

PLAYING UP - Live Art for Kids & Adults

Symposium

Monday April 4 2016

Starr Auditorium, Tate Modern, London

Welcome to today's Symposium, a key part of the launch of *PLAYING UP*, an artwork by Sibylle Peters of Theatre of Research, exploring the potential of Live Art to bridge generations. Drawing on key Live Art themes and seminal works, *PLAYING UP* takes the form of a game played by adults and kids together.

Live Art is more a way of thinking and doing than a rigid artistic discipline. Much of its cultural value lies in its experiential and exploratory nature – in its approaches to, and negotiation of, ideas, experiences, and things. This resonates clearly with the characteristics of childhood. This does not only predestine Live Art for children. It also makes children perfect accomplices for practicing Live Art.

As a cultural strategy Live Art offers rich possibilities in cross generational work for and with children. Nevertheless, it's only relatively recently that the potential for children to engage with Live Art has been explored, especially compared to the opportunities offered within art, theatre, music and dance. But there has been a proliferation of new ways of thinking and making that understand the connections between how children explore the world and what Live Art does.

The *PLAYING UP* partners recognise that the challenge in creating art for children is that in devising the frameworks that support their engagement, unchallenged preconceptions about children and their capacities often inform the design of the work, and ironically, limit the very engagement it aspires to open up. Therefore, we would like to share Live Art approaches, which construct accessible, and carefully considered frameworks for kids, whilst remaining open to all kinds of possibilities, no matter how difficult or challenging.

We want to discuss what Live Art offers to debates and practices on what is possible, and permissible, to do with kids, and on what that doing can do. Especially at a time when art is increasingly devalued in UK schools, there seems all the more reason for artists, educators and curators to look at what is possible when work that is made for, with or about children considers Live Art as a strategy.

The *PLAYING UP* symposium aims to both reflect on and advance many of the recent shifts in Live Art by and for kids, and to ask:

- What are the different relationships and possibilities between art that is for, with, or about kids?
- What can Live Art offer as a tool for promoting cultural agency, as a means to critique power relationships, and as an approach to explore characteristics of childhood as material?
- How Live Art can be employed as a strategy for cross generational collaboration, risk and agency?
- What we can learn from children's relationships with Live Art?

Schedule

10.15 Welcome, background and context
Lois Keidan (Live Art Development Agency)

10.20 Introduction to *PLAYING UP*
Sibylle Peters (Theatre of Research)

10.25 Introduction to the Symposium
Susan Sheddan (Tate Early Years and Family Programme)

10.30 – 11.10
Dare & Danger
Darren O'Donnell (Mammalian Diving Reflex) and Eilidh MacAskill (artist)
Moderator: Matt Fenton (Contact Theatre)

11.15 – 11.55
Out & About
Esther Pilkington & Daniel Ladnar (random people) and Richard DeDomenici (artist)
Moderator: John McGrath (Manchester International Festival)

12.00 – 12.30
Open discussion

12.30 – 13.30
Lunch break

13.30 – 14.10
Beings & Things
Lone Twin (artists) Lena Simic & Sid Anderson (Institute For The Art and Practice of Dissent At Home)
Moderator: Professor Heike Roms (Aberystwyth University)

14.15 – 14.55
Science & Tinkering
Zoe Laughlin (Institute of Making) and Ansuman Biswas (artist)
Moderator: Sibylle Peters (Theatre of Research)

15.00 – 15.30
Break

15.30 – 16.10
Collections & Memories
Hannah Biedermann (Pulk Fiktion) and Sarah-Jane Norman (artist)
Moderator: Professor Geesche Wartemann (University of Hildesheim)

16.15 – 16.55
Body & Perception
Harold Offeh (artist) and Evan Ifekoya (artist)
Moderator: Professor Alan Read (King's College London)

17.00 – 17.30
Open discussion and closing remarks

PLAYING UP Partners

PLAYING UP is a collaboration between the Live Art Development Agency (LADA, UK), FUNDUS THEATER / Theatre of Research (Germany), Tate Early Years and Family Programme (UK), Best Biennial (Sweden) and Live Art UK, and has been made possible with the generous support of the Goethe-Institut London. *PLAYING UP* forms part of LADA's contribution to the Collaborative Arts Partnership Programme (CAPP) supported by Creative Europe Programme of the European Union.

