

...why not accede,
Well, we're here.
Here we are now.
Instead of
announcing that
[this program,
sleep and her
brother death,
program 03:
cosmic microwave
background, or
the ears of heart]
has begun, just
acknowledge that
the program
begun.

I'm...caught in a
double bind of
fundamentally
conflicting desires:
I want these
objects, this
language to be my
social body. One of
the things
discourse can do—
ecstatically—is
augment, knit,
even secrete
human sociality.

While editing this
piece I was
reminded of
neurotic people
doing pedestrian
things like
waiting, walking,
talking, paying
the rent, or
videotaping;
individuals, alone
and together,
figuring out how
to negotiate their
place in the world.

As if trying to
make a graceful
landing, in
brutally abridged
form:

Whacker [by
[Harry Dodge](#) and
[Stanya Kahn](#)] is a
good example of
asking with a
performative
scenario
whether...literal
references [can]
create a poetic
experience of how
we experience
ourselves in this
world, [because]
people taking
things literally
when they're
intended as
abstraction is an
ongoing challenge.

Some think the
audience
incapable of
understanding art
without the added
element of
excessive
pantomime: this
error does not
touch the artist.

To be complete
and whole is to
have a beginning,
middle, and end,
[but, as Kahn
says], "I never
want people to
just stop their
interpretations at

what *literally*
happens in a
scene."

The video proffers
an empty chain of
narrativizing and
scopophilic
signifiers, with no
underlying
character per se.
A high femme at
her chores,
Kahn—the
woman playing
her—reveals to an
audience of
Dodge—the
person filming
her—the
Sisyphean task
she undertakes
systematically,
the whine of the
weed whacker and
passing cars
muttering carbon
dioxide, twenty
layers of sound.

Her hair bucks in
the Quaalude
breeze—there's
this cycling of
energy
between...two
people...trying to
make meaning.

Sound waves have
been doing this
since ears were
invented, that is,
allowing a sound
made *here* to be
heard *there*. A
thing whose

presence or
absence makes no
discernable
difference is not a
part of the whole.

"If you do them
right, edits
disappear.
I think that's
really magical."

[[Kate Soper's](#)]
philosophy-opera,
Ipsa Dixit, is an
ongoing
exploration of the
intersections of
art and language
via a skeptical
investigation of
the role of the
singer as
gatekeeper of
meaning,
sentiment, and
expressivity.

A tour de force in
which the ideas of
Aristotle,
Wittgenstein,
Lydia Davis, and
others assume
sound and form,
the title is Latin
for "she herself
said," and alludes
to "ipse dixit,"
which roughly
translates to
visibility and
invisibility,
"hilarity" and also
"dread."*

* Alert to paradox, irony, and absurdity, the meaning—to claim without proof—is obvious to everyone, or is it far from obvious? Such terms are rooted in the cult of the male artist, a storyline [to] fill with jokes...

* Or, is it actually one [text]...having a better hair day?

The second movement, **Only the Words Themselves Mean What They Say**, a duet for voice and flute, employs Lydia Davis's brief text "Go Away," and the flute becomes a kind of Iron Man suit for the voice, amplifying it to new planes of expressivity, intensity, and insanity as the two players [Soper and flutist [Erin Lesser](#)] struggle, with a single addled brain, to navigate the treacherous labyrinth of simple logic—examining the phrase itself.

Soper is perfectly capable of writing in a more or less conventional narrative mode—and she sometimes does—but through the perils of her impulsive chatter, there's a wave of noise—"walla," they call it when you're trying to buy sound effects—a middle

which follows from something as some other thing follows it.

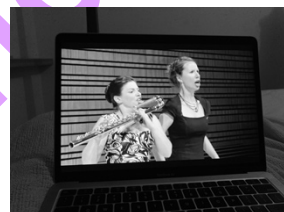
The swerve is love, I think... Spectacle may have emotional resonance but does not belong to art—everything is moved by the atomic storm.

zz

🎧 clips:



Harry Dodge and Stanya Kahn, **Whacker**, 2005
ubuweb.com/film/dodge_whacker.html



Kate Soper, **Only the Words Themselves Mean What They Say (I: Go Away)**, 2010–11, from **Ipsa Dixit**, 2010–16
youtube.com/watch?v=uNTHcINa000

[Today's run time was exactly 12 minutes.

These program notes were composed from parts of many texts,* including [Poetics](#), the first movement of Kate Soper's [Ipsa Dixit](#), and Harry Dodge's [My Meteorite: Or, Without the Random There Can Be No New Thing](#), as well as: [5 Questions to Kate Soper \(composer\) about Ipsa Dixit by Lauren Ishida](#); [Kate Soper's Philosophy-Opera by Alex Ross](#); [PSNY Composer Note by Kate Soper](#); [Harry Dodge and Stanya Kahn interviewed by Michael Smith](#); [Harry Dodge and Stanya Kahn by Rachel Kushner](#); [Dissociated/Dislocated: Thoughts on the Short Videos of Stanya Kahn and \[Harry\] Dodge by Miranda Mellis](#); as well as "Head/Heart," a text I knew from [The Collected](#)

[Stories of Lydia Davis](#), which is also the middle part of **Ipsa Dixit's** second movement, followed by Davis's "[Getting to Know Your Body](#),"—both led me to my own ears of heart, the cosmic microwave background that is my own electric weed cutter, a state of being for myself.



This Saturday, February 10, at 1pm pacific, you may wish to join [The Capilano Review](#) for [As Good As Rocks: A Poetry Marathon](#), a virtual benefit that will bring together 24 meteoric writers for an 8-hour journey of readings that is sure to delight, inspire, and leave you floored.]

🍿 reviews:

Teresa: "I had a hard time hearing over [Ridley Jones](#) so will need to watch the 2nd video again."—🤔