

Arts Research Brings Enrichment to the Classroom

Yvette Mattern is jointly appointed as assistant professor of art and music, in association with the Information Technology Commons at UAlbany. When she first received the prestigious invitation for a three-month BALTIC Arts Residency in NewcastleGateshead, England, she didn't immediately understand the scope of her achievement. Back now, she's ready to incorporate her experiences into the classroom and motivate future generations of artists.



Yvette Mattern

"When the BALTIC opened in 2002," Mattern explained, "the institution was so new, I wasn't aware of everything it offered. BALTIC's reputation is on the level of Britain's Tate Museum. They offer high-end quality production and spaces to work in, a virtual 'factory' for contemporary artists."



A major international center for contemporary art, the BALTIC is situated on the south bank of England's River Tyne, and presents a constantly changing program of exhibitions, installations, and events.

Her mid-October, 2005 through mid-January, 2006 residency afforded her access to an extensive archive of historical video art work that she collected to share with her students. Mattern's research project explored the development of video art in the early 60s and 70s. Central to her research was the interdisciplinary nature of the investigation and defining an evolving medium.

"My research at the BALTIC involved reflecting upon my narrative background in cinema and theater, and how this related to the medium of video art," said Mattern. "I was drawn to the language and performance-based work created by **Vito Acconci*** in the early 1970s -- the originality of his approach and how different it actually was and is to conventional and experimental cinema and theater."

Mattern auditioned twenty individuals -- including recent art student graduates from NewcastleGateshead and sculptor and Acconci contemporary **Joel Fisher** and his son Noah -- to reconstruct Vito Acconci's 1974 video "Command Performance" for Mattern's video, "ANALOG." On January 14, 2006, five professional artists/performers were invited back to reproduce the process in a live performance at the BALTIC.

"Acconci's work defined a new medium," explained Mattern, "and influenced a generation exploring conceptual and political approaches to visual art. He is a master artist/architect, a brilliant mind, a generous man, and an amazing poet."

UAlbany students who have taken Mattern's course "The History and Practice of Video Art" will have a strong foundation and knowledge of the language of video art and the influence and importance of Vito Acconci.

Mattern received her MFA in screenwriting and directing from Columbia University and her work has been exhibited, screened, or performed internationally. Born in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Mattern now resides in Albany, NY, and spends her summers in Berlin.



Tim Nowacki, well known artist and musician from Berlin, is questioned by Mattern during the live reproduction at the BALTIC.

*Artist **Vito Acconci** will present a lecture at the University Art Museum on Tuesday, March 21 at 7 p.m. For more information visit, <http://www.albany.edu/writers-inst/>

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