

With the Others – may 15th 2013 – Gabriella Shypula, Invigilator

My understanding before the performance on the 15th was that Marilyn would be invisible to the visitors. People who entered the gallery would smell the jasmine and not think to look under the bench in the gallery. I thought the gallery would not be too busy until about 4 pm, when admission was free and visitors were arriving for *Odd Spaces*. I also thought the audience, after discovering Marilyn, would have questions, so I prepared a few things to say to them, with Marilyn's help.

(12 pm – 2 pm)

Marilyn began a little after 12 pm. The smell of jasmine was strong and spread through the room quickly. A group of young teens walked through the gallery, barely stopping to look at the sarcophaguses, and muttered, "Why don't the wrap people like that anymore?" I found that humorous because they had no idea that Marilyn was wrapped all in black under the bench just beside them. As I continued through the gallery a large group of middle schoolers entered the room.

Immediately upon entered one girl yells out, "OH MY GOD. It smells so good in here!" The group entered the gallery, and Marilyn remained invisible to them. About 10 minutes passed and the same girl starts repeating, "The Smell is getting to be nauseating." The other students ignored her for the most part, many of them sitting on the bench without any idea that the smell is coming from beneath them. The girl said again, "Can we leave?? The smell is nauseating." Not too soon afterwards, they left.

Time passed and not many people noticed Marilyn, but there were some comments about the smell. Another large group of middle schoolers entered the room. A group of them rushed over to the bench without realizing that Marilyn was underneath. I sat down with them because I noticed that the last group of students were rocking their legs back and forth and I wanted to make sure that if Marilyn for any reason felt uncomfortable she would touch my heels. There were two boys sitting at the end of the bench and after glancing down he noticed there was something underneath. He turns to the other and says, "DUDE! There's feet and a head!: The other boy was confused and looked down and realized what he was talking about. The boys continued to tell the rest of their classmates that, "There's something underneath." All the girls jumped up and look startled. Then they all swarmed around the bench and immediately took out their phones and started taking pictures of Marilyn. It was interesting to see how they immediately felt the need to take a picture on their phones as if she was just another piece in the gallery; Marilyn really was *with the others*.

Later on, another woman entered the gallery and, after looking around, discovered Marilyn. She came over to me and asked if I knew there was a man under there. I found this interesting as well. As the day progressed and I overheard other people's conversations, many believed there was a man under the bench.

(2:50 pm – 6:30 pm)

Later on, another woman realized that Marilyn was under the bench and asked me, “How long is he under there for?” I am still trying to figure out why everyone automatically assumed there was a man under the bench.

As 4 pm arrived and entry became free, many arrived who knew Marilyn was there and not many visitors seemed to question it. I overheard one person say how they were afraid to sit on her. Many just came, sat and watched her. Being in the gallery for so long, walking around, reading the wall texts, glancing at Marilyn intermittently and smelling the jasmine until the smell disappeared felt like the best way to experience Marilyn’s action. Even until the very end, people were sitting staring at her intently, waiting for *the end* to happen. I found the best part of Marilyn’s performance was the spatial experience she provided. Walking around, sitting on the bench, and smelling the jasmine until it smelled rotten and then disappeared provided a unique experience.

After the performance I was exhausted. I was so hyper-focused on the space and Marilyn’s action that it didn’t hit me until I left the Museum and was on the train. I think the smell of jasmine is still lingering in my clothes.