

CALL FOR PROPOSALS: EXPERIMENTICA 2012

Submission deadline April 30, 2012

Applicant: Cathy Gordon

Experimentica 2012: UNSEEN
c/o Visual Arts
Chapter
Market Rd
Cardiff, CF5 1QE, UK

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name: Cathy Gordon

Address: 302-74 Spadina Road, Toronto, ON, M5R 2T5, Canada

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Email: cathy@cathygordon.com

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Cathy is a multidisciplinary artist and programmer based in Toronto, Canada. Over the past fifteen years, Cathy's practice has spanned the gamut from intimate one-on-one performances to large-scale participatory spectacles. The work is often site-specific and has been showcased nationally and internationally within theatre, dance, music, film, television, and visual art contexts as well as non-art venues such as the Ontario Science Centre, the Design Exchange and various public spaces.

Her seminal piece, *ON MY KNEES – a public divorce ceremony* (2007), marked her departure from experimental theatre/dance performance and her foray into durational performance and new media. Since then, her work has encompassed the "social" vibrating between two approaches to performance, that of theatre and visual arts histories.

Cathy is the winner of the Ken McDougall Emerging Director Award and a Harold for her contribution to the Independent Theatre community; she is also a three-time Dora Award nominee for Best Space Design and once for Best Production; two-time nominee for the K.M Hunter Award for choreography; and nominee for the 2005 Canadian Comedy Awards. She is a recent participant of Banff Arts Centre's prestigious international program for Visual Arts, a Thematic Residency led by UK artist Adam Chodzko.

As a programmer, Cathy is the former Managing Director of Toronto's Theatre Centre and co-curator of the national performance festival Free Fall (2005-2010). Since 1999, Cathy has been the co-Artistic Director of Hub14 Art And Performance Works, an artist-run dance studio that supports the development of new work.

Resume enclosed separately.

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ARTIST STATEMENT

My background is experimental theatre and dance; my recent practice includes installation, new media and durational performance. All of my work is audience-centric. I am continually attempting to break down barriers between artist and audience, either through participation, co-creation, or intimacy. I'm currently investigating definitions of audience, community, and participants as I create more work that is geographically specific.

Content dictates my choice of form. The performance quality varies with each project and can range from "just being myself", to a heightened naturalism to extremely stylized choreography. I am drawn to stories; I was a playwright and a poet. Then I began incorporating autobiographical material into the work in 2003. Within the past three years, I've developed my own ethnographic method of creating community work.

Part of my recent thinking includes questions around:

SPECTACLE as a vehicle for SUBVERSION

- The power of spectacle to attract an audience
- People's will to see what they want to see
- Investigating the politics of parties

DURATIONAL PERFORMANCE

- Duration as spectacle
- Duration as a "skill"

INSTALLATION

- Autonomous spaces for people to inhabit without strictures
- Interactive spaces to discover

AUDIENCE AS CO-CREATOR

- Returning to my core beliefs (pre-1996) Meyerhold, Grotowski, Andre Gregory

ONE-ON-ONE PERFORMANCE

- Increased intimacy / risk

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PROPOSAL

Project Title: *Moles Dancing*

Type of Performance: One audience member at a time, durational

Installation component: Public can view performance via live video-feed to Chapter Centre's lobby's monitor

Duration: Flexible (minimum 90 minutes / maximum 8 hours)

Venue: Flexible (need to enclose a space with black curtains – could be a studio, or a hallway masked off. Dimensions approximately (12 ft x 12 ft).

Blindness is scary. The fear is less about the practical ability to see but instead bores to our core vulnerability, fear of being alone, fear of not knowing (if you are alone), fear of not knowing who is there if you are certain that you are not alone. Blindness infers a mental state; to be "blinded" implies disorientation, unknowing, sight and senses incapacitated until your body is able to readjust to its new surroundings. In blindness we are lost. In searching for our bearings, we recognize the smallest hint of familiarity – a texture, a sound, a touch.

Moles Dancing is both a private encounter and a public exhibition of one's "not knowing". You are invited to slip on a pair of headphones, don a blindfold, and zip yourself up in an extra large parka, specially designed to extend the furry fringe so that it implies a mole's snout. Then you stumble your way into the Mole Hole. I'm there waiting for you, another "blind mole", hoping to bump into you. We will silently negotiate a little dance together as we listen to an altered version of Bruce Springsteen's "Dancing In The Dark", slowed down 42% to better accentuate each note to imply the heightened sensitivity of moles' hearing. The aim is to create an environment that is equally familiar / foreign in order to force a confrontation between an inner world and outer world experience / a private and a shared experience.

In addition to the performance, there is an installation component. Two video cameras capture our dimly lit dance, and the images are projected onto a split screen in the Chapter Centre's front lobby allowing the public to view these intimate and clumsy encounters between two unrecognizable humans.

The video asks its viewers to question what they are watching. Is this surveillance footage? Who are these people in black and why are they moving like that in the dark? Is this something covert? How do we recognize each other? Is Josh Harris (We Live In Public) correct when states that no human action is too mundane or boring for others to watch. But how does that public observation change the private interactions?

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MOLES DANCING – visual breakdown

A blind mole

reminds me of Kenny on South Park



makes me think of a costume – parka, blindfold, headphones – for the audience



The audience member feels their way across the chamber where I am waiting.



We are listening to a very slow, very clear, version of Bruce Springsteen’s song *Dancing In The Dark*. We find each other. We slow dance.

The dance is over when we manage together to negotiate ourselves out of the dance and out of the room.

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BUDGET:

Artist Fees: £ 700 (one day of performance) to 1100 £ (3 days of performance)

Materials: £ 200 (2 eye masks, 2 headphones, 2 parkas, recording costs)

Travel (Canada to UK): £ 700

Budget range: £ 1500 to £ 2000

Artist provides: two video cameras, video splitter, costumes: two parkas, two blindfolds, two headphones with mp3 players + audio

Chapter provides: monitor and cables for live feed, an enclosed space,
One volunteer to assist audience members get in and out of their costume.

SUPPORT MATERIAL

More information, please visit my website: www.cathygordon.com

Samples of durational work with audience participation:

Bouncing Bride What Is Down Must Go Up

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVQwzq-PvGw>

Movie Monster

<http://vimeo.com/36805036>

On My Knees: a public divorce ceremony

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZmBi05s6Knk>

LYRICS TO DANCING IN THE DARK

I get up in the evening, and I ain't got nothing to say
I come home in the morning, I go to bed feeling the same way
I ain't nothing but tired, man I'm just tired and bored with myself
Hey there baby, I could use just a little help

(Chorus)

You can't start a fire, you can't start a fire without a spark
This gun's for hire even if we're just dancing in the dark

Message just keep getting clearer, radio's on and I'm moving round the place
I check my look in the mirror wanna change my clothes my hair my face
Man I ain't getting nowhere I'm just living in a dump like this
There's something happening somewhere baby I just know that there is

(Chorus)

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You sit around getting older there's a joke here somewhere and it's on me
I'll shake this world off my shoulders come on baby the laughs on me
Stay on the streets of this town and they'll be carving you up all right
They say you got to stay hungry hey baby I'm just about starving tonight
I'm dying for some action I'm sick of sitting 'round here trying to write
This book
I need a love reaction come on baby give me just one look

(Chorus)

You can't start a fire, sittin' 'round cryin' over a broken heart
This gun's for hire even if we're just dancing in the dark

You can't start a fire, worryin' about your little world falling apart
This gun's for hire even if we're just dancing in the dark

Even if we're just dancing in the dark
Even if we're just dancing in the dark
Even if we're just dancing in the dark

Hey baby!