

for immediate release
list under dance/performance
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Mary Armentrout Dance Theater presents

WHAT: fantasia upon the moment when the woman invisible to herself and the man who isn't sure whether he wants to exist yet or not decide to go in on an apartment together

WHO: Mary Armentrout Dance Theater

WHERE: Z Space, 450 Florida, San Francisco CA 94110

WHEN: Thursday, September 11, 2014 at 10pm only

Friday, September 12, 2014 at **8pm** and **10pm**

Saturday, September 13, 2014 at **8pm** and **10pm**

HOW MUCH: \$25, through zspace.org or 866-811-4111 - small shows

– VERY LIMITED SEATING - shows will **SELL OUT** – get your tickets early

INFORMATION: 510-845-8604, boxoffice@zspace.org, maryarmentroutdancetheater.com

COME EARLY: pre-show installations up and running by 7:45 or 9:45

Z Lobby, Bar and Box open one hour before curtain time

PHOTOS: available on request

Mary Armentrout, a dance artist who creates hybrid dance theater experiments she calls performance installations, is pleased to present her newest full length project for her company, the Mary Armentrout Dance Theater: "fantasia upon the moment when the woman invisible to herself and the man who isn't sure whether he wants to exist yet or not decide to go in on an apartment together." "fantasia upon" is a site specific performance that will be installed at Z Space in San Francisco this coming September 2014.

"fantasia upon" is both a continued exploration of the complex nature of self identity that was initiated in MADT's previous work "the woman invisible to herself," and an exploration of how love is possible within this landscape of discontinuity and fracture. Put simply, this work is an exploded love duet. This project will premiere at Z Space in San Francisco, September 11-13, 2014. In keeping with Armentrout's technique of choreographing the audience's experience, audience size will be kept to 35 people per show; however, there will be multiple shows, at 8pm and 10pm, so that audience demand can be met.

So, another love duet show– why now and why here? The question of how love works is age old but ever evolving. "fantasia upon" offers a contemporary take in distinctive Armentrout fashion – mining raw autobiographical material, humor, philosophical concerns, and deep psychological insight to create an abstract, non-linear, multi-layered, deeply felt exploration of the ambiguities, pitfalls and joys of love. As a participant in a 35 year long (and counting) relationship, that started when she was a teenager, she feels she has a particular relationship to relationships and the question of love, which also for her spools out against the background of fractured, discontinuous self-identity, which makes things either hilarious or heartbreaking or both. And yet, that is not the whole of the story either. Armentrout has recently been focusing on radically responding to the sites she is creating works in and carefully choosing the "right" site for each new project she embarks on. Z Space has been carefully chosen as the ideal setting for this telling of an intimate love story – paradoxically because it is a large, cavernous, dark and empty space. Love turns out to be a vast, incomprehensible, simple, and complex thing, something that we all

know something about, and that we all wonder whether we really know or not in the end. It is the funny, fundamental experience of the unknowability of love that this piece will explore, and the setting of the vast, deep, cold, dark space of Z Space will be perfect for this exploration.

Armentrout has been working in this radically installed manner for the last five years, creating dance works in a myriad of non-proscenium spaces including bathrooms, courtyards, hallways, stairwells, streambeds, beaches, and the sidewalks of Market Street, as well as creatively exploding how the proscenium is used in more theatrical spaces by moving the audience around within the space and altering how light and sound focus the space. Her most recent project "reveries and elegies," a wandering performance installation about change and dislocation, morphed as it was installed at four different sites across the Bay Area, and then travelled to Louisiana and London. With "fantasia upon" she will bring her explorations in exploding and imploding the proscenium to the very large Z Space for several reasons. One is that as she works in this intensively installed way, she has noticed that she is tending to work in small intimate spaces. While this is not a negative, she is interested in widening the scope of what is possible and investigating what will happen in a large space. Also, as she has worked fluidly between proscenium and non-proscenium spaces, she has been able to pinpoint many of the cues that make proscenium spaces work, and is now interested to work within a very clear proscenium situation to see how much it can be pushed to offer new experiences. If one of the reasons intimate, participatory theater experiences are becoming popular these days is because our audiences crave more connection to and participation in their theater experiences, how can we make that happen in the theater spaces that exist around us? This is the second, interconnected reason.

"fantasia upon" will employ several different strategies to explode the love duet and the proscenium: casting, audience size and movement, and environmental design.

Casting. As she has done in the past, most notably in her self-identity piece "the woman invisible to herself," which is meant to be referenced by this new piece, she will be utilizing the strategy of having multiple performers play one character to point to the instability of personal identity. In this piece, Armentrout will play one half of the relationship: "the woman invisible to herself," and the other role, "the man who isn't sure whether he wants to exist yet or not," will be played by Rogelio Lopez, except that both these roles will have several other people "playing" them as well during the show. Lopez is an accomplished veteran of the Bay Area dance scene, who brings his formidable dancing and acting skills to this complex role.

