

Impression of abstraction end and things like that

by Chris Dupuis

Inspiration comes in many forms. With *Abstraction end and things like that*, Hagar Tenenbaum brings together two unlikely influences. The first was American writer Maggie Nelson's book *Women, the New York School, and Other True Abstractions*. The 2007 work examines the often-overlooked role women played in the Big Apple's mid-20th century creative explosion. Her second point of reference was something literally much closer to home; her neighbour's three-year-old daughter Rita.

The combination of these two seemingly unrelated interests, offers an arena to deconstruct language, something vital to the process. While she's never been the silent type in her regular life, when it comes to being on stage Tenenbaum's always been rather reserved with words. During her time at P.A.R.T.S, her first solo where she had to speak gave her pre-show panic attacks. But here, the combination of abstraction and childlike playfulness turns what was once a space of fear into a conceptual playground.

Using her own writing with a sprinkling of borrowed text, she tosses out thoughts on the abstract nature of colour, the incomprehensible character of electricity, and the fragile reality of our ever-aging bodies. Delivered with a quirky musicality, the words are freed from their literal connotations, metamorphosing into objects to be played with. The resulting zone is both gently thought provoking and delightfully ridiculous; a space that would be equally joyous for an abstract painter or a three-year-old kid.