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EMPAC 2011-2012 presentations, residencies, research, and commissions are supported by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Science Foundation, the National Dance Project of the New England Foundation for the Arts (with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation; additional funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Community Connections Fund of the MetLife Foundation, and the Boeing Company Charitable Trust), and the New York State Council for the Arts. Special thanks to the Jaffe Fund for Experimental Media and Performing Arts for support of artist commissions.



empac.rpi.edu
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Saturday
February 4, 2012

FLAT 7^{pm} | FLOTA 8:30^{pm}

WORK IN PROGRESS

Tethered: Vertical Performance
Rodrigo Pardo + Bárbara Foulkes

CURTIS R. PRIEM EXPERIMENTAL MEDIA AND PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
EMPAC

WORK IN PROGRESS

Tethered: Vertical Performance

Two in-progress works by Rodrigo Pardo + Bárbara Foulkes

150 minutes

7 PM: FLAT

choreography by Rodrigo Pardo

Theater

Intermission (30 minutes)

8:30 PM: FLOTA

choreography by Bárbara Foulkes

Studio 1 - Goodman

Q & A with artists to follow after each show.

General Text about *Tethered: Vertical Performance*

A solo performer is suspended against a wall. Using this as a departure point, two teams of artists go in radically different directions with new performance works developed in residence. This showing gives a view of each as they navigate vertical space: one performance tells the tale of a man who slowly realizes he is living upside down, while the other is a vertiginous dance that plays with perspective, time, and gravity.

Rodrigo Pardo's *FLAT* combines storytelling, video projections, and aerial performance. It eventually will be presented outdoors, four stories up, on the side of an apartment building. For now, this dance-theater work is seen 40 feet up inside the theater flytower to simulate the same performer conditions and reclining audience view. A man wakes up in his apartment feeling strange, not knowing he is upside down. The audience hears his inner monologue via headphones as he discovers his new reality and enters into his dreams; he must either learn how to live anew or try to change the world back to a familiar state. Inspired by the magical realism of Jorge Luis Borges, *FLAT* immerses both the performer and the audience in an intimate situation, shifting our perspective on what constitutes our reality.

Bárbara Foulkes' *FLOTA* is a study in falling and floating—a dance performance that takes place in the center of a room on freestanding walls built to form a corner, which is transformed on multiple surfaces by live video projections of the dancer suspended. The audience chooses where to look just as they choose where to roam within the space. Foulkes is interested in creating a moment of suspension and spatial transformation, evoking reflections in an endless mirror, and refractions of time. *FLOTA* existed as a solo performance and is being developed into a more malleable experience for both performer and audience, interacting more openly with the architecture in which it occurs.

Artist Notes: FLAT

The perception of our daily life and the fictional component that makes up a part of it is has interested me for a long time. It is the inspiration for my latest works, including dance pieces created to be performed in toilets; apartments used as a stage; and roofs, streets, and balconies transformed in locations for theatrical scenes.

FLAT not only addresses this subject, but also plays with the ideas of gravity and time as things that modify us, as they are inexorably present in our lives. The surrealistic setting in which the character is placed opens the space for a metaphoric reading and creates a poetic distance to these themes. At the same time, the reality of the performance itself is telling its own story: the performer is actually fighting against gravity, and the audience members are all several minutes older by the end of the presentation.

This project started as an idea two years ago in the streets of Brussels, a city heavily influenced by cartoon culture, in which walls are often decorated with funny characters dropping flowerpots from drawn windows. The first step in the realization of the piece was a meeting with Yves Fauchon, who not only put his own body into the idea, but added his experience both as aerial dancer and technical designer for the flying systems and platforms. From there, the group was formed and the project passed through modifications influenced by the possibilities of video, sound, texts, and dance.

It is at EMPAC where *FLAT* is confronted for the first time with the limits and potential of this setup. These four past weeks have been a fundamental step and a nourishing process that significantly helps the realization of the initial idea into the real piece.

The challenge now is to imagine the adaptations needed for presenting the piece outdoors, and the possibility of extending its length in order to develop the different layers of the story. We will continue this work-in-progress in our next two residencies at production houses in France (Lieux publics – Marseille) and Belgium (Theater op de markt – Dommelhof). We hope to present the final work at EMPAC in the future.

—Rodrigo Pardo

Artist Notes: *FLOTA*

It's not that the piece produces no meaning, or that it is free of interpretation (perhaps this is even impossible), but rather the opposite: it has an excess of semiotic potential. It produces too much meaning, too many possibilities of interpretation—possibilities that are (and this is very important), *incompatible* with each other.

