

Patting Down the Burn Bag:
The Declassification of Impressive Mastermind

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis, *Impressive Mastermind*, examines notions of privacy and the law, particularly with regard to the USA Patriot Act implemented following the events of 9/11. The author/artist believes that numerous freedoms related to personal privacy, especially those rights protected by the Fourth Amendment, were diminished in order to ostensibly seek out potential terrorists. Through the vehicle of a theatrical dance performance, *Impressive Mastermind* investigates these privacy issues on a public and personal level and also asks the audience to question their own views on government policies regarding personal privacy, including illegal search and seizure. Drawing on the previous work of other intervention artists, this thesis explores the realm of public intervention. Moving away from the usual spectacle of traditional theater, this multi-dimensional piece explores an experiential examination of how the public relates to what is real and what is considered performative.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

I frequently visit the online presence of the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). In addition to informational resources concerning the mission of the CIA, there is a game that evidently evaluates the visitor's potential ability as a spy. Each time I play this particular game, the results are always the same: I am an "impressive mastermind." Those two words were a perfect, if ironic, fit as the title of a work, *Impressive Mastermind*, meant to examine issues of privacy in the United States after the events of 9/11.

As a contemporary performance artist, I am influenced by real life experiences and create choreographic works that express my own personal views. As a United States citizen, I find political and social issues to be the root of my choreographic inspiration, and my thesis project, *Impressive Mastermind*, is no exception.

The idea to create *Impressive Mastermind* came to me during graduate studies at Arizona State University. At the time, I was traveling from Arizona to Virginia, my home state, on a regular basis. As a result of post-9/11 security measures, the environment created in and around the airport was startling to me. Multiple security checkpoints, threat level posters, and reminders over the loud speakers about suspicious behavior all added to what I perceived to be a government-induced feeling of fear.

While these experiences both frightened and intrigued me, I was particularly interested in how our privacy was being manipulated and potentially

eroded by the United States government. After 9/11 and the instatement of the USA Patriot Act, numerous freedoms related to personal privacy were suddenly restricted in order to seek out potential terrorists. The USA Patriot Act allows the government direct access to phone records, bank statements, travel history, and financial transactions reportedly in the name of protecting our country.

Impressive Mastermind examines privacy laws affected by the USA Patriot Act, most notably those related to surveillance of individuals. My artistic goal from inception was to create a trans-disciplinary, multi-dimensional, interventional experience incorporating live and recorded video, text, audio soundtracks, and live performance that enables audience members to feel, hear, and see the subject matter from a number of perspectives.

Privacy, or lack thereof in this case, is the primary concern with respect to the USA Patriot Act. Showcasing privacy issues within a setting well known to an audience (i.e. the theater) enables increased awareness of the issue. Assuming that a large percentage of my audience has been on an airplane since 9/11, I believed the focus on privacy within an airport setting would be the most relatable to the general public. In turn, I would be able to express my own frustration with the USA Patriot Act and allow an audience to experience various situations that seriously erode privacy within a theatrical setting.

Chapter Two of this document provides a review of literature relevant to the composition of *Impressive Mastermind*. In addition to direct engagement with textual material from the USA Patriot Act, I introduce several points of criticism with its central tenets. From among the voices that have spoken out against the

USA Patriot Act, I am most focused on those concerned with the erosion of personal privacy rights. Further, I investigate key figures in intervention art and performance as a foundational guide to my own artistic vision and process.

In Chapter Three, I present my own methodology for the composition of *Impressive Mastermind* drawing from the textual and artistic underpinnings of Chapter Two. I begin with a detailed examination of my own intellectual trajectory and process. Since intervention art and performance are largely conceptual, the discussion of procedural methodology seamlessly connects to the process by which *Impressive Mastermind* was performatively realized.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The tension between the right to privacy and the overall wellbeing of the collective public is an inherent characteristic of the United States Constitution, especially with regard to the First and Fourth Amendments, and has been the source of congressional debate throughout the history of the country (Henkins, 1974). *Impressive Mastermind*, engages with recent conflict balancing privacy rights with the public good resulting from the events of 9/11. The review of literature investigates issues of privacy in recent United States legislation, within the national discourse, and on the personal level of individual behavior in social media. Additionally, the conventions and intellectual trajectories of selected intervention artists are reviewed as antecedents to *Impressive Mastermind*.

Privacy and the Federal Government

The topic of privacy is paramount, and the following research specifically focuses on notably increased surveillance imposed by the United States government following 9/11. General observations regarding problems of privacy are then transferred to the frame of social media and networking web sites.

On October 26, 2001 the *Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA PATRIOT Act) Act of 2001* (henceforth Patriot Act) was signed into law. In the wake of the tragic events of 9/11, the United States government passed the Patriot Act in order “to deter and punish terrorist acts in the United States and around the world, to

enhance law enforcement investigatory tools, and for other purposes” (The USA PATRIOT Act, 2001, p.1). The Patriot Act, a 132-page public document, contains ten main sections that have numerous subcategories within them. The main sections are provided below in Table 1:

Title I	Enhancing Domestic Security Against Terrorism
Title II	Enhanced Surveillance Procedures
Title III	International Money Laundering Abatement and Anti- Terrorist Financing Act of 2001
Title IV	Protecting the Border
Title V	Removing Obstacles to Investigating Terrorism
Title VI	Providing for Victims of Terrorism, Public Safety Officers, and Their Families
Title VII	Increased Information Sharing for Critical Infrastructure Protection
Title VIII	Strengthening the Criminal Laws Against Terrorism
Title IX	Improved Intelligence
Title X	Miscellaneous

Table 1: The USA Patriot Act Subcategories

While the Patriot Act as a whole details many security policy changes related to the privacy of individual citizens, Title II, “Enhanced Surveillance Procedures,” is particularly relevant to the related research for and performance of *Impressive Mastermind*. Divided into twenty-five subcategories, Title II includes

procedural information relegating increased opportunities for the collection and distribution of personal information by security and law-enforcement institutions.