The **Live Art Development Agency (LADA)** is a Centre for Live Art: a knowledge centre, a production centre for programmes and publications, a research centre setting artists and ideas in motion, and an online centre for digital experimentation, representation and dissemination. Through its projects, publications, resources and opportunities LADA supports those who make, watch, research, study, teach, produce, present and write about Live Art in the UK and internationally.

www.thisisliveart.co.uk

Sibylle Peters is founder and director of the **Forschungstheater/Theatre of Research** situated at the FUNDUS THEATER Hamburg, a theatre where children, artists and scientists meet as researchers. Co-operating with schools and universities the Theatre of Research is a well known pioneer project for new forms of cultural education. Artistic practices are applied to make research more inclusive and bridge gaps between generations, cultures, social backgrounds and fields of expertise from kindergarten to the associated PhD programme Performing Citizenship. The Theatre of Research has been granted the Federal Award for Cultural Education 2012 (BKM-Preis für kulturelle Bildung) and the Hamburg Award for Urban Community Art 2015.

www.theatreofresearch.org, wishfulthinking.eu, www.fundus-theater.de

Tate London, Early Years and Family Programme works with current cultural practitioners to produce multi-disciplinary 'ways-in' for intergenerational audiences, with particular focus on disadvantaged communities ranking highly on IMD (the Indices of Multiple Deprivation) and IDACI (Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index). The programme aims to represent diverse contemporary practices, challenge preconceptions of children's capacity for arts engagement, celebrate the culture generated in playgrounds, homes and communities, and promote agency in cultural engagement. In 2014/15, the Early Years and Families team worked with approximately 91,997 children and their families and carers.

www.tate.org.uk

Best Biennial is a contemporary art festival for children and young people, presented by over 40 venues throughout Skåne, Sweden. The project is funded by the Swedish Arts Council and Skåne Regional Council. Ystads konstmuseum is the principal organiser of the festival. In 2015 the Best Biennial conference was co-convened with Tate London's Children and Family Programme.

www.bastabiennalen.se

Live Art UK is a national network, bringing together key promoters and facilitators to explore new models and partnerships for the promotion of Live Art; develop new ways to increase the national and international visibility of Live Art; initiate strategies for a more sustainable future for Live Art practitioners and promoters; publish case studies and resources; and provide a representative voice for Live Art across the UK.

www.liveartuk.org

Contributors (in order of appearance):

Matt Fenton is Artistic Director/Chief Executive at Contact in Manchester, the leading UK arts venue to place young people's leadership and decision-making at the heart of the organisation. Contact presents an innovative public programme of contemporary theatre, dance, spoken word, music and cabaret for young and highly diverse audiences. Each year it delivers a wealth of young people's creative and leadership activity, including flagship projects The Agency (with

Battersea Arts Centre), ReCON: young programmers, and Future Fires, as well as the Queer Contact, Flying Solo and Contacting the World Festivals. Recent co-productions include No Guts No Heart No Glory by CommonWealth, RITES by Yusra Warsama and Cora Bissett (with National Theatre Scotland), Big Girl's Blouse by Kate O'Donnell, and Under the Covers (Contact Young Co. and Stacy Makishi). In 2014, Contact won the UK Theatre Award for Promotion of Diversity, the Co-Op Respect Inclusive Venue of the Year award, and the Lever Prize for business. As a theatre director, Matt worked most recently with Imitating the Dog, Neil Hannon, and the Ligeti Quartet on the chamber opera 'In May'.
contactmcr.com

Eilidh MacAskill is a Glasgow-based live artist creating both solo performance work, collaborations with other artists, and bigger projects as artistic director of Fish And Game. These original works aim to be entertaining and experimental both in their content and form, straddling theatre, Live Art and visual art. There is a particular focus on creating innovative work for children and their adults in a range of settings and contexts. Eilidh is currently working on Gendersaurus Rex, a major new project exploring gender, sexuality, queerness and difference in children's performance, supported by Imagineate. This involves the creation of new work alongside a programme of artist workshops encouraging the children's sector to promote diversity and an ethos of equality in their work. Last year with Rosana Cade, she led a LADA DIY artist workshop entitled Sex And Children: Radical Queer Live Art for young audiences.
eilidhmacaskill.com

