

Body of Architecture/Architecture of Body *-REFLECTION*

Takahiro Yamamoto

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I conceived this piece sometime in November, 2011. I was interested in looking at human body as a moving architecture, occupying a space and time while highlighting a negative space around it. In contrast to architecture, my body is mobile. The occupation of the space and time tends to be temporal. The concept of occupation can be seen from a social standpoint. A private house is "occupied" even when there is nobody in there. It is a socially constructed (legally protected, for that matter) space. When you pay for parking, you are essentially paying for the space and time. Again, this is connected to the idea of private space.

This piece is directly influenced by performance works from Tino Sehgal (*Instead of allowing something to rise up to your face dancing bruce and dan and other things* in 2000), Dan Graham (*Roll* in 1970) and Bruce Nauman (*Wall/Floor Positions* in 1968). These three precedents have provided me an aesthetic and conceptual inspiration.

My notebook (dated 11/30/11) says; "It is clear that my focus is on the spatial relationship between the wall, the floor and the body. (Two of which are stationary in nature. This means my body is the agent for change.)"

As a part of Yellow Fish // Epic Durational Performance Festival curated by Alice Gosti, I proposed to perform this piece in response to the invitation. Hedreen Gallery is located as a section of Lee Center for the Arts Complex at Seattle University. The half of the gallery is facing the street (12th Avenue in Capital Hill) with glass windows. The white wall is situated about 15-foot away from the glass windows. Because I performed on the last day of the festival, the space was filled with documentations, residuals, traces, materials, sculptural objects, and props from past performances by ten other Seattle-based artists and dancers.

I decided to place my body along the rolling garage door, which is located in front of the reception desk and next to the double-door entrance. The width of the garage door was about the same length as my height (5' 5"). This location in the space included another element to the piece: an intervention of the space as people came into the gallery. It was also the most uncluttered area in the space. The closing reception of the festival ran from 1:30pm – 7:30pm. I executed three sets of one-hour performance (1-2pm, 3-4pm, 5-6pm).



In between performances, I talked to other dancers like Alice Gosti and Ryan Law as well as photographers like Bruce Clayton Tom, receiving their thoughts and feedback as well as reflecting my conceptual concerns. What I realized through conversation is that the focal point of the piece is the invitation for the viewers to engage in the peripheral vision. This performance proposes an alternative modality of performance. After seeing it for about 1 minute, everything is revealed: a male body rolling across the floor from one point to another. To accentuate the beginning and the end of a lap, the body rises up to standing for a few seconds. The performance resides in the continuous repetition of this simple act.

The piece does not demand the viewers to engage in for a long time. It rather allows them to take their eyes off, roam around, talk with others, and ignore it after a while. Yet, the body continuously rolls across the floor without attention. Viewers cannot help but acknowledge the fact that there is a human body performing even when they are not directly looking at it. This peripheral experience is what this work offers to the viewers. Even people, who walk along the street outside, notices a body, from the half-open garage door, unexpectedly laying down on the ground. Their peripheral experience is instant. The pedestrians usually move on without stopping, yet they become unsolicited audience of that moment. We usually take all the architectural elements in our lives for granted every time we walk pass them. Yet, when there is a human being standing on the side street, we notice it. Maybe, what I'm talking about is related to human instinct: our animalistic nature to protect ourselves.

In order to engage with the work for an hour (endurance was not really a focus of the work), I complicate the rolling with variation of speed as well as various methods of embodying

each speed. I categorize the speed from 0 – 10 (0 being the seeming stillness and 10 being the fastest roll). For each lap from the reception desk to the garage door, I incorporate all eleven levels of speed in my body, but in a random order. This act of randomizing the order often times fails me to include all eleven levels. If so, I include the left-over speed levels in the next lap, which complicates the task even more. I am interested in this state of thinking and figuring out in relationship to the physical movement. The various texture that my body exposes is a result of connecting the gap between the thinking and embodying.

Body of *Architecture/Architecture* of Body lacks entertainment value on the surface. It rather solicits a peripheral attention from the viewers, telling them that a body exists and occupies a space and time, just like an architectural building. The complicated textures of movements that the performing body expresses allow the patient and curious viewers to engage in the subtlety in its embodiment. What distinguishes this from an architectural object, besides the fact that it is mobile and alive, is that the piece heavily depends on the viewers' engagement of peripheral experience.



image by courtesy of Bruce Tom from the performance *Body of Architecture/Architecture of Body* at Hedreen Gallery in Seattle, WA.