A Needcompany production.
Coproducers: PACT Zollverein (Essen), Festival de Marseille,
La Rose des Vents (Scène Nationale de Villeneuve d’Ascq)
With the support of the Flemish authorities.
*Chunking* is a slightly hysterical, elusive performance.

The performers are constantly switching back and forth between presentation (I am) and representation (I am showing). In this way *Chunking* undermines such notions as entertainment and anecdotalism. It nullifies anything spectacular, which makes it an extremely headstrong show. The set is a sort of ‘Franz West meets Mike Kelley’ image, but clumsier in its attempt to present a cheerful picture. When, in this setting, you see Tijen Lawton – dressed in a black satin circus dress with an awfully sad face in fake diamonds sewn onto the bust – swaying her hips with her head in a blue vase and another vase coming out of her behind, you are suddenly confronted with a contemporary version of Hieronymous Bosch. In an age when clarity is demanded from art, and when political messages are considered essential, this piece cannot be called contemporary at all and is therefore itself essential.

Jan Lauwers, artistic director of Needcompany
Maarten Seghers, Benoît Gob, Julien Faure, Louise Peterhoff – Photo © Maarten Vanden Abeele
Having entered unexpected regions I saw what no eye had ever seen. Nothing is more stupefying: when laughter and reason, horror and light have become fathomable. ... It gave me a feeling of triumph: perhaps unfounded, premature? ... I awoke face to face with a new puzzle and I knew immediately it was insoluble.

Georges Bataille, *L’Expérience intérieure*

The evocative world of *Chunking* starts where theatre and dance confront the *performance* element of plastic art. A world where fabulous creatures live, where images and impressions repeatedly shoot past your retina. Images of animal creatures, almost amorphous, of circus artistes, of mad little fellows and odd figures, of sensual, lusty beings who stimulate your desire, of other dimensions where you are immersed in colour and form. A world in which sensuality, the bizarre and the frivolous meet, in which stories appear, but where the story is just one facet of a miraculous universe. A surrealist world with an existential undertone. Surrealistic because it plays with the imagination, the spontaneous and the absurd, because of its rebellion against restrictive rationalism. Existential because of its contemplation of such notions as individuality, solitude, freedom and transience.

So, now, we can listen to this story of materialism and its time

As an antique story of men.

It is a sad story, but we will not be saddened by it

Because we are not like these men.

Born of their flesh and their desires, we have cast aside their categories and their appurtenances

We do not feel their joys, neither do we feel their suffering

We have set aside,

Disinterestedly,

Without the least effort,

Their universe of death.
These centuries of pain which are our inheritance
We can now bring from the half-light.
Something has happened, like a second coming
And we have the right to live our lives.

Michel Houellebecq, *Atomised* (Tr. Frank Wynne)

**Chunking**, a city in China. And also, *chunking*: ‘When one wants to store information in a meaningful way in the memory, one divides it into pieces, *chunks*, a process which in psychology is sometimes also referred to as *chunking*.’ (Grace Ellen Barkey, paraphrased from *Memories are Made of This, The Biological Building Blocks of Memory* by Rusiko Bourtchouladze.) This process is carried on at several levels in this performance. The stage setting is dominated by colourful panels that move and which define the architectural environment. They play on the memory, they manipulate, they direct, they orient the audience, but they also disorient by their ‘overabundance’, by the saturation of their presence.

Images are constructed and deconstructed by means of the panels, music, movements and emotions, always avoiding the anecdotal. What appears is a playing with the unexpected and the unimaginable.

*Chunking* plays on various dimensions of the imagination; references to dreams. But dreams are too limited: *Chunking* transcends this and adopts a plentiful freedom that enables us to enter into imaginary spaces where interwoven time and space prevail.

It may be said that *Chunking* has something of the Japanese adult animated film, called *anime*. The roots of *anime* are to be found in *manga*, the Japanese strip cartoons, but are often more violent. The Japanese animation tradition has an erotic and pornographic category called *porouno anime*, with several subgenres including *ecchi* (erotically charged, humorous) and *hentai* (perverse). *Chunking* can be situated on the boundary between these two.
Without exact borders, the song rose up, staked a claim on your attention, fears or desires and then turned into air.

Greil Marcus on Sonic Youth’s *Kill Yr. Idols*

The subconscious is like a dormant volcano and *Chunking* is your ‘wake-up call’! *Chunking* plays with the subconscious. Imagine: you are in a car going at quite a speed. Suddenly you feel the urge to open the door. Just like that, an intense urge, though you are aware of the danger. An ambiguous feeling shivers through your body, on the one hand the urge that appears in your imagination and transcends reality (opening the door), and on the other the realisation of the danger involved.

