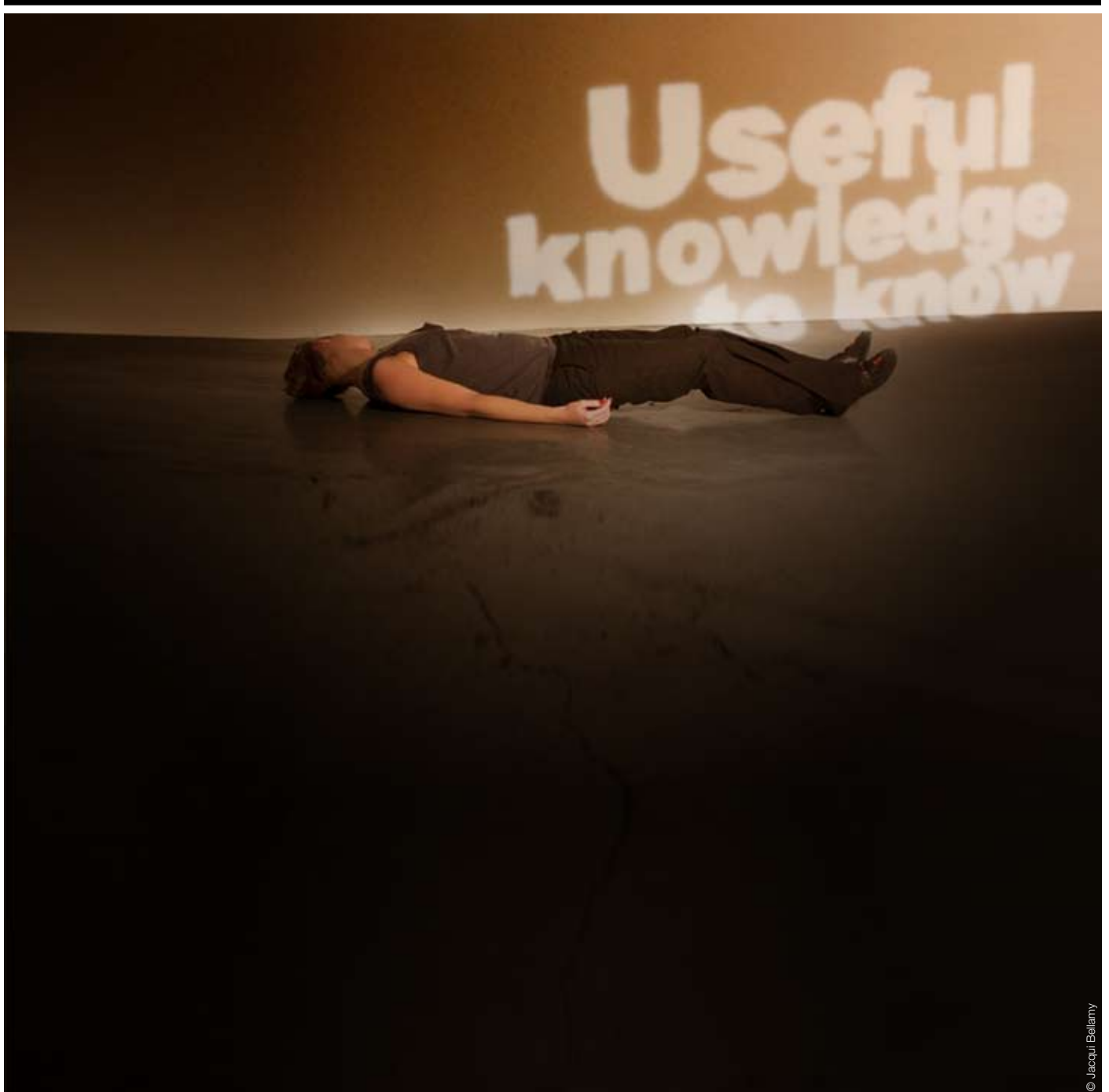


Useful Knowledge to Know

A performance by Chloé Déchery and Chris Eley

EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE // VIDEO // CHOREOGRAPHY



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Introduction

With this performance piece, we wanted to produce and create new ways of communicating, generating new languages, to make sure we are being understood, to make sure we are, indeed, exchanging and sharing, especially in the realm of a theatre space.

