

# **ESTHER MARVETA NEFF**

b. 1984, Goshen, Indiana

BFA, the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI  
Directing and Voice Apprenticeship, The Royal Shakespeare Company, Stratford-on-Avon/London UK  
Lincoln Center Theater Director's Lab

Founder -- **Panoply Performance Laboratory (PPL)** -- 2006-present  
Member – **Social Health Performance Club** –2013-present  
Member – **No Wave Performance Task Force (NWPTF) / Feminist Art Group (FAG)** – 2012-present

## **OPERAS (written, directed, designed, music and digital systems in collaboration with Brian McCorkle)**

### (2014-2017) ***Embarrassed of the Whole***

Interactive processes, workshops, and interactive/survey-based task-social performances. Selected performances during devising period:

LACUNA and Composition Gallery, Portland, OR  
The School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *Practice, to Practice*  
The Wild Project, *Grey Spaces/Special Effects Festival*, NYC  
Dixon Place, performance-works-in-progress  
Villa Victoria Center for the Arts, Boston, *TODO BAJO CONTROL (can I lift you up/can you lift me up?)*  
MAD Theory Performance Philosophy conference, *Do-Nuts* online process and live performance  
]performance space[ in London as part of *Alternatives to Now*  
Vox Populi, Philadelphia  
**PRODUCTION: February, 2017**

### (2012-2014) ***Any Size Mirror is a Dictator***

Devised over the course of 3 years in collaboration with choreographer Lindsey Drury, culminating 7 weeks of exhibition performance, workshop, and installation processes. Selected performances of work-in-progress and processes during devising period:

Movement Research Spring Festival, ISSUE: Project Room  
Flux Factory, Thursday evening share series  
Gibney Dance, work-in-progress showing  
Dixon Place, performance-works-in-progress  
**PRODUCTION: Sept 5-Oct 12, 2014 at Momenta Art**

### (2012-2013) ***You're a Big Boy Now or Rauschenberg Ist Toedlich***

4-day ongoing performance, working restaurant and installation:

**PRODUCTION: Fitness Center for Arts and Tactics in NYC, January 2012**  
**PRODUCTION: Gruentaler9, Berlin, DE, May, 2013**

### (2013) ***Homage to Allan Kaprow***

6-hour set of social processes commissioned by Glasshouse Projects, realized at Walgreens, a baseball diamond, a BP gas station, opera book and score learned from video and text in envelopes:

**PRODUCTION: Glasshouse Art Life Lab, NYC, October 2013**

### (2012) ***NATURE FETISH***

A two-year project on "the nature of nature" with Focus Workshops and collaborations across spheres. Selected processes during devising period:

Center for Performance Research, NYC  
Bronx Artspace, during ITINERANT, curated by Hector Canonge, Bronx, NY  
Kule Theatre/Galerie, Berlin, DE/Sydney, AU  
**PRODUCTION: Grace Exhibition Space and the streets of Bed-Stuy, NYC, July 5-26, 2012**

### (2011) ***The Transformational Grammar of the Institutional Glorybowl: Institute\_Institut***

Documentary opera processes devised through LPAC Residency at LaGuardia Community College. Select performances during devising period:

SALON at University Settlement  
Dixon Place performance-works-in-progress  
Judson Church  
SuperFront Gallery Public Summer at Industry City  
BOB the Pavilion at Columbia University  
Recording: produced by Gold Bolus Records (2014)  
**PRODUCTION: The Cell, NYC, October 9-16, 2011**

(2010) **The Last Dreams of Helene Weigel OR How to Get Rid of The Feminism Once and For All**  
Documentary opera on feminism, womanism, Helene Weigel, and Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz. Performed during/at:  
POST-TV at Cabinet Magazine Event Space (televised performance of opera)  
ABC No Rio Gallery exhibition (3 performances)  
**PRODUCTION:** Surreal Estate, NYC, July 1-30, 2010

(2009-2010) **The Transformational Grammar of the Institutional Glorybowl: Workforce/Forced Work**  
A documentation of workplaces and labor practices with video choir and installation.  
Devised at 14 Wall Street (LMCC Swing Space)  
**PRODUCTION:** chashama theater on 42nd St. NYC, May 6-18, 2010

(2007-2008) **On the Cranial Nerves of Barbarians**  
A documentary folk-opera about Georg Buchner and the birth of neuroscience. Performed:  
Dixon Place performance-works-in-progress (1 performance)  
Richmond Shepherd Theater (1 week)  
**PRODUCTION:** Manhattan Theatre Source (2 weeks)

(2006) **The Transformational Grammar of the Institutional Glorybowl: Schooled and Unschooled**  
Yearlong project devised through Focus Workshops and performances on institutional education.  
**PRODUCTION:** Dixon Place on the Bowery (4 nights), West End Theater (4 nights)

