

EMPAC

THE CURTIS R. PRIEM EXPERIMENTAL MEDIA
AND PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

THE EXTRA PEOPLE

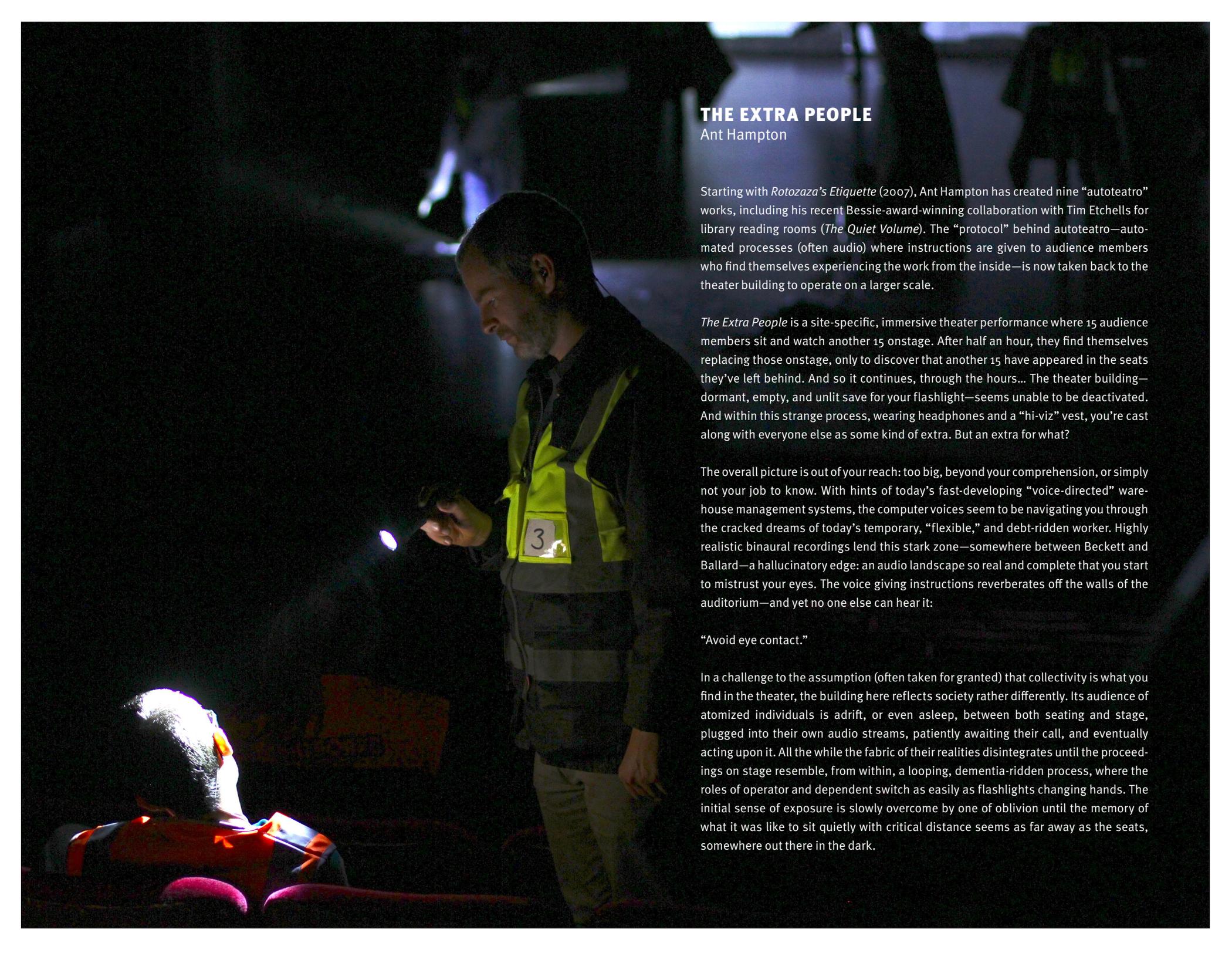
ANT HAMPTON

PERFORMANCE

THU / SEP 10, 7:00 PM

 Rensselaer

ANT HAMPTON: *THE EXTRA PEOPLE*, PHOTO BY: BRITT HATZIUS



THE EXTRA PEOPLE

Ant Hampton

Starting with *Rotozaza's Etiquette* (2007), Ant Hampton has created nine “autoteatro” works, including his recent Bessie-award-winning collaboration with Tim Etchells for library reading rooms (*The Quiet Volume*). The “protocol” behind autoteatro—automated processes (often audio) where instructions are given to audience members who find themselves experiencing the work from the inside—is now taken back to the theater building to operate on a larger scale.

The Extra People is a site-specific, immersive theater performance where 15 audience members sit and watch another 15 onstage. After half an hour, they find themselves replacing those onstage, only to discover that another 15 have appeared in the seats they've left behind. And so it continues, through the hours... The theater building—dormant, empty, and unlit save for your flashlight—seems unable to be deactivated. And within this strange process, wearing headphones and a “hi-viz” vest, you're cast along with everyone else as some kind of extra. But an extra for what?

The overall picture is out of your reach: too big, beyond your comprehension, or simply not your job to know. With hints of today's fast-developing “voice-directed” warehouse management systems, the computer voices seem to be navigating you through the cracked dreams of today's temporary, “flexible,” and debt-ridden worker. Highly realistic binaural recordings lend this stark zone—somewhere between Beckett and Ballard—a hallucinatory edge: an audio landscape so real and complete that you start to mistrust your eyes. The voice giving instructions reverberates off the walls of the auditorium—and yet no one else can hear it:

“Avoid eye contact.”

