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States of Stupidity

<<Dead Stupid: Artist gets £4000 to play \"killed\" war hero (Virginia Wheeler, The Sun November 15, 2006)>>

This presentation examines states of stupidity in the interregnum of stupid performance. It explores aspects of the non-serious, and value-less (Gavin Butt) within the spatiotemporal encounter of “stupid” performance. This inter-state or even anti “state of exception” that reigns in laughter, in dumbness, stupidity and absurdity: where rules are suspended, transformed or altered and power structures constantly shifting, or where states of being absolute, abject, or abstract (Dorita Hannah) are placed in flux.

States of Stupidity probes particular aspects of the event or interregnum of laughter, seemingly non-serious and valueless intervention, “making vivid a ‘light kind’ of importance – a perverse form of value hardly acknowledged within expressly serious discourse.” (Gavin Butt). Focusing on ‘idiotic’ performance strategies that interrupt and disrupt (Mark McGowan, counterproductions). “Stupidity’ which breaks hold of meaning with a laughter that shatters what Jacques Derrida calls “the very fabric of meaning through which the notion of meaninglessness becomes meaningful, through which meaninglessness comes to operate as the dirty underside (the negated) of meaning”. (Davis, 2000: 2) An undisciplinatory state in which the slough of knowledge and of meaning dissolves into a dis-authoritative state of inconsistency, a well of non-knowledge (Francois Laruelle, 2005).

Davis, Diane (2000) *Breaking Up [at] Totality: A Rhetoric of Laughter*. South Illinois University Press