

WINDOWS INTO WORLDS

Temporary Contemporary Market Gallery
Huddersfield, UK — December 2019

EXHIBITION
BOOKLET



Windows into Worlds

Ben Spatz

The aim of the Windows into Worlds project is to share, with a wider community, aspects of performance practice that usually remain unseen. Many people see live performance only in the context of its end product: a public spectacle. But what happens in rehearsal is much more than preparation for a show. In rehearsal processes we explore who we are; we encounter difference and make connections; and we literally discover new ways of being together.

The audiovisual installation exhibition has two parts:

In the main room, six video screens present a variety of new and experimental approaches to video art based on performance practice. More than ten different performing arts companies from the U.K, U.S., Poland, Germany, Spain, and Italy have contributed material. Practitioners featured in the videos represent many more points of origin. (Please note that some videos involve nudity.) Singing, dancing, and playing together are some of the oldest things we do as humans. *How do we represent these practices onscreen today?*

In the inner room, an Open Lab has been set up for visitors to explore and experiment with audiovisual recording. This simple and intimate space is equipped with a video camera and a “director’s chair” as well as a space for performance, practice, and play. Videos recorded in the Open Lab are presented onscreen in the main room of the exhibition (Screen 5). *What can you learn about yourself and your group in the Open Lab?*

This project brings together polished works of performance-based film and audiovisual embodied practice research outputs with raw video clip selections from contributors working as far away as Los Angeles and as nearby as the next room. The aim is to not only to offer a set of “windows” into unique but interrelated contemporary performance practices, but also to point towards the vastness of embodied research that underpins culture and performing arts.

Windows into Worlds was conceived with input from **Rowan Bailey**, University of Huddersfield, UK; **Claire Loussouarn**, Goldsmiths University, UK; **Lxo Cohen**, Independent Curator, UK; **Elizabeth de Roza**, Lasalle College of Arts, Singapore; and **Cara Hagan Gelber**, Appalachian State University, USA. Future iterations of Windows into Worlds, which will combine the project’s growing video archive with locally-selected sources and themes, are currently in the planning stages.

<https://www.urbanresearchtheater.com/>

List of Works

Screen 1

Studio Matejka, *No More Heroes* (2016)

Screen 2

VestAndPage, *Plantain* (special cut, 2018)

Screen 3

Judaica Project: Songwork Catalogue II, III, IV

Screen 4

Judaica Project: Video Essays

Screen 5

Public creations from the Open Lab

Screen 6

Video selections from participating companies

Open Lab

Participatory installation

Screen 1

Studio Matejka

No More Heroes (2016)

Studio Matejka is a physical theater laboratory exploring performance techniques that specifically work across borders: Borders between performance genres, borders between training techniques, and borders between individual expression and collective resonance. Through practical investigation, the performers work to develop the strength, agility, dexterity to physically 'speak' through a diverse range of ideas, images and vocabularies. Studio Matejka does not work to create something 'other' to existing performance approaches and training regimes, rather it uses such established methods as a springboard for pedagogic and creative exploration, charting individual discoveries, drawing out patterns and/or contradictions and integrating these findings into its ongoing work.

No More Heroes (23 minutes) is an unfinished video project from Studio Matejka.

<https://www.studiomatejka.com/>

Screen 2

VestAndPage

Plantain (special cut, 2018)

Verena Stenke (b. 1981) and Andrea Pagnes (b. 1962) have been working together since 2006 as VestAndPage and gained international recognition in the fields of performance art, performance-based film, writing, publishing and with temporary artistic community projects.

Plantain (2018, 90 minutes, special cut 35 minutes) is a performance-based feature film produced and filmed on location during the month-long performance walk by artist duo VestAndPage from Northern Germany through Poland to the Russian region of Kaliningrad, in May/June 2015. Taking a private family story and the historical event of post-WWII displacements as starting points, the film focuses on the issue of the replaced – displaced – in-place body. It investigates the process of acceptance of history, its individual and collective archiving, as well as concepts of identity and permeability of cultural borders.

<https://www.vest-and-page.de/>

Screen 3

Judaica Project

Songwork Catalogue II, III, IV

Ben Spatz, Nazlıhan Eda Erçin, and Agnieszka Mendel

The Judaica Project lab (2017) used new audiovisual methods of practice research to explore the relationship between technique, identity, and place. The core of the project was a six-month laboratory involving three skilled practitioners working full-time at the University of Huddersfield and elsewhere from May – October 2017.

The Songwork Catalogue is a collection of more than 300 short video clips, selected and titled from over 500 hours of audiovisual material recorded in that period. It shows the development of a new laboratory method and illustrates the radical horizontality of embodied research.

Songwork II (2017): 98 videos, core trio only

Songwork III (2017): 80 videos, with invited guests

Songwork IV (2020): 130 videos, site specific

Screen 4

Judaica Project: Video Essays

These video essays use the same raw audiovisual material as the Songwork Catalogue, here developed into standalone works through a more complex logic of composition.

