

## SOMETHING SIMILAR



TALK IN OTHER WORDS

### URSULA HEISE

The Beautiful Violent Futures of J.G. Ballard

An EMPAC-commissioned project reflecting on J.G. Ballard's depictions of violence and their translation into Kris Verdonck's 3D installation, BALLARD.

SEPTEMBER 11 6PM

## A LITTLE BIT DIFFERENT



PERFORMANCE

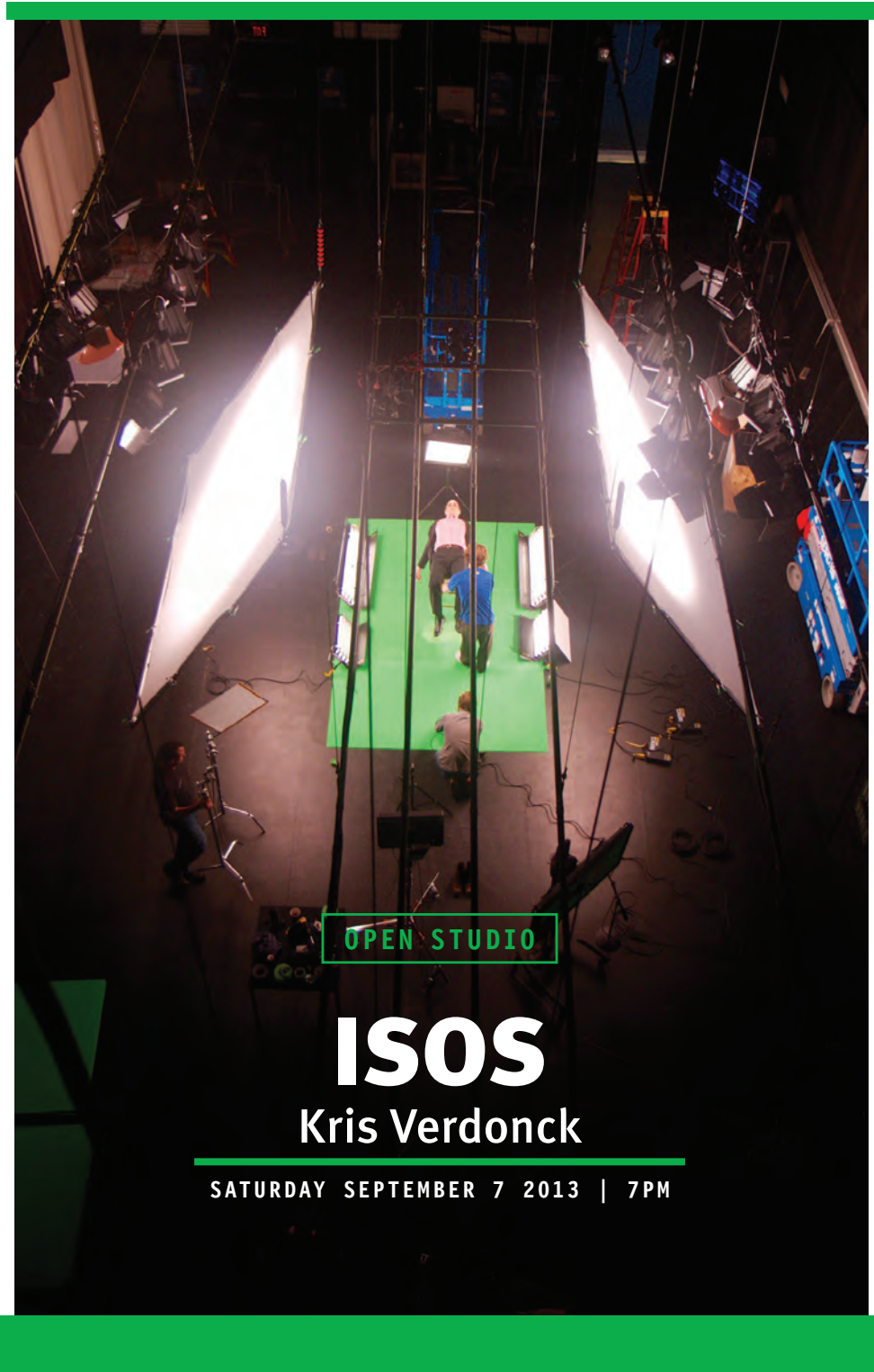
### NOCTURNES William Basinski

Hypnotic, ambient, slowly evolving tape loop manipulations culled from 30-year-old decayed recordings.

