

## C O N C E P T S I N P E R F O R M A N C E

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February 28—Especially excited about this afternoon's program, as all participants are known names—and only some known quantities—to me. Laurie Anderson, I guess accurately, is to do a repeat of "For Instants, Part 3" (subtitled "Refried Beans," by the way), a stiffer performance with more ragged edges but still very, very moving. But I am very anxious to see "At Sunrise a Cry was Heard," a piece marking the New York debut of Guy de Cointet. I came across several fascinating books, handsome, brilliant forays into symbol systems of his own devising last year in Los Angeles where de Cointet lives. People out there told me of his performances, in which professional actors read and act scripts which are interpretations and interpolations of his plaque-like "paintings." The whole concept leaves plenty of room for various elaborations, but de Cointet kept things simple, almost too simple, in "At Sunrise." A single rectangular painting, studded with clearly rendered letters interrupted by a diagonal white space, hung on the wall. An actress came out and read a fascinating, well-crafted account—a la Poe or Verne or Raymond Roussel—of an artwork in ancient Egypt which purportedly made sounds. The painting on the wall was a stand-in for this work. Essentially the event was a storytelling; the "art" was in the presence of the painting, the effectiveness of the story, and the skill of the reader both in giving a dramatic reading and in relating the story

## Performance Diary

significantly to the painting. The actress here was not quite up to this job; her voice was too soft, her emphases restrained, and, it would seem, her whole understanding of the tale less than it could have been. If de Cointet had arranged a more complex presentation—as he just did around Roussel's short stories for several weeks in Paris—he would have impressed the eternally skeptical New York audience. As it is, he interested us, puzzled us, and whetted our appetites for more.