

THE BUILDERS ASSOCIATION

UCSC ARTS DIVISION AND THEATER ARTS DEPARTMENT PRESENT THE INTERNATIONALLY CELEBRATED, NEW YORK-BASED, OBIE AWARD-WINNING THEATER COMPANY,

West Coast Premiere

**STRANGE
WINDOW:
*The Turn of the Screw***

DIRECTED BY MARIANNE WEEMS

OCTOBER 12-14, 2018

UCSC THEATER ARTS CENTER, EXPERIMENTAL THEATER

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UC SANTA CRUZ



THEATER
ARTS
DRAMA
DANCE
DESIGN

FROM DEAN OF THE ARTS SUSAN SOLT

On behalf of the UC Santa Cruz Arts Division, it is my sincere joy and privilege to welcome you to the West Coast premiere of *Strange Window: The Turn of the Screw*, a production of The Builders Association. I have long admired The Builders Association, which is based in New York, as one of the preeminent theater companies of our time, so presenting this work to our Santa Cruz community is a special treat for me personally.

And I could not be more proud that the Arts Division is featured as a co-producer of the East Coast premiere of this extraordinary production that will take place at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) this coming December.

With the leadership provided by Professor Marianne Weems and her company, we continue a rich history of innovation in theater through new media, digital technologies, and mixed realities.



In the early years of UC Santa Cruz, students and faculty worked side-by-side to create relevance for the arts at this research university. Performances at Stevenson College, the Barn Theater, in the Quarry, the Glen, and in our current Theater Arts Center provide a foundation of training research

and inspiration that feed our students and the community. This rich legacy informs our future.

My sincere thanks to Carolyn Hyatt and the Hyatt Family Trust for this special investment in theater at UC Santa Cruz. I am so grateful to Carolyn for her support as a dear friend and as our first Arts Champion Producer.

Finally, my thanks to all of you, our guests.

Enjoy the performance!

Susan Solt
Dean of the Arts
Distinguished Professor of Theater Arts

FROM CHAIR DAVID LEE CUTHBERT

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the Theater Arts Center for our Department's collaboration with The Builders Association. The Department of Theater Arts at UCSC has a long tradition of preparing students to work at the highest level of the profession, providing them with a skill set that readies them for success on any path they may follow. Our students graduate as emerging exemplars not only of creative skills but also of collaboration, communication, and leadership. From the Barnstorm, our wholly student-run program, through our Master of Arts we have created pathways for students at all levels. This collaboration represents a step forward in giving students additional learning opportunities by observing and working with a company that is advancing our artform through the integration of new technology with one of the oldest forms of storytelling—live performance. For months, students have been preparing the eXperimental Theater to execute this production to the highest possible standards. As you read this, there are students all around you, dressed in their stage blacks, headsets on, eagerly standing by to share their work with you. I'd like to express heartfelt thanks to Dean Susan Solt for her inspiration and her unflagging efforts to make this production happen, and to our newest faculty member Professor Marianne Weems, Artistic Director of The Builders Association, for sharing this production with our department, University, and community.

David Lee Cuthbert
Professor
and Chair,
Department of
Theater Arts



STATEMENT FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

On behalf of The Builders Association, I want to thank Dean Solt, Chair Cuthbert, and the community of faculty, staff, and students for welcoming us so warmly. As artists we recognize the importance the university as a repository of knowledge and as a critical training environment, but also as a supportive and stimulating producing partner which is willing to embrace challenging work. The Dean and faculty of the Arts Division here at UC Santa Cruz are doing nothing less than transforming arts education, and I am very happy to be a part of it. We see this production of *Strange Window* as the beginning of a long collaborative relationship with an ideal partner.

