

Experimental Art/Political Art
Kara Feely

When I sit down to write pieces these days, I find myself always using the same subjects: revolution, political activism, civic activism, protest. As it turns out, when it comes to making pieces, subject is usually one of my final considerations. My concerns are foremost formal and stylistic. I am interested in inconsistency (in performance styles, performance modes, in structure), simultaneity, overstimulation, and ruptures in pace. I work very instinctively, spending many hours in the rehearsal room with performers, purposefully trying to create a performance from beginning to end that shouldn't work, but does—in the sense that it functions outside of, or blatantly ignores, any universal standards by which something is considered “well made.” I am interested in that middle ground between incompetence and virtuosity (“what am I looking at?”) Because often when something seems wrong, it begins to get interesting. But when you work with text you need talk about something, and content *does* matter. So this is what I talk about: revolution, political activism, civic activism, protest. I tinker with other subjects, but a familiar thread always re-emerges to carry me through. I am simply interested in the subject matter. Or am perhaps compelled into it. Since it seems to me that there really is only one subject matter when it comes to experimental art. We normally equate political art with didactic, populist work. Something that gets its point across clearly, leaving no room for misinterpretation. What does artwork that is dense, meandering, obtuse, unreliable, aggressive have to do with activism? Make no mistake, I realize there are a thousands things to separate an organized, mass protest from what I do. Yet, in the sense that truly experimental art attempts to upend convention, forcing an acknowledgement and re-evaluation of expectations and habits, a vision of a different world (or better, the unmaking of worlds)... it has quite a lot to do with it. Which is why I can't seem to find another subject matter. Is there one?

Brooklyn, February 2015