WEAVER // a game piece // merzbau

THOUGHTS, RULES AND SCORE

MARCH 25-26 2023

The structure shapes the subject, the structure shapes the body and the structure shapes what a body can do. So, we constructed a new structure.

If there is choreography to be found here, it is to be found in choreographing the space and material used in the work. This is not “about” dance moves or dance/music being organized in a way where we are forced to “hit a beat”. (This should be flipped. The beat is hitting you! A never-ending, lifelong pounding! Absurd, frankly.) It also has little to do with being impressive. The incessant privileging of virtuosity within the context of dance and music is suspect, we have serious doubts as to whether this serves us or the work. the commodification of dance-based virtuosity puts undeniable pressures on what is considered acceptable work to make. There is a real violence done here, because dance is a thing of flesh, we leave no artifact only the trace of memory. Dance *is* body. Compound this with the reality that dance is a feminized form, and we can begin to see the particular violence the virtuosic commodity paradigm inflicts on women dancers. Now, this isn’t to say we aren’t awesome or that you won’t find any of this impressive, you probably will, and you probably should. But there is other, more interesting, shit going on. How have you been choreographed to see?

This is a game piece and the players have been asked to do something rather simple – learn the rules and then, deal with their freedom given the conditions that appear throughout the unfolding of the composition. *Pay attention, your entire body is covered in ears.* Between the rigid directives and structural choreographies are pockets of empty space. When made aware of these voids, what does the body do?

The game mechanism, and the various ways it is invoked in this work, exists as a tool to lure freedom into the room. We built an apparatus to push up against a preconceived notion of the body that appears to us, *and also feels*, neutral. What can a body do? In order to touch this question, we must work past and through disciplinary discourses that we are regularly subject to and that we have taken for granted to such a degree that we believe that the body in chains is a body acting in freedom. There is no neutral body and the idea that there is a neutral body needs to be systematically interrogated. Who and what are neutral? What could lead a body to move in such a way? What historical dust has settled here? How do we disrupt things as such? These questions aren’t necessarily obvious. We might not realize how important it is to ask them. But they should be asked, and they must be asked through the body in its entirety. If there is a political kernel in dance, it is here.

We endeavor to ask these questions in a way that does not reproduce vulgar identitarianism. This, of course, necessitates abstraction. We have gone to absurd lengths trying to do this. That said, the most dangerous reproductions of identity do not come from below. This work is nothing if not punching up. No body is neutral. Make what you will of that.

WEAVER is addressed to everyone and nobody in particular.

WEAVER 1 MARCH 25-26 2023

PLAYERS:

PLAYER 1 // BRAIN: TAI LEE
PLAYER 2 // FEET: DION KERR
PLAYER 3 // HEART: ANDI KERR
PLAYER 4 // HANDS: CAMERON DUNHAM
PLAYER 5 // EARS: BIANCA ABARCA
PLAYER 6 // SKIN: CASSIDY GRADY

PIECES:

Table 1
Table 2
Mixer
Bass guitar
Drums
Korg prophecy
Mp404mkII
Painters tape
Weavers fabric
Lamp x4
Weaver tiles x30 and game board
Brain apparatus (Camera, projector and clock)

What follows is “virtuosity” in the gap. / /

Set up:

The table is in the center. On top of the table is the brain apparatus. Also on the table are the 30 tiles, and the game board. Underneath the table is the weaver’s fabric. To the left of the table is the bass guitar. The drum kit is to the right. In front of those stations, the tape maps the quadrant, a box divided by a horizontal line, a vertical line, and lastly an X. On each corner of the quadrant is a lamp with a green light.

How to play:

At the beginning of the game, each of the 6 players grab 5 tiles. There are different types of tiles: 7 movement tiles, 8 music tiles, 7 directives tiles, the shuffler tile, 6 name tiles, and an X. The game board outlines each of the 6 rounds that will be played, and the interludes that will go between the rounds. The player who gets the X tile goes first, placing the X in their desired position on the board. After that, proceeding clockwise, each player takes a turn placing one tile on the board or into the discard pile, as there are more movement, music, and adjective tiles than there are rounds in the game. This will formulate each of the 6 rounds, and the interludes in which they each will be activated throughout the game. The shuffler has the power to, once the board is set, make exactly 2 changes. After the shuffler adjusts the board, Player 1 remains at the brain, Player 2 proceeds to the bass guitar, and Player 3 proceeds to the drum kit. Players 4-6 proceed to their respective places as indicated by the movement tile for Round 1. The clock starts. Round 1 begins…

