PERFORMING PEDAGOGIES

Curator: Shalon Webber-Heffernan March 15th-20th, 2016 Kingston, Ontario

WITH GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM

Agnes Etherington Art Centre
Corridor Culture
Isabel Bader Centre Integrated Learning Fund
Queen's University Cultural Studies Program
Queen's University Film and Media Department
Queen's University SGPS
Stampede Breakfast Productions
Union Gallery
Voicespondence

Special Thanks to

Keren Zaiontz, Clive Robertson, Frances Leeming, Brian Johnson, Francisco-Fernando Granados, Saul Garcia-Lopez, Golboo Amani, Basil AlZeri, Andrew Rabyniuk, Justin Langlois, Caitlin Chaisson, members of The School for Eventual Vacancy, the students of FILM 338, Madison Lymer, Noah Freedman, Hannah Komlodi, Tarreisha Agard, Miranda Ramnares, Matt Corolis, Dominique Helie, Terry O'Reilly, Craig Berggold, Susan Lord, Jocelyn Purdie, Lib Spry, Ellyn Walker, Jamie Jelinski, and Nicole MacDougal

Design and Layout by Benjamin Nelson

CONTENTS

Foreword	4
Andrew Rabyniuk How to Tie a Bow Tie	6
Golboo Amani The School of Bartered Knowledge	10
Francisco-Fernando Granados movement study - North American strip search procedure	12
Saul Garcia-Lopez 500 + Years of Macho Power	14
Basil AlZeri Suggested Instructions	18
The School for Eventual Vacancy (Caitlin Chaisson & Justin Langlois) Distance Education	22
Performing Pedagogies Panel Discussion Cultural Studies Speakers Series	26
Radical Performance Pedagogy Workshop La Pocha Nostra	26
About the Artists	28

FOREWORD

Performing Pedagogies was a week-long performance and exhibition series that took place in Kingston, Ontario between March 15th - March 20th 2016. The motivation for this project came from a desire to explore performative modes of experiencing critical, embodied knowledge. The series featured five performances, a long distance collaboration between thirty-one Queen's undergraduate students and a Vancouver artist-run free school (The School for Eventual Vacancy), a subsequent exhibition, a panel discussion, and a radical performance pedagogy workshop led by co-artistic director of the international performance art troupe, La Pocha Nostra. Artists featured included Golboo Amani, Basil AlZeri, Caitlin Chaisson, Justin Langlois, Saul Garcia-Lopez, Francisco-Fernando Granados, and Andrew Rabyniuk.

By curating examples of performance art that variously incorporated embodied pedagogical interventions, I examined the processes of performance as pedagogy. I have drawn upon principles from the field of critical pedagogy, and have considered theatricalization of decoloniality as a performative form of critical analysis. *Performing Pedagogies* explored interventions into contemporary contours of neoliberal education paradigms through embodied encounters—fostering conversations about the meanings and limitations of knowledge dissemination and education today, and posing questions about possibilities for radical pedagogies, embodied knowledge, and counter curricula. How can we measure knowledge beyond 'impact'? What knowledge is legitimatized or discarded? What gives knowledge 'value'? The series engaged with performance art and open-ended frameworks for circulating knowledge and embodied epistemologies, and considered ways to play with re-structuring the power relations of knowledge production through performance, critical negotiation and ephemeral exchange.



This project was an exploration into possibilities for political praxis vis-à-vis performance art, the body, and pedagogical processes, as well as experimentation with knowledge dissemination in the pursuit of creating counter hegemonic strategies. My belief in experiential, embodied, and 'self' learning (having first-hand, direct, and affectual experience with concepts) guided me in realizing *Performing Pedagogies*. Performance art (by its very definition an embodied practice) materializes self-knowledge, and critical pedagogical strategies have transformative effects on individuals which can lead to micro changes in perspective, which can temporarily counter or critically intervene into institutional and hegemonic forms of knowing.

