

# FLIPPER



## UNPLUSH COMPANY

[WWW.UNPLUSH.CH](http://WWW.UNPLUSH.CH)

PREMIERE 14 DECEMBER 2017  
DAMPFZENTRALE BERN (CH)

DURATION: 60'  
LANGUAGES: ENGLISH / FRENCH  
SUBTITLES: GERMAN / SPANISH

TRAILER: [VIMEO.COM/249791214](https://vimeo.com/249791214)

FULL LENTH: [VIMEO.COM/420466536/BB1AACDA72](https://vimeo.com/420466536/BB1AACDA72)

STAGING AND CHOREOGRAPHY: MARION ZURBACH

PERFORMANCE AND CHOREOGRAPHY: EVE-MARIE

SAVELLI, PETER CRIPPS CLARK, JOHNNY LLOYD

ARTISITC ASSISTANT: VITTORIO BERTOLLI

VIDEO: MATTEO TARAMELLI

SOUND: HENRRY BONNET

COSTUMES: MYRIAM CASANOVA

LIGHTS: JONAS BUHLER

STAGE MANAGMENT: OLIVER FAMIN

GRAPHICS: VALENTINA BRKOVIĆ

PRODUCTION: MARTINA LANGMANN

DIFFUSION: LES PRODUCTIONS DE LA SEINE

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## PRESENTATION OF THE PIECE

*„She swam to me, looked me straight in the eye, took a last breath... and didn't take another one. I let her body sink to the bottom of the pool. “*

- Rick O'Barry

Thus Rick O'Barry tells the story of the suicide of Kathy, the female dolphin, star of the Flipper tv show. Credible testimony or delusion of a guilt-ridden man? The piece FLIPPER tries to understand how and if the dolphin could have done it.

Kathy and her coach are accompanied by a moderator who presents a subtle mainstream reading of their shared history. Through a reenactment of key episodes in Kathy's life, the public becomes witness to a fictional investigation.



Various scenes and the presentation of evidence (video archive of Kathy performing in Flipper, fan letters, etc.), gradually shed light on the dolphin's situation before her death.

The piece stages the characters in critical situations and lets the audience witness their attempts to take stock of their state of mind during a couple therapy and a magazine's psychology test. These standardised scenarios, both cruel and comic, do not allow the characters to express themselves freely. They offer the audience the opportunity to read between the lines and discover the hidden agendas of the characters.

As the piece progresses, a discomfort appears between the characters. The rules that governed their relationship break down and their interactions become unpredictable. The rhythm of the play first deconstructs, then accelerates. Different testimonies that are a priori distant, overlap and the investigation into Kathy's death takes an unexpected turn to become a settling of old scores between the coach and the moderator.

### EXHIBITION

The live show is accompanied by an exhibition of „seapunk“ visuals and posters inspired by the teenage pop universe of the 90s's, created by the graphic artist Valentina Brković.

Additionally, a video archive presents the testimonies of Rick O'Barry (coach and activist), at the origin of the creation of the play.

The posters and videos contribute to the piece's dramaturgic composition, oscillating between fiction and fact.



## AT THE ORIGIN OF THE PIECE

FLIPPER is based on an interview with Rick O'Barry in which he claims that the dolphin Kathy committed suicide in his arms by deciding to stop breathing. This event radically changed O'Barry's life and he became an activist known for his fight against dolphin captivity. For him, the dolphin was greatly affected by her isolation in a pool. His sense of guilt and responsibility for the increase of dolphinariums following the Flipper series never left him.

