

thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation

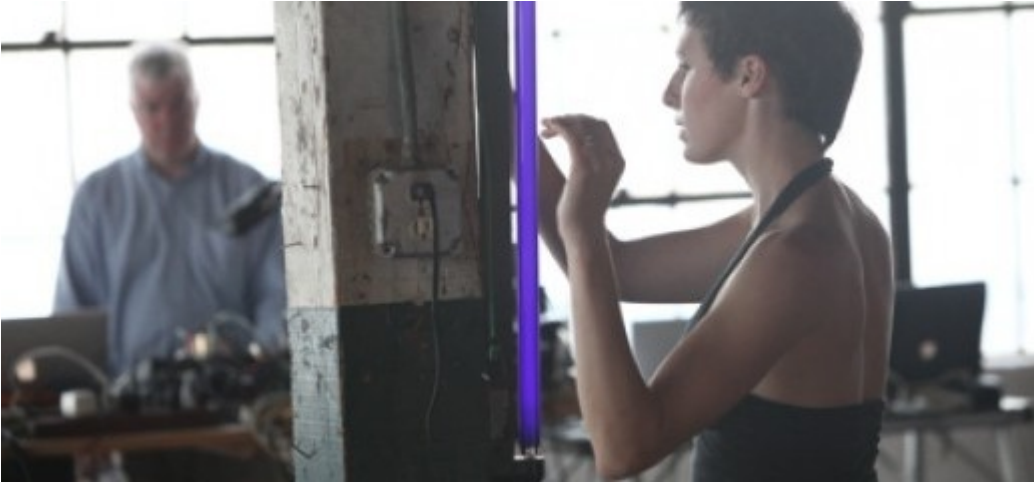


Photo: thefidget

Experimental Actions at thefidget

Peter Price

Editor's Note: We invited TD writer Peter Price to share his insider's point of view on upcoming performances at the space he co-directs with Megan Bridge, also a TD writer.

John Cage famously said "an experimental action is one the outcome of which is not foreseen." David Cope distinguishes experimental from the avant-garde in that the experimental orientation in the arts "represents a refusal to except the status quo." Both considerations of the nature of the "experimental" inform the 2nd annual Fall Experimental Music Festival at thefidget space this weekend.

[thefidget space](#) is the busiest underground arts venue you've never heard of. Last month we hosted 18 public events, plus rehearsals, conversations and spontaneous communal meals. These activities usually plant the seeds of new projects. thefidget began as the private studio space of fidget, the platform for the collaborative work of dancer/choreographer Megan Bridge and myself. It has quickly evolved into an "interdisciplinary arts research laboratory," a hub for experimental arts and discourse impacting communities of dance, music, theater, the visual arts and critical theory. thefidget hosts a regular calendar of events: weekly (currently seminars on Tuesday and Wednesday nights by theorist Peter Gaffney and myself), monthly (*Philly SHARE* – an open improv jam for electronic musicians, media artists, and dancers), biannually (fidget's own *Process Project* weeks) and yearly (like this weekend's festival).

thefidget's Fall Experimental Music Fest is shot through with Philadelphia dance energy. *Temporary Now*, the Fest's first event this Friday, is an evening of experimental music and dance co-curated by and Nicole Bindler. The evening's format – improvisational pairings of dancers and musicians, some of whom may have never before worked together – has recently become a familiar one to Philadelphia audiences (at thirdbird's Blind Date last month at Christ Church, for example). With the curatorial partnership of Nicole Bindler, who as much as anyone initiated the genre locally, and fidget's experimental orientation, I'm expecting a lively evening.

Saturday features two music events that also have strong dance community tie-ins. *Soft Machine* takes the stage with music sets by thefidget space artist-in-residence Joo Won Park, Boston-based percussionist Flandrew Fleisenberg, and myself. Each of these composer/improvisers has experience working within the Philadelphia Dance Community at thefidget space.

Cosmic Trigger will go late and have a laidback party vibe. The event promises total immersion in a night of evolving improvisational soundscapes, Kinect visuals, screens, projections, and experimental dance, co-curated by Tim Motzer and Dejha Ti. Motzer is known among Philadelphia dancers as one of the finest practitioners of the disappearing art of dance class music accompaniment, and to musicians as the creator of lush and compelling guitar-based soundscapes. Also a legendary session musician and arranger, he is that rare artist whose musicianship spans Jazz, prog-rock, soul, and hip-hop welded seamlessly to avant-garde weirdness. Partner Dejha Ti will take over thefidget's multiple projection surfaces for cutting-edge interactive digital multimedia, enlivened by dancers Leanne Grieger and Zach Svoboda. Think ambient art and locally brewed beverages in a warmly stimulating environment.

The weekend festival concludes Sunday with a special iteration of *Philly SHARE* featuring a set by *SHARE*'s co-founders, Mikronesia (Michael McDermott) and Pandar (Megan Cauley) fresh from the premiere of their experimental multimedia opera *Pangaea* at the Rotunda.

At thefidget space we believe that thinking is fun, and we joyfully reject received notions of art vs. entertainment, accessible vs. obscure, and the limited role ascribed to artistic experimentation and discourse by both the culture industry and establishment arts institutions. We are proud of the role we play in fostering experimental arts in an increasingly conservative cultural context and continuously look forward to facilitating actions “the outcomes of which are not foreseen.”

2nd Annual Fall Experimental Music Fest, [thefidget space](http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/208274), November 11-13. <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/208274>

Festival Schedule:

Friday, November 11

>>*Temporary Now* (8 pm): Improvisational musician/dancer duets - Meg Foley, Gregory Holt, Curt Haworth, Rebecca Lloyd-Jones, Christina Gesualdi, Travis Woodson, Dan Blacksborg, Julius Masri, Nicole Bindler, Andy Hayleck, Joo Won Park, Zornitsa Stoyanova, Annie Wilson, Mauri Walton, Megan Bridge, and Peter Price.

Saturday, November 12

>>*Soft Machine* (8 pm): Sets by musicians Peter Price, Joo Won Park, and Flandrew Fleisenberg.

>>*Cosmic Trigger* (10 pm): Ambient art party by Tim Motzer and Dejha Ti, dance by Zachary Svoboda and Leanne Grieger.

Sunday, November 13

>>*Philly SHARE* (8 pm): Open improv, featuring Mikronesia and Pandar.

By Peter Price

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