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After leading a large audience upstairs to the main performance space in the newly inaugurated Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (LACE) building, John White announced that this was his "last performance." He then pointed out that by stating this, he had placed himself in a "no-lose" position. If the piece should be unsuccessful, he could walk away from it without regrets. If it succeeded, he would be leaving the performance arena in triumph at the apogee of his career.

There might have been more than a little tongue-in-cheek in this announcement, since in the downstairs gallery where the crowd first gathered. White's blackboard notations had prefaced this performance with the title *How My Mind Works (Tonight)* which provided implications of temporality, spontaneity and risk-taking as an overlay for the upcoming production.

How My Mind Works (Tonight) was organized as a progression of skits separated by quick blackouts, each seemingly unrelated to the other. As the performance developed, white and his collaborators, Gwendolyn Dean and Martin Kersels, worked within strategies of gestural choreography and mime, skillfully manipulating props and events and presenting them with high energy.

Once the audience was comfortably settled and white had ended his impromptu banter with spectators, he took a deep breath and, with the assistance of a blackout, cut to "Out of Africa," the first formal segment of the performance. In this segment White, alone and spotlighted stage front, ensconced himself on the floor behind a child's canvas stroller and proceeded to produce a series of small, toy-like objects that he lined up on a shelf. In direct, almost slapstick interlay with the audience, White revealed these toys to be the source of rather obvious and self-consciously facetious punning based on the movie *Out of Africa* – the "red ford" and so forth.

The action quickly switched to a well-worn sofa a center stage where Kersels and White sat and engaged in gestural dialog. Dean, who had been on stage since the audience filed in, continued to kneel beside the sofa, her head pressed against its arm. As the two men continued their mimed exchanges on the sofa, they occasionally mugged outrageously at the audience, froze and then shifted back to mime again. White, pointing to a large ink-stain on Kersels's shirt front, leaned forward, picked up a can of paint and a brush and prepared to paint it out. When Kersels, whose size makes him a formidable presence, indicated some displeasure at such an intent, White turned and decorated his own trouser leg instead.

Kersels soon took the leading role in the performance. He rose and began an awkward, shuffling solo dance, turning slowly as he lurched across the stage space and against the spotlighted walls. His slapping heavy movements became more and more repetitive and rhythmic, finally reaching a surprisingly graceful series of convergent movements. A large black box was transported across the stage and Dean, released from the sofa, clambered nimbly into it. Immediately, a rude clatter of kicking and slamming arose from the box, which could be seen as resembling a crib for a giant infant.

At a point midway in the progression of skits, a richly sonorous sound track of Michael Montelone's "Rachel's Tapes" took command of the stage, softening and changing the mood dramatically. As the music diminished, Dean, emerging from the dark crib in formal ballet dress, satin leotard and slippers, executed a brief ballet turn en pointe on the sofa, which had suddenly been converted into a flat platform held up at the corners by White and Kersels, with White sawing busily away at one corner with an electric saber saw. White's melange of language play, private image, self-conscious humor and mimed interaction had culminated in an allusive homage to the dance as an art form. As the performers bowed to the audience, they were rewarded with warm and generous applause.

The meanings encountered within the events of How My Mind Works (Tonight) were elusive and tangential, driven by a restless and improvisatory energy that distanced itself from linear definition by bursts of clowning humor, leaps of language, movement and sound, all within a framework of carefully planned staging. Clearly White, whose contributions to performance have included enthusiastic theoretical support and teaching in addition to his many staged works, and his fellow performers, Dean and Kersels, could consider this evening among their successes.