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NEXT STEPS

This issue looks at the people and agencies that make space for performance artists and dancers to meet, experiment, and dance together in LA. This January, February, and March 2012, Native Strategies presented The Next Steps; a series of performances hosted by Mustache Mondays, PIETER PASD, Anatomy Riot and the Sweat Spot, with site specific dance works by Maya Gingery and Anna B. Scott and a performative installation by WIFE. Native Strategies is directed by Brian Getnick and Tanya Rubbak.

—provocations

1. In LA there is an encounter happening between performance artists from two distinct fields: dance and visual art. These two fields are demarcated by specific languages and histories. For visual artists, it is a language that interrogates representation: I am a visual artist, I want to know what a performance is about, what it refers to and to what other artworks it speaks to. For dancers, there is no less of an interest in history or referentiality, but dance, as Ryan Kelly puts it, “a rarified vocabulary of gestures as foreign to [visual artists] as the rarified vocabulary of gesture in abstract geometric painting is familiar to them.” I would argue that performance artists who come from a Visual Arts background should learn the history of dance—not only to better apprehend the ideas present in the work of dancers, but because the work we do inevitably involves movement, timing, velocity and the placement of our bodies in space. In short, whether we know it or not, dance frames what we do when we make performance art.

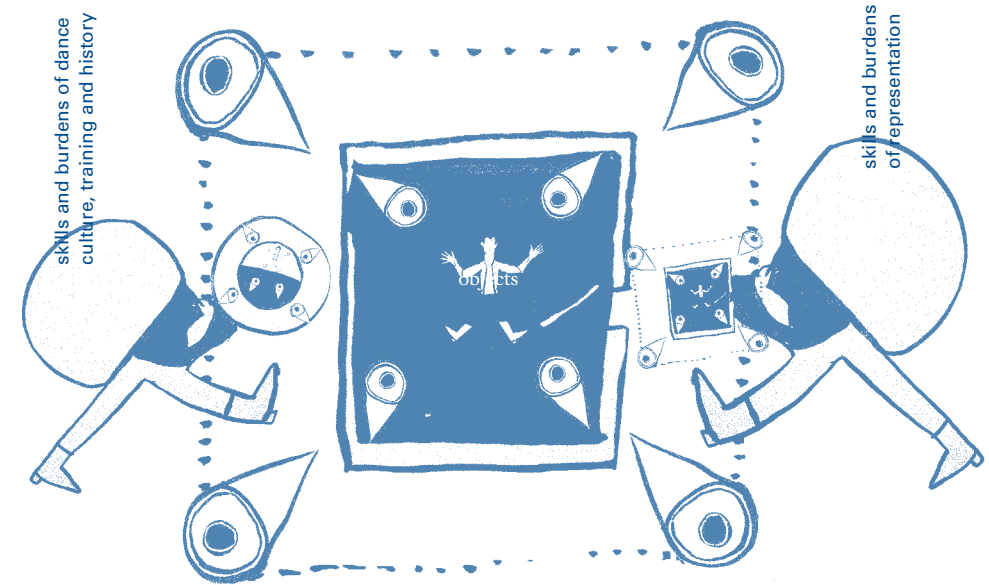
2. Audiences can choose not to privilege referential readings of performance art. This is not to say that we should, or can, turn off our analytical lenses. We can, however, choose to balance our analysis with a focused awareness on what is felt through our bodies towards the performance. Sensory awareness and presence are skill sets learned through practice and training.

3. As a rule, dance-based art is oriented towards the living audience; the people that show up to the event. These works don't leave much of a trace for future audiences to contemplate. As more and more dancers migrate to visual arts oriented venues where their bodies are viewed as objects and, by extension, commodified, there are more and more exceptions to this rule.

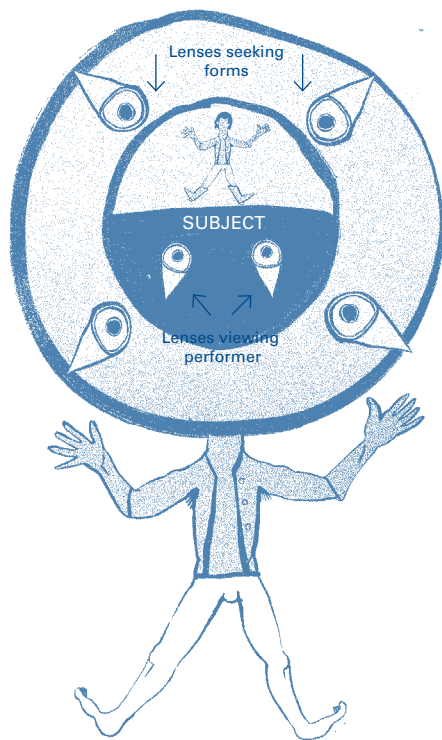
4. To performance artists of all stripes: Rehearse, Rehearse, Rehearse.

—BG

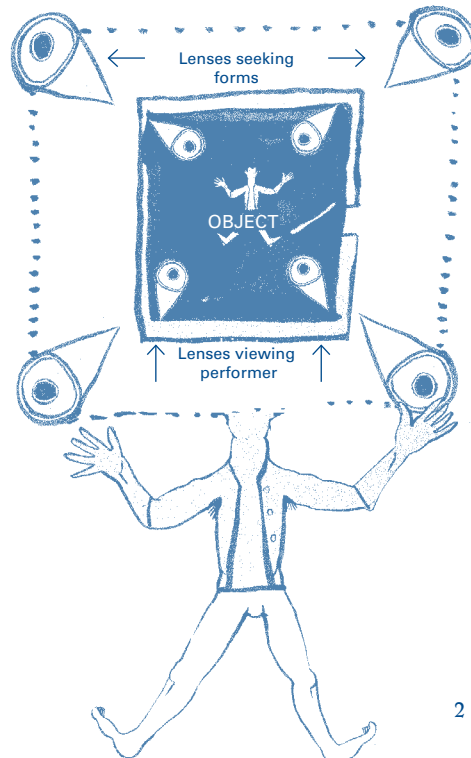
General Migration: dancers and visual artists are migrating towards performance art. in general, performance art takes place in visual arts oriented arenas. the performer is generally regarded like an object in these places.



Two Primary Arenas for Performance Art (Places / Head Spaces)



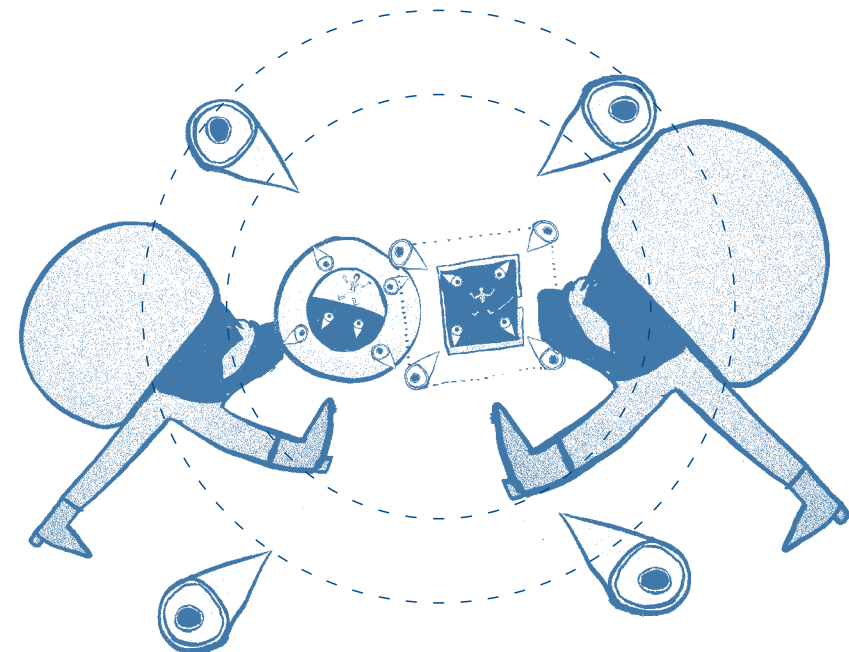
DANCE ORIENTED ARENA



VISUAL ARTS ORIENTED ARENA

2

Migration Diagram in LA: encounter between dancers and visual artists in one of a growing number of dance oriented arenas in los angeles. in LA the walls around these arenas have yet to be drawn, the lenses are resolutely pointed outward and the artists performing within them waver between subject and object in the blink of an eye.



3

HANA van der KOLK'S CHOREOGRAPHIC PROJECTS COMBINE ELEMENTS OF CONCEPTUAL PRACTICE WITH THE TECHNIQUES OF POSTMODERN CHOREOGRAPHY AND TAKE PLACE IN A WIDE RANGE OF SITES, INCLUDING THE STAGE, STUDIOS AND GALLERIES, IN WRITING, ON FILM, AND IN OUTDOOR, PUBLIC SPACES. THE HIGHLY COLLABORATIVE NATURE OF THIS WORK SERVES HANA'S LARGER AIM OF OVERTURNING THE FIXED NATURE OF A GIVEN PERFORMANCE BY ALLOWING FOR SPONTANEITY AND CHANCE-OCCURRENCE WITHIN PREDETERMINED ASPECTS. HANA HOLDS AN MFA IN CHOREOGRAPHY FROM UCLA'S DEPARTMENT OF WORLD ARTS AND CULTURES, TEACHES INTERNATIONALLY AND WAS THE 2011-12 ARTHUR LEVITT '52 FELLOW AT WILLIAMS COLLEGE IN MASSACHUSETTS, WHERE SHE TAUGHT EXPERIMENTAL CHOREOGRAPHY AND PERCEPTUAL INTELLIGENCE AND DIRECTED THE APPRENTICESHIP PROJECT, A PROCESS OF BODILY EXCHANGE AND A DURATIONAL PERFORMANCE INSTALLATION FEATURING 34 PERFORMERS ENGAGED IN MOVEMENT PRACTICE AND A VARIETY OF FUNCTIONAL LABOR. WWW.HANAVANDERKOLK.COM.



Brian Getnick: I wanted to revisit our earlier conversation, where it seemed you were frustrated by the way some performance artists haphazardly use movement and dance in their work.

Hana van der Kolk: I think there are a few issues, and one has to do with bodily training. Part of what defines dance is that it's done by dancers. And what makes dancers dancers is that they've gone through this rigorous training. It's a culture, a lifestyle, and that's different than making work without that as your identity. Whatever issues, themes and structures dancers work with, it's always in dialogue, whether they like it or not, with this bodily training. It's important to acknowledge this as a difference. People who are making performance art don't necessarily have that in their bodies.

bg: What is the difference between a performance artist that incorporates movement vs. a trained dancer who uses dance as the main form of communication, but includes other disciplines in their work? For instance Miguel Gutierrez* is a dancer who uses other tropes such as comedic monologues and music, but when he dances it's clear he's an artist with a dancer's training.

hv: When I get into these discussions about disciplinary boundaries, I get frustrated because I think they are so artificial. But then again, you don't make work in a vacuum. You are always in dialogue with other work being made in LA and the world. You are in dialogue with history, and in order to communicate with an audience, the consideration of those histories is important because inevitably people will read the piece through certain lenses. There is some work that refuses to do this within the category of performance art. Nobody looks at it without their lenses, it's just what we do when we look.

bg: I have been wondering what the core expectations were for the art audience witnessing performance in visual art oriented spaces and I came up with 'concept' and 'presence.' The delivery and handling of the concept is the expected rigor for the performance artist. The word 'presence' however is less clear. As a dancer your critique might be that there is no thought behind an untrained performer's movements. You might see them flailing around and think, if they wanted to convey these ideas or feelings, they could have put more thought into their movements. Then again, some performance artists have been doing it for years and are amazing to watch. They may have no dance training at all and yet are able to communicate their ideas through movement because of this ineffable 'presence.'

hv: I have come to really question how much of this is 'presence' when

there are compositional choices happening that contribute to our ability to see this as ‘presence.’ For example, Marina Abramovic. Part of why her ‘presence’ is considered to be powerful is because she makes very considered, compositional choices, which are usually not to move in a space.

bg: It’s minimal.

hv: It’s not minimal, it’s decided. It’s this and not that. We’re given a place to look. We know that she knows that she’s not moving or we know that she knows that she’s moving back and forth, that she’s repeating a gesture. There’s a trust and a dialogue between us and her. Whereas you can look at other performance artists and say, ‘I don’t even know if they know what they’re doing,’ and that has a distancing effect. I think people’s ability to be interesting to look at can get raised quickly by just making some compositional choices.

bg: Does ‘presence’ then become a blanket masking choices, masking structures?

hv: It gets over used. It’s over rated.

bg: I remember watching Werner Herzog’s “My Best Fiend,” about the actor Klaus Kinski who was known for going on stage and enraging audiences with an almost supernatural power that was described as ‘presence.’ Yet in the film, Herzog concluded that, No, Kinski was rehearsing every day in a closet to have that effect. It seems in general there is so much work done to make it appear that the power came from nowhere, that the performer is not in control.

hv: That ties back to training. This is why we rehearse as much as we do. The skills to create presence. I have been appreciating that more since Miguel Gutierrez’s workshop: the value in breaking down the skill sets behind ‘presence.’ We are an organism with perceptual abilities and here are some of the ways we perceive: sight, hearing, breathing, smelling, internal sensations of feeling full and perceiving another body in the same space. Really cataloging what it means to be a mind-body. I feel that we both share this interest through our work with Deborah Hay. Breaking down the mind and body through meditation, authentic movement, Yoga, post-modern dance, and contact improvisation. Hours and hours of investigating what to do with those perceptual abilities.

bg: Does this reorientation towards the body allow you to de-privilege concept and present instead a particular process?

hv: Ah, yes, this is where I’ve really been investigating my work in the last few years. I was for while just interested in this practice and I just want-

ed to put the practice in the space, but it’s hard for people to read without it being “about” something. People have asked Deborah, do you ever perform Open Practice, which is the perceptual training of here and now that I just described, and she’s like Oh god no, why would I do that, it’s too scary. She crafts specific pieces within which she can practice Open Practice. I follow that model except that I let the pieces be more overtly about certain things and in relationship to overt cultural references and phenomena, whereas Deborah’s are not clearly about relationships to outside things. I’ve used T. S. Eliot for instance...

bg: Are all your performances consistently presenting this performance practice, but within different subject vehicles?

hv: Yes.

bg: So in place of concept you present an awareness of being?

hv: And a proposal for an alternate way of being, which has very deep political implications that confront your societal choreography as a man, as a woman, as a gay or black person. We have bodily choreographies we can’t escape totally, but the practices of Open Practice and Somatic Training really interject into them. Saying ‘what if I am trillions of cells awake now?’ is really outside of identity and of course I have a privileged place to do that, to say ‘I surrender my identity’ as much as possible.

bg: So why would someone want to see two Hana van der Kolk performances if they attempt to present the same process?

hv: Because I am interested in what this practice says in a meta way. It says stuff about death, it says stuff about love, gender, race. I can investigate all these themes and concepts using this practice.

bg: You’ve been doing teaching stints in Amsterdam, LA, NY, France. How has travel affected your work?

hv: It keeps you on your toes, it keeps you fresh, it keeps you having to shift lenses. Teaching in Estonia and Upstate NY keeps me fresh as a maker because I imagine being in these different shoes. And in some ways when I first got back to LA this August, I realized that the word community is mutually exclusive from the word open minded. Community is a collective with an agreed set of values and ways of living. And in some ways, it’s not possible in a rigorous way, to stay open minded when you are also trying to stay an active and accepted member of the community.

bg: Would you recommend to young performing artists that they leave the LA community at least for a time?

hv: I always say to young artists: get exposed to people who don’t work

the way you work. That's what changed me. With all my allegiance to dance, I'm not making work for dance contexts and I don't know if anyone in dance cares about what I do. To another artist, especially one living outside the U.S. I would say: come to LA and see this community where there is such a willingness to say: I don't know if you're a dancer, a composer or a sculptor, but I will look at what you make. At spaces like Human Resources, Public Fiction and Sea and Space they ask: what kind of stuff do you want to have happen? Go find the people to do it.

bg: LA gives artists permission to be promiscuous within many different communities and orientations. It's something we have going for us. What are some things that are difficult about LA that leaving would assist?

hv: What's great about LA is what's difficult. You can do all these oddball things in all these spaces for all these small audiences and you can learn so much but if you're trying to make a career that you can live on, there is not much support for it. And in a way, there can't be because if there were those big institutions like in NY and Europe, there would be many more definitions and people would feel obligated to be inside these defining spaces. But here as a dance maker, I feel free to just make and not worry about it being good only for dance critics or dance minded people.



ITCH OUIJABOARD ORACLE TRANSMISSION

**EDITED AND COMPILED BY
TAISHA PAGGETT AND MEG WOLFE OF TEAM *ITCH***

FROM ISSUES 1 - 14



ITCH OUIJABOARD ORACLE TRANSMISSION

1: Place/Community. It was a transitory community, very much like the city it was a part of. The rioters has long suspected that physicians had been robbing the private graves of the city in order to obtain subjects for dissection. My father and I were friends. We talked about stuff, and I once asked him why he didn't do some writing. I want more access to good venues with good lights and a big space... Getting in the car again just doesn't hack it, even for dance. But now I'm betraying my age. What's not missing in Los Angeles is virtuosic movement, I've seen enough. // Next question. What is my responsibility to what is true right now? and now? and now? Next

question. What are my options? Putting my bgirl friend in touch with my clothing designer friend so she can get a job... Perhaps this feels unfortunate. But perhaps this keeps things shifting and gives us room for change. How can we create opportunities for making connections where mutual recognition can occur without adding more to our already full plates? Labels will just scare them away as they scare me. At that point I thought, what the hell do I want a concert stage for anyway? —anonymous.
meg wolfe. simone forti. esther baker-tarpaga. yvonne rainer. anonymous. Rae Shao- Lan Blum. amy champion. maria gillespie. Arianne MacBean. Rogelio Lopez G. Cynthia Lee.



ITCH IS AN EVOLVING ART PROJECT QUA ARTIST FORUM CUM JOURNAL/ZINE NOW PUBLISHED TWO TIMES A YEAR. WE PUBLISH POETRY, POLITICAL RANTS, SCHOLARLY WORK, ONE SENTENCE EMAIL RESPONSES, CRYPTIC FORTUNE-COOKIE FORTUNES, PHOTOS, FOUND IMAGES, ETC., SUBMITTED FROM OUR HIGHLY ELASTIC COMMUNITY OF VISUAL, PERFORMANCE, VIDEO, MULTI- AND INTERMEDIA ARTISTS, DANCERS, CHOREOGRAPHERS, MOVERS AND THE POLITICALLY-INCLINED, ALL OF WHOM HAVE DIVERGENT INTERESTS AND PRACTICES THAT CONSTELLATE AROUND AN ISSUE THEME IN A HAPPENSTANCE YET CURIOUSLY FORTUITOUS BRICOLAGE

SIMONE FORTI IS A DANCER/CHOREOGRAPHER, ARTIST AND WRITER. HER EARLY DANCE CONSTRUCTIONS WERE A CRITICAL COMPONENT IN FORGING THE DIRECTION OF THE JUDSON DANCE THEATER THAT REVOLUTIONIZED DANCE IN NEW YORK IN THE 1960S AND 70S. HER CURRENT NEWS ANIMATION IMPROVISATIONS IN MOVEMENT AND LANGUAGE ARE MOSAICS OF IMPRESSIONS, QUESTIONS AND FEELINGS IN RESPONSE TO THE WORLD AS BROUGHT TO US BY THE NEWS MEDIA. HER BOOK *HANDBOOK IN MOTION* WAS PUBLISHED BY THE NOVA SCOTIA COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN PRESS (1974). HER BOOK *OH, TONGUE* WAS EDITED AND PUBLISHED BY FRED DEWEY FOR BEYOND BAROQUE BOOKS (2003). FORTI'S WORK HAS BEEN FEATURED AT NUMEROUS PROMINENT INSTITUTIONS AROUND THE WORLD INCLUDING IN THE PERMANENT COLLECTIONS OF THE WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART AND THE STEDELIJK MUSEUM IN AMSTERDAM.