OCTOBER 26 8PM

EMPAC

 Rensselaer



OPEN STUDIO

## ISOS Kris Verdonck

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 7 2013 | 7PM

# STAFF LIST

Johannes Goebel / Director

Geoff Abbas / Director for Stage Technologies

Eric Ameres / Senior Research Engineer

S. Argeo Ascani / Associate Curator, Music

David Bebb / Senior System Administrator

Peter Bellamy / Senior Systems Programmer

Michael Bello / Video Engineer

Victoria Brooks / Curator, Time-Based Visual Arts

Eric Brucker / Lead Video Engineer

Ash Bulayev / Curator, Dance + Theater

Michele Cassaro / Guest Services Coordinator

John Cook / Box Office Manager

David DeLaRosa / Production Technician

Zhenelle Falk / Artist Services Coordinator

William Fritz / Master Carpenter

Kimberly Gardner / Manager, Administrative Operations

Laura Gypson / Production Administrative Coordinator

Ian Hamelin / Project Manager

Ryan Jenkins / Event Technician

Shannon Johnson / Design Director

Pamela Keenan / Production Technician

CathyJo Kile / Business Manager

Carl Lewandowski / Production Technician

Eric Chi-Yeh Lin / Lead Stage Technician

Stephen McLaughlin / Event Technician

Candice Sherman / Business Coordinator

Avery Stempel / Front of House Manager

Jeffrey Svatek / Audio Engineer

Dan Swalec / Master Electrician

Stephanie Tribu-Cromme / Event Technician

Todd Vos / Lead Audio Engineer

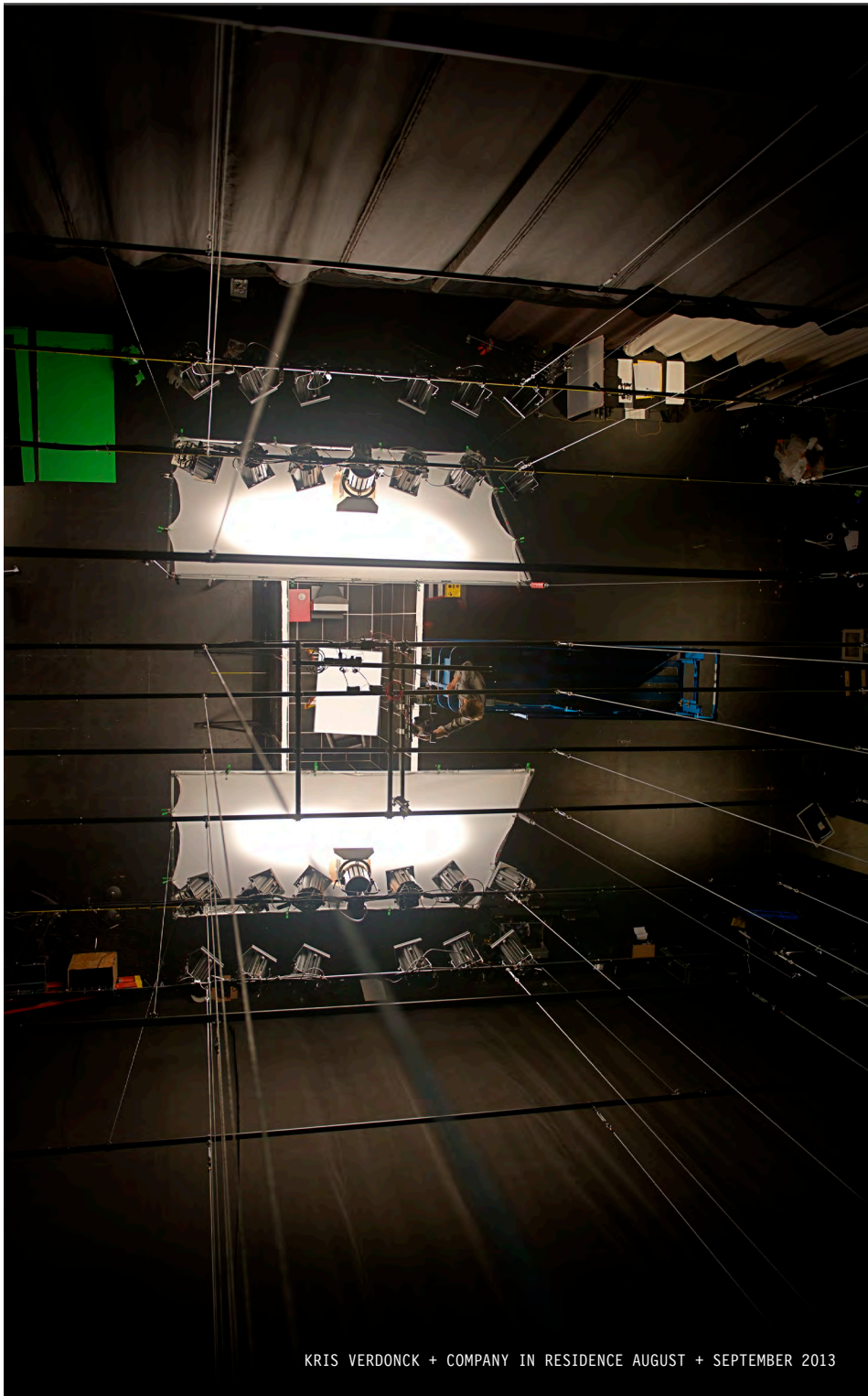
Pete Wargo / Manager, Information Systems