Marianne Weems
Professor of Theater Arts
Artistic Director of The Builders Association



PRODUCTION PERSONNEL

UCSC Theater Arts Center Technical personnel for Strange Window

Assistant Stage Manager ***Camille Kelly***

Light Board Operator/Lighting Technician ***Joe Krempez***

Video Technician ***Spencer Doughtie***

Audio/Sound Consultant ***Matthew Galvin***

Lead Carpenter/Rigger ***Mark Hoagland***

Student Production Assistants

Giselle Audero

Ash Brown

Amber Gebert-Goldsmith

Alyssa Ponce

Amber Zepf

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Company Manager: *D Parr*



www.thebuildersassociation.org

 The Builders Association

UC Santa Cruz Arts Division and the Theater Arts Department present:
THE BUILDERS ASSOCIATION

STRANGE WINDOW:

The Turn of the Screw

BASED ON *THE TURN OF THE SCREW* BY HENRY JAMES

Directed by MARIANNE WEEMS

Written by JAMES GIBBS

*Adapted by MOE ANGELOS, JAMES
GIBBS, AND MARIANNE WEEMS*

*Sound Design and original music
composition by DAN DOBSON*

Video Design by AUSTIN SWITSER

Lighting by JENNIFER TIPTON

Scenic Design by NEAL WILKINSON

Costume Design by ANDREEA MINCIC

PERFORMED BY:

Moe Angelos

Sean Donovan

Hannah Heller

Lucia Roderique

Asher and Ellie Harwood

*Additional text
contributions by
the performers*

Eleanor Bishop, Assistant Director

Jesse Garrison, Associate Video Designer

Tyler Thomas, Associate Dramaturg

Josh Smith, Associate Lighting Designer

*Max Pendergast
Stage Manager*

*Carl Whipple
Production Manager*

*Katherine Brook
Producer*

*Morgan Tachco
Producer*

UC SANTA CRUZ:

*David Lee Cuthbert
Producer*

*Susan Solt
Executive Producer*

*Stephanie C. Moore
Associate Producer*

Co-commissioned by Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) for the 2018 Next Wave Festival, and co-produced by the Arts Division of the University of California, Santa Cruz, and 3LD Art & Technology Center.

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Special thanks to Mike Ross, Kevin Cunningham, Joseph Melillo, and Susan Solt.

Additional thanks to Sean Donovan for movement sequences, and Sunita Weems, song.

Experimental Theater, Theater Arts Center, UCSC
October 12-14, 2018

The Hyatt Family Trust, Arts Champion Producer





THE BUILDERS ASSOCIATION

Founded in 1994, *The Builders Association* is a New York-based performance and media company that creates original productions based on stories drawn from contemporary life. The company uses the richness of new and old tools to extend the boundaries of theater. Among many other unusual collaborators, the company has worked with the architects Diller Scofidio + Renfro, the South Asian London-based collective motiroti, and the National Center for Supercomputing Applications. From Brooklyn to Bogata, Singapore to Melbourne, Los Angeles to Budapest, the Builders Association's OBIE award-winning shows have toured to 80 major venues the world over.



BY ANY MEASURE, THE CAREER OF DIRECTOR MARIANNE WEEMS IS A REMARKABLE ONE.

Her work began in 1987 with her founding the avant-garde performance group the V-Girls (including Andrea Fraser), who would bring feminist theory to life with staged assaults on traditional institutions and forms of knowledge. In 1988 she joined the Wooster Group, a leading experimental theater troupe, and co-founded The Builders Association in 1994. Builders broke traditional artistic boundaries by including architects, media designers, software engineers, and visual artists and pushing the boundaries of experimental theater. Since 1994, their seventeen original productions have appeared in 80 major theatrical venues in every corner of the world, and they have consistently innovated with new technologies within the very old form of theater.

In the late 1990's and early 2000's, critical debate around multi-media theater was intense. Its detractors accused it of catering to popular tastes for screens that corrupted the purity of the live theatrical experience, while some supporters hailed the embrace of new technology to tell stories. Weems and The Builders Association occupied a third way of understanding media — they seemed to anticipate media studies' observation that the explosive emergence of digital technology has in some significant way already altered what it means to experience the human "self." That self exists as much in the virtual world of

cyberspace (where we shop, debate, form communities, play games, embarrass ourselves, commit and are victimized by crime, and do other very human things) as it does in the physical world, and thus human experience exists in the space that mediates the physical and the virtual.