The project was theoretically and conceptually situated within a critical theory framework grounded in critical race theory, postmodern, poststructuralist and feminist thinking. Performances directly dealt with issues of race, sexuality, hegemonic masculinity, power, colonialism, and the performing body as pedagogical tactic for interruption. I am curious about the ways pedagogical performance practices align with, or resist neoliberal trends toward fulfilling capitalist agendas or market-driven concepts of knowledge 'production,' and have attempted to engage with critical embodied pedagogies to explore how they temporarily push against the limits of colonialist, authoritarian hierarchies, and those forms of education that systematize experience, and in many cases ignore body/emotion/intuition/relation as reliable sites of knowledge.

Shalon Webber - Heffernan Curator

ANDREW RABYNIUK

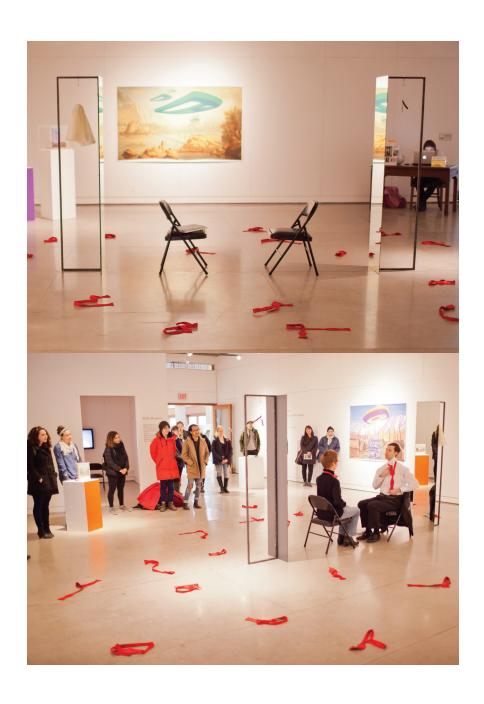
How to Tie a Bow-Tie



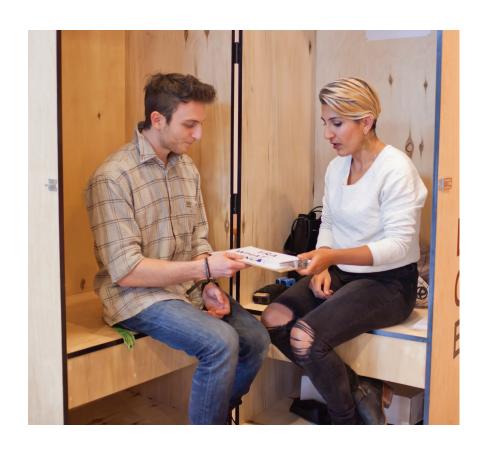
How to tie a bow-tie was a series of one-to-one, participatory performances that used intimacy and mimicry to demonstrate how to tie a bow-tie. After selecting a bright red silk tie from off the gallery floor, each participant took a seat across from Rabyniuk where they would receive a handshake and a brief introduction. Rabyniuk would then slowly begin to tie the bow-tie knot, allowing each participant to watch, interpret and perform for themselves the same actions by carefully mimicking his movements. No linguistic instructions were given, so participants were required to mirror Rabyniuk's actions carefully. In turn, Rabyniuk relied on participants' actions and body language in order to proceed from one stage of tying the knot to the next, revealing the difficulty of mimicking someone else's actions, and to allow for possible "failures" to occur publicly.

