

Andrew Forster: current work

1. The Machine Stops

video installation, 2020

2. Geste / Dance Piece

video installation, 2018

3. River / Tree

installation (in progress)

4. Paraguayan Sea (with Erin Moure)

public installation, 2017





The Machine Stops
video installation
2020

[plein-écran / full-screen: cmd-L]



THE MACHINE STOPS (2020)

2-channel video installation with 5.1 surround sound

A speculative fiction. The Machine Stops is a video work set in Chandigarh, India. Like Brasilia, Chandigarh is a city 'invented' in the 1950s out of a universalist idea of art and design as transformational event. In post-partition India, the city of Lahore, previously the capitol of Punjab became part of Pakistan. Nehru envisioned a new and modern city to replace it. Indian and western architects, most famously Le Corbusier, came together to design a utopian city from scratch. The Machine Stops uses Le Corbusier's Capitol Complex as the location for a performance-video which is an exploration of the conceptual and aesthetic space of this post-colonial modernism. A choreographic elements has a single performer moving through and articulating the plaza spaces and ramps of the Capitol and city. A scripted element is composed of texts written by myself combining excerpts from Le Corbusier and E. M. Forster. The title "The Machine Stops" is taken from Forster's 1930 science fiction story of the same title, which describes a world where people live in an ideal underground in technologically-supported sensorial isolation. Citizens communicate electronically, maintaining technological distance. At a certain point the machinery which supports this utopian world fails and it becomes clear that this perfect and controlled life must end. Le Corbusier's celebrated modernist Capitol becomes the setting for a fictional dystopian speculative-fiction told in fragments of language and movement. The setting is like an abandoned city, at once familiar and strange, in which a new story is performed. The work is a meditation on the technological utopian projects of the 1950's and 60s (eg. Brasilia, Chandigarh, Expo) and a reflection on contemporary instrumental design.

The Machine Stops opens up spaces in all its component narratives. Creative disruption wrecks the horizon of common understanding. In the junk space and junk time that is left over, is a reassuring montage of image and hyper-layered information (reassuring because it is the texture of how we know). In this a junktime do we merely repeat E. M. Forster's "...live in fragments no longer, only connect!" Or is there something else to say?

<https://vimeo.com/327461450> - video link (preview)

password: Machine

<https://vimeo.com/371747385> - video link (installation mock-up)



LA MACHINE S'ARRETE (2020)

Installation vidéo, deux projections, son 5,1

La machine s'arrête est une œuvre vidéo filmée à Chandigarh, en Inde. Tout comme Brasilia, Chandigarh est une ville « inventée » dans les années 1950s, issue d'une idée universaliste de l'art et du design en tant qu'actions transformatrices. Lahore devient une partie du territoire pakistanais suivant la partition des Indes. Afin de remplacer la capitale du Pendjab, Nehru envisage une nouvelle ville moderne. Des architectes indiens et occidentaux, notamment Le Corbusier, se rencontrent pour concevoir une ville utopique à partir de rien. Le complexe du Capitole de Le Corbusier est le lieu de la performance vidéo La machine s'arrête, laquelle est une exploration de l'espace conceptuel et esthétique de ce modernisme postcolonial. Un seul interprète se déplace à travers et articule les places et les rampes du Capitole et de la ville. Ces éléments visuels sont accompagnés d'une narration composée par moi-même, réunissant des extraits de Le Corbusier et E. M. Forster. Le titre, La machine s'arrête, est emprunté du roman du même titre de Forster, paru en 1909. L'œuvre de science-fiction décrit un monde où les gens habitent en isolation sensorielle dans un sous-terrain parfaitement contrôlé. Les citoyens communiquent électroniquement, gardant une distance technologique entre eux. Un jour, la machinerie qui supporte ce système utopique fait faillite. Le célèbre complexe du Capitole de Le Corbusier est le cadre d'une fiction-spéculative dystopique racontée en fragments de langage et de mouvement. Chandigarh devient une ville abandonnée, à la fois familière et étrange, dans laquelle une nouvelle histoire se déroule. L'œuvre est une méditation sur les projets utopiques et technologiques des années 1950 et 1960 (p. ex. Brasilia, Chandigarh, Expo 67) et de l'époque contemporaine (p. ex. l'île Fogo à Terre-Neuve). Il s'agit d'une réflexion à propos de l'instrumentalisation de l'art et du design.

The Machine Stops opens up spaces in all its component narratives. Creative disruption wrecks the horizon of common understanding. In the junk space and junk time that is left over, is a reassuring montage of image and hyper-layered information (reassuring because it is the texture of how we know). In this a junktime do we merely repeat E. M. Forster's "...live in fragments no longer, only connect!" Or is there something else to say?