*The unsaid, that which is not revealed, is expressed in mysticism, and also in absurdity.*

Grace Ellen Barkey

*Chunking* stimulates. *Chunking* stimulates your senses and your emotions. Colour and movement carry you along into a sensual universe. *Chunking* is a lusty circus, full of humour, where an absurd lightness holds sway that transcends rational thought.

So, ungentle reader (as you and I value what we should be ashamed – after witnessing a few minor circus-marvels – to call our ‘lives’), let us never be fooled into taking seriously that perfectly superficial distinction which is vulgarly drawn between the circus-show and ‘art’ or ‘the arts’. Let us not forget that every authentic ‘work of art’ is in and of itself alive and that, however ‘the arts’ may differ among themselves, their common function is the expression of that supreme alive-ness which is known as ‘beauty’. This being so, our three-ring circus is art – for to contend that the spectacle in question is not an authentic manifestation of ‘beauty’ is as childish as to dismiss the circus on the ground that it is ‘childish’ is idiotic.

E. E. Cummings, *The Adult, the Artist and the Circus*. Vanity Fair 25 (October 1925)

Elke Janssens
Part I
Music Maarten Seghers et al. – Music for Chunking

Part II
Music Giacinto Scelsi – Quatuor à cordes n°3 (1963)

Part III
Music Sonic Youth – Five Song Album Kill Yr. Idols (1983)

Concept / Choreography
Grace Ellen Barkey

Scenografie
Lemm & Barkey

Costumes and dolls
Lot Lemm

Created and performed by
Julien Faure, Benoît Gob, Tijen Lawton, Maarten Seghers,
Louise Peterhoff

Light
Lieven De Meyere

Sound
Karin Demedts

Assistant director
Elke Janssens

Production management
Luc Galle

Photography
Maarten Vanden Abeele, Eveline Vanassche

Thanks to
Lieve Meeussen, Atelier Coppens

Production
Needcompany

Coproduction
PACT Zollverein (Essen), Festival de Marseille,
La Rose des Vents (Scène Nationale de Villeneuve d'Ascq)

Duration of the performance: 1h20

With the support of the Flemish authorities.
**PERFORMANCE CALENDAR 2004-2005 SEASON**

*First night*  
Pact Zollverein, Essen  
12, 13, 14 May 2005

*Dutch opening*  
De Brakke Grond, Amsterdam  
19, 20, 21 May 2005

**PERFORMANCE CALENDAR 2005-2006 SEASON**

*French opening*  
Festival de Marseille  
9 July 2005

*Belgian opening*  
Stad in Vrouwenhanden, Mechelen  
1 October 2005

Theaterhaus Gessnerallee, Zurich  
6, 7, 8 October 2005

Kaaithéater, Brussel  
14, 15 October 2005

La Filature, Mulhouse  
6, 7 April 2006

La Rose des Vents, Villeneuve d’Ascq  
17, 18, 19 May 2006

Théâtre de la Ville, Paris  
22, 23 May 2006

**PERFORMANCE CALENDAR 2006-2007 SEASON**

ImPulsTanz, Wenen  
28 July 2006

Künstlerhaus Mousonturm, Frankfurt  
8, 9 September 2006

Centre Dramatique National de Normandie, Comédie de Caen  
17, 18 November 2006

Théâtre Garonne, Toulouse  
30 November, 1 December 2006

Théâtre de l’Agora, Evry  
9 December 2006

CC Sint-Niklaas  
6 March 2007

CC Strombeek  
21 March 2007

CC De Werf, Aalst  
23 March 2007

Deutsches Nationaltheater Weimar  
25 April 2007

De Velinix, Tongeren  
3 May 2007

Ikos Festival, Teatro Sociale, Brescia  
12 May 2007

STUK, Soetezaal, Leuven  
15 May 2007

**PERFORMANCE CALENDAR 2007-2008 SEASON**

Springswave Festival, Seoul, South-Korea  
18, 19 May 2008 to be confirmed
**OVERVIEW OF PERFORMANCES BY GRACE ELLEN BARKEY**

1992 **One**  
first night: 26 November, Theater am Turm Probebühne, Frankfurt

1993 **Don Quijote**  
first night: 28 October, Theater am Turm, Frankfurt

1995 **Tres**  
first night: 18 October, De Brakke Grond, Amsterdam

1997 **Stories (histoires/verhalen)**  
first night: 19 February, Brigittinenkapel, Brussels

