

Eli Gold's performance practice is an exploration of presence, vulnerability, and the materiality of memory in a world increasingly defined by digital transience and sociopolitical disconnection. Gold's work is not confined by traditional boundaries of performance; instead, it operates at the intersections of ritual, witness, and intimate gesture. Through acts that range from the quietly meditative to the publicly confrontational, Gold examines what it means to care, to grieve, and to connect in contemporary society.

At the core of this practice is the body—both as subject and as site. Gold treats the body not as an isolated entity but as a porous, relational field where personal, historical, and collective narratives converge. Whether kneeling before a casket in *Wake*, tending to the architectural wounds of the Pilgrim Baptist Church in *Restoration*, or engaging in intimate storytelling in *Bedtime Story*, the body becomes a vessel of transmission—a medium through which unspoken histories and invisible emotions are made palpable.

Gold's performances are often rooted in acts of care and mourning, challenging the spectator to reconsider their role from passive observer to active witness. In a sociopolitical climate where detachment and apathy can be seen as coping mechanisms, Gold insists on the radical potential of tenderness. The act of washing archival gloves, of suturing grapefruit while listening to personal medical histories, or of writing letters tethered to the rhythmic pulse of an electric breast pump—all are gestures that refuse to turn away from discomfort or vulnerability. Instead, they lean in, creating spaces where grief, love, and memory are not just acknowledged but held with reverence.

Materiality plays a critical role in Gold's work, serving as both evidence and echo of these ephemeral acts. Ash compressed into beads, ink dispersed into water, and collected remnants from funerals—these materials are not mere artifacts but active participants in the narrative. They embody the belief that matter holds memory, that physical traces can carry the weight of absence as profoundly as presence.

THE BODY AS MEDIUM, MEMORY, AND MATERIAL WITNESS

In the context of today's society—marked by sociopolitical polarization, environmental crises, and a pervasive sense of disconnection—Gold's work speaks to a deep, often unarticulated longing for authenticity and connection. It confronts the viewer with the fragility of human existence, not to induce despair, but to highlight the extraordinary beauty found in shared vulnerability. Gold's performances are, at their heart, acts of faith: faith in the power of presence, in the significance of the unseen, and in the potential for art to act as both mirror and mender.

This practice does not offer easy answers or tidy resolutions. Instead, it dwells in ambiguity, in the tension between what is known and what is felt, between the ephemeral and the enduring. Gold's work invites us to sit with our discomfort, to witness without the need to fix, and to find meaning in the quiet, often overlooked moments of human experience. In doing so, it offers a powerful counter-narrative to the noise of contemporary life—a reminder that within the fragile, fleeting gestures of care and connection lies a profound, transformative force.



FRAGILE MATTERS