

# BIG RED & SHINY

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## COACH TV @ CONTAMINATE PERFORMANCES

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“You are a brave man,” Raishad Glover said to me with subtle sympathy as he wheeled me, head first, into the **Coach TV** performance space at last weekend’s performance art festival in Fort Point, aptly called **Contaminate**. I was lying down, facing the ceiling, on a flat-bed cart, only about 10 inches off of the ground, cushioned by a chiropractic mat of sorts which positioned my head in a doughnut shaped pillow. Glover had spun me around several times just outside the makeshift kiosk he and his CoachTV partner, Emily Eastridge, had fashioned out of translucent plastic shower-curtains, disorienting me to make what I was about to experience all the more fantastical.

As my head was eased into the space, a woman, Eastridge, peered down at me with the patronizing air of a dental-hygienist through the locks of her platinum blond wig. Her make-up was flamboyant and her blouse (or dress, as I never saw below her mid-torso) was a disco-shimerry gold. The shower-curtain-kiosk had a depth of only about five feet and the bottom two-thirds of my body stuck conspicuously out into the lobby of the venue. Because the space was so cramped, my head was presumably right between the legs of Ms. Eastridge. She began her



Raishad Glover and Emily Eastridge, *Coach TV*, performance documentation, 2006.



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process, in a soothing voice that was scored by the looping track of a muzak-like melody, by giving me the artfully dubious CoachTV mission: essentially to better our lives, and how she was going to 'coach' me on giving my mouth proper care. She followed this with a facial massage to release all the stress that builds up from performing acts such as smiling (real or forced), while the lips, gums and tongue were also given attention as places



Raishad Glover and Emily Eastridge, *Coach TV*, performance documentation, 2006.

where unwanted tension can accumulate. When Glover asked through the curtain how she was doing, Eastridge replied by shrilly berating him for interrupting her procedure. She seemed to be ensuring me that I was receiving her best care which went on to include flossing, brushing, mouth rinse and a rather invasive Binaca application.

Behind Eastridge, large color photos were taped to the wall. I guessed that they were there in lieu of the posters one would see on the walls of a dentist's office of cherubic children engaging in some fanciful activity like running through colorful fall leaves. However, the photos were of young men and women in various states of excitement, all with maniacal or saccharin smiles on their faces. As the images in a dentist's office signify an idyllic reality for children, the images in the CoachTV kiosk represent the world CoachTV seems to strive for or believes to be where we are headed.

After the Binaca application, Eastridge asserted CoachTV's obligation to safety as she tore a piece of plastic wrap from its dispenser. She then placed the clear plastic sheet over my face and firmly planted her lips upon my own, kissing me for about a second before she picked her head up and screamed to Glover that she was done. I was immediately pulled from the shower curtain tent, a lipstick smudged piece of plastic covering my blushing face. CoachTV had begat a new disciple by way of intensive oral hygiene, their first of the evening.

A short line of future participants and small crowd had gathered around the CoachTV facility while I endured my procedure. The shyness of people is most evident at Performance events such as Contaminate, everyone moved in crowds with surprising synchronization. It was not until about a minute after the first performance commenced that the crowd quickly and synchronously, like a small herd of farm animals around a feed trough, collapsed around the area where the performers would do their work. It is worth consideration that performance art would be less affected if the audience and participants were less shy. However, the dauntingly extroverted performance artist might prove overwhelming for any attendee of such an event.

Though the intensity of performance may be the best way to pursue certain concepts. After seemingly every pathogen of note and any evidence of my recently consumed dinner were painstakingly removed from my mouth, I was covered by a sheet of plastic and employed in an altogether ascetic sensual experience. The methodical rigor of the routine, only to achieve an intense kiss on the lips covered by a sheet of plastic wrap, brought the artificiality of the encounter full circle. Indeed it was the plasticity of the experience that lead me to the satire of the performance. It subverts and satirizes our own ritual hygienic practices and the bluntness of performance put it right in my face.

## Test Performances

### Coach TV

*"Contaminate" was on view January 27th and January 28th, 2006 at the Midway Theater in Fort Point.*

*Emily Eastridge and Raishad Glover are panelists in the Women's Caucus for Art, 2006 National Conference taking place this month in Boston.*

The Contaminate Festival was co-curated by TEST Performance Art Event and The Present Tense.

*All images are courtesy of the artists and Michael Schur.*

**Christian Holland** has been writing for Big RED & Shiny since its inception, occasionally making movies, herding cats, and dabbling in political consulting.