



ARTS HOUSE

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Arts House is a City of Melbourne contemporary arts initiative. Each year Arts House presents a curated program of contemporary art featuring performances, exhibitions, live art, installations and cultural events.

Arts House operates as a multi-dimensional resource hub for artists: producing, programming, devising, supporting and funding. Work is presented across two sites: Arts House, North Melbourne Town Hall and Arts House, Meat Market.

Arts House values arts and culture that help create a world where people are actively engaged, aware and empowered to participate, politically and culturally, to make positive change.

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contemporary arts initiative

VIVARIA

SAMUEL JAMES



ARTS HOUSE

ARTS HOUSE
NORTH MELBOURNE TOWN HALL

WED 3 - SAT 6
AUGUST 2011

“The work is richly textured, at turns elegantly pensive and playful, a meditation on the competing presence of bodies and the built environment.” *RealTime*

ARTS HOUSE



MOBILESTATES
TOURING CONTEMPORARY PERFORMANCE, AUSTRALIA



DIRECTOR’S NOTE

vivaria: Latin, ‘place of life’; plural. An enclosed area for animals or plants, simulated on a smaller scale.

Vivaria is a Kafkaesque co-joining of macro and micro urban environments, articulated by dancers, invoking psychological space. The environments were drawn from a variety of countries, shot with compact MPEG cameras which allowed a spontaneous, high-quality capturing of imaginary space from the street. Spaces and performers were situated in paradox to each other, and rotating cube transitions created a randomising factor, as though all elements were part of a poker-machine-type game of chance, where clusters of images could be juxtaposed with each other. In relation to the immediate and free shooting style of animated urban space, it has made me ask: what are people’s various relationships to urban space, and in particular, digital urban space?

Digital distortion can make junctions between contemporary architecture and nature by searching for fractal generation and modifying scales of urban space. All the separate parts, dance and backgrounds together, were made without knowledge of how they would piece together to find an answer or a psychological solution. The choreography explored the basis of a character’s existence and their pre-choreographed understanding of urban space. The editing of the choreography had to be equal or less weighted to the editing of the overall structure - the dancers were subjected to the dominant mechanised structure and pattern.

The cube structure spatially suggested that all of these mechanised tableaux were interchangeable. The ‘wipe’ infers it comes from a certain place, different to the places of other material. A co-joining of impossible spaces and bodies elicits the dancer as a hybrid creature - anthropomorphic, like Descartes’s ‘animal machines’. In some sense the pre-shot dancer appeared to have somehow adapted to the environment.

Samuel James



CAST AND CREATIVE

Director: Samuel James
Dancers: Martin del Amo, Linda Luke, Peter Fraser, Lizzie Thomson, Georgie Read
Sound: Gail Priest
Consultation: Paul Gazzola

Commissioned by Reeldance Inc. Toured by Performing Lines for Mobile States, with the support of the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body; and through the national performing arts touring program, Playing Australia.

Images: Samuel James

BIOGRAPHIES

Samuel James
Director

Samuel James has worked as a dance filmmaker and projection designer in Sydney since 1995. He has collaborated on over 200 contemporary performance projects developing integrated, paradoxical languages with live performance. His background in architecture inducted him into theatre through set design and has informed his spatial relationship to live arts. He has been a regular contributor to Performance Space, Sydney, for ten years and as a new-media artist he has initiated three Australia Council New Media projects: *Space 1999* (1999), *Remixing the Aftermath* (2002) and *Invisible Cities* (2005). In 2008 he made *Anamorphic Archive*, a collection of distorted dance video works using archival footage, in a residency at Performance Space; and also travelled to Calcutta, India, to make *Multiplication of Difference*, a performance video installation with Tess de Quincey. His Super 8 dance film docu-drama, *Nun’s Night Out* (choreographer/producer Julie-Anne Long) won Best Dance Film at the Australian Dance Awards in 2006. With Rosie Dennis he made the film *Quietly Collapsed* for ABC Dance 4 Screen and Channel 4 UK, in 2007.

