# Composing in Space

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| Clare Rae0:00:02 - 0:00:57 | Hello and Welcome to GAPS, a podcast produced through the Center for Visual Arts Graduate Academy at the University of Melbourne. My name is Clare Rae. I'm an artist and a PhD candidate at the Victorian College of the Arts. I 'm here today with Elyssia Bugg, my colleague from the Department of Art History at Melbourne, and we're presenting our discussion with renowned artists David Rosetzky and Shelley Lasica, focusing on Composite Acts, a video and performance work by David, which featured Shelley,as a performer in 2019 and also Vianne Again, a performance work made by Shelley in 2012. Our conversation ranges from approaches to performance, the body in the moving image, memory, truth and authenticity and collaboration. It was a real privilege to speak to both of these artists, and we hope you enjoy the conversation as much as we did. |
| Elyssia Bugg0:00:58 - 0:01:14 | We'd like to begin our discussion by acknowledging the Wurundjeri and Boon Wurrung peoples of the Eastern Kulin Nations upon whose unceded lands we live and work. We pay our respects to Elders, past and present, and also extend that respect to any First Nations People who may be listening to this episode, |
| Clare Rae0:01:14 - 0:01:42 | David Rosetzky is an artist who has been making engaging and thought-provoking video works, photography and installation for the last 25 years. His work is highly collaborative, and he often works with practitioners from the fields of theater, dance and film. David emerged out of the artist-run scene in Melbourne in the nineties and has become a highly respected figure in the artistic community, with many national and international exhibitions featuring his work. |
| Elyssia Bugg0:01:43 - 0:02:04 | Shelley Lasica is a Melbourne based dancer and choreographer, whose body of work spans more than 30 years. Her practice probes the collaborative and interdisciplinary potential of choreography. Shelley's choreographic works have been performed nationally and internationally and seek to explore the relationship between choreography and its context, in and between the realms of both theater and visual arts. |
| Shelley Lasica0:02:06 - 0:02:54 | Her whole house was pink, she had a pink door and salmon carpet and white leather couches, and everything was colour coded and she had pink tiles, and it was a lot of different shades of pink throughout the house, and she used to have the craziest flower displays. She had these really long vases and would put pink cochineal or blue cochineal in the water to color the water inside the vases. She always used to wear matching clothes and cook crab mousse. That was pink too. And every time I stayed with her we would have cocktail hour at six o'clock. At cocktail hour I'd have coke and she'd have Gin and Coke. She was super flamboyant. |
| Clare Rae0:02:56 - 0:03:29 | I think the first thing we sort of wanted to talk about, was you both recently worked on a collaborative piece with a number of other artists as well, called Composite Acts. And we were wondering, we thought this might be a good place to start because it's kind of the point at which your work very literally, sort of intersects. And I know it was like quite a complex sort of bodily spatial navigation process. So I was wondering if both or either of you wanted to speak a little bit about that work and what it was like working on that piece. |
| David Rosetzky0:03:32 - 0:05:22 | So, Composite Acts was the work, which was a number of years in development. So it's a video work and a performance work that I collaborated on with Shelley. Shelley was one of the performers in the work and in the performanceand we also worked on it with choreographer Jo Lloyd and I. There were two other performers. One of them was Harrison Richie-Jones, and the other one was Arabella Frahn-Starkie. And the work for me developed out of an initial conversation with the choreographer Jo Lloyd, who I have collaborated with a number of times at the starting point. This is kind of like a bit of a long winded story, but it is the way into the work for me. And so we were presenting a live iteration of Half Brother, a video work that we worked on together at Arts House, and we're up in the Green Room and Jo had this jacket with her, which was her mother's jacket, which she had passed down to Joand I noticed the jacket because she had it on the back of a chair in the green room. There was the label, and that label was a, I mean on the back of the jacket was the label for this particular fashion brand called Dominique, and my father was a graphic designer and he had designed a label for this brand, not that particular one, but another one. So this conversation ensued about the jacket and in which Jo talked about her mother and a memory of her mother and both of our parents have passed away. So this work Composite Acts was really born from that conversation, which was about the memory of our parents who had passed away and the jacket. This object had kind of triggered this conversation and these stories that Jo told me about her mother through the jacket and so on. |