ABOUT THE MACHINE STOPS

[text by A. Forster]

Connecting in Junktime. In 1919, the year the Bauhaus school was founded, integrating modernist aesthetic experiment with the world of industrial production, E. M. Forster wrote a dystopian science fiction story entitled “The Machine Stops.” “The Machine Stops” creates a fictional world that might seem to us a very contemporary one, where people live in isolation, with their only tangible connection being through electronic devices. The surface of the earth is no longer habitable. The air is poisonous. Humanity has gone into a high-tech underground and lives in a massive network of individual habitation pods connected to a central machine, which provides for all human needs, both biological and social. A communication network allows the inhabitants to fulfill their intellectual imaginings, all without the necessity of actual physical proximity or contact. Hand-held screens transmit murky but adequate images and listening tubes distribute sound.

Kuno, the protagonist, makes contact with his mother, Vashti. He has broken the rules. He has gone to the surface on a quest for authentic life and he has now been condemned. Kuno is desperate to connect through direct experience. He has been caught and now must pay the cost. Vashti understands nothing of this desire. Only that transgression has ruined her son’s possibility for fulfillment. At some point the machine that makes this world possible slowly begins to fail. The air becomes noxious. The food lacks texture. Machines behave erratically. The schedules break down. Kuno’s struggle for ‘authentic’ life seems prophetic. The world collapses. Everything collapses.

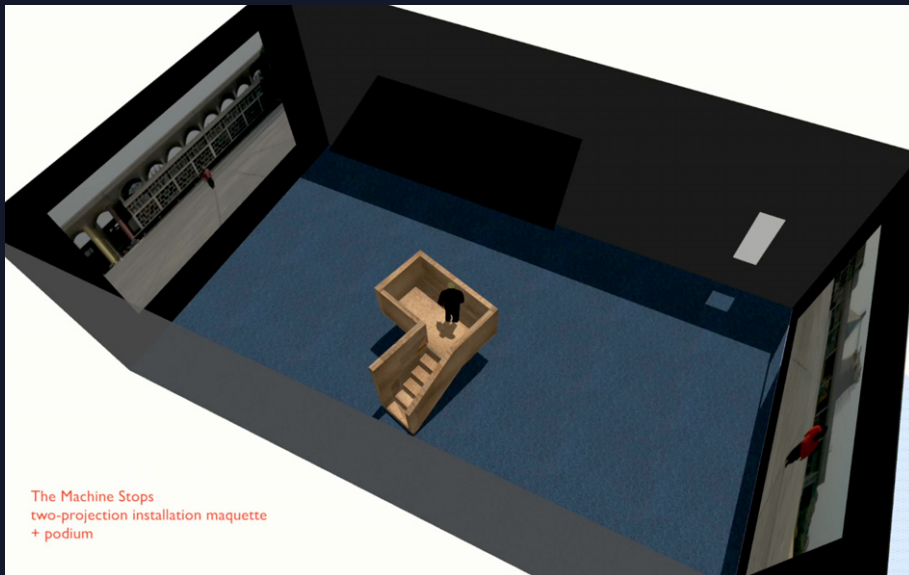
For a twenty-first century reader Forster’s romantic theme of spiritual and visceral connection as humanism (“man is the measure of man,” says Kuno) is the most anachronistic element in the story. Is this the antidote? In the era of Junkspace (Koolhaas) and Junktime (Steyerl) what could possibly replace it as a more realistic, post-humanist trope of crisis?

The video installation, The Machine Stops uses Le Corbusier’s Capitol Complex site and other public buildings in Chandigarh as the location for a performance-video that is an exploration of the conceptual and aesthetic space of this present. A choreographic element of the work is a single actor walking purposefully through the plaza spaces and ramps of the Capitol Complex, articulating architectural space with movement. This character never stops moving through this designed form as landscape, linking the architectural space and a narrated element of the piece. This moving human body is the narrative thread of the piece. This cinematic convention of a perambulatory journey as narrative device is central to the work.