How to Tie a Bow Tie asked how, through the dissemination of certain knowledge and skills, ideologically imbued cultural practices and forms are reproduced. Dressing is an embodied and political practice and in turn, fashion is a cultural system embodying complex gender and class codes. By employing a "demonstration" model whereby people learn by observing and doing, Rabyniuk revealed subtle and discursive influences effecting sartorial form among individuals and groups rather than explicitly stated conventions, or industrially determined possibilities governing dress—metaphorically addressing enculturation as pedagogical form. While Rabyniuk intended to 'teach' individuals how to tie a bow-tie, the interdependent relationship between himself (as demonstrator) and spectator was an effort to undercut the authority of the pedagogue by highlighting the inherently reciprocal relationship involved in knowledge transmissions. The potential difficulties and failed attempts to produce a well-formed bow-tie shifted the concern from the knot, as the object of knowledge, to the process of its production – to the experience of learning and feeling in public, on display.

As the subject of a pedagogical performance, producing a bow-tie through the relational scheme described above treats dressing as a performative and social practice. Although the bow-tie is a very specific fashion accessory, *How to Tie a Bow* considered, through the transmission of technical knowledge associated with forming the particular knot, the kinds of value laden know-how embodied by dressing, revealing the public pedagogy of enculturation. Rabyniuk's performance elucidated vernacular relational knowledge, and highlighted the co-dependence we have upon each other for social knowledge. The performance revealed ways social learning happens through processes of enculturation, intimacy, vulnerability, and exchange. Rabyniuk's 'public lesson' metaphorically revealed more complex ways in which we come to know things – always aware of who and what is watching us, surveilling us, and governing the ways we 'should' be in the world, and the ways we 'should' be learning. The performance highlighted the public pedagogies of spaces that reside outside of traditional school settings that impact our identities and knowledge production.







GOLBOO AMANI

The School of Bartered Knowledge The School of Bartered Knowledge is a performance/installation that utilizes open-ended frameworks for the circulation of knowledge and information. The school is a simple wooden structure, designed for the democratic negotiation of knowledge—a self-contained school and archive, with the structure acting as the building, furniture and library. Housed in the top of the structure are shelves that contain the collected epistemologies of various community interactions. Conversations in *The School* are initiated through public engagement between Amani and passersby. The encounter is intended to re-structure the power relations of knowledge production through critical negotiation and ephemeral exchange. The distinctions that constitute the gap between valued and illegitimate knowledge become the central topic of discussion. Through *The School*, Amani is able to ask: what kinds of knowledge are worth trading, and what kind of value do we give them?

For Amani, one of the inspirations for creating *The School of Bartered Knowledge* was the realization that some of the most important things she had learned throughout her life had been from outside of the institution – things taught to her in casual and vernacular ways—which posed the question: where do we hold that knowledge? Where is the archive of *that* knowledge? *The School of Bartered Knowledge* speaks to precisely that kind of vernacular knowledge and exchange. Amani's school operates out of generosity since as she noted, "we rarely pay for the vernacular knowledge that feeds us with the vital information that we use to survive in our lives, so I wanted to create a space where people could do that".

Once a passerby would sit down in *The School*, Amani would briefly explain the process of how they would go about trading and negotiating knowledge together. Participants approached the structure that placed them in an intimate, face to face encounter with the artist. These encounters played with the logic of capital trade through the exchange of bartered, oral knowledge. Amani records the knowledge she receives on an index card and files it on the shelves above the seating area of the structure, creating a loose-leaf encyclopedia of the everyday. At the end of each exchange, Amani would ask participants if they felt the exchange was a fair trade, and she only keeps the card if the participant believes it to be a fair knowledge trade; if not, they have the power to renegotiate.

The School for Bartered Knowledge created space for the experience of other ways of knowing and experiencing knowledge exchange. In this case, Amani's school played with deinstitutionalizing pedagogy from within the institution (Queen's University) drawing out the inherent possibilities of interdependent structural systems, while simultaneously revealing that 'radical' spaces within institutions can have rupturing impacts for individuals engaging with it. Amani's work transcends a simplistic pedagogic aesthetic by focusing on, and highlighting radical potentials for the *processes* these works elicit by hailing her participants and viewers to engage in and take responsibility for a critical, subjective experience – rather than relying on the artist's expertise to 'teach' something new or to provide a consumptive experience.