Credits

Useful Knowledge To Know was devised and written by Chloé Déchery and Chris Eley

PERFORMER :
Chloé Déchery

FILMS, VIDEO AND IMAGES :
Chris Eley

CHOREOGRAPHER :
Pia Nordin

AUDIO RECORDING WITH
Félicité du Jeu

INTERVIEWS WITH THE FOLLOWING ARTISTS :
Ben Connors, Augusto Corrieri, Holly Darton, Félicité du Jeu, Lucy Foster, Taylan Halici, Jenny Hunt, Mamoru Iriguchi, Stacy Makishi, Tom McKay, Pia Nordin.

What is it?

The idea of this project is to play around the notions of knowledge and languages – foreign languages, non-verbal language, body language, etc – within an interactive process, in questioning the values of communication and the complex act of imparting information.

The performance takes the shape of a series of micro-lectures where the performer is both supported and undermined by video and multimedia accompaniment. A number of random subjects appear briefly as the topics of these lectures before devolving into random choreography. The tone is both comical and straightforward, in turn moving and witty, authentic and playful. The objective is to try and tackle serious issues without taking ourselves too seriously.

The result is a 50 minutes-long performance; which deals directly with the idea of communication itself; how we present ourselves in a public forum, how we pass on ideas and how we can initiate dialogue through different means of communication. Chloé has been very interested in working around the notion of “lecture” as Chloé has been lecturing for three years in Nanterre-University in Paris. She has acknowledged this as a very interesting but quite challenging experience and she now feels truly concerned about how to make people relate and engage with what she can say or experience when being in front of them as well as developing new ways of communication and knowledge-transfer.

What are we looking for?

In terms of method, we would like to investigate the point at which talking (in the sense of ‘addressing an audience’) and lecturing become exchanging and communicating (whatever that is). The piece aims to negotiate a line between presentation and interpretation, constantly shifting between performance and a mock-critical discourse of that same performance.

In terms of style and aesthetic, we have avoided anything fixed, authoritative, polished or overblown. Rather we seek at all times to maintain a sort of low-key fragility – something more concerned with the process than with any clean, finished product.

How did it start?

The performance piece was first shown as a scratch performance in various theatre venues and festivals in England between December 2007 and April 2008 (London, Camden People’s Theatre ; Oxford, Burton Taylor Studio; Bristol, Arnolfini; Sheffield, Bloc; Milton Keynes, the Madcap Theatre). A longer version was then presented at the Camden People’s Theatre as part of the Sprint Festival on the 7th and 8th of June 2008.

