

Structure is a defining feature of the play insofar as it undermines heteropatriarchal (narrative) order. One model for this play's arc comes from our planet. The outer crust is a mythopoetic corporate hellhole where, ironically, one form of love flourishes. The next layer is the Western cultural canon from every angle: let's put Puck, Lysias, and Andy Warhol into small confines à la Ionesco or Sartre and let them simmer. At the core of the play are the lost and the founds—trans people trapped inside a cyberspace where marginal existence becomes centralized. But they too are concretized by the structures in the tunnel. Are they alive; are they décor? What did Medusa say?

We're told that many ancient myths register sociological trauma that we cannot access beyond the memory of the myth. But what if myth can be unwound toward lesser cruelties and returned as a tool to us?

## Aesthetics and their Aftermath | Maxe Crandall

*Together Men Make Paradigms* was my first theatre production, shown for one night at Dixon Place in summer 2014. I wrote a script that I hoped would be impossible to stage. Then, I staged it myself. A 14-person cast plus a pack of dogs and a chorus to be played by an entire city would facilitate explosions, a storm of raining cum rags, and prologue-as-paperwork with the audience. It was important at the time to stick to a poets theatre tradition of making work with no money involved. Everyone who participated did so with such love and dedication. My codirector Aeliana Boyer arranged for Peter Cramer to take us to Materials for the Arts to get free set elements. Thanks to the day's offerings, our installation centered on a family of yellow taxidermy forms (our "theatre dogs" now live in my office at Stanford). I brought pizza and wine to our minimal rehearsals in Brooklyn, which took place at the first Spectrum (queer club) and at Bryn Kelly's Trans Central Station (her living room). We were all exchanging time and energy, bailing each other out of many things that summer.

The idea for *Together Men* was to locate history's everyday violences. I wanted to trace this history through the microscopic gestures of our daily lives, then dramatize the roots of the violence in order to cast it out. As such the play isn't about what happens and how we react, it's about what happened and the epic infiltration of that fossilized violence into our most trivial present moments. Back then, I considered *Together Men Make Paradigms* a thought experiment in remaking time. Ten years later, I can see that it is, first and foremost, a play about aesthetics and their aftermath.

The play is for people who are mad about everything. How do we cope? The performers in this production were not actors but artists, writers, and activists, who address this question in different ways. They organize, make films, write, play music, dress, paint, perform, design, protest, agitate, volunteer, destroy... Sometimes we can't do anything besides, like, ruin our own moments or wear down in the face of global suffering, ecological disaster, mass violence.

At some point Red Durkin figured a voiceover plot twist should be read in a Ken Burns documentary voice, and the rehearsals really took off from there. Feeling out character through such compounded constructions was an example of the proposed method: lighting up old paradigms to make useful disharmony.