

CHOREOGRAPHY FOR BLACKBOARDS

PERFORMANCE INSTALLATION
BY MICHAEL KLIËN WITH STEVE VALK
2006—



michael klïen

CHOREOGRAPHY FOR BLACKBOARDS A PERFORMANCE INSTALLATION

Choreography: Michael Kliën
Dramaturgy: Steve Valk
Composition: Volkmar Klien
Artistic Collaborator: Jeffrey Gormly

A work for 6-8 citizens
For galleries and alternative spaces
Rehearsal Period: 3-5 weeks
Duration: 90-120 minutes
Rehearsed and performed within one week

Originally produced by Daghdha Dance Company with the support of the Arts Council, 2005
Re-commissioned by IMMA (Dublin), Zodiak (Finland), PS122 (NY), Hayward Gallery (London)

Video/Web Documentation:
www.vimeo.com/klien/hayward (edit, version 2010)
www.vimeo.com/klien/sediments (full version 2006)
<http://tinyurl.com/po3t5p3> (essay/review on Culturebot.org (NY))

“Choreography is not to constrain movement into a set pattern, it is to provide a cradle for movement to find its own patterns - over and over again - to prevent a body - whether bound by skin or habits - from stagnation and enable lightness, a primal energy and possibilities only to be found once relations start dancing.” **KLIËN**

cover-image: Christina Gangos

PROJECT DISCRIPTION

7 Participants, chosen both locally and internationally, are working on 7 monolithic blackboards spread throughout a large open space. Actively drawing on the blackboards over a set period of time, they follow exact, rehearsed procedures, developing and exchanging insights and individual expressions in various, immediate communicative forms, weaving their relations into a concentrated collective dance of minds. At times the process is supported by electronic music by long-term collaborator Volkmar Kliën. Once the choreography has come to an end a landscape of drawings is left for display. Observers are free to walk, sit, converse as well as read in an arena setting throughout the process.

A silent and communal matrix of five individuals "dreaming the real" imprints a landscape of marks and meaning on the surfaces of blackboards. Rising thoughts, raw visual thinking and sensual perception form a choreography of self and other - of relations in dialogue, exchange, sedimentation, learning, disintegration, erosion and demise.

Connoting qualities of ritual, audience members bear witness to the events of their immediate reality - to the unpredictable, exploratory dimension of creative thinking inherent in all natural systems. Diverting fingers long enough to release their hold on the situation, the players in Choreography for Blackboards create a subtle participatory frame - a collective "third space" - for sculpting the flow of a moving universe.

"All dreamers are thinkers" **BION**

CURATED POST-PERFORMANCE TALKS

The work, in its unique choreographic process lends itself to cultivate a 'different kind of thinking'. By exploring the participants' potential, a diverse, high-quality programme of talks connected to current concerns (rather than to the work itself) can be created.

Sample-Programme, curated by Steve Valk, NY (2011):

RAW THINKING CIRCLE

Six monolithic blackboards occupy a white dance floor and a cast of citizen performers work out their own idea of a state of dance. Afterwards, oracles gather before the monoliths to articulate their visions of radically different performances of citizenship, drawn by a collective sense of urgency. In the context of a worldwide elaboration of new meaningful public spaces, we discuss possibilities for a new ecology of the arts and activism.

Post-Show Talk #1 (60 Min)

A NEW ECOLOGY OF THE ARTS

Paul Muldoon: Poet, Chair of the Arts, Princeton University

Prof. Brian Schwartz: Professor of Physics CUNY Graduate Center

Morgan Jenness: Dramaturge / Occupy activist Wall Street Activist

Dennis Redmond: Chief Strategy Officer, Queens Community House

Steve Valk: dramaturge / Choreography for Blackboards

BIOGRAPHY

MICHAEL KLIËN (*1973, AUSTRIA)