Darren O'Donnell is artistic and research director of Mammalian Diving Reflex. He is a novelist, essayist, playwright, director, designer and performer. His books include: Social Acupuncture (2006), which argues for aesthetics of civic engagement and Your Secrets Sleep with Me (2004), a novel about difference, love and the miraculous. His stage-based works include White Mice (1998), [boxhead] (2000), and All the Sex I've Ever Had (2012), all produced by Mammalian. He is working on his sophomore novel (and experiencing the 2nd novel syndrome) and a book about working with children (and experiencing the 2nd nonfiction book syndrome). Darren was the 2000 winner of the Pauline McGibbon Award for directing and has been nominated for a number of Dora Awards for his writing, directing, and acting, winning (with Naomi Campbell) for their design of White Mice. His play [boxhead] was nominated for a Chalmers Award and he received a Gabriel Award for excellence in broadcasting for his CBC radio piece Like a Fox. He has a BFA in Acting, studied Shiatsu and Traditional Chinese Medicine at The Shiatsu School of Canada and has a M.Sc. in Urban Planning from the University of Toronto.
mammalian.ca

John E. McGrath is the Artistic Director of Manchester International Festival (MIF). Appointed to the role in 2015, previously John was Artistic Director of National Theatre Wales (NTW) achieving an international reputation for large-scale site-specific work, digital innovation, international collaboration and extraordinary community involvement. Highlights at NTW include Michael Sheen's The Passion, staged in Port Talbot with over 1000 local residents taking part; the critically-acclaimed Coriolanus performed in an aircraft hangar for the London 2012 Festival; musician Gruff Rhys' genre-defying Praxis Makes Perfect; Blast Theory's 'life coach' app Karen, and his own pioneering staging of Tim Price's The Radicalisation of Bradley Manning. John has worked as a theatre director in New York and London, and from 1999 to 2008 was Artistic Director of Contact Theatre in Manchester where he developed a new model for engaging young, diverse artists in all areas of the theatre's work. At Contact he worked with a range of artists including poet Lemn Sissay's Storm, Something Dark and hip-hop theatre artist Benji Reid's b like water. John trained and worked in New York for several years as Associate Director of leading experimental company Mabou Mines. John's book Loving Big Brother: Performance, Privacy and Surveillance Space (Routledge, 2004) is an influential analysis of the role of surveillance in contemporary art and performance. Awards include the National Endowment for Science Technology and the Arts (NESTA), Cultural Leadership Award (2005) and an Honorary Doctorate from the Open University (2015).
www.mif.co.uk, www.nationaltheatrewales.org

random people was founded by **Daniel Ladnar and Esther Pilkington** in Aberystwyth in 2007 as a platform for collaborative projects in the field of performance. Currently, random people are based in Hamburg. In 2013, they co-founded irreality.tv (irreality.tv) to produce interventionist and participatory television projects (Planet Marl – 2013/14, Ebensee Rising – 2015). For many years, they have also worked closely with the collective [geheimagentur](http://geheimagentur.net) (geheimagentur.net). "Collaboration for us is not only a mode of production, but always also an enquiry. We are investigating different ways of coming together and coming apart in projects on mobility and travel; by looking at the relation of performance and documentation, we are pursuing an art of not being there; in projects on work and exchange we put forward the concept of getting paid as you wish; and a recent focus of our work has been the relation between performance art and popular formats such as fun fairs and science fiction. Our last projects include Aktionen/Attraktionen (2013), for which we performed and curated a month-long performance art programme at the fun fair Hamburger Dom, and Short Cuts (2015), a guided tour developed with school children in Stuttgart."
random-people.net

Richard DeDomenici makes work that's social, joyful, topical and political - although rarely simultaneously. He specialises in urban-absurdist interventions which strive to create the kind of uncertainty that leads to possibility. Richard invented the Carry-Ok wearable karaoke system, office chair sport The Swivelympics, and the crocheted crypto-currency Knitcoin. He recently released a fundraising record called Live Art Aid. Last year DeDomenici adapted his inexplicably popular Redux Project for television as part of the BBC4 event Live From Television Centre. It was described by a Guardian journalist as one of the smartest, strangest, subversive half hours of television they had ever seen. This year he'll perform in Malaysia, Macedonia and Milton Keynes. Richard has made work in 28 countries, and is currently trying to devise a site-specific project in Iran. In 2017 DeDomenici will unveil his most ambitious commission yet from the Radical Independent Art Fund.
dedomenici.com

Heike Roms is Professor in Performance Studies at Aberystwyth University (Wales). She has published on contemporary performance practice, the history of performance art in a British context, performance historiography and archiving, performance and ecology, performance as a mode of knowledge formation and dissemination, and performance and pedagogy. Heike is director of 'What's Welsh for Performance? Beth yw 'performance' yn Gymraeg?', a project focussing on the historiography of early performance art. The project was funded by a Large Research Grant from the British Arts and Humanities Research Council AHRC (2009-2011) and won the UK's Theatre and Performance Research Association TaPRA David Bradby Award for Outstanding Research in International Theatre and Performance 2011. She is currently working on a book arising from the research with the working title When Yoko Ono did not come to Wales - Locating the early history of Performance Art.
www.performance-wales.org