In a challenge to the assumption (often taken for granted) that collectivity is what you find in the theater, the building here reflects society rather differently. Its audience of atomized individuals is adrift, or even asleep, between both seating and stage, plugged into their own audio streams, patiently awaiting their call, and eventually acting upon it. All the while the fabric of their realities disintegrates until the proceedings on stage resemble, from within, a looping, dementia-ridden process, where the roles of operator and dependent switch as easily as flashlights changing hands. The initial sense of exposure is slowly overcome by one of oblivion until the memory of what it was like to sit quietly with critical distance seems as far away as the seats, somewhere out there in the dark.

Ant Hampton (British, b. 1975 Fribourg, Switzerland) made his first show as *Rotozaza* in 1998, a project which ended up spanning performance, theater, installation, intervention, and writing-based works, and often focusing on the use of instructions given to unrehearsed “guest” performers, both on stage and in public settings. Solo projects include ongoing experimentation around “live portraiture”: structured encounters with people from non-theatrical milieu.

About / Artist’s Statement

The Extra People was probably first sparked by an actual dream, many years ago, of being in a large theater. I’ve always struggled to remember much in the way of detail, but what does remain is a powerful sense, hard to describe, that the enormous space was somehow active and dormant at the same time. And that even if I was moved by what was unfolding on stage, something else was happening inside me, which I was supposed to pay equal if not more attention to. I remember in that dream having to close my eyes and miss the most important moments, keeping them closed even while thunderous applause rose all around me.

Your role here, to begin with, is of an audience, which is pretending to be an audience, without knowing why. You’re cast as an Extra, or “figurant,” defined as “a supernumerary actor who has little or nothing to say.” I developed a fascination with this role, and began to see it being both assigned and assumed in many different instances within the various games of power and powerlessness that humanity seems to be playing out.

I’m no expert in games of any kind, but I think that in video-gaming a “walk-through” is a kind of narrative or explanation which helps prepare for being inside that world: what to watch out for, what to be aware of. Maybe *The Extra People* is best thought of as a “sleep-walk-through”—similar to how our dreams rehearse the various traumas and predicaments of our waking lives.

—ANT HAMPTON, SEPTEMBER 2015

Credits:

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY **ANT HAMPTON**

SOUND DESIGN AND COMPOSITION: **SAM BRITTON**

ARTISTIC ADVICE: **KATE MCINTOSH**

EDITING AND SYSTEM DESIGN/TECH DIRECTOR: **HUGH ROCHE KELLY**

EARLY DEVELOPMENT/BRAINSTORMING: **GEOFF SOBELLE AND TREY LYFORD**

ASSISTANCE AT EMPAC: **JULIA ASHARAF**

CREATIVE PRODUCER: **KATJA TIMMERBERG**

COMMISSIONED BY EMPAC

CURATED BY **ASH BULAYEV**

COPRODUCTION PARTNERS: EMPAC, KAAITHEATER (BRUSSELS), MALTA FESTIVAL (POSNAN), FRENCH INSTITUTE ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE (NYC).

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fi:af french institute
alliance française

MALTA FESTIVAL POZNAN

KAAI
THEATER

EMPAC

The Curtis R Priem Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center (EMPAC) is where the arts, sciences, and technology interact with and influence each other by using the same facilities and technologies, and by breathing the same air.

EMPAC hosts artists and researchers to produce and present new work in a building designed with a sophisticated architectural and technical infrastructure. Four exceptional venues and studios enable audiences, artists, and researchers to inquire, experiment, develop, and experience the ever changing relationship between ourselves, technology, and the worlds we create around us.



STAFF

Geoff Abbas / Director for Stage Technologies
Eric Ameres / Senior Research Engineer
Argeo Ascani / Curator, Music
David Bebb / Senior Systems Administrator
Peter Bellamy / Senior Systems Programmer
Michael Bello / Video Engineer
Victoria Brooks / Curator, Time-Based Visual Arts
Eric Brucker / Lead Video Engineer
Michele Cassaro / Guest Services Coordinator
John Cook / Box Office Manager
Roxanne De Hamel / Web Developer
David DeLaRosa / Production Technician
Zhenelle Falk / Artist Services Administrator
William Fritz / Master Carpenter
Kimberly Gardner / Manager, Administrative Operations
Johannes Goebel / Director
Ian Hamelin / Project Manager
Katie Hammon / Administrative Specialist
Ryan Jenkins / Senior Event Technician
Shannon Johnson / Design Director
Eileen Krywinski / Graphic Designer
Carl Lewandowski / Production Technician
Eric Chi-Yeh Lin / Lead Stage Technician
Stephen McLaughlin / Senior Event Technician
Josh Potter / Marketing and Communications Manager
Alena Samoray / Event Technician
Candice Sherman / Business Coordinator
Avery Stempel / Front of House Manager
Kim Strosahl / Production Coordinator
Jeffrey Svatek / Audio Engineer
Dan Swalec / Master Electrician
Todd Vos / Lead Audio Engineer
Michael Wells / Production Technician

EMPAC

Upcoming Events

An updated schedule for the 2015 Spring season is available online at empac.rpi.edu. Check back often for more information.



PERFORMANCE

dotQuantum

Platform

Thursday, September 17 / 8:00 PM

FREE



FILM / VIDEO

On Screen/Sound: No. 3

Beach Boys/Geto Boys

Cory Arcangel

All Magic Sands (Chappaqua)

Andrew Lampert

Wednesday, September 23 / 7:00 PM / \$6



TALK, PERFORMANCE

WITHIN 2

Tarek Atoui

Thursday, September 24 / 7:00 PM

\$18 / \$13 / RPI STUDENTS \$6