



## A PARTICIPATORY PERFORMANCE FOR PUBLIC SPACES

A mesh is an interconnected web where each part is indispensable.

A group of dancers weave through streets, indoor and outdoor public spaces creating collaborative, self-organizing and moving sculptural formations responding to site, architecture, and the public.

MESH Invites audiences and passers-by to physically join in to create a ritual of togetherness in different public spaces.

In response to our current global divisive political climate MESH explores how a participatory choreography for a large group can bring people together to offer an experience of interdependence and collaboration through a participatory physical experience.

*I have never seen a dance-work that includes strangers participating spontaneously in this way before; unless the work involves a known social dance form. It's wonderfully affirming to see this non-verbal, gently playful interaction taking place. I admire Vanessa's intent and skillful shaping of Mesh, and the generosity and openness of the professional dancers.*

— Rosemary Lee



MESH is bringing many joyous interactions to public spaces since 2017. So far engaging around 50,000 audience members, with more than 5000 passers-by joining in.

The R&D phase was supported through Arts Council England, Yorkshire Dance, Leeds Beckett University and The Hepworth Wakefield gallery. In 2018 MESH was co-commissioned by The Great Exhibition of The North, Dance City, Yorkshire Dance and Activate Performing Arts, performing in Newcastle, Leeds Light Night and Hull Freedom Festival. In 2019 we toured in the UK and in South Korea: The UK Dance Showcase, Dancing Town Barnsley, Ulsan Promenade Festival and Gwacheon Festival. We also run outreach workshops throughout the UK and in Malta.



## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

MESH is conceived to be presented in any indoor and outdoor pedestrian public spaces with large or small footfall, for example: streets, market squares, shopping centres, galleries, promenades, parks and gardens. The performance structure is flexible to adapt to different sites, events and festivals. It can either be presented as:

**One show along a pre-fixed route:**

moving from A to B locations.

**Multiple shows along multiple routes:**

covering different smaller routes in one day.

Both versions are designed to favour chance audiences to stumble across it. Both chance audience & invited audience can follow and engage with the performance for as long or as little as they wish. (It is not designed as a conventional promenade where one big group of audience follows the show from beginning to end).

Moving through both indoor and outdoor locations is possible. Multiple and consecutive performance dates are possible.

**Running Time:** 45 to 60 mins

**Max number of performances per day:** 2

**Capacity:** No max audience capacity per performance

**People on the road:** 11 – 13

**Timing of performances:** day time (evening possible)

**Age Guidance:** All ages

Video  
links

4 min Video

1.30min Promo

Audience Response Video

Photo  
link





## QUOTES \_ AUDIENCES

*It really lifted the city!*

*What a joy! Very beautiful and present dancing and amazing to see people joining in- in so many different ways. It was powerful, full of risk yet there was a safeness and that I think is why so many people felt strong and confident to join.*

*I haven't had so much fun in a long time. It was wonderful!*

*It made my day. I often feel alone even in public spaces but I felt seen and part of something.*

*In all the years I have grown up in Wakefield, I have never seen anything like this!  
It is just what we need at the moment.*

## QUOTES\_WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

*My favourite moment was getting back to Yorkshire Dance and realising how many people we'd picked up along the way. It was great to know that people who were going about their everyday routine had felt intrigued enough to connect with us and come back to the studio to find out more. We had made spontaneous, honest and real connections with people that to me highlighted the value of the work within society.*

*Being a participant in the MESH project has developed my understanding of my self.*

*I was able to find my inner self and confidence.*

*I liked how it encouraged everyone to listen to each other – a lot of accidental collaboration. The group encouraged me to listen to them and I felt they listened to me and I was encouraged to look out for people who might be interested in it. It was really enjoyable!*





## ENGAGING LOCAL PARTICIPANTS

**The performance is designed to engage local participants who join the core group of professional performers.**

- A group of 5 to 6 participants is ideal
- Adults of all ages
- Some dance or performance experience is desirable but not essential. The participants need to have the stamina to work outdoors for up to two hours

MESH can either work with

- an existing local non professional dance/performance group
- a selected group of people from an open call out
- a combination of the above

**Vanessa Grasse will lead a min of 1 tester/recruiting workshop**

Through ensemble improvisation, choreographic material, and partnering work, participants will explore collaborative group movement and sculptural formations in response to each other, architecture and everyday urban choreographies.

**Selected workshop participants will then join a min of 2 rehearsal with MESH dancers before taking part in the public performances of the work.**

If you are interested in longer engagement activities working with your local dancers/ participants, we are happy to discuss other residency formats.

**NOTE: It is possible to perform with MESH cast of 10 to 12 professional dancers only to accommodate low capacity for community engagement**







## BESPOKE PACKAGES

We can offer a variety of related workshops, intensives, public talks or discussions directly linked to MESH in order to explore the themes of the work and our interdisciplinary approach with sciences further and to build further audiences and interest. This can include:

- **Workshops by Vanessa Grasse**, open to a wider public for all abilities or aimed at professionals and dance students focusing on sharing Mesh choreographic and improvisational process.
- **Public talks/presentations by Vanessa Grasse** focusing on:  
Sharing Mesh concept, questions and process on socially engaged practice; re-imagining new forms of public collective presence and site-choreography; interdisciplinary collaboration with sciences.
- **Public talks/presentation by one of MESH's interdisciplinary collaborators:** science writer Phillip Ball, social anthropologist Tim Ingold, dance artists Rosemary Lee and Beth Cassani.

We are happy to explore your ideas and interest further in conversation.





## WE PROVIDE

- Facilitation of all performances
- Facilitation of workshops and rehearsals for the local participants
- Advise on recruiting local participants
- MESH flyers/ audience invitation
- Admin support for logistics & marketing
- Full marketing support packs for both participation workshops and performance are available on request.



## VENUE TO PROVIDE

- Arrange permission with city council and landowners to use the site and access for rehearsals and performances
- Min 3 staff or volunteers to hand out audience and talk to audience during the show
- Rehearsal space or dance studio for participation workshops and rehearsals
- Green room to lock performer's belongings etc on performance day & space to rest between shows
- 1 security staff (depending on location)
- When working with community cast:
  - 1 workshop and rehearsal assistant/shadow community artist (required depending on the number of workshops & rehearsals, type of group & location)
- Refreshments for local participants if needed

## FEES

Project fees depend on the chosen format and length of engagement. To discuss costs and company availability please get in touch.