop a 6' platform UL and, in profile, conduct a round-robin competition of stick fighting.

For 10 minutes:

Performers A & B (in red and pink) walk, stop, shuffle, laugh, and slurp in a square pattern C.

Performers C & D (in red) slowly crouch, lay prone, breathe, and then rise to chatter C. **The Swarm** (in dark red) swarms, stops, and shakes their pom-poms in a circular mob.

Three Performers (in pink) **with Sticks** stick fight mincingly on a raised platform UL.

Performers E & F in bold red padded unitards enter UR and X quickly to DC. They stand full front, pause, and then turn full back to face UC. They hold for 1 minute.

Performers E & F X slowly into the square made by Performers A & B. They sit cross legged, facing full front, Performer E in front of Performer C and Performer F in front of Performers D.

Performer E yells: "Red!"

All performers except **Performer E & F** freeze in place for 1 minute.

Performer E extends her forearms straight out, palms up, and elbows bent at her sides. She raises her hands to her shoulders quickly and then slowly returns them to their initial position. She repeats the noted actions until the end of the act.

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Performer F extends her forearms straight out, palms up, and elbows bent at her sides. She raises her hands to her shoulders slowly and then quickly returns them to their initial position. She repeats the noted actions until the end of the act.

A Nude or Naked Woman enters CR. She wears red high heels and holds a large blue ball in her right hand. In profile and with a slight smile, the nude or naked woman X through the C square bouncing the blue ball. She exits CL.

All performers unfreeze and continue their respective actions.

Lights fade to black on a 10 count.

ACT III WEDNESDAY: WHITE



Narrator of *The Chromatic Diet*: On Wednesday, the white menu consisted of “flounder, potatoes, [and] cottage cheese,” but Sophie “was not satisfied with the yellow color of the potatoes,” substituting them with rice (Auster 67; Calle, *Double Game* 016). Lounging on a bed of white rice, the flounder filet fills the dinner plate. A flattened layer of cottage cheese or “*fromage blanc*” rests lazily on the dessert plate. To complete the meal, Calle added a glass of milk.

Narrator Tracking Calle: According to Christine Macel, Calle “has been developing her somewhat autobiographical factual/fictional narratives in an ongoing way since 1978 . . . redefining the notion of author, and even fiction itself, by juggling with every possible kind of interweave and interference” (17-18). She plays “authorial game[s],” and “like all authors” is a “stealer of stories” (Macel 25, 27). In part, the stories she steals are based on her unpredictable investigation of others. According to Fred Hoffman, Calle’s gumshoe practices “ignite within [the viewer] the hope and dream that we, as individuals, will allow for an element of risk to permeate our lives, and that the element of risk will lead us into experiences which we would not otherwise have or know” (Irmus 4). For Calle, such experiences affect a shifting sense of self, the factual fictions of other people’s lives influencing the identity she creates and expresses through her photographic projects. While her projects seem to celebrate the fluidity and plurality of the postmodern subject, they simultaneously demonstrate the part that surveillance plays in gaining or making knowledge about the self and others. When on display, the projects detect Calle’s undetected viewing, acknowledging both the primacy and partiality of sight in the production of knowledge.

Narrator of Formal Aesthetics: Color is constituted by light rays absorbed by and reflecting off the surface of an object, mixed in space, and interpreted in the retina of the eye. In subtractive or pigment color mixing, the primary colors or hues are red, blue, and yellow, and in additive light ray mixing, the primary hues are red, blue, and green. By mixing two of the primary hues, secondary hues result, such as purple, green, and orange in pigment color mixing, and yellow, magenta, and cyan in additive light ray mixing. Tertiary hues result from combining the primary and secondary hues further. In additive light ray mixing, white is considered a color created by the presence (or mixing of) the full spectrum of light rays while black is considered a non-color resulting from the absence of light. In pigment color mixing, white is a non-color that results from the absence of pigment in or on an object, and hence the full spectrum of light rays is reflected, producing white light. Black is a color that results from combining primary hues, which then neutralizes the capacity of each hue to reflect (pure) light rays. The mix absorbs more so than reflects light. It is for this reason that black clothing is warmer than white or pure colored clothing.

Two color properties in addition to hue are value and intensity. Value refers to the lightness or darkness of a hue or mix of hues. In pigment mixing, yellow is the lightest brightest value, reflecting more light rays (resulting in more white light) than purple, which is the darkest value. In visual compositions, a small bit of yellow can claim as much if not more focus than a large mass of purple because of its reflective capabilities. Intensity refers to the purity or saturation of a hue, which can be neutralized or grayed by adding other hues. For instance, yellow can be neutralized by adding purple, which then affects its value also.

Narrator of The Bauhaus: In the most complex of the Space Dances, the *Gesture Dance*, the three figures wear the same basic costumes and masks, adding wire rimmed

glasses and handle bar moustaches to the masks and short vests atop the puffed out unitards. A chair, stool, and bench are added to the scene and the performers sit or lie on them, executing “geometric’ gestures” indicative of “everyday actions” and sounds. Yellow is “pointed sneezing,” red is “broad laughing,” and blue is “soft listening” (Schlemmer quoted in Goldberg 104). The piece recalls Schlemmer’s *Figural Cabinet I* and *Triadic Ballet* where he draws extensively on cabaret conventions and mechanical and human figurines. The typification of the characters (as intellectuals or upper crust elites) is reminiscent of the social types found in *Figural Cabinet I*, such as the “Better Class Citizen,” the “Questionable One” and “Miss Rosy Red” (Schlemmer quoted in Goldberg 99), and they anticipate Robert Wilson’s use of cultural character types and icons. Further, the piece demonstrates the “balance of opposites,’ of abstract concepts and emotional impulses” Schlemmer attributed to *Triadic Ballet* (Schlemmer quoted in Goldberg 112), and, once again, we find at work in Wilson’s operas. In other words, the piece demonstrates that the most minimal of details (glasses, moustache, vest, gesture, sound) resonates with multiple citations and associations restored through the creative play with elementary forms.