Michael Wells / Production Technician

Emily Zimmerman / Assistant Curator



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KRIS VERDONCK + COMPANY IN RESIDENCE AUGUST + SEPTEMBER 2013

DISCUSSION

# ISOS

Kris Verdonck

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SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 7 2013 | 7PM

*MY FEAR IS NOT THAT SOMETHING WILL HAPPEN;  
MY BIGGEST FEAR IS THAT NOTHING WILL HAPPEN.*

J.G. BALLARD

Concept and direction	Kris Verdonck
Performers	Tawny Andersen, Hendrik De Smedt
Technical direction and production	Jan Van Gijzel
Stereographer	Niko Himschoot
Director of photography	Vincent Pinckaers
Costume designer	An Breugelmans
Dramaturgy	Marianne Van Kerkhoven, Kristof Van Baarle
Schutzhund dog trainers	Robert Degener, Sheri Duncan
Jujitsu fighters	Justin Candeloro, Joshua Fairfield
Production	A Two Dogs Company

## ISOS (ORIGINALLY BALLARD 3D)

*ISOS* is a 3D video installation by A Two Dogs Company / Kris Verdonck where writer JG Ballard is the central voice. The result of this project will be a not yet defined amount of exhibition pedestals / viewing boxes. Inside each box a “scene” can be viewed, and every scene is a detail of the same social-political situation. The whole could be read as a fragmented short film.

Theater maker and visual artist Kris Verdonck focuses on the confusion of man in an estranged world due to technological development and the tension between man and machine and living species and dead materials, which creates an atmosphere of “Unheimlichkeit,” or eeriness. The current state of the world, with its environmental problems, ecological disasters, wars, and economical ruins is a central theme in his work.

### J. G. BALLARD

*ISOS* takes the world and characters from the apocalyptic science fiction novels of JG Ballard as a starting point. The English writer James Graham Ballard (1930-2009) was born in China and as a child was in a Japanese prison camp: this early confrontation with violence seeped through in all his books. Ballard wrote magical realistic stories and autobiographical works, but is mainly known for his intelligent, visionary descriptions of a future world that resembles the actual world. *Crash* is probably his most famous novel: David Cronenberg’s 1973 adaptation raised a scandal. In *Millenium People* (2003), Ballard describes the terrorist acts of upper-middle class residents of a London neighborhood.