SIMONE FORTI with Brian Getnick

It's a cold day downtown. We seek shelter and cups of coffee in the Broadway Market. There's sawdust on the floors. Simone is wearing a red hat and a red coat. I brush off a dirty table in one corner where we'll have our interview.

Simone Forti: You asked me about my sense of community in Los Angeles and I don't have an overarching sense of the community. I tend to get into what I'm into and know a certain number of people. Before meeting Mara and being a part of The Box* as one of the artists that she shows, I was more in the dance community, which tends to be centered around postmodernism and improvisation. I was kind of an elder in that community.

I followed the work at The Box and was often invited to perform. Since meeting Mara I have become much more aware of performance art in Los Angeles. Maybe a lot of that work - and I'm speaking generally here - uses elements in juxtaposition, often referring to how society is and identity in society.

I remember a performance by Dawn Kasper** and I was quite moved by it. It was something she did in the street just west of where the galleries are on Hill street. She was in a pickup truck and driving like a maniac, then climbing on the roof of the truck, falling into the open back of it and it was clear she wasn't going to hurt herself falling because it was a good fall. Then she jumped back onto the cab and opened up her coat and was naked and screaming and the vision of looking up and seeing this naked woman in this coat screaming her head off was very powerful. It was a genuine anger and fury. She was a fury.

bg: Is sexuality handled differently within the postmodern and contemporary dance venues you mentioned earlier?

sf: In the dance world there are ad nauseum duets of 'come here, go away, I hold you, I throw you to the ground.' Echoes of Pina Bausch, but in sweatshirts and sweatpants. Generally done on stages. Some of the work deals with questions of affection, immigration, forbidden languages.

bg: This is the work in the dance world?

sf: These are the main recurring themes I see.

bg: But you're also seeing these reoccurring themes in the context of student work at UCLA?

sf: Students yes, but I started teaching at UCLA 12 years ago. So some of my students have been out in the world for many years doing their

work and I've been following some of them.

Carmela Hermon did a very beautiful piece with Terrence Luke Johnson. They did a duet where a basic element of it was that she was speaking as if she was him and he was speaking as if he was her from her daily life. He's likely to say: "I'm pregnant in my third month." And she's likely to say, "I'm an aging gay man." The movement is very precise and they stand side by side, but they're changing facings. And the words I went for to make an example are the most banal and the most direct, but as the piece develops it's very subtle. There's a lot of sadness. There's a moment of very beautiful and fast movement on the part of Carmela, and I love that one virtuosic moment of inventive movement. You just get a glimpse of it and the rest is almost pedestrian.

ITCH OUIJABOARD ORACLE TRANSMISSION

2: space. the where of dance. I love dancing at clubs when they have the right music. I don't always know what the right music is. When it's on, it's on. And a camera, a one-eyed witness who feeds my every move through imaginary circuits in cyberspace to an imaginary gallery a few thousand miles away... people may or may not be watching. The limitations of dance start with the skin. That is the first boundary, fingertip to fingertip. time space and the price of gas conspire against us. The lengths we go to get somewhere and how much supposed "nowhere" we pass by in that effort. A "dance space" can be a closet if someone is able to dance within its confines, a "performance space" could be a kitchen floor at a party if there's room for a bboy to throw down some footwork while still saving some space in the corner for two or three "audience" members. The audience understands limitations

and forgives, so I dance in and around them! Perhaps a caravan that transports from one site to the next. There can even be work crafted into the driving, i.e. the soundtrack played on the ride, a text read by someone in the back seat, a drive-by performance of a parking-lot dance. It could also be done Critical Mass style- a la bicycletas. No announcements, no flyers, just show up and play. And maybe, just possibly, dance could start to be taken a little more seriously in this city as an art form with an important local presence—not something that needs to be imported from Europe for presentation, or subjugated to the needs of sitcom choreography and martial arts fight sequences in the latest Tom Cruise flick. — *Faye Lim, Rae Shao-Lan Blum, Jasmine Albuquerque, Meg Wolfe, Taisha Paggett, Amy Campion, Erica Rebollar, Rae Shao-Lan Blum, Jerry the Priest, Rebecca Alson-Milkman*

bg: Why do you like that?

sf: Because I've seen so much dance that goes on and on and on with movement that you can't see anything anymore.

bg: Carmela and Luke presented virtuosic movement in contrast to pedestrian movement. Is it valued more in this way?

sf: It's not more valued. It fits into a moment and is necessary for that moment.

bg: Part of the constellation.

sf: Yes, there's also some use of props. Little cars that you get at the .99 Cent Store that are lined up along the side of the performance space and then sent into the performance space crashing into each other. It's playful and formally interesting with a sad undertone. But there again, it's social. The subject matter is social.

SIMONE FORTI with Brian Getnick

bg: It sounds social in a more general way than the work you were describing earlier. This 'push me, pull you' tension in a couple. A drama of romance.

sf: Yes, but taken in a very stereotypical way. Instead, what Carmela and Luke worked with was so at home and out of their daily lives that it was unusually real.

bg: How has personal experience been a factor in your own work?

sf: Well, my most usual approaches are what I call News Animations. I find that even when I'm on all fours, different thoughts come up to me. And as the thoughts come up, I might stand up or roll over somehow stimulated by my somatic state of being as I'm asking questions. I used to watch a lot of C-Span.

bg: How long ago did you start this?

sf: I started this around 1981. I was doing these also during the time I was living in Vermont doing a lot of gardening and was really interested in the strategies of the various plants, especially the very aggressive ones that take over territory. Seeing what happens when there are two different plants next to each other and how they'll fight over the territory. Say, oregano and mint.

bg: Oregano vs. mint, who wins?

sf: Oregano will win. There's a lot of that going on, especially in the Spring when the ground starts to thaw and you dig up what you had planted for ground cover. It's been there long enough for many things to make a complex arrangement under there. Many worms, beetles, and ants. It's complex down there and you just tear it all up because you're going to pull out all the roots that are still there. Meanwhile there are raccoons. I can see raccoon prints in the snow at my compost heap and follow the prints across the field to where there's some raccoon poop that's sunk way down into the snow because it was hot when it came out and there I am across the field looking down at the stuff that had been on my table the day before.

bg: It traveled.

sf: It travels. To mix the natural goings on in the world with the news. We are each other's predators. We are our own predators. What I see in the garden and in the fields and woods...OK...so now I'm stopping for a moment. In my imagination I'm a little bit in Vermont, and I'm just treading water...I don't know where I'm going with this, I'm in this state and I'll see what comes next, OK what comes next is NOW, it's changed now, now I

feel very much confused that I listen to the news a lot. I don't have a TV, but I listen to the radio. I listen to the BBC at night and it's this whirlwind of suffering and yet here we are, here I am, talking to you, we're recording, we're going to go see a good performance about people who are hungry in the street and there's this sense of the economy crumbling and a feeling that at last, the economy is doing something similar to what the environment is doing. So maybe there will be some language about the economy being tied to the environment or being the tool through which we access the environment. Not something that can spin out by itself as the language now supports. And how my individual life feels in this larger landscape that's going on and when the landscape seems simpler. My life, I could interpret its meaning. A feeling of meaning

bg: By a simpler landscape are you referring to your garden in Vermont?

sf: No, I'm talking about the 60's when we didn't know that Chernobyl would happen, that a whole big area of the earth would be lost to our use. We didn't know or think that climate change was getting to a point of unraveling. So seeing the news in context of that landscape

bg: Hearing the news now in the context of a remembered landscape?

sf: No, that the news media in a way creates and sells me that landscape. For me, those are the questions. I feel that I am getting at them from a very personal and informed position. I'm informed, yet not trusting the information.

bg: How do you move through this information somatically? You were telling me about pulling up the loam, seeing the activity of insects, seeing food travel across the landscape and the landscape of the 1960s where it didn't seem possible that a disaster like Chernobyl could happen, the news now...

sf: I listen to the news now and I have a hard time caring. I bought an LA Times, which I haven't done in God knows how long. Spreading it on my desk and feeling the paper, having to focus on separating the pages and finding the right page where an article continues. Maybe because I have a lot of experience holding a newspaper in my hand, somehow on a somatic level, I was more compassionate.

bg: The tactile helps.

sf: I feel that my ideas aren't based in great studies, but while I'm turning a somersault I can say them and it can be accepted that that's an idea that just came to me then.

bg: You can accept it.

sf: An audience can accept it. They can accept that that idea came to me and I was turning that somersault.

bg: Someone listening to this would say this is someone very at ease with an audience. Are you at ease with your audiences?

sf: Yeah.

bg: Have you always been?

sf: Pretty much.

bg: It never occurs to you to be scared of your audience?

sf: I was doing an improvisation one time. Baryshnikov was doing a tour of Judson choreographers and he would once and awhile invite some of us to do something from our current work. So I was invited to do something at BAM***, an improvisation. It was a full house and I thought, Oh my god, it's just me doing this on a stage, doing this improvisation? I can't even talk and I can't move without talking. And I'm not doing that anymore.

Steve Paxton went on before me. He couldn't give a shit who's out there or what's out there, he just does what he does and he did what he did and it was great. And I thought, I get it, it's OK. If I can do something in front of my class at UCLA, then I can do this here too, it's just the same.

bg: Do you care about communicating something to your audience?

sf: Well I have a rap, I'll give you my rap

bg: OK.

sf: OK, it starts with Body, Mind, World, and it has to do with this:

You have perceptions, very direct, perhaps you see a tree in the wind, you watch a newscast, you eat breakfast with your family and you think about things and you also have certain sensations and you always have emotions, there maybe no words for what you feel, but you feel what you feel right now. You also have mental models of processes in the family and in the news. Right now, Israel is again threatening to bomb Iran, god help us, and bulldozing rainwater cisterns.

(Simone makes a bowl shape with her hands)

bg: These things would be under the category of Body, Mind, World?

sf: Yes, for instance: I didn't know I was going to say rainwater cisterns. I hunkered down, my eyes narrowed, my hands did a gesture that's God help us and somehow landed in the shape of a cistern. It's in the ground to catch the rain. So my relationship to the news is run through my rational verbal tools and also through my kinetic sense. And again it's goes out to the person I'm talking with so there's this circle of being in the world, thinking about it, being in touch with how your body is feeling about it, and having hunches about it. For instance, to say that Iran is not going to bomb the strait of Hormuz because that's the only place that they can get their oil out

is rational, but you can feel that constriction of the water there if you look at the map. It's narrow and there's this black stuff that has to go through there and this land is arid. They don't have much besides oil, so you can almost feel it. Even a cat would know that. The rat would not run in this direction.

bg: There is probably a rat.

sf: Just that sense of the elements that are at play. You bring your language to your understanding of it, but you also bring your skin to understanding it.

bg: Listening to the news is a kinesthetic experience, reading the newspaper is a richer kinesthetic experience. Is performance for you, the richest kinesthetic experience of the news?

sf: Performance picks up from reading the newspaper and listening to the news.

bg: So what about that rich kinesthetic experience of performing is connected to the content of what you're saying about the news? What are you doing to that information? Is it about the news anymore?

sf: Well certainly the news is an element, it's not about the news, it's about experiencing the news.

bg: You not doing news pantomime?

sf: No, well there are moments that just happen. I have riffs: How the Arabian Peninsula was drifting towards Europe and had pushed up the Alps. That under the Alps, there is a lot of compression, a lot of oil, and I get in there.

(She scoops her arms as if to wedge them under a mountain or lift up a small log.)

bg: You get in there.

sf: I get in there.

bg: Is it a way of releasing a tension for you? It sounds like a lot of the things you talk about bother you, they're horror stories in a way. Yet, you going underneath the mountains, and this gesture you just showed me reminds me more of gardening.

sf: I basically trust nature. The earth is going through changes and we're a big part of it. Why am I doing this? I think it puts us in touch. If I'm teaching anything through this it's a moment of experiencing being in touch with one's thinking that one isn't usually aware of, but that is at play and I make that visible.

bg: Right, it's usually such a passive absorption of the news, we are pas-

sive witnesses to murder and brutality and so this is a different, non-passive response that you model.

sf: In a way, yes.

end.

Later we walk through skid row to a lecture at the Los Angeles Poverty Department. I suggest we take a cab. Simone asks: "are you nervous?", moments later passing a Styrofoam bowl of soup, leftovers from our dinner, to a man loading cans and bottles into his shopping cart. "I think we'll be fine" she says.

*Mara McCarthy is a curator and the director of The Box Gallery at 805 Traction Avenue Los Angeles, CA 90013. Mara's programming strives to create bridges between artists spanning many generations. As a result, hard edged hierarchies that sometimes exist between emerging and well established artists are gladly softened.

**Dawn Kasper is a performance artist who, within a vein of her work, creates teetering stages out of a surplus of belongings and furniture with a Chaplain-esque energy. These unruly platforms sometimes collapse as if bullied by the weight of the things she says upon them. The performance Simone describes occurred outside of Human Resources when they had their space on Bernard Street in Chinatown. Now they are located at 410 Cottage Home St in Chinatown, 90012, where you can still see Dawn Kasper perform.

***Brooklyn Academy of Music

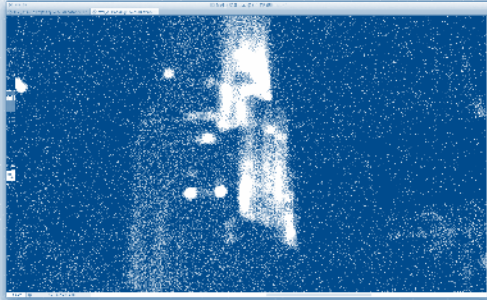
SIMONE FORTI with Brian Getnick

**NEXT
STEPS**



—JANUARY 19TH, 2012

NACHO NAVA &
MUSTACHE MONDAYS PRESENTS:
VIKTOR MANOEL
& JASON XTRAVAGANZA
AT LA CITA



WHERE



DO

YOU



GO

ON

MONDAY NIGHTS?

NACHO NAVA IS THE PRODUCER AND TALENT BOOKER OF MUSTACHE MONDAYS; A LONG RUNNING WEEKLY DANCE PARTY AND A CENTER FOR AN ARTISTIC AND QUEER COMMUNITY IN DOWNTOWN LA.



Nacho Nava: Do you know what *uñas* are?

Jared Baxter: I don't, and Nacho Nava fishes a magazine out of the pile on his coffee table. The cover photo instantly corrects my ignorance of the Spanish word that names both the publication and its monomania—nails, as in fingers, of lengths and intricacies of design I'd only rarely seen before, and never in so comprehensive a format. It could be the pot, but I'm pretty blown away.

nn: I did a party a while back called Uñas...we had crazy visuals of women peeling bananas with these insanely long finger nails,”

jb: which is apparently a thing, as attested by the YouTube videos he proceeds to show me, which range from benignly fetishistic point-of-view clips of women admiring their multi-inch nails, to more confrontational fare in which, yes, a banana is dextrously peeled and then, less dextrously, clawed to a pulp.

nn: There are like thousands of these videos out there. Ashland found the best ones...

jb: ...Ashland Mines being better known as DJ TOTAL FREEDOM, a near-weekly presence at Mustache Mondays, the party Nacho has hosted for more than 4 years in Downtown LA. But where to begin with a vehicle as multi-faceted, ever-changing, and often outright contradictory as the individuals who make it what it is—from the DJs and performers to the crowd and everyone in between—on a given night? In a way, the question is its own answer. If Mustache is still around and still hot at a point when a lot of club nights have either gone under or been overrun by douchebags, it owes its longevity to the vibrancy of the individuals it brings together, and this has much to do with the communities where the party first found roots and grew.

nn: The initial idea for Mustache, I guess, must have been like five or six years ago. Dino Dinco, an artist and performance curator, and I were kind of blown away by the lack of a nightlife for queers in downtown. I mean, every homo was moving in, but there was nothing even remotely gay, and there hadn't been since at least the early 90s.

A year or so after that conversation with Dino, a few friends moved in with me – Danny Gonzalez and

Josh Peace. Collectively, the three of us wanted to start some sort of venture together. At about that time, Josh, a DJ, had just wrapped a party on Mondays called Illusions in West Hollywood, which had been a crazy t-girl night. At midnight the 'girls' would lip-sync and perform as the ultimate WOMAN - it was sooo good! On top of that, this really amazing party called FINGERED had really lit a fire in me and introduced me to Ryan Heffington, Nina McNeely, Marlon Pelayo and Mecca Valdez among other incredibly talented dancers. FINGERED was kind of ending when I got an offer to do a Monday night at a venue called Crash Mansion here in downtown LA.

At first I didn't want to commit to producing a weekly party, but every-

thing was telling me to run and do it. With Josh and his built-in following, along with my collection of insanely talented friends,

I knew we could get folks out on a Monday night.

Josh is known by many as THE house music DJ in LA, but I also wanted to mix it up a bit. I knew that if this was going to work downtown on a Monday during the holiday season, a time of year that clubs usually bomb, we needed to offer something different. So I thought it'd be interesting to have Dino Dinco DJ alongside Josh. Dino would play everything from Little Richard, Dolly Parton, The Talking Heads and The Fall to cumbia rhythms, while Josh did what he does best—keeping folks moving! A few months later Ashland made his debut, joining Dino and Josh as a resident DJ. There were so many different things going on, but somehow the mismatches and contrasts worked. I loved that early Mustache sound.

jb: Appropriately, for as long as I've been going—barely a sliver of time in its history—Mustache has taken place at La Cita, a Mexican-style bar on Hill Street that can't help but clash with what's left of the slopes of Bunker Hill just across the street, now colonized by bland corporate skyscrapers and lavishly insolvent temples of official culture. Once inside, bathed in red light reflecting off matching leather and dark wood in an already narrow room, one forks either to the left or right of a chest-high partition, vaguely suggestive of a turn-of-the-century bordello, dividing the stage and dance floor from the bar. If, however, you've arrived before the rush, which inevitably begins around midnight, you'll probably proceed directly through, past the bathrooms and down a short flight of red stairs to El Patio.

Here, I usually get at a seat at a table that allows me to look back the way I came, where the bank towers rising above the bar's roof somehow re-emerge as a passable skyline and I watch the evening's drag queens make their entrances. On a good night, the range, like the crowd itself, spans a vast spectrum, from nauseatingly gaudy attempts at Club Kid insanity, to bastions of a taste so exemplary as to be life-affirming, to those who fall somewhere in between, such as the strange and wonderful being I saw on my first night there, blessed with the ability to make DDD implants look like the height of style.