One celebrated production of The Builders Association was *Super Vision* (2005) which premiered at the Walker Arts Center in Minneapolis. This play tells the story, among others, of a Muslim traveler whose humanity is gradually stripped away by electronic government surveillance. The action on stage is monitored at all times by a cadre of security officers through various devices while secret information about the characters is broadcasted on huge screens. But before the action begins, an actress makes a curtain speech in which she reveals detailed demographic data about the audience culled from their credit card ticket purchases. In so doing, *Super Vision* calls attention to that portion of the spectators' lives that are lived online, and how vulnerable they have thereby become.

In this, The Builders Association has become a beacon of a new media dramaturgy that maximizes theater's ability to speak directly to its audiences about the worlds in which we struggle to live and thrive — and that has always been theater's most urgent occupation.

— Michael M. Chemers
Professor of Theater Arts

Strange Window is The Builders Association's adaptation of Henry James' serial horror tale, *The Turn of the Screw*. When it was first published in Collier's Weekly between January and April of 1898, complete with spooky illustrations, James was perhaps at the nadir of his career. Born in



New York in 1843, James lived in London and Paris for much of his adult life and counted among his close friends Émile Zola, another great pioneer of modern psychological realism. James' novel *The Portrait of a Lady* had been published in 1881, and was hailed then (as it still is) as a masterpiece of psychological realism that became

a powerful influence on contemporary writers including Virginia Woolf and Edith Wharton. But between 1881 and 1883, several deaths in quick succession of family members and close friends affected him profoundly, and his career suffered a decline, the worst point of which was perhaps the failure of his drama, *Guy Domville* (1895), which was jeered off the London stage. In 1897 James moved to Rye, in Sussex, and in here he crafted the terrifying story of a young governess haunted by dangers physical, psychological, and perhaps supernatural. *The Turn of the Screw* marked a turning point in James' creative life that would cement his legacy.

The same year that *The Turn of the Screw* was published, James wrote several articles extolling the work of his contemporary, Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen, another celebrated psychological realist. It is perhaps small wonder, then,

that James would, like Ibsen, employ ghosts to emphasize that madness is defined by the thinning of barriers between fantasy and reality, even in a story crafted with such careful fidelity to human psychology. The ghosts certainly serve to illustrate the trauma of the governess' position as an unmarried woman of no means at the mercy of a powerful and unscrupulous man during a period of unapologetic chauvinism and classism that, as James and others seem to argue, so warped the human psyche that the powerful

HENRY JAMES and The Theater

became predators and the powerless, victims. But James' ghosts are ambiguous; they may have no existence outside of the governess' mind, or they may be present threats to herself and her young charges. Although this ambiguity has troubled some literary critics, in the theater since Shakespeare we very much cherish our ghosts. It should come as no surprise that *The Turn of the Screw* should be so often adapted to the stage and screen, and continue to haunt our drama more than a century later.

— Michael M. Chemers
Professor of Theater Arts

PERFORMERS



Moe Angelos (Mrs. Grose) is a theater artist and writer.

In addition to her work with The Builders, she's one of The Five Lesbian Brothers, an OBIE-Award winning theater company, and she has been a member of the Wow Café Theater since 1981. She has collaborated with many downtown NYC performance luminaries including Lisa Kron, Anne Bogart, Lois Weaver, Kate Stafford, Brooke O'Harra, Carmelita Tropicana, Half Straddle, and The Ridiculous Theatrical Company. She is a mentor in Queer/Art/Mentorship, and she has taught and lectured at universities across North America.



Sean Donovan (Quint, Uncle, Lecturer, voice of Miles) is an actor, dancer, writer, choreographer and director. He's been nominated twice for BESSIE awards for Outstanding Performer for his body of work. He's worked with Faye Driscoll, Miguel Gutierrez, Jane Comfort, The Builders Association, Witness Relocation, and many others. Recent credits include *Thank You for Coming: Attendance and Play* (BAM, Danspace Project, international tour), *Age & Beauty Part 2 at NYLA*, and *House/Divided* at BAM (NY) along with a national tour. He holds a BFA from NYU's Experimental Theater Wing. His newest work, *Cabin*, will premiere in May 2019 at The Bushwick Starr.