When journalist Wouter Van Driessche of *The Standaard* looked for the root causes of the London riots in August 2011, he wrote: “The looters were not only the disadvantaged youth, people there were coming from all segments of our society. (...) This has nothing to do with social inequality or segregation. This is about something much more diffuse—a kind of nihilistic boredom and deep blurring of moral standards. To understand these riots, you do not have to read Karl Marx, you need JG Ballard.”

In *ISOS*, Tawny Andersen and Hendrik De Smedt portray two middle class characters. Anderson is a dancer and a model; she understands well the brutality of the advertising world. Verdonck worked with her for *FRIEZE* and *PRESYNCOPE* (*K, a society*). Hendrik De Smedt is an actor and the production/business leader of the company. He has created “the businessman in precarious state” in several of Verdonck’s video installations. The middle class couple will appear



### **Jan Van Gijssel (Belgium)**

Jan Van Gijssel graduated from Sint-Lukas Brussels with a master's degree in audiovisual arts in 2001. Since then he has worked as a freelance video artist and lighting designer. He has been involved in the development of several video works, including for Ingrid von Wantoch Rekowski, Needcompany, Filmfabriek, Philippe Blanchart, Kosi Hidama, and Davis Freeman, among others, and has done lighting design for A Two Dogs Company/Kris Verdonck, ZOO, Mette Edvardsen, Lilia Mestre, Albert Quesada, Zefiro Torna, Stefan Dreher, Ayélen Parolin, and Manuela Rastaldi. Between 2005 and 2012, Van Gijssel also worked as a technical coordinator for ZOO/Thomas Hauert. Since 2013, he has been technical coordinator of A Two Dogs Company/Kris Verdonck.

### **THANKS TO**

Kc Nona, Mechelen (Belgium) [www.nona.be](http://www.nona.be) for providing space and support; Kommer Kleijn for advising and testing the stereography; Erwin Van Der Stappen for assisting with the tests; Robert Degener, Sheri Duncan, Justin Candeloro, and Joshua Fairfield; Emily Zimmerman for casting her cat as a star in a video shoot; and all of EMPAC for support of this residency.

in different apocalyptic/boring situations. Their relationship is defined by mutual abuse of power; they are not victims, but responsible for their own environment. They embody the apocalypse. Their twisted relationship and psyches reflect the “Unheimliche,” a completely unlivable outside world.

### STEREOGRAPHY / 3D

One could argue that 3D images imply a different cinema language. Hollywood already knows that the latest 3D bubble was hype. The BBC stopped its 3D broadcasts. Maybe stereography is such a different medium that it is not “working” in classical viewing environments like TV or cinema. In many current 3D movies the landscapes have depth, but the characters are like cardboard figures.

These facts encourage us even more to use 3D technology in this project; stereography needs another approach. We can see a connection with the “poorly made” science fiction of George Méliès. Through far-reaching stereography, Kris Verdonck wants to make Ballard's futuristic dream come true: a dystopia in 3D.

### LIVING SCULPTURES / FINAL INSTALLATION

The boxes will have peepholes at the top: the public examines the strange little people at the bottom of the box as if they under a microscope. All scenes will be shot from an omniscient bird's/God's perspective. This suggests an “objective” view of reality. The situation is reminiscent of the Muybridge experiments: a scientific point of view where the drama is absent; there is only the register of a real situation. In Kris Verdonck's video work, architecture often plays a major role. The frame of the film image and the “walls” (i.e., in the boxes), coincide. The characters are aware of their limitation and claustrophobia. The dioramas are transformed into moving sculptures. Through the process of pure registration—an unassembled interval—the subjects in the boxes become sculptures.

*If you look at something long enough, it will automatically become revolutionary.*

—Heiner Müller

Isos means “equal” in Greek. The shipping container and its industrial standardization might be one of the most important inventions of the 20th century. In ISOS, the entire world is standardized. The contents are adapted to the measurements of the exhibition box—animals, machines, objects, human beings, stereography—all are brought to the same standard. Insects are as big as humans; a burning car seems just a toy; the revolution televised.

