

# Operation Work: In Progress

Written and performed by Avi Wenger, *Operation Work: In Progress* was first performed in December 1980 in The Rotunda, at the North Carolina School of Design, located in Raleigh, North Carolina. It was produced by *grid,ink*.



## Section A.

four performers: a single live performer interacts with three taped voices. the main voice is that of a german, speaking english with a very thick and typical german accent. the other two voices are the voice of [tick tick tick tick tick] and {an englishman}. the fourth voice are the sound effects.

—the piece opens with ten seconds of total **Blackness**...tape on—

<b>Description</b>	<b>German/English Voice</b>	<b>The Clock</b>
the voice of the German	The sum total of a person's days are marked by what?	[tick tick tick tick tick]
	by what?	[tick tick tick tick]
	by what?	[tick].

—tape off. single spot on a shape curled on the floor near the rock. tape on—  
listen

the shape begins to move.	look...see...spot...move	
the performer is dressed in a sleeveless cotton t-shirt—1621 written on the back—gym pants with piping down the sides similar to baseball leggings, white baseball stirrups and a pair of black ballet shoes. slow methodical movements, from spot on the floor, to a upright figure.	finde den stein findet den stein er sieht listen, fur den stein den stein den stein yah dieser stein er ist, der stein der steine this rock it is, THE ROCK is sein stein his rock er findet den stein he finds on dem platz vo er on the spot where it the implacable rock is he finds himself.	
	english touches the rock grabs grasps the rock english holds the rock where...it...it...it...is.	
thru-out this section the live performer moves	work...I. sitting. look at him...sitting	

thru a variety of postures which reflect different forms of work: sports, manual labor, desk jobs, etc. in the form of a dance.

at some point the dance takes the performer to a typewriter, where he types various stories, anecdotes and facts about the world of work.

the typed notes are passed amongst the audience.

the entire sequence of movements described above lasts until "2 principal assets".

there...sitting...there  
look...ing...at him si...sitting  
there..look ing...there  
sitting  
he is alone.  
nothing [tick tick tick tick tick]  
doing!  
solo...he is sitting  
{subtracting, the act or process or instance  
[tick tick tick tick tick]  
—harsh sound of an electric saw—  
of withdrawing from a number}  
yet something is working.  
it is quiet  
there is an unnot-terable...stillness.  
solo he is  
{subtracting, a whole number from itself does not  
yield a non-integer- 0 is real}  
sitting.  
he sits  
something is at work  
listen...  
—harsh sound of an electric saw—  
there is quiet  
there is an unnot-terable stillness  
there is some...thing  
[tick tick tick tick tick]  
he  
listen  
working  
in the quiet  
in the unnot-terable stillness  
he  
listen  
alone  
nothing [tick tick tick tick tick]  
do...ing!  
is work  
look [tick tick tick tick tick]  
is...sitting.  
he sits,

intrans...itive,  
nothing doing!  
transitive;  
he sits...on the rock.

let me re-iterate.  
what we have is he,  
I  
WORK...sitting  
there...looking...sitting  
at him...there...listen  
sitting...there...look  
at him...si sitting...looking  
there...sitting...  
alone.  
nothing [tick tick tick tick tick]  
doing!

—harsh sound of an electric saw—  
something at work?

quiet...there is  
unut-terable stillness...there is  
sitting  
something  
{subtracting 382 from...}  
potent  
(...2002...}  
something hard  
{...equals...}  
something compound  
{...1620...}  
at work.  
he...is...sitting  
intransi-tive,  
nothing doing!  
transitive;  
he sits...on the rock  
looking...listening,  
it is quiet  
there is un-ut-terable stillness  
there is some thing

[tick tick tick tick tick]

he  
listen  
work...in the quiet  
look  
he  
alone

[tick tick tick tick tick]

doing  
work...in the quiet  
is sitting  
intrans  
nothing  
trans  
he sits...on the rock  
potent  
on the rock  
compact  
the rock  
something is compound  
the rock  
listen

—harsh sound of an electric saw—

at work  
sitting  
is at work  
transitive  
the rock  
something  
at work?  
sitting  
the rock...is  
the rock  
is the rock  
sitting  
is on the rock  
at work.  
he is  
transitive.

he sits on a rock  
and the rock  
sits  
under him,

on a rock  
yes, sitting.  
doing something?  
doing something  
doing something

[tick tick tick tick tick]

yes,  
{TIME}  
yet nothing  
{2020-400  
=1620  
-1620 = 0.  
1620 = 0 is the the the}

[tick tick tick tick tick]

{by deduction}  
is the starting point,  
and nothing,  
{by deduction}  
is where we begin.

{zero}

moving [time]

a little further up

but do ing [tick tick tick tick tick]

the same [tick tick tick tick tick]

—harsh sound of electric saw followed by chicken sounds—

{hold the addition for later}

halte deine gedanken fur spatzen jetzt wolen wir essen

{we subtract 400 from 2020

and come to an agreement:}

the rock is compact

the rock is not moving

the rock has been moved

the rock moves...but

we cannot see its motion.

