

J, when we talked about this text originally, what I understood was that you were not asking me for a press text or critical work, but instead a piece that could accompany the videos rather than directly analyze them. You were clear that you did not want to direct me but to see what I would come up with prompted by the work, and I was under the impression that you were not paying me to write an analysis. I wanted the writing to directly mirror the devices present in the work, rather than analyze its content. In my view, the text is directly related to the videos - it literally mimics the processes within them, though it deliberately does not describe or flatter them.

I approached this text as an experiment in transparency and restraint. In the text I am very honest about what I intend to do with it, in the same way that I believe both of your videos are transparent about their devices. Furthermore, since you are artists who question ways of communicating content through formal means like removal/narrative/self-reference, I thought it would be an appropriate parallel to make a piece that completely denies the reader's (and your) expectations for art-related content. Apparently I accomplished this, and your expectations were not fulfilled.

If you had asked me for a text with direct use value, I would have been glad to do it. I was given a blank slate, an opportunity that I took to question the mode of art writing rather than just write it - removing its "use value" completely. I mention that I'm being paid in the very first sentence for precisely this reason: to make clear that I am undermining what is generally expected in a situation like this, when one person is paid to write about another.

Clearly I got a lot from the videos. They are rich with material that prompted me to do something out of the ordinary. I am not surprised at your disappointment that the text does not address their content, which was intended, but I thought it would be clearer to you that I was dealing directly with your formal choices in a non-literal way.

Why would I want to disservice either of you if I like your videos?

In both of your work, I am intrigued by the way you deliver content to, or service, your viewers and yourselves, in the following ways:

1. H, in the use of duration, deadpan monologues, and a removal of your own body and voice in "On Elegance," you demand concentration and attention with sparse aesthetic touches - choices that are either in tandem with or in contradiction to the subject matter (content) of the work. The tension created between the content and its delivery are emphasized by your implication of yourself in text you have written for two women to perform; you are an absent character who we cannot access, yet your voice is ever present, and self-referential. Why this removal of self? Is it a disservice to yourself when you mention that you've written this piece at the last minute? Is transparency/honesty a service to the viewer or an impediment to their approaching the work as such without directions for interpretation?

2. J, transmission of content in the first and last parts of your piece is layered and garbled with formal devices (music, flashing graphics, overlapping text) that make it hard for the viewer to concentrate - resisting engagement at the same time that you draw us in with a network of intimate narratives. The middle segment breaks through this wall of information (the same wall of content we bang up against using the internet every day) and suddenly a quiet scene appears, a different mode of removing your own voice using an actor for movements and another actor for voice-over. The story, delivered in a melancholy voice by your stand-in, is a poetic description of the feeling of artistic futility. Are you disserving yourself by revealing your insecurities? Are we disserved by the clash between the story you are telling and the way it is told?

As I wrote in the first sentence of the piece I sent you, you are paying me for a service, which I am happy to deliver. If you ask me to modify the text based on your needs, I will of course do so.

E