## BIOS

**A Two Dogs Company (Brussels, Belgium)**

A Two Dogs Company (ATDC) is the structure around the work of artist Kris Verdonck. ATDC is supported by the Flemish Community and the Flemish Community Commission in Brussels, and is the artist-in-residence of the Kaaithheater in Brussels.

More information and videos of previous work at available at [www.atwodogscompany.org](http://www.atwodogscompany.org).

Artistic director	Kris Verdonck
Management and production:	Hendrik De Smedt
Business support	Sylvia Picard
Communication and production	Karen Verlinden
Technical coordinator	Jan Van Gijssel

**Kris Verdonck (Belgium)**

Kris Verdonck’s visual arts, architecture, and theater training is reflected in the work he produces: his creations are situated between visual arts and theater, installation and performance, and dance and architecture. He has directed theater productions and produced numerous installations, including *5* (2003), *Catching Whales is Easy* (2004), *II* (2005), *Stills* (2006), *IIIIIIIIIIII* (2007), and *END* (2008). Verdonck often presents combinations of different installations/performances as *Variations*. *Variation IV* was shown during the 2008 Avignon Festival. In 2010, Verdonck finished *Actor #1*, and *K*, a *Society*, which premiered in Essen, Germany. In 2011, he presented two research projects: *TALK* and *EXIT*, and the first solo exhibition of his work, *EXHIBITION #1* was shown with a new work, *EXOTE*. In 2012, he created *M*, a *Reflection*, a theater piece based on texts of Heiner Müller. In spring 2013, Verdonck presented *H*, an *Incident*, based on the work of Russian writer and dissident Daniil Kharmis. *H*, an *Incident* premiered in May 2013 during the Kunstenfestivaldesarts in Brussels and is currently touring throughout Europe.

**Tawny Andersen (Canada)**

Tawny Andersen is a performer and performance theorist located in Brussels and Montréal. As a dancer and actress, she has worked with directors such as Jan Fabre, Meg Stuart, Chantal Akerman, and Kris Verdonck. She holds a master’s degree in performance studies from the Université Libre de Bruxelles and is currently working on a PhD in art history from McGill University. Her dissertation research seeks to theorize the concept of “performativity” at the intersection of the philosophy of language, post-structuralism, and gender studies in reference to live art practices. Anderson’s artistic research has been supported by grants from the Canada Council for the Arts and the Flemish Minister of Culture; her doctoral research is supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

**Hendrik De Smedt (Belgium)**

With a photography background and a master’s degree in drama from the RITS in Brussels, Hendrik De Smedt developed his professional career in theater and performance. As theater maker, actor, and production manager, he has worked at festivals such as the Festival d’Avignon, la Monnaie, Kunstenfestivaldesarts, Théâtre de Champs Elysees, and Theater der Welt festival Kaaithheater, among others. He has collaborated with Dito-Dito, Bronstig Veulen, Alejandro Tantanian, David McVicar, Raven Ruell, Reynaldo Rampersad, Emre Koyuncuoglu, TG Nun, Kris Verdonck, John Malpede, and the RITS in Brussels. In 2010, he began A Two Dogs Company (ATDC) with artist Kris Verdonck. He is currently developing a plan for an international sea-ship residency.

**Niko Himschoot (Belgium)**

Niko Himschoot studied audiovisual arts and film directing at the RITS film school in Brussels, Belgium. His 2010 master’s project was entitled *DINSDAG, Une Tranche d’Immeuble*. This 3D installation won the prize for stereoscopic innovation at the Dimension 3 Festival (Paris, France), and was screened at BEYOND 3D Festival (Karlsruhe, Germany), Ghent International Film Festival (Ghent, Belgium), and 3D KIFF (Seoul). He is currently working as a freelance director and stereographer.

**Vincent Pinckaers (Belgium)**

Vincent Pinckaers studied image studies at l’Insas in Brussels. He has served as director of photography for numerous projects and has been credited in several short and long films, documentaries, and installations. As a collaborator of Le Fresnoy art school in France, where new technologies are dedicated to contemporary arts, he is experienced in all filmmaking disciplines. Besides being a video creator for the performance scène, Pinckaers has created several solo film projects, including *Lum*, *Face à ce qui se dérobe*, and *Isola*. He is currently working on a new fiction movie.