

**Post-performance conversation with Julia Kouneski & Sarah Petersen,
Minneapolis, 21 November 2015. (excerpts)**

Question: Was the presence of cameras documenting the performance part of the piece?

Julia Kouneski: I was interested in these layers of vision, or mediation. “You are looking through a camera lens, and we are looking through binoculars, at each other.” And there is something that fits into the piece about a camera. That it’s ok to have a camera present, to not try to hide it.

Comment: Since it put that question in my mind, I thought, well to hell with it, I’m going to put myself right in it, right between you two, and see what happens.

Sandra Teitge: There was a moment when a lot of people were filming it. Sure, the camera [we used to film this performance] is a different apparatus because it looks more professional than a cell phone. But there were moments when five or six people were filming. So that also breaks that [hierarchy] and allows a different participation.

Comment: It’s an indirect permission. With performance pieces, that’s the interactive moment, if and how you give permission to break the wall. I felt like I was trying to react against being looked at. The camera was my apparatus to react, to look back.

Comment: (...) the need to capture... on the part of the audience. Or forcing them to want to participate through another level of mediation.

Question: It seemed like for as long as I held your gaze, in both cases you gazed back. Was that intentional?

JK: We didn’t have instructions for that but yes.

Comment: I started to feel like I was interrupting the performance. So eventually, I would do quick looks away to see if you would look away and at the very least it was meant to signify that you could look away if you needed to continue with the performance. But you both held gazes for a really long time.

Sarah Petersen: That was one of the pleasures of being able to perform this piece, actually getting to look at people, but I don’t know that it was mutual, because you just saw these [binoculars]...

Comment: You can feel it.

Question: Was staying flat down on the floor the plan? That was really your movement I was drawn to it and how sometimes it felt like trying to [get up] and moving back down. The gravity was very apparent. Was that the plan?

JK: That was, yes. I wanted us to stay close to the ground. Part of that was playing with that position as being a vulnerable position– and then the binoculars being more about power in a way, and playing with these two things. It didn’t feel right for us to be standing up.

Comment: It felt like a tension. My interpretation of the movement was sort of like an awakening, wanting something but then being drawn back down. Someone walked by and it seemed like a recognition, an opening and then down... that tension.

Comment: ... kind of being trapped there with the binoculars that bring yourself beyond where you are trapped, like being in a foxhole.

JK: It felt a little like that sometimes.

SP: And that was maybe this feeling of infant movement, that excessive vulnerability. You can't even tell if there are humans until maybe, until you happen to find them. You kind of know that they are around but everything is just blurry.