



YOU ARE HERE:
BY STEPHANIE PAN

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A multi-media performance in three parts for performer, live video, 10-meter dress, homemade taiko, and chocolate cake, by Stephanie Pan

A carefully constructed miniature of the world; a piece where the performer as maker as performer controls all elements of the performance itself. *You Are Here:* is reality as a construction of the mind. More than theatrical acts, it is states of being, where nothing 'happens', but everything exists. It is alternately intimate and warm, intense and passionate; it is a piece in search of a way to belong together, to share together a moment, the meaning of 'being alive,' or at the very least, the search for such meaning.

Through music and sound written for voice, taiko, toy zither and live sampling; a live video feed of a lovingly prepared chocolate cake; a painstakingly and passionately self-constructed taiko, a process which took 1.5 years to complete; and a 10-meter dress, complete with 117 sitting places, made by the performer, to be inhabited by both the performer and the audience, *You Are Here:* offers a gently perverse perspective of the world.

You Are Here: is a state of existence.

To view the 1-minute trailer please go to: <https://vimeo.com/46573591>

For full documentation:

To view Part I please go to: <http://vimeo.com/23074139>

To view Parts II & III please go to: <http://vimeo.com/22971855>

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SYNOPSIS

During the performance all lighting and sound cues are controlled by the performer; 'scene changes' happen in open light.

Before entering the space, the audience is greeted by the performer, who after a brief welcome, requests that the audience members remove their shoes before entering the space. She is polite but formal. She thereafter leaves them and returns to the stage, which is currently in blackout. The house is softly lit as the audience enters the space. Once the audience has settled in, the performer moves forward to the front of the stage and cues houselight fadeout.

Part I begins as a kind of opening ritual for the piece. After houselight fadeout, the performer cues an idyllic, soft soundscape, which plays over the speakers and slowly develops over time into a subtly twisted soundcycle. Meanwhile, a live-video feed begins of an empty earthy landscape, a miniature world, found positioned on a small pedestal in the middle of the stage, complete with a rising and setting sun in the form of LED lights attached to a discoball motor. After the performer slowly fills and develops the landscape, full of bright green broccoli trees and Lego men, she cuts into this miniature world, which is in fact an elaborately and lovingly prepared chocolate cake; she then selects one spectator at random to be the recipient of this first piece. This spectator in turn receives the knife and is invited to come on stage and cut the next piece of cake for another spectator of his/her choice. This chain continues as each recipient of a piece of cake chooses who to serve next. Lasting upwards of 25 minutes, this ritual plays out until the cake has been completely served, as the audience becomes involved in a game of psychology and control, with the pre-recorded soundscape trickling away to reveal the sound of forks and plates, people walking back and forth, whispering and laughing, as the audience creates its own soundscape. Once the cake has been entirely served, the performer takes a seat on the darkened stage to observe the observers, waiting patiently until the last bite of cake has been consumed. Only once the cake has been completely devoured does she cue a complete blackout, and in total darkness utters the first words of the performance in the form of a lonely a cappella song.

Part II is a hypnotic, staged music piece for voice, zither, wineglass, taiko, and live sampler. It attempts to create the sensation of truly 'being alive', or at the very least, the search for this sense. Moving blindly and silently on stage after finishing the song at the end of Part I, the performer returns to the front of the stage, where she cues the lights for Part II, made up solely of a slightly grotesque green spotlight. The audience sees suddenly before them a table covered in equipment – a soundmixer, a light mixer, various instruments, cables; opposite the table they see a large drum, a handmade taiko. She begins playing the instruments on the table, and with the aid of a live sampler builds the piece real-time, layer upon layer, creating a pulsating, trance-like wall of sound. As the sounds rebound through the hall, the performer recites the only spoken text of the entire performance. Part stream-of-consciousness, part monologue, part manifesto, it weaves in and out of the music, building towards a visceral, highly physical taiko drum solo, the impact of which literally vibrates in the spectator's body. The music ends suddenly and brutally when the performer can no longer continue playing, due to exhaustion.

Part III – Transformation of the space. After recovering her breath from Part II, the performer clears the stage of the music setup, removing the table and the taiko (both on wheels) to the side of the stage. Now confronted with an empty stage, she reveals and carries into the center of the space a very large white clump of fabric. This clump is slowly unveiled before the audience, transforming into a 10-meter dress, complete with 117 cushions sewn into the fabric for the audience to sit on. After somewhat whimsically crawling under the dress, the performer emerges into it from within, suddenly with zither in hand, and invites the audience to come join her on stage, on the dress. She sings a very short, delicate song. Turning slowly in the dress, expressionless, she makes eye contact with each and every spectator, one-by-one, in this suddenly intimate yet far-removed environment, subtly challenging the notion of intimacy, of giving and receiving. Once the song is over, the performer remains with the audience on the dress in a moment of stillness and silence before ending the piece and stepping out of the dress, exiting the persona.

Approximate running time: ±55 min.

Credits:

Concept, music, text and performance by Stephanie Pan
Taiko and stand constructed by Stephanie Pan and Arie Bults
Dress conceived, designed and constructed by Stephanie Pan

Light Design: Stephanie Pan and Rik 't Jong

Advice: Harco Haagsma and Snejanka Mijaylova

A DasArts Production, co-produced by Zeebelt Theater