This section of the Patriot Act “has made the secret surveillance of innocent people far easier to justify” (Farren and Gibb, 2007, p.98). The National Security Agency “secretly filters millions of phone calls and emails an hour—international and domestic—through equipment programmed to watch and listen for hundreds of thousands of names and phone numbers” (Bamford, 2008, p.1–2). Section 206 of Title II “allows one wiretap authorization to cover multiple devices, eliminating the need for separate court authorizations for a suspect’s cell phone, PC, and Blackberry” (Abramson and Godoy, 2006, p.1). Therefore, the Patriot Act arguably leads “to privacy violations of anyone who comes into casual contact with a suspect” (Abramson and Godoy, 2006, p.1).

Certain forms of electronic surveillance, including video footage, have been a part of security systems for years, especially in the workplace. However “in light of the Patriot Act, employers may not even be aware of government surveillance of their employees, or may have no choice but to allow the government access to their employees’ private communications” (Sproule, 2002). It may be reasonably assumed then with the dramatic increase in visible closed-circuit surveillance devices that the general public actually expects to be videotaped while at work or in any public space. However, due to increasingly unrestricted protocol infringing private spaces as a result of the Patriot Act, private citizens may never be fully aware of the extent to which they are watched,

and even more unsettling, who, in addition to the federal government, is doing the watching.

Some authors take criticism of prescribed surveillance mechanisms even further, speculating that the United States government exploited a national tragedy and the subsequent composition of the Patriot Act to gain total control of access to private information. According to Glenn Greenwald:

Even now, every new attempted attack causes the Government to devise a new proposal for increasing its own powers still further and reducing rights even more, while the media cheer it on. It never goes in the other direction. . . . every new incident becomes a pretext for a fresh wave of fear-mongering and still new ways to erode core Constitutional protections even further (Greenwald, 2011).

Scholars suggest that United States citizens are being tricked into believing that their government is protecting them, when in reality the government is actually reducing rights in the supposed service of the public good. The result could well be that the planners and terrorist attackers of 9/11 have successfully achieved a deeper, more intellectual goal. In criticizing the obliteration of certain personal rights to privacy, one author ruminates that “the real aspiration of those who plan [terrorist attacks], is the destructive over-reaction they provoke” (Fallows, 2010). The case of the Patriot Act in point, many have argued that the United States government uses and abuses newly self-appointed powers in order to gain further

control of its people. The façade of an “account-able” Homeland Security projects the idea, in name, of benevolent protection but neglects to be transparent in terms of the compromised privacy rights that it arguably represents in both stated intent and subsequent malevolent activity.

Personal Privacy and Social Media

Social networks and internet-based social media tools such as MySpace, Facebook, and Twitter are increasingly integrated into everyday life and support the reduction of degrees of separation between every individual on a global scale (Watts, 2003; Gleick, 2011). These online devices, primarily used for social networking, are creating a compelling blur in the negotiation of privacy and redefinition of public spaces. Jon Kleinberg, a professor of computer science at Cornell University, states “when you’re doing stuff online, you should behave as if you’re doing it in public—because increasingly, it is” (Lohr, 2010).

While social networking may positively promote and reinforce constructions of community and expand open dialogue, many “parents, schools, social networking companies and government officials consider the outpouring of personal information in public social networking sites to be a problem” (Barnes, 2006). For example, both the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the United States Department of Justice (USDOJ) have created mechanisms with which to use these social networking web sites to obtain incriminating information. According to one scholar:

Newly released documents under the Freedom of Information Act reveal not just the Justice Department's guidelines for how to use social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter for investigative purposes, but which ones are the most friendly to their request for access to user info (Morran, 2010).

Further, a USDOJ presentation in August 2009 revealed:

Facebook is often cooperative with emergency requests. MySpace requires a search warrant for private messages/bulletins less than 181 days old. Twitter has a stated policy of producing data only in response to legal process (Morran, 2010).

Though the IRS is also an avid user of social networking web sites for the purposes of gleaning private information, the "IRS should be commended for its training that clearly prohibits employees from using deception or fake social networking accounts to obtain information" (Hofmann, 2010). Many critics hope that more government agencies follow the standards set by the IRS and only use these social networking sites as an aid to assist their governmental obligations to the law, rather than as a tool of deceit to trap "suspected" criminals. One notes, however, those agencies such as the USDOJ with more at stake as a result of 9/11

and the Patriot Act likely act with impunity derived from enhanced, and self-appointed, security responsibilities.

Intervention Art

While intervention art is not a new genre of artwork, it is in fact one of the most controversial. Known for its unapologetic attacks on public spaces, institutions, previously created artwork, and even people, intervention art closely balances the line, with notable deviations, of what is considered creative (even fun or playful) and what is ultimately destructive. Controversy and intervention art go hand in hand for one primary reason: vandalism. Despite the hypocrisy of institutionalized vandalism in the form of religiously and politically motivated restrictions or outright censorship, individual intervention artists are often viewed as criminals rather than creative beings with an artistic agenda. The distinction remains a heavily debated topic in public discourse regarding intervention art, and individual works or artists often carry the aggregated dual distinction of artist/criminal depending on frame of reference.