| David Rosetzky0:05:22 - 0:06:18 | And so that was sort of like the starting point for the development of the Composite Acts project, which had a number of kind of development phases, is over. I think maybe two or three years and Shelley came, surely I think was involved from the beginning, in the first sort of iteration of the development, which I think was in 2017, where we started to work with ideas developing from the narrative, those personal narratives and Joe developed some choreography, and we sort of embarked on a creative development period that's from those ideas of to do with memory to do with grief, to do with story telling and exploring those through choreography through speech, through movement of the body through space. Yeah, and people sort of sharing stories and contributing in different, in different ways from that. |
| Clare Rae0:06:19 - 0:06:33 | Yeah, it's really interesting to hear about how that idea developed because the clothes feature so prominently in the kind of the way the characters relate to each other and the, the way they sort of interact through the performance. |
| Shelley Lasica0:06:35 - 0:07:57 | Working on Composite Acts sort of brings about the whole lot of things about the way sort of how people work together in different ways and through their own practice and through how their practice feeds into other people's. And it was working kind of as a performer rather than as the choreographer in that work. So with through and thinking about how you know what Joe and David were developing with the ideas of that work was incredibly interesting and also, you know, working with the other performers as well in developing how to build that work through sort of the whole series and systems of different types of languages and how they collided with each other and supported each other. Sort of through this kind of odd matrix between Jo and David. It was a really fascinating process and in terms of sort of questions, the type of questions that David posed in order to develop some of the narrative strains and this kind of idea of swapping that then kind of manifested itself both in the clothes but also the stories was really fascinating and also the objects, obviously too and the order and all sorts of things. |
| Clare Rae0:07:58 - 0:08:04 | Yes! Do you want to just describe David how it sort of happened in terms of the installation and the sculptural work in the screen? |
| David Rosetzky0:08:06 - 0:09:00 | Yes, so in the space you mean physically describe it? This was sort of like a, like, Well, the Magdalene Laundries is, ah, large. You know, it used to be a laundry space, but it's It's a large, cavernous space, and there was maybe 3 m suspended screen, which showed the video of composite acts, which ran for about 27 minutes, and I think that ran through a number of times, while the audience were arriving. So they had the they were able to view the work and see the work prior to the performance, if they wanted to. Though we did advertise what time the performance would be would occur. So if people just wanted to come to that, they could. And so the video projection screen was hanging towards the rear of the space. And Sean Meilac's sculptural set pieces were kind of set up just on the left hand side against the wall, and they were then, at a certain point. |
| David Rosetzky0:09:01 - 0:10:05 | I think there were two iterations of the performance. For one of them, the video actually went to black so that the audience were able to concentrate on the performance itself. So the video went to Black and Shelley and the other performer, Harrison Richie-Jones, activated the space. I think by initially bringing out a carpet and rolling it out and then bring out the different set pieces, which kind of cleared the space of the audience, I think, and so that was an interesting relationship as well in the way that the performance that's Inuit negotiate that space and interact with the audience themselves. And so they did one iteration of the performance without the video showing. And then there was another performance which occurred while the video was showing. There was so though these different iterations off the live version isolated, you know, without the reproduction of the video behind. And then there was one with the video behind. So I think that set up an interesting dialogue between those different spaces and the sort of live performance and the video. |
| Clare Rae0:10:06 - 0:10:20 | I wonder if you could speak a bit about that. Shelley, in terms of does the experience of doing it, you know, performing in front of the work on screen and how it may be felt different, or how the kind of performance aspect was different. |
