
THE BOX

July 1–31, 2010

Dani Leventhal

54 Days this Winter 36 Days this Spring for 18 Minutes, 2009



Image courtesy of the Video Data Bank, Chicago

JL: The title implies a very formulaic and structured work and yet the piece itself is very stream-of-consciousness. How did the idea for a prescribed shooting structure evolve?

DL: This structure was built out of a need to continue working at a time when I wanted to quit. Each day I made myself shoot for 9 minutes. I shot 54 days of winter, and 36 days of spring. These numbers are multiples of nine which add up to 18 which is a lucky number in Hebrew that equals "life." I required myself to shoot but the subject of the shot was open-ended. One of the reasons so much of the piece is dark is because I would procrastinate until the last minute and by then it was night-time.

JL: You have this powerful way of mixing perspectives and vantage points that at times has the effect of being totally disorienting and, at other moments, demands complete immediacy and forces focus/presence. Can you talk about this in terms of how you shoot and edit?

DL: Sometimes shots are planned and constructed, but mostly I find pre-existing things with the camera. The editing is organized by formal relationships; color, tone, sound. Or I lay one clip next to another to produce a new meaning.

JL: Your work has often been described as diaristic, which most associate with something quite personal and yet there's this interesting tension (it's actually not tension because it feels quite natural) between the personal and the universal, self and other, inner and outer (you've even got a bit of Warhol's Outer and Inner Space in there, right?). How do you work through these ideas? Do you consider 54 Days a diary?

DL: I don't like to call this work diaristic because diaries are private. I would not show footage from my diary, but I guess diaristic is the best way to describe it because it is personal and emotional work. There is a shot in my video from Warhol's *Outer and Inner Space*. I use that clip to show the complexity of a person.

JL: What are you currently working on?

DL: I recently shot 72 days of Fall and this summer I will shoot 18 days of Summer. In April I returned from a month and a half in France where I collaborated with poet, Brett Price. We made two video poems and are now working on a series of broadsides that I am making drawings for.

INTERVIEW BETWEEN ARTIST DANI LEVENTHAL AND JENNIFER LANGE, ASSOCIATE CURATOR OF MEDIA ARTS.

Dani Leventhal is a native of Columbus, OH, where she attended Indianola Alternative Elementary School and Columbus Alternative High School. She received a MFA in sculpture from the University of Illinois, Chicago, as well as a MFA in Film/Video from Bard College, New York. Her work has screened at festivals internationally including International Film Festival Rotterdam, Chicago Underground Film Festival, Migrating Forms, New York, and she was most recently included in PS.1's exhibition *Greater NY*. Leventhal lives and works in Brooklyn.

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(16 mins., video)

Courtesy of Video Data Bank at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, vdb.org.

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