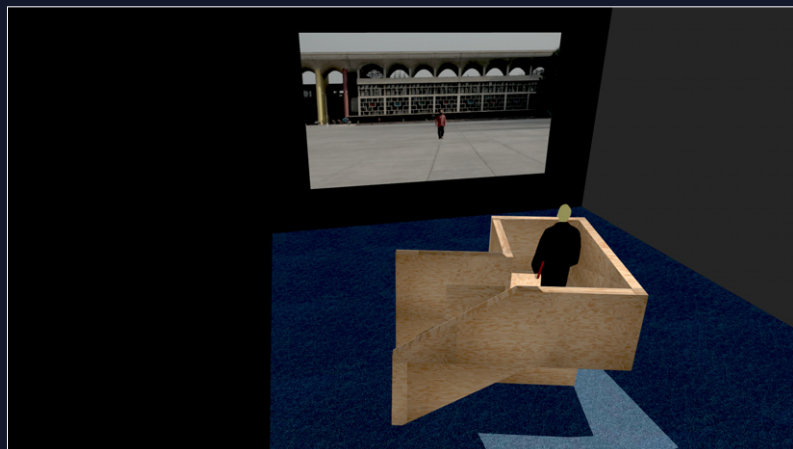
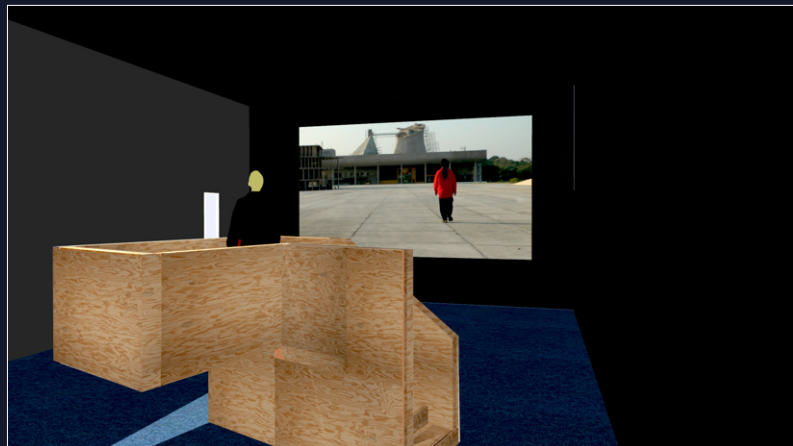
The narrated element juxtaposed to this choreographically activated site includes texts written by myself, combined with excerpts from Le Corbusier, and a significant portion of the short story by E. M. Forster. In Futurist enthusiasm, Le Corbusier called the modernist dwelling a “machine for living” (Vers une architecture, 1923). For this video work the setting for this story is like an abandoned city, at once familiar and strange, through this insertion into a fiction. The work becomes a meditation on technotopias of the 1950s and 60s (Brasilia, Chandigarh, Expo 67 in Montreal) and a reflection on our designed world and the ubiquitous culture of the framed ‘outcomes’ in which we live. Le Corbusier can be seen as representing a tabula rasa approach to design. He is a choreographer of form. We now live in new era of the ‘choreographers of information’, our data-trails algorithmically parsed for purposes unknown. The ‘machine for living’ is a concept for behaviour. E. M. Forster’s “The Machine Stops” story is anachronistic in relation to the real place that is Chandigarh – the modernist monument and the surprisingly habitable city of today. “The Machine Stops” is a dystopian warning about technologically-alienated humanity written by a romantic author who perceived himself as an outsider to the colonial system that gave him such an intimate involvement with British India.

This new video installation updates this science-fiction parable for the post-human age (exactly one hundred years later) and meditates on the peculiar thought that, as humans, we think we are destined to design better worlds. Le Corbusier’s celebrated utopia becomes the setting for a dystopian speculative fiction told in non-linear fragments of language, image and movement. This isn’t a BBC-style production; the video itself is a decayed digital landscape. It is like a poor Merchant-Ivory production colliding with a nostalgic Hito Steyerl. (Steyerl’s apocalypsis is quite nostalgic in its ‘free fall’ romanticism, and highly marketable in its glitch-stylings. At the same time, I think her practice sits right on an important fault line in the designed world.)

My The Machine Stops opens up spaces in all its component narratives, drawn as they are from many sources. Creative disruption wrecks the horizon of common understanding. In the junk space and junk time that is left over, in a reassuring montage of image and hyper-layered information (reassuring because it is the texture of how we know). It is a junktime characterized by “a lack of duration, lack of attention, things going on simultaneously all the time” (Steyerl). And in this new space, do we now merely repeat, “Only connect . . . and human love will be seen at its height. Live in fragments no longer. Only connect...” (E. M. Forster, Howard’s End 160)? Or is there something else to say?