Then, of course, there are the performances. These usually begin around midnight, when the energy has started to build on the dance floor, and remain

nn: another major part of what set us apart. I've always been a really big fan of movement, dance, and performance, and seeing some sort of per-

formance at a club has always intrigued me. I think this is reflected in the variety of things we've showcased, which range from straightforward pop acts to more unconventional things. Alice Cunt built a mini-apartment on the stage and covered it with a curtain, leaving a TV set visible that showed a live feed of what was going on inside—or just enough of it, anyway. When our friend Dina Thompson broke her ankle, Nina McNeely created a dance piece for her involving this backless office chair I have, doing all this choreography that moved her from the waist up, which combined live performance and projections in a way she's since built on through her involvement with WIFE. And when we were just starting out, our go-go dancers had anything but the typical go-go dancer look. I hired my friends – we had a short, extremely hairy yogi, an overgrown muscle queen, and that cute security guard from MJ's you've always wanted to see go-going but never did. I really get off on mixing things up that don't normally go together or match. We weren't trying to make a statement or coordinate a routine. We didn't need or want it to make sense, except for that one moment when all 3 boys were on stage – performing in their own world – doing THEIR thing – that's when it all fit together.

ITCH OUIJABOARD ORACLE TRANSMISSION

3: systems of support. We are alive... and do we flourish? I seek. I seek. I seek. I seek. I seek. I seek. I seek. I seek. (this one is really something to behold) What matters is only what—the work should be simple, or clever, or something that clicks. Something giant. To keep bringing attention back to our bodies, back to our connection to each other, to this planet we are a part of. The natural elements that nurture us. Mutual respect, engagement, listening, attempting, collaborating, witnessing. We start with need. What movement conveys need? What movement conveys love? Most of the time what I do with my time is watch bad performance.yes!, and no, and yes y si! Thinking, or giving over the responsibility to someone else—a person, people, the government... doesn't make sense since we are all we need! We need to find/found our own place

within the vast expanse of LA's sprawl. You can work in a little newly created company doing avant-garde work and still gain professional status. I won't talk about the inconvenience, but are you following what I am saying? I touched the ground differently, got close to it, and began to recognize the nuances in texture and color. I like the idea of taking the theater out of the theater, but I'm conflicted by the challenge of the non- controlled nature of nature. More often than not, to me, real life is more interesting than its representation. In other words, do I care if other people understand what I'm trying to communicate or do I want to send a message or move people or make people think? *Rae Shaolan Blum, Jill Sigman, Meg Wolfe, Rebecca Alson-Milkman, Bull Yard Bash, Esteban Cárdenas, Meg Wolfe and Rebecca Alson-Milkman, Nathalie Broizat, Kristen Smiarowski, Keith Glassman, Rachel Colon*

jb: Although it's tempting to look to art-historical referents like the Cabaret Voltaire, the Warhol Factory, or the artists' cabaret of early 80s New York for context, the name Nacho repeatedly brings up when discussing what influences his work comes from a different, though related, world.

To read the recollections of those involved, extensively archived online, the Paradise Garage was and remains the greatest dance club ever to have existed. Occupying the second and third floors of a parking garage in SoHo, New York from 1977 to 1987, it was among the first clubs to emphasize

dancing over social interaction, a place where the really good DJs—especially Larry Levan, a figure of foundational importance in dance music culture—went on at five a.m. when the amateurs went home, where the live acts included Grace Jones and ESG, and where the walls were covered in orgy murals drawn by Keith Haring, himself a serious regular. All of these elements, or so it's said, coalesced as equals around the ecstatic collective experience of dance marathons extending well past dawn, emerging from a sense of freedom to be who you were that the club's racially diverse and predominantly queer clientele found in few other places.

In many ways, it's difficult to imagine a more different environment for nightlife than Los Angeles today, where dedicated spaces are rare and club nights are nomadic, the atmosphere of a given venue changing dramatically depending on the promoter. In any case, drinks, which weren't even offered at the Garage, are indispensable, and bars are required by law to close at 2, meaning that even the dedicated souls who regularly come out to dance on a Monday night do so for little more than an hour and a half of release, before last call strikes and security begins hassling people to go. Yet what does resonate in Mustache, though perhaps transformed by the awareness of its past, is the importance of a sense of openness, an invitation to belong, even community.

nn: Mustache is so much bigger than just me. There are many contributors. So many different groups of people just meet up, and they're all individually unique, bringing a piece of themselves and their creativity to the environment on a Monday. There's so many of us that do so many different things that add to what are—even the folks that go, the weekly crowd adds an additional unexpected element to make Mustache what it is. I guess we are a community, but I never really thought of it that way. Although I don't think it's exclusive to Mustache, there totally is a community that met, came together and continues to collaborate and rally to make Monday nights in downtown LA truly amazing. I just don't really know what more to say about it than that...

jb: Yet if there is a facet, among the many that comprise the project, through which one can see the strength of this community, it could well be those occasions, no less important for being rare, when the party proves itself able to accommodate serious topics and issues alongside the usual levity. I remember, for instance, how Nacho told me that after the murder of Lawrence King, a young man from Oxnard, California who was killed by a fellow student for being gay, he felt compelled to acknowledge it, and

nn: The following Monday, word was spread online for all guests coming to Mustache to sport blue eye shadow in remembrance of Lawrence, which was his favorite shade...and everything stopped for a moment of silence that night.

jb: What's more, I learned, this was neither the only time that Mustache had played host to a memorial, nor the only time that the person memorialized was a victim of homophobic violence. The fact that a party of any kind, much less one as generally outrageous as Mustache, was able to create a space for reflection on the lives of those lost, as well as the continued prevalence of homophobia in our society, drove home the fact that it's more than a place to get drunk and dance—it's a place that, for many people, fosters a sense of openness and belonging that remains hard to find. As I mulled over the image of dozens of people in blue eye shadow encountering each other in the semidarkness of the dance floor, I felt that an important side of what Nacho does has to do with performative acts of collective memory, seamlessly interwoven with the spontaneity of the present. In instants like those, a history surfaces and is pushed outward, into and through the bodies assembled, coming alive in a way that vitally reverses the deadening tendencies of institutional memory and archives. Then, eventually, 2 a.m. strikes and you exit into the silence of Los Angeles midway through a Monday night, when you can drive for miles, sometimes, without seeing another car in motion.

JARED BAXTER WAS BORN IN ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, AND STUDIED GERMAN LITERATURE AT REED COLLEGE IN PORTLAND, OREGON. HE LIVES AND WORKS IN LOS ANGELES.

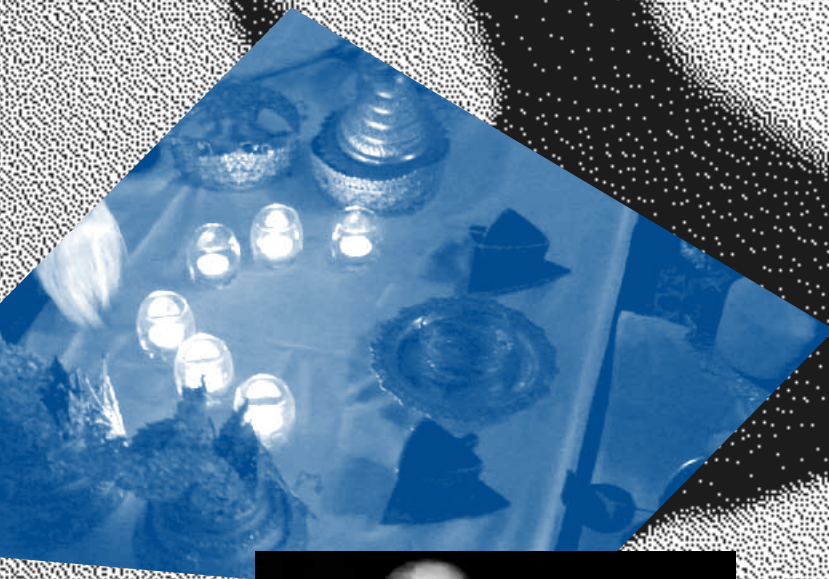


FRIDAY JANUARY 20TH, 2012

PRUMSODUN OK PRESENTS "WHITE CHALK HORSE" WITH
ARCHIE CAREY, ODEYA NINI, AND ARIEL CAMPOS
WITH GUEST ARTISTS YANNIS ADONIOU AND CYNTHIA LEE
AT THE SWEAT SPOT

PRUMSODUN OK

PRUMSODUN OK IS GUIDED BY LOVE. HE WORKS TO POSITIVELY TRANSFORM OUR WORLD THROUGH HIS PRACTICE AS AN ARTIST, TEACHER, WRITER, CURATOR AND ORGANIZER. HIS INTERDISCIPLINARY PERFORMANCES CONTEMPLATE RENE DAUMAL'S EXPRESSION OF "THE AVANT-GARDE IN ANTIQUITY," MINING THE TRADITION OF CAMBODIAN CLASSICAL DANCE TO EXPLORE THE INTERSECTION OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL ISSUES WITH NEW POSSIBILITIES FOR PERFORMANCE. CURRENTLY, HE IS ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF KHMER ARTS AND HIS PROJECTS IN PROGRESS INCLUDE: AN INNOVATIVE BOOK TITLED *REAM EYSO AND MONI MEKHALA*, A PERFORMANCE ART MUSICAL CELEBRATING THE EXPERIENCES OF GAY MEN, AS WELL AS A CLOTHING LINE INSPIRED BY CAMBODIAN CLASSICAL DANCE REGALIA.



Alison D'Amato: I want to hear about the piece.

Prumsodun Ok: The evening or the piece?

ad: Well, both. We can start with whichever one you want.

po: "White Chalk Horse"* is an interdisciplinary performance work I'm making in collaboration with sound and musical artists Ariel Campos, Archie Carey and Odeya Nini, who I've worked with a lot. "White Chalk Horse" is made for my dad. The title is derived from a childhood memory. When I was six years old, I was practicing how to write my name on a chalkboard and he took the chalk from me and drew this image of a horse, and I remember it being so strong, and viral, and regal. The whole evening is a reinterpretation of a Sampeah Kru ceremony, which means a prayer to the teachers. It's a ritual that's over a thousand year where dancers make offerings to the gods, to the spirits of the dance, to their teachers, deceased teachers. And it's really a means of marking your place in a lineage, and marking yourself as a carrier of that lineage. So we're going to have an altar set up just the way you would do it in Cambodia, and we're going to have offerings of dance and music. New offerings. Which is kind of complicated because 1) my audience is not Cambodian and 2) even if they were, they don't know what this ceremony is. It's a very Brahmanic ceremony and for the most part Cambodia is Buddhist. So this is like the most Hindu you can get. My challenge has been – how can I engage my community because it should be a participatory event. How do I push this event from just looking back to looking forward?

ad: Well this was a huge thing that I wanted to talk about because even when we first met, it came up – this use of the word "traditional," and what that can mean, or what it does mean, or what it shouldn't mean. I feel like the work that you're trying to do has to do with re-purposing, and asking what's useful to us right now about these practices that we might carry with us from wherever.

po: Yes. I'm performing one of the most sacred works in the cannon, but I'm changing the costume – I'm going to be in gold and a thong, but... you know, that's an example of me having to confront this altar with my identity, and my politics. There's a Cambodian belief that when all is well in heaven, all will be well on earth. In this case, all is not well in heaven – so, you know, we might have to re-choreograph heaven.

ad: I love that.

po: And so, I had a talk with my dance teacher. She's supportive. But she would never do the things I do, though she can respect where I'm coming

from. I am a young gay man in California, and this issue needs to be addressed. I need to present before the gods a dancing gay body.

ad: A sacred body.

po: A dancing sacred gay body. So that another thing about how I'm changing this ritual. This is the first time that the person – that Prum – is going to be dancing at the altar. Not a god, or an archetype.

ad: That's huge.

po: Yeah.

ad: And do you feel authorized to make those changes? Or do you struggle with that?

po: I think about it like this: what is the type of god you want to believe in? What is the type of heaven you want to believe in? Do you want to come from a place of fear, and anger, and punishment? Or do you want to come from a place of love, and inclusiveness, and expansiveness? What I'm doing before the altar is saying: look, I'm very much a part of your lineage. But only the loving part. And that loving part is going to accept everything I do. And it's going to protect me.

No one in a Cambodian context is dancing in a thong and gold, no one is depicting homosexuality. And people might look at me like "what do you think you're doing?" And certainly there are conservative forces. In the dance tradition, there's a term kach, which means the teachers' spirits will break you.

ad: I feel like that resonates across the board in terms of dance!



po: Totally. So yes, literally, your teachers will break you, but also the teachers' spirits – the spirits of deceased dance masters who are caretakers of the form will actually harm you if you disrespect the form. But for me, I say –ok if you want to look at it that way, that's your thing. But I'm going to look at it as love. I'm going to see history as love. I know it's not always like that, but that's going to be my world. I'm going to fill my gestures and my work with so much love and sincerity that there's no room for fear. That's it.

ad: Let's talk about SALA**. I was wondering if you feel like you're responding to a need that's already there, or if you are thinking this is an underserved community and I have a vision and the community will get it.

po: Here's the thing – there's no space for young artist like myself trained in traditional performing arts. I am, in a way, responding to a need in the traditional arts community, but I'm also looking at the trajectory of my own life. The arts have been so pivotal in elevating my quality of life and pushing me to transcend the realities of central Long Beach. So in a way, I think it's my duty, with SALA, to create a platform for traditional performing artists to have a more tangible way of transforming mainstream society. And the other part is using the arts as a gesture of community health, of youth development, of revitalizing communities.

In traditional arts, there are these histories that need to be kept alive. You know, what is a young, gay man in Wisconsin going to think when he realizes that in Cambodia, at the height of dance ritual is a brahman who is half male and half female who is seen as a messenger between heaven and earth? There's a lot of politics, a lot of histories, that traditional arts carry, and a lot of social possibilities that they offer.

ad: And in a way, it's not just about giving back to a specific community. What you're talking about is actually much bigger. It makes me think again of that idea of re-choreographing heaven. It's for everyone, not just for the people that live 5 or 10 miles away from this space and might come there for class or to rehearse.

po: I think some of this comes from a legacy of genocide, when you've lost so much, when you grow up in this history of loss, you become this ultimate caretaker. For me, I realize that I have to keep Cambodian classical dance alive, and yet I have to push it – so SALA would also be a platform for experimentation.

ad: I think that specific history of genocide is really interesting to think about in the context of dance in general. We're always talking about dance and loss, the body and loss. It's a radical example of that, and this gesture of

carving out space is such an important one. In your case, it seems tangible. More urgent.

po: Yes.

ad: So what do you think about working in and around LA?

po: There can be isolation here as an artist, but that can also be a strength. Sometimes because of community, work can start to fit into a mold. The nice thing about LA is that people are so spread out; the work becomes so different, which can make it even stronger.

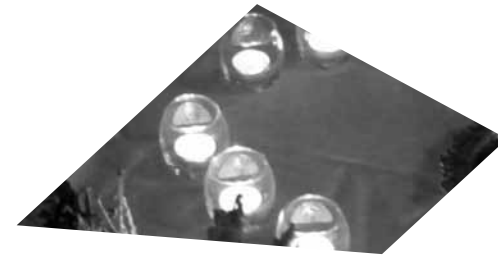
ad: People are idiosyncratic here, for sure.

po: That's something I've been thinking about with SALA. How do I create a platform for artists, allowing them to have independence and growth but also have a sense of being a team, of unity.

ad: Rootedness.

po: Rootedness, and identity, in a way. But without forcing that identity on them.

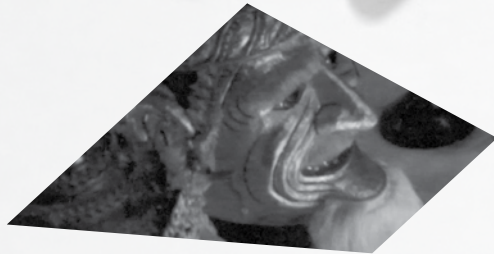
ad: Well it's like what you were saying about having a voice – your unique voice is what brings you closer to others in the end.



ALISON D'AMATO IS A RESEARCHER, CHOREOGRAPHER, AND PERFORMER CURRENTLY WORKING ON HER PHD IN UCLA'S DEPARTMENT OF WORLD ARTS AND CULTURES/ DANCE. SHE HOLDS AN MA IN EUROPEAN DANCE THEATER PRACTICE FROM THE LABAN CONSERVATORY IN LONDON (FOR WHICH SHE WAS AWARDED THE JACK KENT COOKE GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP) AND A BA IN PHILOSOPHY FROM HAVERFORD COLLEGE. HER CHOREOGRAPHIC WORK HAS BEEN PRESENTED IN LOS ANGELES (KRISTI ENGLE GALLERY, ANATOMY RIOT, PIETER PASD) AND NEW YORK (MOVEMENT RESEARCH, THE TANK, AUNTS, WAXWORKS, DIXON PLACE, AND BAX/BROOKLYN ARTS EXCHANGE), AS WELL AS AT VARIOUS PHILADELPHIA VENUES, LABAN, AND THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEMPORARY DANCE CONFERENCE AND PERFORMANCE FESTIVAL IN BYTOM, POLAND. HER RECENT WRITING ON PERFORMANCE CAN BE FOUND IN *CHOREOGRAPHIC PRACTICES AND ITCH*.

ITCH OUIJABOARD ORACLE TRANSMISSION

4: Evidence: She writes that the first time she taught, she hadn't planned on a topic and said the first thing that came to her mind: "Elbow". And was surprised that everyone just got to work. The ritual of performance is like a thought-iceberg. Only a bit of it is visible: everything that goes into it, the time in the studio, the time spent sitting on the bus staring out the window wondering "How does doo-wop relate to apocalypse?" and "Is that old trumpet still at the Goodwill?" he said: "how long you been black?" i said: "umm, 30 years at least." We seem strikingly incapable of addressing the disaster itself without the artifacts it left behind. ...looking at the damage that was done during a really beautiful performance and I wouldn't have it any other way. "What am I doing? Is this allowed? Am I pretending? Am I stealing?" When people were getting sick, I kept on losing my earrings- my earring kept on flying out in the studio. It went into the dance. We all have moments to be beautiful and ugly, to be feminine and masculine, and that is another reflection of my culture, a real-ness that lets everyone be seen as magnetic and powerful sometimes and vulnerable and a mess at others, there is an aim to have no superficial illusion about people's pow. Our consciousness is the evidence and we become the historians—of the



*White Chalk was made richer by the performances of guest artists Cynthia Lee in collaboration with Carol McDowell and by Yannis Adoniou founder and artistic director of San Francisco's Goldie award winning KUNST-STOFF in collaboration with Vong Phrommala. Shyamala Moorty and Eriko Azuma helped create the very special atmosphere of the welcoming and tea ceremony. Ariel Campos, Archie Carey, and Odeya Nini worked closely with Prum to create the live musical score.