If a chair is at the same time a glass of water and a slap on the face; that is to say, if something—anything—is *oversignified*, reality will break down, and for an instant, we will float out of representational references as fundamental as the notion of gravity itself. Convention tells us we are not going to fall sideways or upwards, that we will be back on the floor soon if we jump. These are notions we take for granted; assumptions that discipline our understanding of reality. And when such assumptions are called into question by our inability to process a flood of incompatible perceptual stimuli, we tend to escape the semiotic. If there is a fracture of interpretation in this piece, it does not happen because it escapes from it (which is impossible), but because it confronts it: because it charges against interpretation, overloading it; and it is then that an explosion is produced. Meaning itself explodes. There is a limit of vacuity, perhaps similar to that schizophrenic limit Deleuze and Guattari so eagerly proposed.

—Juan Francisco Maldonado

BIOS

Rodrigo Pardo's work encompasses dance, video, and site-specific projects with the utilization of mixed media. This interdisciplinary practice is characterized by a special relation with urban spaces, the use of movement as a tool to perceive time, and the insertion of constructed fiction in daily life as a way to open doors of awareness on how we perceive reality. Pardo is originally from Argentina, and currently is based in Brussels.

Bárbara Foulkes is a choreographer and contemporary dance artist who performs and teaches vertical dance with harness. She directed the Latin American Independent Tour with Colectivo Jugador Especial, performing in every country from Argentina to Mexico. She currently is part of Colectivo AM and teaches composition and vertical dance with harness at Casa de Artes y Circo Contemporáneo. Her new work, *FLOTA*, was sponsored by the Dirección de Danza UNAM. Foulkes is originally from Argentina and now lives in Mexico City.

CREDITS for *FLAT*:

Rodrigo Pardo: concept, direction, text, and choreography
Yves Fauchon: dance, choreography, and flying system's design
Murielle Felix: video creation
Simon Thierre: original music
Sybille Cornet: dramaturgical and text coaching
Piergiorgio Milano: choreographic and general assistance

Support

SACD/SCAM (Soutien aux projets des auteurs), Brussels; Wallonie-Bruxelles International

CREDITS for *FLOTA*:

Bárbara Foulkes: director and performer

Current Version

Ricardo Cortez: sound design and live manipulation
(with the inclusion of samples by Benito Gonzalez)
Juan Francisco Maldonado: co-direction
Armel Hostiou: film

Previous Version

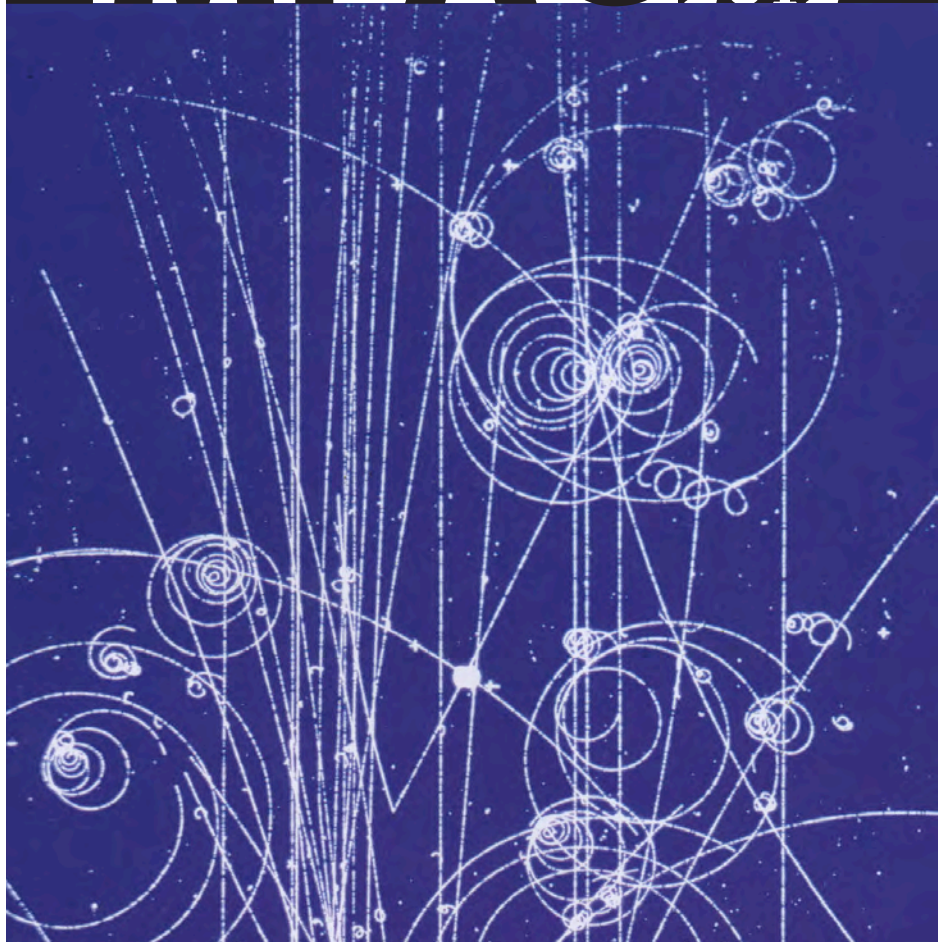
Moisés Regla: multimedia installation
Jaime Lobato: sound live manipulation