The Machine Stops
two-projection installation maquette
+ podium

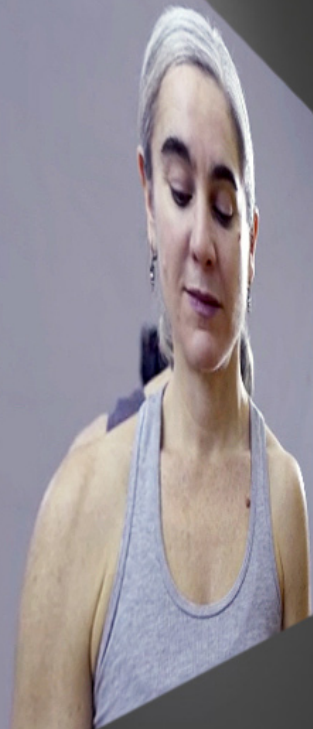


Geste / Dance Piece

video installation

2018

(2 versions)



[plein-écran / full-screen: cmd-L]



GESTE / DANCE PIECE (2018)

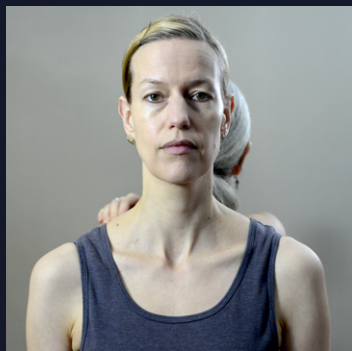
2-channel video installation with sound

What is a gesture before it becomes a movement? Research in neuro-science suggests that the neural development for thinking comes directly out of the organism's need to navigate space and time through voluntary movement. In order to move there is a 'here' and a 'there', consequently a 'then' and a 'now'. Movement is contained in the capacity to experience time and space (time and space is the medium of movement). Thought is either movement or a rehearsal for it. This piece takes the idea that thought and movement are two isolatable components of gesture. Two dancers (Suzanne Miller and Magali Stol) perform a choreography which they have memorized - in dance language it is part of body memory. For the video they 'perform' this choreography almost without moving; at about five percent of the 'normal' amplitude. This choreography of micro-gestures (gestures which could be full movements but which are really involuntary movements coming from the dancer's thinking of the movement) is recorded to be presented as a two synchronised videos.

There are two versions of the installation: 1) In a simplified installation the video is shot with the performers back-to-back. The videos are projected one above the other, or opposite each other (like a mirror) on facing walls; 2) for a more complex version of the installation violinist Malcolm Goldstein has improvised a minimal set of musical gestures (almost music) while watching the almost-movement of the performers. This becomes the soundtrack for the piece. The video of the two dances is projected in a corner. A video of Goldstein performing the soundtrack is seen at a small format on a monitor elsewhere in the space (see image on previous page).

Geste ['gesture' in French] suggests the thinking of movement as the beginning point of being. Where photography isolates movement in the 'freeze-frame' of the camera, *Geste* attempts the impossible, through a video-performance, to isolate the neurological from the bodily, thought from gesture. *Geste* explores bodily presence as movements of thought.

<https://vimeo.com/212678418> - video link



simple version of *Geste* (no sound); presented as 2 projections one above the other (performers standing back-to-back in the recorded performance).

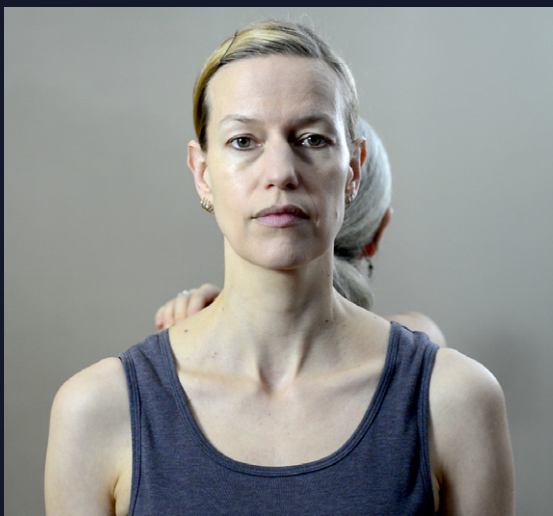


alternate installation version with sound and a 3rd video on a monitor (of musician Malcom Goldstein playing violin)



simple version of *Geste* (no sound); presented as 2 projections on opposite walls (performers standing back-to-back in the recorded performance).

Possible Configurations



ABOUT GESTE

[Neuroscientist Rodolfo Llinas on movement]

Temple Grandin borrows an example from neuroscientist Rodolfo Llinas ("I of the Vortex: from Neurons to Self"). The sea squirt is a tiny animal which goes through two stages in its life: one where it moves around and finds a place to fix itself and a second where once fixed it turns into an immobile oyster-like being. In the first stage it has a simple nervous system/brain in the second the brain disappears. It is absorbed and becomes part of the gut. The sea squirt eats its brain when it no longer needs to move. The conjecture is that we have a brain so we can move. The thing we call thinking is pre-movement, or de-motorized movement. Thinking begins on the cellular level of movement. A sense of space and time are the raw neural material of movement.