Michael Kliën is an acclaimed choreographer, curator and producer of numerous touring productions, installations and events. In 1994 he co-founded the performance collective Barriedale Operahouse (in operation till 2000) and worked as a choreographer for Ballett Frankfurt, Volksoper Wien etc. From 2003 to 2011 he was Artistic Director/CEO of Daghdha Dance Company, one of Ireland's premiere dance organisations. His artistic practice encompasses interdisciplinary thinking, critical writing, curatorial projects, and centrally, choreographic works equally at home in the Performing as well as the Fine Arts. Michael Kliën's choreographies are predominantly dance-based works of art, situated in galleries, museums or on stages. Increasingly, visual art works form part of his choreographic output; yet, other creations may act directly upon the social sphere (Social Choreography). His choreographies for dance are marked by a distinctive improvisation methodology and the subsequent movement aesthetic. Amongst a considerable body of work, Michael Kliën's seminal choreographies include *Einem* for Ballett Frankfurt, *Sediments of an Ordinary Mind* and *Sense and Meaning* for Daghdha Dance Company (Limerick) as well as *Choreography for Blackboards* for Daghdha Dance Company and Hayward Gallery (London) and *Slattery's Lamp* of IMMA's (Irish Museum of Modern Art) permanent collection. www.michaelklien.com

STEVE VALK (*1962, USA)

Contemporary dance dramaturge, visual artist and designer, lecturer and leading figure in the emerging field of Social Choreography. Influenced by his experiences as Personal Assistant of theatre director Robert Wilson (1988–90) he joined Ballett Frankfurt as Head Dramaturge and creative collaborator for William Forsythe (1992–2004). From 1998 to 2004, this dramaturgical practice and a subsequent focus on trans-disciplinary networking strategies lead to the development of a new participatory/situational epistemology for the institution of contemporary dance. From 2004 to 2011, Steve Valk, in partnership with choreographer and Artistic Director Michael Kliën, became Head Dramaturge and artistic collaborator of Ireland's Daghdha Dance Company. In 2007 founder of the international dramaturgical and social choreographic design agency r.i.c.e. Since 2012 he has been Director of the newly founded Institute of Social Choreography in Frankfurt, where he currently lives.

VOLKMAR KLIEN (*1971, AUSTRIA)

Volkmar Klien today strives to extend traditional practices of composing, producing and listening far beyond the established settings of concert music. He works in various areas of the audible and occasionally inaudible arts navigating the manifold links in-between the different modes of human perception, the spheres of presentation and the roles these play in the communal generation of meaning. His works have been widely recognized, exhibited, performed and presented. He has received commissions from institutions truly varied in nature. For Volksoper Wien (Vienna) he composed music to a full evening ballet, the Curtis R. Priem Experimental Media & Performing Arts Center (Empac, Troy, New York) invited him to produce multi-channel electronic sound works and for Transito MX (Mexico City) he produced a mixed media installation acoustically surveying landscapes. In his installation *Aural Codes*, funded by the Arts Council England, he turned the radio sphere over London into his exhibition space inviting residents to tune in and also interact. Throughout his career he has collaborated with his choreographer brother Michael Kliën on numerous performative projects exploring relationships between sound, bodily movement and human communication. Works stemming from this ongoing collaboration have been produced and presented at ZKM Karlsruhe, Ballett Frankfurt, the Hayward Gallery London, and—most recently—by the PS122 (New York). Volkmar Klien's work has been awarded numerous prizes and awards, amongst these an honorary mention at the Prix Ars Electronica, the State Scholarship for Composition of the Republic of Austria, the Max Brand Prize for Electronic Music, the Scholarship of the Vienna Symphonic Orchestra and the Gustav Mahler Prize for Composition. www.volkmarklien.com

JEFFREY GORMLY (*1971, IE)

Jeffrey Gormly works theatre, dance and participatory art processes. Literary Editor for nervousystem theatre laboratory, Creative Director of Soul Gun Warriors, commissioned by The Abbey Theatre, Clonmel Junction Festival, Dance Ireland, and worked with the Irish Chamber Orchestra. Associate Artist with Daghdha Dance Company 2004–2011 where he edited and co-authored two Framemakers books, and performed in and collaborated on Michael Kliën's major works *Sediments of an Ordinary Mind* (Limerick and Dublin), *Choreography for Blackboards* (International), and *The Ponderous* (National Folk Theatre of Ireland). He is currently Editor at choreograph.net and facilitates Telepathic Training Centre for dancers and non-dancers alike.

