

Gerard & Kelly

The series of events focusing on the work of Gerard & Kelly was jointly presented by the UAlbany Performing Arts Center and University Art Museum. It ran for a two-month period, reached over 5500 people and included the following events and activities:



1) **VIDEO EXHIBITION** - Performance Documents
February 2 through April 2 at University Art Museum

This rare exhibition of performance documentation charted the prevailing concerns around history, memory and the present tense of performance that have come to define collaborative artists Gerard & Kelly's practice. These video "documents" underscored the artists' inquiry into the relationships between performers and spectators, language and movement, intimacy and public space. The selected videos demonstrated Gerard & Kelly's continued interest in broadening their scope beyond dance to include film, text and visual art, which provide a larger and more unstructured palette on which to grapple with the questions that interest them, while also giving viewers the opportunity to consider the expanded field of dance in museums.

2) **WORKSHOP**

Tuesday, February 2 from 9am to noon at University Art Museum

Gerard & Kelly introduced their choreographic score, Reusable Parts/Endless Love, to a dozen visual arts students taking a class in Concepts of Visual Thinking.

3) **LECTURE** - In Time and Out of Sync

Wednesday, February 3 at 10am at Skidmore College and 7pm at University Art Museum

Gerard & Kelly discussed recent projects and key terms for their collaborative art practice. Their performative lecture drew on documentation of the artistic duo's past work and considered their engagement with legacies of feminism and queer theory in an interdisciplinary approach to making performances and installations. The lecture at UAlbany also included the duo performing excerpts of their work Timelining.

4) **WORKSHOP** - Witness the Process

Thursday, February 4 from 9am to noon at University Art Museum

Observers were welcome to watch the artists as they conducted a workshop in which fragments of their 2011 choreographic score, Reusable Parts/Endless Love, was transmitted to UAlbany students.

5) **RECEPTION** - Meet the Artists

Friday, February 12 from 5-7pm at University Art Museum

Gerard & Kelly were on hand for an artist reception along with painter Keltie Ferris and photographers represented in Race, Love, Labor exhibitions which were also be on view in the museum.

6) **PERFORMANCE** - Reusable Parts/Endless Love

Friday, February 12 at 7pm and 8:15pm at UAlbany Performing Arts Center

In this score-based, thought-provoking performance installation, the performers transmitted and transformed the instructions for a kiss between a man and a woman into a machine-like production of unscripted representations of intimacy. Doing away with fixed seating, the artists placed the audience in a "catch-as-catch-can" interactive experience inviting them to roam freely to watch the action or stay out of its way.

1) Signage welcomes visitors to the exhibits in the University Art Museum.



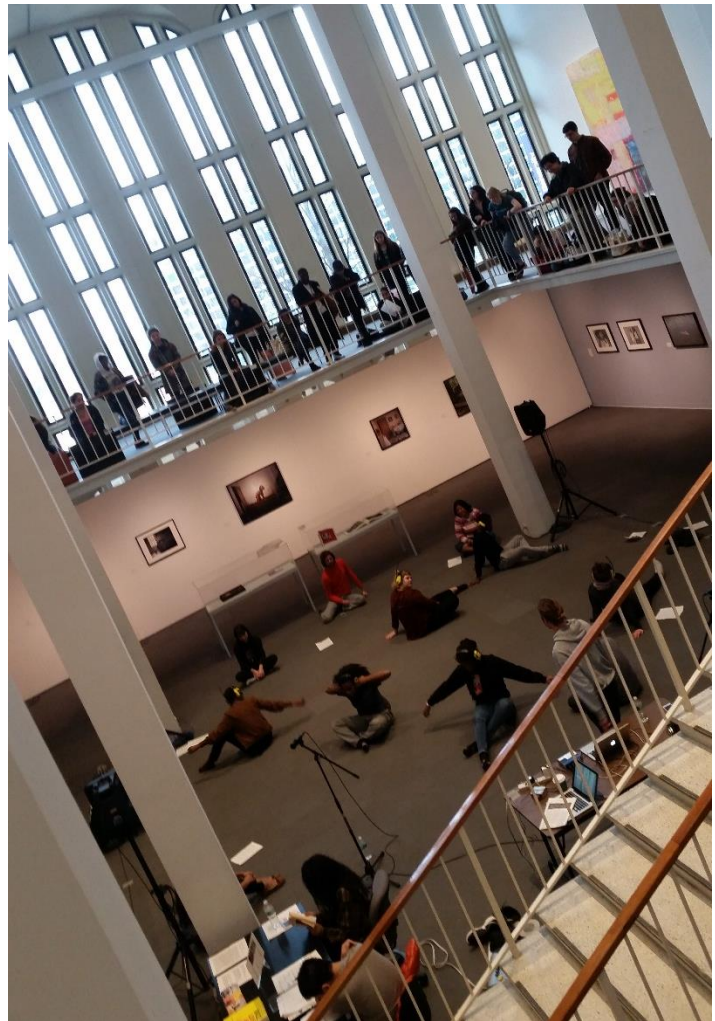
2) Ryan Kelly gives breathing instructions to students taking the workshop.



3) Gerard & Kelly perform excerpts of *Timelining* during their lecture at the University Art Museum.



