



## ARTIFACTS

Andrew Stuck is sitting with **Pam Patterson** and **Leena Raudvee** in a woodland glade, on a rough track that curves towards a rural road, a couple of miles beyond La Romieu in south west France. They have just performed a collaborative piece entitled “Listening: On the Architecture of Aging” as their contribution to the Made of Walking gathering of artists in August & September 2017. The two of them have been working independently as solo artists and their collaboration as **ARTIFACTS** for more than 30 years. Both have mobility issues, and Leena is also visually-impaired; they have differing experiences in using a cane to aid walking. The discussion explores aspects of collaboration, creativity and reflection, as we explore how their collaborative practice has evolved. 24’27” 11.6MB

Notes from the podcast interview by **Andrew Stuck**: Recorded on a walk at Made of Walking in La Romieu, south west France in September 2017 <http://www.themilena.com/made-of-walking> . Published in June 2018 on <http://www.talkingwalking.net>

Pam Patterson and Leena Raudvee came together as ARTIFACTS in Toronto in 1983 working first in/as theatre and latterly evolving their practice into performance art. One of the first performance works was called “Entrapment” and used written texts about how women are represented. Pam had graduated in Theatre, Leena in Fine arts, and they sought a cross-over of their very different ways of working. It wasn’t until 1987 at The Banff Centre, that they began performing together and initiated the process that has evolved into their collaborative practice.

At La Romieu, they performed over three days, a piece called “Listening: On the Architecture of Aging”. Their focus has been changing from solely the representation of women, to consider women as they age and how such women “appear” in public space.

Pam and Leena also each have a solo practice in the arts and this can indirectly inform their work together. For example, prior to this performance, Pam has been writing a catalogue essay for an exhibition of work by three women artists entitled “Coming of Age”. Preparatory reading for this included: Simone de Beauvoir’s “Coming of Age” and Germaine Greer’s “The Change: Women, Aging and the Menopause”.

ARTIFACTS’ work in the 1980s was more didactic and loosely experimental; for example, they washed, dried and ironed clothes in “Female Laundry” outside the Toronto stock exchange. While in another street performance from that time, “Madam X from Planet X”, Pam played a visiting dignitary from Planet X, Leena acted as Planet X’s cultural attache and translator, and Francois Regis-Klanfer was the Canadian Minister of Foreign Objects. For “Ghost Trio”, another early work, they reinterpreted a Beckett play for the Theatre Centre, Toronto using extensive visual projections and professional actors.

ARTIFACTS has been exploring the value of having a “witness” in some of their more recent work. This has been evident in performances such as “Pentimenti”, in co-curated events such as “Babble(Babel)”, and most recently in exhibition such as in the collaborative photo work “Among Questions Raised” shown in 2018 for the Ontario Society of Artists’ exhibition. Toronto photographer, Miklos Legrady has been their key witness and collaborator. In recognising his valued position, they acknowledge that those that document play a significant interpretive part themselves.

At 7A11D in 2000, they performed throughout a large multi-use artists’ space at 401 Richmond Street, Toronto carrying large black rocks. They walked up and down stairs and round the building. As this was a durational performance, they found that the walking eventually proved to be a challenge and they were forced to alter their activity: they took the elevator! Walks as non-walking then became interesting!



They mostly work in site-specific performance, creating works that respond to, and resonate with the space. Their process of making occurs in dialogue with the spaces and with each other. As a research modality, it harkens to a phenomenological approach: when I am observing a phenomenon, what do I see, and how do I react to and process this observing? For "Listening: On the Architecture of Aging" they observed the interrelationship of walking, aging and mobility and addressed their shared reflections at the work evolved.

Leena is visually-impaired, and had recently injured her foot before coming to La Romieu. Using a cane provided her with greater independence. Pam has been a wheelchair user at some point, and has lived for decades with an autoimmune disease; the cane acts at times as a protective device for her. They recognise how different their disabilities are and choose sites within which to perform that both challenge and accommodate their individual needs.

Compensation became an interesting point of discussion for them both in working on "Listening: On the Architecture of Aging". They acknowledged that they both, to a greater or lesser degree in the past, have "closeted" their disabilities. But now as aging is brutally upon them, the compensations necessary to maintain "passing" become ludicrous and frankly impossible.