"So the brain seems to have evolved as the instrument for motricity, the instrument to move. Now because it is so closely related to prediction and so closely related to intentionality, we make an impossible statement and say you know what, thinking may be nothing else but internalized movement. Why? Because it is through movement that we solve many things. And what is it that the brain basically does ultimately in all of us? What it does is generate premotor acts, inside it generates premotor events, all that we can do as human beings with our brain is activation of motor neurons, that is the only output. I tell my students you only activate muscles or you activate glands. To put it differently, you either move or drool, that's all you can do in life. Its true. Ok so you have this apparatus that defines movement beautifully, that predicts that has all sorts of hypotheses on which to act. So thinking is a premotor act. And therefore we are fundamentally moving animals that move intelligently. The more intelligent our movement, the more intelligent we are as animals."

[Rodolfo Llinas, "I of the Vortex"] Thought is either movement or a rehearsal for it. This piece takes the idea that thought and movement are two isolatable components of gesture.

GESTE (2018)

Qu'est-ce que le geste avant qu'il ne devienne mouvement? La recherche dans le domaine des neurosciences suggère que la formation neurale de la pensée vient directement du besoin de l'organisme de naviguer dans l'espace au moyen du mouvement volontaire. C'est dans la tentative conceptuelle de mouvement ou on invente un 'ici' et un 'là' ainsi que la notion de temps et de l'espace qui rendent ici et là possible. La pensée est mouvement, ou peut-être préparation du mouvement. Cette pièce part de l'idée que la pensée et le mouvement sont deux composantes isolables du geste. Deux danseuses (Suzanne Miller et Magali Stoll) performent une chorégraphie qu'elles connaissent toutes les deux, mais presque sans bouger; à cinq pour cent de son amplitude « normale ». Cette chorégraphie de microgestes est filmée afin d'être présentée sur vidéo. Par rapport au 'freeze-frame' de la caméra (soit caméra photo ou vidéo) Geste suggère que l'absence de mouvement (réel ou dans les gestes de la pensée) est aussi impossible que l'absence de temps ou de l'espace. Une trame sonore (violoniste Malcom Goldstein) composée des 'gestes' du son (voix et violon) minimal ('presque' musique) [vu sur écran Lcd ailleurs dans l'espace].

Il y a deux versions de l'œuvre : 1) Deux grandes projections carrées sur murs opposés, les mouvements se reflétant. 2) Deux projections 16:9 projetées dans un coin, ainsi qu'un petit moniteur LCD ailleurs (avec vidéo du musicien).



A River and a Tree

installation 2020-21

TO BEGIN: A RIVER AND A TREE

video installation with sound

Work in development. A projection of the flowing surface of a river is projected onto a strip of silk fabric (3m x 10m) which lies diagonally across the floor of a darkened room. This fabric is blown by a fan to create an undulating waving surface along its 10m length. This surface receives the projection. This is the river. A sculptural object nearby is a tree – partially a material armature and partially a projection.

With these primordial horizontal and vertical elements any story can be told. For this piece, the story are stories of passage, of crossing over. Stories of travel. Stories of exile and refuge. Stories of loss. Stories of re-finding ground. These stories are gathered from many people.

These 50 stories are heard through speakers at the perimeter of the space. They are voiced by actors and heard as different voices, one following the other. The voices are 'spatialized' ie.: we hear them in the dark as if they are wandering around us, circling the space, or pacing back and forth.



Paraguayan Sea (with Erin Moure)

public installation

2017

[illegible]

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Paraguayan Sea (2017)

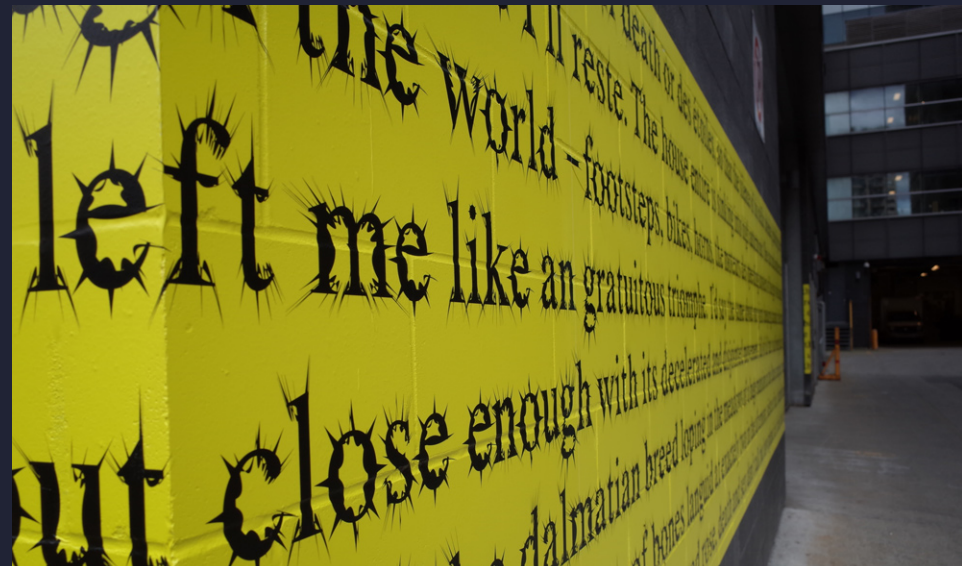
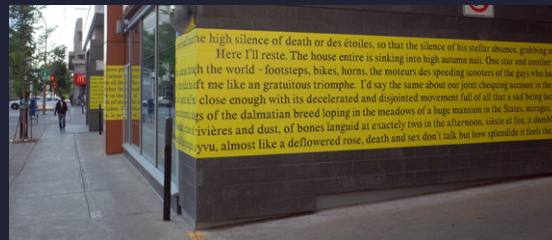
public text installation

