

**EMPAC**


# TELEPATHIC IMPROVISATION

A FILM BY PAULINE BOUDRY / RENATE LORENZ



THURSDAY / SEP 28 / 7:00 PM

# TELEPATHIC IMPROVISATION



Berlin-based artists Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz present their new moving-image work, *Telepathic Improvisation*, filmed at EMPAC in Spring 2017.

Humans and non-humans, movement, speech, gesture, music, light and smoke interpret composer Pauline Oliveros' 1974 score of the same title. While the film unfolds in a mostly abstract way, references to left protest, queer S&M club life, acts of surveillance and, finally, fantasies of new relations between human and non-human objects emerge in an interstellar dimension.

The audience is called to telepathically communicate with all the elements of the performance. Challenging the idea that images are mere depictions of (political) actions, this filmed performance speaks about productive tensions between the fantasy of an action and the action itself.

**IMAGES:** PAULINE BOUDRY / RENATE LORENZ, *TELEPATHIC IMPROVISATION*  
VIDEO STILL, 2017. HD VIDEO, COLOR, SOUND, 19:27MIN.  
COURTESY THE ARTISTS, ELLEN DE BRUIJNE PROJECTS, AND MARCELA ALIX

**TELEPATHIC IMPROVISATION**  
PAULINE BOUDRY / RENATE LORENZ

2017, HD video, color, sound, 19:27min

**PERFORMANCE:** Marwa Arsanios  
Ginger Brooks Takahashi  
MPA  
Werner Hirsch

Courtesy the artists, Ellen de Bruijne Projects, and Marcela Alix

**PRODUCTION CREDITS:**

**DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY:** Bernadette Paassen  
**COLOR CORRECTION:** Matthias Behrens (Waveline)  
**SOUND DESIGN:** Rashad Becker

TEAM AT EMPAC:

**PRODUCER:** Victoria Brooks  
**PROJECT MANAGER:** Ian Hamelin  
**LIGHTING DIRECTOR:** Alena Samoray  
**SOUND:** Stephen McLaughlin, Jeff Svatek  
**ROBOTIC PLATFORM DEVELOPMENT AND FABRICATION:** Eric Ameres  
**DIT AND VIDEO:** Eric Brucker, Mick Bello, Ryan Jenkins  
**DIRECTOR FOR STAGE TECHNOLOGIES:** Geoff Abbas  
**PRODUCTION TECHNICIANS:** Carl Lewandowski, Mike Wells

*Telepathic Improvisation* is presented as part of a year-long series of major presentations *Everybody talks about the weather... We don't* by Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz in the US, co-curated by Alhena Katsof in collaboration with the Walker Art Center's Moving Image Commissions, Minneapolis; EMPAC / Curtis R. Priem Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy; Participant Inc., New York; and the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston (CAMH). This project is produced in partnership with the Goethe-Institut New York and generously supported by the Bentson Foundation, Service des affaires culturelles - Canton de Vaud, and ProHelvetia.

**INTO MEMORY: TELEPATHIC IMPROVISATION/S**

"The distance might be small or great, i.e., thousands of miles or light years."

**PAULINE OLIVEROS**, IV, SONIC MEDITATIONS, 1974

Boudry / Lorenz's moving-image work, *Telepathic Improvisation* (2017), takes as its starting point Pauline Oliveros's 1974 score of the same name. However, the audience for this filmed performance is not only called upon to telepathically communicate with the performers (as was the case with Oliveros's original score), but also to communicate with the other elements onstage, from the theatrical lights to a group of white boxes that glide across the stage.

"*Telepathic Improvisation*" (1974) is the third of Oliveros's numerically arranged *Sonic Meditations*, a series of instruction works she composed for the ♀ Ensemble. Scored as prose rather than standard musical notation, the *Meditations* rely on a choreographic approach that seeks to produce a place, sound, and experience outside the normative conventions of Western music. The piece dispenses with a litany of such notions: the concert hall as ideal space, the primacy of the virtuosic musician, and the hierarchically determined relationship between audience and performer.

To participate in *Sonic Meditations* is not without effort, however. It requires commitment adequate to that of a professional musician. Oliveros imagined the ensemble at once as a group of individual performers and as its counterpoint, with "all the parts of a thing taken together, so that each part is considered only in relation to the whole." This act of communal surrender to an expansive space of communication is key here, as each person is in support of the group and is reciprocally supported by them in order to "actively imagine sounds" and manifest them. Oliveros intended for the transition from language to thought and from thought to action to produce "heightened states of awareness or expanded consciousness." In *Telepathic Improvisation* and its companion work *Pacific Tell*, the action thus lies as much in the gaze between participants, the very act of willing a nonverbal communication, as in the music that arises as a "welcome byproduct of this activity," as Oliveros described it.