First Version

Emilio Espinoza: sound design and live manipulation
(with the inclusion of samples by Benito Gonzalez)
Yuri Laguna: direct sound recording
Melissa Cisneros: co-direction
Carlos Altamirano: photography

We are thankful for the support of EMPAC at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) and the direction of the dance department, Autonomous National University of México (UNAM), without which this project would not be possible.

EMPAC 2012



Wednesday
February 8
6 pm
free

TALK: OBSERVER EFFECTS

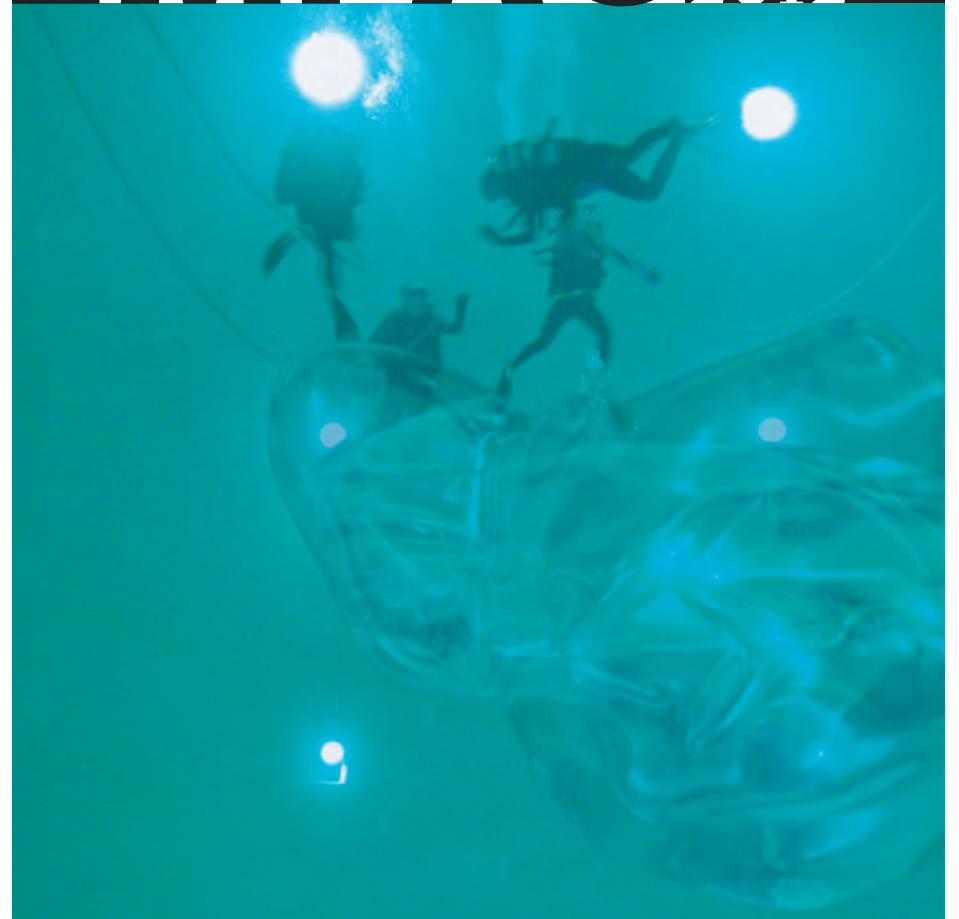
John D. Barrow
Better than a Thousand Words

Famed physicist John D. Barrow will discuss the observer effects principle and the impact of images on the development of science throughout history.

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EMPAC 2012



Tuesday
February 14
12 pm
free

TALK: DETAIL VIEW

Zbigniew Oksiuta
A Biological Future?

Using biological polymers as construction material, Rensselaer Architecture professor Zbigniew Oksiuta will present his research on creating biological living habitats by combining art, architecture, engineering, and the biological sciences.

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