(2017) Text installation for Concordia University's EV Building (Engineering and Visual Arts) in downtown Montreal. Temporary installation wrapping the non-retail sections of the building with a yellow banner (1.55m x 60m) using the text Paraguayan Sea by Erin Moure / Wilson Bueno. A translation by Montreal poet Erin Moure of Wilson Bueno's novela Mar Paraguayo. Typeface and installation design by Andrew Forster. The original text by Bueno is in Portunol (Spanish/Portuguese) and Guarani (an indigenous language of the Parana region). It is translated for Montreal by Erin Moure into 'Frenghlish' leaving the Guarani fragments intact. August 2017 - June 2018.

Mer paraguayenne (2017)

Intervention textuelle dans l'espace public

Mer paraguayenne est une collaboration avec la poète montréalaise Erin Moure. La bande jaune (1.55m x 60m) est déployée à l'extérieur, enveloppant les façades du rez-de-chaussée du pavillon EV (génie et arts visuels) de l'Université Concordia qui donnent sur les rues Sainte-Catherine et McKay, au centre-ville de Montréal. Cette œuvre graphique et typographique relaie le texte poétique d'Erin Moure - une traduction qui utilise trois langues—français, anglais et guarani—du roman Mar Paraguayo de l'auteur brésilien Wilson Bueno, écrit en portunhol et guarani.





Mer paraguayenne extrait/excerpt : "...one dusk après une autre I sit ici on this sofa diagonal to the window, and in sitting it's presque as if everything's crumbling into bits: cramps in the guts: setting sun weaving humid nuances: spaces from où move déjà les occupations cérémoniales of light and lune: between the crowns of sombreros or entre les durs vides of the fig tree that devastate into shadow and suspicion in the crépuscule of the sea resort: figuier, couronne, sombreros: la ancestral speech of fathers and grands-pères that infinitely vanishes into memory, they entertain all speech et tricot: these Guaraní voices simplement eternalize as they go on weaving: ñandu: there is no better fabric than the web des feuilles tissées all together, ñandu, together and between the arabesques that, symphonique, interweave, checkerboard of green and bird et chant, in the happy amble of a freedom: ñanduti: ñandurenimbó:..."



h shadow et suspicion; figuier, couronne, shade: la ancestral speech of pères et grands
dutí lace: ñandutimichĩ: smallest ti-fleur that my needle pursues with excruciating pain
u, pincent you with all they've got: the ñandutí jolt mortally occurring: meanwhile we s
en flecks that give them colour: hovĩ hovĩ hovĩ: my despair bigger than the cicada-loud
ñandu: ñandutimichĩ: laaaaacings crocheted: faster than a single heartbeat: race of fin
yys: the flowering octahedron of immortal consistency: la chase: consistency: the living
hunt for life: now: hetaicoé: having to tear themselves free until they are fully spiders: t
d, happy: bare feet stepping, stepping all over what I'd worked to sweep and du

Writing about Paraguayan Sea

[Sherry Simon from “Paraguayan Sea”] The multilingual mixophoning of the Paraguayan Sea is a happy addition to Erin’s many previous translation escapades, one that combines homage and admiration for the exuberant Wilson Bueno with at home Montrealish franglais language blending echoing his Portunhol, and still leaving plenty of room for guest appearances from Guarani. Erin will already have mentioned that she wanted to use Mohawk in a first version....then determined the essential presence of Guarani.