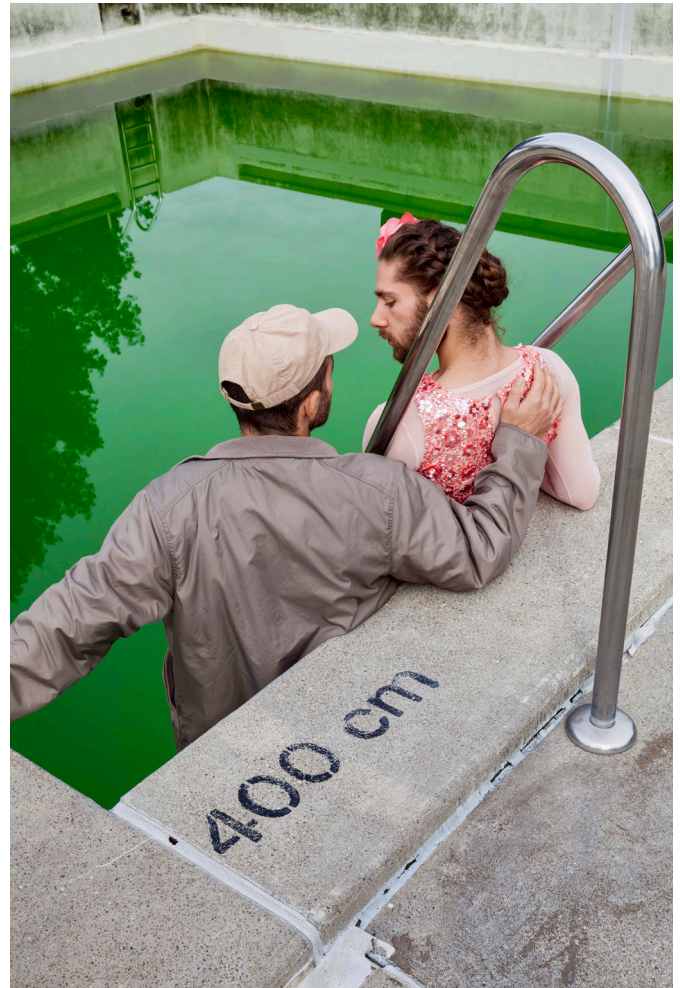
To date, it is scientifically impossible to prove that it is likely that dolphins voluntarily take their own lives. However, for researchers of marine mammals behaviour, stress and depression are major symptoms of life in captivity for wild animals.

## CHOREOGRAPHY

The choreography highlights the relationship between O'Barry and Kathy. Her capture is staged, exploring mechanisms of dependency that victims can develop towards their captor, according to the „Stockholm Syndrome“. A brutal physical interaction is developing, until Kathy's gradual pacification and submission.

The television series Flipper is recollected by the sequence of eight duets mixing the various dance backgrounds of the performers, Hip Hop Contemporary dance and Lindy hop.

Supported by the Flipper musical theme, the scene leads to opposing feelings in the audience, both, dizzy as well as excited by the repetition of the music and the technicality of the dance. They laugh and applaud, while being embarrassed by the physical violence and the constant position of fragility imposed on the performers.



## THE CHARACTERS

The piece questions the state of captivity, through Kathy's transformation. First trapped in a pool, then in a role imposed on her, she is forced to conform to find a place in the entertainment world. This role then becomes a necessity for survival.

The character of Rick O'Barry evolves by gradually losing his freedom to act and express his opinion. Less and less comfortable with the ongoing trial that seems to be his own, his movements gradually settle on the repetition of a text that he clings onto, attempting to escape the pressure exerted by the other characters.

The relationship between the moderator and O'Barry highlights artists and activists reasons' for taking action. In the second part of the play, the personal motivations of the moderator and O'Barry take precedence over Kathy's story. The piece looks at the characters' reasons for wanting justice for Kathy.

## VIDEO AND SCENOGRAPHY

The video installation, made of animated graphics illustrate the conditions of confinement of the animal with abstract forms: organic entities trapped in restricted spaces, constrained in their movements by shrinking boundaries.

During the series of duets to the Flipper music theme, the graphics turn to "snow" on the television screen, which gradually invades the backdrop. The hypnotic effect of the video is amplified by strobe lighting that immerses Kathy and O'Barry's characters in an abstract vision of the television world to which they belong.

The table where the moderator is seated is where she directs the other characters and presents initial evidence to the audience. The scenes presented from this desk allude to an investigation, to be followed live by the audience.

