

GRACE ELLEN BARKEY & NEEDCOMPANY

# CHUNKING

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.



Grace Ellen Barkey - Photo © Eveline Vanassche

*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 surrealistic 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.



Louise Peterhoff - Photo © Maarten Vanden Abeele

## 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

Kaaitheter, 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 Velinx, Tongeren 3 May 2007

Ikos Festival, Teatro Sociale, Brescia 12 May 2007

STUK, Soetezaal, Leuven 15 May 2007

## PERFORMANCE CALENDAR 2007-2008 SEASON

*Springwave Festival, Seoul, South-Korea*

*18, 19 May 2008 to be confirmed*



Louise Peterhoff, Benoît Gob, Julien Faure, Tijen Lawton, Maarten Seghers – Photo © Maarten Vanden Abeele

## 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, Kaaitheter, Brussels

## GRACE ELLEN BARKEY

Grace Ellen Barkey, born in Surabaya in Indonesia, studied dance expression and modern dance at the theatre school in Amsterdam and afterwards worked as an actress and dancer. Before co-founding Needcompany in 1986 and becoming its full-time choreographer, she had choreographed several other productions. She created the choreography for *Need to Know* (1987), *ça va* (1989), *Julius Caesar* (1990), *Invictos* (1991), *Antonius und Kleopatra* (1992) and *Orfeo* (1993). She also acted in several of these productions, as well as in *The Snakesong Trilogy - Snakesong/Le Voyeur* (1994), *Caligula* (1997), *Needcompany's King Lear* (2000), *Images of Affection* (2002) and *No Comment* (2003). She was one of the cast of *Goldfish Game* (2002), Jan Lauwers & Needcompany's first full-length film. For *Isabella's Room* (2004) she joined forces with Lot Lemm to create the costumes under the name Lemm&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*.

(*AND*) (2002), by Grace Ellen Barkey, was his first production with Needcompany. He replaced Timothy Couchman in *Images of Affection* (2002). In addition to this he also appeared in *Isabella's room* (2004), *The Lobster Shop* (2006) by Jan Lauwers and *Chunking* (2005) and *The Porcelain Project* (2007) by Grace Ellen Barkey.

## **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*.

He collaborated for the first time with Needcompany in (*AND*) (2002) by Grace Ellen Barkey. He replaced Dick Crane in *Images of Affection* (2002). In addition to this he also appeared in *Isabella's room* (2004), *The Lobster Shop* (2006) by Jan Lauwers and *Chunking* (2005) and *The Porcelain Project* (2007) by Grace Ellen Barkey.

## **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.

In 1991 she co-founded Foco Loco, a company that concentrated on research and development in every area of dance. In 1992 she joined Emma Carlson & dancers and toured Great Britain and Germany with the performance *Inner Corner*. In 1996 she came to Brussels to work on several productions by Pierre Droulers: *Les Beaux Jours* (1996), *Lilas* (1997) and *Multim in Parvo* (1998), followed by international tours. In the meantime she worked on the first choreographic pieces of her own: *Les petites formes* (1997) which contained *Je n'ai jamais parlé*, *Les Beaux Jours* and *Plus fort que leurs voix aiguës* (1998).

Her collaboration with Jan Lauwers started with her work as an actress and dancer in the revival of *Caligula* (1998) and in *Morning Song* (1999). Since then she has been a constant presence in Needcompany productions. She has appeared in *Needcompany's King Lear* (2000), *Images of Affection* (2002), *Goldfish Game* (2002), *No Comment* (2003), *Isabella's room* (2004) and *The Lobster Shop* (2006). She also appears in *Few Things* (2000), (*AND*) (2002), *Chunking* (2005), *The Porcelain Project* (2007) by Grace Ellen Barkey.

## **LOUISE PETERHOFF**

Louise Peterhoff, born in Sweden, studied dance at The Swedish Ballet School. She started working with The Royal Swedish Ballet in contemporary and classical repertory (1997-1998). For several years she worked with a variety of directors and choreographers including Jens Östberg (*Billy's dream*, 1999 *Play House*, 2000), Irene Hultman (*Cascade*, 2000), Philippe Blanchard (*Airbag*, 2000 *Noodles*, 2003) and Fabrice Lambert (*Play Mobile*, 2003). She made a few productions herself, *Swing for a lifetime* (2001), a duet with Lisa Östberg and *Flingor* (2002), a dance film created together with Per Sacklen and Lisa Östberg. This year she worked with Jan Fabre and Troubleyn in *Je suis sang* (2003).

*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 r u n g*.

His collaboration with Needcompany started with the production *Images of Affection* (2002). He wrote music for *No Comment* (2003), *Needlapb*, *Chunking* and *The Unauthorized Portrait* (2003) – a film about Jan Lauwers by Nico Leunen.

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.



Tijen Lawton - Photo © Maarten Vanden Abeele

## PRESS ABOUT GRACE ELLEN BARKEY & NEEDCOMPANY

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

***Trouw*, ‘Infectious copulating jumble of people as dressage’, Sander Hiskemuller, 23/5/05.**

‘*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](http://www.needcompany.org)

# NEEDCOMPANY

Hooikaai 35 B-1000 Brussel

tel +32 2 218 40 75

fax +32 2 218 23 17

[www.needcompany.org](http://www.needcompany.org)

## Contact

Managing director: Christel Simons / [christel@needcompany.org](mailto:christel@needcompany.org) / +32 477 66 34 66

Assistant managing director: Thijs De Ceuster / [thijs@needcompany.org](mailto:thijs@needcompany.org)

International relations and sales: Inge Ceustermans / [inge@needcompany.org](mailto:inge@needcompany.org) / + 32 495 27 17 24

Production management: Luc Galle / [luc@needcompany.org](mailto:luc@needcompany.org)

Assistant director, dramaturgy and communication: Elke Janssens / [elke@needcompany.org](mailto:elke@needcompany.org)

Tour management: Frank Van Elsen / [frank@needcompany.org](mailto:frank@needcompany.org)

Publications & Symposium: Eva Blaute / [eva@needcompany.org](mailto:eva@needcompany.org)