| Shelley Lasica0:10:21 - 0:11:28 | It was kind of really complex triangulation between the actual sort of physical situation, of the performance and how everything would happen as a live performance and sort of in really sort of practical ways. As Duane's music would function both in the space that we shared with the audience, but also as it functioned, you know, in the actual video and then the objects and all of the elements happening. So this continuous, of doubling and looping through so kind of multi awareness of sort of reading backwards and forwards at the same time and in some ways being aware of what was on the screen and in some ways not, and sort of referencing to a point that also working through that with Harrison. I mean, it was really kind of complicated to do, but and also because they were such specific spatial and time considerations, because it did rely very much on what was happening in the video as well. So it was a really interesting was weird, it was fun though. |
| Clare Rae0:11:28 - 0:11:54 | Hmm, And just out of interest, David, you just mentioned that you did a live performance of Half Brother at Arts House, which I didn't see, unfortunately, but and I had presumed that composite acts was the first time that you'd had live performers performing in front of the world, kind of with and in front of the video work. But maybe that's not the case was HalfBrother, the first time. |
| David Rosetzky0:11:56 - 0:12:13 | Half Brother was the first time that one of my works was shown in a live. Actually, I've been involved in, I think Lucy Guerin did a project where she collaborated with some visual artists a long time ago, and I contributed, I think, a video. |
| David Rosetzky0:12:22 - 0:12:58 | Yes, I think that was the first time that my work was combined with live performance, though I think I was yeah, and I collaborated with Lucy on That is part of her work. But then this e think it was in 2017, Shian Law curatedaseries of our performance works for party event at ourselves. It might have been called The Side Part. I don't know why that's coming to mind, and Half Brother was presented then in a live format. But not with the video was just three performers performing their choreography, Jo's choreography, from Half Brother, at that event. |
| Elyssia Bugg0:13:00 - 0:13:38 | It's interesting that you've both done, because you've done, Shelly,"Vianne again". But it's interesting that you've both done these works that kind of have this forward and back, past and present, sort of interaction, built into them. And I kind of wonder whether partially part of the mediums that you both are working in, in the sense that, like choreography, sort of has this inbuilt memory system, in it or something, and similarly, so does film and photography. So I was wondering, Yeah, if this is something that you are consciously working through. If it's sort of just comes up because of the nature of the mediums you're working in. |
| Shelley Lasica0:13:41 - 0:15:56 | I think it is part of the medium. But I also think, particularly with Vianne,I think is possibly the most autobiographical work I've made. And it was very specifically Vianne is an anagram of Vienna and, which I kind of came across because I made a typo and then realised that I really likeditas a name, and the work kind of is about sort of imaginary history,once imaginary narratives. Half of my family came from Vienna on my mother's side. And I spent a lot of time with my grandmother when I was little.And I used to hear lots of stories. But of course, in my experience of the place with this kind of it was a fiction that was being reimagined, or not a fiction. It became a fiction for me out of these, out of a situation in a time that no longer existed, basically between the 1st and 2nd World War, and I guess in building that work, which I also sort of took, I think, a couple of years to make. I was very interested in how sort of systems of knowledge and systems of memory function through sort of spatial and cartographic practices and can be reimagined also in a number of different ways. So as well as Vianne. Then I made a whole series of work, and it was also because of a practical things called Vianne again, where we did this work again and again and again. And I kept on redrawing it in a way and working I was also working with and Anne Marie May, who was making objects, the initial objects that we made for 45 Downstairs, which was probably the most theatrical version of it. They kind of adapted and changed because I decided that Vianne again, it had to be in a place where cultural activity was produced, but not dance. So we did it first one, I think, was it at MADA in one of the drawing studios. |