FRANCISCO-FERNANDO GRANADOS

movement study standard North American strip search procedure



movement study illustrated behavioral patterns established by police strip searches and was presented as a readymade in a white cube setting. Emerging from a crowd of spectators, Granados casually approached the instructions which detailed the steps of a 'correct' strip search procedure. Granados followed the instructions: taking off his clothes, turning them inside out, shaking them and throwing them out of reach followed by a very detailed & intimate examination of the body. The intimacy and discomfort of movement study forced spectators to consider the ways they are personally implicated in ongoing forms of state violence and forms of knowing that are produced through naturalized racist, homophobic laws, structures, and embedded societal norms.

Granados maintained intense eye contact with his spectators throughout the entire performance. When he removed his pants, coins spilled from his pocket –he bent down to pick them up wearing only his underwear and socks. He pulled down his underwear and holds them up for all to see, and proceeded to wriggle off his socks, shaking them out and tossing them into the pile of belongings. Once completely nude, he leaned forward and ran his fingers through his hair – ensuring everyone could see that there was nothing hidden there. He leaned his head back and stuck out his tongue, flipped his upper lip up and then down. Folded back the left ear, then the right. Hands up. He spread his legs, pulled back foreskin, lifted balls. Lifted the left foot, then the right. Squat. Cough. Once the strip search was complete, Granados slowly began to cover himself back up, piece by piece.

Denuding within the context of carefully following a "correct" strip search procedure posed the question of pedagogy in relationship to the power dynamics of instruction from the state. The relationship between score and action aimed to expose the double bind between coercion and consent that results from framing an act of state power that under current circumstances can be legally enforced on any body that falls under its jurisdiction. By performing the procedure of the strip search, Granados revealed the perversity and coercion that can be embedded in instruction. A real strip search procedure already looks so much like performance art; it already is such a careful, detailed way to figure the body.



SAUL GARCIA-LOPEZ

500+ Years of Macho Power

As co-artistic director of La Pocha Nostra, Garcia-Lopez is deeply influenced by the international performance troupe's common denominator to challenge, cross, and erase dangerous borders between art and politics, practice and theory, artist and spectator, mentor and apprentice, body and cultural nightmares through performance art. Garcia-Lopez' performance engaged with hegemonic masculinity and violence perpetuated by colonization. In 500+ Years of Macho Power Garcia-Lopez embodied a hyper-masculine Latino persona and his performance deconstructed binary forces and relationships of machismo and power. Garcia-Lopez performed humorous actions showing stereotypical representations of power.

A table sat before Garcia-Lopez with hot sauce, tequila, cutting board, kitchen utensils and knives. Ceremonial bagpipe music blared loudly from the speakers with the tune of *Amazing Grace*. Garcia-Lopez donned a crown of silver bullets and began grabbing at his crotch at an apparently massive phallus under his pants. Stroking himself, he stepped toward his viewers – taunting them, playing with them. He stripped off his shirt to reveal the words MACHO POWER on his chest. He unzipped his pants and pulled out a massive piece of meat attached to his body and proudly showed it up and then dropped it straight onto a chopping block. He began to mash the meat violently with a mallet—butchering it.

He tossed taco shells on the grill and began cooking the pieces of meat he had severed off. He assembled the taco and greedily stuffed the entire thing in his mouth, with meat juice dripping all over his face and lips and chased it down with tequila—eating his own masculinity in an act of self-mutilation. The performance was a provocative poetic action that referred to the mutilation of the body and its relationship with power and gender. In other iterations of this piece, Garcia-Lopez has completed the performance by offering "Macho Tacos" to the male audience members, a powerful commentary of deconstructing machismo, power and the violence implied – implicating members of the audience to reflect on their own complicity in histories of violence. Garcia-Lopez challenged viewers to re-think and re-engage with the performative effects of bodies that transgress against state-and socially mandated racial and sexual norms.







