

perform feminism

Adrian Piper, The Mythic Being



From 1972 to 1976 Adrian Piper performed as The Mythic Being, walking through the streets of New York disguised as an androgynous, mixed-race man. She adopted stereotypical male gestures and wore an afro wig and moustache in order to 'pass' as male. She walked through the streets repeating mantra-like phrases taken from her teenage diary.

The artist describes the piece as follows:

The Mythic Being was "a street performance I did over a four-year period, from 1972 to 1976, in drag as a young male of color. I wore Afro, shades, moustache, and smoked a Tiparillo. I visited certain culture-related locales around the city: art gallery openings, concerts, films, plays, etc., as well as took the subways and buses and walked the streets at night in different neighborhoods. In order to focus my attention and maintain my composure during the performance, I focussed on a mantra: a passage from the personal journal I have been keeping since pre-adolescence, which I simultaneously published in the *Village Voice* on a monthly basis. The dates of the passages were chosen according to a complex permutational system. In content, I selected passages expressive of some personal issue I was grappling with at the time. Repeating the passage was a way of defusing and transcending the issue. In this recording I rehearse my repetition of the mantra of the month, with occasional Freudian slips."

Video Footage of Piper getting ready to perform:

http://www.adrianpiper.com/vs/video_tmb.shtml

Sound recording of rehearsal:

http://www.adrianpiper.com/vs/sound_tmbc.shtml

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