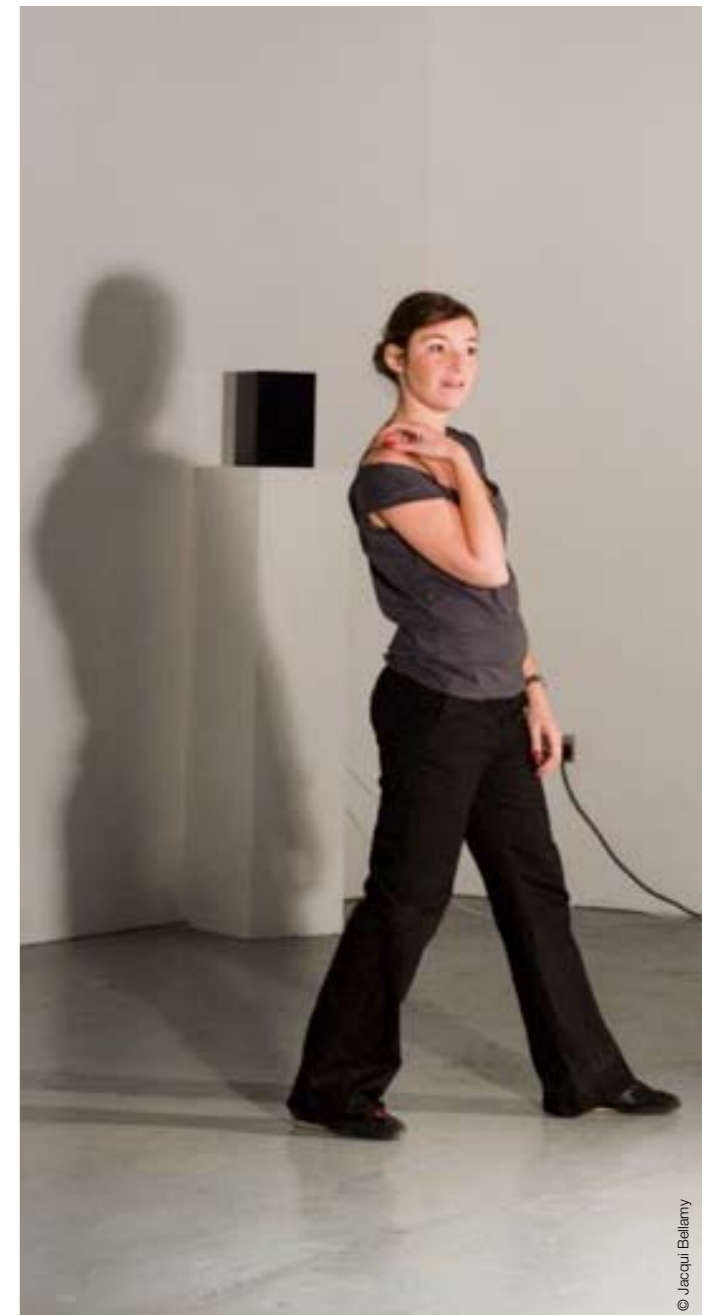
The show is now ready to tour in its definitive version.

« I really enjoyed the show - and more. It made my mind go to all sorts of interesting places. »

Bobby Baker

«An artist like Chloé is very rare. Her work is smart but never smug, humorous but challenging, moving but not sentimental. Chloé’s work is inspirational.»

Stacy Makishi



« Passionate and thoughtful about her work, I was [...] impressed by her performance « Useful Knowledge to Know » at Camden People’s Theatre. In turn humorous, ironic and poignant, it was created and performed with a decisive wit making innovative and clear comments about the linguistic misunderstandings that can wreak unintentional havoc on people’s lives with a subtle underlying theme of cross channel relationships both personal and political.

Geraldine Pilgrim

Artistic Statement

Chloé and Chris work as a team.
Chloé is a woman, Chris is a man.
Chloé is French, Chris is Australian.

Chloé speaks loudly in public spaces but she can't help it; Chris likes to do slapstick comedy when he thinks that no one is looking at him.

Chloé likes cupcakes, Chris prefers peanuts.

Chloé and Chris are building up a collaboration where their different backgrounds and skills combine and interact. Their work is based on action and reaction, impulse and response, it is an on-going and endless process of dialogue.

The duo intends to work as a collective in which Chloé and Chris, a performer and a film-maker, aim to draw in different collections and permutations of performers, dancers, technicians, and non performers with whom to devise work.

“We are experimenting within the territory of theatre, inventing permanently shifting strategies to imagine new ways of communicating and exchanging.

In brief, we are very interested in the nature of performance, its definitions and its context. We are keen on questioning the performance tradition, its different formats and its methodologies.”

As well, an integral part of the company's set up is a permanent project of documentation, archiving and collection. Objects, documentary material and ephemera created and collected in this way are drawn into the company's work.

«We are interested in collecting documents and raw material and turning them into poetic and performative objects.