***I am currently developing the SALA Center for Art and Culture. To be based in central Long Beach, one of the most diverse but poorest areas of the city. SALA will provide free residency to artists and art organizations devoted to the transmission and development of traditional performing arts. Practicing everything from yoga

past, the present, the future—in as much as we can let ourselves feel. I remember marches on Washington in the 1980's – for Gay rights, against the Klan, for the rights of Palestinians to determine their future, in solidarity with the people of El Salvador. I remember chanting, sore feet and the smell of tear gas. More pausing. More falling back. Less advancing. Less offense or defense. More playful stepping to the side. Think trust. Be seen and see yourself being seen but do not change your angle. Knowing that dance is performed and then completed, the idea of trying to capture its essence is questionable. It would be like trying to catch the remains of energy left by the performers. And as they slowly trickle out of immigration and customs, the people slowly reading each sign as if they had never seen their own name before and might not recognize it when they saw it, the lone woman walking back and forth, up and down the line, "Where is my name? I don't see my name." The relief when she finally does. *Simone Forti, Meg Wolfe, Taisha Paggett, Ozimandus, Elizabeth Wade, Cynthia Lee, Lailye Weidman, Rebecca Alson-Milkman (interview with Barbara Mahler), Hana van der Kolk, Laura Fuller, Ishmael Houston-Jones, Rae Shao-Lan Blum, Jeremy Hahn, Terence Luke Johnson*

to Afro-Brazilian dance, hip hop to Cambodian classical dance, samba to kathak, classical Western drumming to Mexican folklorico, these artists at the forefront of their practice will provide the community with free workshops." -Prumsodon Ok

Editor's Note: Interestingly, "White Chalk Horse" premiered at Ryan Heffington's Sweat Spot in Silverlake which was the only instance of true cross over between the artists who run spaces in The Next Steps series. Dancer Jos McKain was one of the people who made it to nearly every one of the shows in the series. He notes in a developing essay: "The Los Angeles dance community is so large and diverse that specific niches develop while rarely intersecting. The challenge in Los Angeles is to see a smidgen of them. It's impossible to see them all."

RYAN HEFFINGTON with Brian Getnick

RYAN HEFFINGTON EQUALLY FULFILLS TITLES OF PERFORMING ARTIST, CHOREOGRAPHER, DESIGNER, PROMOTER AND DANCE GURU. KEEPING AN EXISTENCE IN BOTH COMMERCIAL AND UNDERGROUND CULTURES IS ESSENTIAL FOR HEFFINGTON AS AN ARTIST. HIS SOLD-OUT MONTHLY DANCE PARTIES SOCK-IT, FINGERED AND FULL FRONTAL DISCO HAVE INCLUDED DANCE CLASSES, CONTEMPORARY-PUNK MINI DANCE CONCERTS AND ALWAYS SOME OFF-THE-HOOK-SWEAT-FEST-DANCEFLOOR-FOOLERY. FINGERED IS WHERE RYAN FIRST INFUSED DANCE CLASS INTO HIS PARTIES, SPARKING THE IDEA FOR SWEATY SUNDAYS – DANCE CLASS FOR EVERYONE. TRADING COCKTAIL GLASSES FOR WATER BOTTLES, IN 2010 HE OPENED THE DANCE / FITNESS STUDIO "THE SWEAT SPOT" GEARING CLASSES TOWARDS THE ADULT BEGINNER TO PROFESSIONAL DANCER. THE SPACE SERVES AS PERFORMANCE SPACE AS WELL. RYAN HAS TRAVELED ACROSS THE U.S. AND TO NICARAGUA, TOKYO, COPENHAGEN, SRI LANKA, GERMANY AND CANADA SPREADING HIS ENTHUSIASM FOR DANCE.

Brian Getnick: I'm interested in the Sweat Spot as a place that invites the dance community to experiment.

Ryan Heffington: Our mission statement was to include and strengthen the community and offer a venue that was affordable and accessible. If you hear about it you should check it out. You don't need to apply, we don't curate at this point. Its doors are open as so many people opened doors for myself and my companies when I needed a space to experiment. That made a world of difference in terms of how I produce my work. With the Sweat Spot I want to assist other people and their visions the way I was assisted.

bg: What were some of those early opportunities you had?

rh: At that time, I was mostly performing in more commercial work while on the side I was working on my own artistic self in rock clubs and with Hysterica and in theaters like Highways.

bg: Not every dancer would be interested in performing outside of paid gigs or in strictly dance contexts. It sounds like instead you took your work into the myriad contexts that LA offers. What excited you about working in rock clubs and black boxes?

rh: Well, in those places we could douse the audience with huge mega water guns and throw cow livers and sardines and spray ketchup at them and you can't really do that in dance theaters. We really were excited about the opportunities to entertain people and push boundaries. So it was more dance-based performance art, conceptual and cabaret, but always with a strong backing of technique. Everyone we worked with had major training

but they would have their leg up to their ear with a dildo balancing on their foot. Absurd scenarios like dancing to Jimi Hendrix with blenders and cords everywhere on the wet stage. We had so many injuries and were wasted most of the time. It fueled us.

BG: Do you consider those experiences as your education?

rh: It was, and our therapy. It was very intense. It was very violent and in depth in regard to changing genders. Me and my friend Bubba Carr did something called the Psycho Dance Show. He was like a god to me when I first moved to LA. I remember seeing a show that was so twisted with gay bashing and OJ murdering on roller skates and I was like I don't get this but my heart was racing. I loved it and I thought I have to meet this guy, and years later we ended up working together and forming Psycho Dance Show. He was a great mentor.

bg: It sounds like there was such a great relationship between performer and audience in those places. The audience was full of people who wanted to witness and use it in their work. Even not knowing what that was, they felt an invitation in the work.

rh: That was the beginning of seeing dance in clubs. Now our friends Nacho Nava and Mario Diaz feature dance in their parties all the time. In the 90's there wasn't really dance in clubs aside from go go dancing. It wasn't a strong scene but we created a strong scene. Kids fresh off the car ride from Idaho and Ohio come here to dance in LA expecting one thing and then they find us. When I came here, I was like what the fuck is going on here?

bg: What did you expect when you came out here?

rh: I expected to come out, get my agent, audition for music videos and McDonald's, have this great career, make lots of money and be on TV and that was a bit of my reality but my heart wasn't in it. As soon as I got here I started growing out my hair and my beard and my mentor was like you're not doing it right. If you want to be a commercial dancer you're not on the right path. And for some reason I was like ummmm, I don't believe you, I think I'm going to do what I want to do, if that means I'm poor, fine, I'm going to be an artist and do what I want to do period.

bg: With the Sweat Spot are you creating a space where a dancer who comes to LA expecting to work commercially would find opportunities to experiment and join a more open community. Are you re-creating the environment you found yourself in?

rh: Yes, but it's a little different because I think that the Sweat Spot is an

open door for anyone, not just dancers. Their dreams are not to be dancers or to dance. They come because, through word of mouth, they heard about a fun place where you can exercise and find some expression too. It just clicks with so many people who are just curious. I think the people who are coming out to LA to dance commercially don't necessarily find the Sweat Spot. It's not their world. Especially right now, with dance shows on TV, the dancers who want to come out and do commercial work will do it. The studios that offer that sensibility are thriving. They're packed with people, tripled from when I moved here. People who walk into our doors have different intentions.

bg: So the Sweat Spot might not be the place you would have gravitated towards when you were young.

rh: I don't know, possibly not. When I first got here, I was searching for commercial work. Then life kicked in and my ideal of what I wanted changed. The Sweat Spot would have a cool place but, at that point, I don't know if I would have benefited from it.

bg: You were looking for a catharsis.

rh: I needed to do me. I needed to know how I was going to connect dance to myself in a different way.

bg: What does the term performance art mean to you?

rh: When I hear it I think of freedom as an artist. Dance work has a box. Even if it's see-through, you're presenting dance work and it's dance-heavy. On the other hand, dance-based performance art seems to have no lines around it, you can meld concepts and dance together. It seems like it allows one to experiment more. I do experiment through dance, it's a structure that I love, but in performance art I have no expectations for what I will see.

bg: What is entertainment? What does entertainment mean to you?

rh: Entertainment. I think entertainment means...hm, I know what it feels like. It feels like an exchange between the performer and the audience in a way that's not so heavy. I feel that the interaction is possibly of joy or laughter and a sense of honesty. And you get to see a response. For me that's entertainment. I can put on a show that will make people feel a certain way and it lines up with what I had in my mind. I think for me there are certain things which make me happy and bring me joy and those are my tools in order to influence and make other people feel those things. Everyone is different, but you can tap into collective sensibilities that will ignite most of them.

bg: If you wanted the audience to be alienated or humiliated is that still entertainment?

rh: I create pieces that do that. I will layer a piece so much that it will aggravate the audience. A visual overload with a soundtrack can really unearth those feelings but I don't consider that entertainment. I grew up dancing in tap shoes with the ideal of show tunes. I spent 16 years of my life doing Yankee Doodle and I still love hamming it up as that feel-good kid onstage. I like putting a smile on people's faces even if that means dudes stripping down to female Cholita outfits. If it was more like a personal exploration of my life I wouldn't call it entertainment.

bg: If we took an audience from a different place, say another state in the US, the places that these dancers fresh off their car or bus trips come from, and you put them in front of a performance where people are stripping down into Cholita outfits or slipping on baked beans with blenders, they might not find this entertaining but disturbing. The audiences you play for, on the other hand, are able to read this as light-hearted, even when you're playing hard with issues of sexuality and gender. Isn't it a very particular community that finds what you do entertaining?

rh: Well, I had these dudes last night dressed as thugs then stripping down and these kids in the audience absolutely loved it. Performances can transcend expectations. We're not doing a heavy gender studies mind-fuck. I mean, it can be, but I present it as entertainment, as tongue in cheek. All the lady-boys at Sweaty Sundays give me signals that they love to play with gender and we celebrate those feelings. It might be therapeutic but it's based in joy.

bg: When I first moved here, I saw content being explored in 12 minute sets between DJs in clubs that was similar to what I had seen performers doing in gallery settings. For me it was an eye opener: what if the content wasn't only for, and only understood by other artists? What if it these ideas were universally being explored by an entire generation and not just by those of us, myself included, who had specialized educations? And these club performance were addressing sexuality, gender, race, history, surrounded by pleasure and joy. There is something about entertainment which is very particular here in LA.

rh: And it's sharing. It's something I don't experience in theater works where it's so intellectualized by the artist that I don't know if it translates. When I know what I'm doing, it will translate, even though I don't write scores of concepts before I create my work. It's a very basic exchange. I'm not out to baffle people, I want them to relate to me. Let's just get together and have a great time. When I got here I developed creatively through par-

tying and meeting people, it wasn't through school. I wanted to live life, fall on my face, become homeless.

bg: You were homeless?

rh: For a little bit. Yeah. I worked it out. You know where to eat. I didn't care that much. I was a survivor.

bg: Well, here you don't die in a 20-below night.

rh: LA is great in that way. It won't kill you that fast. At least not in a night. I was lucky.

RYAN HEFFINGTON with Brian Getnick



ITCH OUIJABOARD ORACLE TRANSMISSION

5: fiction and fictions. Feel weird. Bow. Sleeping through the night costs extra. Yellingwhisperingbelieving costs extra. One felt both exposed and included. And so the tensions within the piece were heightened. I felt it. I pretend that I'm alone, that I will always be lonely, and that the sensation I used to call melting velvet is like a phantom limb, gone forever. On weekends, I take my boy, Cody, to his little league, while my wifey takes the little lady, Chastity, to her ballet-tap classes. I own thirty-eight guns. The fox began to pant. She wondered what the best pet would be. A hermit crab perhaps? At night I join my hands in a generic act of prayer lacking rationale, feeling the lack of it, and like a cube of sugar sucking coffee, let images of what I've heard about the civil war between the rivers permeate me. It took an hour and a half. Then I didn't win the trip to Paris I didn't

actually think I'd win and began thinking about The Secret, which I'd like to forget but can't because it's everywhere and has subsequently infiltrated my subconscious. (An unsatisfactory embodiment of what I intended) // Everything becomes a clue when you start looking for them. A chewing gum wrapper. The bent nails scattered on the sidewalk. Graffiti on the wall that hadn't been there the night before. // Three men standing, one on each corner, waiting. For something. They didn't cross the street when the light changed. One had a patch over his left ear. I'm grappling with the disappointing fact that dance really doesn't affect some types of change, can't stand up to some types of violence. Is that true or my own fiction? *Taisha Paggett, Shane Anderson, Patricia Wheeler, Keith Hennessy, Greg Barnett and Laura Fuller, Jeremy Hahn, Simone Forti, Mikki del Monico, Rebecca Leib, Meg Wolfe, Sarah Leddy*

—JANUARY 21ST, 2012
JMY JAMES KIDD AND NICK DURAN PRESENT “LAKE”
WITH OPENING PERFORMANCE BY
ARCHIE CAREY AND ODEYA NINI
AT PIETER PASD



RYAN KELLY IS CURRENTLY PURSUING HIS MFA IN THE INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIO PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES, AFTER COMPLETING THE WHITNEY INDEPENDENT STUDY PROGRAM IN 2010. FOR NEARLY TEN YEARS, KELLY HAS WORKED IN COLLABORATION WITH BRENNAN GERARD, ALSO A STUDENT AT UCLA, CREATING A BODY OF PERFORMANCE AND VIDEO WORK. THE DUO'S COLLABORATIVE WORK HAS BEEN SHOWN IN NEW YORK CITY AT ART IN GENERAL, PARK AVENUE ARMORY, SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM'S WORKS & PROCESS, THE KITCHEN, DANSPACE PROJECT, VOLTA ART FAIR, AND THE WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART.

Brian Getnick: As an artist whose primary vehicle for expression and exploration is dance, why would you desire to have your work read within the field of visual arts? Where does that place you as an artist?

Ryan Kelly: There's an instability in not being placed, as in one's placement within a field and locality. I think that the infrastructure that exists either supports dance or art, artists who live in NY or LA...but practice is actually pushing people across these fields and localities. For instance, Dance based artists who identify as NY artists are not always living in NY and so they're not necessarily benefiting from that NY centric infrastructure. Dancers move out of the field of dance and into the field of art often with the expectation that its going to bring them more financial return but they then encounter the fact that there is not the infrastructure for the production of live performance in art. Art is structured around the paradigm of painting really. So practice and practicality are pushing people.

bg: Sounds like what you're describing is practicality. Can you talk about the internal needs within a practice across the field.

rk: Well, I think that's more the motivator. There's a perception that it is more practical, as in: Oh rent is cheaper in LA I could live for part of the year in LA and make my work there and part of the year in NY where I could present it and that sounds like a practical solution right? But what it affects is actually another practical problem which is that you may then not be recognized as a NY artist and that might disqualify you from some very practical funding. The other motivation is that artists are curious. Specialization in general has become so restrictive that there is an energy and desire to move beyond that specialization and move across fields which is maybe why an artist trained in drawing and painting might stretch towards performance and why an artist who makes work in a contemporary dance paradigm might stretch towards the visual arts.

bg: Such as yourself?

rk: Yes, for me it stems from a desire to connect across 2 different discourses and histories with many convergences along the way but for all practical purposes, two distinct fields. I think those fields are set up to support artists who are entrenched within them and to the extent that you stretch outside of your field you risk not being recognized as being part of it. My position in dance is a wavy line.

bg: Is the visual arts-expected space inviting dance based artists into its field more than dance expected spaces inviting visual artists into their field?

rk: I think so.

bg: In NYC? In LA?

rk: Actually I'm trying to think of any dance space in NYC that is actively inviting visual artists. The Kitchen is one but it's literally split between a gallery and a performing art space. Fortunately that boundary is being troubled by the new director. But I think the invitation from visual arts to dance far out ways the inverse and you might wonder why that is. Plainly, there is more funding and more capital in Visual arts and that doesn't necessarily mean more money for artists.

bg: But doesn't it also have to do with this issue of specialization? For a long time, contemporary visual artists skill sets have not been about expertise, virtuosity and specialization in particular mediums but more about a conceptual framework where the object's value lies in what it obliquely points to, or represents. When you have a body in that space I imagine these frameworks are still used to investigate what that body represents as well as does.

RK: There's certainly been a deskilling that's taken place in visual arts through the effects of modernism but I would venture to say that specialization has actually increased. It's just that the area of specialization has less about one's ability to skillfully produce an object but more about one's ability to conceive of a gesture, a performative act that intervenes in the history of other performative acts (visual arts history). So I think that this is even more specialized because it is such a restricted field of knowledge that requires education and study to gain access to, to even begin to perform in that arena. I agree with you that when a dancer enters the a visual art framework it does add many levels of signification that did not exist when dance was acting within its field proper because of the specialization of that discourse, because of the investigation of object relations and sculpture. Also because the interrogation of representation that takes place in the visual arts

field is different than how it takes place in dance and for these reasons dance looks and means different things in art contexts.

bg: Why do you think dance expected venues do not generally invite visual artists who make performance?

rk: I think it has too limited resources to experiment with visual artists, but maybe not, maybe it's that within dance there is not the tendency to look outward. Within visual art there is an imperialist gaze, it's looking for the next thing it can appropriate into its field but dance has a self reflective tendency and there I specifically speak about contemporary dance; it looks to its own community, well that's the word we often use...