Halfway throughout the piece, the investigation drifts towards judgment, the attention shifts to ten chairs facing the table on the other side of the stage. These are set up to receive „Representative Audience Members“. The allusion to a trial scene is reinforced by the installation of dolphin masks floating above these chairs, like „dolphin jurors“, attentive to the events and ready to give their sentence.

## PRIZES AND CRITICS

*„Last night, our participants at VOYEURE BERN chose the production of the year 17/18. The winner is your play: FLIPPER. We saw it on 14.12.17 at the Dampfzentrale Bern and were completely thrilled.“ - “VOYEURE BERN” / Group following the season's major shows in Switzerland*

*„We were very happy to host the company UNPLUSH with «FLIPPER» at Theater am Gleis in Winterthur. UNPLUSH managed the balancing act between acting and dance, between trash optics and professionalism excellently.“ - Lisa Letnansky / Dramaturg and production management - Theater am Gleis, Winterthur, Suisse*

*“Flipper was chosen between 450 proposals to be the opening show. I love the original way Unplush tells this story, the repetitions, the stretching of the scenes to the maximum, the quality of the three on stage...” - José Manuel Navarro / Programmation director for the Encuentro Emergentes Festival, Sevilla, Spain*

*„Flipper is a very strong, fine and complex piece of work, which I enjoyed immensely.“ - Daniel Hellman / Stage director, performer, Switzerland / Germany*



# UNPLUSH

Unplush is a transdisciplinary art association connecting artists from various fields such as dance, performance, music, visual arts and graphic design.

Since 2017, the collective UNPLUSH has been presenting performances, organising clubbing events and workshops with UNPLUSH Company, HEPTEKA and AMAClub.

With its vast collaborations, formats and venues, Unplush is actively involved in the swiss cultural scene and produces for a broad audience.

## UNPLUSH COMPANY

The company proposes works that result from the dialogue between people participating in the productions. Whether they are artists, anthropologists or amateur dancers, the meeting between people with different life experiences or of different ages is seen as a stimulus for reflection and solidarity.



Under the artistic direction of Marion Zurbach, the performers work from their connection to a theme, with their imagination and history. Between myth and realism, tragedy and humour, UNPLUSH observes constructions, existential strategies or non human life forms. A reflection on our conditionings, our struggles and what a space of speculation like the stage can produce.

## PRIZES AND CREATIVE SUPPORT

2019 – UNPLUSH receives the “June Johnson Dance Prize”

2018 – UNPLUSH receives three years of support from PRAIRIE, the Migros Culture Percentage’s co-production model for innovative Swiss theatre and dance companies.

2017 – “ACT-BAD Bilbao” prize for the piece LABOR at the ACT Festival Bilbao

– “Best Production of the 17/18 Season” prize for FLIPPER by the „Voyeur Bern“

## DIFFUSION

### LES PRODUCTIONS DE LA SEINE

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# BIOGRAPHIES

## MARION ZURBACH

### Concept and realisation

Marion was born in Martigues, France. She started her training at the École Nationale Supérieure de Danse in Marseille, before moving on to the École-Atelier Rudra Béjart Lausanne, where she began her professional career with Maurice Béjart's "Compagnie M". Between 2003 and 2015, she was a member of the Teatro comunale di Firenze, the Ballet National de Marseille, and was a soloist at the Bern Ballet and the Tanzcompagnie Konzert Theater Bern. In 2015, Marion founded with Vittorio Bertolli the Bern-based artistic association UNPLUH. Since its creation, UNPLUSH has collaborated regularly with the Dampfzentrale Bern, toured in Switzerland and abroad and has won several awards. In 2018, Marion completed her Master of Theatre and Performance degree at Bern University of the Arts (HKB). In 2020-21, she creates "Les promises", a piece made with teenage woman living in the northern districts of Marseille. In 2021 she will work on the new creation for Unplush „Do it Mayra“.