Menu Imposed:

Auster

Flounder

Potatoes

Fromage blanc

Calle

Filet

Rice instead

A layer of cottage cheese

Milk

Kitchens O'Meara

Festival

White pleasure

White diet

Duplicity & whimsy

Characters:

Hostesses in Black

White Woman

Performers C & D from Tuesday

Two Nude and Naked Women

Woman in White Layers

Performers Knife, Fork & Spoon

Five Rice Brothers

Miss Flounder

The entire theatre is a white wonderland, all aspects covered in various textures of white paper and cloth. White lanterns and twinkle lights, snowflakes and icicles hang from the ceiling at various heights. Bodies and body parts sculpted from white rice rest in audience seats here and there, and white noise plays softly in the background.

Hostesses in Black puffy unitards greet the guests with white trays that hold shot glasses of Kahlua and milk and vanilla cupcakes decorated with edible glitter and images of bones, semen, and eggs. Inside each cupcake is a chocolate chip or two.

Inscribed in white on the Hostesses' black unitards are phrases such as:

Thin and Tight	Eager for Instruction	Ready and Willing
Bulimia Saved Me	Always on Display	I Ate Your Eating Disorder
In Proper Discipline	Cooking is Creative	Dis-favor Thinness
Striving for the Real in the World of the Artificial		

Upon reading the last phrase, the on stage lights intensify, revealing a sparkling white ladder placed C.

White Woman poses beneath the ladder. She is dressed in a black unitard and her face is powdered white. Her hair is piled high on her head and powdered inconsistently, with a few ringlets falling on either shoulder. Her body faces DL as she looks over her right shoulder at the audience through two rungs of the ladder.

Long silence. Snow falls. 10 minutes pass.

Performers C & D from Tuesday enter through the house, carrying their red bowls and sporting black mustaches and wire-rim glasses. They X on stage to C and proceed to smear cottage cheese along the limb and torso lines of the black clad White Woman who remains still beneath the ladder.

Performers C & D exit UL.

White lights fade as black lights rise. The latter illuminate the lines of the white ladder and the cottage cheesed body lines and powdered face and hair of the black clad White Woman.

White Woman performs a puppet dance of slow jerky movements. Snow falls. 5 minutes pass.

Two Nude and Naked Women enter UR with a long piece of crisp white material. One woman remains UR while the other X behind the ladder to CL, the material stretched between them. The women swoop the fabric up and down in the air. It makes a whipping, whirring sound.

White Woman continues to dance. Snow falls. 3 minutes pass. White lights intensify. **Woman in White Layers** and layers of fabric enters UL. She holds a large blue ball in her right hand. At a moderate pace, in profile, and with a slight smile, she X on a horizontal line bouncing the blue ball until she exits UR.

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White Woman continues to dance. Snow falls. 1 minute passes.

A huge cow udder descends slowly from the flies above the DS area. Strips of sparkling white fabric and paper streamers hang down from the teats onto the stage.

Performers Knife, Fork & Spoon garbed in white unitards enter from DL, CR, and UC respectively.

Performer Knife X DC with a stiff spine in a slow patient shuffle.

Performer Fork X DC with hitches and jerks in an angular pattern.

Performer Spoon X DC swiftly in swooping motions.

Performers Knife, Fork & Spoon meet and dance together, trading partners in the strips of fabric and paper streamers.

Five Rice Brothers rise from their seats in the house, (re)assemble their parts, and, grabbing the hands of guests, X on stage to join the dance.

Miss Flounder, a guest waylaid by toxicity on her way to the theatre, arrives. Although worn a bit thin by her trials, she flops on stage anyway, eager to join the dancing and merriment.

White Woman dances too, her “traces” leaving a “stained” black “radiance” (from Denzin 195).

Snow falls. Lights fade.

ACT IV
THURSDAY: GREEN



Narrator of *The Chromatic Diet*: On Thursday, Maria-Sophie ate green “cucumbers, broccoli, [and] spinach” (Auster 67). On her dinner plate, Calle adds green basil pasta. The pasta is in the center of the plate surrounded by the spinach, which is surrounded by the broccoli and slices of cucumbers. Every fourth cucumber slice is followed by a broccoli cluster, resulting in a total of twelve cucumber slices and three clusters of broccoli. Calle also added grapes and kiwi to the menu, which she displays on the dessert plate. The kiwi is sliced and layered in rows from the outside of the plate in, and in the center of each kiwi slice is a half of a grape, cut side facing down. To drink, Sophie had a mint cordial.

Narrator Tracking Calle:

On Maria:

Again she took photographs; again she invented life stories for them based on the evidence that was available to her. It was an archeology of the present . . . an

attempt to reconstitute the essence of something from only the barest fragments: a ticket stub, a torn stocking, a bloodstain on the collar of a shirt. (Auster 70)

Narrator of Formal Aesthetics: Color theorists, such as Bang and also those of the Bauhaus School, claim humans have primary responses to certain colors, such as red, blue, yellow, white, and black, again based on corporeal functions and survival. For instance, all bodies are constituted by white bones, red blood and organs, (blue) water, and black waste, which bodies must emit to survive. In addition to bones, blood, water, and the emitting of waste, bodies also require (white) semen and eggs to regenerate, (yellow or white) sunlight or a (red) fire for warmth, and (variously colored) food to survive, the latter necessity suggesting that the primal claim may be qualified by context and culture. Whatever the case, “color’s effect on us is very strong,” and we respond to it in secondary if not primary ways before we respond to other picture elements (Bang 74). Red lips seduce us, yellow lemonade refreshes us, and a green meadow calms us.