ITCH OUIJABOARD ORACLE TRANSMISSION

6: The (un)raveling of Dance's Public Discourse or we ex*perts. OK OK. So maybe I'm not making my point well(?) enough HERE to make you WRITE differently – but how about THINK differently? Clearly no one can approach this moving mass of four violent bodies careening through space (it would be ridiculous to intervene), but no one can turn away either. There is milk in my hand, and a five dollar bill on the counter in front of me. If the dance world is going to compete with the music world and the film world, they're going to have to start advertising. I mean that's just the reality. Part of the excitement of dance is its polyvalence in the moment, the multiple associations each viewer brings to the performance in dialogue with movement as it happens; kinesthetic empathy, sensory and visual memory, and analysis are all enlivened and brought to the quick. Maybe allowing ourselves bliss is an act of resistance in a culture encouraging a pervasive feeling of lack as a colonizing tool. And as a reminder that

the changes an artist can affect in another are sometimes best expressed in the rawness of art itself—a form of response which may fit into our (un)raveling notions of public discourse as dance artists. Call me too German, but I find a hearty argument time well spent. I realized that I actually like chaos. And I got back to work. And so, this love child emerges from a Xerox machine: made in the spirit of optimism, transgression and the conviction that, while absent-mindedness often fosters creativity, it is not the fundamental condition of the thinking, observing public. One last exhortation: Let's stop blaming everything on Cunningham, for heaven's sake, and—if I were you—I wouldn't blame anything on Wilson! I want to be around people who remind me that I am evolving and one piece does not define me. *Arianne MacBean with Lewis Segal, Jonah Bokaer, Taisha Paggett interviews Wendy Perron, Annie Tucker, Tania Hammidi, Rae Shaolan Blum, Ari Hoffmann, Meg Wolfe, Ana Isabel Keilson, Yvonne Rainer to Arlene Croce, Mira Kingsley*

bg: One thing I notice in dance based work that reaches towards visual art contexts is that dancers often reach to extra media as a way of creating the signifiers of art around and in their work. As in, I am an artist who uses dance and I can signal this by using texts, video, and theater. These are moves for an artist who wants to expand beyond the expected formal language that generally appreciates dance but often misses the ideas in the work. Then again there are artists like Jmy James Kidd and Nick Duran who, if they have a theatrical idea they place it as a discrete moment within a score that is primarily within the medium of dance.

rk: I think there's a slide in what you're saying when you say the word dance, which I haven't quite worked out myself, which is dance as a signifier for a field and dance as a signifier for the medium of dance. Both the field and the medium enact certain restrictions in order for us to recognize this

work as dance. It must perform certain competencies in order for us to recognize this practice or artist as working within the field of dance. It's the artist, not just the work. The way the artist positions himself must be recognizable in the field.

bg: What field? Art or dance?

rk: Of dance. There are many dancers who make work within the field of dance in which dance as a medium is not used. The person who comes to mind is Ann Liv Young. She's self consciously using certain frames to position her work within the field of art yet she receives funding through those resources dedicated to dance, is presented nationally and internationally in those venues associated with the dance field and is reviewed by the dance critic in the NYT. All these things that are outside of the work proper locate her as being within dance. Yet the work itself reacts against the expectations of what makes a dance a dance. So you could say that she's an artist working against dance within the dance field. That's a sophisticated aspect of the field itself, it makes space for its own antagonists. So when you talk about Jmy and Nick, and this should require a more specific critical thinking, my intuitive response is that I recognize their work as dance in that it engages with the medium of dance, and it exists in relation to the dance field.

bg: Maybe in NY, but I'm not sure that's as true here in LA.

rk: Well, here the field of dance is so amorphous. Is there a dance field?

bg: I agree that a lot of what you just described with Ann Liv Young, all the things surrounding her, her bona fides, are known in NY. These are attenuated lenses within which the modes she is working is understood. If you go to Dance Theater Workshop or Dance Space for instance, the crowd, I would assume, would be somewhat used to looking at dance based work through those lenses. But presenting Jmy and Nick or Anne in in Los Angeles, at PIETER or Highways or Redcat I would not assume our audiences are looking at the work less through these, largely NYC determined, frameworks. I would guess that our audiences would know that this is not only dance and know that because they are watching this performance in a place where not only dance is made but other works in the category of performance art.

rk: I have to wonder if that's true. What is the position PIETER holds and to what field in Los Angeles?

bg: It's the only place in town with the explicit invitation to make art as a dancer without reaching for dance theater or extra media. This has a lot to do with the way audience is positioned to a given performance.

rk: I think PIETER exists within the dance field which means that it exists

within the dance field as it encompasses many geographic areas in the world, but it also means it exists within the dance field as it exists in Los Angeles which might be restricted to PIETER.

bg: This is the dance field in LA

rk: I think PIETER is where art begins to investigate dance in LA. PIETER becomes a place of contestation and encounter and how does that impact the practices that take place there? Could Jmy and Nick's work appear at LACE?

bg: Yes, Absolutely. Also Human Resources

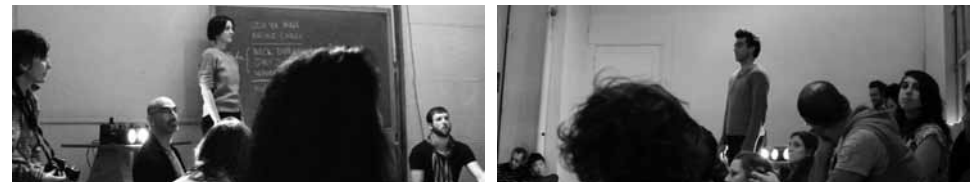
rk: That's the comparison because Human Resources is more or less a white cube, and Highways is more or less a black box and PIETER is more like a site but I think those are not just different armatures, they carry different histories and expectations.

bg: Let's pretend we see the performance they gave at Highways at Human Resources.* What happens when they put that work in front of that specialized audience attuned to reading representation and objecthood in performance art as the primary keys to reading meaning and suddenly you have two people who come in there who are dancers who are largely presenting dance and used to the framework of the field of dance? What's open, what's limited?

rk: I'm going to answer that with an anecdote. When I first went into PIETER to see the first iteration of Jmy and Nick's work, an art historian friend who I brought to the show said to me: You were laughing a few times during it, but I don't understand why? I don't understand how to look at this, how to read it. As an art historian I'm having trouble. Well, I said, let's not get too scared by these rarified gestures. To get the full picture of their work you do need to understand the history of western choreography to understand how they are using the classical and post modern idioms of movement. If you don't know that history the work can't make meaning for you on that level. But before you get there there's all sorts of representation going on. Let's think about this: this is a performance where a man and a woman are dressed explicitly alike: they're twinned, they're doubled. This doubling has an almost photographic effect and yet they spend the entire duration of the performance facing out not facing each other. So they've de-coupled the classic representation of the man and woman simply by facing outward towards us as opposed to facing each other. This queering of the couple happens through a representation of an image.

Then, there's the relationship to the audience itself in the way we are

seated not in front of them but halfway around them. It's very unstable. The line that demarks our space and their space is crucially underdetermined and we don't know where it is. They continue to press against it. I remember that there was a guy who had his leg out during the whole performance until Jmy kicked it, and for me, that moment, when the dancer kicked the audience, opened up the reading of the piece to the history of performance art and its relationship between performer and spectator. So there are all these entry points that an art audience and that the attentive reader is reading. It's bulk of meaning available through those frameworks and there's another bulk of meaning which is in the movement itself. So the audience at HR, and we are giving them the a big benefit of the doubt here, is going to look at Jmy and Nick's work in terms of image, representation and object relations that is if they don't get scared of this rarified vocabulary of gesture which is as foreign to them as the rarified vocabulary of gesture in abstract geometric painting is familiar to them. So the best thing we can do to ease the tension between this moment of encounter between these two fields and their proper consumers is to just remind them that what you're about to see is rarefied specialized, you may not understand it because you do not have that specialized education, yet, think of how it felt the first time you saw a monochrome and you had no idea what to think about it, as a gesture. This is like that but with enough study and attendance this will be meaningful also. Even without that there is all this terrain that you can enjoy and find meaning in.



*Human Resources, or HR, is, in its current incarnation, an enormous white box. The site of an old movie theater on Cottage Home in Chinatown, HR's programming wavers between visual art installations and performances. One simple choice that they've made, and this makes all the difference, is that when performance art is happening, they usually give over the entire space to that event. As a performance artist, one doesn't feel that they are the equivalent of the liberty tax sign twirler; entic-

ing audiences inside to see the objects through an advertising spectacle. Because HR makes clear distinctions between when they have visual art object show and a performance, the space is haunted by both simultaneously. The performer must contend with the interrogations usually reserved for objects and when performance is absent, the old art school adage that "art must speak for itself" seems particularly absurd.

JMY JAMES KIDD (B. 1979, SAN FRANCISCO) WORKS OUT OF HER STUDIO IN LOS ANGELES, PIETER. SHE HAS DANCED FOR STANLEY LOVE PERFORMANCE GROUP, LUCIANA ACHUGAR, NANCY MEEHAN, SARAH MICHELSON, NEIL GREENBERG, WALTER DUNDERVILL, THE MEL WONG DANCE COMPANY AND APPRENTICED WITH THE MERCE CUNNINGHAM DANCE COMPANY. IN LOS ANGELES SHE DESIGNS DANCES WITH NICK DURAN AS NICK+JAMES. SHE IS PART OF THE LA-NYC-DETROIT BASED TRIO MGM GRAND, WHICH HAS BEEN PRESENTED BY MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART DETROIT, CREATIVE TIME AT MIAMI ART BASEL, THE KITCHEN, MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY THEATER DEPARTMENT, PACIFIC NORTHWEST COLLEGE OF ART, HIGHWAYS AND PACEWILDENSTIEN AS WELL AS MANY PRIVATE HOMES, GALLERIES, GARDENS AND GARAGES. THEY ARE REPRESENTED BY CALICOON FINE ARTS. HER SOLO WORK HAS BEEN PRESENTED AT LACE, LA LIVE ARTS, JOSHUA TREE ART TOURS AND PIETER. SHE IS 2012 CHIME SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RECIPIENT, MENTEE TO JULIE TOLENTINO. SHE MAKES DANCER-WEAR AND DANCE COSTUMES UNDER THE LABEL JAMES KIDD AND DESIGNED FOR JOHN JASPERSE, MELANIE RIOS, REBECCA BRUNO, DAWN KASPER, SARAH MICHELSON, NEIL GREENBERG, ANNA SPERBER AND BEN ASRIEL. IN NYC SHE STARTED AUNTS, A PERFORMANCE PLATFORM AND CLASSCLASSCLASS, AN ORGANIZATION IN SUPPORT OF EMERGING DANCE TEACHERS.

NICK DURAN IS A NATIVE OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA. HE BEGAN HIS DANCE STUDIES AT THE IDYLLWILD ARTS ACADEMY AND HOLDS A MFA IN DANCE FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN AND A BFA IN DANCE FROM NEW YORK UNIVERSITY'S TISCH SCHOOL OF THE ARTS. IN NEW YORK CITY HE WORKED WITH BRIAN BROOKS, SEÁN CURRAN, NEIL GREENBERG, FIONA MARCOTTY, MARK MORRIS, DUŠAN TÝNEK, AND JOHANNES WIELAND. HIS CHOREOGRAPHY HAS BEEN PRESENTED BY DANCE THEATRE WORKSHOP, MGM GRAND, 3RD WARD BROOKLYN CREATIVE, DANCENOW/NYC, MOVEMENT RESEARCH AT THE JUDSON CHURCH, KRANNERT CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, THE ROY AND EDNA DISNEY CAL ARTS THEATRE (REDCAT), AND PIETER PERFORMANCE ART SPACE DANCE. HE HAS TAUGHT AT THE OPEN LOOK FESTIVAL IN ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA, THE YARD ON MARTHA'S VINEYARD, 3RD WARD BROOKLYN CREATIVE, AND IN THE BFA PROGRAMS AT NEW YORK UNIVERSITY, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN, CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LONG BEACH, AND PRESENTLY IN THE UCLA DEPARTMENT OF WORLD ARTS AND CULTURES/DANCE AND AT POMONA COLLEGE.

OLIVE NOIRE IS A DOCTORAL STUDENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES. SHE IS A LOOSE DOG.

The first time I came to PIETER, Jmy and Mak greeted me with hugs and offered me a shot of tequila and a lime dipped in espresso. Across the room, a durational piece was in progress, during which a lone performer dipped his face in bowls of cupcake icing and multiple colors of sprinkles. I knew then that this would be my mainstay for dance in Los Angeles.

A experimental dance venue and a rehearsal space, PIETER PASD (Performance Art Space Dance) emerged out of Jmy's desire to create her ideal working space and to let the sharing of it with others shape what PIETER became. In its current incarnation, PIETER aims to present dance made for the malleable studio space rather than a traditional theater, dance that does not impart the secret wish for a proscenium.

Prior to moving to LA, Jmy spent a decade dancing in New York City performing with many downtown choreographers and making work with her collective dance project MGM (Modern Garage Movement). She was also an instrumental force behind the AUNTS series, a performance/party during which dozens of people showed new work and everyone who came contributed to a free boutique and a free bar. At a certain moment, after having danced with the New York choreographers she had an interest in, she felt she had reached a limit of what she could do in the city. She wanted to make her own work but felt frustrated by the narrow ladders that confine one's pathway as a choreographer. She had looked into securing a permanent home for AUNTS, but obtaining a building in New York City seemed too expensive and infeasible. Having just turned 30, Jmy thought a big change would do her well.

While on tour with choreographer Neil Greenberg and MGM she and her partner Mak stayed at a hotel downtown. It was there that they decided that they would move out here, a decision based on a combination of the avocados, the heat, and the desire for a change of pace. LA promised the space and time to change direction, wander around, and try things without worrying about previous conceptions of her work. Jmy and Mak packed their lives into a truck and went on a road trip across the country.

She soon found PIETER's current home: a large studio space with a hardwood floor, inexpensive rent, lots of natural light, a small parking lot, close to the metro station, and neighbors open to having shows. Supported by a bit of family money, they worked on the space, Mak building the walls and Jmy chiseling the splinters in the floor and filling holes with Bondo.

Being in the habit of naming her dances with proper names and after organizing AUNTS under a female signifier, she wanted the new space to have a male name, reversing the usual feminization of dance. "PIETER" had the right combination of anatomical reference, humor, and opinionated ambiguity. She eventually added an acronym for 'performance art space dance' to give a little more specificity to what happened at PIETER.

PIETER emerged as a negative reincarnation of the AUNTS series. While preserving the free bar and the free boutique, Jmy inverted the characteristics of AUNTS: showing one person's work rather than thirty choreographers, smaller audiences rather than a huge turnout, and a quiet dynamic focused on chatting about the work itself rather than a chaotic, party atmosphere. While AUNTS sought to create a context conducive to the experimentation absent from other downtown dance venues, PIETER had little to work against in the arid topography of LA dance.

While Jmy loves making work in the permissive latitude that the city offers, she does not champion the current landscape of LA dance: "I don't have LA nationalism." Jmy feels at odds with the values and priorities of venues that do support contemporary dance in the city such as Red Cat and the university dance departments at UCLA and Calarts. Although Los Angeles is currently home to Simone Forti, Yvonne Rainer, and others with significant professional experience and a rich background in the form, the city lacks a vibrant community of curious, educated dance people. In Jmy's analysis, film production functions as the norm for LA cultural life: cultural bubbles that form as people come together to intensely work on a movie but that dissipate just as quickly; a structure antithetical to a sustained, engaged community.

Unlike New York, the choreographers and dancers in LA do not live here to be a part of a thriving dance scene. However, Jmy does not miss or wish to replicate the experimental dance communities in San Francisco or New York, which she experienced as tight, white, elitist cliques. Inspired by a comment Neil Greenberg made during the only composition class she has ever taken, to "make it more what it is," she wants to appreciate the qualities of LA as it is. "You can be in dialogue with... no one," and for Jmy, this allows

the liberating possibility to not be looped into a constant conversation.

PIETER - a character, a space, a phallus, presents a mode for producing dance that moves away from the anointed proper name of the choreographer and the red velvet curtains of the proscenium. PIETER is a rare gem, not only for Los Angeles but for modes of presenting contemporary dance in general. It provides a vacay from the usual pre-show awkward vibes and program size-ups. You can even go home with a sparkly red velour jumpsuit.

OLIVE NOIRE



ITCH QUIJABOARD ORACLE TRANSMISSION

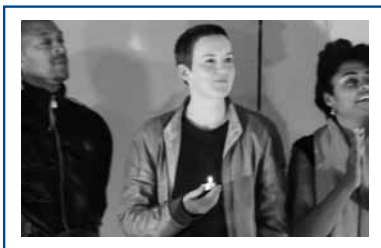
7: Balance and the phenomena of 7. Last-minute, I make the trip back to NY with her and note that on her refrigerator, in a kitchen as familiar to me as my own, is a prayer to prevent falling. Many of my clients express the same fear, in different ways. They tell me their balance is failing. balance = falling in every direction at the same time. Unfortunately for me, a prerequisite for joining roller derby is to have some sort of medical insurance. On the ninth count of rocking with "OO-WAH" throw yourself onto the floor and QUICKLY and without thinking draw an X then a line from the X, and where that line ends draw another X. I like how it reminds me of Indiana Jones' note-book and how he always had a rubber band around it. At least I remember it that way. And then you try to make it better, stronger, longer, easier, more intelligent. Now as dainty as all possible she stood up and calmly walked off the bus not because she was kicked off, but because she was finished. That's what keeps me

going....what it boils down to is something quite similar to birdsong. i am too in tune sometimes. you can't tell for my dancing. it's a lot of façade. strong, arcing, graceful at times, but very fast, quick like my wit, but angular, not how i like to be perceived. Once we have figured out "who we are now" and have been able to define this in our own terms, then perhaps we can get back to making dances that say something about what we "think," "feel," "know," "wonder" about the world out there, about art. (written after eating only white foods for a day while under the influence of "108" written on my forehead with fresh semen.) To speak quietly the things it is too shy to say in mixed company. To get all worked up at the pulpit and preach to the choir. *Mikki del Monico, Shel Wagner Rasch, Meg Wolfe, CAConrad, Mira Kingsley, Sarah East Johnson, Greg Barnett, Pat Wheeler, Anna B. Scott, Keely Garfield, CAConrad, George Lugg (letter to readers)*

—JANUARY 22nd, 2012
MEG WOLFE AND SHOW BOX LA
PRESENTS THE FINAL ANATOMY RIOT (AR#45),
WITH *ITCH* DANCE JOURNAL

MEG WOLFE IS A CHOREOGRAPHER, PERFORMER, AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZER; THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF SHOW BOX LA, AND CO-EDITOR OF *ITCH* DANCE JOURNAL. HER WORK HAS BEEN PRESENTED ON THE WEST COAST AT REDCAT, SEGERSTROM CENTER FOR THE ARTS/OFF CENTER FESTIVAL, CALARTS, HIGHWAYS PERFORMANCE SPACE, ANATOMY RIOT, SEA AND SPACE EXPLORATIONS, AMONG OTHERS. HER PROJECTS HAVE BEEN SUPPORTED BY GRANTS FROM THE NATIONAL PERFORMANCE NETWORK CREATION FUND, THE CENTER FOR CULTURAL INNOVATION ARC GRANT, THE DURFEE FOUNDATION, DANCE SPACE PROJECT COMMISSIONING INITIATIVE, AND MEET THE COMPOSER FUND; FOUR RESIDENCIES AT THE DJERASSI RESIDENT ARTIST'S PROGRAM; THE HOTHOUSE RESIDENCY PROGRAM AT UCLA, AND OTHERS. SHE HAS BEEN BASED IN LOS ANGELES SINCE 2004, PRIOR TO THAT SHE DANCED IN NEW YORK CITY IN THE WORKS OF VICKY SHICK, SUSAN RETHORST, CLARINDA MAC LOW, AND OTHERS. WWW.DANCEMEGWOLFE.BLOGSPOT.COM

TAISHA PAGGETT MAKES THINGS AND IS INTERESTED IN WHAT BODIES DO. SHE BELIEVES LANGUAGE IS TRICKY, THOUGHTS ARE POWERFUL, AND THAT PEOPLE ARE MOST BEAUTIFUL WHEN LOOKING UP. HER WORK AND COLLABORATIONS FOR THE STAGE, GALLERY AND PUBLIC SPHERE HAVE BEEN PRESENTED LOCALLY, NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY. SHE'S BEEN A GUEST LECTURER AT THE DANCE CENTER OF COLUMBIA COLLEGE IN CHICAGO SINCE 2010. SHE'S HAD THE HONOR OF WORKING EXTENSIVELY WITH THE STANLEY LOVE PERFORMANCE GROUP, FIONA DOLENGA-MARCOTTY, DAVID ROUSSEVE, VIC MARKS, REBECCA ALSON-MILKMAN, KELLY NIPPER, MEG WOLFE, ULTRA-RED, AND WITH ASHLEY HUNT IN THEIR ONGOING COLLABORATIVE PROJECT, "ON MOVEMENT, THOUGHT AND POLITICS," WHICH HAS TAKEN FORM AS WORKSHOP, PERFORMANCE, VIDEO AND MIXED MEDIA INSTALLATION. SHE HOLDS AN MFA FROM UCLA'S DEPARTMENT OF WORLD ARTS AND CULTURES/DANCE AND IS A CO-INSTIGATOR OF *ITCH* DANCE JOURNAL.



