

Dance Dance Revolution | Timber & Battery

What is your idea?

Two performers enter the stage, bearing a TV screen, a projector, a Sony PlayStation, and two dance mats.

(What can two dancers do? What can dance do? When is dance political? What might constitute a revolution in dance; or how might dance contribute to a revolution?)

They set up the equipment - the screen at the front, facing the performers, its image projected on the back wall. They plug two dance mats into the games console, setting them parallel centre stage, and then power up the classic video game 'Dance Dance Revolution'.

(What does it mean to follow steps, to join in a movement, or to fall in line? What might emerge from the spectacle of unison, the gesture of collectivity? What would it mean for a (inadequate, excessive, clumsy) body to struggle to keep up - to waver, falter, yet persist?)

Without deliberating with each other or the audience, they begin to dance - starting with the easiest songs, working their way through increasing levels of difficulty.

(What does dance offer when divorced from expression, when merely reproducing pre-set and abstract movements? What might the exposure of a commitment to memorization and training communicate to an audience - this virtuosity in dancing a culturally negligible, yet globally recognized set of choreographies?)

Negotiating the game's increasingly complex demands, the two performers waver in and out of sync - their independence made visible through stutters and failures.

(What energies and attentions are necessary to keep up with a rapidly changing political landscape and dialogue? Digital platforms accelerate communication and exchange; yet carry the remorseless judgement of call-out culture.)

Maybe some other stuff happens. Maybe that's enough.

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We're curious about the flows of digital information (how they are held, confronted by and reproduced within bodies); the tension between abstraction and critique; and an insistence on the political potential of art as an irresponsible, inefficient and excessive force.

Tell us about your company

Timber & Battery's playful work considers meaning and meaninglessness through oblique gestures. The collaborative practice of Rohanne Udall (Vlatka Horvat; Shane Shambhu; Collective Gallery) and Paul Hughes (Vlatka Horvat; Ponyboy Curtis; Simon, Colin and I; dramaturgy for Gareth Cutter, Andy Edwards and Sam Pardes), 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 persistent and fidgeting enquiry that continually questions itself and the contexts it finds itself within.

Our work has been recently presented at Chisenhale Dance Space, Rich Mix, Bethnal Green Working Men's Club (all London), Forest Fringe (Edinburgh), Attenborough Arts Centre (Leicester), Summer Lodge (Nottingham), DISKURS (Gießen) and ICW (Blackpool).

www.timberandbattery.com

Why do you want to develop your idea with The Yard?

The Yard is a place to experiment with form while remaining in close dialogue with urgent questions about the ways in which performance can (or should) interact with the wider world - questioning the political possibilities, responsibilities and limitations of what it means to do something on a stage, and be watched by a public. The Yard is a place of doing, and discussion: of discussing through doing and watching and testing.

Our work takes us across disciplinary boundaries, and involves the smuggling and exchange of ideas. We feel very sensitive to (and informed by) the ideas that have emerged through the NOW Festivals, and we feel that we're at a ripe moment to take closer part in this conversation. First Bites offers a good chance to test out a new idea with confidence and curiosity - a good platform to share our thinking since refining our practice's unique balance of playfulness, rigour and experimentation.

What do you want to explore with the development time and sharing?

Our development time would be dedicated to:

- Training ourselves to perform these dances with skill.
- discovering different dramaturgical structures within the game itself. How will we play it? Which settings, selections, choices and tones? In what order? Subtle choices will make the difference between a powerfully poetic and acutely insightful work, and a rough and inarticulate gesture.
- Testing, re-testing, experimenting with, and envisioning back ups in the event of tech failure. (While quite dependant on technology, we think *Dance Dance Revolution* is well suited to First Drafts, as the set up is manned by the artists during the performance.)

Nearly all of our works adhere to strict formal propositions - which we have found to produce a strangely resonant and surprisingly accessible form of poetic power. We're interested in whether *Dance Dance Revolution* could restrict itself as much as possible to the formal proposition of the two performers setting up and playing the video game (without resorting to 'extra' texts, gestures, actions, etc.) Although we have ideas and suspicions about what the work might feel like or suggest to an audience, we're curious to see how tangible and articulate this work could be: how it raises or conveys the political questions we're interested in, or indeed opens up new questions. Our process would shift around in response to discoveries in the making process, yet be anchored by the attention to practicing the game. We would be keen to work with outside eyes from the Yard team to help us understand what an audience might be seeing, and thinking about, during the work.

Links to previous work

- [Meaningless Dance 13 \(Empty Gestures\)](#), stage performance, ~15mins.
- [It's Out of Our Hands](#), video, ~1mins 30sec.
- [Just One Thing On Top Of Another](#), installation, found objects.
- [The Rules of the Game](#), audio series, duration variable.

What are your preferred dates and when, if at all, are you unavailable?

Preferred dates - 7th – 11th December