He has screened dance films at Cinedans Amsterdam, VideoDanza Barcelona, Dança em Foco Rio de Janiero, Tanzfilm Wettbewerb Berlin, Video Danza Buenos Aires, Media Terra Athens, Reeldance in Australia and New Zealand, and the Experimental Media and Performing Arts Centre, New York. Long-term collaborators are De Quincey Co, Martin del Amo, Narelle Benjamin, Nikki Heywood and Julie-Anne Long. Projects in 2009 were *Ghost Quarters* (De Quincey Co, Performance Space), *Nomads* (Director Hans van den Broeck, Compagnie SOIT) and *Night Garden* (My Darling Patricia at Performance Space). He made the video installation *Vivaria* on an artist residency at GlogauAIR Berlin, commissioned by Reeldance. Although he works mostly on small, independent developments, he has regularly contributed to Australia’s major festivals, from Adelaide to Perth to Alice Springs.

Martin del Amo
Dancer

Originally from Germany, Martin del Amo is a Sydney-based dance artist and movement trainer. As a performer, he mainly works solo, but has also collaborated with numerous artists of various genres and styles both in Europe and Australia, including The De Quincey/Lynch Performance Union, Nikki Heywood, Samuel James, Branch Nebula/Urban Theatre Projects, Julie-Anne Long and Gail Priest.

His last four solo works, *Never been this Far Away from Home* (2008), *Can’t Hardly Breathe* (2006), *Under Attack* (2005) and *Unsealed* (2004), were all presented at Performance Space, receiving critical acclaim. The latter two works were chosen for the Breathing Space touring program, an exchange between Australian and UK artists initiated by Performance Space and Arnolfini in Bristol. *Unsealed* was shown at the Perth

Institute of Contemporary Art (PICA) and had a return season at Performance Space in November 2004. *Under Attack* toured to the UK earlier this year. His recent work *It’s a Jungle Out There* (2009) was co-commissioned and presented at Campbelltown Arts Centre and Performance Space and at Dancehouse and PICA in 2010. In 2005 he was nominated for an Australian Dance Award as Best Male Dancer for his work in *Under Attack*.

Martin del Amo has presented work in Osaka and Matsuyama, Japan, and at the Sydney Opera House Studio, as part of an exchange between Australian and Japanese independent dance artists. In 2006 he conducted a research residency at Dance 4 in Nottingham and presented an evening of short works, *Notes to Myself, Volume 1*, at Arnolfini in Bristol. In 2009 he taught dance workshops at the Panorama Dance Festival in Brazil and Next Wave in Melbourne. His current interests are the interplay between movement and spoken word and the use of improvisation within pre-determined structures.

Linda Luke
Dancer

Linda Luke has worked in theatre and dance performance since 1997. She joined De Quincey Co in 2004 and has performed in *Triptych* (Performance Space at Carriageworks, 2008), *Five Short Solos* (Performance Space, 2005) and *Dictionary of Atmospheres* (Alice Springs Festival, 2005). She has been integral in developing the company’s ongoing training program for Body Weather dancers and the performance/dance community in Sydney since 2006. She performed in choreographer Samantha Chester’s creative development *Monster Forming*; and in 2007 she received funding from the Myer Foundation and Arts NSW to develop a new solo work entitled *Borderlines*, which toured to Melbourne, Sydney and Campbelltown in 2008 with support from the Australia Council. In 2007 she was also granted an Asialink residency and travelled to Japan to study with acclaimed dancer/choreographer, Min Tanaka.

Peter Fraser
Dancer

Melbourne-based performer Peter Fraser is inspired to explore the ‘unfamiliar’ body and its states in relation to space, mind, time and gesture. He uses Body Weather as his main research/performance tool, and has studied in Japan (2007) with its founder, Min Tanaka. His most recent work was *Triptych* (2008; De Quincey Co, Performance Space

at Carriageworks) and a self-devised solo, *Tarkovsky’s Horse* (Dancehouse, Campbelltown Arts Centre, Performance Space at Carriageworks). He is a member of the De Quincey ensemble and has worked on many Tess de Quincey projects including *Dictionary of Atmospheres* (Alice Springs, 2005), *Five Short Solos* (Performance Space, 2005) and *Impro-Lab: TRANSPARENCIES* (Sydney Opera House and fortyfivedownstairs, 2006-07). He has also worked in choreographed or improvised performance, film, video and installation with Frank van de Ven (Amsterdam), Barry Laing, Yumi Umiutare, Tony Yap, Peter Snow, Stuart Lynch, ZouZou Theatre, filmmaker Ben Speth, visual artist Bashir Baraki, installation artist Julia White, and others.