## PETER CRIPPS CLARK

### Performer

Peter grew up in Melbourne, Australia. At the age of 20, he moved to the Netherlands and joined the ArtEZ school where he graduated with a Master degree in Dance in 2015. He was a member of the Tanzcompagnie Konzert Theater Bern, where amongst other productions he participated in the creation of Koen Augustijnen's „Dancing Bach“. At this time, he started to work with Marion Zurbach. Based in Amsterdam since 2017, he works as an

independent artist and performer, interested in interdisciplinary performances, installations and costume design. He is part of the drag house „House of Hopelezz“. He joined UNPLUSH at its creation in 2015. Since then, he has been a regular contributor to the artistic work of the company and is notably interpreting the role of Kathy in the piece FLIPPER.

## JONNY LLOYD

### Performer

Johnny is from Cochabamba, Bolivia. He has been touring the world for 15 years to teach Lindy Hop, Charleston and various forms of hiphop. In 2003 he created his first solo „Accidental Artist“ and in 2007 he collaborated with Antje Pfundtner. In 2011, he was invited by Fontys Dansacademie as a guest lecturer to design and sharpen the profile of the Contemporary Urban Department. In 2012-2013 Johnny toured with the piece „Unpunished“, created together with Guilherme Miotto and „Bodies Anonymous“. In the same year, he started dancing for Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, performing in Mlonga and Genesis and worked as an assistant choreographer for the Cirque du Soleil play „Curios“. Recently, he also appeared in Eastman/Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui and the opera Shell Shock and was touring with Fractus V. In 2014, Johnny collaborated with Andre Grekhov and park theater. In 2018/19 he choreographed for the Opera Cologne and the Urban Dansdagen Eindhoven.

## EVE-MARIE SAVELLI

### Actrice

Eve-Marie was born in Geneva. In 2005 she began her studies at the Central School of Speech and Drama in London, before moving to Barcelona in 2007, where she graduated from the Institut del Teatre. From 2005 to 2007 she studied European theater at the theater and drama school Rose Bruford in England. From 2007 to 2008, she completed the training at the Cours Florent in Paris, where in 2009 she was assisting Christian Crosset. Between 2008 and 2013 she performed with her theater company IDYL'HIC at the Off Festival in Avignon. From 2010 to 2012 she worked together with the companies LULLA DIT, Cube Blanc and Le collectif La crème. Since 2014, she has been completing her Master in Mise en scène at the Manufacture in Lausanne and is also working for various film productions, commercials, video clips and the Radio Nova.

## VITTORIO BERTOLLI

### Artistic assistant

Born and raised in Napoli, Vittorio graduated from the Ecole Atelier Rudra Béjart Lausanne in 2002. During the following years he danced for several ballet and contemporary dance companies, such as the Béjart Ballet Lausanne, the Teatro alla Scala di Milano, the Compagnia Aterballetto. After the encounter with David Zambrano in 2008, Vittorio's interest shifted to different ways of expressing his passion for dance. Since then he works as a freelance performer and assistant choreographer in collaboration with artists coming from very different artistic backgrounds. Alongside his work as a performer, assistant choreographer, and dramaturge Vittorio teaches Flying Low regularly at Tanzcompagnie

Konzert Theater Bern and in several companies and education programs in Switzerland, Germany, Italy, Belgium and France. In 2015 he co-founded with Marion Zurbach the dance-theatre company Unplush. In 2018, he achieved the MAS program in Dance Science at the University of Bern.

## MATTEO TARAMELLI

### Video creation

Born in Bergamo (Italy), he graduated at the Dessau Institute of Architecture and completed his bachelor degree in Science of Architecture at the Politecnico di Milano. He has been carrying out research on 3D Augmented Reality within the Architecture & Plan Department of Politecnico and worked as designer at NuMiStudio architectural office. For several years he has been creating illustrations for Atlas publishing company as well works as art assistant at Zimoun Studio (Bern). He also collaborated with the performative art project "A Normal Working Day" with Delgado Fuchs, focusing on the design and creation of video art works and with Tomàs Saraceno Studio (Berlin), for the design and 3D print of modular components. Matteo has been teaching workshops on 3D modeling and algorithmic design at Politecnico di Milano, DIA and Kulturesk HKB.

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