

Miki Shaw

The Open Book

Video and paper installation with live writing performance

Commissioned for Jewish Book Week 2015

I have never written a book. But I surround myself with them. Books are revelations; the thoughts and ideas of their authors unfolding with every page. At the same time they are opaque – they don't show us the process behind their formation; the false starts, the rough drafts, the doubts and ruminations of the author.

Writing does not come naturally to me. At times it is agonizing. It is only when I do "freewriting", writing from stream-of-consciousness without pausing or editing, that words flow. That discovery led me towards using freewriting performance as an artistic medium to explore the raw process of writing in works such as *The Live Writing Circle* (Feb 2014) and *The Live Writing Stream* (May-June 2014).

This commission is about the creation of an alternative book. It is being written from scratch in one week, in public, by a team of volunteers and visitors, mostly strangers to each other. Each participant has been asked to write two pages of freewriting. There is no editing. The order of pages is not important. This book is about its own creation, a process that will be played and replayed in the video projections, formed from recordings of the writing as it happens. Copies of every page will be displayed on the wall, charting the book's growth over the course of the week.

My use of digital projection is informed by my background in VJing; creating live projected visuals. I'm interested in the contrasts that arise where digital and analogue meet, such as in the combination of handwriting with digital video feed.

The work operates as a live experiment, to question and unravel the nature of The Book.

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Live writing performance times:

Saturday 21 Feb: 7:20-8:00pm, 8:45-9:05pm

Sunday 22 Feb: 1:20-2:00pm, 2:50-3:30pm,
5:50-6:30pm, 7:20-8:00pm

Wednesday 25 Feb: 7:50-8:30pm

Sunday 1 March: 11:50am-12:30pm, 1:20-2:00pm

Outside of performance times, the projections consist of recordings from previous performances.

Taking Part:

If you enjoy writing and would like to be one of the live writers for this commission, please get in touch with Miki as soon as possible (details below).

No experience or preparation required. Participants will be photographed and video recorded during the performance.