While there are numerous arguments surrounding what may be considered art and what is regarded as a criminal act, the Stuckists, a group opposed to both conceptual and intervention art, have the most direct and entertaining response. According to Stuckism, the difference between vandals and artists is as follows:

An act by an individual which interferes with an existing artwork is termed an “intervention” and the individual termed an “artist” if they are

endorsed by a Tate curator or are dead. The same, or similar, act by an individual interfering with the same artwork (or even interfering with the interference to the artwork), if they are alive and are not endorsed by a Tate curator, is termed “vandalism”, and the individual termed a “criminal” (Stuckism).

While this statement is primarily a contentious jab at the Tate Modern, there is an air of truth behind it. With intervention art, its purpose and its context are extremely important in determining its societal worth, or potential criminality. While, in general, museums and galleries have historically been more forgiving if the original art can be restored, other interventions, like those involving graffiti artists, often end in arrest.

One interventionist who is known as both an artist and a vandal is Banksy, a British street artist who has become a respected icon in the art world. Though his real identity remains a mystery, his artwork is clearly identifiable. As one critic notes:

Wherever his work may be, it’s the subject matter that gives it its bite: the establishment, whether art, politics, celebrity, police, religion, war.

Banksy doesn’t make so-called fine art, but something more direct. His work articulates his generation’s cynical, shrugging wit; the ability to be both angry with and take the mickey out of the rotten ways of those in charge (Sawyer, 2009).

While Banksy's artwork has been labeled vandalism by the government, it remains in high demand from the public. When a new Banksy intervention appears, it is nothing short of headline news. Admirers and detractors alike often travel great distances to view a Banksy piece and world-renowned auction houses, such as Sotheby's, have recently sold his works for thousands of dollars. Additionally, the owners and occupants of buildings that are "vandalized" by Banksy often express gratitude and a sense of honor that their property is subsequently considered a work of art. Beth Bartolini, the director of public relations for Light Group, recently commented on being Banksy's latest victim, saying, "We picked a great spot for our billboard, and he thought so too. It was one of our generic billboards. It's much cooler to have Banksy tag it" (Sperling, 2011).

Intervention art within the realm of visual art and as an artistic tool transforms existing pieces of work, often physical (and more recently digital) objects. Whereas, space manipulation, movement, and social interactions are primary elements in performative intervention art. Spectators of both visual and performance art often maintain preconceived notions of what to expect when entering a museum or theater. When this idea is challenged, however, the viewer has an entirely new perspective of both the space and the artwork within.

In British-born artist Tino Sehgal's piece *This Progress*, he stripped the Guggenheim completely bare, a shock to any avid museum viewer expecting paintings, wall text, or even merely a visible title. Within the empty space,

“Sehgal allows no documentation of his work (no photos, video, or audio), nor does he allow the creation of any objects related to it” (Miranda, 2010). The piece consists solely of dialogue between the viewer and the performers. *This Progress* is not to be duplicated; it is to be experienced.

While the initial surprise of the space is expected, Sehgal’s intent is what defines this piece and constitutes the success of the work according to critics. “For one, the Guggenheim looks spectacular without art. Two, Sehgal’s piece completely kicks us out of our museum-going haze—that rush-through-the-galleries zombie mode that all of us, at one time or another, have fallen into. Picasso: Check. Kandinsky: Check. Pollock: Check. Off to the gift shop” (Miranda, 2010). *This Progress* forces the viewer to slow down and embrace the space for what it is. It is not about criticizing artwork. It is about life being art and appreciating the moments in time as they occur.

In this case, Sehgal not only changes a viewer’s expectations of a well-known art space but he also transforms the way people experience art. The divide between performer/artist and viewer is nonexistent. These roles become interchangeable and frequently shift. It is improvised, unexpected, and thought provoking for all parties involved. It takes simple conversations between strangers and makes them works of art.

As a trained dancer, Sehgal creates artwork from movement on a regular basis; and, in *Kiss*, Sehgal embraces compelling forms of movement and choreography. *Kiss* includes two dancers, one male and one female, engaging in a passionate embrace. Whether the viewers notice or not, “the dancers’ gestures and

poses recall, at times humorously, Courbet's erotic paintings (1860s), Rodin's sculpture, "The Kiss" (1886), Brancusi's "Kiss" (1908) and Jeff Koons' "Made in Heaven," ceramics and photographs with an explicitly sexual content" (Whitwham, 2010). Sehgal's choreography in *Kiss* is a successful representation of how movement can enhance an artistic idea and validates the importance of choreography within the intervention art world. In a genre of art that is overrun by pedestrian (in the literal sense) movement, it is refreshing to the informed audience to see a work that is highly choreographed and performed outside of a typical dance-based setting.

Another important aspect of Sehgal's work involves situationalism. In *Kiss*, Sehgal transforms a private moment between a couple by positioning it performatively in a public space. The audience members are at once watching a dance piece but also acting as voyeurs. Therefore, the role of the audience is immediately transformed and the way in which the viewer reacts becomes a core component of the piece. "His art is a response to these perceived realities as they play out microcosmically in the context of the art industry. His goal is to create a counter-model: to make something (a situation) from virtually nothing (actions, words) and then let that something disappear, leaving no potentially marketable physical trace" (Cotter, 2010).

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Privacy Issues as Investigated and Articulated in *Impressive Mastermind*

From my perspective as an artist and United States citizen, the acts of 9/11 were no doubt horrifying. But, as a result of legislated reaction, private individuals are attacked daily in an entirely different way. In one comprehensive measure, the Patriot Act made everyone a suspect by assumed association. Fourth Amendment rights are in jeopardy, and we may be seeing the transformation of the “home of the free” into the home of the watched.

In order to visually communicate this perspective in the context a live performance piece, I elected to compose a public intervention in three parts. In order to do this successfully, I had to first consider the typical assumptions made by dance viewers. Traditionally, audience members enter a performance space without interruption. For this piece, however, I wanted to manipulate the entire space (lobby, hallways, and theater), thus creating an environment that was startling as soon as the audience approached the doors to the building. This progression was vital to the performance because it forced the audiences’ engagement from beginning to end.

