

The First Dimension

A ten-minute play

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“The First Dimension”

Characters

Actor 1.....	An actor. Instead of Actor 1, use the name of the actual actor. Changes into one of Olaf’s assistants when Olaf enters.
Actor 2.....	An actor. Instead of Actor 1, use the name of the actual actor. Changes into one of Olaf’s assistants when Olaf enters.
Olaf.....	The artist who created the work the actors are building as well as countless other pieces. Deals mainly with installation pieces which manipulate people’s senses.
Richard.....	Friend to Olaf. Another famous installation artist. They are equals in their own subgenre.

Setting

The play takes place in many places at once. Specifically, it focuses during a conversation over dinner and the creation of Olaf’s installation piece on the other side of New York City.

Other Notes

While the play is going on, Actor 1 and Actor 2 are creating the installation piece. They can stop and continue whenever it seems appropriate, but there is an underlying sense of creation, movement, and a changing of perspectives as the play goes on.

Actor 1 and Actor 2 add and remove pieces from Richard and Olaf’s dinner as the scene goes-on.

“The First Dimension”

The stage is empty, with blocks and tables on the side. Throughout the play ACTOR 1 and ACTOR 2 are setting up the art exhibit and the restaurant while the play goes on.

ACTOR 1 & 2 enters, carrying a block between them.

OLAF is watching the scene take place.

Whenever ‘ACTOR 1’ or ‘ACTOR 2’ is scene, replace it with the actors’ name.

ACTOR 2

Okay. Now this block.

ACTOR 1

Three dimensions.

ACTOR 2

Good. Why?

ACTOR 1

Fuck, I don’t know! It just is!

ACTOR 2

Because it exists.

ACTOR 1

I know it exists- It’s a waste of time. I am retarded in all levels of math. I don’t know how to fix Olaf’s fucken exhibit.

ACTOR 2

ACTOR 1.

ACTOR 1

I should just shut up and lift fucken blocks because that’s all I can do. Finish by yourself. I’ll just help you lift.

ACTOR 2

I don’t have time to do it alone.

ACTOR 1

You have forever until Olaf comes back.

ACTOR 2

We have four pages.

ACTOR 1

Four pages?

ACTOR 2

Yeah. But his scene is across town, so we'll get a few hours of work done in that time. And it can be done. If you help.

ACTOR 1

All levels of math. And Olaf's work is all math. I don't understand it.

ACTOR 2

Alright. This block. Right here. It exists. It's Three-dimensional. It has height, width, and length. 3 dimensions. Set it down right here.

ACTOR 1 stops and starts to lower the block.

ACTOR 1

Right here?

ACTOR 2

It looks right to me.

ACTOR 1

If it's wrong, Olaf will tell us. Now everything is three dimensional.

ACTOR 2

No. Give me the chalk.

ACTOR 1 throws ACTOR 2 a piece of chalk. Together, they create parallel lines down the middle of the stage.

ACTOR 2

This line, isn't. It is length and width (however wide the chalk you drew it is). (pause)
That's it.

They finish. ACTOR 2 gives the chalk back to ACTOR 1.

They go and setup a table. After that, they setup two chairs around the table.

ACTOR 1

And there's the fourth, yes?

ACTOR 2

There’s a fourth.

ACTOR 1

That’s what I said.

ACTOR 2

You can’t change the first three dimensions because they are what we experience. The fourth is what’s measured. Never observed. The fourth could be time, temperature, weight. Anything that can be measured is a dimension, anything that exists when we’re not observing it can be a dimension.

RICHARD and OLAF enter and sit.

ACTOR 1

That’s all we can see? Length, width, and height?

ACTOR 2

Of course. What if we could actually watch time changing? If we could see time.

OLAF

I’m sorry. What did you say? My mind has been wondering.

RICHARD

Your exhibit, of course. How is it coming?

OLAF

22 hours and counting.

RICHARD

Shouldn’t you be there?

OLAF

It’s in capable hands.

RICHARD

Going well?

OLAF

It will work. (smilingly) So what did I miss?

RICHARD

(repeats)

Who do you think you are?

OLAF

I still don't know that I understand your question.