“Diaspora: An Illuminated Video Essay” (30 minutes, 2018) by Ben Spatz with Nazlıhan Eda Erçin, Agnieszka Mendel, and Elaine Spatz-Rabinowitz

“He Almost Forgets That There is a Maker of the World” (30 minutes, work in progress) by Ben Spatz with Nazlıhan Eda Erçin, Caroline Gatt, and Agnieszka Mendel.

“Labour” (11 minutes, work in progress) by Nazlıhan Eda Erçin with Agnieszka Mendel and Ben Spatz.

“*nefs*: embodied self, flesh, desire” (14 minutes, work in progress) by Nazlıhan Eda Erçin with Ilona Krawczyk, Agnieszka Mendel and Ben Spatz.

“Działoszyce” (18 minutes, work in progress) by Nazlıhan Eda Erçin with Agnieszka Mendel and Ben Spatz.

Screen 5

Video selections from participating companies (2019)

The following companies have been working with Ben Spatz to explore new video documentation and selection techniques for performing arts practice. The short, raw video selections they have contributed are presented here in random order, revealing unexpected connections between practitioners working in very different genres, aesthetics, locations, and contexts.

Ilona Krawczyk with Brice Catherin, Cristina Fuentes Antoniazzi, and David Velez, University of Huddersfield (UK). **Maria Donohue with Colin Frank**, University of Huddersfield (UK). **Make, DO Theatre**, dir. Emily Brown and Sean Sewell, Huddersfield (UK). **Sweet Sensation**, dir. Mo Brown, Hebdon Bridge (UK). **Claire Loussouarn and Dominique Rivoal** (UK). **Instabili Vaganti Theatre Company**, Bologna (Italy). **DansPXL**, dir. Marta Arjona, Valls (Spain). **Parcon Resilience**, dir. Andrew Suseno, New York City (USA). **Tatyana Tenenbaum and Hadar Ahuvia** with Rowan Magee and Colin Nusbaum, New York City (USA). **Theatre of the Oppressed NYC** (USA). **Slippage Lab**, dir. Thomas F. DeFrantz, Duke University (USA). **MFA Acting Program**, dir. David Bridel, University of Southern California, Los Angeles (USA).

Screen 6

Public creations from the Open Lab (2019)

Visitors to Windows into Worlds are invited to explore the Open Lab, a participatory installation in which performers, practitioners, and anyone who wishes can encounter each other via three designated roles. Video created in the Open Lab is screened in the main exhibition room alongside video contributed by participating companies and artistic researchers. In order to bring out unexpected horizontal connections between diverse moments, the video is presented as an infinite series of **random three-minute selections**.

Future iterations of Windows into Worlds will combined video from their own Open Lab installations with the video created in Huddersfield.

Open Lab

Participatory installation

Welcome to the Open Lab! You are invited to explore.

The Open Lab is a mostly empty room structured by three roles. Some of the roles can be filled by more than one person. The lab is 'functioning' when all three roles are filled. Visitors are encouraged to try out all three roles. Take care of yourself and others. The Open Lab is intended as a space of play.

The first role is **PERFORMER / PRACTITIONER**. This is someone who reveals their own impulses through any kind of structured or improvised practice. You might sing, dance, or tell a story. You can interact with other practitioners and choose to accept direction (or not) as much as you wish.

The second role is **DIRECTOR / WITNESS**. This is someone whose first responsibility is to carefully observe the performer or practitioner and to help them to stay interested in what they are doing. You may offer

directions if you feel moved to, but do not expect complete obedience.

The third role is **VIDEOGRAPHER**. Take the small camera from the table by the door. The job of the videographer is to document what happens in the lab. This document will be the only archival trace of the moment. All the same, you do not have to be recording at all times.

BY ENTERING THE OPEN LAB, YOU AGREE THAT ANY VIDEO RECORDINGS IN WHICH YOU PARTICIPATE CAN BE PRESENTED IN THIS EXHIBITION (Screen 5) AND IN FUTURE VERSIONS OF THE WINDOWS INTO WORLDS PROJECT.

Individuals can request a video to be removed and entire groups can request copies of video materials by emailing Ben Spatz <b.spatz@hud.ac.uk>.

Frequently work on a tricky flight of dancing would spawn yet one more involved cast discussion about the dancers' reasons for dancing, the tensions between individual and group, the notion of "freedom," the residues of colonialism, or the connections between dance and spirituality. These topics bubbled up easily from just below the surface of the daily work, because they were so often implicit in the reasons for which one moved this way instead of that.

[... Yet] it is possible for intercorporeal work to be radical on a radically small scale. If the knowledge gained in the rehearsal room is not effectively disseminated, the collaboration will have been very meaningful for a very small number of people. Its impact could easily be limited to the owners of the bodies in question. And thus the dance dramaturg, spending her time thinking about intercorporeal exchange, still eventually shifts back to that old question of audience. How might other bodies, beyond those bodies in the room, feel the reverberations of this physical work?

Katherine Profeta
Dramaturgy in Motion
2015



**URBAN
RESEARCH
THEATER**



Queensgate
Market

University of
HUDDERSFIELD
Inspiring tomorrow's professionals