Narrator of Theatre of Images: A student of architecture and painting, Robert Wilson formed his theatre company, the Byrd Hoffman School of Byrds, in New York City in 1968. The company gained international recognition and success fairly quickly, producing several plays on main stages in New York and abroad. Wilson named the group in honor of a dance teacher with whom he had studied as a teen. Through the age of seventeen, Wilson had suffered from a debilitating speech impediment, which Byrd Hoffman helped him address through physical training and relaxation techniques.

Hoffman’s influence on Wilson’s work is evident in two related ways. First, Wilson often collaborates with individuals who are differently challenged as regards to their sensory and/or cognitive relationship to the world. For the 1970 piece titled *Deafman Glance*, for instance, Wilson worked with the painter Raymond Andrews who is deaf and without speech. In addition to his “extraordinary sense of colour and spatial composition,” Andrews contributed “a network of images . . . unique to his imagination” (Counsell 182). Counsell describes the assembly of fairytale figures, “silver-painted nudes . . . a man swathed in bandages and walking on crutches,” all weaving “slowly through a forest,” the “tip of a pyramid” visible upstage and, in the foreground, Byrd in a frog costume presiding over a dinner table (182).

In several other projects, Wilson collaborated with Christopher Knowles, a teenager with autism. As with Andrews, Wilson felt that Knowles’s particular relationship to the world offered “an alternative, positive mode” for expressing it, and he included Knowles and the poetry he wrote in many of his pieces (Marranca xii). As Counsell describes, Knowles “used words primarily as material phenomena – sounds or shapes on paper – arranging them to form audial and/or visual patterns” (191). In part, Wilson’s rationale and the on stage effect of Knowles’s poetry appear similar to how and why the Bauhaus Stage Workshop composed language and sound as they did. In addition to using percussive instruments to beat out basic rhythms, the Bauhaus performers often transformed words into “phonetic sound relationships . . .

fragmenting the word into . . . disjointed vowels and consonants” (Moholy-Nagy 52). While Knowles’s language patterns may be more complex than those of the Bauhaus, the point in estranging language for an audience seems similar, namely, to prompt “pleasure in shaping and producing” abstract language “without asking questions about use or uselessness, sense or nonsense, good or bad” (Schlemmer 82).

Menu Imposed:

Auster

*Cucumber
Broccoli
Spinach*

Calle

*Sliced and mixed with...
In clusters
Surrounding basil pasta
Grapes and kiwi
Mint cordial*

Kitchens O’Meara

*Kitchen discipline
& excess
Performing an icon
or how to become a
character out of
(or is it in?) a novel*

Characters:

Holly Homemaker
Holly Homemaker Chorus
Frog

Sounds of chopping and blending fade in and continue throughout the act. A green wash rises slowly to reveal a bare stage.

Holly Homemaker enters UR and X C. She wears a green cocktail dress, sunglasses, and an apron imprinted with the image of the “We Can Do It!” woman. Over her shoulder she carries a large roll of green paper.

A voiceover fades in:

Etiquette texts generally use a “teacher/student model of instruction” in which the student is inscribed as “submissive” and “eager for instruction,” a malleable plastic “ready and willing” to learn discipline from the absent yet stern “female etiquette authority” (Foster-Dixon 80-1). Proper table settings for dinner parties are always covered in etiquette texts as is the reminder that “one is always on display” at such occasions. Nevertheless, the authority tells us, we should “always strive . . . for the real in the world of the artificial” (Foster-Dixon 86). Stabilize the plastic.

The voiceover repeats the message four times, increasing in pace and rising in pitch with each repetition.

Holly Homemaker mouths the message absently (she’s heard it before) as she allows the green paper to unroll from her position C to DS. Holly raises her edge of the

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paper so that the audience can see what is written on it. It appears to be a list scrawled in large black letters. The list reads:

TO DO:
CUC
BROC
SPIN
KI
APRON
BORN T'SHOP
FORCED T'COOK
FSH MINT
BAS PAS
GRN PLASTIC UT
WHIS
PIC IN HEAD
RISK CITE
AUTO EXPRESS

Holly Homemaker pulls the list toward her, tossing it bit by bit over her shoulder. At the end of the list, Holly finds herself buried in a large pile of green TO DO's.

The stage is still for 2 minutes.

Holly Homemaker Chorus of twelve enters UL. They are dressed exactly like Holly Homemaker and each has an over-, under-, or regular size kitchen appliance constructed of cardboard in three-dimensions and meticulously detailed.

The first Holly carries a regular size toaster.
The second rolls in a huge double-stacked oven.
The third lugs a gigantic mixer.
The fourth and fifth carry tiny refrigerators.
The sixth pushes a large coffee maker.
The seventh holds a regular size electric skillet.
The eighth displays a miniature sink.
The ninth pulls a huge toaster by a rope.
The tenth carries a tiny oven.
The eleventh displays a regular size mixer.
And the twelfth pushes an oversized sink

Holly Homemaker Chorus arranges their items in a circle around Holly buried in her list of green TO DO's. They stand with their backs to Holly, each staring at their appliance and striking a static pose appropriate to using it.

