

## REF Report and Summary

### Matt Thorne, *Surface Torture I-II*

**Author:** Matt Thorne

**Output Title:** Surface Torture I-II

**Brief description:** A play inspired by the artwork of Hungarian performance artist Tibor Hajas

**Type of Output:** Performance

**Venue:** Austin/Desmond Fine Art, London

**Media of output:** Excerpt of performance (mp4), copy of Script (items 1-2)

**Contextual information:** Author discussion on staging directions and creative process; Austin/Desmond Fine Art Catalogue; evidence of dates and venue (items 3-5)

#### Index of information available for assessment on this site

##### Output

	Item/Link	Description	Additional information
1	<a href="#">Excerpt</a> of improvised performance	mp4 (running length 2mins 24sec)	This segment is the only surviving footage from the improvised scenes. It is also publicly available on the following link <a href="#">Hungarian Cultural Centre London - Performing Images - Tibor Hajas brought to life   Facebook</a>
2	<a href="#">Script</a> comprising of two duologues: Surface Torture I and Surface Torture II	PDF (18 pages) Surface I, pp. 1 – 4 Surface II, pp. 4 - 18	The two scripted duologues acted as starting points for each section of the show, which was then built further from improvisation, rehearsal and direction. The performances and improvisations worked across the performance space around the source photography, allowing the audience to drop in and out of the performance as they viewed the exhibition.

### Contextual information

	Item/Link	Description	Additional information
3	<a href="#">Staging Direction and Creative Process</a>	PDF (1 page)	Additional text relating to research process: the format and requirements of the original brief and the research interpretation of the photographs in developing the scripts.
4	<a href="#">Austin/Desmond Fine Art Catalogue</a>	PDF (9 pages). Surface Torture I-II are on p.7.	Full exhibition catalogue
5	<a href="#">Screenshot</a> of venue and date	PDF (1 page)	Evidence of dissemination

### Copy of 300-word statement

A two-handed improvised play inspired by the artwork of Hungarian performance artist Tibor Hajas. I was invited to write the play by the Hungarian Cultural Centre for a Hajas exhibition at the Austin/Desmond Gallery.

The aim was to give these artworks a contemporary British literary dimension. Walking through the exhibition, visitors became part of the theatrical settings choosing freely how long to stay at a particular stage or move on to the next section in a promenade performance.

The Hungarian Cultural Centre gave me a selection of artworks by Tibor Hajas and asked me to produce a contemporary performance that would make a connection between the historical pieces and the contemporary spectator in the gallery via performance. The series of works used as a starting point are collectively known as 'Surface Torture'. The titles have a double-meaning referring to the fact that the surface of the photographs have been tortured (manipulated) and there is also the suggestion that some form of subjugation has also happened to the subjects of the photograph. I looked at theatrical and film duologues from the same period Hajas was working (especially Rivette and Pinter) and wrote a series of looping duologues and starting points for improvisation which demonstrated a similar subjugation in theatrical form.

The insights gained were primarily to do with the challenges of site-specific theatre within an art gallery, but also (and this is relatively unique and the most exciting part of the research) how theatre and fine art can be combined. My previous experience of this nature has relied on video art. It is more unusual for theatre and fine art to be combined, in part because the role of the spectator in an art-gallery is very different to a theatregoer, even in a promenade performance.

URL: <https://figshare.com/s/769c4e9bd0b813c0f2ff>