Asher Harwood (Miles) can most often be found playing soccer or practicing parkour. He is in the sixth grade and enjoys social studies and music. He is also an avid reader and a graphic novel fan. He recently received the Family Service Award for taking out the trash without being asked. Asher lives with his family in the East Village in New York City.



Ellie Harwood (Flora) loves play dates, wearing funny costumes and talking in foreign accents. She is in the fourth grade and her favorite subjects are math and art. She was recently voted the funniest member of her family, in the nine and under category. Ellie lives with her family in the East Village in New York City.



Hannah Heller (Miss Jessel, Aunt, Lecturer, voice of Flora) is a New York-based performer and writer. Select New York theater credits include *Elements of Oz* (The Builder's Association), *Emily Climbs* (The Brick), *Evelyn* (The Bushwick Starr), *Actress Fury* (Bushwick Starr), *The World is Round* (BAM), and *The Reception* (HERE Arts Center). Upcoming, Hannah will be seen in Nellie Tinder's *All Long True American Stories* play-cycle at The Bushwick Starr. Film and Television credits include *Lemon* (Magnolia Pictures/Killer Films), *Hard World For Small Things* (WEVR), and *Jeff and Some Aliens* (Comedy Central). Hannah is the director and co-creator of the web series *Morning Chardonnay*. As a dancer, Hannah has worked with Dorrance Dance and Savion Glover.



Lucia Roderique (Governess, Nanny) is a performer, Full Spectrum Doula, and student based in Brooklyn. Past favorite productions include: *Carmen La Cubana* (Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris), *Sheila's Day* (Lincoln Center, NY), *The Apartment* (Abrons Art Center, NY), *The Unfortunates* (Joe's Pub, NY). Future productions put on hold to pursue a masters degree in Midwifery. She is a Carnegie Mellon University Drama grad.

COMPANY

Marianne Weems (Director) is artistic director and co-founder of the The Builders Association and has directed all of their productions. She has also worked in various creative roles with Susan Sontag, Taryn Simon, The V-Girls, David Byrne, the Wooster Group (where she was the assistant director and dramaturg), and many others. Weems led the Graduate Directing program at Carnegie Mellon University's School of Drama from 2008-14 and was Special Faculty at Carnegie Mellon's Integrative Media Program. She has served on the board of the small but fierce foundation Art Matters since the early '90's and participated in the formation of Visual AIDS, and the National Campaign for Freedom of Expression. She is the co-editor of *Art Matters: How The Culture Wars Changed America* (NYU Press 2005) and co-author with Professor Shannon Jackson of *The Builders Association: Performance and Media in Contemporary Theater* (MIT Press 2015.)

Eleanor Bishop (Assistant Director) is a director and writer based between New Zealand and New York. Recent works include an adaptation of George Bernard Shaw's *Mrs Warren's Profession* (Auckland Theatre Company) and *Jane Doe*, a participatory piece about rape culture that has evolved with participation from multiple colleges in the U.S. She has worked as an assistant director for The Builders Association's *Elements of OZ*. She received her MFA in Directing from Carnegie Mellon University's School of Drama.

Katherine Brook (Producer) director and producer, who creates original work with her performance ensemble, Televiolet. She has worked as a producer for The Foundry Theatre, New York City Players, The Provincetown Tennessee Williams Theatre Festival and StoryCorps. Brook received her MFA from Carnegie Mellon University.

Dan Dobson (Sound Design and Original Music Composition) is a founding member of The Builders Association and has designed sound for all of their productions. In addition to editing and scoring for film, he has played zither and Chapman stick for Blue Man Group since 1995.

