

MANUELA BERNDT: ARTISTIC RESEARCH WITH CASA DORREGO

Buenos Aires/Argentina 12.02.2010 – 13.04.2010

Dear LUTSF,

6th June 2010

Thank you very much for supporting my work and research, both in Argentina and the UK. This scholarship has enabled me to embark on a unique experience, which has enriched my artistic and personal growth and created links and opportunities that will continuously nurture future projects. Whilst undertaking intensive research with the creators of Casa Dorrego, a leading arts organisation from Buenos Aires/Argentina specialising in audio-visual performance technologies, I gained an insight into the company's innovative practise and methods of incorporating improvisational multimedia and interactive installation technologies into live dance performance. Yet most importantly I used this two-month residency to collaborate and share with local and regional artists and have been offered a range of professional activities and projects to be involved with during my stay. I have truly experienced the benefits and joys of international exchange and returned my hosts' generosity by sharing my creative practise with them and leading a series of workshops and seminars for associated artists in Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay.

Thank you again for helping me initiate an exciting and forward-looking connection between British and Argentinean artists. Please find enclosed two copies of the full report and images of my trip and follow up recent and future developments on my website www.motionmanual.com or see <http://www.wix.com/odamovimiento/oda-tic> for details about my upcoming tour through South America.

Best wishes

Manuela Berndt

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The beginnings of this project go way back to 2008, when I first established online links with artists from Casa Dorrego and the Red Sudamericana de Danza. The idea of a joint research and exchange project began to take shape when I was awarded the Lisa Ullmann Travelling Scholarship in 2009. Still over ten months before the actual trip we began to plan and design the activity and it grew bigger and more exciting as we went along. Whilst collaborating with my Argentinean colleagues, I was introduced to the enormous network of South American dance artists they have set up over the last years to create a platform of international and interdisciplinary dialogue and exchange. Soon a range of members and associated artists would express an interest in meeting me and organising residencies, workshops or seminars and this is how I became more and more involved with different artistic communities, able to undergo practical research and at the same time reciprocate the hospitality and learning opportunities I was offered in Buenos Aires.

My creative research focused on the creation of new performance work with my Leeds based interdisciplinary artists collective MotionManual. The residency with the artistic core of Casa Dorrego, a leading South American arts organisation specialising in audio-visual performance technologies, enabled me to study and experience their innovative practise and methods of incorporating improvisational multimedia and interactive installation technologies into live dance performance.

The reason for choosing this particular Argentinean company to collaborate with during my research, was my interest in the collective's latest development of an interactive performance space, which operates in dialogue with movement. The concept and design of this technological ecosystem enables the dancers to effect the performance parameters of sound, light and visuals through movement and direct contact with media artists who are integrated into the performance space. Blending the roles of technicians and dancers to create one joint collective creates constant mutation of the performance space provoked by the movement of all participants on stage. This advanced idea of interdisciplinary collaboration enabled by technology has become the starting point for devising a new production with MotionManual in the UK.

During my stay with Casa Dorrego who have invited me to observe and experience their ongoing research into multimedia performance systems I gained a deeper understanding of the software and technology used and embarked on a series of movement and choreography studies within the described interactive performance spaces. I was able to undergo my research within the frame of the company's working processes and made use of their facilities whilst receiving coaching and mentoring from different artists.

My research objective was to collect specialist information, contextual understanding and technical know-how needed to identify and develop my own practise of combining dance and interactive technology in order to devise and create new choreographic work. This knowledge has significantly enriched and nurtured the artistic concept of MotionManual's new double bill and strengthened the technology strand of my performance work. Since returning from my travels I have collaborated with a Leeds-based media artist and successfully previewed the company's new double bill composed of *HYB* and *DanceMakers-A working relationship in 10 acts* in the Netherlands, followed by the UK-premiere this month.

Alongside the opportunity of intense professional development I was mostly interested in the artistic exchange aspect of my international activity. Whilst studying and working with the artists of Casa Dorrego in Buenos Aires I was able to build new networks and contacts with dance professionals and gain insight into artistic practise in Argentina as well as Bolivia and Paraguay where I was invited for short residencies. During my two-month stay I was offered numerous possibilities of participating in performance events, meetings, seminars, workshops and research activities, which enhanced my conception of South American contemporary dance and allowed me to explore new artistic platforms.

In return have I shared my choreographic practise and experience as a lecturer in dance, movement generation and improvisation with the company members and their colleagues from the Red Sudamericana de Danza. In this context I have learned how to approach international artistic collaboration within my field and developed ideas and plans to extend my own international practise, networking and representation.

Determined to exchange methods, creative approaches, skills and ideas with the people that helped me pursuing my own professional development and research within their working spaces, I was able put my studies into practise and receive feedback from my colleagues. In the future I wish to maintain and expand this connection and look forward to embarking on a creative residency tour through South America as a direct outcome and development of this project.

Thank you very much for this fantastic opportunity of experiencing artistic practise abroad and building networks, friendships and contacts with great potential to be developed in the future. The exchange with international artists is an essential contribution towards professional artistic development and the efficient organisation of travel arrangements and good communication with LUTSF has greatly contributed to a successful accomplishment of this activity.

Best wishes to the fund and future scholarship holders.

Manuela Berndt



Leading a workshop at the San Martin State Theatre in Buenos Aires.



With artists from Casa Dorrego during a creative session.



Creative Residency in Rosario/Argentina.