Round duration: 7 minutes
Interludes: 2 minutes

Run order:
Round 1
Interlude
Round 2
Interlude
Round 3
Round 4
Interlude
Round 5
Interlude
Round 6
Outro

Movement tiles:

QUADRANT (x2)
Players 4-6 follow the taped quadrant on the ground. The round begins on the color red. While on red, the players can only move counterclockwise around the shape. The diagonal line from the top left to the bottom right of the quadrant can either be run forwards or walked backwards on. The bottom right corner is a point at which the players can exit the inner lines of the shape. When moving on the other diagonal, players emphasize one limb. The bottom left is also a potential exit point. The horizontal line in the middle of the quadrant is for mirroring another body on that line. The left side of this line is an exit point. On the vertical line, players move at a low level, close to the ground. The front of this line is an exit point. When the board switches to green, the flow switches to clockwise. The two diagonal lines switch prompts, and all the exit points change to the opposite side of the line.

OKLAHOMA (x2)
Players 4-6 perform an excerpt of the ballet dream sequence from Oklahoma. It has been sectioned into 4 parts. They do part 1 twice, in unison. From there, the players can utilize all 4 parts to create their own configuration of the choreography.

LAMPS (x2)
For the Lamps round, Player 4 goes to the bottom left corner of the quadrant, Player 5 to the top left, and Player 6 to the top right. The lights go out. Player 5 turns on her lamp once. Player 4 turns on his lamp twice. Player 6 turns on her lamp 3 times. Players 4 and 6 turn on their lamps and Player 5 crosses the quadrant diagonally to the bottom right corner. Players 4 and 6 turn off their lamps and Player 5 turns hers on. Player 4 then crosses to join Player 6. Player 4 turns on his lamp, and Player 6 crosses to take Player 4's original position. Player 6 then initiates all 3 players to turn off their lamps. Player 5 then turns on her lamp and crosses diagonally. She then turns on the lamp that was waiting in the other corner, triggering players 4 and 6 to cross simultaneously. Players 4 and 6 then turn on their lamps, and all three players shift one position counterclockwise. Player 6 once again initiates all 3 players to turn off their lamps.

WEAVER (x1)
At the top of Weaver, Player 4 grabs the weaver's fabric from under the table. Player 4 then ties the fabric to Player 2's chair. He then moves across the stage, unraveling. Player 4 and Player 6 then wrap the fabric around the pillar on the right side of the stage. Player 6 then moves diagonally to the front left corner and ties the fabric to the chair in the front row, furthest audience left. She then passes the fabric to Player 5 who travels to the back left corner, and ties the fabric to Player 2's chair. She then travels with the fabric to the front right corner, as Players 4 and 6 meet her in the center. Player 4 is left behind in the center and Players 5 and 6 proceed to the corner. They become intertwined in the end of the fabric, then move back towards Player 4. All three players travel together towards the back left corner becoming increasingly intertwined in the fabric. Player 4 then escapes the structure, followed by Player 6, then Player 5.

Music Tiles:
All musical blocks were built from the starting point of preprogrammed beats on a vintage Yamaha mixer/drum machine.

Block 1: extends from "waltz"

Block 2: extends from "tango"

Block 3: extends from "two beat"

Block 4: extends from "bossa nova"

Block 5: extends from "rumba"

Block 6: extends from "swing"

Block 7: extends from "jazz rock"

Block 8: extends from "slow rock"

These are just the starting points. Tempo, feel, instrumentation etc are all subject to change..but it is important to stay committed to the blueprint.

Directive tiles:
These tiles should be understood as filters that color the entirety of the round. This is the most flexible aspect of the game and can be taken in any direction that players desire, so long as all other structural rules maintain their integrity.

25% EFFORT

EXPANSIVE

SPEED

DISJOINTED

Thank you to all the supporters of merzbau.

I'd name you all, but I typed this 12 hours before the show.
The love and care are in the bones of the work.

Last word..

No to spectacle no to virtuosity no to transformations and magic and make believe no to glamour no to the heroic no to the anti-heroic no to trash imagery no to involvement of spectator no no no to romance for fucking christs sake no to kitsch no to camp no to seduction of spectator by the wiles of the performer no to eccentricity no to Warhol sick son of a bitch no to being moved. You saw what you saw and what you saw was NO.

Thank you Yvonne for your vicious NO.

This is an aesthetic of denial. We don't want your beautiful delusions.

tai