Jesse Garrison (Associate Video Designer) is an LA-based multimedia artist and video designer. He uses a range of technology to examine the boundaries between the physical and digital. It has incorporated everything from computer vision libraries and AR SDKs to colored oil and 35mm slides. Recent stage work includes The Builders Association's *Elements of Oz (3LD)*, *Only Child Aerial Theater's Asylum* (Skirball Center), and *Thread* at the Edinburgh Fringe. Recent installation work includes *The Woods*, an exploration of our relationship with the forest, *VROM*, a VR meditation experience, and *NewsPrint*, an anachronistic printing machine. More at takethefort.com.

James Gibbs (Writer and Dramaturg) is a writer and company dramaturg with The Builders Association. He has worked with the company since 1998 in a variety of roles, including contributing and directing 3D-animated visual material. He is currently at work on his first novel and has had short fiction recently published with *Storyscape Journal* and anthologized by *Epiphany*. Gibbs was a founder and remains a director of DBOX, a company that makes stories about buildings (advertising, branding, media) and won an Emmy for *Rising: Rebuilding Ground Zero*. His photography work with DBOX and with husband Dick Page has been published in *The New York Times*, *Surface*, *allure*, *W*, and *Interview* magazines, among others.

Andreea Mincic (Costume Designer) is a visual artist who works as theater designer in New York City. She likes working on various types of performances and always tries to be involved in new, unconventional and challenging projects. From stage design to costumes, making masks, or puppets, Andreea loves everything that has a good idea. She is the type of artist who uses her hands to make things, an individual with a versatile set of skills. She designs mostly for downtown theater companies, and some of her favorite collaborators are: The Builders Association, Two Headed Calf, Half Straddle, 31Down, Hoi Polloi, Jim Findlay, Radiohole, Mallory Catlett, Susan Marshall, Banana Bag and Bodice, Big Dance Theater. <http://andreamincic14.portfoliobox.io>

Max Pendergast (Stage Manager) is a director and stage manager. She founded The Brouhaha Theatre Project with Nick Auer in 2015, and co-directed its first four productions: *Tunnel Odyssey*, *Wrestling with Lesbians*, *R&D: a nightmare in three flowcharts*, and *Heydays*. Other directing credits include *The Castle of Perseverance*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, and *Black Cat Lost* by Erin Courtney. Stage Management credits include *Strange Window* (Invisible Dog), *Room for Cream* (New Museum), *MYTHO?* (Abrons Art Center), *BLDZR the musical* (The Triad), *I'm Bleeding all over the Place: A Living History Tour* (La Mama), *And That's How the Rent Gets Paid* (The Kitchen), *The Egg Project* (Fringe NYC), and *Billy the Kid* (Mount Tremper Arts).

Josh Smith (Associate Lighting Designer) is a NYC based set and lighting designer. Recent projects include; *Big Fish* (Theatre Raleigh), *Power of Emotion* (Abrons Arts Center), *Bear Slayer* (Ars Nova), *Boy at the Edge of Everything* (Lincoln Center), *How To Get Into Buildings* (New Georges), *Million Dollar Quartet* (Bucks County Playhouse), *Clara Not Clara* (Knockdown Center), *The Power Of Emotion* (The Public Theatre: UTR) ...*Ichabod Crane* (Park Avenue Armory), *Feeling* (New Ohio Theatre), *Lady Han, Party in the USA* (Incubator Arts).
www.josh-smith.com

Austin Switser (Video Designer) Recent projects include *Tree of Codes* (Spoleto Festival USA) *Onegin* (Spoleto Festival USA), *Trojan Women* (National Theater of Korea, Singapore International Festival of Arts, LIFT, Holland Festival, Wiener Festwochen) *Paradise Interrupted* (Spoleto Festival USA, Lincoln Center Festival, Singapore International Festival of Arts), *Facing Goya* (Spoleto Festival USA, Singapore International Festival of Arts), *Émilie* (Spoleto Festival USA, Lincoln Center Festival, Finnish National Opera); *He Brought Her Heart Back in Box* (Theatre for A New Audience; Obie Award), *Big Love* (Signature Theatre) *Sontag: Reborn*, *¡El Conquistador!* (New York Theatre Workshop), *Elements of OZ*, *House/Divided* and *Jet Lag 2010* (The Builders Association).
www.switserknight.com