| Shelley Lasica0:15:57 - 0:16:56 | And I should also say that I worked with Milo Kossowski, who composed and made the music and with Ben Cobham in the first one, who made thelight for it, which then when we did it in the other places, that kind of changed quite a lot. So it was a matter of renegotiating those places, but also this idea of how this, how things could happen again and again, and also how to deal with sort of circumstances and situations as they came up in order to produce work and to make things kind of happen in different ways. I also there was a new online version of that too that I worked with Helen Grogan, and then from that, we then worked again to make the version of Vianne again that was partof Melbourne Now, and with the installation so again worked with Helen and with Anne Marie, to make that into a work that sat in part of the exhibition, it was an exhibition piece. Sorry, that was a really long-winded answer. |
| Clare Rae0:16:57 - 0:17:28 | Can I just ask a follow-on question about Vianne again? Or Vianne and then Vienna again? So we've got a bit of a section now on documentation and in Vianne again, the work is performed in the gallery space but then projected back into the gallery space and which acts as a kind of expansion of the physical volume of the room, as well as this kind of visual echo of time passed like a memory, projected onto the walls, like Plato's Cave or something.I was just wondering if |
| Clare Rae0:17:28 - 0:17:40 | I was just wondering if maybe, you know, you spoke about how autobiographical that work is and how you mentioned your grandmother's memories, and I wonder if, what your thoughts are further about the installation in termsofmemory. |
| Shelley Lasica0:17:40 - 0:18:19 | I think it's not particularly descriptive off those particular memories, but I think how it functions, sort of in this sort of both, through this kind of illusory space that's created by the way that it was projected into the corner,orthe reproducing that space into itself, but also because of what was shot and the repetition through the double images get this kind of uncertainty about what things are, which or the authenticity of a particular moment. So I think that's where it pulls directly towards the sort of initial impetus of the work. |
| Clare Rae0:18:20 - 0:18:56 | Mm, that's so interesting to in terms of Composite Acts, because the way the characters are telling stories that are clearly not their own, like the section that I just recently watched on the Sutton website the excerpthas you Shelly telling a story about being a young boy. And so immediately the authenticity is called into question because, you know, we can see visibly, that probably weren't a young boy. So I think, yeah, but we don't know. So I think, yeah, I think that those that idea of authenticity and the projection is really interesting too. |
| Shelley Lasica0:18:59 - 0:19:33 | Yeah, that's something that has always interested may ah lot, especially my solo performance, but also in most of the workI make, because it's often an assumption, especially for solo performers and choreographers and something about,for some reason, people have this idea that if you're working with your body somehow, it's not mediated in any way and that there's a There's not a complex process and selection process that comes about in doing the thing that you're doing, whatever that is. |
| Clare Rae0:19:34 - 0:19:53 | Yes, I think also, there's a, sorry I was just going to say also, it just occurred to me that through working with the body and through working with photography or video, there's this kind of inherent truth claim that both mediums make, which is always really interesting to interrogate and unpack. And I know you've spoken about that before,Shelley. |
| Shelley Lasica0:19:54 - 0:21:30 | Look, I think you know, I have issues with the whole idea of authenticity. I think it's always to be contested in performing in terms off this idea of some sort of bodily truth. I think it's a misalignment or a misjudgement about certain relationships between thinking and moving, between one's physical body and an intellectual emotional body. It sets up those dualities in a way that is not useful at all. And I think it's a much more complex relationship, and I think that one of the things about working in live work or, and also recorded work, but working through your body is the complex way you can make choices through, I mean in a really obvious way, in terms of photography and moving image, with its off point of view and at the relationship between the frame and the performer and the way that the performer can or the subject can function a very active way and also in live performance that the this kind of complex relationship you have with the context of where and how you're performing. And also the audience allows this kind of much more nuanced and active dialogue between how the types of forwant of better words sort of narrative strings that might get expanded and moved around. |
