

# Conference

## Learning by Collecting

### Strategies for Acquiring and Presenting Live Performances

Thursday 8 and Friday 9 June 2023  
MAMCO | Musée d'art moderne et contemporain  
10, rue des Vieux-Grenadiers, 1205 Genève

#### Thursday 8 June

Welcome 5:00 p.m.

#### Adaptations and Negotiations

Cori Olinghouse (independent archivist) and Autumn Knight (artist) 5:15 p.m.

#### Visit of the Ecart Archives and Film Projections

6:30 p.m.

From 7:00 p.m., 20-minute tours of the Ecart Archives will be offered by Elisabeth Jobin, curator at MAMCO  
From 6:30 to 9:00 p.m., the videos created by the group will be shown in a loop in the conference room

#### Friday 9 June

#### Decisions and Definitions

Sabine Schmidt (director PSM Gallery Berlin) and Christian Falsnaes (artist) 10:00 a.m.

#### Production and Care

Cally Spooner (artist), Erin Brannigan (lecturer, theatre and performance studies) and Shelley Lasica (artist) 11:00 a.m.

Break 12:00 p.m.

#### Documentation and Mediation

Florence Jung (artist), Cathal Sheerin (curator Something Great Collection) 12:30 p.m.

End of conference 2:00 p.m.

This conference is part of the SNSF-funded research project  
"Collecting the Ephemeral. Prerequisites and Possibilities for Making Performance Art Last"  
Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts - School of Art and Design

Please click [here](#) to check our website for updates

Organisation: Phila Bergmann, Rachel Mader and Siri Peyer

# Thursday 8 June

## Adaptations and Negotiations

5:15 p.m.

### A Letter to the Future: Autumn Knight and Cori Olinghouse in Conversation Cori Olinghouse (independent archivist) and Autumn Knight (artist)



This conversation between artist Autumn Knight and artist archivist Cori Olinghouse relays field notes and observations from their collaboration on the acquisition process for Knight's WALL, the first performance to enter the Studio Museum in Harlem's permanent collection. WALL gathers an intergenerational cast of Black femmes in a performance layered with sounds, rituals, and actions. WALL sits at the nexus of social and artistic practice; is both a performance work and a form of social action. Marking an important precedent in performance collecting practices, WALL initiates a model for acquisition that invites future interpretation and modularity, and applies a call-and-response methodology as initiated through Knight's practice. Together they discuss a range of topics including living archives, creative documentation, restagings, access work, and the ongoing systems of care required to steward ephemeral forms rooted in embodied practice.

**Autumn Knight** is an interdisciplinary artist working with performance, installation, video and text. Her performance work has been on view at various institutions including DiverseWorks Art-space, Art League Houston, Project Row Houses, Blaffer Art Museum, Crystal Bridges Museum, Skowhegan Space (NY), The New Museum, The Contemporary Art Museum Houston, Optica (Montreal, Canada), The Poetry Project (NY) and Krannart Art Museum (IL), The Institute for Contemporary Art (VCU), Human Resources Los Angeles (HRLA) and Akademie der Kunste, (Berlin). Knight has been an artist in residence with In-Situ (UK), Galveston Artist Residency, YICA (Yamaguchi, Japan), Artpace (San Antonio, TX) and a 2016-2017 artist in residence at the Studio Museum in Harlem (NY). Knight is the recipient of an Artadia Award (2015) and an Art Matters Grant (2018). She has served as visiting artist at Montclair State University, Princeton University and Bard College. Her performance work is held in the permanent collection of the Studio Museum in Harlem. She attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (2016) and holds an M.A. in Drama Therapy from New York University.