To aid in this intervention, various created surveillance systems were put in place. Warning signs and the watchful eyes of a security team greeted each audience member as they arrived. Additionally, a live video feed captured the audience as they proceeded through the checkpoint area. Once inside the theater, the audience was able to view the security checkpoint through the live feed;

therefore, allowing the audience to be both the victim of surveillance and the voyeur.

In order to fully investigate limits to the expectation of personal privacy in a post-9/11 Internet environment, social media devices were included in the creation of *Impressive Mastermind*. Each core performer used Facebook and Twitter in character on a regular basis, aiding in the establishment of their identities (see *Phase I* below) in the virtual world. Through this experiment they were able to communicate in the role of their respective characters and display information regarding their fictionally created lives.

To emphasize the voyeuristic aspects and danger to privacy of social media, each audience member was given a list displaying the characters, Facebook identities, and Twitter names of each performer. In so doing, the audience was given the opportunity to access vital, yet private, information regarding each performer and their role within *Impressive Mastermind*. The choice to view this information, however, was completely voluntary. A copy of the information released to audience can be found in Appendix D.

The Methods of Intervention Art as Applied to *Impressive Mastermind*

My personal artistic perspective holds that intervention art does not destroy beloved pieces of work, it reenergizes them. Art is something that should be touched and experienced, not roped off and gawked at for centuries. Galleries and museums are more like prisons with visitation rights, where the audience does

nothing more than stop and stare, unengaged. Intervention artists take these stale environments and breathe life back into them.

When situating myself within the intervention art world, my artistic methods most closely correspond with those of Tino Sehgal (profiled above in Chapter Two). As performance-based intervention artists, our work is based on *public* intervention, not art intervention. While our influences and outcomes may be different, the core standards in which we create art are the same. As an artist, I am highly influenced by the expectations of art spaces. As a classically trained dancer, movement is my medium of choice. Dance is intergraded into all my pieces, which I have found to be unusual within the intervention art world.

My work's main purpose is to blur the line between reality and performance. In doing this, and as with Sehgal's *The Progress*, the audience is often a critical part of my artwork. Their reactions dictate the path of the piece and in turn audience members become participant-performers. What is considered performance is also considered real life and vice versa. I am highly influenced by private situations within public settings for this reason. My work consistently places the audience and performers in vulnerable situations in which negotiations between the two have to be made.

While Sehgal and I share many similarities, we differ in terms of artistic influence. Unlike Sehgal, I do not want realities to disappear. I want for them to be exposed. My goal is for the audience to walk away intrigued by their viewing experience but inquisitive regarding their reactions to it. Additionally, I am not opposed to the marketability of artwork or an artist as long as their artistic

integrity is not compromised. As a point of method, my work has been heavily documented, and I encourage the use of photography and recording devices at my showings as long as I have final approval of what is released. I feel that artists should have control of their artwork for copyright purposes only. The way their art is perceived, critiqued, or destroyed should not and cannot be controlled.

The Practical Application of Methodology for *Impressive Mastermind*

The purpose of this project was to create a performance piece based on privacy implications of the USA Patriot Act, specifically those surrounding search and seizure. My own personal experiences as an American woman, research on current privacy laws, and investigation of voyeuristic trends of social media all served as background inspiration for my interventional performance art piece titled *Impressive Mastermind*. This project included three developmental phases: preparation for the production, the production, and the evaluation phase.

Phase 1, the preparation for the production

Impressive Mastermind is a performance piece created in fulfillment of my Master of Fine Arts degree in Dance. This piece was presented on November 5, 2010 at 6:30 pm, November 6, 2010 at 7:30 pm and November 7, 2010 at 2:00 pm. All performances took place at the Physical Education Building East (PEBE) at Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona. This piece was presented in

conjunction with two additional MFA candidates and their projects, Rebecca Hillerby and Crystal Bedford.

The piece was divided into three different sections: Checkpoint, Control Room, and Line Up. Checkpoint took place in the lobby of PEBE, and both Control Room and Line Up were shown in the Margaret Gisolo Dance Studio.

The viewing experience of *Impressive Mastermind* began as soon as the audience approached PEBE. Upon entry, the audience was faced with a comprehensive security checkpoint. Each audience member was forced to enter the checkpoint in order to proceed into the theatre. The checkpoint area, hosted in the lobby of PEBE, was set with branded threat level posters, warning signs, instructions on proper checkpoint procedures, audio recordings in multiple languages, and armed security guards outfitted in black and pink uniforms and pink imitation weapons. The branding of *Impressive Mastermind* was also thoroughly deliberate, resonating imagery and verbiage common to government security agencies. Project-based brand colors (pink and black) were paired with mottos reminiscent of TSA and Homeland Security messages in order to simulate a fictitious, yet well organized, security agency.

The audience was required to travel through a maze of pink security lines (see Figure 1) that eventually led to the door of the Margaret Gisolo Dance Studio. Both a ticket and valid photo ID had to be presented in order to enter the theater. Having each audience member hand over a personal form of identification is not typical when attending a dance performance. This element was added to

accentuate the presence of surveillance within the piece. Once inside the main performance space, the audience viewed a live feed of the security checkpoint.



Figure 1: Security Lines in PEBE Lobby

The second section of *Impressive Mastermind* consisted of video only. A freestanding projection screen inside the Gisolo Theater, placed downstage center, showed a four-minute black-and-white film. The footage, presented in quadrants, contained a mix of candid and surveillance style video of the five female dancers.