| David Rosetzky0:21:35 - 0:23:07 | Particularly with Composite Acts and when I talk about it and describe it, I think I always say to people, it's one of the first things that people ask, like, Are they true stories or are they fictional? People really want to know that. And I always say, make a quite a definitive statement, that they are based on, real, you know, true stories based on my conversations with cast members and so on. And I think that is important too. Not the authenticity so much, but perhaps how you know, the collaborators and performers respond to the stories in different ways because of the way they connect with them. And I think because they are true for want of a better word, or they come from people's real experiences, I think there's a certain connection the people have with them, which would be different than if they were fiction. And I think that is an important distinction for me, with the work and in terms of my connection to the stories, you know, because as I mentioned, the starting point was this true story, this conversation about this actual object and how it related to Jo's and my lives and families. And I think that kind of truth or authenticity or history and memory, very much important starting point for this project. So I think the idea of truth and authenticity sort of embedded in the development of the process. But I think once the work is made and it's shown to an audience, it's sort of becomes something quite different. And, you know, there's many different sort of layers that kind of add on sort of complicate the narratives and intentionally as well on my behalf. In terms of how their stories were developed |
| David Rosetzky0:23:08 - 0:23:37 | and treated and iterated in different language systems, which I think I talked about earlier, you know, through the body, through choreography, through performance, through speech or voice-over so it becomes lead and complicated through the process. But yeah, it's an interesting relationship to truth or authenticity. I think when making a work, particularly when it's based on, or working with people's personal histories as a starting point. |
| Clare Rae0:23:45 - 0:24:14 | That is one thing that we haven't spoken about really explicitly, is how the performers interact with those objects that Sean created and you refer to them as set pieces, which I think is really interesting, too, because it references the theater again as these kind of sets that you act within and with. How did that? Maybe you could just talk about how that process of making those objects came about and what the conversations were between you and Sean. |
| David Rosetzky0:24:14 - 0:24:17 | That would be hilarious to actually remember. |
| Clare Rae0:24:17 - 0:24:19 | Yeah, word for word. |
| David Rosetzky0:24:21 - 0:25:44 | I can't remember because it's so embedded within our everyday lives. Yeah, I think the the set pieces were very much an extension of Sean's practice, and I think you can see that by looking at them in their relationship to his longstanding practice with Modernism and Abstraction and and so on. But I think it's very interesting in terms of how they function within the sort of sequence of the video itself and kind of sort of opened up different sort of settings, different spaces that were then collapsed and shifted and maneuvered by the agency of the performers. So I think they sort of provided this kind of modular kind of framework that could set up and dismantle different sort of constructs or scenarios, which I guess also feeds into this idea of the gaze of, you know, challenging particular sort of framing devices or, you know, histories of what have you and sort of having them being able to sort of shift them through the relationship of the performance bodies to the set so that it sort of set up this, hopefully this sort of sense of that. They did have agency within that space that they were sort of altering the sort of the framing devices through which the audience viewed the narratives and the work and the way that they sort of inhabited those stories in different ways. |
| Elyssia Bugg0:25:46 - 0:26:09 | That raises the question of collaboration. And when you're collaborating with people you know, or that you have relationships with, like professional personal relationships with and how that also like, I guess there's another layer of how you sort of navigate these things. And again, it's a question that's, I guess, specific to both mediums, because they're necessarily often collaborative. |
| Shelley Lasica0:26:10 - 0:26:27 | I work in other people's work as well, so where I am, right. You know, my input and my relationship to the work is different from necessarily being driven by me in some way. So there, you know, there's lots of different ways andI find that really interesting. |
| Clare Rae0:26:28 - 0:27:01 | I think that's something that you've spoken about before, Shelley and certainly earlier was this idea of colliding, you know, practices colliding rather than or maybe in addition to collaborating, which is a really nice way of phrasing it because it becomes like these encounters between people rather than you know or not, rather than but just as a thing on its own. I wonder if maybe you just want to speak a little bit about works that you've made with Helen Grogan. Because I know that you've kind of performed in her work. But then she's also collaborated with you in your work as well. |