GREGORY BARNETT UTILIZES MIMETIC MOVEMENT AND GESTURE, SUBURBANITE-BASED ARCHETYPES, A WIDE RANGE OF PORNOGRAPHY, AND AMERICANA POP CULTURE TO CREATE VISUAL AND PERFORMANCE WORK ADDRESSING AMBIGUITY OF SALVATION, OWNERSHIP OF SELF, AND ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF TRANSCENDENCE. PROJECTS HAVE INCLUDED THE ACCLAIMED "DIE MUTHAFUCKAH DIE!!! (A EULOGY)", "INEVITABLY HER ATTEMPTS PROVED FUTILE-IN RESULT SHE WAS INCONSOLABLE", AND MOST RECENTLY THE FIRST INCARNATION OF HIS DEVELOPING SOLO PERFORMANCE AND INSTALLATION "THIS IS BARELY HELD TOGETHER. THIS CAN FALL APART AT ANY MOMENT. THIS IS WHY YOU'RE WATCHING." OTHER CURRENT PROJECTS INCLUDE A SERIES OF CHILDHOOD LOVE LETTERS DETAILING AN IMAGINED AFFAIR WITH HIS MARINE UNIFORMED UNCLE, AND A SHORT BIO DOCUMENTARY THAT DOUBLES AS A JERK OFF VIDEO.

STACY DAWSON STEARNS IS A BESSIE AWARD-WINNING INTERDISCIPLINARY PERFORMANCE ARTIST, TEACHER AND SCHOLAR INVESTIGATING SYMBOLIC LANGUAGE AND THE SENSORY EXPERIENCE OF SUBJECTIVE REALITY. HER WORK HAS BEEN PRESENTED NATIONALLY AT JACOB'S PILLOW DANCE FESTIVAL, THE YARD, PS 122 (NYC), TOWN HALL (NYC), MASSMOCA, THE DANCE PLACE (D.C.), THE SOUTHERN THEATER (MINNEAPOLIS), REDCAT (LA) AND THE GETTY VILLA (LA). A PRINCIPAL MEMBER OF BIG DANCE THEATER FROM 1993 – 2001, STACY CONTINUES TO COLLABORATE WITH THE COMPANY THROUGH VIDEO PERFORMANCE IN THEIR INTERNATIONALLY ACCLAIMED *COMMES TOUJOURS HERE I STAND*, AND CHOREOGRAPHY/ MOVEMENT CONSULTATION FOR *SUPERNATURAL WIFE* (PREMIERED IN DECEMBER AT BAM). STACY IS A 2012 CHIME (CHOREOGRAPHERS IN MENTORSHIP EXCHANGE) RECIPIENT.

[HTTP://WWW.IMPULSEINTOACTION.COM](http://www.impulseintoaction.com)
[HTTP://WWW.IMPULSEINTOACTION.COM/STACY_ PERFORMANCE.HTML](http://www.impulseintoaction.com/stacy_performance.html)

ANATOMY RIOT#45



A conversation with Meg Wolfe, Taisha Paggett, Stacy Dawson Stearns, and Greg Barnett (via text messages)

(Setting: Saltwater, outside of linear organization of space and time. Meg Wolfe and I float, considering the implications of manifesting formless forms and hosting the movement of energy in the physical plane. But first, we start from an ending.)

Stacy Dawson Stearns: Oh Meg! You are the rare artist who advocates and nurtures others in your own field. Thank you for that. Your ongoing curatorial series Anatomy Riot had a long life: 45 shows over the course of 6 years. That is a lot of giving. Now that Anatomy Riot (AR) has passed, can you tell us why you started it, and why you ended it?

Meg Wolfe: I was new to LA and feeling disconnected. There was no outlet for experimenting. Lots of people were in the universities doing stuff, but I wasn't a part of any university. My own dance-making didn't feel like

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8: Pornocracy. A younger audience, one that has grown up in these conservative times, may not hear the bra screaming, but I do. "Balls." I answer. We hover a moment more feeling the pluits what we attract to us is more of the same, more heartfelt passion, and nothing you do here can be wrong. The experience of looking at an image, apprehending and oscillating between meanings not only demands the presence of our physical body, standing, sitting or reclining before it, but calls our sense of our body into question, as we know it through a specular image. Little boy blue likes to blow on horns. Little boy blue likes to watch some porn. Then, before he pens another word, again he writes "holy" yet another eleven times. Quoting Annie Sprinkle's Public Cervix Announcement, I made ten-minute videos of close up, interior views of my mouth and ass hole, held open by a speculum and lit up by a red laser—it's surprising how much their pink fleshy worlds resemble each other. She declares that while there isn't a single ugly girl in the bunch, we certainly aren't actresses and we need to start practicing seducing the audience. I am assuming names, from real people, in fictional circumstances. I am disappearing myself. And I've been surprised to see, especially since we've actively cultivated significant body diversity in our ensemble, that no matter how different we all seem to be (men/women/trans, old/young, fat/ thin, hairy/smooth, of all colors and abilities), when we get naked the most salient experience is that of our sameness. I care more about how gesture/movement is influenced by

an embodied presence, action and fixation on the gut and cunt of a person. My mom told me when I was young that God itself made us horny, God gave us these urges because people are lazy. So you can imagine my irreverent behavior and often physically contorted responses to their performances on stage as straight-acting men, when not a few hours earlier they were sashaying and hitting it like no other fierce queen could in the dance studio. The mirror becomes a dressed down version of a time machine through which I speak to a thinner self, a younger self and a childless self. With bodies expressly for display, the two supercharged Barbie dolls engaged in rapid fire sensual interactions that were the rough equivalent of stuffing your mouth with as much candy as possible and downing it in one gulp. Protesting Columbus quincennial celebrations, the performance had audience volunteers kneeling face deep into Bustamante's crotch, apologizing for their sins, then biting deep into the strap-on burrito she guided down their throats so that the "healing rush" of spurting warm beans could absolve their guilt. But butches dancing, butches stripping? What were the models for us? In the sharing of a central axis, spine, mouth, genitals, face, and anus reveal their interconnectedness and centrality in embodied experience. *Flora Wiegmann, Simone Forti, Jordana Toback, Ashley Hunt, Jeremy Hahn, Doran George, Keith Hennessy, Angeline Shaka, Meg Wolfe, Eric Kupers, Julie Tolentino, Greg Barnett, Joel Smith, Karen Bernard, Eva Yaa Asantewaa, Sara Wolf, Tania Hammidi, Jess Curtis & Maria Francesca Scaroni*

MEG WOLFE, TAISHA PAGGETT, STACY DAWSON STEARNS, and GREG BARNETT (via text messages)

it "fit" into the landscape. I needed to make a place for it, in order to keep making work and find other artists to be in some sort of dialogue with. It always felt strange to me that there was nothing else like AR here, coming from NYC where it seemed like there was a performance going on in every available space. I certainly didn't expect this to go on for six years.

sds: Did it fill the void?

mw: I think that it helped to build some critical mass in the dance scene here as a regular meeting place. (she empties water trapped inside of her goggles. . .) But it no longer feels necessary for me to continue with this particular format. It expanded beyond its original intentions and people were seeing it as some sort of "showcase", which did not interest me. I was getting burnt out from producing it month after month. So I decided to kill AR off and take a break to see where inspiration leads me.

sds: So here we are in the breaks! So why are dances and dancing so necessary? What goes on that makes you need it?

mw: For me, dancing is an energetic channel. We are energy that happens to be expressed through human form - the same stuff as energy expressed in tree form or animal form or pile of rocks form. I think that dancers are some highly-trained energy workers.

sds: I guess this kind of exploration could be challenging for dancers who are used to dealing with VOCABULARY. Are people able/willing to work within an uncharted space in which there is actually no tangible material?

mw: I can't imagine working with me. It requires a certain kind of patience - of "let's explore this thing endlessly for weeks, and then throw it away".

sds: This doesn't seem like "throwing away". It sounds like adjusting the path of energy seeking manifestation. (A low-voltage jellyfish brushes past her leg underwater.) How and when does form actually emerge?

mw: I'm looking for something, and this can mean a long time of doing stuff without much direction, waiting and watching to see what presents itself.

sds: But then there are temporal realities, premieres, dates on postcards.

mw: The moment when you just have to MAKE. SOMETHING. NOW. And then I work very fast. Pressure is sometimes good for the decision-making process... but I feel like I need all that exploration time before starting to make decisions. When it comes to changing gears from exploration to actually putting something repeatable together for a deadline, I am always very last minute. Taisha is (at least appears to be) really comfortable taking that journey. And Greg, we've been working together for a while

now and he sort of knows my patterns. They are both great at kicking into gear when that moment comes.

sds: This indicates a specific kind of intimacy between you and your collaborators - to be able to leap from the goo to form all at once. I like to imagine that moment of shifting intention and the sensation of that.

(Pause in conversation while Meg joins Taisha's swirly game. SDS texts Gregory Barnett out there in 4 dimensional-land for a psycho-physical

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9: Before/After. She spiraled right up from the floor and out into space, a cyclone directed from its calm inner eye of connectivity. We all know everything, but forget it in strange chunks. For a moment, we remember the past and wonder where it went. the song of the ice cream truck gives rhythm to my steps the corn vendor honks as he pedals by. Are you allowing the circumstances that surround you to discourage and stifle the authentic you? What part of yourself could come roaring back to life, if you'd only let it? Before! There's the agony of before, characterized chiefly

by waiting and/or procrastination, usually both. before the twins, and after. before the next dance. before enough joy. So, then, the accompanying photograph Which I took before Big Sur but after Provincetown Is the event, more than the fire - the lit candle, the cigarette, or the cooked food - that will be. I have just finished breaking every dish we own and slicing our comforter and pillows with our butcher knife. I could spit bile there is so much anger in me. — Hilary Bryan, Laura Fuller, Esther Baker-Tarpaga, Eva Yaa Asantewaa, Allison Wyper, Victoria Marks, Marcela Fuentes, Gregory Barnett

breakdown of the critical “now we test our synergy and collectively commit to form” moment)

Greg (remotely, via text): I don't know I don't know. If I knew I wouldn't have to do it. There's logic I'm no longer familiar with and it's always there with me and I value finding it. Detective. And not sure I'm going to get it again. Never sure if I'm going to again. Green. Green feathers then burn them off burn this off. Burn off this thing then slightly better or worse for a moment. Then do it again.

sds: Thanks, Greg, for translating us into the closed circuit of collaborative intuition.

So Meg, I am interested in the energy of intimacy, and I don't mean the inferred intimacy of gestural semiotics of sensuality and emotion that are found in the lint trap of contemporary interpretive dance forms. (At this point, something bites her foot. She thrashes wildly, accidentally inhales some water, and coughs) When I see you dance, I feel as if I am being given a sensory glimpse into an intimate space that is purely Wolfe-ian. Can you describe this space? Does it connect with an intimate space within those who witness your dance?

mw: That's interesting and exciting somehow. And I don't know what you mean. I'm making something that's going in front of people eventually, I keep that in mind. It's an emotional thing, making and performing,

working something out physically. I'm a sensual being, and dancing is how/where I make sense of things. Body-mind-world is a place, a safe container. A Meg space. Hmm. What's going on in the world around and how does it affect the world inside? How do you feel???

Taisha Paggett: You let yourself stay tangled up in your work and that's where I see the intimacy. I mean, everybody is perhaps, but they (at least try to) cloak it and pretend that the questions they pose in the studio are about the thing itself/the world/Bush/this issue or that, as they see it... Opaque choreographic structures, motifs, movement vocabularies, etc. come into the process as a way of shaping their questions and making them tangible like an exoskeleton. But in your process, there are no structures to hide behind... or perhaps they are so translucent they appear to be invisible... you start us moving, with nothing but a few words and images in our heads. It's a most unreal process. Unsettling and plush at the same time. And how the piece comes together seems more like sorcery than anything else. Or a space mission. We're looking for something but won't recognize it until we see it and then it's another month before you actually name or frame it.

mw: This is really good to hear. It's funny too because I think of structure SO much, making a framework/skeleton for the piece, but it grows with its own logic in a wholistic way. and I don't want to frame it too soon. I think that the thing is not complete until an audience is there, and there is an energetic exchange or resonance going on. It is a ritual, we're all in it together, and it's a lot of energy to be moving around. Sometimes the ritual feels like a failure, you know those times I'm sure, when it feels like the audience just isn't there with you, they're asleep or wishing they were home watching tv or something, or as a performer something is just not flowing and you feel like you are dancing in a vat of glue and just hope you make it to the end of the piece and go home and cry...

tp: Which is interesting and another type of intimacy. The work, the feeling, the energy, etc., doesn't change in the presence of the audience. I think you ask your audience to look in, down your blouse, up your skirt, over your shoulder, etc even though your work sits in vast landscapes and never seems to sit comfortably in its skin (perhaps that's too much of a luxury?) In the making, your work is about an us-ness, and in the presence of the audience, they become part of that us-ness. Our container doesn't change, it just balloons out to include everyone in the room. That's radically intimate and scary because, as you said, if the audience doesn't take on

the us-ness, doesn't recognize or accept the invitation, you can REALLY feel it onstage. Their resistance. In the studio, we dance for hours and no one ever knows what's gelling with you. We just keep looking. you let it happen. Obviously very little of what happens in the studio goes into the work but you have/let us stay with things for so long. What I'm interested in are the moments you say no, because they are rare, usually to Greg (ha ha! Or you're only comfortable externalizing your disagreement towards Greg?!!?!?!?) and are fucking subtle but pretty unshakeable.

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10: Manifesto. Turn towards fear and become intimate with not knowing, risk and failure. I can't sleep any more unless I'm empty - I need some tortured ritual - to fill myself up - empty myself out - fill myself up. These feelings of confusion and terror in the process do not mean that you are getting somewhere. Nor do they mean that you are not getting somewhere. They are simply the ego freaking out. Let it freak out and do your job anyway. Pack your dance a lunch, make sure it has bus fare, and wave goodbye. Try again. What needs to be heard and seen - What needs to be listened to. A THEATER OF THE VISCERAL NOW! YES! HERE! with fingernails and bones in resonance with the ground below. You will move space as you move metaphors in a single virulent second as you KEEP-- DOING--IT. Even if you are standing still you are doing something. You're being read and read differently by different people. No to style / Style is unavoidable - No to

camp / A little goes a long way. We demand the right to self-determine our genders, regardless of income and race, and without facing harassment, discrimination, or violence. The University of California school System is definitely Dead Twitter is Epic Dead Irony is Dead The "live" in Live Performance is Dead The Manifesto in case you hadn't realized is Dead. trance mute still form of sound moving the silence time imitates. Don't be afraid, let the metal and plastic go, liquefy into this voice and these pixel pictures, this liquid flow of information that feels so real. It pulls you in, it feels more real than real, you'll tell me things you would never tell your friends and we like it that way. whatever you do - fade out. *Hana van der Kolk, Gesel Mason, Mira Kingsley, Meg Wolfe, Stanley Love, Taisha Ciara Paggett, Yvonne Rainer (interview), Yvonne Rainer (A Manifesto Reconsidered), Wu Ingrid Tsang/Imprenta, Mathew Sandoval, d. Sabela Grimes, Clarinda Mac Low, Adam Overton*

mw: Hmmmm... this is actually something I have been trying to figure out, and I think part of getting more comfortable in the role of director, working with different personalities, trying to find out how they work best, what they need as far as encouragement or more specific direction or just to let them get lost and bored for a while. Often, I'm just watching and waiting. I think there's something about trust in all this - that actually I do have an idea that is very clear, I will know it when I see it; some things when I see them are not what I'm looking for at that moment and I don't want to spend time figuring out why not... so i say no, put it aside, and keep excavating. Sometimes I may be mistaken, and those things actually are just exactly what I was looking for but didn't recognize at first, and I'll need to go back and dig through the pile of dirt later!

I think saying no is a quick (not always the best) tool to re-focus boredom and speed up the process by bypassing habitual movement patterns, get back into investigation mode. At some point, you do have to say

"THAT. That, there is it" Sometimes, we don't find that. Or we only find part of that. So you go on to the next project...

Which may also be related to the death of AR. "That there is NOT it!" It was, and now it is not. I'm looking for something else, waiting to recognize it.

(Exhausted from this span of verbalocious activity, Meg returns to the swirly thing while Taisha floats without trying at all. Stacy considers the risks of going really deep to retrieve the pen she dropped halfway through the interview. Greg, perhaps is still dealing with feathers, even as he navigates the stranger waters of 4 dimensional "reality". At any rate, the time for talk is over.)

MEG WOLFE, TAISHA PAGGETT, STACY DAWSON STEARNS, and GREG BARNETT (via text messages)



—FEBRUARY 11TH, 2012

ANNA B. SCOTT PRESENTS "PATCH"

AT THE LAST BOOKSTORE

PATCH

ANNA B. SCOTT, BORN IN 1969 IN IOWA CITY, IOWA, PERFORMS AFROFUTURIST CONJURATIONS WITH DANCE, DIGITAL DEVICES AND TEXT, ON STAGE, IN BLOGS, BOOKS AND THROUGH STRATEGIC MARKETING PLANS. TRAINED IN TRADITIONAL, COLLABORATIVE PERFORMANCE FROM THE AFRICAN DIASPORA, SCOTT IS ALWAYS LOOKING TO JOIN THE ARKESTRA. SHE HAS BEEN FORTUNATE TO COLLABORATE WITH PAT PAYNE, ULYSSES JENKINS, SHERON WRAY, MEG WOLFE, NAJITÉ, BRIAN GETNICK, AND RITSU KATSUMATA ON AN ARRAY OF PERFORMANCE WORK. HER WORK IS ARCHIVED AT THE SCHOMBURG CENTER FOR RESEARCH IN BLACK CULTURE AND THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM. SHE HAS PRESENTED HER SOLO WORK IN TRADITIONAL AND NONTRADITIONAL SPACES AROUND THE COUNTRY INCLUDING THE REDCAT, MIT, EXPRESS YOURSELF FESTIVAL IN CHICAGO'S GRANT PARK, BAYVIEW OPERA HOUSE IN SAN FRANCISCO, AND STREETS AROUND LOS ANGELES. AS A DANCER, SHE HAS PERFORMED FOR ALASSANE KANE, AUGUSTO OMOLU, ISUARA OLIVEIRA, MALONGA CASQUELORDE. SHE IS THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF VISCERA PERFORMANCE INSTIGATION TROUPE. THEY PERFORM 'HIGH TECH' STREET THEATER INSTALLATIONS, HAVING LAUNCHED THE INAUGURAL PERFORMANCE IN THE LOS ANGELES WORLD AIRPORTS' AND PUBLIC ART DIVISION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS' EPHEMERAL ART PROGRAM WITH *'BOUT TO GET ON*. VISCERA OCCASIONALLY APPEARS AROUND THE CITY, MOST RECENTLY AT THE LAST BOOKSTORE AS *PATCH*. PLEASE VISIT [HTTP://KINEME.BLOGSPOT.COM](http://KINEME.BLOGSPOT.COM) FOR INFORMATION ON THEIR WORK.



photo by Jeremy Oversier



Underneath the strong, sinewy blue bodies of the Na'vi (the CGI natives of the planet Pandora in James Cameron's movie *Avatar*) were the black bodies of Lula Washington's dance company. The ideal bodies of the future, the avatars into which the white hero joyfully leaps, were holograms modeled after the exceptional black bodies of a dance company. The horror and liberation of this idea - that a black body could be understood as an energetic force within which blackness is both glorified and erased - startled performance artist Anna B Scott. As a result, she posed the question: what kind of black history will there be in the future if we can now imagine accessing blackness without black people?