Tyler Thomas (Associate Dramaturg) is a multidisciplinary theater maker and cultural worker. Her work has most recently been shown at the New York Musical Festival, HERE Arts Center, Paradise Factory, The Performing Garage, and NYU. Recent assisting credits: The Public Theater, Soho Rep, The Foundry Theatre, City Center Encores!, University Settlement, and upcoming, Atlantic Theater Company and The Flea Theater. She is a former SDCF Observer, alum of the Lincoln Center Directors Lab, Visiting Artist at the Athens Conservatoire in Greece, and current Resident Director at The Flea Theater. Tyler holds a BFA in Drama and MA in Arts Politics from NYU.



COMPANY

Jennifer Tipton (Lighting Designer) is well known for her lighting for theater, opera and dance. Her recent work in theater includes Richard Nelson's *Uncle Vanya* at the Old Globe, San Diego. Her recent work in opera includes Gounod's *Romeo et Juliette* at the Metropolitan Opera and her recent work in dance includes Alexei Ratmansky's *Romeo and Juliet* for the Bolshoi Ballet. She teaches lighting at the Yale School of Drama. She received the Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize in 2001, the Jerome Robbins Prize in 2003, and in 2008 she was awarded the USA "Gracie" Fellowship and a MacArthur Fellowship.

Carl Whipple (Technical Director) is a freelance production manager and technical director based in Brooklyn. Recent projects include *17c* (Big Dance Theater), *Mourning Becomes Electra*, *Pay No Attention to the Girl* (Target Margin) *Othello*, *Hadestown* (New York Theater Workshop), *Elements of OZ* (The Builders Association), *YOUARENOWHERE* (Andrew Schneider), MoMA, The New Museum, as well as a variety of shops and venues in New York City.

Neal Wilkinson (Scenic Designer) joined The Builders Association as Production Manager in 2004, co-designed scenery for *Continuous City* and *House Divided*, and designed the scenery for *Elements of Oz*. Recent set design credits include: *Mata Hari* by Matt Marks and Paul Peers (WestEdge Opera), *Donovan and Calderon's Reception* (HERE), Degenerate Art Ensemble's *Predator Songstress* (Yerba Buena), and Kaija Saariaho's *Emilie* (Finnish National Opera). Neal is founder of the production management and design firm Corps Liminis, whose credits include *Prelude to the Shed*, Broadway Asia's *China Goes Pop* (Chinese Tour), Tony Oursler's *Imponderable* (MoMA), and Anri Sala's *Ravel Ravel* (New Museum).



“The Builders Association makes other multimedia theater look as if it’s from the Stone Age.”

The New York Times



MC: You have had a remarkable career as a theater artist. How did you get initially involved with the Wooster Group, one of the foremost experimental theater companies in America?

INTERVIEW WITH M *by Michael M. Chemers*

MW: Well, it was one of those instances of being in the right place at the right time. New York City in the 1980's was still a kind of crucible for the avant-garde. I got to know the people at the Wooster Group while I was working for a small arts foundation, and at one point they were looking for a dramaturg. I hopped on board, and eventually became Assistant Director. I worked with the artistic director Elizabeth LeCompte and other members of the company such as Willem Dafoe, Spalding Gray, and Kate Valk.





MARIANNE WEEMS

, Professor of Theater Arts

MC: What interested you about their work at that time?

MW: The Wooster pioneered what has come to be known as ‘post-dramatic’ theater in which unexpected artifacts drawn from high art and popular culture are juxtaposed in a radically hybrid form. They were the progenitors of a lot of very different artistic work. For instance, my colleague John Collins, the Artistic Director of Elevator Repair Service, has created many radical reinterpretations of classic theatrical texts. For my part, I was quite interested in their relatively early experiments with mediatized performance on stage.

MC: You co-founded your own company, The Builders Association, in New York, and your first performance was an adaptation of Henrik Ibsen’s 1892 play *The Master Builder*. Is there any connection there?

