

Lucas Flanders (LF): Here we are

Luca Klauba (LK): Umm

LF: ...don't be timid, we're friends
[laughs]

LK: Yeah, I was just trying to think of where to start with it

LF: Sorry I had to break the ice otherwise I'll psyche myself out...Profanity first?

LK: Yeah, we'll say all the profanity first and move on
[laughs]

LK: Onto everything else...but I was going to ask you first and foremost where you stood with 'grace' in the exhibition. 'Grace' as a definitive term but also as a term that is something that I felt like you were trying to strive towards

LF: I feel like it's a misnomer, as we're talking now I want to forget that we're recording, it's a self awareness that comes with...maybe this is not for everyone but when you know you're being photographed, it changes your posture, your gait. Or there are people who are so effortless in front of the camera, the second you know you're in front of the camera, it shifts your posture a little bit. It's kind of gross to me. I think it's just a misnomer, you strive for being streamlined but maybe this is about the caricature of a ballerina. This endeavor is labored over, and that endeavor is truly grotesque. For 99.9% of the people that really put their life towards it...

LK: When I first approached that idea with you, it was definitely towards a socio economic lens; I was interested in how you were approaching grace, but also approaching grace as something that connotes there being a definitive body to hold 'it.' There is not one, but in being told so...

LF: Historically there's something that is upheld...

LK: Yeah - that was the curiosity first coming into this but I suppose we should quickly talk about the exhibition as it was first slated. Being - we were going to ask you to have a show at a ballet studio - infiltrating a space for education; wanting it to be at a school first, then a privately run space; so getting into these spaces and having you show there and maybe the work being a bit too out and dry, or possibly risking the work to be anything but...maybe I wanted to poke you a bit more on your decisions, being that the show now operates as a sort of placeholder

LF: I was trying to translate what I would have done there - not that I had any clue - as the ethos of what it could have been onto this smaller piece of the ballet 'studio'. I think I wrote down extrication... it's not even a translation because it still comes from the same environment. Thinking about the wardrobes as a piece of the studio as a whole, or something that participates in the production because it's important! None of the shit on stage could happen if there was no labor behind the scenes for months or years prior - or even the life of the dancer you know? That's 20+ years of work -

LK: It's capped too, you can't dance after 25 or so - me and you are quickly approaching the mark to be cut out! We're closer to the end for dancing, it's very strange...But what you're saying about taking something small that opens up into multiple divisions on how a 'stage' is built. I think of how we acquired them in the first place. Us buying them from someone who had taken them, was hired to do so, and decided to recirculate them. They became ours, they became a woman's who used them to put on puppet shows at Lurie Children's hospital, and they became a carpenter's. I like that now they're in your hands...It's complicated further

LF: They had this life before our encounter with them, having an interior life, or maybe I like thinking about the interior life the crates had to have. Even beyond materiality, once superseding the material, the container fulfills its preset function which it could have lost very easily. As far as turning it back into a ballet stage device...

LK: Well how conscious are you of it being from the Joffrey - this circumstance only being there so some semblance of the original program remains on our end, while also trying to protect the integrity of our ongoing conversation. By them being used by social workers, in environments that differ ours, the logotype of the Joffrey being covered up; the specialized labor in constructing, using, becomes complicated beautifully as the box is reused by a completely different set of hands. Maybe I'm not asking you about reuse in your practice but your attachment to modular objects I suppose...since you usually work in iterations.

LF: I think I like the idea that something can be taken apart and reconfigured for a different space. Each time it may not be a different work but based on the environment, it takes on that new life. And I guess it's just so similar to theater. I want to say the more we talk about this the more that I come to a new realization...each night a production is put on, it's a different show.

LK: And that goes back to the toll on bodies too. I'm trying to pull us back to idealism. Simply because you implicated everyone with putting the graphite on the boxes...bodies walk through the space, brush against the boxes, the walls, the floor becomes layers - I was going to ask you about drawing but I think that thinking of it as drawing is sort of drained out.

LF: Drawing as affect. It's pretty exciting to me actually, my initial draw to graphite was its physical properties of being so slick, it being applied as a lubricant in industrial measures - I think my introduction to it was that it could lubricate the barrel of a gun or a bullet. I remember being a kid and rubbing graphite on the wheels of a pinewood derby to make it go as fast as it could. The glide is so alluring to me. It's a very sensual thing, at least in relation to the human body. It has this effortless feeling to it, and it's so supple. There's something so gorgeous about it. Beyond that it has this luster, it's metallic, it can be polished to have a gorgeous shine, and on top of all that it's great for mark making! It's in every fucking pencil!

LK: Yes! And I think a lot about how we were told that there was lead in pencils as a child!

