

Interview by Kate Ferreira on P(AR)take @NAF 2014
Interview for www.memburn.com
Interviewee: Jeannette Ginslov

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1) I'm interested in the seed of the concept of P(AR)take as well as the development of the multimedia materials and integrating this with the 'real world' aspects of the performance. Can you tell me a little about this please?

The dawn of the age of the post digital, the internet of things and the coming of age of the prosumer, reveals our changing relationship to technology and shifts our notions of being human and creating art forms. In art forms there is an attitudinal shift that is more concerned with being human, than being digital. Merely looking at a screen has become boring. With the advent of mobile technologies and smart cities, the prosumer has come to expect an integrated user experience of the real and the virtual, the simultaneity of being here and there, mixing realities as they appear on hand held devices and tablets. Viewers merely lift up devices to sense a tactile relationship with ideas and mutable materialities, leading to somatic, actual and physical engagement with ideas within augmented realities. It is this dialogical engagement of differing materialities that is driving the research and outcomes of *P(AR)take*.

This is in keeping with the main research aims of plasticity and relational art practices that reject art as "consumer-object" but values art as dialogic, self organizing territories that have yet to be explored in the dance world. The technology engages and re-distributes bodies in relation to processes, time and place.

Furthermore the outcomes of this research are to enhance the viewer's current perception of reality, to use technology as a means to challenge the current perception and framing of dance and choreography and finally to use AR to amplify mutable participations in dance events. Above all it sets out to explore the reframing of dance with a simultaneity of: the virtual and the actual, the present and the past, the archived and the relational.

For Laura Kriefman from Guerilla Dance Project augmented dance "is a specialised and evolving form - where the choreographic language is interrogated not for form or content sake, but in response to the changing stimuli and physical liberties of the technology itself." (2014)

P(AR)take is part of my ongoing research and practice into AR and dance on screen. Since 2000 my research and practice has explored the interdisciplinary nature of dance and technology and has led me to using the Internet as a site for new outcomes. In 2010 I started collaborating with Prof Susan Kozel, Professor of New Media at Medea, Malmö University, on the Augmented Reality (AR) project *AffeXity*. a play on both 'affect city' and 'a-fixity'. This is an ongoing project and an interdisciplinary, collaborative project drawing together dance, tagged visual imagery, and people using mobile-networked devices. It exposes somatic and affective layers of urban spaces through dance improvisation and screendance. See: <http://affexity.se/>

2) Also, I am not aware of any similar work (in terms of the AR stuff) being staged at an SA festival before, although maybe I am just out of the loop. Do you know if this is the first?

Yes this is the first in South Africa. Maybe QR codes or apps have been used for triggering and uploading data or info, but nothing of this scale, nature, form and content has been produced here in South Africa. In fact it is only just catching on in Europe. So its still kind of a world first. I know of no other dance festival or theatre festival that has a virtual dance archive spanning forty years using AR.

3) What are you hoping audience-participants will take from it?

The main aims of this project is three fold:

- audience participation in the development of South African Contemporary dance
- using AR to encourage mobility and a dialogical framework
- to explore a novel choreographic structure, curating the content in such a way that the audience becomes part of the media and not just a passive consumer.

Mobility is key to the project and underpins the main aims of the research: novel structures of engagement and the discourses that arise from that. The audience has to seek out the material, connect with the online media and engage. And it should be fun! Audiences usually have a lot to say when they engage with the material and this I will be documenting - shooting video footage for the ongoing research.

Here are the five dance venues with the works tagged in each venue:

GREAT HALL	#1 <i>Thabangita</i> (1984) Tossie Van Tonder
	#2 <i>Gula Matari</i> (1996) Vincent Mantsoe
ALEC MULLINS	#3 <i>African Moves</i> (1998) Debbie Rakusin & David Matamela
	#4 <i>Daddy I've seen this piece six times...</i> (2000) Robyn Orlin
RHODES THEATRE	#5 <i>clinical capsule</i> (2001) Jeannette Ginslov
	#6 <i>The Unspeakable Story</i> (2004) Gary Gordon
CENTENARY HALL	#7 <i>Beautiful Us</i> (2006) Gregory Maqoma
	#8 <i>Body of Evidence</i> (2009) Jay Pather
CITY HALL	#9 <i>Isingqala</i> (2011) Mamela Nyamza <i>Isingqala</i>
	#10 <i>Ndumba</i> (2013) Fana Tshabalala

4) *Do you have any concerns about having to overcome a tech "learning curve" from audience-participants?*

The viewers become and are active participants, part of the network and media field by virtue of the mobile technology and the internet. A sort of entrainment has to occur before they set out to partake in the entire archive especially, if they have not used this technology before.

This occurs at the first meeting point at the Drosty Arch where my research assistant Ester van der Walt and I will ensure that: their data is loaded, the AR app Aurasma is downloaded onto their device and they know how to trigger an overlay on their device. We then show them how to trigger the trailer video tagged to the P(AR)take logo: <http://youtu.be/Qv1aUQw1GpE>
Here they can also download a pdf with more contextual info on each artist and timeframe.

Its quite easy really, once you have set things up and the device is ready. Triggering an overlay on your device is simple, you just hold it over the trigger image and the app boots up the video that is stored in the P(AR)take Channel in Aurasma. All the hard work has been done previously, firstly gathering the material, then editing and then uploading at the back end of Aurasma.

Viewers just need five minutes entrainment and some patience - sometimes internet speeds here in South Africa are a bit slow, however the NAF has ensured a faster internet during the Festival.

5) *What else are you working on at the moment?*

Firstly I have marking to complete and a dance video that needs editing, *Translucence*, that Acty Tang performed in when he was here working with the Drama Department at Rhodes Uni. I want to edit 5min film of footage bringing in footage that he shot whilst he was in Hong Kong. Its all about slippage and being nomadic: a central theme to my research and practice at present. It also inspired by Albert Camus quote: "And never have I felt so deeply at one and the same time so

detached from myself and so present in the world"

And so saying my contract as Senior lecturer at the Drama Department ends this month after being here for a year, leave replacing Andrew Buckland. I'm moving on to Berlin, 15 July, where I have a 6 week residency lined up at the Lake Studios Berlin, <http://lakestudiosberlin.com/> in collaboration with www.dance-tech.net. Here I will be giving two screendance workshops and one in AR as well as showing *P(AR)take* and making a new work ***P(AR)ticipate*** - here I want to tag my own body with video of my works that I made over the last 30 years - a living breathing archive. The audience will have to move around my slow moving body to connect with the media tagged to my body - as if the works seep from my body and they capture it with their devices.

PS> *P(AR)take* has wings and will not only be presented at the Lake Studios, but also at The University of Arts in Berlin <http://www.hzt-berlin.de> and Impulstanz Vienna International Dance Festival <http://www.impulstanz.com/>, via <http://www.dance-tech.net>.

A German TV Station 3 Sat is wanting documentary footage from *P(AR)take* to feature the form and content <http://www.3sat.de/kulturzeit/index.html>

6) *And, finally, where can people find out more about you and your work online?*

Personal Website: <http://jeannetteginslov.weebly.com/>

Company Website: <http://www.screendanceafrica.com/>

Dance Videos You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/WalkingGusto>

Dance Videos Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/jeannetteginslov>

LinkedIn: <http://za.linkedin.com/in/jginslov>

Other AR Project AffeXity: <http://affexity.se/>