A Member of the Holly Homemaker Chorus occasionally looks at another member and shouts in a surprised voice: "Hey! That's Me!" Then, she resumes her pose. 5 minutes pass.

Suddenly, a sprinkle of rain falls from the flies dampening the chorus and leaving small puddles on the floor of the stage. Just as suddenly, the rain stops followed by a hard bright light.

Holly Homemaker Chorus of poses wilts as if overcome by sweaty heat.

One by one, **the Holly Homemaker Chorus** members break from their pose, X C, tear a piece from the green TO DO list, return to their appliance, and make a little hand fan.

Holly Homemaker Chorus waves their fans and, in a round, sings happily:

walk. walk. walk. *walk. walk. walk. walk. walk. walk.* walk. walk.
drip,drip,drip. drip,drip,drip. drip,drip,drip. drip,drip,drip. drip,drip,drip.
sloshsloshsloshsloshsloshsloshslosh
clickclickclick. clickclickclick. clickclickclick
hmm

walk. walk. walk. *walk. walk. walk. walk. walk. walk. walk.* walk.
drip. drip. drip. drip. drip. drip. drip. drip. drip. drip.
drip.
sloshsloshsloshsloshsloshsloshslosh
clickclickclick. clickclickclick. clickclickclick. clickclickclick.
hmmMzmmMzmmMzmmMzmmMzmmMzmmMzmmMzmmMzmmMzmmMzmmMz

walk. walk. walk. *walk. walk. walk. walk. walk. walk.* walk.
sloshsloshsloshsloshsloshsloshslosh
click (dripdrip), click (dripdrip), click (dripdrip), click (dripdrip)
HMM

Holly Homemaker rises slowly from her pile of green TO DO's transformed into a Holly Homemaker Machine. The body of the machine is a large green sandwich board depicting the front and back torso of the "We Can Do It!" woman. One arm is Slinky-like and the other a combination whisk, spoon, and spatula. A gigantic green glowing Cyclops eye replaces the sunglasses, and atop the machine's head is a working fan.

Holly Homemaker Machine rocks back and forth as the chorus continues to sing.

Frog enters UL and hops C to the Holly Homemaker Machine. Frog kisses the machine and tries to give it an apple. The machine is unable to grasp it, however, and so Frog puts the apple in the mouth of the machine.

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Frog takes the machine by its whisk, spoon, and spatula, and the pair exit UC – Frog hopping and the machine rocking and dragging the green TO DO list after them.

Holly Homemaker Chorus continues to sing softly. Some members exit here and there while others unhinge, flatten, and fold the cardboard appliances into easily portable pieces. Then they exit too.

Throughout the exit, lights fade slowly to black.

ACT V
FRIDAY: YELLOW



Narrator of *The Chromatic Diet*: “Since no color was prescribed for Friday, [Calle] chose yellow” (Calle, *Double Game* 018). An “afghan omelette” rests on the dinner plate topped by six skinned and cooked potatoes, which are arranged in the shape of a flower. On the dessert plate is a “Young Girl’s Dream,” which consists of a banana and two small scoops of mango ice cream displayed to resemble a phallus (Calle, *Double Game* 018). Calle drank a pschitt fizzy lemon drink.

Narrator Tracking Calle: In *Leviathan*, Auster’s summation of Maria’s practice as “an archeology of the present” cites details from Calle’s project, *The Hotel*. For this

experiment, Calle secured a job as a chambermaid for three weeks in a hotel in Venice, Italy. While the guests were out exploring the city, Calle would enter their hotel rooms to tidy up and rummage through their personal belongings. She kept a detailed log of each guest's belongings, where they were kept in the room, and where they were placed from night to night. She also photographed the belongings, sometimes rearranging items so as to realize certain composition and storytelling effects. The completed piece consists of photographs, notes, and invented stories regarding the guests' personalities as based on the items Calle found.

As an "archeology of the present," Calle's and Maria's method infers the postmodern irony I mentioned above; namely, the generative potential of constantly inventing subjects (including one's own) based on chance finds of partial evidence. In postmodern and post-structural terms, Maria-Sophie's method is not errant as much as it highlights the reality of how personal et al., stories and identities are made. That is, they are incomplete, shifting, and partial as their "factual" elements are perceived and expressed differently by different viewers or tellers. "A torn stocking" can mean many things as can a meal of all white food. In a similar vein, Sophie's gumshoe tactics recall and comment on the empirical tradition of investigating unknown territories (lands, cultures, resources) so as to capture observable reality and thereby lay claim to knowledge and power. In so far as Calle's enactment of this tradition – e.g., her archeology of the present – is slapdash, inconsistent, and amateurish, it follows that her aim is less one of appropriation and more one of commentary regarding the slapdash and inconsistent nature of all empirical truth claims, in her case, as made through the photographic I/eye of the camera.

Narrator of Formal Aesthetics: Texture refers to the surface quality or "feel" of an object, which we experience and express in multisensory terms. Whether we see, hear, or touch a texture, it may range from soft to hard, smooth to rough, slick to grainy, shiny to dull. Again, our primary responses run along survival lines: we are more likely to feel safe in calm rather than rough waters. Since we have no teeth as babies, we require soft smooth foods, such as pureed carrots. However, once we gain our pearly whites, we may find such foods not only unnecessary but unappealing, associating them with the soft and dependent bodies of babies.