On February 12th Anna B Scott presented PATCH at The Last Bookstore in downtown LA. Through Scott's unique blend of immersive dance and storytelling, the audience re-experienced the bookstore as a living trans-dimensional portal, carrying the archives of black history into a future where black people have all but disappeared.

PATCH originally appeared on Scott's Twitter feed in 2009 as a series of flash fiction pieces in which the main character, a young euro-distinct woman of the 22nd century, undergoes one of the latest trends in cosmetic cultural augmentation- the melanin increasing Patch- and finds herself evolving into "Them," vanished black people. This iteration revolves around her encounter with the ori.Xas (transdimensional aliens of *The One*) who first appeared in Scott's 2011 ensemble work, *'Bout To Get On*. This performance was made possible through the participation of: Amy Shimson-Santo, Jahanna Blunt, d. Sabela Grimes, Natalie Micciché, Maia, A. Minor, Margit Edwards, Prumsodon Ok, and Peter Woods.

Anna B. Scott: I'm thinking a lot about the fact that black people are everywhere and nowhere. In LA we are down to 6% of the population. I have a colleague, a gay white man who went back to NY, who said about LA, "Honey, where are all the black people? I don't live in cities without black people." San Francisco also has a negative rate of growth in their black population. I think everyone is going to Atlanta or Houston. A lot of people are dead. And then with the tax rates going through the roof in some of these places, people are having to get out. It's peculiar. Like, Moreno Valley is full of black people. It's far east in the Inland Empire and it's really depressed in a way because the military base there shut down. It was a big employer for black people but now it's gone. These people were so under water that they just abandoned their houses; but the question is

then: where did they go? I had a friend from Chicago who just moved here ask me that.

Well, where are they going? People tend to migrate to where the jobs are. But where are the jobs? It's really hard to track because the normal way that we would track migration patterns doesn't seem to be holding water. But right now it looks like people are headed south, back to Atlanta. And when black people leave, they are looking desperately for black people because they don't know what to do without them.

I'm from Mississippi so I grew up with that old South that you hear about. The whole confederate flag thing is just laziness and a lack of imagination. In high school, I went to a boarding school in New England, one of my best friend's Granddaddy had been the grand whatever of the KKK where he was from but we were buds. I called him, "Tiger" and he called me "Sweetie." And people were like: how is this, cuz you're from the oppressed south and he is from the oppressing south and y'all make no sense. But the South is everywhere now once you leave the big cities. How does it work out that on the one hand racism and the south are migrating everywhere, while black culture is more and more pervasive in the media, and yet, black people are disappearing...

The question, the quandary, is almost like a time travel problem. On the one hand blackness is everywhere, and on the other hand black people are in very particular locations. How is it traveling? What is it traveling through? What's its value as it's traveling? What's its value as it lands? How is it that it has more value on certain types of bodies in certain locations? Does it have less value if performed on a black body in certain locations than it does on any other type of body? What's happening here? It's like physically they are here and not here. Like the lead, Nazee (in *Avatar*), is actually a Latin American dancer of African descent and they couldn't figure out if they should put her up for an Oscar or not because it wasn't clear if she was doing the magic or if the CGI was doing the magic. It's unclear if they were looking at the artist who rendered the characters, or the human body underneath the CGI. Was she captured enough for that body to be considered her or was it the person who placed the blue body on her that should get the award? Or is it shared across?

They don't have a category yet.

So what I was thinking of doing for my show was a version of an earlier piece called "A Bout to Get On B.O.O.G.I.E." where we crash landed into a bus station. I put up QR codes everywhere and they delivered text mes-

sages to your phone that gave you info about what was happening. So I was going to do the QR codes here at the Last Bookstore, either on the pillars, or on objects, but the store is in a dead zone for cell phones. Then I was thinking that I would do a layer that allows you to augment reality. You walk into a space and you access the application on your smartphone. When you send in your coordinates, the app let's you know if there are layers that exist (as in extra reality material that is dropped).

In my work, I layer.

(15:30) Break...we order tea...coconuts

ITCH OUIJABOARD ORACLE TRANSMISSION

11 you. are. here. The music can sometimes act as my endless battery, but I can also feel when my agility starts flagging. Lately though, I've been trying to push through and keep dancing longer, and lately closing my eyes to hear in a different way. I still get a salty smell in my nose when I hear "I Wanna Rock With You" by Michael Jackson as this song always seemed to be on the transistor radios of my fellow fishermen on the Venice Pier. Robyn Cutler: for helping me to learn Limon technique and letting me watch your long hair. Bessie Schonberg: for meddling and telling me not to talk so much. Among the rustling of the crowd (like a rustling of Whitman's leaves of grass) came a silent sound, produced by a set to my right. I looked up to see Heather Cassils clad in an icy environment. She was always nervous about plane rides. Claustrophobia I guess. She loved Turkish airplanes because you could smoke on them. When colleagues warned me he was "difficult," I replied, "but he's brilliant." True to reputation at rehearsal only days before the performance he informed me of all the things that were wrong, and how it was to be done. I love the character's outlaw persistence over time, building his own haphazard Cadillac dream from spare parts, smuggled out of the factory in a lunchbox with the help of a friend; love the story of the

long-term vision culminating in the collaborative all-nighter...but my body is not your confessional booth. and redemption will take you more than ten hail marys because now it is my turn to claim you and question you Where are you from? What are you? I ended up doing an introductory speech about trying to get located in the ever unlocatable Los Angeles, and then proceeded to do an improvised dance that I've done a thousand times in other contexts. I'm not sure why I did that, but I just sort of freaked out. All my old tricks were there. one person lies down, face-up - the group gazes downward observing, waiting. This effort has a backspace though I feel all frontal, unreal, armed, heady. I am seeking a 3D effort ultimately, a full dimensionality to structure and form, its pulsing movement and density harnessed. It is wait/retreat combined with focus/direction. I'll call it "severed head." This particular state of being is characterized by the feeling that your body is trailing behind your head at all times, only to be felt when some mentally stimulating idea triggers a release of adrenaline. A fine feeling indeed. *Alistair Schneider, Leonard Melchor, Victoria Marks, Tania Hammidi, Lilian Wu interview on Pina Bausch, Jacki Apple, Meg Wolfe, J. Lorenzo Perillo, Lionel Popkin, Adam Overton, Julie Tolentino, Megan May Daalder*

What is that? \$3.50? Weren't we at \$2? only two dollars? (laughs) I'm just messing with you (to the Barista) this is like the land of the 8 dollar breakfast.

BARRISTA: It really is. I went to the Nickel Diner and nothing's a nickel! It's good but its like 8 dollars for breakfast. 8 dollars for a bagel and eggs.

BAKER (Anna's son): they charge you an extra 1.25 for the condiments that come with it. For the jelly and the avocados.

ANNA: But it was worth it. Oh yeah they did charge for the butter. Everything is extra.

BAKER: You're lucky that the chef gave you an extra avocado. Yeah he came by 'cause I gave him the soul nod.

ANNA: We are going to have narrators live but I also wanted to use these little virtual pop up books. The QR codes are awesome because you can send entire stories to people's phones, which I dig.

I run parallel shows basically. The book thing is parallel to the layer thing but they intersect at some moment. And the QR code is running behind the live action. There's live action that's running against the narration and the narration is actually encapsulating everything.

The last piece was at a bus station and it had to be triggered when the bus came in. You have to look and see when people are coming from the bus. And everyone is making use of everyone else for cues and sometimes you can't visually see the rest. But the rewarding thing is that it synched up. People thought it wasn't working the first time we ran it through. We looked totally psychotic. We're at some terminal just looking totally ridiculous, trying to stuff a dollar in a machine that only takes credit cards. People were looking at us like, Look at them crazy black people. And then, Wait, they all have on the same shirts. Did they come from somewhere? We were like, Yeah, we did.

It took hours to do the first run through. People wanted to stop and talk it out. But we didn't stop on the second, we stumbled through. And people (the cast) didn't even know what a stumble through is. They're like What the hell are you stumbling through? There's a script. I'm a dancer and I'm a performance artists and when you are working with text that isn't really text and you don't have a real script, it's like you have to stumble through to discover where the changes happen. That was the process I was trained in so to speak.

I went to Stanford and I was really fortunate to get to study with Anna Deavere Smith who shows in her own work, not only can you interview a person for background, but you can actually act that interview out through your own body. She did a really famous piece called Fires in the Mirror after this big riot that happened in Crown Heights, Brooklyn in the 90's. And people were trying to figure out how does this race riot happen in the 90's? How is that even possible because these people knew each other generations deep. She went through and interviewed over 100 people and got it {the show} down to like 35 people. She did a one woman show of 35 different characters.

I didn't know initially that I was studying dance at Stanford. You know

when you are an undergrad you don't know what the hell you are studying. But what I was figuring out was that I wanted to study dance linguistics. Listening to how words dance in a way and then looking at how certain types of bodies are materialized by certain vocabularies. It's like you get a certain musculature, a certain energetic feeling that exists around the sound of a word. Not just the sound itself, but the way the sound is intending to work once it leaves the body. So you reverse engineer, and you read the text and you read the text and you read the text. And as you read it, you allow your body to wrap around it. As opposed to: here's a picture of this person, here's the situation in which it was said. Bodily form is actually already imprinted in the way that words are put together.

One example is the Electric Slide. I call that the African American wedding dance. It ain't a wedding until everyone's done the Electric Slide. But now some regions will do the slide to Cameo and other songs#. You see the transformation in the practice and that is a type of communication.

JEREMY OVERSIER IS A PHOTOGRAPHER, ARTIST AND JOURNALIST BASED IN LOS ANGELES. JEREMYOVERSIER.COM



*FUTURE INTERJECTION: May 13th 2012, Anna gives an example of the way Bodily form is actually already imprinted in the way that words are put together.

The bodies are being materialized by the vocabulary. The way we communicate is pre-choreographed by class and geography. Terminology is strategic, it can be deployed, and a gesture.. putting on a hood reads as "I'm in solidarity with Trevon Martin," but it is also to masquerade. We put on hoods for liturgical reasons, or to create fear—you deploy the hood against someone, like the KKK. Wearing a hood, a person becomes a magical creature. In Academia, you put on a partial hood upon acceptance into the professoriate; we say we "hood them." When you are putting on the hood-ie, you reach behind your own head and flick upwards. You put the hood over someone's head typically while looking at them, face to face

if conferring, from behind if hiding them from the world; the hood becomes a verb. To hood them, the word has a different sensation, probably in the center of your body, since there is a fight with gravity, with your arms outstretched holding the hood, raising it above their head. We hood people to either take away or confer a privilege on someone. When the hood is pulled down over a head, it's as if the word becomes negative space as in a painting; the word disappears as the gesture takes over. The hood is a hood, but the situation in which its hoodness materializes renders different experiences. Still a hood, but it's a different hood moment to moment.

Traditionally, the Electric Slide is done to the Marcia Griffith tune, "It's Electric." It's not uncommon for people to use "She's Strange," by Cameo instead, mostly at large night club parties as opposed to wedding banquets.



—FEBRUARY 17th, 18th, 24th, 25th, 2012

"ABADDON", A NEW WORK BY WIFE

(KRISTEN LEAHY, NINA MCNEELY AND JASMINE ALBUQUERQUE)"

AT CHRIS AND JED'S LOFT IN BOYLE HEIGHTS.

ABADDON

JASMINE ALBUQUERQUE IS A DANCER, CHOREOGRAPHER, AND INSTRUCTOR. SHE HAS DANCED WITH SUCH COMPANIES AS HYSTERICA, BLUE13 BOLLYWOOD, COLLAGE DANCE THEATER AND RYAN HEFFINGTON'S PSYCHO-DANCE PERFORMANCE FINGERED. OTHER LIVE PERFORMANCES INCLUDE WE ARE THE WORLD, HAZM, AND HECUBA IN VARIOUS VENUES AROUND LA SUCH AS THE HAMMER MUSEUM, THE FORD AMPHITHEATER, MOCA, THE ORPHEUM THEATER, LACMA, THE JOSHUA TREE MUSIC FESTIVAL, AND EVEN A LAUNDROMAT. SHE HAS CHOREOGRAPHED MUSIC VIDEOS FOR BOB WAYNE (DIRECTED BY JENNIFER TZAR) AND DANCED IN VIDEOS FOR BECK, YOU WILL KNOW US BY THE TRAIL OF THE DEAD, MORCHEBA, AND TODD EDWARDS. SHE STUDIED CONTEMPORARY MOVEMENT IN BUDAPEST, HUNGARY AND AT THE EDGE IN HOLLYWOOD AFTER YEARS OF CLASSICAL BALLET AND JAZZ TRAINING. WHILE MAJORING IN HISTORY, SHE DANCED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF WORLD ARTS AND CULTURES AT UCLA AND LATER TAUGHT MOVEMENT WORKSHOPS IN CHIAPAS, MEXICO AND COPENHAGEN, DENMARK. HER CURRENT WORK WITH WIFE CONTINUES TO CHALLENGE AND INSPIRE HER AS A PERFORMER.

KRISTEN LEAHY IS A DANCER/CHOREOGRAPHER BASED IN LOS ANGELES. FOR THE PAST TEN YEARS, LEAHY HAS DANCED WITH RYAN HEFFINGTON (FINGERED) AND OTHER LA CHOREOGRAPHERS IN CLUBS, ART GALLERIES (MOCA, LACMA), WITH BANDS (WE ARE THE WORLD, MT. SIMS, SHINY TOY GUNS), IN THEATER PRODUCTIONS, AND IN NUMEROUS MUSIC VIDEOS AND SHORT FILMS. HER CHOREOGRAPHY CREDITS INCLUDE THE SISTER MANTOS 2009 EUROPEAN TOUR, PRAY/PREY, A RITUAL PERFORMANCE IN COLLABORATION WITH ARTIST AMANDA STREET, AND THE ONGOING WORK AS A CO-CREATOR OF WIFE. LEAHY ALSO EARNED HER M.S. IN DANCE/MOVEMENT THERAPY FROM PRATT INSTITUTE, AND CURRENTLY PRACTICES D/MT WITH ADULTS AT A PSYCHIATRIC FACILITY AND TEACHES ADULT TAP AND JAZZ CLASSES.

NINA MCNEELY IS A VIDEO ARTIST, CHOREOGRAPHER AND DANCER BASED IN LOS ANGELES. SHE HAS CHOREOGRAPHED FOR MUSIC ARTISTS INCLUDING YEASAYER, MORCHEEBA, SAM SPARRO, WE ARE THE WORLD, DORIAN WOOD, AND BASECK. HER INTERACTIVE PROJECTION WORK WAS RECENTLY FEATURED AT MOCA FOR RYAN HEFFINGTON'S "HEFFINGTON MOVES MOCA." NINA'S FILM "THE DINNER PARTY" PREMIERED AT DANCE CAMERA WEST IN 2010. SHE HAS DANCED FOR POP ICONS SUCH AS THE B 52'S, BRITNEY SPEARS, FERGIE, AND PEACHES. HER COMMERCIAL CAREER HAS TAKEN A TURN TOWARD EDITING AND ANIMATING, AND HER LATEST SUCCESSES INCLUDE SAM SPARRO'S "PINK CLOUD" MUSIC VIDEO, DORIAN WOOD'S "BRUTUS" MUSIC VIDEO, INTERVIEWS FOR ELLE MAGAZINE ONLINE, AND A VIDEO LOOK BOOK FOR L'AGENCE. HER COLLABORATION WITH WIFE IS AN EXPERIMENT IN THE POSSIBILITIES OF DANCE, VIDEO AND FANTASY.



DONESH OLYAIE IS A WRITER, ACTIVIST AND DRAMATURG WITH AN MFA FROM YALE SCHOOL OF DRAMA WITH DRAMATURGY CREDITS AT YALE REPERTORY, SOUTH COAST REPERTORY AND CINCINNATI OPERA. HE IS BASED IN LOS ANGELES AND WORKS AS A UNION ORGANIZER.



Feb. 12, 2012. Two lights illuminate three dancers positioned side by side on pedestals. As they begin their violent dance of possession, the lamps, affixed by chain and spindle to a rotary motor, slowly circle the three women. The lights move faster and my eyes shift from the dancers to what is happening behind them: shadows flickering across the performance space, resurrected and dying with each turn.

In Los Angeles, some argue we encounter the world as a visual space. Cocooned in cars, busses and trains, we glide past the city and bear witness to its squalor and splendor primarily through our eyes. Snapshots of the city are offered up, only to vanish seconds later.

The L.A. performance collective WIFE has spoken, intentionally or not, to this subject with their recent creation Abaddon. A series of loosely connected vignettes, Abaddon explores madness, possession and mythology through dance and video. Along with a strong group of collaborators, the three women behind WIFE, Kristen Leahy, Nina McNeely and Jasmine Albuquerque, created a highly stylized environment from which to launch into their eerie, Victorian-era nightmare.

Staged in a workshop above the bustle of Cesar Chavez Avenue in Boyle Heights, the venue itself lent to the dust-covered attic quality of the piece. The space's imposing, warehouse-sized dimensions left the audience to feel swallowed up in the room and by extension, by Abaddon.

Within this setting, Abaddon is presented as a series of snapshots. Here is a man at a desk, there is a woman at a vanity. Upstage sits an opera

singer offering discordant songs of dread. Across the stage shuffle a trio of kimono-clad, kabuki dolls risen from the dead.

In Abaddon we see an assemblage of common themes brought to life. Passion, madness and evil all work their way into the piece. But when broken down, Abaddon's narrative becomes difficult to comprehend. Without a story arch or fleshed-out characters, Abaddon relies on theme and continuously circles through it. As a whole, it largely succeeds in illuminating the darker undertones of desire, lust and insanity. The vignettes, with the kabuki dolls, opera singer and the rotating lights, when viewed together, impart a disquieting mood, place and time.

