



OoS 2019 Blog

Carron Little on Erin Evans Delaney, 2019



Image by Erin Evans Delaney
(OoS performance 2019)

An exciting performance that had crowds in awe one day and perplexed the next was a performance by Erin Evans Delaney. I first saw her perform as an undergraduate at SAIC where she was one of a group of research artist scholars investigating how to create a biodegradable plastic bags. In Wicker Park one of our missions as a neighborhood is to think about sustainability and the environment.

In creating this year's line up of artists I was thinking about ecologies of care and how interactive public performance can contribute to expanding the discourse around issues of care. What do we consume? How do we consume and what commodities are essential to our everyday lives? How can we eradicate plastic for instance? The artist, Hanh Pham who we commissioned in 2011 to create an OoS performance called Pretty Dirty is a committed eco-activist and has an instagram page where she discusses her environment saving methods. Her constant posts and reminders through social media have inspired me to do a better job in my own life about eradicating plastic which is so hard when shopping at a supermarket. The quest to be plastic free is much easier when I shop at the local farmer's market. The plight of the plastic island that some say is the size of Texas and other's say is the

size of North America is detrimental in so many ways for our environment and the food we eat.

In Erin's proposal she writes that her performance: 'references the contemporary ecological phenomenon of the Plastiglomerate, a naturally formed ball of sticky clay that collects tidal detritus on beaches. In recent history, these glomerates have been found to include plastic, integrating this human-made material into an organic ecological process of rock decomposition and decay. My interest is to create an organic assemblage on the body, portraying the inevitability of the plastic/body relationship, but instead, using a bioplastic that is environmentally safe. Using the biodegradable plastic as representative of the sticky organic clay body, I will point to our contemporary and problematic relationship to plastic while presenting a future fusion of the plastic body that is not harmful to our ecosystem.'

We are at a critical point in terms of addressing environmental concerns, in fact some people believe it is too late believing that 2050 will be the end of planet earth as we know it but this cannot be an excuse to sit back and do nothing. We have to live with hope and be proactive about creating a caring society. We continually need to thrive and strive for a better world and we all at OoS hope that the work we do in the local community is raising these questions that we need to collectively address. Thinking about ecologies of care for the environment will be a key question that we will be talking about this year with the performances for Out of Site, 2019 at Wicker Park Fest.

By Carron Little

Tags: #erinevansdelaney, #outofsite, #publicperformance

Carron Little on Germann & Gehrig, 2019



Topology of Space, 07.16.19
(OoS Performance 2019)
by Carron Little

I recently wrote a line in a poem that read “The distance of horizons” thinking about perception and our lived experience. When we are able to stand on top of a high mountain and see the valleys and villages below, it gives us different perspective on the world in that moment. It gives us a sense of scale in a relation to the earth, in a literal sense, but in the act of climbing the mountain it connects us to the infinite. It connects us to nature and how we are part of a larger world and this in itself holds possibility.

When I first moved to Chicago in the late nineties I remember walking around the loop and feeling dizzy by the scale of the skyscrapers. I made a plan to come the next day with my camera and take photos to overcome the dizziness. It worked and that year my friends came to celebrate my first birthday in Chicago on the 99th Floor of the John Hancock building. The most unique view is from the Women’s bathroom that is like a shot from the film, Blade Runner.

The Swiss Artists, Patric Gehrig and Saskya Germann have devised a performance for this year’s Out of Site festival that explores the topology of space, and how this is linked to the boundaries and borders of our neighbor-

hoods. The artists state; “Where we see mountains, Chicagoers see a skyline. At home, Alp borders Alp.

In Chicago, district borders district. But neighborhood bonds are just as important in a big city as anywhere else.” It is a stark reminder how perception is linked to movement, to the ebb and flow of a city at work. When we travel beyond the borders of our neighborhoods it heightens perception and gives us a wider understanding of community.

In adapting an ancient Swiss tradition of singing blessings into the city, the artists are sending their wishes into the city, connecting border with border, connecting neighborhoods crossing beyond divisions. In their words; “The urban prayer call will strengthen neighborly bonds and protect the residents from all “big city dangers”. The idea of sending the public’s blessings into the city as a form of protection, a sacred act, is one created in this neighborhood for this one moment in time, yet we hope it reaches beyond the neighborhood limits.

In the words of Hal Foster, he talks about auratic traces and I’ve been recently writing about this in relation to performance and how public performance specifically has the capacity to transform urban space when it breaks down the fourth wall, by engaging the public directly. Public performance creates memories in space that over time have the power to transform the ‘no go zones’ into spaces that offer wonder, joy and awe through profound dialogue. Yet, it is not about putting up a ‘nice’ performance in public, a ‘nice’ dance piece, a ‘nice’ theater piece, it is in the methodology of the approach and how the public are engaged in dialogue about the work that is key to leaving an auratic trace where profound exchange occurs between the artist and the public in an equally mutual exchange.

Tags: #patricgehrig, #publicperformance, #saskyagermann



Carron Little on Wannapa Pimtong-Eubanks, 2019



Drawn from Memories 07.25.19
(OoS Performance 2019)
by Carron Little

Wannapa P-Eubank's is returning to perform for Out of Site for a second year running and her performance has been inspired by a drawing by her daughter. Wannapa's performances come from personal memories and last year the interactive performance was inspired by a protest she attended in 1996 in Thailand where over 600 student demonstrators were killed by the government police. The litter of shoes on the ground the day after the protests is a haunting memory. For OoS18 she invited the public to dance with her on the canvas. They were invited to choose a pair of shoes and cover the sole in red paint. The concept of the performance was put yourself in my shoes and in our conversation last night we were talking and sharing stories about the ongoing prejudices one faces when you don't look or talk like a 'normal' person. This idea of questioning normative behavior and what is the concept of normal is an important part of the work we do. And I am excited after listening to all the performances we are creating for you this year how we will take you to different worlds through each artist's imagination.

The idea of 'placing yourself in my shoes' is about the fundamental task of everyone to listen. If we are to eradicate abuse and violence in our daily lives we all have to start from a place of listening and tolerance. Yes we are going to make mistakes but when we listen we can have a deeper understanding of both perspectives. In re-activating the memory of the protest in Thailand the work became a ritualistic holding memory of the hundreds of people who lost their lives. The piece was so moving and captivated the public for two hours.

Wannapa's daughter lives with learning disabilities and she created a drawing of a tree with red birds. This deeply personal performance entitled 'The Wishing Tree' is a conversation between mother and daughter held in the place of the imagination. Where verbal communication is limited communication expands into other realms, the imagination, intuitive etc. This performance is an extension of the personal forms of communication between mother and daughter to the wider community.

The act of drawing on personal experiences to imbue dance and movement with emotive and imaginative form is part of the butoh tradition and one that Wannapa is highly skilled in. Her performances move people, the public is captivated in her trance, her comedy, and her sense of play. As a curator, I've wanted to work with Wannapa for a long time having seen her previous performances. When I reached out to her to perform for Out of Site the proposal that she sent didn't capture the talent of her work and ideas. So I arranged a meeting with her to discuss what was important to her as an artist. And she shared the idea for 'put yourself in my shoes'. That is the piece, but I had to take the time to sit down and listen. As curators if we are to diversify our programming and step outside the limitations of privileged artist production we have to be willing to go the extra mile so we make space for diverse voices.

Stage Set credit to Janet Schmid for The Wishing Tree, 2019.