Gregg Whelan and Gary Winters formed the performance company **Lone Twin** in 1997. The company's work is regularly shown across the world to critical and popular acclaim. Lone Twin produced The Boat Project, a large-scale participatory commission for the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad. Other recent partners include Sadlers Wells, Kunstenfestivaldesarts and the Sydney Festival. Following some years of working as writers in children's television (Ragdoll Productions and Channel 4) Gregg and Gary produced a series of live events for young people, including Beastie and Cabaret Simon (with Stuart Silver). 2017 will mark twenty years of Lone Twin, with the company developing a new stage production to mark the occasion. Gregg is currently Artistic Director of ANTI Contemporary Art Festival, Finland and Professor of Performance at Falmouth University.
www.lonetwin.com

Lena Šimić and Sid Anderson are a mother and son from the **Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home**, an art activist initiative in their family home in Liverpool. They first started performing together in *Contemplation Time: A Document of Maternity Leave* (2007 – 2008). Lena is a mother of four boys, performance practitioner, pedagogue and scholar. Sid is a boy of 8, brother, son, friend and artist. He is on the pupil council at Four Oaks Primary School. He attends after-school art club on Fridays. They are both part of the Family Activist Network which is engaged in thinking about climate change and family life. Sid has presented at Artsadmin, Bluecoat, Arnolfini and been a keynote provocateur at Storytelling and Activism Symposium at the University of South Wales. Lena is currently working on 'performance and the maternal' research project. They are two of the six co-authors of *Four Boys* (for Beuys) art activist book (2016).

www.twoaddthree.org

Zoe Laughlin is co-founder/director of the Institute of Making and the Materials Library project. She holds an MA from Central Saint Martin's College of Art and Design and obtained a PhD in Materials within the Division of Engineering, King's College London. Working at the interface of the science, art, craft and design of materials, her work ranges from formal experiments with matter, to materials consultancy and large-scale public exhibitions and events with partners including Tate Modern, the Hayward Gallery, the V&A and the Wellcome Collection. Her particular areas of interest are currently *The Sound of Materials*, *The Taste of Materials* and *The Performativity of Matter*, with outputs ranging from theatrical demonstration lectures to the making of instruments and features on both radio and television.

www.instituteofmaking.org.uk

Ansuman Biswas was born in India and has an international, inter-disciplinary practice. Recent work has included directing Shakespeare in America, designing underwater sculptures in the Red Sea, living with wandering minstrels in India, working as an ornamental hermit in the English countryside, touring with Björk, surviving blindfolded in an unknown place, travelling with nomadic shamans in the Gobi Desert, playing with Oasis, collaborating with neuroscientists in Arizona, living for a week with nothing but what spectators chose to give him, organizing grassroots activists in Soweto, meditating in a box for ten days with no food or light, creating a musical in a maximum security prison, being a soloist with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, bathing strangers, running seminars in a Burmese monastery, working with children in hospital isolation wards, making a radio telescope sing and dance, being locked in a Gothic Tower alone for forty days and nights, and flying on a real magic carpet in Star City, Moscow.

www.ansuman.com

Geesche Wartemann has a PhD in performance studies and is Professor for Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) at the University of Hildesheim, Germany, since October 2011. As professor for theatre/drama she worked at the Norwegian University of Agder 2009 - 2011. Prior to that, she worked as a dramaturg and theatre pedagogue. She teaches courses in theory and practice of theatre for young audiences. Her research focuses on aesthetics, concepts of audience development, and strategies of participation in contemporary TYA. She is Board member (since 2006) and Chair (since 2014) of the international theatre for young audiences research network (ITYARN). She has published on processes of interaction between performers and audiences in TYA and theatre with non professional actors.

www.uni-hildesheim.de

Sarah-Jane Norman is a cross-disciplinary artist and writer. Her work traverses performance, installation, sculpture, text, video and sound. Live performance remains the core of her practice: working with extended duration, task-based, and endurance practices, as well as intimate/one-to-one frameworks, Norman's primary medium is the body. An alumna of Sydney's PACT Centre for Emerging Artists (where she first began training with Christopher Ryan in 2003), Norman's artistic trajectory has been informed by numerous practices, disciplines and methodologies, including theatre and dance. She holds a degree in Writing and Cultural Studies from the University of Technology, Sydney, and also spent time as an Associate Student of Visual Art at