Narrator of Theatre of Images: Byrd Hoffman also influenced Wilson as regards to how art and creative processes can be therapeutic, an understanding Wilson enacts in ways that connect his work to concepts and practices of surrealism. Specifically, Wilson believes that we perceive and process the world through interdependent exterior and interior screens. Our exterior screen is a place of socially shared associations and meanings, and our interior screen is a site where our personal experiences, associations, and imagination reign (Counsell 180). Due to the bombardment of commercial imagery through the exterior screen, Wilson feels "more and more people are turning into themselves" as "a means of survival" (quoted in Counsell 180). Like the surrealists, then, Wilson attempts to reunite the

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exterior and interior screens, using the social space of the theatre to stage socially shared imagery in ways that “elude fixed, given meanings and public logics” (Counsell 180). As a result, the viewer is encouraged to call on her inner screen to experience or make sense of the imagery, associating the two screens without surrendering to the ideological intentions of exterior screen imagery.

In addition to content choices, Wilson realizes his aims by using iconic figures, objects, and places. Space ships, dinosaurs, a train, cowboys and Indians, women with babies, an elderly couple, Stalin, Lincoln, Einstein, and Freud, Hamlet, Pegasus, and Alice’s white rabbit, a star studded sky, beach, cave, forest, drawing room, and housing project are but a few of the icons he has integrated in his pieces. Likewise, Wilson uses “linguistic fragments” drawn from commercials, films, literary works, overheard conversations, and remembered dreams (Counsell 192).

Menu Imposed:

Auster

*No color
prescribed*

Calle

*Afghan Omelette
A Potato Flower
Young Girl's Dream
Pschitt fizzy lemon drink*

Kitchens O'Meara

*External Screen
Internal Screen
Locating I-eye*

Characters:

Old Woman
Hunter
Two Gumshoes
Young Girl
Archeologist of the Present

A dim amber wash fades in to reveal the faint outlines of five large frames. The frames are of different sizes and positioned at different heights, widths, and depths on stage. The frames are empty. The amber wash fades slowly to black.

Frame One

Bright light rises within a frame hung high just UL of C. Inside the frame is a bright yellow piñata shaped like a canary. Different colored streamers hang from the piñata, stirred by a gentle breeze. Birds chirp. After a half minute, the lights fade to black.

Frame Two

Rosy warm lights rise within a frame placed DR on the floor. Inside the frame is an **Old Woman** wrapped in a worn yellow afghan sitting on a stump holding a plate of cheesecake. There is a lit birthday candle in the cheesecake, and the Old Woman is smiling.

Frame One fades in. The two frames hold for a half minute. Frame One fades out, followed slowly by Frame Two.

Frame Three

Amber lights rise within a frame placed 5' above the stage in the UR area. The view is foggy although one can make out a **Hunter** standing on the upper rung of a ladder. The Hunter is reaching for and picking bananas located in the darkness outside the frame. The Hunter puts the bananas in a sack strapped to his back although he stops to eat a few too, dropping the peels to the floor in the darkness outside the frame.

From Frame One comes the sound of chirping birds. Then silence, save for the plop of a banana peel or two on the floor. Lights dim but do not go out completely in Frame Three as Frame Four takes focus.

Frame Four

A crackly yellowed B&W film fades in to indicate Frame Four, which is positioned DL of C. The film shows the classic 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 countdown and bulls-eye before it cuts to an image of **Two Gumshoes** in trench coats standing in front of a chalkboard in an old worn office. The Gumshoes are smoking cigarettes and, so it appears, trying to figure out the mystery of a phrase written on the chalkboard. It reads, "Do not play with food." The phrase is surrounded by an entangled network of lines, photographs, and scrawled notes that the Gumshoes add to, delete, and switch around nervously. Occasionally, one of the Gumshoes erases "not" in the key phrase, stands back to look at the new phrase, and then re-instates the "not."

Frame Three lights rise to full to show the Hunter eating an entire banana *very* slowly. As the Hunter drops the peel to the floor, lights bump to black in Frame Three and dim to low in Frame Four.

Frame Five

Rosy lights rise within a frame placed C-CR. The frame is filled with a cobbled-together yellow lemonade stand. Inside the stand is a **Young Girl** in a yellow tutu juggling potatoes and singing "You Are My Sunshine" a little off tune.

Once Frame Five is established, Frame Four rises to full and the two frames interplay for a while, after which Frame One rises to full. Frame Four fades out and Frame Five dims. At this point, then, the canary piñata is featured and the girl in the lemonade stand claims a secondary focus.

Also AT THIS POINT, before the Archeologist of the Present appears, it is up to the reader to decide which frames should be featured in what sort of sequence. Once you

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have orchestrated the frames and sequence in your mind's eye or, if you prefer, on a scrap of paper, you may continue reading. . . .

Once the reader has decided the frames and sequence she or he would like to feature, the **Archeologist of the Present** has indeed shown up!

ACT VI
SATURDAY: PINK



Narrator of *The Chromatic Diet*: For Saturday, Calle chose pink. In the center of the dinner plate is taramasalata, a dip made from fish roe. The taramasalata is surrounded by several layers of pink ham cut in thick slices. For dessert are two large scoops of strawberry ice cream and to drink, a rose wine from Provence.