(Left + Top) Photos by Dominique Helie (Above) Photo courtesy of Saul Garcia-Lopez. Guillermo Gomez-Pena and Saul Garcia-Lopez

BASIL ALZERI

Suggested Instructions



Suggested Instructions was an instructional work that instructed guests in the etiquettes of eating Palestinian mezze dishes. Defining life artistically through the domestic, the culinary, or everyday unsettles the relationships between art and life. AlZeri's performance broke with the traditional space and usages of the art gallery, taking as his subject the dynamic and ephemeral social environment of dining. Suggested Instructions worked to create a social circumstance with the participant's experience of social eating, conversation, and learning and teaching the instructions, becoming the art.

AlZeri rolled out a dolly carrying folding chairs and began to arrange them around the table one by one. Once the tables and chairs were set, AlZeri began randomly approaching individuals in the gallery to ask them if they wanted to dine. If they agreed, he sprayed their hands with sanitizer and gave them a serviette. Once this cleansing ritual has concluded, chosen individuals would find a spot at the table in the gallery, and wait for others to join. Once enough people had gathered around the table, AlZeri began creating an elaborate spread - bringing out a large pot of hummus and olive oil to the table, followed by bowls of chopped tomatoes, lemon, radishes, arugula, fennel, pine nuts, paprika, olives, stuffed eggplant, and labneh.

AlZeri quietly explained 'the instructions' to individuals seated around the table. Al-Zeri taught his guests the particular etiquette for eating the Palestinian mezze dishes set in front of them. After the instructions have been imparted to the selected guests, the guests were in turn asked to repeat and teach the instructions to other remaining spectators in the gallery. The 'performance' began blurring into 'real' life. Multiple conversations erupted, people dispersed and scattered through the space, and they knew that they no longer had to follow the etiquette of the usual gallery experience. The performance created a temporary community of friends, fellow artists and strangers in a gesture of generosity and collectivity with individuals engaging, sharing and contributing their own knowledge through dialogue. AlZeri abdicated the position of "teacher" rather than remaining the gatekeeper of special knowledge. The knowledge of the instructions was organically and messily passed along orally through individuals - much of it was lost, misinterpreted, or transmitted completely incorrect. While the visual display of the colorful foods was beautiful, it was not the presentation of the food that was important for this performance, but rather what happened between people while eating and talking. Eating the food, and the conversations that arose while attempting to pass on the instructions of proper etiquette to others became the object on display - the shared communication was the realization of the work.





THE SCHOOL FOR EVENTUAL VACANCY (CAITLIN CHAISSON & JUSTIN LANGLOIS)

Distance Education



Distance Education was conceived and articulated across distances by Vancouver's The School for Eventual Vacancy (TSEV) and Queen's University undergraduate class, Film 338: Contemporary Issues in Cultural Studies. Distance Education was a long distance knowledge exchange between The School for Eventual Vacancy and Queen's Department of Film and Media undergraduate course, FILM 338. The School mailed FILM 338 students packages of materials, resources, and ephemera that set out to challenge traditional understandings of learning in the academy. In response, students created Knowledge Kits that critically and creatively attempted to de-centre their own ingrained assumptions around schooling within and beyond the classroom. The Kits challenged how (un)learning can take place, and revealed the range of embedded messages disseminated through both popular culture and institutional curricula. While some Kits took the form of books and maps, others used film and art objects to explore the stakes of learning in a period where knowledge for its own sake is treated as a suspect activity because it cannot be reduced to (economic) market activity. After creating the Kits, a group exhibition took place at the Isabel Bader Centre for Performing Art which illuminated the possibility of a counter curricula, or subjects of study that attempted to tactically speak back to the secret knowledge that disciplines subjects into productive workers, consumers, and docile students. Following the exhibition, the Knowledge Kits were mailed to Vancouver completing the exchange with *The School*. Working across great distances and expanses of time, this exchange demonstrated that knowledge production is an activity made of critical negotiations, ephemeral exchanges, and creative practices.

