

Tell us about you, your practice and why you make the work you do *(Maximum 1400 characters, including spaces and punctuation)

Timber & Battery's work considers meaning and meaninglessness through oblique gestures. The collaboration of Rohanne Udall (b. London, 1990) and Paul Hughes (b. Dublin, 1991), it takes place across choreographic, performance and visual arts contexts. Trained in fine art and philosophy, the practice is a meeting point between disciplines; a persistent and fidgeting enquiry that continually questions itself and the contexts it finds itself within.

Prioritizing momentum and plurality of gesture, we present performance, sculpture, video and audio. Playful and opportunistic, our work is sensitive to the materials and contexts (galleries, theatres, studios, universities and publication) that surround us and is shaped by the concerns and demands of distinct disciplinary bodies of thought.

We're interested in weak gestures - how to do less? What if it was 'just' that? What might happen? Polite, white, middle-class kids, we have failed to adopt any radical pose, and instead foreground the complex materiality of the body – fleshy, awkward, restless, lethargic, playful, and inescapably political. We align ourselves with both a historical legacy of critical conceptual practice and the figure and physicality of the clown, as we plunge into the contradictions of our weak aesthetic: being serious about meaninglessness, valuing pointlessness and intentionally wasting time.

Why is this a good opportunity for you? *

Why us, why you, why now? (Maximum 1400 characters, including spaces and punctuation)

We began our collaboration within performance art/live art scenes (Forest Fringe/LADA), but became disillusioned with the apparent demand for intensity, earnestness and the abject. These economies rewarded radical posturing and social instrumentalisation – that eliminated any room for doubt, for uncertainty; for work that presents performance in itself, to leave the question of its political efficacy or necessity open to its audience. Your open call seeks artists who have been 'overlooked', 'with something meaningful to say': we argue that this attitude has dominated the field of performance art for a generation of artists; overlooking the rich possibility of the meaningless, the mute, the hesitant, the gabbling, and the stupid.

We have been experimenting with and developing our work of the past years– and are now more confident and articulate in our interest in laziness, boredom, fidgeting indifference and stupidity. We insist on this legacy within the performance canon, including Wendy Houston, Gary Stevens, John Baldessari, etc. We feel it timely to return to the performance scene to present our work: to insist on the visibility and legitimacy of this pointless, slapstick, self-doubting work within live performance. We wish to take a place within the SPILL platform to present our work to peers, communities and institutions of performance art.

What kinds of professional support would you benefit most from at this stage in your career? * e.g. meeting other artists, the opportunity to perform you work publicly etc. (Maximum 1400 characters, including spaces and punctuation)

SPILL would be able to offer us conversation and exchange with our peers. Being able to connect with others during this unstable moment (both within the performance scene – Forest Fringe and Buzzcut's transitions – but also wider political shifts, e.g. Brexit) is absolutely crucial. We crave the opportunity to discuss, to critically re-position ourselves; to understand commonalities and difference. SPILL would be the perfect context to reflect on, and position ourselves within, a national community of artists thinking at the edges of live performance.

It would also allow us to present our work to peers and institutions working across live art throughout the country. Our interdisciplinary practice is often at the edges of things: it would be a rare and deeply valued opportunity to be able to present our work at a major platform like SPILL. To showcase a work we strongly believe in be invaluable in making our work visible to the broad performance ecology throughout this country.

Finally, we would deeply benefit from SPILL's advice on how to progress and develop our career in a sustainable path. After a growing confidence in our own work, we are now seeking ways to enter into

long-term partnerships and support with institutions; guidance in forming longer-term projects with the adequate and necessary support would be invaluable.

How long have you been making work for?

We met and first collaborated while studying our undergraduate approximately 5 years ago, and have been consistently making work together since August 2014. So roughly 4 years.

Have you shown work publicly before?

If so, please give us up to 5 examples telling us the title of the work, the venue/festival and the date

'The Chorus' [audio installation]; DISKURS '17, IAT Gießen, Germany, October 2017

'VVVV' [video], *SET me Free*, VeNe (in collaboration with the Festival de Videodanse de Bourgogne and Future Mellon), Venice and London, September 2017

'Meaningless Dance 15 (Some Possibilities)' [stage performance]; *Chisenhale* Dance Space, London, May 2017 [alongside Gareth Cutter as part of *Fiver Fridays*]

'Just One Thing on Top of Another' [sculpture], ICW, Blackpool, June 2017, as part of exhibition *Provocations*, curated by Garth Gratrix and Jez Dolan

'Imaginary Festivals Project' [publication], Forest Fringe, Drill Hall, Edinburgh, August 2014

Please describe the work you propose for the SPILL OPEN and what stage it's at in its development *e.g. finished, in development, brand new (Maximum 2800 characters, including spaces and punctuation)

The piece we would like to present is a performance for exhibition spaces. It is called 'This', a consists of two performers working with two collapsible tables. Working with a restrictive script of 'this', 'that', 'here' and 'there', they use the gestures of sensation and exploration: tapping, rubbing, knocking, pointing, flicking. Their exploration is improvised, responsive to the material unpredictabilities of the tables themselves – how they ping, squeak, rock, fall, collapse.

