

7pm:

'What time does it finish? ... What? ... Well I have to leave in an hour. I won't be staying.'

Club Class at the ICA by FrenchMottershead: organised to a 't' and documented to the max, it challenged and amused for around four hours on a Saturday evening in late February. As with previous incarnations of the programme at Tate Modern and Tate Liverpool, participants were invited to choose from four micro-classes (Bad Behaviour, Clothing, Surveillance, and Body Language) but this time the setting was markedly different: a club night with loud music, punters dressed to the nines, and a fair amount of alcohol in the equation.

The creators, Rebecca French and Andrew Mottershead, charming hosts from start to finish gave a motivational welcome, later bobbed in and out of sessions, and led a rousing experience-sharing series of discussions at the end, but were for the most part in the background, having devised the evening and set it in motion, it was the participants who were firmly foregrounded.

I was part of the Clothing micro-class and put through my paces by costume and production designer Marsha Roddy. I'd made the mistake of watching FrenchMottershead DVD of the Tate events and subsequently was extremely apprehensive. On entering the 'classroom' snatches of awkward conversation gave crucial insight into people's personalities: there was an art pack component talking ostentatiously about their forthcoming trip to Documenta in the summer; some friends nudging each other and giggling; and a few quieter people who sat somewhat self-consciously darting the occasional smile around. Perhaps given the omnipresence of the documentation processes involved and in our media-savvy age people felt a responsibility to perform and tensions buoyed. Though Roddy encouraged participants to be 'honest' rather than 'nice', when invited to share first impressions of one another most erred on the side of caution: 'Arty', 'Funky', 'Relaxed'. That is apart from the penultimate participant to share her thoughts: 'Uptight', 'Arrogant' and 'Insecure' came the verdict on the person sat opposite them. Met with a highly defensive retort the analysis did not seem entirely inaccurate or unwarranted, but how could two people who had never come across each other previously get to such a point so quickly? Perhaps more surprising still was the amicability they displayed just a couple of hours later after having sat around in dressing gowns together and publicly worn a mishmash of each other's clothes.

Some people underwent a more radical transformation than others. Most of the men seemed to end up in very tight-fitting girls' t-shirts, the most glamorous girls were made to look ragged, and the dowdiest shiny and new. For my part, I surprised myself by being very assertive in talking about the way I felt at different points in the evening, but apart from one of the exercises in which I was made to wear a miniskirt and some sweaty boots, it wasn't nearly as bad as I thought it was going to be. Indeed, for me, the 'results' were almost frustratingly invisible. While in my final outfit of the evening and, as per the task in hand, asking people what they thought of it, I (cheatingly) asked an acquaintance only to be told that while for me it might feel radical and uncomfortable she noticed nothing especially unusual.

Indeed, the said acquaintance had had an abrupt introduction to the evening: upon arrival they were confronted by a man shouting vigorously in someone's face only to be greeted by the comment 'Are you in the Bad Behaviour class?' She quickly worked out what was going on and remained in the bar, thoroughly entertained throughout. Club Class' micro-classes turned the ICA bar into a concentrated mass of highly orchestrated performative behaviour, a veritable experimental playground. Whereas in the previous Tate manifestations participants were literally unleashed on

the unsuspecting general public, at the ICA the situation seemed to be more concentrated and thereby, fittingly for a Saturday night, more fun with participants and their newly-honed skills bouncing off each other.

In just a few short hours all those taking part had managed to surprise, amuse and delight themselves in a myriad of ways.

12am:

'You still here?'

'Yeah, I was in the Surveillance class, it was wicked.'

Everyone stayed right until the end, vying for the opportunity to proudly talk to camera about their various mischiefs and adventures. Judging by the ebullient responses it would be fair to say a good time was had by one and all.