4) Observers watch Gerard & Kelly and workshop participants from above in the University Art Museum



5) Brennan Gerard talks about his work with students at the Meet the Artists reception in the University Art Museum.



5) Audience members watch performers in Reusable Parts/Endless Love.



What people had to say:

"On Friday, March 11, a group of high school students from UAlbany's Liberty Partnership Rising Star Program for at risk students visited the museum. We did a worksheet and discussed all three exhibitions on view. I've given many tours of these exhibitions and we usually end with the Gerard & Kelly video room. It's sometimes challenging to deal with video in an exhibition tour, balancing the amount of time spent silently watching with all the information and background that one wants to convey, as well as respond to questions the audience may have. For this particular tour, I ended by asking a question I often ask student groups: Which exhibition was your favorite? Students' responses often provide a good way of re-capping the visit and emphasizing the most important aspects of an exhibition, so it's more than idle curiosity on my part. In this case, I asked the question of one student who had been unresponsive during most of the tour. "I don't know why, but I like this one," she said motioning to the videos that surrounded us. She continued almost as if she was thinking aloud to herself: "I don't know why, but I feel the artists are trying to tell me something important. Even though I don't get what they're saying," she mused, "I just like thinking about it." It was so unexpected, so sincerely put and so thoughtful, I was stunned for a minute and then said, "You know, I think that's one of the things that I like best about art. I don't always know what an artist is trying to tell me, but lots of times I just like thinking about it." I wish more adults had such an openness and acceptance of art they don't fully understand. I know, from this response and other interactions I've had, that Gerard & Kelly's exhibition and their performances, workshops, and talk touched some people very deeply. The museum is very pleased and proud to have been part of this collaboration and to share their work with so many people."

~ Janet Riker, Director, University Art Museum

"I'm still processing all that Gerard & Kelly brought to UAlbany in terms of their new and evolving art practice and their transformative public performances. The two-day workshop that they did in the museum activated the space as a living theater and site of social interaction that left me and all those in attendance with a new understanding of how artists can reorient conventional thinking. Over two-days, I observed Gerard & Kelly take fourteen students who were virtual strangers and transform them into intimate collaborative art partners. Brought together through a class designed to expose art and non-art majors to visual thinking as an intellectual practice, these students entered the museum uncertain of what to expect. Within minutes, Gerard & Kelly put the group at ease and, within an hour, the group entered into close physical contact. We watched these students kiss, embrace, intertwine limbs, whisper in ears, and move fluidly through space, all under the graceful and purposeful direction of their choreographers. Mixed-race, male, female, petite, big boned, metalhead and prep, the students let down their guard and went for it. They understood they were coming together to be part of something bigger than themselves, and the viewer sensed it too. By the end of day two, Gerard & Kelly brought all of us together in ways that we never anticipated and challenged us to think anew about art, intimacy, and our ability to overcome fear."

~ Corinna Ripps Schaming, Associate Director/Curator, University Art Museum

"Sexuality Month has been in existence at UAlbany for 33 years. It is designed to support students facing critical issues and choices such as gender and sexuality, HIV/AIDS, relationships, identity, and reproductive health. Over the years, we have found that very critical educational messages have been communicated effectively not only with lectures and presentations, but, more importantly, through the creative arts. With the important mission of providing vital sexuality education to our campus community and beyond, the Gerard & Kelly series met and exceeded our goals."

~ Dolores Cimini, Sexuality Month Coordinator, University Counseling Center

"One exciting aspect of the performance for me was that I was able to interact with one of the dancers before they began to perform. At the time, I did not know that this person was one of the performers. While watching one of the dancers, Malcolm Low, perform his solo, I complimented a person on their

perfume and for the rest of the evening if we saw each other, we'd just smile. So when they stepped into the circle and started dancing, I was shocked. It was strange to see this transition because I had assumed that they were a spectator. It was interesting how easily this person broke away from the audience to become a performer and also to think that everyone is a performer who simply did not step into the limelight yet. Her movements, which were pedestrian as a spectator, become much more fluid and direct once she stepped into the middle of the room." ~ Student

"The narrative communicated to me that the piece was about a contemporary romance. The way each dancer said the same narrative told me that each dancer was thinking the same thing but, what made them different, was their movement. Each one had different moves and interpretations to the narrative. This showed me that that all react differently in situations because we all contain unique perspectives and styles. I believed the structure was cleverly laid out in a way that fit the theme appropriately. The way that each dancer's narrative contained a specific time frame, all sorted into "rounds," which eventually made one "cycle." This to me was indicative that some love experiences are longer than others, some react and live in the moment differently than others." ~ Student

"I very much enjoyed the performance as a whole. It was edgy and unique. It was interesting and a bit scary that I didn't know who the dancers were and was often surprised when I saw one of my "peers" step up to a microphone to add to the show. This level of secrecy, if you will, made me very cautious of my surroundings. I found myself looking around the room at the other viewers to see who would join in next. There was actually a split moment when I thought the audience was supposed to join in! In a way it seemed kind of odd that we didn't. We all heard the same commands that the dancers did, yet we just watched them." ~ Student

"The bright room that held the paintings was a very nice contrast to the room that was playing the videos. This room really added an element of excitement to the videos because it was dark. I don't know if this was intentional or just a happy coincidence. Either way the darkness of the room really allowed you to tune into the videos you were watching to make you feel like you were there." ~ Student