| Clare Rae0:27:01 - 0:27:03 | Do you want to just talk briefly about that? |
| Shelley Lasica0:27:03 - 0:27:22 | So she collaborated on Vianne again, but only two parts of it. The online part, the moving image online part. And then the part that became the exhibition piece for Melbourne Now and then I've also worked in one of her books in the Split Apart, |
| Clare Rae0:27:24 - 0:27:26 | Splitting Open the Surface. |
| Shelley Lasica0:27:26 - 0:28:13 | Thank you, Yeah, it was just one version of that and there's a number of version that work. So it was the one that was initially presented at Gertrude in 2018 and in a group show that I can't remember the name of now and there were really different relationships between how we work together, and that was really interesting. And then we actually did another thing last year, which was two working things that were completely separate but happened side by side. And it was only the sort of, it was the preliminary, sort of sketches for two different pieces. It was part of a residency in Vienna, so we were actually working completely separately, but actually sort of happened at the same time. Another dimension of that too. I just wonder if maybe you |
| Clare Rae0:28:13 - 0:28:43 | I just wonder if maybe you could just to follow on from that and speak about, I guess, the experience of performing in another person's work and them then collaborating in your work. I feel like that's a really particular kind of dialogue exchange that takes place that has happened with Helen, but also with Jo Lloyd and Deanne Butterworth and these other like, specifically, dance makers that you've worked with. So, you know, I'm just really interested in that process, kind of working with somebody else's choreography and then maybe making work for other people. |
| Shelley Lasica0:28:43 - 0:30:17 | I've also done that in Bridie Lunney's work too. Oh and actually in Fiona McDonald's and Lindal Jones'. So with Deanne and Jo the thing that I would talk about is this piece we made together for West Spase called How Choreography Works, and it was, in fact a dialogue. The whole piece was a sort of a dialogue about how information is transmitted over a very long period of time, through people, because the three of us have been working together for quite a long time and then also, obviously, Jo and Deanne make separate work, and so I asked them to work with my archive. But then I also asked them to make choreographic work for me, but it was through also this length of a discussion about choreography too anditthen became an exhibition and with some online content. I'm super interested in the transmission of information and working with Jo in Composite Acts, and functioning in a way in which I was drawing out from what she wanted and also then being asked to do quite specific things, is one of the things I really like about working on other people's work, because they're they're just different choices from the ones that I would make. Enormously interesting. And then it's obviously what I bring to that. Likewise, when I'm working with other performers in my work, it's not about making work on them but making work with them. And the complex ways that functions. |
| Elyssia Bugg0:30:19 - 0:30:46 | David, do you have a similar experience or is it different, Like this idea of making work on people versus with people and things? Because I know you do a lot of portraiture as well, which is, I guess, I would think of that, as a form of making work of people, which is another kind of related thing. But yeah, do you have a similar experience in terms of how you have worked with people? |
| Speaker 40:30:47 - 0:31:11 | I definitely would say that. You know, I consider that I work with people. I think that's sort of my way in, and that's a really important part of my process. And I kind of really rely on that collaboration and relationship with the people I work with. Whether it's video or photography, I think I really need it. They are, of course, photographs, are of course, of people as well. |
| Shelley Lasica0:31:11 - 0:31:15 | That was before we started working on Composite Acts? I can't remember. |
| David Rosetzky0:31:18 - 0:31:19 | I think it was |
| David Rosetzky0:31:19 - 0:31:26 | between the first development, the first and the second. So before we embarked on the second, so there was kind ofa gap. |
| Shelley Lasica0:31:27 - 0:31:48 | But I felt very much that we were working with each other. It was very much about what each other drew out of and then learned, and then made other decisions like it. But it was sort of in quite a fast, looping way, which was really fun. |
| David Rosetzky0:31:48 - 0:31:55 | Oh that's good. I'm glad you enjoyed it. |