Pointing and tapping gradually escalate to the wild extremes of clattering, shaking and shouting. Unpredictable results are seized, temporary games become established of falling, dropping, breaking, swinging. There's a frantic, manic, childish gleefulness to this work; both body and material are tested and exposed. Body and furniture contort around one another; the unstable demonstratives 'this' and 'that' shift from detail to whole, gesture to pose, position to architecture; and eventually to the emergent and fleeting relations between performer and viewer. They explore how their bodies fit around and across the tables – how they can sit on them, go underneath, fall off. Standing on the tables, they become two bodies on plinths - the performers begin to reposition themselves, to pose – they ask their audiences: "this?" "here?" "that?" What does it mean to present oneself, to reveal one's body, to ask to be gazed at, to ask how one should present oneself for gaze?

We are interested in the tonal reaches of the work – hovering somewhere between scientific exploration, salesman-like presentation, pedagogical introduction, childish experimentation. The work operates through a continual definition, demarcation, identification: we are interested in our whiteness within this work. These are white bodies standing at and over tables, saying 'this', 'that', 'here', 'there'. What does it mean to be the voice of authority, of privilege? Who gets to set the subject matter, to define the conversation, to set parameters? What is the relationship between this childish glee – this freedom, this naivety – and these subtle articulations of power?

This is a new performance which has had work-in-progress sharings at Chisenhale Dance Space (December 2017) and Central School of Speech and Drama February 2018). Audiences expressed their glee at these sharings – the manic childishness, the sense of improvisation, inventiveness and explorations – and most of all the tight restriction of the language. We have developed this work to a finished piece, with a premiere date at Rich Mix, London in May 2018.

Which category (or categories) best describe your work? *

Activist Actions
Cabaret & Club Arts
Craft & Folk Methods
Experimental Theatre
New media/digital practices
Film & Video
Museum Collections
Heritage & Place
Installation
Live Art & Performance
New Dance
Science & Social Science
Sound & Music
Spoken Word
Street Art
Text
Visual Art
Other:

Duration of your piece *
30min

Maximum capacity of your piece *
e.g. one to one, 60 people seated, etc.
Depends on space, but approximately 50 standing in exhibition space

Proposed number of performances over the festival *
3

Which venue type would best suit your piece? *
Gallery (white box)
Black box
Non-theatrical spaces
Small intimate spaces
Outdoor/site specific (e.g. shopfront, park etc.)
Museum space
Other:

Please tick any SOUND equipment you will need SPILL to provide for your piece: *
PA system
Microphones
Playback
None of the above
Other:

Please tick any VIDEO equipment you will need SPILL to provide for your piece: *
Projector
Projection screen
Live camera feed
Video clip feedback
None of the above
Other:

Please tick any LIGHTING equipment you will need SPILL to provide for your piece: *
Basic Theatre Lighting (e.g. a warm/cold wash)
Practical lighting (such as domestic lamps, angle poises, etc.)
None of the above
Other:

Please list any technical equipment you/your company will be bringing with you which is specific to your piece *e.g. laptop, handheld projector, adaptor

n.a

STAGING, SET, PROPS, FURNITURE, FOOD *

If your performance incorporates any of the above, please list them here, along with storage details (i.e. how much space you need, do you need access to a fridge etc.)

n.a.

How long do you need for your get-in and what does it entail? *

30 mins

How long do you need for the get-out and what does it entail? How long do you need for the get-out and what does it entail? Does your work require any special clean up during get-out? *

(e.g. bodily fluids, natural materials, food, glitter, confetti) Please tell us any specific needs you have for clearing the space after your piece.

n.a.

We conduct risk assessments for the whole festival. Please tell us anything you think would affect this in your proposed work (e.g. working with young people/animals, bodily fluids, breaking of the skin, working at height etc.) *

Copy *

Please describe your project, in a way that you would be happy for us to use for promotional and publicity purposes (Maximum 700 characters, including spaces and punctuation)

Lost somewhere between scientific rigour and childish recklessness, two idiots introduce a pair of collapsible tables. Their pointing and escalate to clattering, shaking and shouting; body and furniture contort around one another. The minimal script, restricted to the unstable demonstratives 'this' and 'that', shifts from detail to whole, gesture to pose; and eventually to the fleeting relations between performer and viewer.

Exhausting the possibilities of body, object, gesture and space, 'This' draws together the rebellious bodies of slapstick with contemporary choreographic and sculptural thought, to interrogate the slippery gestures of identification, demarcation and demonstration.

Please Add a short bio about yourself/company *

(Maximum 350 characters, including spaces and punctuation)

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Please add up to three links to video/audio documentation of your work that support your application

<https://vimeo.com/261919675>

<https://vimeo.com/217874112>

<https://vimeo.com/245938607>

Please include links to your website and/or social media pages

www.timberandbattery.com