

LANDMARK WILLIAM FORSYTHE EXHIBITION AT WEXNER CENTER

SHOW MARKS FIRST SIGNIFICANT GROUP OF INSTALLATIONS IN U.S. BY THE RENOWNED CHOREOGRAPHER AND 2002 WEXNER PRIZE RECIPIENT; SYMPOSIUM, PERFORMANCES PLANNED

The Wexner Center presents **William Forsythe: *Transfigurations***, an exhibition of the installation works of vanguard American choreographer and 2002 Wexner Prize recipient William Forsythe, **April 2–July 26, 2009**. This show marks the first significant group of Forsythe's installations to be seen in the U.S.

Forsythe's bold, contemporary works have revolutionized classical ballet for our time, and he is widely viewed as the greatest innovator in this field since George Balanchine. With the formation of The Forsythe Company as an independent platform following the end of his tenure as artistic director of the Frankfurt Ballet in 2004, Forsythe continues to actively explore his multidisciplinary interests in new forms and new modes of presenting his work. His installations, whether or not they contain specific dance imagery, constitute progressive additions to his extensive oeuvre, which contains a hybrid performance installation; installations for galleries and public spaces; video works; digital media; and publications.

The exhibition at the Wexner Center opens in conjunction with the launch of the **web project *Synchronous Objects for One Flat Thing, reproduced*** that Forsythe developed at OSU with Maria Palazzi and Norah Zuniga Shaw. All of these projects are part of a larger sphere of interest he terms "choreographic objects," an idea that allows for the transformation of choreographic principles from one manifestation—a performance on the stage—to an array of other possibilities, including digital information, animation, and installations.

Performances and a cross-disciplinary **symposium** are planned for the opening week (see pages 3–4 for details).

Notes Charles Helm, the exhibition's curator and the Wexner Center's director of performing arts, "We are pleased to showcase this range of the installation work of William Forsythe for the first time in this country. These works demonstrate his boundless creative drive and the connections that have evolved from Forsythe's work as a dance maker—developing his concepts through working from the body—to projecting these ideas into new mediums and ways of presentation. The exhibition and web project also exemplify how a major university can leverage its diverse resources to integrate innovative arts initiatives and research to provide a model for the field."



From Forsythe's *Antipodes I / II*. Two-channel video. Choreography / performance: William Forsythe
© The Forsythe Company.
Photo: Julian Gabriel Richter.

Sherri Geldin, director of the Wexner Center, says, "This exhibition culminates a rich chapter in our longterm relationship with Forsythe, beginning with his award in 2002 of the Wexner Prize for innovation in the arts. Among the overarching goals for the Wexner Prize as expressed by our board chairman, Leslie Wexner, in creating the award: to not only honor and support the most compelling and pioneering artists among us, but also to foster further exchange among those artists, the Wexner Center, and other OSU departments. We are thrilled to be presenting this exhibition of Forsythe's gallery-based installations on the occasion of the launch of his new web project, itself an extraordinary creative partnership with OSU's dance department and the ACCAD facility."

WORKS ON VIEW

This exhibition will feature Forsythe's hybrid performance installation work ***Monster Partitur*** (drawn from his Bessie Award-winning work *You made me a monster*), which will be performed by dancer Alessio Silvestrin several times during the opening days of the exhibition in the gallery. The work's sculptural elements will remain on view as an installation for the duration of the exhibition (see next page for a schedule). Visitors will also see the video work ***City of Abstracts***; as they approach this piece, their images are projected onto a large screen, inviting interaction as their images are melded into a "dance" of stretched and spiraled bodies. Other video works include: his landmark work ***Solo; Antipodes I / II***, an illusionistic two-screen work whose gravity-defying action raises questions about our beliefs in physical reality; ***Suspense***, a recent video where Forsythe creates potent images of a mover ensnared by his very need to move; and ***Thematic Variations on One Flat Thing, reproduced***, in which William Forsythe and filmmaker Thierry de Mey reveal the classically modeled choreography of his tour-de-force work for the stage, *One Flat Thing, reproduced*, from multiple perspectives.

Also featured in the exhibition will be ***Synchronous Objects for One Flat Thing, reproduced, a new web project*** developed by Forsythe in collaboration with Ohio State's Department of Dance and Advanced Computing Center for the Arts and Design (ACCAD). To develop *Synchronous Objects*, Forsythe worked in collaboration with Norah Zuniga Shaw, director of OSU's Dance and Technology program; Maria Palazzi, director of ACCAD and a faculty member in the Department of Design; and a dedicated team of graduate students and ACCAD graphics research specialists. Starting with Forsythe's ensemble dance *One Flat Thing, reproduced* as the research resource, *Synchronous Objects* reveals the deep structures of choreographic thinking in order to enrich cross-disciplinary investigation and creativity. The site invites a wide audience into understanding complex structures of interaction through an array of creative tools, expressive animations, and information graphics informed by the diverse team of collaborators from OSU's Computer Science, Dance, Design, Philosophy, Geography, Statistics, and Architecture departments and schools. *Synchronous Objects* is the first phase of *Motion Bank*, an overarching initiative that Forsythe envisions will become an accessible repository of advanced ideas developed through choreographic investigation.

Material related to the development of *Synchronous Objects* will also be on view in the exhibition, as will Forsythe's groundbreaking **CD-ROM project *Improvisation***

Technologies that uses *Solo* as its core material (serving as both a precursor to *Synchronous Objects* and a pioneering example of Forsythe's early employment of new media).

The exhibition *William Forsythe: Transfigurations* is organized by the Wexner Center for the Arts and curated by Charles Helm, the center's director of performing arts. Julian Richter, producer for The Forsythe Company, will supervise the installation of the exhibition, which will also involve other collaborators and associates of The Forsythe Company, and students from OSU's Department of Dance.

