

EDUCATION RESOURCE

The Tennis Piece

Atlanta Eke

8 February - 23 March 2019



Atlanta Eke, *The Tennis Piece*, 2018, production still.

Atlanta Eke's project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.

Taking form as a tennis court and partial clubhouse, Atlanta Eke's project performs as both an installation and platform for a series of choreographed activations. Initially appearing to riff off the southern hemisphere summer and the fervent interest in the Australian Open, the work instead draws upon a historical moment in the evolution of democratic society. Collapsing time and geographical context, *The Tennis Piece* revisits the 20th June 1789, when members of the French Third Estate (*Tiers État*) congregated in the city of Versailles and took the Tennis Court Oath (*Serment du Jeu de Paume*), a moment that would become a pivotal event toward the French Revolution. With the integrated performances taking cue from Renaissance dance and the collapsing of organised court dances and courting rituals, the (tennis) court becomes a site of adversarial competition wherein the players jostle for domination on both physical and psychological planes, against inferred competitors and literal projectiles.

Dancers: Atlanta
Eke, Annabelle
Balharry, Ivey Wawn,
Ellen Davies

Composer:
Daniel Jenatsch

Architect:
Tim Birnie

Builders:
Dario Amati,
Tim Birnie



Atlanta Eke, *The Tennis Piece*, 2018, production still.

Atlanta Eke is an artist, dancer and choreographer working in Australia and internationally, currently based in Jan Juc, Victoria. Recent projects and performances include *Mother Holding Something Horrific: The Dance* (in collaboration with Claire Lamb), Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne (2017); *The Unsettling*, *The National*, Carriageworks, Sydney (2017); *Fuck You Buddy*, Dark Mofo, Hobart; and Liquid Architecture Festival, Melbourne (2017); *Body Of Work*, Vitalstatistix, Adelaide Festival (2016); *Body Of Work*, Les Plateaux, La Briquetterie National Centre, Paris Dance Biennale, Paris (2016); Adelaide Festival 2016; Dancehouse, Melbourne; and Perth Institute for Contemporary Art (2015–16); and *Miss Universal*, Gertrude Contemporary, Melbourne (2015). In 2014 Eke was awarded the inaugural Keir Choreographic Award.

VISUAL ARTS 7 - 10

Explore and Express

What is a choreographer? What are the visual elements that make up artist Atlanta Elke's exhibition *The Tennis Piece*? What visual connections can you make with the artist's exhibition and the outside world? How can a miniature tennis court built inside an art space be viewed as an artwork? What sources of inspiration are visible in this exhibition?

Respond and Interpret

As you walk around the exhibition space consider how time, place and the context in which you live, shape the way you interpret historical events? What insights or ways of seeing do artists offer when thinking about historical events?

Visual Arts Practices & Present and Perform

Atlanta Elke is an artist and choreographer who has researched a specific moment in history and constructed both a performance and installation around this event. Choose and research your own historical moment and construct a fictional performance or visual artwork. What sort of movement, dialogue or imagery could you incorporate to represent this event?

Atlanta Eke, *The Tennis Piece*,
2018, production still.



Atlanta Eke, *The Tennis Piece*,
2018, production still.



VCE STUDIO ARTS

QUESTION

Does an artwork have the same meaning for everyone? What visual clues does Elke's exhibition offer when you consider it in relation to the historical events that inspired it? How would you describe Elke's work in this exhibition?

Artist Atlanta Elke is in part interested in the way that historical events from one place can be interpreted by artists living and working in very different times, places and contexts. How does the time, place and context in which you live, shape the way you interpret historical events? What insights or ways of seeing do artists offer when thinking about historical events? What visual connections can you make with Elke's exhibition and the outside world?

ACTIVITY

Studio Art Unit 1.1 & Art Unit 2.1

Elke's practice is informed by her research into historical events and performances. Look at multiple versions of her *The Tennis Piece* online and take note of the different ways in which Elke has referenced the materials and techniques of sport, dance, and performance in these works. How has Elke constructed these dances in relation to the space in which she performs them? Does the location and set play a role? How are they similar and different to what you observed at Gertrude?

Choose a location within your own school and brainstorm the ways in which you could use this location (a classroom, stairway, doorway, etc.) as the setting for a performance based on a historical event or personal memory. What connections can you draw between your chosen location and the event or memory you are wanting to depict? Create your mini performance and film it on a phone or iPad. Without giving too much away, show your performance to your classmates and ask them what visual connections they can see between your chosen location, your performance and the idea, memory or event you are depicting.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Provocative: Intended or intending to arouse sexual desire or interest.

Choreographer: The art of creating and arranging dances or ballets; a work created by this art. A person who creates choreography is called a choreographer.

French Third Estate: France under the Ancien Régime (before the French Revolution) divided society into three estates: the First Estate (clergy); the Second Estate (nobility); and the Third Estate (commoners).

French Revolution: The French Revolution was an uprising in France against the monarchy from 1789 to 1799 which resulted in the establishment of France as a republic.

Renaissance: Generally described as taking place from the 14th century to the 17th century, the Renaissance promoted the rediscovery of classical philosophy, literature and art.

RESOURCES

Gertrude Website: <http://www.gertrude.org.au/exhibitions/>

Atlanta Eke: <https://atlantamaryeke.wordpress.com/the-tennis-piece/>

Dance Massive: <https://dancemassive.com.au/program/the-tennis-piece/>

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2BiZdG3sgDM>

Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/228149118>

Dancehouse: <http://dancehouse.com.au/performance/performanceDetails.php?id=314>