Impressive Mastermind's final section took place on the entire stage of the Gisolo Theater. The dancers stood in an evenly spaced horizontal line downstage. The freestanding projection screen was placed behind the dancers upstage center. This section incorporated movement, video, recorded audio, and spoken text.

The core performers were required to create respective, fictionalized online identities using Internet-based social media platforms. Each performer was

given a basic background to which they added throughout the creative process. Allowing their own creative input during character construction gave the performers a sense of ownership of their new identities. In turn, their performance was more believable due to their direct connection to new fictional identities. The information each performer received and/or added included items such as their name, ethnicity, age, educational history, etc. In addition, each performer created a Gmail, Facebook, and Twitter account in order to pose as their fictionalized selves. These characters lived virtually for approximately nine months.

The core cast consisted of five female dancers. These dancers performed in all three sections of the piece. Rehearsal with these dancers began in March 2010 and continued up until the performance in November 2010. We rehearsed once each week during the Spring semester and twice every week during the Fall semester. Each rehearsal session was an hour and a half. During rehearsals each performer was referred to by their new identity.

The security team consisted of seven performers: three males, and four females, myself included. The security team performed in the first section of the piece. We met for two one-hour rehearsals: one in late October and another in November of 2010. We also conducted security meetings prior to each dress rehearsal and performance. During this time, we mapped out the space, created dialogue, and reviewed the rules and regulations of ASU's legal advisors and general counsel.

Due to the sensitive nature of this project, it was recommended that the Dean of the Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts and ASU's general

counsel be made aware of all logistics concerning the piece. The School of Dance's production team worked closely with appointed legal advisors in order to create a regulatory list of what could and could not take place during the performance. This list was the basis of a protocol system used by the security team while dealing with audience members' reactions to and within the checkpoint area.

The choreography for *Impressive Mastermind* revolved around two aspects: the dancers' "identities" and various degrees of security searches and interrogations. Based upon their fictional backgrounds, the dancers and myself worked collaboratively to create movement that fit my choreographic vision and their new personas. As a result, each dancer performed a solo that integrated their character-based aesthetic as well as a selected type of body search chosen by the choreographer. These body searches ranged from a simple pat-down to a fully nude cavity search.

The staging of the choreography was minimal and straightforward, alluding to a police line-up. The dancers were spread out laterally along the stage, and each dancer performed their solo one-by-one. A video, consisting of surveillance footage, text, static, and various audio played continuously during this twenty-five-minute section.

It is impossible to fully prepare for how an audience will react to a piece like this. Within the typical constructions of performance the audience knows what to expect. They are predisposed to believe that their role is simply as viewers, and the performers are the only participatory element of the piece. In

Impressive Mastermind, however, the viewers are bombarded immediately with an experience they are not expecting. They are no longer the spectators. They are the performers. This can cause an array of emotions and reactions. Their response, after all *is* the piece, especially during the first “Checkpoint” section.

Unlike typical shows, in which the performers are rehearsed for months, the audience has not been rehearsed at all. Even more disconcerting is the fact that the security team is unable to rehearse their roles either. The only way I was able to train participating performers was to anticipate a variety of potential reactions and outcomes.

In order to prepare for both the expected and unexpected, we created a protocol system that protected the audience, the School of Dance, and the performers. The system was created with the help of the production team from the School of Dance and ASU’s legal counsel. While knowing the performance aspect of the “Checkpoint” section would be more of a structured improvisation, I believed that creating an organized system of various outcomes would be the most efficient way to handle an unpredictable and risky situation such as this.

The audio component for *Impressive Mastermind* varied from section to section. Each of the three segments needed a different soundtrack in order to create the environment I sought after. The security message heard in the “Checkpoint” section was based upon audio typically heard in an airport setting. I utilized the United States Transportation Security Administration’s (TSA) announcements as inspiration and composed text relevant to the piece and its branding. It was recorded in both English and Spanish. William Swayze read the

English version, and Reyna Montoya read the Spanish version. Both versions were recorded and mixed by William Swayze. The announcements were played on the second level of the lobby in PEBE every two minutes and were preceded by a warning alarm.

The sound for the “Control Room” section video was originally synced with its corresponding footage. Unfortunately, the synchronized audio and video footage appeared too similar to reality television. Instead of the original audio, music from Scott Hull was added. Having one minimal track created the voyeuristic effect I was hoping for. Todd A. Raviotta created the score for the final “Line-up” section by mixing a variety of components together. These included: recorded interviews with the dancers, recorded audio of security instructions, original audio from the dancers’ surveillance tapes, camera sounds, and static.

The costumes for the security team needed to have an official, yet homemade look. In order to achieve this stylistically, I screen-printed black t-shirts with magenta lettering that read “SECURITY” on the front. On the back of each shirt, I printed the security team’s logo “Invading Your Privacy Is Our Priority”. In addition to the t-shirts, each member wore various types of black bottoms and shoes that reflected their own personalities. They were able to accessorize as they wished individually.

Randi Frost and I, the directors of the security team, wore professional attire. Unlike the security guards, we wore different coordinating ensembles for

each performance. However, the color scheme of pink, black, and white was always visible.

The costumes for each dancer were ultimately based upon their fictionalized identities. Props were selected according to the perceived needs of their characters and purpose of “travel”. All costumes for the dancers were purchased off-the-rack.

Phase 2, the production

Due to the complex production requirements of this piece, multiple meetings were held with the production crew. This group included the production manager, Carolyn Koch, the technical director, Mark C. Ammerman, the lighting designer, Davey Trijillo, and the stage manager, Alyssa Gersony.

While Koch and Gersony handled the flow of the production, it was the collaboration between Ammerman, Trijillo, and myself that designed the actual look of the show. Ammerman assisted on the set design, including the interweaving checkpoint line and bare theater, while Trijillio created a stark lightning design inspired by interrogation rooms.