LF: Did you ever have a fear of it!? Once I realized there was lead based paint, my life was over! I couldn't even lick my toys!
[laughs]

LF: Everything was off limits

LK: Though [I] growing up around house painters kinda instilled this mentality that if a substance got on you, 'you'd be fine,' or your body would surely give you a sign that you're not. It's a different type of fear in the realm of specialized labor. That getting your hands dirty didn't necessarily mean the repercussions would immediately be negative; and this goes into the curiosity with touching things to understand them, getting oil on your hands. It's funny when kids are drawn to toy cars and when they encounter a real car they try to touch it with the same sensibility of the toy car. There hands get all dirty - and becomes a sort of drawing, something you kind of feel out as a new understanding of the material. Not as something that is thought of as the subject, but as a way of maneuvering with curiosity

LF: The facilitator, but also it documents the behavior. Putting it in a white room maybe could have been a mistake because it's going to get filthy.

LK: That was the best thing that happened.

LF: It just tells us everything that happens in the space, at least anything that moves, if touched, we're going to know. It carries just so effortlessly too. It wasn't necessarily my original intention, but because of how restricting the space is just to circumambulate these boxes, you're going to brush up into something. You're going to transfer... I like to say that I burnished them but by coating these wardrobes it's almost like I'm masking them. I'm costuming them, maybe that's too much of a push because I'm not looking for a vocabulary but thinking about the bodies in the show as a topological phenomena.

We aren't the end, nor the sole body to inhabit a space, but just the active participant. I can't so easily discount the boxes in this either, they are facilitating something that clothes, shroud, and only temporarily for an exuberant display. Maybe this object is not easily recognized as having inner life, but thinking about it is a jumping off point for me time and time again. It's treated with the same care as buildings, as bodies; to some degree maintaining an empathy with them is involved. The skin, the surface of a first encounter, [being a sentiment] while bodies are composed of other bodies, of organs, of cells, or organelles, it's hard not see a repetition and a pattern to things. They have similarities and parallels in each level of their makeup, a body and a box. We're just stuck perceiving the same vantage. I wanted to bend this a little bit and it's uncanny.

LK: You love the uncanny.

LF: It shows us that there's much more going on than what we sense. That's, if not utterly terrifying...

LK: Utterly important.

LF: It's so important, but it frees you. You don't have to worry. You don't have to understand everything. Not seeking answers is so liberating. Just the curiosity of doing something you don't need to do and gripping to the context that reveals.

LK: This was something we were talking about earlier before the interview.

LF: A sublime encounter
[laughs]

LK: A Sublime encounter! But you were talking about reading a room as something literal. This is extremely hand in hand with what you were saying and maybe my biggest take away from the work as a sensory experience. As if you were just saying, 'I'm going to read the room,' either as a performative gesture or as an enabler to have a multitude of contextualized bodies write. A nod to beginning? To end?

LF: It's completely metaphysical. Maybe there's more to it since, if we don't have history we don't have anything. It's a very new endeavor. A room, a record of a room, the record of a time... Actually, how it is to be now and how we talk about it, how it had been talked about, through not saying much but by pointing out functionality.

LK: 'My body can do this' as familiarizing. Giving something to read. Not giving a diagnosis of the objects or the context but by giving a book and a pen, the site, you're giving the amount needed for a complete dissection.

LF: I think in a crude sense I'm setting the scene. That's all that needs to happen. That's all there is to do - you can only be so prepared. The people will do the choreography. So will the boxes, so will the lights. Yes I pushed the hand of fate a little bit but they all have their own certain kinds of behaviors. The lights are set to a half hour cycle which has its own breath to it, and it's active in itself - but once people come into the equation they become the audience, the dancer, it can be sheer chaos.

LK: I hope it is. I feel like I'm hesitant to talk about them alongside time even though they operate as a substrate alongside writing, drawing, it's all set on the basis of the day's and exhibition's light cycle. The lighting itself is so prominent in the show. It's one thing I'd rather not talk about.

LF: The lifespan? I mean it will live after, it'll just be something else. Which isn't new and constantly happens. It's just on the basis of experiencing everything on our own lifespan - were lucky to experience the life cycles of every other animal that lives shorter than us, and we've made it to a point that we observe the lifespans of entities that live for billions of years...I'm talking about stars

LK: Of course
[laughs]

LF: I hope it's humbling, and I think that's the ultimate goal. Trying to find a way to articulate this form of permanence and temporal gestures.

LK: That's the 'grace'

LF: It's the slippage of life...you hope that you can find it when you need it.

Over the clatter of hammering, wood being pulled apart, the smell of freshly accumulated dust, a meditation on I.I