Lizzie Thomson
Dancer

Sydney-based dancer Lizzie Thomson has performed throughout Europe and Australia with choreographers including Rosalind Crisp, Garry Stewart, Tess de Quincey and Maggi Sietsma/Expressions Dance Company. She trained at Queensland University of Technology and at EDDC in Holland. She has collaborated with Rosalind Crisp since 1998, performing in works including *Tread*, *The View From Here*, *Danse 4*, *The Sakamoto Sisters* and *Insert no. 16*, throughout France, Germany and Australia. Her own works include *Still Standing*, commissioned by Performance Space; and *Stand Still*, supported by the Australia Council. In 2001 she received an ADAMI Scholarship through CND-Paris to train and perform with French choreographer Serge Ricci.

Lizzie Thomson has recently collaborated/performed in works by Rosalind Crisp, Fiona Malone, Nikki Heywood and Samuel James, in addition to training with Berlin-based company laborG.RAS and Belgian choreographer Julie Bougard, supported by an Ian Potter Grant; and with Andrew Morrish in Berlin. She also participated in Critical Path’s workshop with Belgian choreographer Hans van den Broeck.

Georgie Read
Dancer

Performance-maker Georgie Read completed Honours in Performance at UNSW in 2005 and studied Animateuring at the VCA in 2007. She was a member of PACT Theatre’s ensemble in 2004 and the Urban Theatre Projects ensemble in 2005. In 2006 she received a BBM Young Artists scholarship to the UK. She has trained with artists including

Martin del Amo, Nikki Heywood and Andrew Morrish. This year she has made a solo performance supported by the Australia Council, mentored by Lee Wilson. Other achievements include her participation in a dance laboratory at Critical Path with Rosalind Crisp, and internships with the De Quincey Co. She also collaborated on and performed in *Finale* presented by Performance Space and the UK group, Pacitti Company. She trains regularly with De Quincey Co. During November and December she will devise a new solo work to be produced by PACT Theatre, Sydney.

Gail Priest
Sound Artist/Composer

Gail Priest is a Sydney-based sound artist, writer and curator. Originally trained in the performing arts, the core of her practice is in sound design and composition for dance and contemporary performance, frequently playing the sound-scores live. Projects include Martin del Amo’s *Unsealed* (2003) and *Under Attack* (2005), both of which have toured nationally and internationally as part of *Breathing Space*; and version 1.0’s *Wages of Spin* (2005) which toured nationally as part of Mobile States. Much of her work has involved interdisciplinary practice, leading to multimedia performance installations such as her collaborations with Caitlin Newton-Broad, *White Collar Project* (2000) and *Dead Girls’ Party* (1997). In 2003 she collaborated with Samuel James to create *Sonic Salon* - a one-on-one immersive audiovisual installation utilising surround-sound technologies and physical presence. She has also performed electro-improvisation at national experimental music events including *Liquid Architecture* (2003, 2006), the *NOW now* (2004), ABC Radio’s *In the Night Air Audiotheque* (2005); *Electrofringe* (2005) and *Typhoon*, Artspace (2005).

In 2001-02 Gail Priest received an Australia Council/ABC Radio Residency to create music theatre for radio, resulting in two music theatre works broadcast on Radio National and Classic FM. Other highlights include a multichannel, site-specific sound performance for Elizabeth Bay House, a commission to create a piece for ABC Radio’s *Figures in the Soundscape* series, and the release of her debut solo album *Imaginary Conversations in Reverberant Rooms*.