The School for Eventual Vacancy

February 7, 2016

Dearest friends.

As you know by now, The School for Eventual Vacancy operates as an ongoing exploration of education as creative practice and political subjectivity. It tries to find the power to make itself unnecessary and vacant, with an underlying concern for the necessary maintenance of The School towards its eventual vacancy.

Hidden Curriculum and Distance Education aimed to reveal hidden curricula in educational infrastructures and everyday practice. Distancing education from traditional pedagogical dogmas to think of learning in an expansive scope, we endeavoured to take up distance education as something more than a response to scarcity or an inclination towards independent management.

Through an engagement with various concepts of distance, we tried to locate ourselves in a vantage that illuminates what it is we are learning, when we are learning. Guided by an effort to not only unpack, but to deploy hidden or secret knowledge and curriculum within and against educational models, this session explored the potential of forms, gestures and articulations that take place across great distances and expanses of time.

As a result of these efforts, we have prepared a package of materials, resources, and ephemera for you. In some cases, we have aimed to share what we found important or useful, and in other cases, we've tried to rework materials to our own interests, and in yet other cases, we've abandoned discrete goals in favour of eventual trajectories and horizons of spontaneous activity. We envision this package as a part of a correspondence project, perhaps even a form of distance education, that will be posted back and forth between us. The materials provided should be 'completed' as you see fit.

We encourage you to think together and apart, to develop your own vacancies and deployments or knowledge and action, and to hide in plain sight and in deep cover a curriculum that matters to you. Together, we want to imagine that a hidden curriculum is as much something we need to reveal as it is something we need to obfuscate, and that distance education is a site of praxis and generosity, negotiated collectively. What counter-hegemonies, common sense, and truant activities can we cultivate together?

We look forward to your response.

With sincerity, eventually,

Caitlin Chaisson and Justin Langlois, on behalf of The School for Eventual Vacancy



(Top) Photo by Dominique Helie - Book created by Film 338 students in response to The School for Eventual Vacancy (Above) Photo by Dominique Helie - Pieces sent from The School for Eventual Vacancy on display

PERFORMING PEDAGOGIES PANEL DISCUSSION

Cultural Studies Speakers Series

On March 16th, *Performing Pedagogies* hosted a panel discussion at the Agnes Etherington Art Centre. Panel participants included Basil AlZeri, Golboo Amani, Saul Garcia-Lopez, and Francisco-Fernando Granados and was facilitated by Keren Zaiontz who is Assistant Professor and Queen's National Scholar in the Department of Film and Media and Graduate Program in Cultural Studies. The panel was an opportunity for guest artists to discuss their artistic practices and the intersecting relationships, challenges and potentials between art and critical pedagogy.

RADICAL PERFORMANCE PEDAGOGY WORKSHOP

La Pocha Nostra

On March 17th Saul Garcia Lopez, co-artistic director of La Pocha Nostra, led a daylong radical performance pedagogy workshop at Queen's University. La Pocha Nostra (headed by Guillermo Gomez-Pena) conducts cross- cultural/cross-disciplinary/ cross-generational workshops involving performance artists, actors, dancers, theorists and students from diverse communities, generations and artistic backgrounds. Participants were exposed to the 'Pocha Method', an eclectic combination of exercises borrowed from multiple traditions including performance art, experimental theater and dance, the Suzuki method, ritual shamanism, performance games and live performance jam sessions. Parallel to this hands-on process, the group analyzed the creative processes and issues addressed by the work, and its cultural impact and political pertinence. The workshop provided a glimpse into the pedagogical performance methodology of La Pocha Nostra which seeks to create temporary communities of rebel artists from different disciplines, ages, ethnic backgrounds, gender persuasions, and nationalities, in which difference and experimentation are not only accepted but encouraged. La Pocha Nostra tries to find hybrid and interdisciplinary aesthetics reflective of the spirit and tribulations of our times, and of the concerns of each participant. They look for new modes of relating laterally to the 'other,' bypassing the myriad borders imposed by our professional institutions, our religious and political beliefs, and pop-cultural affiliations. The workshop focused on methods to discover new ways of relating to our own bodies with the hope that by decolonizing and then re-politicizing our bodies, they can become sites for activism and embodied theory.