We can see what this looks like with Andrew Forster’s ribboning of the text along de Maisonneuve and Mackay streets, the prickly font accentuating the strangeness of language itself...as if to say along with Nestor Perlongher, who writes the introduction to the Paraguayan Sea: “Everything’s the same yet, subtly all is altered. The event pokes holes in our habits, and in the rhythms of the cosmos.” The strangeness is intensified by the presence of Guarani, the haunting repetition of words, the unusual accents adding to the visual disturbance – and reminding us here, if need ever there was, that language is a force forever shaping our being, that the city is a creation of language, because to read its structures – its buildings, the circulation of things within it – we need a language or maybe even two or three. The city does not look the same, depending on which language is used to read it. Or perhaps, we need to create special mixed languages to enter into the always changing vocabulary of the city itself. Erin Mouré specializes, I would say, in the creation of such languages—not just mining the particular resources of the dialogue between French and English that exercises us in this city but bringing in other histories from that other language border, the one that runs between Spanish and Portuguese and includes Galician and here Brazilian-Paraguayan Portuguese—in a version that is enriched by a joyous poetic tradition. Wilson Bueno’s ‘mixelated baroque’ is a creation of languages ‘holding a mirror to the democracy and proliferation of languages’, a homage to Joyce and Neruda, migrancy and geographical indetermination.

[Stephen Horne from “A Rumble of Thread Set Free”] Simply put, Forster and Moure have adopted walls and words to stage an encounter between language and architecture, writing and poetry, within the context of a multi-disciplinary collaborative art work. Such a project engages the “democracy problem” through its expression of multiple subject positions and its ongoing “incompletion.” However, the more concrete and practical impact of this project rests with it’s play on and against boundaries both in its language dimension and its spatial configuration. In particular the work provokes a perception that the interior confinement effected by such a building is an architectural function and that such confinement extends into the building’s institutional reality as well, that is, in the case of a university, the function is a

setting of limits or boundaries as to what constitutes “proper” meaning.

...Of course with the text imprinted on a banner wrapping around an entire building it’s not really feasible to take in the entire piece of writing, we achieve only fragments interspersed with the practicalities of reading while being there on the street, in a shared civic space traversed by competing interests. Reading the text engages a reader in a participatory exchange, in this case one that is exuberantly festive, a language of release and a resurrection of libido. Even in this brief fragment we can sense the style of movement and emotion that speaks about engagement while already embodying and enacting that engagement. The text is about making: “...the ever repeated gesture of conducting the thread from the linearity of the skein...” while simultaneously existing as this making process, by being the thing it’s commenting on, “a rumble of thread set free.”

...The banner demarcated space but the text is also a cutting and lining up of space in its own way. In this way the banner mimics the action of the city space which is an ordering of space but what is most extraordinary about this event is the interaction between the writing on the banner and the spatial play of the banner and on the banner. That is, the banner marks a limiting that is in fact more like an interaction. In so far as this banner is secured against the skin of this building, it exposes the three sided role of the building’s outer wall: outside, in-between and inner, thought of in the way Elizabeth Grosz suggests, the wall is actually an intermediary, an “in-between.” And, in doing so, covered with a verbal text as it is, a piece of writing, it asks us if writing itself may operate as a wall, as a frame, as a box, and proposes that language may have it’s own walls and boxes operating within it as well as its resistances, its own performance of hybridity and liminality.

... Again, as for reading Stein and other such avant-garde writers, the point is not to find an idea, the idea “in” the work, or “in” the author, but to engage in beginning again the practice of reading, and a practice of reading against “proper meaning” perhaps by reading inside out or outside in. What is most remarkable is the intimacy in which this catches us up. Wilson Bueno created a piece of writing with great emphasis on affect, a writing that is simultaneously lovingly playful and playfully loving, Moure has with her “translation” of Bueno’s book given it the gift of ongoing “incompletion”. It’s a language of release and on Forster and Moure’s banner it says “let this building go, let go of this building, let go of building....”

[Martha Robinson from "Mer Paraguayenne / Paraguayan Sea"] That most ubiquitous of fonts, Times New Roman, has been transformed by Forster into Iguana, a thorny letterform that while it appears clean from a distance, reveals its true splintered and prickly architecture the closer the viewer approaches the work. Forster "wanted to make the physical manifestation of this text also be something that makes us stop at the letterform . . . getting you hooked on words, like the burrs of seedpods" and creating a productive friction that foregrounds the surface, the boundary, which is determined by the text. As the thorny edges come into focus the letterforms can evoke growth—reptilian horns or a time-lapsed jungle springing to life...

Unintentionally, the work plays on a paradigm familiar to the urbanite—the yellow ground and black text designed by Forster to be as bright as possible, confronting the viewer and calling attention to the surface, the textual skin articulating the division between the inside and outside, the public and interior space. "Putting that zip of yellow around it . . . delimits the space, plays with it," at the same time it references the emergency tape of construction sites and road crews, and serves to fit out the text for its inevitable confrontation with the plethora of signage with which it shares the urban streetfront. This is still another of the ways in which the formal qualities of this work are deployed to intensify its hybrid nature, and when married to the nature of the text itself and the process of translation by which Erin Moure brings the text to its Montréal audience, constructs a richly layered, complex intervention into public space.

