

QUARTE

Liz Santoro



Conception and Choreography · Liz Santoro
Performance · Tove Brunberg, Sherwood Chen, Liz Santoro
Artistic collaboration · Pierre Godard

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“One’s mind and the earth are in a constant state of erosion, mental rivers wear away abstract banks, brain waves undermine cliffs of thought, ideas decompose into stones of unknowing, and conceptual crystallizations break apart into deposits of gritty reason. Vast moving faculties occur in this geological miasma, and they move in the most physical way. This movement seems motionless, yet it crushes the landscape of logic under glacial reveries. This slow flowage makes one conscious of the turbidity of thinking. Slump, debris slides, avalanches all take place within the cracking limits of the brain. The entire body is pulled into the cerebral sediment, where particles and fragments make themselves known as solid consciousness.” –Robert Smithson (1968)

For this project, *Quarte*, I am inspired by the work of Robert Smithson and his idea of sedimentation and *abstract geology* – the union in art of the perceptual and the conceptual. That is to say, my interest lies in the tension that develops between the intrinsic attributes of an object, in this case a landscape, and the symbolic arrangement built around said object. Is there a way to install a body in an exterior space, at a fixed time and through a fixed duration, which can reveal sediments accumulated and generated by human intervention in this space that at once responds to the natural and artificial? How could choreography serve to reveal this space, the situation of representation that unfolds from it, and our relationship to each other inside it?

The landscape theorist John Dixon Hunt elucidated that beyond the three categories of landscape defined during the Renaissance, “first nature” being wilderness, “second nature” being cultivated landscape, and “third nature” being the garden (a combination of nature and culture), a “fourth nature” has arisen in contemporary society. He argues that the dialectic of nature versus city, or natural versus artificial, no longer exist but that there is a spectrum within which nature is manipulated. That the boundaries between constructed and natural environments are becoming continuously more ambiguous. The research of *Quarte* lies in this spectrum between what is effected in response to a terrain and what is effected in soliciting change inside the frame of a terrain. This work is a negotiation between the architecture around it and the architecture it is creating via the sedimentation generated by the bodies placed in the space, in time. A dance work taking place in real time, taking into account the real time of the location—something largely inaccessible inside a traditional dance venue—that allows the specific landscape to determine the score of the performance.

At present, the movement research for the piece consists of cueing in to the particulars of the given landscape, ie what is constant or persistent, what is incidental, and what is constructed. Using these particulars, a research on framing, timing and attention comes into play with scores that are implemented in direct response to the precise terrain. One such example of this scoring involves the dancers remaining strictly in time with one other while each covers an individual course in such a manner that all obstacles or deviations encountered by one performer must be expressed by the other two in order to remain together. Other scores involve utilizing both the prescribed and naturally-occurring ambulations and perspectives of the landscape to begin to reveal their logic. The ultimate goal of the work is to create a structure, a grammar, a machine that can be implemented in varying terrains that respond to what is inherent to the distinct space in which it inhabits.

LIZ SANTORO (US)

Liz Santoro is an American dancer and choreographer. She began her dance training at the the professional division of Boston Ballet School and with Marcus Schulkind. She then studied neuroscience at Harvard University in Cambridge, MA where she received a bachelor's degree in biology and psychology in 2001. She has worked with a number of choreographers including Alexandra Bachzetsis, Philipp Gehmacher, Jack Ferver, Trajal Harrell, Sam Kim, Heather Kravas, Jillian Peña, Eszter Salamon & Christine de Smedt, David Wampach and Ann Liv Young. She has also performed in the theater work of John Jahnke/Hotel Savant, Charles Chemin, and Pierre Godard, and collaborated with visual and performance artist Ryan McNamara. Her choreographic work, which investigates the performative role of attention and challenges the diametric relationship between watching and being watched, has been presented by Danspace Project at St Marks Church, The Museum of Arts and Design in New York, Chez Bushwick, Movement Research at the Judson Church, Dixon Place, Brooklyn Arts Exchange, The Chocolate Factory, Dance Theater Workshop, Théâtre de Vanves, L'Atelier de Paris – Carolyn Carlson, Centre Pompidou Metz, and ImpulsTanz Festival in Vienna. Her work has received support from The Jerome Foundation, FUSED (French US Exchange in Dance), and DRAC Ile-de-France. Her recent work, *Watch It*, was awarded a 2013 New York Dance and Performance Award, or “Bessie”, in the category of Outstanding Production for a work at the forefront of contemporary dance.