MW: Oh yes, there’s a line in Ibsen’s play where the character Mrs. Solness asks Ragnar “Are we to have music?” and he replies “Oh yes, it’s the Builders Association.” But the name also refers to the three-story house we built, based on the work of Gordon Matta-Clark, for our first performance.

MC: That production attracted a lot of attention for its integration of video projections and soundscapes, and for the house itself which I understand was demolished onstage during the performance?

MW: Yes. Matta-Clark was a kind of de-constructing architect. We designed the house to reflect the fragmented psyche of the architect in Ibsen’s play. But the house also

became a sort of container for our ideas about building an aesthetic around media, one which we could employ to talk about popular culture and in this production, the psychology of certain strata of middle-class family life in America.

MC: Let’s talk about that aesthetic. Under your leadership Builders has become a real innovator in interactive performance technologies. Was that always the goal?

MW: In *Master Builder* we came up with a system that allowed the actors to perform with the technology, and to influence its behavior onstage. For example, we wired video and sound cues to MIDI triggers, and the performers could choose when to activate them. The set becomes like a reactive tool.

MC: Like a musical instrument they can play?

MW: (laughing) Sure. We even invited the audience to “play” the house after each performance.

MC: There are some critics who don't like the use of digital media in performance, and worry that theater loses something important when it tries to imitate film or television.

MW: I don't believe we are imitating film or television. Since the ancient Greeks theater has incorporated new technologies as part of its spectacle and storytelling. The advent of gas lights, advances in scenography, adoption of electricity: theater has always been at the forefront of new tech. All of that is about creating a kind of world on stage that tells a compelling story to the audience. I think that both artists and audience are products of our times, and what I am putting on stage reflects the world that we live in. When I use digital media it is as a literal manifestation of our lived experience, particularly that of those of us in a privileged position, and I honestly think it would be false to do anything else.

MC: I've heard you describe modern life in the U.S. as already “irrevocably mediated.”

MW: Yes. We exist in a gray area between the virtual world and the physical world. Our experience is constantly mediated—whether by our phones or our (sometimes rabid) relationship to social media. The experience goes far beyond any actual device. We are living along a spectrum which reaches between virtual and physical space, and our work is staged along that spectrum.

MC: I know a lot of your work, like your show *Super Vision* in 2005, shows how digital technology can dehumanize us by blurring the boundary between the virtual and the real. This makes me think of the ghosts in *Turn of the Screw*, which Henry James seems to have intended to be ambiguous – somewhere on the spectrum between

reality and fantasy, as it were – so that they could serve as reflections of the governess' tortured psyche. Is that what attracts you to this story?

MW: It's true that our work has a critical component often reflecting contemporary issues, and in this case the piece resonates with reality and truth. In most of the theatrical versions *The Turn of the Screw*, including in the Benjamin Britten opera, the ghosts are definitely there: they exist as characters who are constantly onstage. In *Strange Window* we are trying to capture the idea that as an audience member you're not certain if the ghosts are real or only exist in the governess's mind.

MC: Henry James himself is surrounded by a lot of ambiguity – he seemed to be ambivalent, if not in fact traumatized, by his own sexuality, very much like the governess in this story.

MW: Eve Sedgwick has a celebrated take on *The Turn of the Screw* which is formed around James' repression of his own sexuality. The governess is in a position where she does not know herself fully, and her relationship to her own desire is one of terror and repression. As we often see in Victorian culture and sexuality “it comes out sideways,” in that she may fabricate these ghosts as a manifestation of her repressed desire. You could say that James was haunted by these kinds of ghosts throughout his life.

MC: Is that still relevant for us?

MW: Well, we are definitely more open about our sexualities, but you know our views remain heavily censored in some ways, and coming out still carries terrible dangers, personally, professionally, and socially, to say nothing of the risk of actual violence. So unfortunately, yes, I think there is still resonance there. Also, the Victorian moral structures in which James lived had as much to do with class and race as with sexuality.