[autumnjoiknight.com](http://autumnjoiknight.com)

**Cori Olinghouse** is a research-based artist whose practice combines performance, video, living archives, curating, and writing. In 2017 she founded The Portal, an artist-led initiative that cultivates archiving as a poetic and performative practice. Out of this work, she collaborated with video artist Charles Atlas on a moving image installation of Trisha Brown's archival materials for Judson Dance Theater: The Work is Never Done at The Museum of Modern Art. In 2019 she collaborated with Autumn Knight and The Studio Museum in Harlem on the performance acquisition and restaging of Autumn Knight's WALL—the first performance work to enter their permanent collection. Formerly, she served as archive director for the Trisha Brown Dance Company (2009-2018), a company she danced for from 2002-2006. She holds an MA in Performance Curation from Wesleyan University and serves as visiting faculty at the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College.

[theportal.place](http://theportal.place)

## Visit of the Ecart Archives and Film Projections

6:30 p.m.

Ecart is a group of artists, an independent space and a publishing house founded in 1969 in Geneva by John M Armleder, Patrick Lucchini and Claude Rychner. It quickly established itself as one of the reference places in Europe where Fluxus-related artistic practices were flourishing at the time. The archives of the Ecart group are now integrated into the museum as a place of research and exhibition. They will be open to the public for an evening, during which visits will be made to discover correspondence, printed material or even the „scores“ of Ecart's artistic performances.

From 7:00 p.m., 20-minute tours of the Ecart Archives will be offered by Elisabeth Jobin, curator at MAMCO

From 6:30 to 9:00 p.m., the videos created by the group will be shown in a loop in the conference room

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## Decisions and Definitions

10:00 a.m.

### Defining the Ephemeral

Sabine Schmidt (director PSM Gallery Berlin) and Christian Falsnaes (artist)

How can performance also be successful in the commercial sphere? How can a performance position function not only as a figurehead for current content and ephemeral media of a gallery, but also as a commercial position? How can performance continue to exist as an ephemeral experience rather than as a documentation of it or props of it, and be maintained and preserved in institutional or private collections for posterity and made experienceable again?

These were the questions posed by Sabine Schmidt and Christian Falsnaes asked themselves in 2011 after their first joint exhibition: ELIXIR. The solution was based on a logical conclusion: by taking the process of collecting the process of collecting backwards from the end to the beginning, it became process of collecting from the end to the beginning, it became clear that only the exact definition and pricing of a performance opens up the possibility of collecting it, to be able to collect it.

**Sabine Schmidt** is the founder and director of PSM Gallery in Berlin. Since its beginning 2008 the gallery has been presenting exhibitions with a favor for large installations and performative formats that encourage the visitors' participation. The gallery program thus focuses on conceptual mixed-media art with an emphasis on three-dimensional and performance-based works. Prior to that, Schmidt worked in several galleries in Berlin, such as Christian Nagel, Gerhardsen Gerner or Büro Friedrich, as well as the Museum House of World Cultures. Schmidt also ran the project space KORRIDOR in her apartment in Berlin.

**Christian Falsnaes** studied Philosophy at the University of Copenhagen and Art at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. His works are often based upon the interaction between audience and artist, dealing with the rituals, dynamics and group behavior in highly codified social fields like the art world. They revolve around the issues of identity, authority and submission. His works has been shown at, among others, Copenhagen Contemporary (2020), Kunsthalle Mannheim (2018); Kiasma Museum for Contemporary Art, Helsinki (2019); Centre Pompidou, Paris (2018); Bienal de Performance, Buenos Aires (2017); 57th Venice Biennale, Venice (2017); Manifesta 11, Zurich (2016); Hamburger Bahnhof - Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin (2015) and Kunsthalle Wien (2015), Vienna.

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## Production and Care

11:00 a.m.

### Architectures of Care

Cally Spooner (artist)

A presentation of a manual in progress that Cally Spooner has been writing with her collaborators via a series of non-public conversations. The manual, titled Architectures of Care, is a technical rider detailing the simple conditions and considerations that need to be in place for delegated / live work to be exhibited. Its focus is on the conditions necessary to ensure that integrity, health, knowledge, labor of performer/s who are carrying the work is supported. Architectures of Care endeavors to close the gap between exhibition and care, since an exhibitor's desire for a good/ functional/ ideally excellent presentation of a delegated or live work in their care is intrinsically connected to the care of the performer who carries this work. Further, given that the author of a delegated / live performance work might not be present during presentations of their work and thus might not be available to 'proof' the material conditions themselves, Architectures of Care becomes a bridge: an advance briefing for an institution — a checklist of spatial, financial, and relational conditions necessary to exhibit a delegated or live work — and equally a guide for performers on what conditions they can and should expect before they take their labor to an institution to carry an artist's work. Architectures of Care is in progress; Cally Spooner will read from this document and recount several anecdotes and micro-histories that made it clear that this manual was necessary.