TOVE BRUNBERG (SE)

Tove Brunberg has been working as a freelance dancer since her graduation from the contemporary line at the Royal Swedish Ballet School in 2006. She is the founding member of the performance groups “ches:co” in Sweden. Tove has danced in pieces with contemporary choreographers in Sweden such as Dorte Olesen, Carl Olof Berg, Pontus Lidberg, SU-EN, Ossi Niskala, Anna Koch, Lotta Melin, Sebastian Lingserius and Susanne Jaresand. With the choreographers and the performance group “ches:co” she has been performing in venues like Norrlandsoperan i Umeå, Dansens Hus (House of Dance in Stockholm), Riksteatern Hallunda, Orienteatern and Bærum Culture House in Oslo, Norway and various venues around Sweden. In the spring of 2013, Tove danced in pieces with David Hernandez and Mette Ingvarsten at MDT (Moderna Dansteatern) and also received her Bachelor Degree in Dance Performance from the University of Dance and Circus in Stockholm. Currently Tove lives in Paris to learn more about the dance scene in France.

SHERWOOD CHEN (US)

Sherwood Chen has worked as a performer with artists including Anna Halprin, Min Tanaka, Xavier Le Roy, l'agence touriste, Ko Murobushi, Arcane Collective, Grisha Coleman, Sara Shelton Mann, Talma Salem and Do Hee Lee. In 2009, he formed dance collaborative Headmistress with choreographer Amara Tabor-Smith performing at Movement Research at Judson Church and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, and currently artists in residence at ODC in San Francisco (2012-2015). He has been a contributing performer to Shinichi Iova-Koga's inkBoat since 2005. Sherwood has worked with Body Weather Laboratory training, initiated by Tanaka, since 1993, and was a resident member of Tanaka's international performance collective Mai Juku in rural Japan. He has facilitated Body Weather Laboratory and danced with Oguri and Roxanne Steinberg in L.A., and continues leads training internationally and has taught in spaces including Independent Dance-Siobahn Davies Studios, K3 Tanzplan, Chez Bushwick, ODC Dance Commons, Pole Nord Éstaque, EDEN, UC Berkeley, and Point Éphémère. He has trained companies including J.Gar.Cia Dança Contemporanêa, Ghawazee Coletivo de Açã, OMSTRAB, Compania Sansacroma and Nucleo Luis Ferron. He has created solo, collaborative and group dances at venues including Theatre de L'Échangeur, ODC, PS122, Thread Waxing Space, CounterPULSE, San Francisco Asian Art Museum, Japan America Theatre, Point Ephémère, Sala Crisantempo and San Francisco Art Institute. Sherwood was Associate Director of Alliance for California Traditional Arts, an Arts & Culture Fellow at the San Francisco Foundation, and has served as board member for Intersection for the Arts (San Francisco) and Khmer Arts Academy (Phnom Penh/Long Beach).

PIERRE GODARD (FR)

After completing a Master's degree in applied mathematics at Ensimag in Grenoble beginning a career in finance as a quantitative analyst, he resigned in 2005 to begin working in theater. Initially as a technical intern to investigate light, sound and stage, he has subsequently been exploring the field successively as a technician, an assistant lighting designer, a props manager, a stage manager, an assistant director, an assistant choreographer and a director. He has worked in particular with Jean-Michel Rabeux, Sylvie Reteuna, Sophie Lagier, Valère Novarina, and has been in close collaboration with Liz Santoro over the past five years. His work now focuses on reconsidering many of the assumptions made about theater, and starting to work with text material in a manner informed by contemporary dance, neuroscience, computer science and linguistics. He is currently completing a second year of a Masters at the Sorbonne Nouvelle - Paris 3 in Natural Language Processing with the intention of consolidating the design of new tools for the performance of language-based materials. This spring he is working at LIMSI (CNRS Laboratory) on topics related to Statistical Machine Translation.