



## **Content: Female Male**

Nature:

*Performance*

Public Performance:

*Manila, Philippines, 2007*

After a trip to the LRT (light rail transit) in Manila, I was interested in highlighting the notion of distinctions. Throughout the city, people are routinely "asked" to divide themselves according to gender, e.g. in malls and train stations whereby male and female security guards stand ready to search men and women. The normally mixed and fast moving crowd quickly subdivides itself to conform to this binary set. Similarly trains like the LRT and MRT provide platform waiting areas and train cars that allow only women, children, the elderly, and disabled, thus creating yet another division once people enter the train. One distinction that might be considered is the pair "content/not content." By leaving the binaries somewhat open-ended, people who notice them will have to interpret intentionality, asking themselves "content with what, my life, my job, my living situation, etc.?" and then sorting or refusing to sort themselves accordingly.

In the middle of the walkway, 2 stanchions were placed. On either side of the stanchions, the sign "Kontento" (content) and "Hindi Kontento" (not content) making human pedestrian choose whether to go to the left or right of the stanchions. Standing on either end was a person with a security guard's hat, black shades and a 5-inch baton ("the magic wand"). In the Philippines, there exist security guards who use wooden sticks (like the conductor's baton) as an assisting tool to check the bags of people entering malls, cinemas, trains, and other public places. I have seen this phenomenon only in this country.