We are interested in observing and finding the wonder in the daily life and ordinary environments.

We are interested in questioning the obvious and making it look extraordinary.

We are interested in making sense of what is apparently meaningless.»

MAKE LOVE
(In Dark Only)





© Ben Meadows

Useful Knowledge to Know

an extract from
the performance text

“Good evening, English people, good evening. Good evening, my name is Chloé. Welcome. Tonight, English and British people, we are going to spend some time together, some « quality time ». We are going to spend a moment together. Tonight is our night. We are going to communicate, to exchange, to share.

To begin with, I would like to talk about me, to introduce myself.

Yes, I am going to talk about myself, even though, in real life, I don't like talking about myself very much. But I feel, that, tonight, British and English people, it is necessary to talk about me – just a little bit -

There are two things to remember about me:

1) I come from across the ocean – yes, I am a foreigner – and 2) I am a specialist.”

Silence.

“I am a specialist in communication.”

Whispering

“Tonight, we are going to communicate.

Tonight, I will be communicating to you all with my voice, my resourceful and expressive body language, my projector [*the word 'projector' appears on the screen*], my table, my chair, my sheets of paper, my watch, my bottle of water, my green apple and [*grabbing a vase out of the handbag*] this vase.”

Chloé takes some flowers out of the handbag and put them in the vase.

“I won't actually be using this at all, but I thought they were quite decorative.”

Pause.

“As part of our communication this evening, you'll see the following:

You'll see me standing behind the desk, with my hands on the desk, like this” [*doing the movement*]. “I'll be doing this twice. I've already done that once.

You'll see seven slides depicting Japanese urban scenes.

You'll see this movement” [*back to the audience, moving the tips of her fingers up in the air*].

“You'll see the chair being thrown across the stage.

You'll see me sitting over there changing my shoes” [*designating the front stage*].

“And finally you'll see my hand touching the chair like this” [*caressing the chair with her fingers*].

“When I'll be touching the chair like this, it will mean we have three minutes before the performance ends. Yes, the performance will end, English ladies and English gentlemen, there will be an end. At the end of the show, at the very end of the show, I'll be lying here, before you, lying, motionless. When I'll be lying here, before you, motionless, it will mean it is the end and then, you will be able to relax, but not before.”



Technical requirement

The piece is flexible enough to be performed in different spaces (black box theatre, auditorium, art gallery) but would work best in some kind of seated space like a black box theatre.

We would need to be provided with:

SET

- 1 chair to use on stage
- 1 desk table to use on stage
- a glass vase

FLOOR

What sort of floor is it? What surface? Is it easy to move / dance on?

VIDEO PROJECTIONS

We would need some projection screen or surface (i-e a white wall).

We can provide a projector or use one in place (although it would be more convenient if we could use one on the site).

SOUND

- A basic sound system.

We will be operating sound (soundtrack from video films and a track from an opera) from a Powerpoint presentation ; therefore, the Mac computer we will be using needs to be connected to a PA system.

LIGHTING

- A general basic lighting device.

There are between 5 and 7 light cues (depending on the facilities of the venue) in the show, so we need to check and run them with a technician beforehand

As said previously, we will be operating the Powerpoint presentation ourselves, but we need a technician to operate lighting cues during the show.

Flat G12, 5, King Edwards Road, E9 7SG London, United Kingdom

T: +44 791 494 0894 - E: decherychloe@yahoo.fr - M: <http://www.myspace.com/chloedechery>

Nationality: French - Date of birth: 03/06/1980

1- PERFORMANCE WORKS

Chloé Déchery is a French performance artist living and working in London since 2005.

She likes to frame her work within the theatre tradition, focusing her interest on the body, communication and language issues and the nature of the theatrical event itself. She regularly works with documentary film-maker Chris Eley, and, together, they are interested in collecting documents and raw material and turning them into poetic and performative objects. They try to observe and find the wonder in the daily life and ordinary environments – to make sense of what is apparently meaningless.

