

## **1. Tell us about your idea**

We would like to propose a new piece, *Empty Gestures*, for NOW'16. Performed by two dancers, the work moves through a choreography of signs and gestures borrowed from multiple 'everyday' sources (such as sign language, codified religious movements, or casual unconscious motion in conversation), performed as an act of citation and virtuosic memory. Operating as a quiet poetry and fragile intimate encounter, the performance draws from a history of abstract dance but uses a curiously everyday and 'meaningful' movement material.

Whilst recognizable and rehearsed the gestures are ambiguous and decontextualized - the only certainty being the intense commitment of the performers to learn and reproduce them. In this way, the work is concerned not only with the gestures themselves, devoid of their original meaning, but the question of what significant gestures are available to a performer with regards to their audience - and the 'reality' of this labour. Inspired by Tim Crouch's description of theatre "as a place where a group of people gather together", we aim to interrogate the relationship between performer and spectator - what can each offer the other; and what kind of commitment, to communication, interpretation or understanding, is demanded or expected from either side?

## **2. Tell us about you / your company**

Rohanne Udall and Paul Hughes collaboratively make work exploring suggestion, possibility and playfulness. Their current practice operates through seriality, moving through different gestures and materials to establish and exhaust systems of meaning.

Tempo Rubato is an umbrella title for a number of works exploring these ideas. Our work is playful and abstract, and rooted in a bodily and material space. We work with improvisation, and techniques that draw from clown, dance and task-based performance. We move in and out of meaning, nonsense, pleasure and labour, and play with the distance between internal sensations and a viewing audience.

Our recent work includes Partner Dances For One, a solo performance for stages (work in progress showings Camden People's Theatre, Battersea Arts Centre), Floorplan//Here Or Now, a solo exhibition of performance at Rich Mix, London; and the Imaginary Festivals Project, a collaborative writing project with the Forest Fringe.

Rohanne graduated from a MA in Fine Art at The University of Edinburgh in 2014. Paul is currently studying MA Dance Studies with the University of Roehampton.

## **3. Why should your idea be developed at The Yard?**

The work crosses borders of theatre, dance and live art - questioning and blurring the relationships between performer, the 'material' and the audience. We believe that The Yard theatre provides a useful context to situate this, within a programme that already embraces cross-disciplinary performance. We're keen to not only engage with audiences with this attitude, but also other artists too. We think there's an interesting culture being produced around The Yard that we'd like our work to respond to, learn from and develop with.

At it's core, we're most excited about proposing this work to The Yard as it was during, and in response to, NOW '15 that it's original concept came about. Part of this is a response to the work we saw and the conversations in the bar - but also the physical space itself. The Yard's stage - wide, bare, material, both grandiose and rough, recycled and reclaimed - feels significant to the elements at play in this piece, and we would have this dialogue with the space in mind as we develop the work - with its simplicity, labour and exposure.

#### **4. Why your show needs to be made NOW**

Our work is born out of, and speaks to, a culture that is saturated in content and meaning, and subject to endless streams of information, reference and possibility. Equally, we notice a growing political consciousness, which demands education, awareness, participation, and presence - the commitment to which can come in different forms and gestures; being one of many at a protest, signing a petition or sharing an article online. Engaging with these things, in an abstracted, bodily and concentrated form, feels urgent to us now in the process of understanding and (in)articulacy.

In March 2015, we undertook a residency with the New Wolsey Studio. The first material support we had received within our collaborative practice, this space and time offered us a chance to reflect on our work and explore new ways of making. Since then, we have worked rigorously on a series of works that respond to a variety of questions and concerns across different media, and feel we have taken on a more refined and distinctively playful voice. We believe we are ready to produce a work for a festival like NOW'16 and a stage like the Yard's; to start a mentoring relationship from a more experienced company; and to share our ideas and work to a wider audience.

#### **5. The name of two invited artists you would like to be mentored by, and how you feel that relationship could benefit your practice.**

We'd be excited to work with Dog Kennel Hill Project. Their work, like ours, takes on many forms and rubs against definitions. It is only recently that we have returned to stage based work, to understand what the context asks of us and the audience; simultaneously we have become more and more engaged with contemporary dance practices. We feel like a mentoring relationship with them could be invaluable in interrogating our work as we continue to explore this direction.

We'd also be interested in working with the mystery artist. We're curious about working with someone beyond our choice, finding new ways of articulating our practice and possibly holding ourselves up to a radically different practitioner's questions and standards. In our dream world, this would be someone working with an antagonistic, seductive and questioning relationship to an audience, and perhaps an artist working in medium at odds with 'theatre', such as Stewart Lee.

#### **6. Internet links to previous work if available.**

[Partner Dances for One, at BAC, October 2015](#)

[Here or Now, at Rich Mix, September 2015](#)

[Meaningless Dance 9](#) (One of a series of immediate, improvised works)

[Open/Close](#)

A portfolio of our work can be found at: <https://temporubatoresearch.wordpress.com/>.

We are also informed by our solo art practices, which can be found at

<http://rohanneudall.com/> and <http://www.paulpaschal.tumblr.com/>.

#### **7. Your preferred dates and any that you are unavailable for.**

We can't do the weeks of 23rd or 30th May - as Paul is working with Ponyboy Curtis.

#### **8. Please tell us what stage of development your idea is at.**

This work has grown out of a short period of recent unfunded development and has had no public showings to date.