Audience Choreography. As Armentrout discovered in her last two projects, "the woman invisible to herself" and "reveries and elegies," limiting the audience size to 30+ and actively moving them around during the piece has the unexpected boon of giving them a sense of ownership and participation in the performance without resorting to confrontational means of engagement – a promising new model for live performance work that can involve the audience in an intimate, embodied way. With "fantasia upon," she will explore how to bring this intimate experience into the large proscenium space, using several techniques.

Environmental Design. Additionally, Armentrout will work extensively with her collaborators: Allen Willner-lights, Ian Winters-video, Pamela Z and Evelyn Ficarra-sound, to both continue to disrupt the proscenium and create the rich, discontinuous collage of different mediums that creates the fractured logic of a MADT performance installation. She is delighted to be working with Allen Willner on this project – his expertise with lighting and his intimate knowledge of the inner workings of Z Space will make it possible to use light to undo the proscenium effect. Lighting the whole space not just the stage, and using the steel girders left over from the space's industrial past as part of the set design are two strategies that will get used. Longterm video collaborator Ian Winters will create a live-feed video installation, allowing the performers to be simultaneously near and far away from the audience, and creating a sense of dislocation and distance that way. Longterm sound collaborators Pamela Z and Evelyn Ficarra will create layered environments out of

Armentrout's texts, which will be used with live dance sections, video sections, and also all by themselves, as the audience finds itself lying on the floor of the theater in the dark, just listening to an intimate voice talking to them in this very large space. In addition, two Webern songs of Rilke poems, beautiful but rarely heard, as well as original Pamela Z material and a love song by Antony and the Johnsons will all be part of the sonic environment.

In conclusion, "fantasia upon" is the next giant step in Mary Armentrout Dance Theater's trajectory of exploring the exciting cutting edge of what installed performance can do and be. This project is risk taking in that it pushes the envelope around how we participate in live theater events, something that impacts artists, audiences and the whole field of live performance. And, if and when we successfully create new models that generate excitement and new participation, we deliver on the great promise of live performance to connect people in ways nothing else can.

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more about Mary Armentrout Dance Theater

Mary Armentrout is a dance artist who works primarily with repetition and duration to uncover aspects of intentionality and presence. Influenced by contemporary philosophical concerns as well as the ongoing critical investigations started by the Judson Church dance deconstructions, she makes works that embody the contradictions of contemporary life, both our conflicted, fractured sense of self, and our discontinuous, collage sense of being-in-the-world. She grounds her work in her ongoing investigations of the Feldenkrais mind-body practice, drawing on the rich ways its awareness practice embodies and problematizes issues of intentionality and presence. From the confictions and dislocations she finds there, her work spills out to build odd and compelling structures exhibiting contradictory aspects of our self-awareness and being-in-the-world. Her choreography consists of small fragments of everyday movement, words, and environments that are distilled, distorted, polished, and stripped down to reveal the layers of ambiguity, pathos, and absurdity underneath the surface. Repetitive and deconstructed gestures, utterances, and objects/pieces of the outside world are layered and allowed to build and morph, crumble and change, creating compelling, unstable environments which allow deeper truths covered over in the everyday to surface, come into focus, and, paradoxically, display their contradictions. Her works are puzzles, designed to imperfectly capture fragments of presence-in-performance and human intentionality.

Armentrout calls her works performance installations. Drawing both raves and interested puzzlement from the critics - "a performance artist of tremendous range" (Christopher Correa, *Dance View Times*), "a quirky idiosyncratic choreographer who assembles works that appear illogical on the surface, but somehow her twisted humor, comic timing, and odd use of furniture and bodies coalesce into meaningful dance" (Rita Felciano, *The East Bay Monthly*) - she is engaged in "inventing a new kind of dance theater right before our eyes" (*Dance View Times*).

She received her BA from Sarah Lawrence College, concentrating particularly on dance and philosophy. After many years of making and performing work on the East and West Coasts and in Europe, she formed the Mary Armentrout Dance Theater in the Bay Area in 2000. The company is, as it has been since its inception, a fluid blend of dancers, actors, and sound and media artists. Armentrout also maintains on-going collaborative relationships with sound artists Pamela Z, Evelyn Ficarra, and Merlin Coleman, and media artists Ian Winters and Bulkfoodveyor (Phil Bonner).