| Clare Rae0:31:55 - 0:32:35 | Sorry, David. I was just going to ask about that process of working with a still image versus the moving image. And particularly, I feel like what you're talking about with Shelley is really interesting, because we often don't think about it. Well, I mean, we do. But when we are only presented with a slice of the moment in the still frame, you know, we don't know what else has taken place to get to that point or afterwards. So yeah, I'm just curious to know how you both feel about that, I guess the maybe the different approaches in each medium, or how the performance per se is different, how it went? |
| David Rosetzky0:32:40 - 0:33:30 | I think that's part of the reason why I'm interested in working with double exposure because, you know, these double exposure series, which it was a part of. And the photograph that I made with her was part of that double exposure series, with those shoots, I think, because the process isn't just a sort of singular taking of an image of the split second, but it's kind of this layering, of thinks about, you know, a process and sort of and in interaction a little bit more, rather than just the taking of a single image. Because, you know, different moments overlap and collide, and sometimes it's not clearasto what you're actually looking at, so there are different time frames that are being represented. And I think that's part of the appeal of working with double exposures, for me rather than just, a still image. |
| Clare Rae0:33:30 - 0:33:32 | Do want to talk about that also Shelley? |
| Shelley Lasica0:33:32 - 0:33:46 | No, I mean, it's that thing about sort of like it's always what happened before and what happened after too. And the implication of a still image is always that you know, that it's part of it. Well, for me, anyway. So it's part of some sort of longer stream. |
| Clare Rae0:33:48 - 0:34:08 | I think what you're saying, David, also really resonates with thinking about your collage works where you not only overlay different images of people, but at different times. So we're kind of getting these, you know, through the apertures that you carve in the print. We're getting these views into different, you know, different people's experiences, but also different times. |
| Elyssia Bugg0:34:10 - 0:34:34 | One thing we haven't spoken about yet is we kind of touched on it earlier, but the different kind of spatial dynamics in both of your work, in terms of having worked in sort of more theatrical spaces versus gallery spaces and kind of what I guess, the different dynamics of that in terms of thinking about sort of intervening as an artist into those different sort of zones. |
| Clare Rae0:34:34 - 0:34:43 | Do you want to talk about that, Shelley, Because I think maybe it's quite pertinent to your work, in that it traverses performances in museum and gallery contexts. |
| Shelley Lasica0:34:44 - 0:36:17 | Yeah, and also in terms of the histories and the expectations and the those systems of knowledgesof those particular modes. And I think people or audiences are very implicitly knowledgeable about those modes, and I think that it allows the possibility then to sort of play a bit between them. But to be very super aware of what those contexts are, and I probably do make work that exists in a gallery more than a theater. I am really, really interested in theater, in the history of theater and understanding what the differences are and in articulating the differences in terms of all sorts of things, about hierarchies, of importance, sort of how illusory space functions and time. And I think that illusory spacing is really interesting in David's work too and you know, in a lot of different work. But I guess I'm more familiar with composite acts and actually working with that, and I think those things, they allow time to actually move around quite a lot too and to sort of almost, crack open and have different kinds of possibilities. And yeah, as I find it infinitely interesting but articular, like being really careful about articulating for myself what those contexts are, how those different languages can function and tug around at each other. |
| Clare Rae0:36:19 - 0:36:34 | Thinking about Composite Acts, how the kind of very specific context of the Abbotsford Convent may have impacted, and particularly the Magdalene laundries, in that the work was performed in the live iteration, how that might have affected the performance or not? |
| David Rosetzky0:36:34 - 0:36:45 | I think there are a lot of practical considerations which, sort of affected the performance and the relationship between the performance and video relating to the to the space itself. |
| Clare Rae0:36:46 - 0:37:13 | In what way? What sort of considerations did you have to make just in terms of planning and considering the relationship between, I guess the performers and the audience? And how that would be negotiated in terms of how that sort of fitted in with the screening of the video as well, so they're kind of a lot of pragmatic issues that had to be, you know, worked out as well. I met. |
| Clare Rae0:37:13 - 0:37:22 | Maybe you could also talk about that, Shelley, about the kind context of that very specific space and how you felt about the performance in that space? |