1998 **Rood Red Rouge**  
first night: 5 October, STUK, Leuven

1999 **The Miraculous Mandarin**  
first night: October, PS 122, New York

2000 **Few Things**  
first night: 7 October, BIT teatergarasjen, Bergen (Norway)

2002 **(AND)**  
first night: 23 October, De Brakke Grond, Amsterdam

2005 **Chunking**  
first night: 12 May 2005, PACT Zollverein, Essen (Germany)

2007 **The Porcelain Project**  
First night: 10 October 2007, Kaaitheater, Brussels

**GRACE ELLEN BARKEY**


Since 1992 she has been steadily and successfully building an international career with her own stage creations. Her first pieces, *One* (1992), *Don Quijote* (1993) and *Tres* (1995) were coproduced by Theater AmTurm in Frankfurt. These were followed by the Needcompany productions *Stories (Histoires/Verhalen)* (1996), *Rood Red Rouge* (1998) and *Few Things* (2003). *Few Things* was received very enthusiastically both at home and abroad. With *(AND)* (2002) she transcends all the boundaries of theatre, dance and music with an irresistible flair. In 2005 Grace Ellen Barkey presented her new stage show, *Chunking* and was nominated for the Flemish Community Culture Prizes (2005). *The Porcelain Project* (2007) is her latest dance piece, for which she created a porcelain installation together with Lot Lemm.
**Julien Faure**

Julien Faure, born in France, studied performing arts at INSAS in Brussels from 1995 till 1998. After his studies he worked with Pierre Droulers on *Multim in Parvo* (1998) a creation for the KunstenFESTIVALdesArts. As from 1998 he worked with Karin Vyncke, Julie Bougard, Jean-François Duroure and Cie Osmosis. In 2001 he created his first choreography *Stamata #1-Et si demain voit le jour.*


**Benoît Gob**

Benoît Gob studied painting at the academy of art in Liège and then continued studying at INSAS in Brussels. In 1998 he joined Wim Vandekeybus' dance company Ultima Vez and danced in several productions including *The day of heaven and hell, In spite of wishing and wanting and Inasmuch as life is borrowed.*


**Tijen Lawton**

Tijen Lawton, born in Vienna to a British father and a Turkish mother, was raised in Austria, Italy and Turkey, and finally ended up in Great Britain. In London she studied dance and music at the Arts Educational School from 1984 to 1988 and at the London Contemporary Dance School from 1988 to 1991. In 1989 she spent a year at the prestigious Juillard School in New York. She participated in various dance workshops in Paris and Istanbul.


LOUISE PETERHOFF

Isabella’s room (2004) was the first production in which Louise Peterhoff worked together with Jan Lauwers & Needcompany. Chunking (2005) is also her first venture together with Grace Ellen Barkey & Needcompany.

MAARTEN SEGHERS
Maarten Seghers studied stage directing at RITS (Brussels). In the meantime he continued his own work (theatre and music compositions). In 2001 he created the stage production Angel Butcher with the theatre company d a e m m e run g .


In Isabella’s room (2004) and The Lobster Shop (2006) by Jan Lauwers, he was also responsible for composing the music, together with Hans Petter Dahl, as well as performing. He also appears in (AND) (2002), Chunking (2005) and The Porcelain Project (2007) by Grace Ellen Barkey.
PRESS ABOUT GRACE ELLEN BARKEY & NEEDCOMPANY

‘... a fresh and wilful piece, an anarchic punk polonaise, camply barbed. Particularly bracing. [...] The choreographer cleverly leads us quite organically from compelling lunacy to an inescapable sort of sombreness.’


‘Chunking is a playful mixture of dance theatre, performance and art, in which the attractive design helps to define the appearance of the work. The combination of frivolous hedonism and decadent anarchism appears to be related to the work of artists such as Micha Klein and Joep van Lieshout: amusing and wry at the same time. This is portrayed very well by the actors in this highly imaginative garden of delights.’

NRC Handelsblad, ‘A mimic copulation act’, Isabella Lanz, 21/5/05.

‘We’ll leave the concise and incisive closing words to Jan Lauwers: ‘Chunking is an intangible, slightly hysterical piece.’ And that’s exactly why we like to see it so much.’

Les Inrockuptibles, Chunking Express, Fabienne Arvers, 20-26/7/05.

‘What was created here was amusing, eccentric, erotic, lusty, full of humour, absurd and bizarre – and with marvellous colours too – and took one through the whole range of sensuality.’

WAZ, Weckruf für das Unterbewusstsein, DG, 18/5/05.

All press reviews on www.needcompany.org
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