She installs work in both conventional and site-specific venues, and the Mary Armentrout Dance Theater has been presented at numerous venues all over the San

Francisco Bay Area, including ODC Theater, The LAB, and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, as well as in less proscenium-oriented spaces including a bathroom, the beach, and a car. Her recent project, "the woman invisible to herself" garnered an Isadora Duncan Dance Award nomination for best choreography, and her current project "reveries and elegies" has toured to Baton Rouge and London. Her work has also been presented at such venues as Movement Research at the Judson Church and Danspace Project in New York City, Highways in Los Angeles, the Dance Place in Washington D.C., le Centre Americain in Paris, and Tanzfabrik in Berlin, as well as in festivals including Dadafest, the Tenderloin "Festival In The Street," the Retail Dance Festival, the DUMBO (NY) Dance Festival, the SF Fringe Festival, the "Women on the Edge" Series, and the Hunter Mountain (NY) Performing Series. She recently co-curated a Movement Research (NY) Studies Project on new work from the Bay Area with Trajal Harrel, and assisted Jonah Bokaer in a "Food for Thought" project on contemporary Bay Area dance at Danspace Project (NY).

She has received support from the Zellerbach Family Foundation, the CA\$H Grant program, the Clorox Company Foundation, the Lighting Artists in Dance Award, and the New Stages for Dance Award, and has had residencies at Djerassi, The LAB, The Garage, and CounterPULSE. She teaches on-going technique, composition, and Feldenkrais classes at Danspace and Shawi-Anderson Dance Center, and has also taught at Sarah Lawrence College, Cal State East Bay (Hayward), USF, LSU, the University of Sussex (UK), the University of Roehampton (UK), Beijing Normal University (China) and Daijing Sports University (China). She is the organizer of the Dance Discourse Project, an on-going series of artist-curated discussions of the Bay Area dance scene, co-presented by Dancers' Group and CounterPULSE, and co-curates the mixed performance salon "The Milk Bar" at The Biscuit Factory in Oakland, along with Merlin Coleman and Ian Winters. She is proud to be the president of the board of Dancers' Group, considered the most important dance service organization in the Bay Area, and happy to have recently obtained her Feldenkrais certification. See more at maryarmentroutdancetheater.com

Collaborating Artists' Biographies

A dual citizen (UK/USA), **Evelyn Ficarra** studied composition at the University of Sussex, the National Film and Television School, and the University of California, Berkeley, and has several years' experience as a freelance composer, teacher and sound editor. She has a strong focus on electro-acoustic and collaborative work and has written music for dance, film, theatre, radio, installation and the concert hall. She has received support from the Arts Council of England, the London Arts Board, the Sonic Arts Network, the Ralph Vaughan Williams Trust, the Hinrichsen Foundation, the Djerassi Resident Artist Program, Meet the Composer and Poems on the Underground. Her music has been heard variously in concert halls, theaters, music festivals, film festivals, on television and in radio broadcasts in the UK, Europe, the Americas and the Far East. Her solo CD Frantic Mid-Atlantic is available on the Sargasso Label www.sargasso.com, and other recent music can be downloaded from www.criticalnotice.com. Recent projects include *vagues / fenêtres*, a string trio with electronics, supported by a Fellowship from the French American Cultural Exchange and premiered in Nice, France during the 2009 MANCA Festival, and 'in. apt.', an improvisation research project in collaboration with *paige starling sorvillo / blindsight*.

Rogelio Lopez Garcia earned his BA in Theater Arts and Dance from CSU Fresno and his MFA in dance at CSU Long Beach, during which he had the pleasure to work with wonderful choreographers such as David Dorfman, Bill Young, Terry O'Connor, and Andrea Woods. Since graduation, Lopez has danced professionally for Sarah's Box dance theater, PTERO Dance Company, LA Contemporary Dance Company, Keith Johnson and dancers, Joe Goode, Hope Mohr, Holly Johnston's Ledges and Bones, Deborah Slater Dance Theater, Cathy Davalos Dance Company and Nina Haft. He has been on faculty at Cerritos Community

College, Loyola Marymount University, and San Jose State University. He also has been guest faculty at Lines Ballet School, TDC, Modesto Junior College, and Lines Ballet Summer Intensive. His choreography has been shown at The American College Dance Festival, in Gala Performances, Nationals at The Kennedy Center. He presently is on faculty at Saint Mary's College and teaches regularly at Shawl Anderson's Dance Studio. Starting in 2012, he has begun showing his own work in San Francisco at The Garage, Studio 210, CounterPulse Dance Theater, and at Temescal Art Center in Berkeley.

