

MALRAUX'S PLACE
253 36th St. 6th Floor
Brooklyn, NY 11232

Heather Guertin, Sanya Kantarovsky, and Viola Yeşiltaç : *Zero For Conduct*
February 1st - March 2nd

I tried all the higher Unities in vain – Humanity for example, but she keeps turning everything into money and giving back the change.

Furdydurke, Witold Gombrowicz

Dear Friends,

It is with great pleasure that I invite you to *Zero for Conduct*, an exhibition of newish works by Heather Guertin, Sanya Kantarovsky, and Viola Yesiltac. There will be a reception on February 1st from 7 - 9 pm.

With your forgiveness I will briefly say that there is a focus in this show on gesture. I don't mean the dirty word which became the phonetic leash between author and artwork and reached its paradoxical apotheosis at the moment it sank beneath the surface of paintings and took up stately residence in their content. I also don't really mean its inversion: those parrys, parodies, and pantomimes that constitute an entire secondary genre of eviction notices. The brush strokes of tragedy and farce merely amount to two variations of the same neurosis and even deep navel gazing fails to reveal a light at the end of its tunnel.

What I mean is that gesture used to be merely the tool of expression where expression meant "putting one's insides out." As we watched the paint dry gesture became the reified index of the distinction inside/outside, and the hard proof of the abstraction Subject which it supported. For a time, every brush stroke seemed to repeat the mantra: "I am putting insides out, therefore there is an inside, an outside, and an 'I'." The proof, though tautological, was in the putting.

Maybe things get more interesting when we position gesture as an index of what Sloterdijk calls "a life of practice?" This is precisely that type of behavior which becomes inconceivable "as soon as we accept the ingrained difference between 'active' and 'contemplative' as if it were an absolute and total alternative..." but which most artists get up to in their studio on an almost daily basis. It is an activity which when appreciated fully, dismantles that inside/outside thing and puts subjects and objects on equal footing for a certain amount of hours per week, depending on one's day job.

However, the muddying of boundaries more often than not makes for muddy trousers and in a context as sterile as it is rational this type of activity constitutes very bad behavior. For this reason we ought to remember to comport ourselves poorly, with the hopes that like the naughty schoolboy anti-heros of Jean Vigo's 1933 film we too might receive a cuff on the ear, or a Zero for Conduct.