In addition to the production team, I worked with filmmaker Todd A. Raviotta and graphic designer Charles Frost. Raviotta created the video and sound scores for section two and three. Since this collaboration was conducted across the country (Virginia to Arizona, and vice versa), the material was sent via mail and electronically. To reinforce the theme of government secrecy running through this piece, we treated our artistic relationship as one would when working with the

CIA. All materials were labeled classified, confidentiality contracts were signed, and all performers were referred to using the new fictionalized identities.

Frost created all of the propaganda and publicity materials used for *Impressive Mastermind*. Original Homeland Security and TSA posters and mottos inspired the signs that were placed in the security checkpoint and outside of the performance space. Copies of these items can be found in Appendix B. Copies of publicity materials can be found in Appendix E.

In live theater no two performances are ever the same, especially when technology is involved. The Friday, November 5, show was by far the most successful. The audience was receptive, all technical aspects were achieved without failure, and the production was well performed.

The Saturday, November 6, show was the complete opposite. In addition to my performance, an Indian dance showcase was also occurring in the same building. Deciphering who was attending which dance concert was an additional task that proved cumbersome for the security team. The security checkpoint that evening was even more stressful due to the fact that the projectors inside the theater were malfunctioning. Instead of concentrating on the organization of the checkpoint, I was required inside the theater for troubleshooting.

Unfortunately, there was a complete lack of technology during the first two sections of the Saturday performance. This not only disrupted the psychological journey I created for the audience but it skewed the data I was gathering from my surveys as well. This performance left the audience confused, the tech crew was embarrassed, and I was infuriated.

The final performance on November 7 also had its hiccups. While the video aspects of the piece ran smoothly, the placement of the projector screens had to be compromised in order to accommodate the new projectors. In doing this, an important transition between section two and section three was omitted.

There was also a higher level of aggression in the checkpoint during this performance. Many students that attend the shows do so for class credit. Writing a dance critique is required for all ASU School of Dance classes and typically students attend the final performance due to procrastination. Unfortunately, these shows are usually sold out and students fear that their grade will be significantly lower if they do not attend a required performance.

The final performance of *Impressive Mastermind* was in fact sold out. This created an interesting tension as those without tickets had to wait within the checkpoint area in hopes that additional tickets would be released. The mix of harassment from the security guards and irritation from the students created an environment that was noticeably more hostile than the two previous performances.

Jessica Mumford, the School of Dance videographer, videotaped the performances. There are two separate versions of this piece recorded, a wide shot and a close up. Since Mumford was made aware of the nature of the piece, she was able to capture key moments within the security checkpoint.

Phase 3, the evaluation phase

Overall, *Impressive Mastermind* was successful. My intent was to create a piece that blurred the lines of performance and reality and to expose the audience to intervention art practices. Throughout this piece, the audience was confronted with various situations surrounding privacy and their reactions to the artwork became the actual performance. Regardless of their personal opinions of the piece, good or bad, the fact that they walked away discussing privacy issues or art-making in general, makes *Impressive Mastermind* a success.

At the conclusion of this piece, the audience was asked to complete a survey based on their emotions or experiences of each of the three sections. They were also asked if they would like to share any personal encounters they had previously experienced involving search and seizure. Unfortunately, the surveys became more of a critique of the piece rather than exploration of their theatrical experience. While responses were interesting, they neither added to nor detracted from the research of this piece. A copy of the survey can be found Appendix D.

Chapter 4

ARTISTIC STATEMENT

My artistic work purposefully blurs the line between reality and performance, and as a potential outcome, reveals to audiences the performative in their personal realities. I am intrigued by truths, lies, and the uncomfortable moments in which this duality is negotiated in personal exchange. As an intervention dance artist, I create experiences that are participatory, unpredictable, and potentially scandalous. I achieve this most frequently by situating private experiences in public spaces. My work is often autobiographical, and I employ movement as my primary medium though my work often includes select tools from digital and multimedia arts to enhance my creative palette.

In *Impressive Mastermind* my main goal was to continuously alternate the roles of performer and viewer. In so doing, the audience experienced the performance from multiple points-of-view. Through this participatory exploration each individual was able to examine their personal stance on privacy, search and seizure procedures, voyeurism, and their own internal debate of what is real and what is performative.

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APPENDIX A
FICTITIOUS IDENTITIES

CLASSIFIED

Name: Georgina Bliss

Nationality: American and Egyptian

Age: 26

Occupation: Art curator

Location: New York, New York

Parents: Mother, Kifi Bliss, Father, Jonathan Bliss

Relationship Status: Long distance relationship

Education: Kaplan University, BS Paralegal Studies, UCLA MA Anthropology

Political Views: Liberal

Hobbies: Puzzles, painting, journal writing (3 times a day), counting stairs, arts & crafts

Favorite Color: Purple

Favorite Food: Chicken Kofta

Favorite Sex Position: Crouching Dragon

Favorite Music Artist: Regna Spektor

Righty or Lefty: Ambidextrous

Ideal Twitter Name: BlissfullyDomestic

Background: Born in Alexandria, Egypt to an Egyptian mother and American father, Georgina has dual citizenship in both countries. Due to her job and the location of her family she travels back and forth extensively from the United States. Due to her ethnicity she is constantly pulled to the side for additional security measures. This constant discrimination has caused her to resent the US government.

Additional Info: Germaphobic, has a pet monkey named Bongo, rides her bicycle everywhere.

CLASSIFIED

Name: Blair Louise Ellis

Nationality: Asian American

Age: 30

Occupation: Housewife

Location: Houston, Texas

Parents: Jill and Aaron Lee ages 56/57

Relationship Status: Married

Education: BA from Texas Tech in Criminal Psychology & Texas Tech Law School. Blair is super smart but doesn't work because her husband does not believe in it.

