

Untitled installation, 1976. Courtesy Framartstudio, Napoli.

Dennis Oppenheim

Untitled installation - exhibition, September 1975 at The Kitchen, New York.

Components:

Table made up of 10 sections 2'x6' to total length of 60'.

Figures at each end:

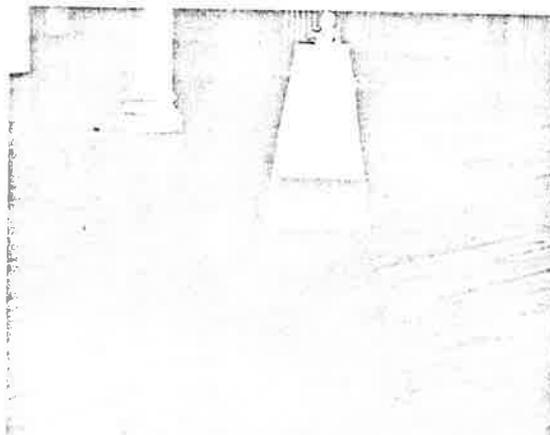
1 Black (Negroid)

1 White (Caucasian)

Stereo sound system with two mounted microphones.

Each figure is equipped with a speaker system located inside the head, plus an exterior control devise that activates the lower jaw in perfect lip sync to external voice input. Both units are attached to a stereo system, which allows the figures to carry on a dialogue. The following transcript is 1 1/2 hours long — and is recorded with intermittent primitive drum music. The Black side (Negroid) uses a "Jive" or black street dialect, while the White (Caucasian) uses a standard Americanese dialect. Using the stereo control knobs these dialects slowly move down the table from one figure to the other.

Black side. Transcript of stereo sound track
 It's gonna take a while for this to happen... so I want
 ya to rest easy, want ya to re-lax... and listen
 to my voice... let me hear what ya sound like...
 I want you to repeat these sentences after me...
 «I've been watchin you for a long time... seein' your
 thoughts burn up inside up inside your head...
 turning into cinders before there's time for anyone
 to see or hear... But I can hear you now, I can see
 through those charred thoughts to know where you
 want to be...
 Man, the nectar of those ideas never come out as
 words... no voice can carry it... language breaks
 into a storm of particles... you've been makin' your
 thoughts live in alien forms, baby... places they don't
 belong... never did. Man,
 you'll get those thoughts through to the right place.
 That's what I want, now let's try this... instead of you
 talkin' to the world, I'm gonna try and say them



White side. Transcript from stereo sound track.
 «I've been watchen you for a long time... seein' your
 thoughts burn up inside your head... turning into
 cinders before there's time for anyone to see or hear...
 But I can hear you now, I can see through those
 charred thoughts to know where you want to be...
 Man, the nectar of those ideas never come out as
 words... no voice can carry it language breaks into a
 storm of particles... you've been makin' your thoughts
 live in alien forms, baby... places they don't belong...
 never did. Man. I'll get those thoughts through to the
 right place.
 there there
 there there
 You've always known ya have to go through
 someone else
 where you want them... when during their course they
 ignite into a slow burn
 you'll get those thoughts through to the right place.

Table made up of 10 sections 2'x6' to total length of 60'.
Figures at each end:
1 Black (Negroid)
1 White (Caucasian)

allows the figures to carry in a dialogue. The following transcript is
1 1/2 hours long — and is recorded with intermittent primitive drum music.
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White (Caucasian) uses a standard Americanese dialect. Using the stereo
control knobs these dialects slowly move down the table from one figure to
the other.

Black side. Transcript of stereo sound track
It's gonna take a while for this to happen... so I want
ya to rest easy, want ya to re-lax... and listen
to my voice... let me hear what ya sound like...
I want you to repeat these sentences after me...
«I've been watchin you for a long time... seein' your
thoughts burn up inside up inside your head...
turning into cinders before there's time for anyone
to see or hear... But I can hear you now, I can see
through those charred thoughts to know where you
want to be...
Man, the nectar of those ideas never come out as
words... no voice can carry it... language breaks
into a storm of particles... you've been makin' your
thoughts live in alien forms, baby... places they don't
belong... never did. Man.
I'll get those thoughts through to the right place.
That's cool baby, now let's try this... Instead of you
repeatin' the words... I'm gonna try and say them
for you... I'm gonna twist down there into you... You-ll
see my words slowly corkscrew from here to
from here to from here to from here to
...o.k. baby, let's try some more...
You've always known it man...
...weil it's true... your thoughts don't objectify in
things... baby, they form themselves in other...
knowin your thoughts don't land
...and come down as ashes... baby you shootin
at the wrong target... it's a straight line now, man,
from me to
But, do you know, do you know you gotta send
yourself... not just pieces... everythings gotta go...
has to dis-place... but lookit, it's a strip, baby...
a channel...
well baby... ya gotta believe in what you're throwin...
cause what you're doin is throwin yourself
...for mine...
...bring you so far down this line that you can
turn around and see your body... see it as something
dead... something vacant...
And when you're ready baby... I want you to
take it... I want to let my words form your lips.

Black End
I'm getting into ya... I'm getting in real deep... now
I want you to give me what's left of you, I want you to
send it down... everything... you got... and I'll
destroy it. It'll just evaporate inside me, it'll just ease
outta my system and vanish... it'll be gone...
forever...



Untitled installation, 1976.

White side. Transcript from stereo sound track.
«I've been watchen you for a long time... seein' your
thoughts burn up inside your head... turning into
cinders before there's time for anyone to see or hear...
But I can hear you now, I can see through those
charred thoughts to know where you want to be...
Man, the nectar of those ideas never come out as
words... no voice can carry it language breaks into a
storm of particles... you've been makin' your thoughts
live in alien forms, baby... places they don't belong...
never did. Man. I'll get those thoughts through to the
right place.
there there
there there
You've always known ya have to go through
someone else
where you want them... when during their course they
ignite into a slow burn
you. It's right in front of you
...just pull back baby... I'll catch it... I'll let it land here...
you just let it glide on down... baby.
...a line... just slip it in baby... there's no place
for it to go but in. But you want these darts to hit
hard... don't you... you want them to stick in so far they
can't be pulled out... Don't you...
...down here... baby... and I may not always
be able to send you back... I mean... you may have
to leave that body... that body your in down there
but you can stay here... there's room in here
for you... Let's try it... let me try and pull ya out...
pull ya out for good
Then we can go baby... then we can go places you've
never believed existed... Come on baby... I want ya
to look at my lips, I want you to concentrate on
what I say.
Drum sounds begin here... moving from black side
to white side for 20 minutes.

White End (in Black voice)
«O.K. baby I'm gonna send it to you... I'm gonna
spin it down to you in pulses... I'm gonna let you pull it
out of me... O.K. baby... You pulled my skin off of my
bones... Your mind sucked out of you and I'm in your
body, my ideas levelled by your identity... my thoughts
colored with black skin, ya cleaned me dry. But
I knew you couldn't let me escape you.
I knew you couldn't get rid of my spirit... I knew you
wouldn't be able to get me out of your system once
you took me in... I'm into you for good baby...
And do you know, I knew it all the time... I knew
I could rob you of your spirit... Now, here's what
I want you to do... baby, here's what you can do...
I want you to kill yourself... I want you to
kill yourself...