In conversation, Forster reiterates that he is not responsible for the flow through of authorship, the intricate text in French, English and Guaraní that is central to "Mer Paraguayenne/Paraguayan Sea," paradoxically, he locates meaning in a certain inability to "really say what this piece is about," while it does "all of the things that language can do that nothing else can do." Comparisons may be drawn to the very differently articulated but oddly homologous textual works of Greg Curnoe, such as "View of Victoria Hospital," First Series No.1–6 (1968–69): both subtly rebuffing the precision attached to the use of text in public works(or works of art), and a reliance on language, the meaning of words, as the communication factor; in addition the regionalist concerns which characterize Curnoe's work are realized in the particular urban hybridity which "Mer Paraguayenne/Paraguayan Sea" presents to the viewer. And while what the work doesn't do, as Forster notes, is offer up a neatly packaged, language driven clarity to be quickly consumed by the commuter, the things it does do are legion.

Andrew Forster Bio

Andrew Forster lives in Montreal. His practice includes collaborative and cross-disciplinary projects, installation, performance, video, sculpture, design for theatre and design for public space. Visual art work is often done in collaboration with writers, dancers, choreographers, designers and architects. His work has two primary directions: firstly, installation, video, and movement-based performance shown in visual art and dance venues and, secondly, design, performance and text interventions for public space. A selection of early work was encapsulated in a solo exhibition entitled 'Museum Stories' at the Power Plant, Toronto. Past work includes: a touring production of Samuel Beckett's 'That Time' (with artist Michael Fernandes); the winning design in a competition for a new entrance to Place des Arts, Montreal (with architects Atelier Big City); a performance for 75 people entitled 'En masse,' (with choreographer Suzanne Miller); 'Osip,' a dance performance based on the poetry of Osip Mandelstam. His most recent public art work is 'Paraguayan Sea,' a building wrapped in language, in collaboration with Montreal poet Erin Moure (Concordia University, 2017-8). A current project 'The Machine Stops,' set in Chandigarh, India, uses Le Corbusier's Capitol Complex as the location for a performance-video speculative fiction which explores the conceptual and aesthetic space of post-colonial modernism in architecture. Current critical writing is about contemporary art and performance as critical practice in relation to the designed world and art as critical practice in the public space of the city. Forster has participated in several invitational art and/or design competitions for public space, including collaborations with Montreal architects Atelier Big City: Place des Arts, Montreal (2002); identity program for Quartier des spectacles, Montreal (2004); and Gatineau Monument Competition (2005).

WEB SITES : www.reluctant.ca (portfolio)

vimeo.com/channels/forster (video excerpts)

concordia.academia.edu/andrewforster (some writing)



Duet

performance video installation, 2008

2004 television news audiences watched tape of a young Palestinian boy, Hassam Abdo, as he cut off the explosive vest he was wearing, following instructions shouted by Israeli soldiers. Abdo had approached an Israeli checkpoint near Nablus in the occupied territories. For some reason, he decided not to carry out the intended act, for which his body had been made into a bomb. For some reason the soldiers took pity on the youth and did not shoot him. What followed was a delicate choreography at gunpoint. Over a significant period of time Abdo stood with his hands in the air, isolated in a wide-open space, while he followed shouted instructions to defuse and remove the explosive vest and then his clothing.

The performance-video recreates and repeats all of Hassam Abdo's gestures as performed by a man in a business suit and a woman 'minder'. To disconnect or un-make the connection between the bodily meaning and the ideologically predetermined informational news event, is not to sensationalize or deplete the relevance of the event itself, or the trauma embedded in it. The intention is the opposite.



Cinéma

performance, 2004

Outdoor performance of indoor audience. Société de art technologiques, Montreal, 2004. Cinéma was a multi-night performance in a public square. An audience is seated indoors in constructed theatre seating, facing out through a wall of floor-to-ceiling windows towards an active public square (Place de la Paix). The window functions like a screen when viewed from the inside, creating a 'safe' space for viewers to observe the outside urban world. The performance in the plaza involves a series of ambient actions by eight performers, repeated on varying cycles for approximately two hours. Cinéma was an apparatus that hinged on the boundary of looking versus acting, of public and private, of 'surveillor' and 'surveilled.' Is the unblinking eye of the camera or the camera obscura – the cinematic eye, an adequate metaphor for looking out on the world (and the people) that surrounds us? Is it an adequate metaphor for being implicated in the world? The work plays with the idea of the screen and the window as simultaneously alienating and revealing, as the divider of public from private space.

FOR BOTH SEE: vimeo.com/channels/forster (video excerpts, page 2)