Political Views: Republican

Hobbies: Horseback riding, volunteering at the local youth city center, walking Duke & Daisy (two labs), going to the local gun club to shoot.

Favorite Color: Peach

Favorite Food: Hushpuppies

Favorite Sex Position: Reverse Cowgirl

Favorite Music Artist: Faith Hill (or all things country)

Righty or Lefty: Righty

Ideal Twitter Name: BountifulBlair02

Background: Blair is married to an incredibly wealthy lawyer. He is 15 years older than her. They are Republican and love all things USA. They especially love guns, cookouts by their big pool and their two dogs. This however is a change for Blair. Before meeting her now husband she had a very different life. Most of that life is in the past except that Blair is secretly having an affair with an ex-lover. If her husband found out, he would kill her. Seriously.

CLASSIFIED

Name: Foxy McGillicutty

Nationality: American

Age: 23

Occupation: Music expert in local record store. Also a political activist.

Location: Sacramento, California

Parents: Mother, Starlite (Hampton) McGillicutty, 67, Father, John McGillicutty, 69

Relationship Status: In a relationship with a 28 year old woman but has other partners (male & female) that he woman is okay with.

Education: Never graduated high school. Dropped out after being suspended too often for rioting & running around nude.

Political Views: No government input! I hate rules & regulations.

Hobbies: Smoking good marijuana, hiking, camping, collecting glass to create smoking pieces, hunting, building forts

Favorite Color: GREEN!!!!

Favorite Food: Weed brownies

Favorite Sex Position: Every sexual position is of equal importance. Partial bondage.

Favorite Music Artist: O'Death, but love all music because it takes over my soul.

Righty or lefty: Lefty (I will never be a righty)
Ideal Twitter Name: None. Fuck technology.

Background: Raised by hippies, Foxy is a wild child. She believes the government should have no say on how she lives her life. She thinks that privacy laws, including the US Patriot Act, are a huge issue. She has been arrested multiple times for her (sometimes violent) outbursts. These arrests have caused her to lose jobs, relationships, etc. She believes America is full of fascist motherfuckers.

CLASSIFIED

Name: Pennelopi Lawson/Nadie Putina

Nationality: Russian

Age: 27

Occupation: Double Agent. Working for the FSB (Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation) and the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency)

Location: Washington D.C. and Moscow

Parents: Father, Ivan Ivanovitch. Mother, only knew her as "Mom". She had me when she was 16 and went M.I.A. when I was 7.

Relationship Status: Involved

Education: Life experience.

Political Views: Government is fucked.

Favorite Color: Red

Favorite Food: Blinio (thin Russian pancakes my Dad used to make for me) and steamed vegetables.

Favorite Sex Position: On top.

Favorite Music Artist: Alanis Morissette

Righty or Lefty: Right-handed

Ideal Twitter Name: Lenne Pawson or Random Roulette

Background: Pennelopi Lawson was born Nadie Putina in Saint Petersburg, Russia. She was working as secret agent for the FSB when she met her current lover, an agent for the CIA. They decided to work for both agencies for monetary reasons. This, of course, makes life tricky. To make matters worse, her friend and fellow CIA agent Penelope Salt has been assigned to investigate her involvement with the FSB.

CLASSIFIED

Name: Penelope Salt

Age: 35

Nationality: American

Occupation: CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) Special Agent

Location: Washington D.C.

Parents: Ester & Clifford. Both deceased. They were killed by a Russian car bomb.

Relationship Status: Single but has lovers in every major city.

Education: BA in International Affairs at Georgetown University.

Political Views: Don't give a fuck. They are all trifling.

Hobbies: Kung Fu, knife fighting, shooting guns, kicking ass, jumping out of moving cars, yogalites

Favorite Color: Black

Favorite Food: Spicy

Favorite Music Artist: Metallica

Righty or Lefty: Ambidextrous

Favorite Sexual Position:

Ideal Twitter Name: Salty Spy

Background: Started working for the CIA right after completing her Bachelor's Degree in International Affairs at Georgetown University. She is a trilingual special agent with the CIA. Russian and French are her additional languages. She is a master at body detection. Her current job is to investigate her friend and current CIA agent Pennelopi Lawson. The CIA believes Pennelopi may be a double agent with the FSB (Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation).

APPENDIX B
CHECKPOINT PROPAGANDA

FDANCE SECURITY ADVISORY SYSTEM

SEVERE

SEVERE RISK OF PRIVACY ATTACKS

HIGH

HIGH RISK OF PRIVACY ATTACKS

ELEVATED

SIGNIFICANT RISK OF PRIVACY ATTACKS

GUARDED

GENERAL RISK OF PRIVACY ATTACKS

LOW

LOW RISK OF PRIVACY ATTACKS

FDANCE
INVADING YOUR PRIVACY
IS OUR PRIORITY

**THE CURRENT
THREAT LEVEL IS
MAGENTA**

SEVERE

SEVERE RISK OF PRIVACY ATTACKS

FDANCE
INVADING YOUR PRIVACY
IS OUR PRIORITY

PLEASE STAY ALERT!