RICHARD

It is straightforward, Olaf.

OLAF

The problem comes, Richard, in the difference between thinking and knowing.

RICHARD

Okay, okay. I'll drop it.

OLAF

You always say that. You never do. You must be dropping it in a place that I don't notice. 'Thinking' implies something relative, and 'knowing' implies something absolute. But there is nothing that is absolute. Everything is 'thinking', everything is from another's perspective. I don't know whose perspective you are asking from. Mine? Yours?

RICHARD

I just want the answer. I'm dropping it, I'm dropping it.

ACTOR 1 has been watching the scene.

ACTOR 2 goes to take another block.

ACTOR 2

Can you give me a hand with this?

ACTOR 1

I don't accept what you said about dimensions.

ACTOR 2

(laughs)

Alright.

ACTOR 1

If I can define 'time' or anything as the fourth dimension, then I should be able to define the first three.

ACTOR 2

You can pretend to change the first three dimensions, you could say that temperature is the first, but length, height, and width are what we experience. They can't be changed.

ACTOR 1

You're wrong.

RICHARD

I'm dropping it. (pause) I saw “Your Black Horizon”. I spent a lot of time there. It was scary. It was an essay. It was sublime.

OLAF

No, it wasn't.

RICHARD

I know what it was.

OLAF

What it was, was a 1000 foot strip of LEDs-

RICHARD

What it was, was beautiful.

OLAF

What it was, was a single line of light. What it was, was two inches wide. What it was, was a thousand feet across. What you said: sublime, scary, an essay, is what you thought it was.

RICHARD

It's the same.

OLAF

That's not what I thought it was.

RICHARD

You can never take a compliment. Just because you don't experience it does not mean that it hadn't happened.

ACTOR 1 and ACTOR 2 take-away the dinner table, and place it in the exhibit. It goes unnoticed.

OLAF

I am sorry. Thank you for going. Thank you for saying those things.

ACTOR 2

How am I wrong?

ACTOR 1

“Your Black Horizon”? Length of 1000 feet, height of two inches, and from the observer seeing lights there is no width. There was no traditional third dimension. And by a process of photon duplication, the lights in Venice, from dawn to dusk, travelled along that strip. What you call the 4th dimension, time, was our third. The viewers see time changing. They can see what is impossible to see.

RICHARD

Olaf.

OLAF

I'm sorry. What did you say? My mind has been wondering.

RICHARD

Your exhibit, of course. Going well?

OLAF

It will work. (smilingly) So what did I miss?

RICHARD

(as in the beginning)

Who do you think you are?

OLAF

To live in my family is to be a fisherman. That is who I am. A fisherman see his children from the window as he leave his house in the morning. He casts his net, catches fish, cleans them, sells them by the docks, and returns at night after an entire day has gone by. A fisherman doesn't see his family as they progress, only the beginning and end-result for that day. My father's day started when I four and he went to Copenhagen. It hasn't ended yet. His father's day was the same. My child is more fortunate. My day is only months long. So a fisherman is the answer to your question.

RICHARD rises and walks to the entrance. They continue as if they were talking across a table from eachother.

OLAF

So what did that question mean, Richard? What does that say, a fisherman? I ignore my child, my wife, and turn my focus to art, which had been stopped in time, waiting for me. What does that say? What does it say about what I'm ignoring? Which is important? I return at the end of the day, and my wife, my child has changed. They couldn't wait for me. But my art could. Is there a way to view them all simultaneously?

RICHARD

You're the artist.

OLAF

Yes. (pause - they are now in the gallery) Richard. You are about to be the first. I believe, yes?

ACTOR 1

Yes. We just finished. The pool is fixed. It should work.

RICHARD

Who fixed it?

ACTOR 2

Neither of us. Both of us.

OLAF

I am very excited. It is very rare for me to see my art realized on the first run. I normally see it after we know it works. Never before we know.

RICHARD

Would you like to be the first then, Olaf?

OLAF

You don't know something has changed, that something is successful, when you're in the middle of it. I need to be apart, so I know it has worked. I need you, to know that the world is there.

RICHARD

Wish me luck.

RICHARD starts to walk.

END OF PLAY