Photos by Dominique Helie (Top) Attendees at Performing Pedagogies panel are led in an embodied practice by Saul Garcia-Lopez. (Above) Basil AlZeri talks about his performance practice. (Right) Saul Garcia-Lopez talking about La Pocha Nostra performance methodology.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Basil AlZeri is a visual artist living and working in Toronto. AlZeri's practice involves the intersection of art, education, and community engagement, taking multiple forms, such as performance, interventions, gallery and public installation—examining the socio-political dynamics of the family and its intersection with cultural practices, drawing on the necessities of everyday life and the visibility of labour as sites of exploration. His work aims to facilitate a space for empathy through gestures of inclusivity and generosity. AlZeri's work has been shown in Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Sackville, Regina, Vancouver, Mexico City, Santiago, and Tartu/Estonia, and he will an artist in residence at the Art Gallery of Ontario in 2016.

Golboo Amani is a Toronto-based interdisciplinary artist who creates works focused on process and research through a variety of mediums including photography, performance, space intervention, digital media, and participatory practice. She received her Bachelor of Fine Art from Emily Carr University and her Master of Visual Studies at the University of Toronto. Her work has been shown nationally and internationally in venues including the Hemispheric Institute at FOFA (Montreal), FADO Emerging Artist Series (Toronto), TRANSMUTED International Festival of Performance Art (Mexico City), and the LIVE Biennial of Performance (Vancouver).

Saul Garcia-Lopez is a performance artist, radical director and PhD candidate at York University. He is co-artistic director of international performance troupe La Pocha Nostra. Saul explores the pedagogical intersections of acting, performance theory and practice, indigenous strategies of performance, ethnicity, gender, post-coloniality and indigeneity. His artistic work is body, text and multidisciplinary based and aims to dislocate assumptions of cultural representations by embodying simultaneous and contradictory identities and actions. Saul has trained as a contemporary dancer and actor, and as a psychologist at the National University in Mexico. He completed a Post Graduate Diploma in Directing at VCA, Melbourne University, and a Drama and Film Honours Degree.

Francisco-Fernando Granados is a Toronto-based artist working in performance, drawing, and multidisciplinary critical practices. Recent Toronto projects include public art work for NuitBlanche, an installation at Sur Gallery, a space by the Latin American Canadian Art Projects, and a performance at the AGO's First Thursday. Awards include Emerging Artist Grants from the Toronto and Ontario Arts Councils, Governor General's Silver Medal for academic achievement upon graduating from Emily Carr University, and named one of Canada's 30 Under 30 by BLOU-IN ARTINFO in 2014. He completed a Masters of Visual Studies at the University of Toronto. He is a member of the 7a*11d International Performance Festival Collective and teaches courses at OCADU.

Andrew Rabyniuk is a Kingston - based artist whose work considers the ways textile products and practices define or modify space. He received a Canadian Graduate Scholarship in 2015 for his study of knots and knotting practices. His artistic work addresses the performative aspects of object production and interaction.

The School for Eventual Vacancy (Vancouver) operates as an ongoing exploration of education as creative practice and political subjectivity. It tries to find the power to make itself unnecessary and vacant. It is an art school that has no interest in the current models of the art school. The 'Distance Education' collaboration with *Performing Pedagogies* was led by Caitlin Chaisson and Justin A. Langlois of TSEV.