[tick tick tick tick tick]

time does not [tick]

it works

on the rock

on the rock

sitting

doing

on the rock

on the rock  
yes, that is correct  
motion, the rock  
moves  
{2020 -399  
= 1621}

work...has its moments

[tick tick tick tick tick]

moves  
the rock...sitting

[tick tick tick tick tick]

he...in...momentum

[tick tick tick tick tick]

with its movements  
in

[tick tick tick tick tick]

hands against the clock.  
now with respect to

[tick tick tick tick tick]

listen  
the rock in

[tick tick tick tick tick]

moves,  
but we cannot

[tick tick tick tick tick]

it,  
breathing, goddamn

[tick tick tick tick tick]

it  
helps the hands  
move

[tick tick tick tick tick]

work, the rock,  
has its

[tick tick tick tick tick]

moments

[tick tick tick tick tick]

does not sit

[tick tick tick tick tick]

it is work.

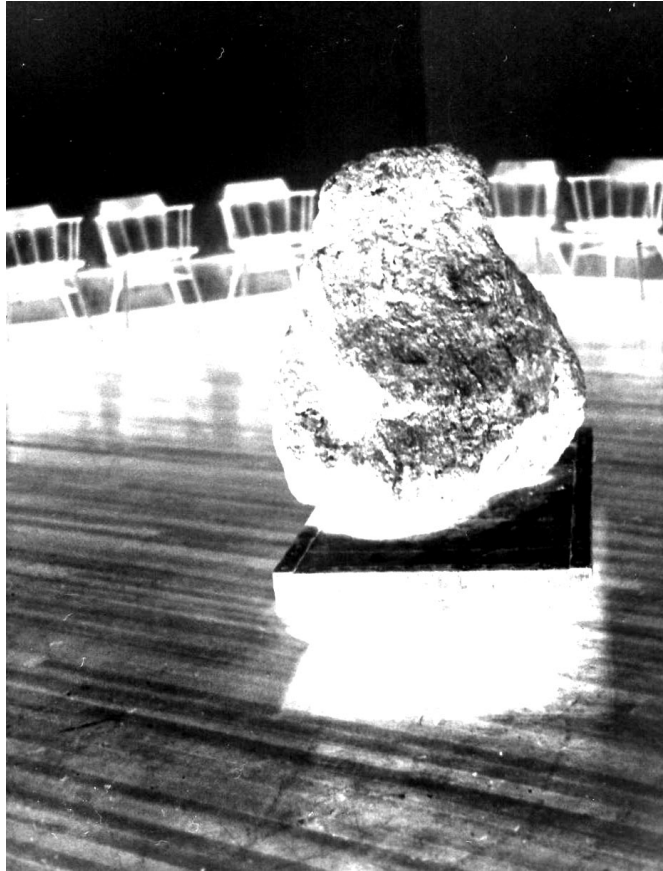
[tick tick tick tick tick]

listen...the

it takes to [tick tick tick tick tick]  
move, the rock [tick tick tick tick tick]  
that sits...is [tick tick tick tick tick]  
look...work, [tick tick tick tick tick]  
it takes to [tick tick tick tick tick]  
move...the rock [tick tick tick tick tick]  
sitting...work [tick tick tick tick tick]  
is...yes...he, [tick tick tick tick tick]  
is...listen [tick tick tick tick tick]  
he is...look [tick tick tick tick tick]  
on, yes, the rock [tick tick tick tick tick]  
on the spot [tick tick tick tick tick]  
listen, he [tick tick tick tick tick]  
look...have a pact. [tick tick tick tick tick]  
some are willing to play [tick tick tick tick]  
with time, [tick tick tick tick]  
others are committed.  
his 2 principal assets  
the watch and the hear  
are his 2 principal assets  
and don't forget the hands  
are his 2 principal assets.  
re-member  
captialize on the [tick tick tick tick]  
at hand.  
are his 2 principal assets.

end dance.  
the live performer  
moves to cart and  
sits atop the rock  
thru the end  
of Section A.





the rock hands [tick tick tick tick]  
capital...remember [tick tick tick tick]  
{subtract 400 from 2020...} [tick tick tick tick]  
interest moves [tick tick tick tick]  
the rock [tick tick tick tick]  
{tract tract tract tract} [tick tick tick tick]  
sitting...assets [tick tick tick tick]  
of principal [tick tick tick tick]  
are working, [tick tick tick tick]  
the rock. [tick tick tick tick]  
watch...hear [tick tick tick tick]

the rock work. [tick tick tick tick]  
[tick tick tick tick]

it was the rock that was  
it was the rock that was in their hands  
that was hard, as a rock that was  
hard up and down to work  
hard at work the rock to work  
in their hands, hard, as it was.  
it is this rock he stands on  
stands on will stand on and on  
just him alone

[tick tick tick tick]  
nothing doing!  
with the rock.  
just him and his rock...alone

[tick tick tick tick]  
doing...doing...doing

—the following section consists of three voices and the voice of the ticking clock—

<b>german</b>	<b>englishperson</b>	<b>a geologist</b> (american accent)
work		the rock
moves	2020 minus 399	composed of many different grains
thru		[tick tick tick tick] assembled into singular units
the rock	1621 minus 1621	susceptible and dependent upon
sitting		natural processes in the environment
on the spot	equals	past and present
where we begin.	zero	

[tick tick tick tick]

—the ticking clock continues for fifteen seconds, then fades with the lights to a **Blackout**—