

Highlights 2013 - Dan Fox

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Michael Portnoy, *27 Gnosis*, (2012-13), performance still; courtesy: The Kitchen, New York; photograph: Paula Court

W.H. Auden reportedly said that the art of living in New York City lay in crossing the street against the lights. [Michael Portnoy's 27 Gnosis](#) at The Kitchen, New York, attempted to cross the street against the lights, do a pirouette halfway, then pull a wheelie in reverse gear down an adjoining one-way street, and for that I doff my hat to him just for even thinking about trying. I missed its original presentation at DOCUMENTA 13 in Kassel last year – with only 27 people able to attend each performance, it was oversubscribed when I visited – so I was curious to see the New York reboot. Staged in a lilac-coloured auditorium shaped like a lemon squeezer for alien giants, *27 Gnosis* was a truly hilarious mock game show that spliced parodies of critical theory with dance, fashion, music and sci-fi-inspired tomfoolery. Portnoy and Ieva Misevičiūtė played bossy pan-dimensional beings who invited their audience to take language for a walk, blindfold it, dose it with strong hallucinogenic drugs and let it wander naked in the jungle until it could no longer remember its name. An imaginative work about the act of interpretation, *27 Gnosis* was the most memorable art experience I had this year. If I am looking forward to anything in 2014, it is to be surprised like I was by this.