SYMPOSIUM

WILLIAM FORSYTHE: CHOREOGRAPHIC OBJECTS

Wednesday, April 1

Wexner Center for the Arts * Free admission * *Exhibition preview at 2 PM* *

Discussions 3–5 PM in Film/Video Theater * *performances of Monster Partitur at 2:30, 5:30, 6:30, 7:30 pm in galleries (see below)* * *Press hour 5–6 pm* * *Opening party 5–8 pm*



William Forsythe.
Photo © Stephan Floss Photo

William Forsythe and his collaborators discuss his concept of choreographic objects and how this idea took form in the *Synchronous Objects for One Flat Thing*, reproduced web project and the *Transfigurations* exhibition. A diverse roster of *Synchronous Objects* collaborators and other authorities will join **William Forsythe** for these talks: **Mark Goulthorpe** of MIT's School of Architecture; **Alva Noë**, Professor of Philosophy at UC Berkeley; *Synchronous Objects* creative directors **Norah Zuniga Shaw**, Director of Dance and Technology in the OSU Department of Dance, and **Maria Palazzi**, Director of OSU's ACCAD; and **Charles Helm**, Wexner Center Director of Performing Arts and curator for the Forsythe exhibition. Additional collaborators from The Ohio State University will also join the discussion, including **Ola Ahlqvist**, assistant professor of geography; **Noel Cressie**, professor of statistics; **Matthew Lewis**, graphic research specialist, ACCAD; **Stephen Turk**, associate professor, Knowlton School of Architecture; and other *Synchronous Objects* collaborators and **graduate student researchers**.

A live stream of the symposium will be viewable at wexarts.org/about/live/ beginning at 3 pm EST.

Presented collaboratively by Ohio State's Department of Dance, Advanced Computing Center for the Arts and Design, and Wexner Center for the Arts, with additional support from the Knowlton School of Architecture, with support from the Battelle Endowment for Technology and Human Affairs.

PERFORMANCES OF *MONSTER PARTITUR*

The U.S. premiere of the hybrid performance installation piece *Monster Partitur* will be presented during the opening days of *William Forsythe: Transfigurations*. Dancer Alessio Silvestrin delivers a mesmerizing performance against a backdrop of



From Forsythe's hybrid performance installation piece *Monster Partitur*. Pictured: Dancer Alessio Silvestrin. Photo by Dominik Mentzos.

sculptural elements created from life-size models of human skeletons and line drawings traced from these gnarled forms, which also serve as cues in the performer's score (the word "partitur" refers to the musical scores used by orchestra conductors). The work is a condensation of and companion to Forsythe's Bessie Award-winning *You made me a monster*. Admission is free on a first come, first served basis (and includes free admission to the Forsythe gallery). Performances run about 20–25 minutes and take place in the Wexner Center's Gallery D. The schedule:

Wednesday, April 1 | 2:30, 5:30, 6:30 & 7:30 PM

Thursday, April 2 | 12:00, 12:30 & 7 PM

Friday, April 3 | 11:30 AM; 12, 12:30 & 7 PM

Saturday, April 4 | 12, 12:30, 1 & 7 PM

Sunday, April 5 | 12, 12:30, 2:30 & 3 PM

EXHIBITION AND PROJECT SUPPORT

The exhibition is made possible at the Wexner Center with support from the National Endowment for the Arts' American Masterpieces: Presenting Initiative and from the Contemporary Art Centers network, administered by the New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA), with major support from the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and additional support from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. Additional support provided by the Battelle Endowment for Technology and Human Affairs. Also made possible through the Wexner Center Residency Award program.

Synchronous Objects for One Flat Thing, reproduced by William Forsythe is coproduced by The Forsythe Company with Ohio State's Advanced Computing Center for the Arts and Design and Department of Dance. Funding provided by The Forsythe Company, The Forsythe Foundation, The Ohio State University Office of Research, Rotterdamse Dansacademie/Codarts, and Tanzplan Deutschland, an initiative created by the German Federal Cultural Foundation. *Synchronous Objects* is the first phase of *Motion Bank*, an overarching initiative Forsythe envisions for utilizing the Internet and other means to create a readily accessible repository of ideas developed through choreographic investigation. The Forsythe Company is supported by the city of Dresden and the state of Saxony as well as the city of Frankfurt am Main and the state of Hesse. The Forsythe Company is also supported by Mrs. Susanne Klatten. Additional support is provided by Ernst & Young.

For more on Forsythe and The Forsythe Company: <http://theforsythecompany.de/>

For more on the web project: <http://synchronousobjects.osu.edu>

For more on the Wexner Center: <http://wexarts.org>

VISITOR INFORMATION

William Forsythe: Transfigurations will be on view **April 2–July 26, 2009**, at the Wexner Center for the Arts, 1871 N. High St. on the campus of The Ohio State University in Columbus. Gallery hours are Tuesday–Wednesday and Sunday, 11 am–6 pm; Thursday–Saturday, 11 am–8 pm; closed Mondays. Also on view during this time are *Catch Air: Robin Rhode* and *COOP HIMMELB(L)AU: Beyond the Blue*. **Walk-in Tours** are held Thursdays at 5 and Saturdays at 1 (starting April 4). An **opening party** for all three will be held April 1, 5 to 8 pm (admission fees apply). Admission to the galleries is \$5; free for Wexner Center members, college students, and visitors 18 and under; free Thursdays from 4 to 8 pm and the first Sunday of the month. Admission to *Monster Partitur* performances is free and includes free admission to the Forsythe gallery. More information: wexarts.org or at 614 292-3535.

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