FDANCE SECURITY CHECKPOINT



NOTICE

**Photo I.D. and
Ticket Required**

**Items prohibited during
performance:**

Cellular Phones

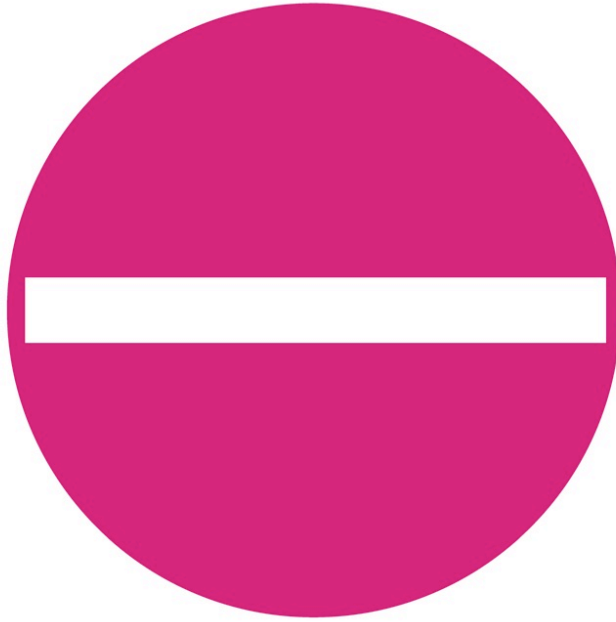
Digital Cameras

Video Devices

Food and Beverages

FDANCE
INVADING YOUR PRIVACY
IS OUR PRIORITY

EXIT ONLY



DO NOT ENTER

FDANCE
INVADING YOUR PRIVACY
IS OUR PRIORITY



ATTENTION



**DUE TO HEIGHTENED SECURITY
PLEASE REPORT ANY UNATTENDED
BAGGAGE OR SUSPICIOUS BEHAVIOR
TO SECURITY PERSONNEL**

FDANCE
INVADING YOUR PRIVACY
IS OUR PRIORITY

**INTERROGATION
HOLDING
AREA**

FDANCE
INVADING YOUR PRIVACY
IS OUR PRIORITY

B1002

**INTERROGATION
HOLDING
AREA**

FDANCE
INVADING YOUR PRIVACY
IS OUR PRIORITY

B1004

**INTERROGATION
HOLDING
AREA**

FDANCE
INVADING YOUR PRIVACY
IS OUR PRIORITY

B1005

**INTERROGATION
HOLDING
AREA**

FDANCE
INVADING YOUR PRIVACY
IS OUR PRIORITY

B1007

ALTERNATIVE ENTRANCE

FDANCE
INVADING YOUR PRIVACY
IS OUR PRIORITY

HOLDING AND PROCESSING AREA

FDANCE
INVADING YOUR PRIVACY
IS OUR PRIORITY

F1009

**THIS PERFORMANCE IS INTENDED
FOR MATURE AUDIENCES ONLY
AND CONTAINS NUDITY**

APPENDIX C
CHECKPOINT ANNOUNCEMENT

Announcement 1:

You have entered Physical Education Building East. The current threat level is magenta. Please stay alert.

Usted ha incorporado el este del edificio de la educación física. El nivel actual de la amenaza es magenta. Permanezca por favor alerta.

Announcement 2:

Attention. Due to heightened security please report any unattended baggage or suspicious behavior to security personnel.

Atención. Debido a la seguridad aumentada divulgue por favor cualquier bagaje desatendido o comportamiento sospechoso al personal de seguridad.

APPENDIX D

PROGRAM INSERT: CHARACTER INFORMATION/SURVEY

IMPRESSIVE MASTERMIND

INVADING YOUR PRIVACY IS OUR PRIORITY

You too can invade the privacy of tonight's performers!
Feel free to friend them on
Facebook and/or follow them on Twitter.

Georgina Bliss
FB: Georgina Bliss
Twitter: @GeorginaBliss

Blair Ellis
FB: Blair Ellis
Twitter: @BountifulBlair

Pennelopi Lawson
FB: Pennelopi Lawson
Twitter: @RandomlyRussian

Foxy McGillicutty
FB: Fox McGillicutty
Twitter: @foxmcgee

Penelope Salt
FB: Penelope Salt
Twitter: @PenelopeSalt

Let the voyeurism begin!!!!

This survey is a vital component to the research involved in the production and execution of Impressive Mastermind.

Please share your feelings and/or experiences of each of the following:

Section 1: Checkpoint (entering the theatre)

Section 2: Control Room (surveillance video of performers)

Section 3: Line Up (interrogation of performers)

If you have any personal encounters involving search and seizure that you would like to share, please do so here.

Thank you for your feedback.
Your participation is greatly appreciated.

IMPRESSIVE MASTERMIND
INVADING YOUR PRIVACY IS OUR PRIORITY

FDANCE

APPENDIX E
PUBLICITY MATERIALS

IMPRESSIVE MASTERMIND

Presented by Rebecca A. Ferrell
MFA Candidate

Emerging Artist II

Other works by
Crystal Bedford
Rebecca Blair Hillerby

Nov. 5, 6:30 p.m.
Nov. 6, 7:30 p.m.
Nov. 7, 2 p.m.

Margaret Gisolo
Dance Studio
PE East 132
ASU Tempe Campus

This performance is intended for mature
audiences only and contains nudity

FDANCE

WHO IS WATCHING?



Friday, Saturday and Sunday
Nov. 5-7, 2010
Margaret Gisolo Dance Studio
PE East 132
ASU Tempe Campus
dance.asu.edu
Cost: \$8-\$21

IMPRESSIVE MASTERMIND

Impressive Mastermind examines privacy laws surrounding the USA Patriot Act, most notably those involving airport security within a post 9/11 America. This trans-disciplinary piece moves away from the construction of spectacle and into a multi-dimensional experience for the audience enabling them to feel, hear, and see the subject matter from a number of perspectives. Ferrell's work incorporates live and recorded video, text, audio sound tracks and live performance.

This performance is intended for mature audiences only and contains nudity

ASU Herberger Institute
FOR DESIGN AND THE ARTS
ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

