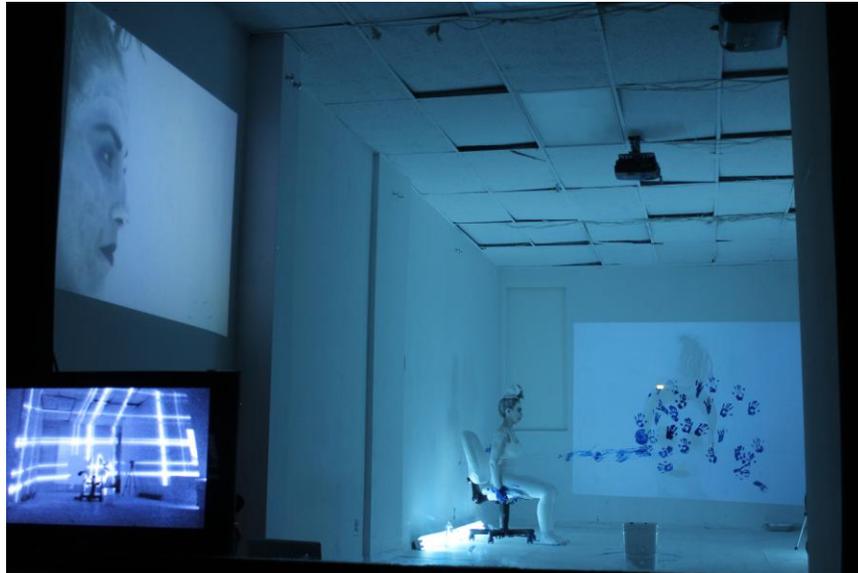


## **The Digital Dramaturgy Lab (DDL) is going to Berlin! Three graduate students talk about their work**

In August 2013 Antje Budde, professor and Associate Director (graduate) at the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies and founder of the DDL started to work on their collaborative project *Stare.Print.Blue. – Voyeuring the Apparatus*, which premiered this durational performance installation inside of Videofag's storefront space in October 2013 at Toronto's Nuit Blanche Festival as part of the renegade *Le Rues des Refusés* programming (<http://lesruesdesrefuses.com/les-rues-des-refuses-2013>).



Much of the piece was focused on our relationship to time and technology, exploring elements of endurance, the movement of the body through time, and of course the colour blue as it relates to our history and understanding of the world, particularly its appearance in most digital or technological devices.

**Three graduate students** from the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies had the opportunity to take part in this exploratory piece as a means of combining both the academic and practical side of their work within the theatre program. They each felt a different connection to the work depending on their input, but all three felt that this practical work was essential in enhancing the academic nature of their work in the graduate program and in the field of theatre.

**Nazli Akhtari** is currently a Masters student with the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies. Coming from a Bachelor of Fine Arts program, she explained “my entire undergraduate experience was very much based in studio work, so having practical work as part of the curriculum is not a surprise to me...it would be hard to understand the theoretical side of theatre if there was no practical experience offered in the performing arts.” The Digital Dramaturgy Lab lends itself to this type of exploration, as their dramaturgy is one focused on the creative/learning nature as evident in the field of artistic performative production.

*Stare.Print.Blue.* provided this type of laboratory for our students. The emphasis placed on duration and slowness with respect to time was intriguing for current Ph.D student **Myrto Koumarianos**, who has worked with creator and producer Antje Budde on many other occasions in the past. “It was strange to experience elements of performance from both the point of view of the performer and the deviser, as I was essentially creating the piece and improvising particularly towards the end. Whatever I did I needed to do it in slow motion, and I had to find this fine balance between being ready to go and energetic, while remembering to move slowly. There was a rhythm to this piece that I could not break.”

**Michael Reinhart** choreographer for the piece and also a current Ph.D student with the Centre for Drama, found the aspect of slowness just as difficult as performer Myrto. “My role in the piece was to keep Myrto moving. It was interesting for me to watch the visual relationship we have to duration and time, and the frustration that can result from this.” Our bodies find it difficult to move that slowly but as Myrto discovered while rehearsing and performing this piece, there are also obstacles that arise from working with technology in this way, “I would find myself ready to perform but the technology wasn’t ready to go, so much of it requires human attention, as did the analog chair that I performed with throughout the piece.”

This project wanted to alter our everyday understanding of time and reality, and as Nazli points out, the “print” in the title lent itself to this particular notion. “There was never a sense of certainty that you get with other pieces that you know are rehearsed over and over again, you never knew how Myrto was going to respond to her environment, it was intriguing. The documentation of time with the blue handprints on the wall was something I really connected with as it was “screwing” with time in a way that forced the audience to look at it through a different frame.”



The blue in the piece was the last of the three elements focused upon, and while it provided an idea of time and documentation, for Koumarianos, it represented and signaled joy and relief. “When I got to the bucket of blue paint it was pure joy. The tactile nature of the paint, the fact that it was cool to

the touch, was so inviting after working and becoming entranced in the stark whiteness of the space.”

The Digital Dramaturgy Lab has been invited to perform *Stare.Print.Blue. – Voyeurizing the Apparatus* at the International Performance Art Festival “Survival” in early September 2014, organized by Open Space Berlin. This will be the second project of the DDL in Berlin after last year’s international saFAri research trip on the theme of “Digital Performance Dramaturgies and Globalization. - Reality/Virtuality/Intermediality, In-betweeness and the Politics of Theatrical Aesthetics” (<http://digitaladventure.tumblr.com>)

The current rendition of *Stare. Print. Blue.* is co-created by designer Karyn McCallum, and digital designers and programmers Don Sinclair and William J. Mackwood. The latter two are faculty members of the Digital Media Program at York University with which the DDL has collaborated on several occasions since 2012 (participatory workshops, artistic creation, and course collaborations between “Digital Dramaturgy in Performance” (U of T) and “The Interactive Stage” (York U.).

The DDL’s festival participation is partially funded by the **German/European Research and Study Fund** of the Faculty of Arts and Science, University of Toronto (<http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/international-programs/faculty/applications-international-programs>) and the **Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performances Studies** (<http://dramacentre.utoronto.ca>).

For more information please visit the links below:

**Digital Dramaturgy Lab:**

<http://digitaldramaturgy.wix.com/main#!practice-based-research/c1htu>

**Open Space Berlin:**

[http://www.openspace32.de/index2\\_eng.php](http://www.openspace32.de/index2_eng.php)

Information and interviews compiled by Rebecca Biason.  
Communications Coordinator & Assistant to the Director  
Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies  
<http://dramacentre.utoronto.ca>

Toronto, May 2014