Allen Willner has designed lights, set and video for a diverse range of theater, dance companies and musical groups. Notable awards and nominations include: Isadora Duncan Dance Awards for the lighting design of inkBoat's "Line Between" 2011 and "Heaven's Radio" 2004. Nominations for Isadora Duncan Dance Awards for the Visual Designs of Erika Chong Shuch's "51802" and inkBoat's "Cockroach". Bay Area Critics Circle Lighting Design Nomination for The Shotgun Players "God's Ear, Broadway World Lighting and Set Design nomination for Symmetry Theater's "Patience Worth". Lighting Artists in Dance Awards for inkBoat's "Line Between," Erika Chong Shuch's "Sitting in a Circle" and Laura Arrington and Jesse Hewitt's "Adult." Past Collaborators include: Anne Kaufman, The Erika Chong Shuch Performance Project, Shinichi Iova Koga and inkBoat, Kitka, The Traveling Jewish Theater, Gamelan Sekar Jaya, Intersection for the Arts, The Rova Saxophone Quartet, Z-Space, ODC Theater, The Lorraine Hansberry Theater, Margo Hall and Marcus Shelby, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, The Cowell Theater, Carla Kihlstedt, Deborah Slater Dance Theater, The Douglas Morrison Theater, The San Francisco Asian Art Museum, The Shotgun Players, Anne Bleuthenthal, Katie Faulkner's Little Seismic Dance Company, Dan Wolf, Counterpulse, Tanya Calamoneri & Company So.Go.No., Brava Theater, Scott Wells and Dancers, Motion Lab, Monique Jenkinson, Faun Fables, The Billy Nayer Show.

Ian Winters is a San Francisco Bay Area based photographer, video artist and performer working at the intersection of architectural form, frozen image and time-based media in solo work and collaborations with composers, directors, and choreographers to create open-ended environments through performance, photographic/video/film media, and sonic environments. Winters trained in photography, film and performance at SMFA-Boston and Tufts University, and post-graduate training in architecture and live performance. He also co-curates the Milkbar salon series in Oakland. Recent collaborators and media projects include projects with Francis Ford Coppola (designing the custom Isadora playback system for his new film), Robert Moses Kin, Elaine Buckholtz, ODC Dance, Alice Arts, Pamela Z, Evelyn Ficarra, Paige Starling Sorvillo, Blindsight, Sara Kraft, Mary Armentrout Dance Theater, and others. Recent work screenings, performances and video / media design projects include venues such as London City University, the Port of Oakland, The Luggage Store, Sergei Kuryokhin Modern Art Center, Moscow Conservatory Electro-acoustic Center, I-Park Artist's Enclave, Journées de l'électroacoustique, Paris, YBCA, ODC, Z-Space/Theater Artaud, The Asian Art Museum SF, The Kitchen, POTO Arts Festival, EMPAC, MIT New Media Center, Mass art, London Cutting Edge Festival, Oxford & Corsham music festivals, Moving Baltic Sea Festival and OPEN Cinema Festival in St. Petersburg, CounterPULSE, CNMAT, Highways, The Parkway Theaters, Hertz Hall at UC Berkeley, LA Freewaves Festival, 21 Grand, Dance Mission and more. www.ianwinters.com

Pamela Z is a San Francisco-based composer/performer and media artist who works primarily with voice, live electronic processing, sampling technology, and video. A pioneer of live digital looping techniques, she creates solo works combining experimental extended vocal techniques, operatic bel canto, found objects, text, digital processing, and MIDI controllers that allow her to manipulate sound with physical gestures. In addition to her solo work, she has composed and recorded scores for dance, theatre, film, and new music chamber ensembles. Her large-scale multi-media works have been presented at venues

including Theater Artaud and ODC in San Francisco, and The Kitchen in New York, and her media works have been presented in exhibitions at the Whitney Museum (NY), the Diözesanmuseum (Cologne), and the Krannert Art Museum (IL). Her multi-media opera *Wunderkabinet* – inspired by the Museum of Jurassic Technology (co-composed with Matthew Brubeck) has been presented at The LAB Gallery (San Francisco), REDCAT (Disney Hall, Los Angeles), and Open Ears Festival, Toronto. Pamela Z has toured extensively throughout the US, Europe, and Japan. She has performed in numerous festivals including Bang on a Can at Lincoln Center (New York), Interlink (Japan), Other Minds (San Francisco), La Biennale di Venezia (Italy), and Pina Bausch Tanztheater Festival (Wuppertal, Germany). She is the recipient of numerous awards including a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Creative Capital Fund, the CalArts Alpert Award in the Arts, The MAP Fund, the ASCAP Music Award, an Ars Electronica honorable mention, and the NEA and Japan/US Friendship Commission Fellowship. She holds a music degree from the University of Colorado at Boulder.

www.pamelaz.com.