**Cally Spooner** is an artist who exhibits performances that unfold across media—on film, in text, as objects, through sound, and as illustrated in drawings. Recent institutional solo exhibitions have taken place at the Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Sint-Martens-Latem, Belgium; Parrhesiades, London; the Art Institute of Chicago; the Swiss Institute, New York; Castello di Rivoli, Turin; Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève; the New Museum, New York; and the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. Spooner is the author of recent and forthcoming monographs published by Lenz Press and the Swiss Institute (2023); Hatje Cantz (2020); Mousse (2018); and Slimvolume/Cornerhouse (2016). Her novella *Collapsing in Parts* was published by Mousse in 2012. She was awarded the Novo Nordisk Foundation's Mads Øvlisen PhD Scholarship for practice-based art in 2021, in association with the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts and the University of Copenhagen (2021–24). She lives in Turin.

## Precarious Movements: Dance and the Gallery Research Project Toolkit

Erin Brannigan (lecturer, theatre and performance studies) and Shelley Lasica (artist)

*Precarious Movements: Choreography and the Museum* is a research project bringing artists, researchers and institutions into dialogue about best-practice to support both the choreographer and the museum, and to sustain momentum in theory and practice around dance and the visual arts. The methodology centres artists and their practices with 6 case studies presented between 2022–2024 at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Monash University Museum of Art, National Gallery of Victoria, and National Gallery of Australia. Outputs and activities that draw on the case studies and a suite of 50 interviews undertaken across 2021–2022 include publications, workshops, online forums, a reading group and our major contribution, a toolkit with guidelines for best practice. This presentation will focus on the latter, sharing the toolkit's structure, rationale and a positioning statement, all of which frame the detailed work to come.

**Precarious Movements: Choreography and the Museum** is a research project hosted by the University of New South Wales and involving partner organisations the Art Gallery of New South Wales (AGNSW), Monash University Museum of Art (MUMA), National Gallery of Victoria (NGV), Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (PICA) and Tate UK. The team members are theorist Associate Professor Erin Brannigan (UNSW), curators Lisa Catt (AGNSW), Amita Kirpalani (NGV), Hannah Mathews (PICA), Pip Wallis (MUMA), Zoe Theodore (UNSW), conservators Louise Lawson (Tate UK) and Carolyn Murphy (AGNSW), and artists Dr Rochelle Haley (UNSW) and Shelley Lasica, and a network of local artists, curators, theorists and writers. The team coalesced at the Choreography-Gallery-Practice workshop in February 2019 at UNSW Galleries and have received an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant worth over \$1 million AU cash and in-kind for the period 2021–2024, managed through UNSW.

**Erin Brannigan** is Associate Professor in Theatre and Performance at the University of New South Wales. She is of Irish and Danish political exile, convict, and settler descent. Her publications include *Dancefilm: Choreography and the Moving Image* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011) and *Choreography, Visual Art and Experimental Composition 1950s–1970s* (London: Routledge, 2022). She has published various chapters and articles in film, performance and dance journals and anthologies. Her current research project is *Precarious Movements: Dance and the Museum* with Tate UK, National Gallery of Victoria, Art Gallery of NSW, Monash University Museum of Art, Perth Institute of Contemporary Art, Shelley Lasica and Zoe Theodore. A second monograph associated with this project is forthcoming: *The Persistence of Dance: Choreography as Concept and Material in Contemporary Art* (Michigan University Press, 2023).