MC: Which brings me to the choice to cast a performer who is a person of color as the governess, which is

unusual for dramatic interpretations of *The Turn of the Screw*. What went into this decision?

MW: First of all, I think it is unacceptable in 2018, to create a show that is completely homogenous unless there is a very specific justification. Secondly, the James piece leans very heavily on class, as does all of his work. The position of the 19th-century governess is quite interesting in that she ranks above the housekeeper and the other servants but below the children. Inevitably, on the streets of New York and other major American cities today you see many examples of white children whose nannies are people of color, and this phenomenon reflects that older model. I wanted to draw on that cultural phenomenon and give it a place on stage.

MC: We're at a historical moment when truth is sometimes excoriated for not being politically convenient, when truth's legitimacy as provable fact seems regularly threatened. And yet we also know that truth is often relative and subjective—which is very much at the heart of this story. What does this play have to say about truth?

MW: The question of fantasy vs. reality was my way into the story, and in our version there are interventions that call that into question. Specifically, we are exploring the discourse on “microexpressions,” which is a pop psychological movement that proposes that people give their secrets away with facial expressions so minute that we are more or less unconscious of them. This reflects the “micropsychology” of James' ornate text, in which the very detailed descriptions of characters' expressions play a massive role. We were also interested in Piaget's work with how children experience truth and lies. *Strange Window* is a kind of meditation on truth in these various contexts.



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THEATER ARTS DRAMA DANCE DESIGN

Welcome to the Theater at UC Santa Cruz

- Please do not bring food into the venue. Food and drink may be enjoyed outside only.
- Please unwrap cough drops and throat lozenges before the performance starts.
- Please turn off all electronic devices and put them away for the duration of the performance. The use of electronic devices is distracting to audience members and performers alike.
- Everyone in attendance will be grateful if your watch and phone alarms are turned off.
- The use of cameras and recording devices is strictly prohibited unless approved in advance by the theater manager.
- If you arrive later than 15 minutes before curtain, we cannot guarantee that you will see the first portion of the program. Please allow adequate time to park, pick up your tickets, and be seated before the scheduled performance time.
- Latecomers will be admitted to the theater at the discretion of the house manager at an appropriate break in the performance.
- Children and their adult guests may wish to be seated on an aisle near the door if a quick exit is needed.
- Children (and adults) should be able to sit quietly during the length of the performance.

Theater Arts Staff

Brent Foland
Costume Shop Manager

David Glover
Department Manager

Eric Mack
Electronics and Sound
Supervisor

D Parr
Production Manager

Janna Phillips
Costume Shop Assistant

Salal Moon Rinaldo
Academic Advisor

J. E. Weiss
Operations Director

Rajesh Westerberg
Technical Director

Theater Arts Faculty

Lee Armstong, *drama*

Dor Atkinson, *drama*

Brandon Baron, *design (emeritus)*

Tandy Beal, *dance*

James Bierman, *drama*

Alina Bokovikova, *design*

Kirsten Brandt, *drama*

Gerald Casel, *dance*

Michael Chemers, *drama*

David Lee Cuthbert, *design*

Kate Edmunds, *design*

Kathy Foley, *drama*

Brent Foland, *design*

Greg Fritsch, *drama*

Patty Gallagher, *drama/dance*

Amy Mihyang Ginther, *drama*

Sean Keilen, *Porter Provost*

Mandjou Koné, *dance*

Eric Mack, *design*

Annapurna Pandey, *drama*

Triloki Pandey, *drama*

D Parr, *production*

Cid Pearlman, *dance*

Elaine Y. Roos, *design (emerita)*

Norvid Roos, *design (emeritus)*

Danny Scheie, *drama*

Susan Solt, *drama*

Audrey Stanley, *drama (emerita)*

Kinan Valdez, *drama*

Ted Warburton, *dance*

Marianne Weems, *directing*

Paul Whitworth, *drama (emeritus)*

Donald Williams, *drama*

Visit our website at:
<http://theater.ucsc.edu/>

Tickets online at UCSCtickets.com