Narrator Tracking Calle: Calle's investigative method finds a parallel in Norman Denzin's notion of the ethnographer as a private eye, a concept that helps me further understand Calle's practices as a type of performance research. In *Interpretive Ethnography*, Denzin argues for a reflexive ethnographer who uses her many senses to research and express her ethnographic findings in multiple voiced ways. Denzin

proposes “an ethnographic epistemology that goes beyond vision and mimesis” to “an evocative epistemology that performs” (xvii). He provides the ethnographer with several models of “experiential texts,” such as the detective novel, to help the ethnographer create performative ethnographies (xx). Denzin writes:

The postmodern detective story is about the death of the last frontier and what we do about this death: There is no there to go to anymore. We are left, then, with tiny moral tales. These tales work outward from the local to the global, entangling the global in the local dealings that produce the violence that surrounds us everywhere. . . . Local violence is always personal and political, moral and social. . . . [It] is about memory and its loss, its destruction, and the attempts to erase the past and control the future. . . . Here, inside time, the postmodern detective writers attempt to restore this lost memory, showing that it can never be erased because its traces always leave a stained white radiance. (195)

Denzin’s private eye treats the culture she is studying as though it is a puzzle she is attempting to solve. Rather than prefabricated pieces that fit together nicely, the puzzle pieces the private eye ethnographer discovers derive from several puzzles, inconsistent in subject matter, time, space, and scale. For the private eye, “nothing is absolute” (166). Rather, what she finds is a mixture of fact and fiction told from multiple perspectives in diverse periods. To evoke the cultural puzzle in the research text and involve the reader in the co-production of it, Denzin recommends that the private eye ethnographer allow the inevitable contradictions, ambiguities, inconsistencies, and gaps to be a part of the text, thereby prompting the reader to participate in piecing the puzzle together. In a similar manner, Calle works to discover the complexity of cultural puzzles, enlisting the viewer in her activities of tracking, discovering and, if not solving, speculating as to the meanings of the mystery she finds.

Narrator of Formal Aesthetics: In composing lines, shapes, colors, and textures on the page or stage, the element of space arises. Spatial considerations include the amount of space an element claims, its placement and recurrence or not within the spatial frame, and its relationship to other elements, for example in terms of distance. Such considerations result in fundamental principles and properties of composition. The key principle is contrast or the differences between things in space. “Contrast enables us to see” and respond to the world in ways that help us survive and, also, make sense of and express the world (Bang 80). In the space of a rocky riverbed, the contrast between a predominance of sharp rocks and a few smooth stones help us determine a safe passage across the river. This simple example illustrates additional composition principles and properties, such as those of harmony and unity and variety. In this case, an analogous harmony of recurring stones unifies the composition and also allows for variety – e.g., in the placement, color value and intensity, and texture of the rocks and stones. Notably, while the smooth stones claim less space than do the sharp rocks, they also draw our focus not only for survival

reasons, but because they provide the main contrast in the composition. They are the anomaly that sticks out.

Narrator of Theatre of Images: Informed by his training in the visual arts, his collaboration with diverse artists, and his aims of creating persuasive sur-realities, Wilson crafts formal elements with such meticulous and elaborate care that his work has been aligned with that of Richard Wagner and his all encompassing *Gesamtkunstwerk* or “total work” of art. Like Wagner, Wilson creates spectacular illusions. The result, according to Colin Counsell, is an unintentional message that perpetuates a national (fast becoming global) mythos. Calling on Debord’s essay, “Society of the Spectacle,” Counsell claims that Wilson’s productions uphold the ideology of late consumer capitalism, alienating the subject from reality (i.e., from meaning, for Counsell) by turning all representations into commodities that constantly shift in meaning given the whims of the individual producer and consumer. In short, Wilson’s theatre of images is no better than a mall where an accumulation of product imagery is made available for our personalized consumption of it (Counsell 204-205). However, in his draw on Debord, Counsell fails to mention Debord’s notion that spectacle can answer spectacle, and I believe Wilson does just that by how he composes his imagery.

Just as Calle acknowledges and queries her voyeuristic practices or, more broadly, the primacy and partiality of sight, so too does Wilson by calling attention to the act of seeing and making it difficult. First, many of his pieces test his audience’s endurance, running longer than the conventional two hour limit, sometimes twelve hours and even days. Second, unlike the commercial pitch of imagery, Wilson does not display his imagery in clear, coherent packaging. The accumulation of diverse imagery in montage and collage frames requires viewers to choose what to focus on and when, understanding (or learning over the course of the performance) that they will not have the opportunity to rewind, select, and see again. Hence, the partiality of sight is experienced by the viewer. Further, once a viewer selects a focus, however temporary, deciphering the content is not immediate due to the surprising more so than relevant juxtaposition of imagery in the frame. Third, Wilson alters norms of visual perspective constantly, thereby activating our eyes and challenging how we see. In *The King of Spain*, for instance, the gigantic legs of a mechanical cat walked across the stage, minimizing for a moment the scale of the performers and theatrical space. In *Einstein on the Beach*, a large train crossed the stage in one scene and, in another, reappeared significantly smaller. While, in realistic terms, the alteration captured how a moving object appears smaller as it recedes in space over time, it also highlighted the fact that the object does not become smaller at all; it is an illusion, an accident of seeing in real life and in realistic terms. Fourth, comparable to the operations of a miniature, Wilson often isolates an object, body part or movement, creating the effect of a close up as focus is drawn to a single detail on stage, such as a moving finger or blinking eye. To a similar effect, frozen tableaux and slow motion movement encourage the audience to slow down too and concentrate on the details.

Menu Imposed:

Auster
No color
prescribed

Calle
Ham
Taramasalata
Strawberry ice cream
Rose wine from Provence

Kitchens O'Meara
Close up
Spectacle
answers
spectacle

Characters:

Archeologist of the Present
Holly Homemaker Machine
Young Girl in Yellow Tutu
Ham Hoc
Hunter
Woman in Overalls

A white spotlight rises on a pink piggy bank at C.