#### **OTHER PERFORMANCE PROJECTS (created and performed in visual arts performance contexts)**

##### **2016**

--**Relational March: (MI)Rage**, 19 day-relational tour, new performances each day (select sites include: Michigan Institute for Contemporary Art [Lansing], Spread Art/CAID [Detroit], No Nation [Chicago], Ohio State University [Columbus])  
--**(de)liberation III:** Spring/Break Art Show, COPY/PASTE, curated by Jodie Lyn-Kee-Chow, Moynihan Station, NYC  
--**(de)liberation II:** PULSAR performance art series at Catland Event Space, Brooklyn

##### **2015**

--**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**, performance at PS69 in Jackson Heights during *ITINERANT*, curated by Hector Canonge, Queens  
--**MoCo**, performance at Abrons Arts Center as part of Social Health Performance Club during the Queer NY Festival  
-- **A Philosophy of Significant Patterns**, interactive performance-of-practical-theorizing, 7hr durational on Spectacle Island, curated by Alice Vogler and Vela Phelan as part of the Island Arts Initiative and *TIME BODY SPACE OBJECTS*  
-- **(de)Liberation action I**, a durational performance (7hrs) at Gowanus Ballroom as part of visual arts exhibition.  
--**Apply Yourself**, a durational performance (5hrs) as part of *Great American Performance Art Festival*, GHS, NYC  
--**NF Redux**, a social performance and short-form action during the month of May as part of Month of Performance Art Berlin and the exhibitions *Post-Coital Tristesse* at Meinblau Atelier, DE  
--**Do I Do**, 4-day collaborative pedagogical situation, Gruentaler9, Berlin, DE  
--**Diagram Your Artistic Practice:** system for *Curating Performance as Performance Practice* conference, Berlin, DE  
--**Critical Eye Contact**, interactive interpretive tour performed at The New Museum as part of AUNTS for Camera exhibition

##### **2014**

--**Relational March: MAROONING.** Travel and performances across 23 cities in the USA, including performances at: University of Kentucky, Ohio State University, High Concept Laboratories (Chicago), Charlotte Street Settlement (Kansas City), Contemporary Art Institute of Detroit. Documented/framed by texts on culturebot at [www.culturebot.org/author/panoplylab/](http://www.culturebot.org/author/panoplylab/)  
--**Magnetics is Abstraction.** Sculpture/performance art. English Kills Gallery as part of *GROKNOTT* exhibition, January 2014.  
--**Center for Marooned Citizens.** Social research performed on the street at The New Museum/Bowery Mission, ABC No Rio, and Clemente Soto Velez as part of the Undergroundzero Festival, June 2014 and culminated online at [panoplylab.org/thecenter/](http://panoplylab.org/thecenter/)

##### **2013**

--**Magnetics is Abstraction I**, Recession Art, NYC  
--**Trash or Kroner?** During *Hitparaden*, Copenhagen, DK, curated by Henrik Vestegaard Friis  
--**Untitled Social Experiments**, (CON)temporary Spacetime, Leibig12 and AquaBit. Berlin, DE/Taipei, Taiwan  
--**Simulation of cultural ties**, site-specific public action traveling with participants, Bushwick, Brooklyn  
--**I am sitting in a room different from the one you are in now: right now**, 109 Gallery. Brooklyn, NY  
--**Archiving the Now**, Glasshouse Projects, Brooklyn, NY, NYU Radical Archiving Conference, 2014

--**Zygoat**, Glasshouse Projects, 24-hour interactive performance, commissioned as part of *7 Invitations*, Brooklyn, NY

## 2012

--**do-nuts**, MANA Contemporary, curated by Threewalls Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL

--**Protoceptive Responses**, Defibrillator Performance Art Gallery, Chicago, IL

--**PPL Help the Water**, during *To the Stars on the Wings of an Eel*, Gowanus Ballroom, along Gowanus Canal, Brooklyn, NY

--**HAPPY BIRTHDAY DEAR MONOLITH**, IV Soldiers Gallery, Brooklyn, NY

--**BABY BABY BABY**, during the MPA-B Open, ACUD Serendipity Gallery, curated by Stefan Reibl, Berlin, DE

--**Birdhouse Home Craft Project for Fathers and Daughters**, Casita Maria Center for the Arts, Bronx, NY

--**The Common Thread**, during *Dimanche Rouge/Spread Art*, Spread Art/Dimanche Rouge, Brooklyn, NY/Paris, FR

## 2006-2011

--**Calmly Engaged**, sensorial interaction and installation performed durationally at Flux Factory, Wildlife Loft, NYC

--**How to Answer to the Problems** during BABEL, Queens Media Arts Development, a Pop-Up Exhibition, Queens, NY

--**Qualia**, a social experiment-as-dance, Brooklyn Arts Exchange (BAX), Brooklyn, NY

--**The Silviculture Museum**, 2 months of installation/performance/software/video, a miniature museum in a chashama window space on 37<sup>th</sup> Street in NYC

--**The Institute for Local Discovery Proudly Presents Bavaria Rundgang**. Social project between NYC and Munich, DE, social performance and installation on the Theresienwiese, Munich, DE

--**Fallstudies**, a collaboration with The Internationalists, The Public Theater, NYC

--**7 Deadly Sins**, an interactive installation and social project, The Secret Theater, Queens, NY

2006-2008 I also worked as a freelance theater director, costume, props, and set designer and assistant director across productions in NYC: *Manhattan Theater Club, 92Y, Dixon Place, 13<sup>th</sup> Street Rep, The Ohio Theater, Studio MAYA, MaYi, etc.* Some highlights include assisting Mark Lamos, and working as a director with the late great Arthur Miller to devise a production from his autobiography "Timebends."

