

## **Emergency 2017 Proposal Form**

### **Project Title**

Pointing the Finger

### **Artist or Company**

Timber & Battery

### **Main Contact**

Paul Hughes

### **Number of performers in company**

1

### **Number of others in company**

1

### **Do you have any access needs? Video URL**

<https://vimeo.com/191617277>

### **Previous performance/s**

Hostpitalfield Arts, Arbroath Scotland (November 2016)

### **Audience arrangement**

Standing/Come and go

### **Duration of piece**

90 mins approx

### **What type of space do you need?**

Gallery space, white-walled

### **Is your piece suitable for all ages?**

Yes

### **Is your piece noisy?**

Yes – a performer hammers nails into the wall.

### **Is your piece noise sensitive?**

No

### **How much technical time do you need PRIOR to the event?**

30mins

### **How much turnaround time do you need BEFORE your performance?**

5mins

## **How much turnaround time do you need AFTER your performance?**

5mins

## **What days are you available for technical get-ins?**

Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> September

## **Practical Synopsis**

A performer enters a white cube gallery space carrying a hammer, a set of small nails, and twelve sheets of paper. Each sheet bears a crude drawing of a pointing finger. They begin to mount these sheets on the wall in a line, by hammering a single tack into the top of each page. They run out of tacks on the tenth sheet, prompting them to take a nail from one of the sheets already mounted, causing it to fall to the floor. This initiates an endless task of continual rearrangements. The paper becomes worn, the nails become blunt. After exhausting possible combinations/placement, they begin to overlap the images, realising two sheets of paper can be held on with one nail that penetrates both. The twelve sheets are finally all up, held on by however many tacks have survived - a dense overlapping mess of hands. The performer leaves the space.

## **Set or equipment to be brought**

Hammer, tacks, paper

## **Do you use water or leave mess behind?**

The pictures are left mounted on the wall in a dense clump (approx. 1m x 2m)

## **Proposal**

Pointing the Finger is a durational solo performance in which a figure attempts to hang a series of drawings of pointing hands upon a wall. Driven by a scarcity of materials, this slapstick-like figure is forced to borrow nails they have already used; initiating a seemingly endless task of mounting, dropping, remounting. The initial hanging of a row of evenly placed portraits, gives way other logics – grids, clusters, archipelagos, groupings. Each constellation produces vividly suggestive meanings – through spatial logics (all gathered at one point, or divided in two) or adhering to specific rules (all pointing in the same direction). The hands themselves beginning to subtly suggest and dictate their own placement: each pointing out where the next should be.

The ‘invisible’ action of art handling becomes a point of focus –through duration and repetition, the ‘neutral’ task of nailing paper to the wall unfolds as a semi-violent action which tires both material and performer. This performance draws upon and extends our previous research into gesture, hands and signs; questioning the symbols of social dynamics of collectivity, individualism, distance and intimacy. The simple and rough drawings become deeply suggestive - the finger of god, pointing from heaven; the delicacy of two fingers touching, another hand pointing in apparent accusation. Meaning and meaningless oscillate through shifting juxtapositions and playful games. Hands pointing out to the viewer where to look, or hands pointing out pointing itself.

Things are kept moving, as the system’s continual rearrangement produces new possibilities and forgets old choices. As with all our work, the piece is undertaken in a deceptively simple and understated manner – but reveals itself to be poetic, humorous, and surprisingly absorbing - as the single premise unfolds into an evocative and complex game. Trapped within a restricted set of materials and the particular gesture of hammering, this idiotic performer is forced to fail, compromise and find new ways to cope with this system.

### **Brief artist biographies - NOT full CVs**

Timber & Battery's playful work considers meaning and meaninglessness through oblique gestures. The collaborative practice of Rohanne Udall and Paul Hughes, it takes place across choreographic, performance and visual arts contexts. Trained in fine art and philosophy, our practice is a meeting point between disciplines; a fidgeting enquiry that continually questions itself, and the contexts it finds itself within.

Recent performance include; Some Possibilities (Chisenhale Dance Space, London; 2017), Infinite Tango, commissioned by Third Row Dance Company (Michaelis Theatre, London, 2016), Empty Gestures (Attenborough Arts Centre; 2016), the exhibition of performance Floorplan//Here Or Now (Rich Mix, London; 2015). Conference presentations include The International Conference on Artistic Research (The Hague, 2016), Yes Conference (Applied Theatre Institute, Giessen, 2016) and Dialogues on Dance, Philosophy and Performance in the Contemporary, Neoliberal Moment (Coventry, 2017). We have been awarded residencies with New Wolsey Theatre (Ipswich 2015), Hospitalfield Arts (Arbroath, 2016), TOP SHED (Norfolk, 2017) and Summer Lodge (Nottingham Trent, 2017). In early 2017, we performed for Vlatka Horvat in work 'Minor Planets', commissioned by HAU, Berlin.

### **Programme notes/web copy**

A figure attempts to hang a series of drawings of pointing hands upon a wall. Short of nails, they become trapped in an endless game of mounting, borrowing, dropping, and remounting. Logics continually emerge and are overwritten. The hands themselves begin to suggest and dictate their own placement: each pointing out where the next should lie.

Meaning and meaningless oscillate through shifting juxtapositions. As the action of nailing paper to the wall tires both material and performer, playful games emerge of intimacy, accusation, collectively and distance. Hands point out where the viewer should look. Hands point out pointing itself.

### **One line description for press release**

A gallery technician becomes trapped in a game of mounting and remounting artwork; meaning and meaningless oscillate through logics intimacy, accusation, collectively and distance.

**We have an honorarium of up to £100 available per piece to cover fee/expenses; how much do you require?**

£100

**Do you have your own Employers/Public Liability Insurance?\***

Yes