For more than 40 years, **Shelley Lasica** has pushed the confines of dance, choreography and performance. Her practice is defined by an enduring interest in the context and situations of presenting choreography. Throughout her career, she has been making solo performances that function as a mechanism and a commentary on making work. This practice provides the basis for generating ensemble works with a network of artists working in dance and other media, that question the collaborative and interdisciplinary possibilities of choreography. She regularly collaborates with visual artists, including Tony Clark, Helen Grogan, Anne Marie May, Callum Morton, Kathy Temin and Jacqui Shelton, in order to create dialogues between different modes and means of presentation. She has also contributed to the work of artists including Bridie Lunney, Fayen D'Evie, Tony Clark, Spencer Lai, Fiona Macdonald and Alicia Frankovich. Lasica's choreographic works have been shown nationally and internationally within both visual art and theatre contexts, including: Melbourne Festival; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; *Chunky Move*, Melbourne; Artspace,

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Sydney; Centre Nationale de la Danse, Paris; Siobhan Davies Studios, London; Dance Massive, Melbourne; Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne; Murray White Room, Melbourne; Neon Parc, Melbourne and Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne. Her most recent work is WHEN I AM NOT THERE a performance-exhibition commissioned by Monash University Museum of Art (2022), Art Gallery of New South Wales 2023, and Precarious Movements: Choreography and the Gallery, a research project 2021-2024 hosted by the University of New South Wales with support through the Australian Research Council. She is also a lead research associate with the Precarious Movements: Choreography and the Gallery. Lasica has also been a mentor, teacher and advocate in choreography and dance throughout her career.

Break 12:00 p.m.

**Documentation and Mediation** 12:30 p.m.

On my Terms  
Florence Jung (artist)

- A. You have to put it in writing.
- B. When you write to someone, keep a copy.
- C. Don't throw the mail away. When you get a notice that certified mail has come for you and they haven't delivered it because you weren't home and you have to go to the post office, go to the post office. Don't just blow it off. Go and get it.
- D. When you make an agreement with somebody write it down. Write it on a napkin but sign it. Everybody should sign it.

These are four pieces of advice from Robert Projansky (who drafted The Artist's Contract in 1971). But Robert Projansky's Artist Contract won't be our topic. We will talk about my own contract: why I did it, how I did it, what is lacking in it.

**Florence Jung** writes scenarios that shift from fiction to reality in the same way rumors become facts in the digital age. Her works - which she does not produce images of - examine our relationship to uncertainty and how assumptions shape our perception. Her work has been exhibited in numerous solo and group exhibitions, notably Museum für Gegenwartkunst in Siegen, the Palais de Tokyo in Paris, Helmhaus in Zurich, the Art encounters Biennial in Timisoara, the Frans Hals Museum in Haarlem, Frac Lorraine in Metz, the Athens Biennale, Kunsthalle Basel. She was awarded the Swiss Performance Award and the Swiss Art Award. Florence Jung lives in Biel/Bienne and Paris.

Something Great Collection  
Cathal Sheerin (curator Something Great Collection)

The Something Great Collection is an ongoing project initiated in 2021 by Something Great (somethinggreat.de) with a dedicated focus on preserving and disseminating international performing arts. This ambitious endeavor challenges established norms in creating, producing, and distributing performing arts internationally. The theoretical and practical approach taken by the collection explores the concept of acquisition and „post-production“ in performing arts as a means of collection. It also emphasizes the significant role that research, mediation, and particularly iteration of performing artworks play as essential components of a practical strategy for preserving live art.

**Cathal Sheerin** is a producer and curator based in Berlin, Germany, and originally from Ireland. He has worked in theatre and dance in both Ireland and The Netherlands. He obtained his M.A. in International Dramaturgy at Universiteit van Amsterdam. Since 2021, he has worked at Something Great as a member of the International Relations and Curatorial team. Something Great is a Berlin-based organisation that represents the work of associated artists, helping them develop new work and tour internationally. In addition to its associated artists, Something Great supports a variety of other artists and arts professionals through its residency centre in Mentin, a small village in the rural Ruhner Berge, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, in north-eastern Germany.