## SELECTED RECENT ORGANIZATION/CURATION

--PPL, a space organized as a social arts project, is located at 104 Meserole Street.

-- **PERFORMANCY FORUM**, a monthly platform for social arts practices and performance. Sessions have been held at Columbia University, Grace Exhibition Space, PPL Space, SUPERFRONT, and elsewhere in NYC and Berlin, DE. 2009-present (monthly), 12-day performance of a conference **PERFORMANCY FORUM QUINQUENNIAL** October 8-26, 2015.

--**Sounding the Alarm: Theories of the Anti-Sight**, an exhibition of 13 fellow interdisciplinary performance-makers and collective tour in Europe, 2015

--**Brooklyn International Performance Art Festival (BIPAF)**, A work of institutional critique evaluating and constructing platforms as aligned with "performance art" practices. 230 participants made 48 events across 12 spaces and 9 public sites, July 4-29, 2013. Continued projects under the name "Brooklyn International Performance Art Foundation."

--**Rebuttals, Proofs, Theorems, and Propositions: A Conference of Theoretical Theater**, two-week conference of performance theory organized with Yelena Gluzman (This is a Science Project) at Glasshouse Projects, guest speaker Chakravorty Gayatri Spivak. September, 2013

-- Artist exchanges and exhibitions with the Immaterial Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh, UK, the Boston collective Petricore, D.C.-based artists lead by Eames Armstrong, students from the Art Institute of Chicago, 2012-present

--**iCan Exhibition and Social Performance** project, IV Soldiers Gallery, with temporary collective "iCan" investigating "sustainability" of artistic practices, labor, and environmental impact, June-September 2012

--**Compendium: Technics**, a conference investigating technique, technicality, and technology with temporary collective The Compendium, Center for Performance Research (CPR), June 2012

-- **Conference of Work: Collaborations and Participations**, a conference of social artists, Grace Exhibition Space, Vaudeville Park, November 2011

--**Conference of Works: MODE, METHOD, MEDIUM**, A conference of social artists, University of the Streets, May, 2011

## SELECTED LECTURES AND WORKSHOPS

*(de)liberating performance*: workshop as part of GET YOUR A\$\$ IN CLA\$\$ at Abrons Arts Center

*Radical Constructivism in Performance* workshop, Massachusetts College of Art and Design

*Democratizing Performance*: lecture at Reverse Space

*Documentary Theater*: lecture at Clemente Soto Velez

**PERFORMANCY**: play/lecture performed by BlackSheep Collective at Counterpath (Denver) University of Kentucky (Lexington)

*Against Professionalism in Theater*: interactive lecture at The New School

Participation in playwright/librettist reading events and talks at Abrons Arts Center, Dixon Place (Poets and Writers), Invisible Dog, etc.

## SELECTED PUBLICATION AND PUBLIC SPHERE

Essay, *Opera as Operations*, New Music Yearbook, 2015  
Book: *ASMIAD/DAISM*: 2014  
Essay, *7 Invitations* (book), *Practice, to Practice*, 2014  
Essay, *PERIOD Magazine Touring and Fear*, 2014  
Catalog Essay, Kikuko Tanaka's *Poultry Paradise and Its Discontents*, 2013  
Interview, *Resisting Commodity*, GritTV, July 2013  
Catalog Essay, Chloe Bass' *The Bureau of Self Recognition*, 2012  
Nociception Theatrician blog, *Discipline in our Time: Rants of a Wartime Performance Artist* and other texts  
*Drearysomebody, Escaping the Fabrication of Art (in conversation with Lindsey Drury)*  
Essay, *Hyperallergic, Performance Art and You*, 2013

#### **SELECTED RESIDENCIES, GRANTS, AND AWARDS**

Emergency Grant, Foundation for Contemporary Arts, 2016  
RAPID PULSE Selected Artist, 2016  
Tempting Failure Selected Artist, London, UK, 2016  
Residency, Grüntaler9, Berlin, DE, 2015 and 2013  
Culture Push Fellowship for Utopian Practices (with Yelena Gluzman), 2012  
Residency, Grace Exhibition Space, July 2012  
Residency at LaGuardia Community College at the LaGuardia Center for Performing Arts, 2011  
NYSCA IND-TIER Grant, the Brooklyn Arts Council, 2011, to write libretto for *Institute\_Institut*  
IRT 3-B residency, 2010  
chashama residency on 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, 2009  
LMCC Swing Space at 14 Wall Street, 2009  
Surreal Estate resident artist 2009-2012  
chashama window grant, 37<sup>th</sup> St, October 2008  
Hopwood Writing Awards, 2004 and 2005, University of Michigan