A distant-sounding voiceover fades in:

The first aerial photography was taken by Nadar (Gaspard-Felix Tournachon) in 1856. He went up in a hot air balloon he called “The Giant” and took photographs of the landscape from above. The “birds-eye view of nature . . . was an extreme and rare curiosity” at this time in history (Hughes 14).

A few minutes pass. Then, one by one, pink spotlights bump up to dot the stage.

Archeologist of the Present enters UL. Attached to a string around her neck is a large red cardboard camera that she uses variously as a mask, spyglass, and camera. She moves from pink spot to pink spot, investigating each thoroughly.

Holly Homemaker Machine follows her, gumshoeing her every move from the shadows just outside the spots of light.

Archeologist of the Present reports her findings with a mysterious: “Fishy.”

Young Girl in Yellow Tutu enters UR and dances a series of moving pirouettes from UR to DL where she exits. She re-appears UR and repeats the action again and again until otherwise noted.

Archeologist of the Present and **Holly Homemaker Machine** eventually exit DL.

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Ham Hock, a large pink . . . well . . . ham hock, enters UR and runs across the stage to exit UL.

Archeologist of the Present enters UR at a run and exits UL, apparently chasing Ham Hock.

Holly Homemaker Machine follows as best it can.

The chase continues, back and forth across the horizontal lines of the stage and progressively moving downstage.

Ham Hock stalls DR, out of breath and gasping: "Try this! Try this!"

Snow (tinted pink by the lights) begins to fall on Ham Hock.

Archeologist of the Present arrives and investigates the ham in the show, I mean snow, with her spyglass.

Holly Homemaker Machine pants in. She looks at the pair and then says to Ham Hock: "Is she mad, or does she joke?"

Archeologist of the Present turns from investigating the ham to training her spyglass on the Holly Homemaker Machine and her Cyclops eye. The two eyes (one red and one green) confront each other and are about to tangle when a loud "HAHA HAHA HAHA" interrupts them.

Hunter enters UC laughing and strides DC – Young Girl in Yellow Tutu barely rescuing the little piggy C from the crush of his willful stride. DC, Hunter removes the sack from his back and opens it, taking out five large glass jars. As he places the jars in a row across the DC line, he reads their labels out loud.

Hunter: "Ear. Mouth. Intestine. Heart. Toe."

Hunter perches atop one of the jars, removes his right shoe, and plays the "This Little Piggy" game with his toes. Each time he completes the rhyme ("Whee whee whee all the way home"), he picks up and shakes one of the jars violently.

Ham Hock, Holly Homemaker Machine, Archeologist of the Present, and Young Girl in Yellow Tutu (piggy bank snuggled safely beneath her arm) watch Hunter dumbfounded.

[There is an eight year intermission.]

Hunter tires of his little game, puts on his shoe, stands up, shakes out a few errant banana peels from his sack, puts the jar with the toe in the sack, strides UC, and exits.

Ham Hock, Holly Homemaker Machine, Archeologist of the Present, and Young Girl in Yellow Tutu applaud for 2 minutes, facing full front and without emotion.

Afterwards, they look long and hard at the remaining jars, then at each other, and then back at the jars.

Ham Hock whispers: “It’s kind of like *The Wizard of Oz*, isn’t it? Who’s gonna get which part and all that?”

The others nod in agreement. Long thoughtful pause.

Woman in Overalls enters DL with a large orange watering can. She X to the jars and stands looking at them with the others. Then, she begins to water the jars.

Pause.

Holly Homemaker Machine removes her green mask with its Cyclops eye and fan and places it carefully among the jars.

Young Girl in Yellow Tutu slips off her yellow net skirt and rings it round one of the jars.

Archeologist of the Present gently places her red cardboard camera in the growing nest of items.

Ham Hock (being a ham hock) stands to the side a little ashamed she or he has nothing to add.

Young Girl in Yellow Tutu gives him or her the little pink piggy bank, which Ham Hock nestles safely in with the other bits and pieces.

Woman in Overalls, having completed her watering, sets her orange can amidst the items too.

A gentle snow begins to fall on the ear and the mouth and the intestine and the heart; a snow begins to fall on the green and the yellow, on the red, pink and orange remnants of the act. And as the snow falls, petals of carnations and roses fall too, and in his frame in the distance, the canary bird sings.

ACT VII
SUNDAY:



Narrator of *The Chromatic Diet*: On Sunday, Sophie decided to have dinner guests and (re)serve all the prior meals of the week: orange, red, white, green, yellow, and pink. She assigned each guest a color and meal by having them draw lots. In her caption for this photograph, Sophie admits, “personally, I preferred not to eat; novels are all very well but not necessarily so very delectable if you live them to the letter” (*Double Game* 021). On the center of the black tablecloth is a circle of loose pink, white, and red carnations and yellow and red roses. Extending from the circle of flowers in the direction of the matching place settings are the napkins. From the viewer’s perspective, the orange place setting rests in the top left corner with the dessert plate of cantaloupe frowning at the camera. In clockwise order, the pink, yellow, red, white, and green place settings follow. The settings have shifted slightly in order to fit all the items on the table. The napkins have moved toward the center of the table, and the dessert plates sit next to the knives rather than above them.

