

Interview on P(AR)take by Josh White  
For: Oppidan Press Rhodes University Grahamstown  
Interviewee: Jeannette Ginslov

1. Very briefly, what current project/s are you working on at the moment?

**P(AR)take** is a public art work, a virtual archive of South African Contemporary Dance that appeared at the National Arts Festival from 1984, using the Augmented Reality app [Aurasma](#) on smart mobile devices. With this app you can access the archive and trigger ten 40 second video clips of South African choreographers' works that appeared on the Main Programme of the NAF over the last forty years. These have been curated & edited by Jeannette Ginslov with research assistant Ester Van der Walt and resonate within the context of South Africa's history and its transformation. These videos are suspended as hidden layers of archived media, tagged on images of the dance works to be found in the City of Grahamstown, during the Festival. The dance video material is then part archive, part "time-machine" and part performance of memory - a living archive. The tour is a dialogue where you partake in a choreography of time and history.

2. What are your exact plans for the National Arts festival? What made you choose this specific project, what influenced you?

I am curating and setting up a virtual public video art archive in High Street, Grahamstown as the site for the triggering and viewing archived dance video material. Audiences partake in this by using their mobile devices and the AR app Aurasma.

Audiences will meet me and my research assistant Ester Van der Walt under the Drostdy Arch, from Monday 07-10 July at 11:00 and Friday 11 July at 12:00. Here they will download and familiarize themselves with the app Aurasma. They will then be instructed on how to use the app before setting off by themselves as a group to find ten tagged images to trigger the archived footage: a kind of treasure hunt if you will! The audience members will each receive a map detailing where to find these images which will start at the Rhodes University Clock Tower and move down High Street to end in front of the Cathedral. The tour should take approximately one hour.

I am interested in challenging traditional and conventional means of presenting dance on stage. Site specific works, new media and screendance in urban spaces using cell phones and apps is a new platform for dance and breaks conventional way of viewing dance. The audience becomes part of the choreography, the virtual, digital and real dialogue with each other. The augmented media amplifies the ephemeral nature of dance that the viewers "captures" with their mobile device. The live performer dances in and out of this field of media, sometimes disrupting the connection between cell phone and viewer. The viewer needs to reconnect to the media. Ultimately it's about agency for the viewer. They are not passively consuming the dance videos and history of South African Contemporary dance, but entering into a dialogue with it.

3. Have you previously been involved in the community at Rhodes and in Grahamstown? If so, could you give some history?

I obtained my MA in Drama - Choreography in 1996, danced and choreographed for the First Physical Theatre Company and taught a Screendance workshop at the Drama Department 2012.

4. How are you currently involved in the Rhodes Drama Department? What is your speciality and what, as well as who, inspires and has inspired you?

Since June 2013 I have been a temporary Senior Lecturer in the Drama Department, teaching Somatic Dance Classes, Choreography, Contemporary Performance, Lecturing Digital Performance, Screendance and dance history to First Years to Masters students. In February I co-directed, shot and edited a dance video for Juanita Finestone Praege - *nightflower*, which recently premiered at the DETOURS re-visioning dance festival at the Wits School of Arts in Johannesburg.

My specialities are dance on film, for Augmented Reality, Screen and the internet. Breaking conventions, researching new ways of presenting dance, digital materiality and capturing dance for screen inspire me.

The interdisciplinary nature of screendance is a cross over of dance, choreography, cinema and video art, and this really excites me. Since 2010 I have been collaborating with Prof Susan Kozel, Professor of New Media at Medea at Malmö University, on the AR project *AffeXity*. *AffeXity* is a play on both 'affect city' and 'a-fixity'. It is an interdisciplinary, collaborative, social choreography project drawing together dance, geo-spatially tagged visual imagery, and people using mobile-networked devices. It exposes somatic and affective layers of urban spaces through dance improvisation and screendance.

See: <http://affexity.se/>

Scottish dance filmmaker Katrina MacPherson and editor Simon Fildes tutored, mentored and inspired me in my screendance research and practice in 2008-2009 at the University of Dundee Scotland where I obtained an MSc in Media Arts and Imaging, specialising in Screendance with Distinction. My practice and research is ongoing. There is still so much to explore and I am applying to do a PhD in the UK this year to further my research into new cinema.

5. Are planning anything more? What will your future involvement with the university and with Grahamstown be, if any?

Funding permitting, next year February, I may be back to shoot two more dance videos for Juanita Finestone Praege. This will complete the trilogy of dance films examining three different women in different states of being and locations

6. What have been your best experiences in Grahamstown and at Rhodes? To whom do you owe the best memories?

My best experiences in Grahamstown have been seeing students become inspired by my teaching - those a-ha! moments and those times when they come up to me to thank me for a lecture or tell me that they want to make a dance video.

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