## BIOGRAPHY

Pauline Oliveros (1932–2016) was distinguished research professor of music at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and a regular fixture at EMPAC as a composer, researcher, performer, and teacher. She had planned to join us in person for the filming of Boudry / Lorenz's *Telepathic Improvisation* at the Center in March 2017. Instead, our communication with her resided in memory as we worked. On set one day, just before the performers gazed into Boudry / Lorenz's camera to tele-communicate with the film's future audiences, playwright and artist Ione described her life of listening with Oliveros. She talked about the potential of dreams to open inter-dimensional communication between people and worlds. As the camera rolled and Marwa Arsanios finished reciting Oliveros's score, there was a moment of stillness animated by the low hum of the film equipment. The term "telepathy" is derived from the Greek *tele*, which signifies distance or the distant, and *patheia*, an act of feeling. In this moment of active listening, a connection is formed, a literal feeling across distance with the potential to resist structures of exterior control that are inscribed into memory in that moment.

Boudry / Lorenz's film is bookended by two monologues: the Oliveros score, and a 1969 text by German revolutionary Ulrike Meinhof that prescribes resistance in the face of global capitalist oppression. In a similar vein, both *Telepathic Improvisations* attempt to resist historical narratives surrounding normative agency and action. It is in these spaces of resistance that thoughts, sounds, words, and images can communicate new worlds collectively.

—VICTORIA BROOKS, 2017

*Text reprinted from the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston exhibition catalogue Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz: Telepathic Improvisation, ed. Dean Daderko (CAHM: 2017)*

Boudry / Lorenz have been working together since 2007. Their staged films and film installations often start with a song, a picture, a film, or a script from the past. They produce performances for the camera, staging the actions of individuals and groups living—indeed thriving—in defiance of normality, law, and economics. Their films upset normative historical narratives, as figures from across time are staged, projected, and layered. These performers are themselves choreographers, artists, and musicians, with whom Boudry and Lorenz engage in a long-term conversation about performance, the meaning of visibility since early modernity, the pathologization of bodies, and also about glamour and resistance.

Recent solo exhibitions have included *Telepathic Improvisation*, Contemporary Arts Museum Houston and Participant Inc., New York, 2017; *Portrait of an Eye*, Kunsthalle Zürich, 2015; *Loving, Repeating*, Kunsthalle Wien, 2015; *Patriarchal Poetry*, Badischer Kunstverein, 2013; *Aftershow*, CAPC, Bordeaux, 2013; *Toxic Play in Two Acts*, South London Gallery, 2012; *Contagieux! Rapports contre la normalité*, Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva, 2011. They published the catalogue *Temporal Drag* by Hatje Cantz in 2011, and *Aftershow* was published by Sternberg Press in 2014.

# STAFF

**Geoff Abbas** / Director for Stage Technologies  
**Aimeé R. Albright** / Artist Services Specialist  
**Eric Ameres** / Senior Research Engineer  
**Argeo Ascani** / Curator, Music  
**Eileen Baumgartner** / Graphic Designer  
**David Bebb** / Senior Network Administrator  
**Peter Bellamy** / Senior Systems Administrator  
**Michael Bello** / Video Engineer  
**Victoria Brooks** / Curator, Time-Based Visual Arts  
**Eric Brucker** / Lead Video Engineer  
**Bruce Bryne** / Master Carpenter  
**Michele Cassaro** / Guest Services Coordinator  
**Gordon Clement** / Media Systems Integrator  
**John Cook** / Box Office Manager  
**David DeLaRosa** / Desktop Support Analyst  
**Zhenelle Falk** / Artist Services Administrator  
**Ashley Ferro-Murray** / Associate Curator, Theater & Dance  
**Kimberly Gardner** / Manager, Administrative Operations  
**Johannes Goebel** / Director  
**Ian Hamelin** / Project Manager  
**Ryan Jenkins** / Senior Event Technician  
**Shannon Johnson** / Design Director  
**Carl Lewandowski** / Production Technician  
**Robin Massey** / Business Coordinator  
**Daniel Meltzer** / Master Electrician  
**Stephen McLaughlin** / Senior Event Technician  
**Josh Potter** / Marketing and Communications Manager  
**Candice Sherman** / Senior Business Administrator  
**Avery Stempel** / Front of House Manager  
**Kim Strosahl** / Production Coordinator  
**Jeffrey Svatek** / Audio Engineer  
**Todd Vos** / Lead Audio Engineer  
**Michael Wells** / Production Technician