The photograph for Sunday is shot at a closer distance than was the case in the prior photographs, or it has been enlarged so as to provide a closer view of the details. Further, it appears that Calle is shooting and serving the exact same meals she shot and ate (or not) during the week. The shrimp are the same size and shape, the ribbed texture of the fish filet is exactly the same, the broccoli clusters and cuts of the cucumbers are identical, the cut and hue of the ham match, and the ice creams have melted a bit in the Sunday photograph. Close inspection suggests then that Sophie did

not eat the meals during the week, but simply reused them for the Sunday shot. Or did she? Since she had photographs of each meal, she might have copied their details meticulously, and the melted ice cream could be due to hot lights or late guests. Whatever the case, a mystery arises and many story possibilities ensue.

Narrator Tracking Calle: A “postmodern detective,” the private eye ethnographer acknowledges her personal and/as political investment in the mystery she undertakes, locating “the ‘other’” in herself, rather than assuming an objective “investigative gaze” (Denzin 165, 174, 193). In many cases, she becomes the central subject of the work, discovering the part she played in “stir[ring] up the world” and how it changed her (Denzin 165). Similarly, in her projects, Calle constantly highlights why she is interested in the investigation, calling attention to the part she and her camera play in detecting others. Thereby, she creates an auto-ethnography that encourages her reader and viewer to do the same.

Narrator of Formal Aesthetics: Formal aesthetics articulates a concern for the basic elements of visual composition and, as Molly Bang, the Bauhaus, and Wilson teach us, such a concern does not equate necessarily to a disposition of formalism where the elements are ripped from their contexts, stripped of their citation of prior genres and styles, and dismissive toward the associations we might make in response to them. In formalism, these perspectives are considered “aesthetically irrelevant” in the analysis of the autonomous art object (Barrett 124). Given the currency of politically conscious and instrumental art in our times, there is little wonder why formalism has fallen on hard times. Nonetheless, we should acknowledge that while all art can be analyzed in terms of form, an emphasis on the basic elements does indeed abstract the work, removing it from the particularities of everyday life. In his “Foreword” to Molly Bang’s *Picture This*, Rudolf Arnheim helps us understand the limitations and possibilities of abstraction:

. . . the word *abstract* has a double meaning. It repels because it deprives us of the subject matter we consider indispensable for entertainment and instruction. By the same token, however, abstraction also leads us beyond the daily distractions, the practical particulars, to the elements from which they all derive. It adopts an idiom that has shaped our industrial revolution, the sober patterns of our engines, the geometrical simplicity of our most comforting furniture. Therefore there was protest but also exhilaration when, around 1910, the painter Wassily Kandinsky [a Bauhaus teacher] reduced his pictures of human experience to pure shapes and colors. Ever since, many good artists have shown us that we can find our lives reflected with new immediacy in their “abstractions.” (Arnheim ix; emphases in original)

Narrator of Theatre of Images: Like Schlemmer and also Calle, Wilson explores the relationship between bodies, objects, and/in space so as to experiment with and address contemporary issues of perception, sight, and seeing. While Wilson’s aesthetic

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is one of accumulation rather than elimination, as is the case with the Bauhaus, the elements of visual form discipline and also resonate with excess. In Wilson's case, it is an excess of visual imagery, visual trickery, and the unseen associations he encourages his audiences to create.

Menu Imposed:

Auster
*No color
prescribed*

Calle
*Orange, Red, White,
Green, Yellow, Pink
& Black*

Kitchens O'Meara
*Blue
Accident*

Characters:

Melanie

A soft white light rises C to reveal the same remnants from the prior Act, enlarged and repositioned C. There are the jars with the ear and mouth and intestines and heart, the green Cyclops eye and fan, the yellow tutu and banana peels, the pink piggy bank and orange watering can, and my red mask, spyglass, and camera. It's a very pretty picture (if I do say so myself) and well composed. DR, in another soft light, stands a microphone on a stand.

There's some silence.

Then, from DL, a large blue ball rolls on stage, a soft wash of light picking up on its movement. The ball stops rolling just left of DC and waits.

Melanie enters DR and X to the ball. She picks it up, X C, and places it carefully among the other items. Then, she X to the microphone and speaks:

Sophie Calle's *The Chromatic Diet* is displayed on the walls of an art gallery. People attend the gallery anxious to view the week of monochromatic meals.

Meg laughs aloud when Thursday arrives, recalling her son who "likes white food best" and bolts at anything green.

Midge remembers cornfields, Joan her green pond, and Brian Joan's lips on Friday, Thursday, and Tuesday respectively.

Paul is confused by Wednesday while Hannah gives thanks for the black blanket of night.

Midge wanders and worries about her eating disorder while Joe recalls reading that the quickest way to lose a few pounds is to wear one color. He wonders if green might be better than red.

On Saturday, Marion rethinks the pink suit she thought she might buy and pregnant Diane daydreams of babies.

As early as Monday, Mardi confirms that orange is by far her most favorite color while, already bored beyond all repair, Todd tells Lucy a knock knock joke. (“Orange you glad I didn’t repeat it?”)

On Tuesday, Dorothy blushes and Matt pines.

Dee longs for grandma’s jell-o on Thursday and Bootsie a peach when Monday and Saturday merge in her mind.

Ruby thinks about work and Dan his dog and Sarah about very little at all.

Bob stands in front of Tuesday dreaming of football while Sandra does likewise in front of Thursday.

Luke groans, “Oh, brother, another phallus!” on Friday while little Luke (his hand in his dad’s) wonders just what a “young girl’s dream” might be.

Renato’s stomach grumbles, and Claire takes a sip from the fountain, while Fran cools her heels on the park bench outside.

All highly colored and not, so they say, part of the real or essential element of some thing.



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