Dartington College, Devon, UK. She went to London in 2014, where she studied Jewellery and Silversmithing at Central St Martin's School of Art and Design. She has presented her work at Venice International Performance Week (IT), Spill Festival of Performance (UK), Fierce Festival (UK), In Between Time (UK), Arnolfini (UK), Performance Space, Sydney (AU), Next Wave (AU) and the Australian Experimental Art Foundation (AU), Edinburgh Festival (UK) and Brisbane International Festival (AU) to name a few. Aside from her performance practice she works in a range of other media, and is known as a writer of fiction, essays and poetry. A proud Indigenous Australian of both Wiradjuri and European heritage, she grew up in Sydney and Regional NSW, has lived in the United Kingdom, Japan and Germany, and currently divides her time between Berlin and Regional NSW.
www.sarahjanenorman.com

Hannah Biedermann was born in Bonn, Germany in 1982. She visited the drama school Theater der Keller in Cologne, and continued to study Szenische Künste (Performing Arts) at the University of Hildesheim. In 2007 she founded the theater company Pulk Fiktion, where she explores contemporary forms of theater for young audiences, and whose productions have been invited to several national and international festivals. From 2013 to 2015 she was the dramatic advisor and director of the COMEDIA Theater in Cologne. As a freelance director she works for independent and public theaters in Hannover, Karlsruhe, Ingolstadt, Cologne, Berlin, and others, mostly in theatre for young audiences.
www.pulk-fiktion.de

Alan Read is Professor of Theatre at King's College London, and has been Director of the Performance Foundation at King's (2008-) founder and curator of The Anatomy Theatre & Museum (2010-) on Strand, and the Inigo Rooms (2012-) in Somerset House, Director of Talks at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in the 1990s and, alongside David Slater and the Bermondsey neighbourhood, worked with Rotherhithe Theatre Workshop in the 1980s. He writes, curates, publishes and broadcasts and is currently working on Soul Estuary: The Mouth of the River commissioned by BBC Radio 4, due to be broadcast in Spring 2016. Previous works written and presented for Radio 4 include Dreadful Trade (2015) and Plato's Cave (2013). Non fiction publishing includes: Theatre & Law (2015, Palgrave), Theatre in the Expanded Field (2013, Bloomsbury), Theatre, Intimacy & Engagement: The Last Human Venue (2008, Palgrave), Architecturally Speaking (2000, Routledge), The Fact of Blackness (1996, Bay Press), Theatre & Everyday Life: An Ethics of Performance (1993, Routledge). Alan has just completed his first novel: The White Estuary (Man with the Reason of History Missing).
www.kcl.ac.uk

Evan Ifekoya is an interdisciplinary artist and educator, exploring the politicisation of culture, society and aesthetics. Evan's current work investigates the possibility of an erotic and poetic occupation using film, performative writing and sound, focused on co-authored, intimate forms of knowledge production and the radical potential of spectacle. This year, Evan has presented work at Artsadmin, London College of Communication, University of Central Lancashire and Royal College of Art, with upcoming exhibitions and performances at Cubitt Gallery, Stevenson Gallery and the Whitstable Biennale. Evan is currently co-lead artist on Camden Arts Centre's youth collective as well as developing material for Tate's Schools and Teachers programme.
www.evanifekoya.com

Harold Offeh is an artist, facilitator and educator working in a range of media including performance, video, photography, learning and social practice. Often employing humour as a means to confront the viewer with an assessment of contemporary culture. Offeh's current project 'Covers' sees the artist embody images from popular culture in a series of attempts to transform music album covers from the 1970s and 80s by black singers. He continues to work in a number of diverse and situational contexts. He studied at the University of Brighton and the Royal College of Art, London. He lives in Cambridge and works in London and Leeds. Recent exhibitions and projects include: THE SHADOWS TOOK SHAPE, Studio Museum Harlem, NYC, USA,

RADIOCITY, An Early Years and Families Learning project at Tate Britain London UK, JUST LIKE A WOMAN curated by LADA at Abrons Arts Center, New York & Chelsea Theatre, London 2015.
haroldoffeh.com

Visit the *PLAYING UP* website:
playingup.thisisliveart.co.uk

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www.thisisunbound.co.uk

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