| Shelley Lasica0:37:22 - 0:39:20 | We rehearsed at the convent, but in a different space, one of the rehearsal periods. So there was something about coming into that which is around the corner from the actual laundries, another area. I can't remember what it's called now, and the space itself historically is incredibly loaded. But this work wasn't about that at all, and it wasn't in dialogue or interaction. But being with that history of the laundries, which is, you know, complicated and deeply troublesome for a lot of reasons, there is a kind are various reasons about that, and, you know, there sometimes is a particular quality about a moment in time. And that's kind of one of the fun things about performing and sort of, you know, the things that you can't control, basically, and then you have to kind of experience and not only just react, but respond and function with the performance that's existing, and the kind of situation of what's going on. There were a lot of people there and it was quite an intense night for a lot of different reasons. And so it was. Initially, you know, we've been working on that material in shooting it, so that when you're shooting video, you do things a lot of times and you have a different type of relationship with what you're doing, the activity that you are doing is intense, but in a different way from the relationship you have in time with the audience. It's just different. And then to have that kind of happening simultaneously but also with the absence of one person there, that was kind of like when you are making a sauce and you boil it down and then you boil it down, you boil it down, then it's like this paste. It was a bit kind of chance. |
| Elyssia Bugg0:39:21 - 0:40:02 | We had a question about specifically, Shelley, because I know you've spoken about it in interviews before, the kind of tensions of being held in in the gaze as a performer and as a woman, and in terms of like doing something that is embodied and how you navigate or subvert or overcome the kind of issues that are there, I guess, maybe the kind of inherent potential of this kind of situation that you put yourself into, in some some ways. So, I guess, the question would be, how do you deal with those possibilities? |
| Shelley Lasica0:40:03 - 0:40:43 | I will go back to what I was saying before, about working with David, just in relation to this. It's sort of like with the photographs, for instance, me watching David taking photographs of me. The lense functions in two ways. Not just as a one way thing for me, and then it depends on who I'm working with, but it's working out how to make that a very active possibility. I think for me it's always been very important and likewise when I'm performing and it's something that I'm very interested in people developing as a skill as performers too. |
| Clare Rae0:40:50 - 0:41:07 | Can you just elaborate about that, Shelly, how would a performer develop that skill? And there's something that you said previously, maybe you could say it again if you want to. But about, you know, I've heard you say something about"I see you seeing me and I'm looking back" and that's what you were talking about with David. |
| Shelley Lasica0:41:08 - 0:42:46 | Yes, my ability to look at you and to address you as an audience is as strong as you're looking at me and I can make that relationship or allow the possibility for that relationship to be a two-way thing or a multi-way thing, rather than always being dominant, particularly dominant one way or the other. I'm not interested in proclaiming or controlling how you understand or apprehend what I'm doing and likewise you, the way may apprehend what I'm doing or where my work is may be influenced by, in fact, the work itself. So in developing that with performers, it's an attentiveness that I think is developed over a long period of working in particular ways and understanding. It's almost like a filmic mechanism off attending to focus where the focus might be and having some play and not authority over some agency with as a performer, you know. So there's this kind of idea of the agency of the performer and in the agency of the of the audience to which I'm really interested in. And it's the thing in relation to what we're talking about before about theatre and the gallery. Those things function in very, very different ways, and that's really fascinating. And that's to do with an actual kind of architectural functional thing, but also with lots of histories. |
| Clare Rae0:42:54 - 0:43:33 | Thanks for listening. We hope you've enjoyed this conversation with David Rosetzky andShelley Lasica for GAPS,Center of Visual Art Graduate Academy Podcast series. Please head to the CoVA website at sites.research.unimelb.edu.au/Cova for more episodes. Luckily, we have another chance to view David's work, Composite Acts, which is showing at Sutton Gallery here in Melbourne from the 6th of February to the 6th of March 2021 as part of Photo 2021, the International Festival of Photography. Head to photo.org.au for more information |