Chloé's recent works include: *Useful Knowledge to Know*, a solo piece devised in collaboration with Chris Eley; *Not to Perform*, devised and performed with Lucy Foster and Chris Eley, *Her in the Red Dress*, devised and performed with Kyla Davie, and the following solo pieces: *Saint-Pancras / Gare du Nord*; *Loser*; *After / Before*.

Chloé has been working with Anne Bean, Geraldine Pilgrim and she regularly collaborates with Nomad Theatre Company. She has also been taking part in workshops with Toby Jones, Marcello Magni (Complicité), Stacy Makishi, Holly Darton and Curious. She is currently involved in the development of a new show about female pirates, directed by Lucy Foster, associate director from Improbable.

Chloé is also part of the Balloon group, an artist-led forum supported by Artsadmin and Oval House.

Chloé has performed in England and in France; in London (BAC, Siobhan Davies Space, Toynbee Studios, Shunt, CPT), Bristol (Arnolfini), Oxford, Sheffield, Hertford and Milton Keynes – and in France; in Paris (Théâtre Albatros, Théâtre du Jardin, Théâtre Bernard-Marie Koltès), and Corsica.

2. LECTURING AND WRITING

As well, Chloé is an academic working in the field of Performance Studies; she writes critical essays and gives lectures in Nanterre University in Paris, where she is also pursuing her PhD based on the representations of the body in contemporary performance in England and in France.

She is also a workshop leader and tours educational shows in primary schools with Freshwater Theatre Company.

« Chloé has a voice and a body. She uses both of them. She has a French accent and likes moving her hands. She likes the theatre, the darkness of it, the warmth of it. She likes the theatre as a space of gathering and interaction. She likes being alive, the fact that it is happening in the here and now.

For more information, visit her Myspace page: <http://www.myspace.com/chloedechery>

Flat G12, 5, King Edwards Road, E9 7SG London, United Kingdom

T: +44 (0)78 9013 5030 - E: chrise@truevisiontv.com

Nationality: Australian - Date of birth: 25 /09 /1976

1. DOCUMENTARY FILM-MAKING

Chris has been working in documentary for the past 6 years, for the last three in London as part of True Vision, one of the British Television's most respected and award winning documentary producers.

In 2006 he was part of the team that created *Evicted* for BBC1, the winner of the 2007 BAFTA for best documentary. Since then, he has worked with True Vision on a film for Channel 4's Dispatches, and was the producer on the critically acclaimed feature *Chosen* for the British documentary foundation. He has recently finished directing a series of 3 minute shorts for Channel 4, which will be broadcast in 2009. He has continued to work on his own film projects including material for the Australian band Youth Group documenting the creation of their most recent album.

He has been the recipient of awards including first prize at the 2004 Art of Documentary festival held at the Australian National University for his film *Greenway : Living in Space*.

His student film *The Vocabulary of Loitering* was highly commended at the National Student Film Festival in Sydney and received the VCA award for sound design. It screened at various festivals in Australia and internationally.

2. PERFORMANCE WORKS

In 2007 Chris collaborated with Jumbled theatre company to create documentary video material for Lucy Foster's *Oh My Green Soapbox*.

He first worked with Chloé Déchery in 2007 when they started to devise and write *Useful Knowledge to Know*.

Chris and Chloé were also invited to workshop and present a new piece entitled *Not to Perform* in collaboration with Lucy Foster at a Live Art Festival curated by Holly Darton which took place in Hertford in May 2008.

At the moment, Chris is collaborating with Chloé on several performance projects including *The Train Project* planned for 2009 / 2010 in collaboration with choreographer Pia Nordin.

3. EDUCATION

Chris graduated from Sydney University in 1999 with a first class honours degree in History. His honours thesis dealt with media and documentary film surrounding the 1901 federation celebrations in Australia.

He later studied at Victorian College of Arts in Melbourne where he received a graduate diploma in Film and Television (documentary).