ITCH OUIJABOARD ORACLE TRANSMISSION

12: The Big Throw Down. I do give her credit for showing up and working hard on her dancing though... and noticed a recent Enquirer headline: "Bristol to mom: I'm more popular than you." Even though it was a competition structure that we had come up with together, with many random elements, the winner still felt a great validation from being chosen, and the loser was devastated. It ended up being much more than a game. This excess has a function, and that function is the exercise of a kind of freedom - a freedom to not be reduced to a scheme of conformity, dominance or obedience. i, for one, can't seem to shake somewhat of a socialist romantic notion of sharing. I think of myself more as a collaborator than a competitor. That's my general orientation towards life, especially in art making. Trusting, with soft attention, the movements of the body as it passes under gravity and through time - without judging the imagination that creates a follow-through. Intellectually I am often disgusted by the very thing that I physically love. And so it goes. Even though I refuse to kick the ball up the field, I need something outside of myself to run up

against. Otherwise, it's just me screaming into the void. I find myself arguing between following my impulses and studying the rules of a universe with which I am not familiar. I decide not to play, not to win. To forget the game as it has been taught to me and instead create sustaining movements and actions. No one hit wonders. I feel all this generative desire in me. Desire to produce, even at the speed of some TV shows (creating something in just an intensive week of rehearsal). Desire to show that dance is not a sport and that we can enjoy an arm moving with consciousness...I read some of the cover letters. All of them stress how the applicant is the best-suited person for the job. A lot of them are out of work. As each dancer enters into and traverses the disorienting task, something occurs when the limit is transcended - the familiar in-and-out momentariness of the breakthrough, like perforations in a fabric; stars appear in the dome of sky casting light from the other side. *Meg Wolfe, Eric Kupers, Ashley Hunt, Arianne Hoffmann, Cheryl Banks-Smith, Barbara Dilley, Alexis A. Weisbrod, Keely Garfield, Vic Marks, Paige Tighe, Esteban Cardenas, Tim Devin, L. Martina Young*

Neither theatre nor ballet, Abaddon's characters are not so much protagonists or dancers as hallucinations - they operate with a logic entirely different from our own. In order to find a suitable comparison we must look elsewhere and, in this case, backward, to the photomontage.

At its core, photomontage demanded viewers derive their own meaning from the visual form. Various images assembled into a cohesive whole forced the viewer to create their own interpretation. It gave the spectator a newfound responsibility. That responsibility as an audience member is something particularly salient about to the experience of watching Abaddon.

WIFE doesn't tell you what the show is about, or what you should come away with. Each audience member arrives with their own particu-

lar memories, background and upbringing. The alchemical reaction that occurs during the performance is entirely dependent on the elements each person offers up. And like the most successful photomontage, the message is derived within the mind of the spectator. Abaddon is in a sense a performative photomontage: A series of disparate snapshots cut together that the audience analyzes as it wishes.

While interviewing WIFE, they shared their personal relationships with Los Angeles and the freedom it affords. This is in no part due to the dynamism of our city. The physical dimensions of Los Angeles force us to experience it in ways like a photomontage, pieced together from one neighborhood to the next, from one center to another. In Los Angeles, we live in the montage. Taken as images, broken up into individual components, communities seem isolated and self-contained. But when juxtaposed against one another, we begin to see relationships that mirror the city in which we live and create: we observe, we synthesize, we reflect.

Feb. 14, 2012. She crosses the stage on a diagonal until she arrives at a vanity downstage left. Sitting and staring at herself in the mirror, she begins a dance that is immediate and visceral. She is giving herself over, she is possessed. I wonder, did she ask for this? I feel as though I am watching Pina Bausch's Rite of Spring all over again, only this time the sacrifice is voluntary.

Is this death spiritual or physical?



photos courtesy of WIFE

2012 / 2013

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—FEBRUARY 25th, 2012
MAYA GINGERY PRESENTS “NOT FOR NOTHING DO WE WAIT”
AT THE LA CONVENTION CENTER



MAYA GINGERY

MAYA GINGERY IS A MULTI-HYPHENATED DANCE ARTIST-MUSICIAN-ACTOR-ARTIST-WRITER-ARTS EDUCATOR BASED IN LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA. SHE IS KNOWN FOR EXPRESSIVE DANCE PERFORMANCES THAT REFLECT THE INFLUENCE OF POSTMODERN DANCE, TANZTHEATER, ANKOKU BUTOH, AND NOH THEATRE. IN 1989 SHE BEGAN WORKING WITH BODY WEATHER LABORATORY, A MOVEMENT METHODOLOGY FOR EXPLORATION OF THE HUMAN BODY/MIND CREATED BY JAPANESE AVANT-GARDE DANCER MIN TANAKA. HER FASCINATION WITH THE FORM KNOWN AS BUTOH LED HER TO JAPAN, WHERE SHE MET AND STUDIED WITH TANAKA, AS WELL AS MAJOR BUTOH ARTISTS KAZUO OHNO, AKIKO MOTOFUJI AND OTHERS. SHE ALSO BECAME A STUDENT OF NOH THEATRE AND IS NOW A MEMBER OF THE TOURING COMPANY THEATRE NOHGAKU. HER SOLO WORKS HAVE BEEN SEEN IN JAPAN AT ASBESTO-KAN TOKYO, AND IN THE U.S. AT HIGHWAYS PERFORMANCE SPACE LA, SUSHI GALLERY, ANATOMY RIOT, MAX 10, THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF LOS ANGELES, DIAVOLO STUDIO, CALARTS, PIETER PASD AND OTHERS.

MAYA GINGERY with Brian Getnick

LA has many performance venues, but is also generously filled with an untold number of parking lots and abandoned fields. Dancers, choreographers and performance artists have often taken advantage of buildings, alleys, vacant lots, unnamed urban spaces and historic architecture to create site-specific works that are responsive to LA's urban landscape.

On February 25th, 2012 musician, choreographer and performance artist Maya Gingery presented Not for Nothing Do We Wait at the LA Convention center. Described as, “a dance to the status quo,” it called on its audience to engage or disengage with its questioning of space and time in an unforgiving landscape of concrete and human frailty. Along with Maya Gingery, the performance featured dancers/movers Alexa Weir, Jillian Stein, Jos McKain, Ally Voye, Odeya Nini, Amanda Furches, Busy Gangnes, and violist Kristina Haraldsdottir and was a part of curator Deborah Oliver's “Unspace Ground” performance event for the College Art Association's Conference at the Convention Center.

Brian Getnick: I'm intrigued by the title of your dance piece Not for Nothing Do We Wait. Could you explain its meaning?

Maya Gingery: Something I read said that the status quo is about self interests which come together to stop change. Then there is a positive aspect: even though the status quo represents the inability to change, there are some situations where people are willing to wait it out because they know that if you just

wait long enough something will change.

bg: So waiting is tactical.

mg: There are two ways of thinking of it. For example, Taiwan wants to separate from China but Taiwan knows that if it just waits long enough, eventually it will become its own country because China can't hold out forever.

bg: How did those interests translate into making dance?

mg: My piece is, in a way, a response to the political climate at the moment, which is very deadlocked. I wanted to respond to the feeling of being stuck by taking a group of performers and putting them through some actions that represented, in both a visual and spatial sense, what the Status Quo is in terms of people not being able to move because they're blocked by certain boundaries and limitations.

bg: Showing being blocked through the choreography?

mg: The choreography, the way they move through space. Let me walk you through the piece. In the beginning they're coming in very slowly and I wanted it to be synchronized and slow to show a representation of time passing. They're all in a similar grey uniform and carry the same prop, a suitcase. The other idea behind coming in slowly is in Noh Theater, which I studied, the main character always enters across a long bridge. He's always traveling from somewhere. As a theatrical device, the traveler brings the audience into the universe that the play will create. That's always the beginning of the Noh Play. A slow travel into space.

So the beginning had an everyman look to it, the look of the Status Quo. When they reached a pre-designated area, they would have a synchronized choreography coming from an emotional sense of arriving at a destination. They run forward and then find a limitation that they have to react to.

bg: It's not a limitation we, the audience, can see. It's something expressed through their bodies. Is it like a pantomime?

mg: It's not pantomime, it's an internal reaction to a space.

bg: They're not pretending a wall is there?

mg: No, the choreography is abstract, but the motion of reaching as high as you can is a human emotion and action. It's dance choreography in terms of technique and methodology, a release methodology: they do that action of tension, release, tension, release...and a counting of time. Then they come up against that limitation and they drop the suitcase as if their energy has given out. That happens four times. When they reach the central area, they open up the suitcase and find clothing. This begins a set of actions and a monologue around a set of questions that the clothing is meant to provoke.

bg: This a theatrical moment?

mg: Structured improvisation. I gave them a structure to work with and they had to come up with this story. Each time I met with them, I gave them some ideas and examples. Over the course of our six week rehearsal process, they worked on these and at the end I asked them what they would talk about.

bg: At those rehearsals, I saw this moment of them improvising as a break from what had been a coordinated group of slow movers. Suddenly they're fractured into eight different plays, with eight simultaneous monologues. The sound of your dancers talking emerged as an unintelligible chatter. In contrast, on the day of the actual performance, when I saw you giving your monologue, these women came up to you and began nodding their heads in agreement. Did you anticipate this?

mg: I didn't, but part of the structure was to attract an audience. So I told them, If you see a group of people try to get them to come over and listen, talk to the people near you. If no one is around, talk to a tree, but direct your monologue to someone or something. But this wasn't possible for everyone. People got a little stressed out about that. What happened to me, I wanted to have happen for everyone.

bg: You have experience working outside in site-specific work. What are the kinds of things you wanted your dancers to have in mind performing in an unpredictable environment?

mg: I told them that anything is possible, something will go wrong, be flexible, and that nothing is written in stone. Go with whatever is happening. If you get to a point when you can't find your partner or your clothes fall off, just keep moving. There's a waltz section where they were supposed to spin in circles and pick up clothing from the ground, and if they couldn't find it I said, just keep moving.

bg: So you built within the choreography a structure for re-finding the score? Is score about the location of bodies in space?

mg: A score is an organization of events in time. I would call what I did a score because I used time very specifically like a musical score.

bg: So you built structures in order for them to re-find their unification. If they got lost, you built in ways out.

mg: Oh yes, it would have been complete chaos without those.

bg: Tell me about what you were invited to do that day and then tell me what actually happened.

mg: We were invited to create a site-specific piece in front of the LA

Convention Center along with several other performance pieces. The whole thing was choreographed. My piece was planned to maneuver around the other performers. I proposed that my piece would use the whole plaza and I wanted my dancers to move around the other objects and installations. These were installations and durational spectacles. Little islands of activity and art in front of a large wall arranged in a semicircle. We showed up two hours before it started and an official was there from the College Art Association and he was saying, I'm sorry, the fire marshal won't allow you to do this in front of the main entrance and also the Convention Center doesn't want it. And Deb* said, but this was all arranged ahead of time, we had a map, this was planned out. And he said, We didn't expect this to be so planned out, we expected something more spontaneous! When you design a piece with 45 artists and 15 pieces you need structure. You can't just show up and say, whoopee let's do something.

bg: So there was a crisis and you had to shift gears and everyone went forward.

mg: I think this is the beautiful thing about artists, we're very used to having to adapt easily to unfortunate circumstances.

bg: And indignity.

mg: Yes, that too. But you adapt and go with it. This is professionalism, whatever happens, you do it.

bg: And your dancers were relying on you to lead them through this crisis?

mg: It happened, we did it.

bg: Now, you are in a completely different situation than you expected. What I saw surrounding you that day were clusters of different artist groups that blended together. Everywhere you looked, there was an intense amount of color and movement. Surprisingly, your performance was very visible in that circus-like atmosphere.

mg: I chose to have the piece reflect the site as much as possible, rather than be a colorful object placed within the concrete and glass hardscape. I chose for us to look like the Convention Center so we were dressed in grey and were stiff.

ITCH OUIJABOARD ORACLE TRANSMISSION

13: The Magic Rabbit. Given chalk or pencils or crayons or even pen, our walls by our beds became tomes of our lives. The joys of spring: (humping) and (teasing). On a soda bottle: your sissy children save the world from you! The somatic action can happen in a public context or a private space. Start where you are most

comfortable maintaining a connection to your body and set a specific amount of time to allow the action to occur. Make sure on-lookers are doing their job at all times. Sometimes they get feisty and deny their role. *C.O. Moed, Kate Bergstrom, CA Conrad, Melinda Buckwalter, Arianne MacBean.*

bg: It was the site reflected in the body.

mg: Yes, we were embodying the site. In the third section I wanted to fill the plaza with bodies, that the bodies would be like bees, moving around in that space with the music, but we were limited by the basketball game.

bg: And they stopped at a certain time. I saw that they were blocking you and I said to Deb, Deb, do you think we could ask the basketball players to move back three feet? And she said: Maya knows exactly what she's doing, she's prepared for this, just watch. And she was right, I thought this was great, that she was confident about you and trusted you and them too. No one said anything, but then all of a sudden the chaos around you stopped. There was this very intense moment when all eyes were upon you.

mg: I had no idea. I was inside the piece and I was concerned about the dancers, I couldn't see everyone.

bg: I'm thinking of the way this piece was saved by the choreography—by relying on something that wasn't so dependent on place. The choreography first exists within the rehearsal space, which is a non-space because it's not the place of the actual performance. Alternately, do you think it would be helpful to prepare your dancers by putting them through a boot camp of sorts, to put the choreography through the ringer by bringing them to busy chaotic spaces? Just have them do it...

mg: If we had the time yes, I think so, but it's not easy to get a pick-up company to be in the same space. But, no one quit and most of them were into the piece...

bg: Is that the measure of a good ensemble?

mg: In a way.

bg: What did you do to build ensemble, to make them a unit?

mg: What are you driving at with ensemble?

bg: What was so impressive to me about this piece, and what I think would be tremendously helpful to other performance artists to have seen, was how the rehearsing of a choreographed structure makes you visible in entropy. If you are performing outside of an art or dance sanctioned space, you should expect entropy

mg: Later, they asked me what the essence of the piece was. I said, the only way to change is to change. You can't legislate change. You have to actually change yourself for change to start. To artists it's not that difficult.

bg: What I think you're saying is that in the political sphere or larger sphere of the world, if you want to enact change, you must do it internally first, before you legislate it. In the piece are you modelling that value?

mg: No, I don't think so. I think, rather, that when you create something you just base it on what your feelings are, and what ultimately it becomes or how it affects the world, you don't know. There was a hope that something would form itself out of the way I was playing with time and space and bodies around a concept. I hoped that something would change, that people would see that happening in that piece and would understand something about their own self-interests. There were eight different people with different personalities in my piece. I like the sound of the eight different plays happening at the same time, orally and visually.



ITCH OUIJABOARD ORACLE TRANSMISSION

14: The Brakes. The Breaks: The best days are the days when everyone forgets about going to work. There is too much to do. Five year break No performing No making dance Edit out seeing dance as much as possible. On all fours, you buck your back suddenly and then back up. Sitting on you when you do, I fling forward and catch myself on spread palms before face hits floor. Game: Re-frame risk, danger and effort as rest (I think I might fly). #occupyFailureToDisperse #occupyFailureToDisperse #occupyFailureToDisperse #occupyWhatTheFuckingTimeIsIt #occupyNapAllDayLong #occupySoreShoulders #occupyDiscomfort #occupyFriends. In this age of excess, choose to do and produce less; look instead to what already exists and raise the temperature on those masses idling in the corner. Burn the institution to the ground for the love of all of us. Are you willing? Does interpretation preclude interrogation? Can there be interpretive interrogation? Interrogative interpretation? we drink a six pack. what if the eyes can touch and the hands can see? we learn some lines from iron man, the movie. Resisting the conformity of linear progression in favor of circumlocutions and digressions; moving through a narrative sideways, diagonally, in retrograde; eschewing the logic of the obvious in favor of the implied

*L.A. based curator, educator, and artist Deborah Oliver is the founder of Irrational Exhibits, a recurring performance event in which artists perform simultaneously in a spacious, immersive

and speculative, the ellipsis is poetic, reflexive, performative, queer, ambivalent. // When no laws are broken, are the cops or the state permitted to police morality? Are two women expressing queer love an image which corrupts children? Cautionary lore became my bag; I got into it and kept getting into it. It started with The Flying Dutchman (again - forget Disney for goddess' sake) and ended with The Salmon Woman of Deception Pass. Going up- going down/ no matter- she will go with you and tell you beautiful things, plant in your mind small perfect words that you will carry into your day. Her next pause is where the bridge meets the edge of the noh stage, a space that is always the same in dimension and character. She pauses there, long enough for us to wonder if she'll ever move again. Her socks never dried & never walked on their own. Even though the bones healed. Even though not-so-close friends came to her room and helped her rearrange her bed. this b-side - an act that acts as part of its lyric. Bird time is short... and "especially if it's a parakeet..." Her mom would come in parakeet time, I started to say. *Olive Mckee, Sara Wookey, Hana van der Kolk, Mikal Czech, Taisha Paggett, Kate Mattingly / Macklin Kowal, Alison D'amato, Sara Wolf, J. Dellecave, Stacy Dawson Stearns, Sarah Day, Maya Maverik, Exquisite corpse/Stephanie Skura, Julie Tolentino, D. Sherwood.*

environment that changes [audiences] from detached viewers to live participants.
irrationalexhibits.com

BRIAN GETNICK, BORN 1976, UTICA NEW YORK, IS A PERFORMANCE ARTIST AND SCULPTOR LIVING IN LOS ANGELES. IN 2004, HE RECEIVED HIS MFA IN FIBER AND MATERIAL STUDIES AT THE SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO. IN 2008 HE WAS NOMINATED FOR THE FOURTH ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PRIZE IN TRENTO ITALY THROUGH THE GALLERIA CIVICA. SINCE THEN HE HAS PERFORMED IN CONTEXTS RANGING FROM QUEER NIGHT CLUBS TO RED CAT; THE ROY AND EDNA DISNEY HALL SHOWCASE FOR PERFORMANCE ART. DEDICATED TO HIS CITY AND TO ENABLING THE WORK OF FELLOW ANGELENO PERFORMANCE ARTISTS, HE HAS RECENTLY LAUNCHED NATIVE STRATEGIES, A LOS ANGELES FOCUSED PERFORMANCE ART JOURNAL AND SHOWCASE.

TANYA RUBBAK IS A MULTIDISCIPLINARY ARTIST AND GRAPHIC DESIGNER BASED ON LOS ANGELES. SHE CREATES WORK IN COLLABORATIVE SETTINGS, FOCUSING ON PUBLICATIONS AND PERFORMATIVE PRINTED MATTER. SINCE 2008 SHE HAS BEEN A SENIOR LECTURER AT OTIS COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN. SHE HAS AN MFA FROM CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF ARTS IN GRAPHIC DESIGN AN A BA FROM UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA IN LITERATURE.

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about

Native Strategies is a five-year study of contemporary performance modalities through the creation of 10 differently themed performance series and 10 uniquely designed journals. Our goal in creating NS is to assert that a spectrum of specific practices are at play in Los Angeles and that diversity provides the most compelling and complex picture of our city's cultural output. In this sense, NS is a taxonomical project with the aim of mapping out precise frameworks for responding to different types of performance. Yet, bringing attention to a multiplicity of forms challenges the historical tendency to allow certain ones to become monolithic. Native Strategies is here as a vehicle for a more truthful telling of the story of LA performance art between the years 2011 and 2016 and to use this research as the basis for a book, each journal becoming a separate chapter.

To understand what performance art in LA is, we need to look outside of our immediate communities, to meet people we don't know yet, and to stretch across the terrain. Reach out to us at:

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All photos, unless otherwise noted, were taken from stills of the shows from The Next Steps series.

thank you

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