

MASS MoCA

For Immediate Release
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Etiquette, a Personal Theater Experience Comes to North Adams in October



(North Adams, Massachusetts)

The New York Times' recent piece about Rotozaza's Etiquette opened with this question: "Producers must have fantasized about it. Couldn't we just eliminate the actors?" The Times went on to explain, "Silvia Mercuriali and

Anthony Hampton -- the artistic team behind Rotozaza, an inventive London-based company with a growing reputation on the experimental theater circuit -- have found a way around the problem of pesky performers by giving the audience something else to look at: themselves." In Etiquette, a half-hour theatrical experience for two people in a public space, the participants wear headphones which instruct them what to say to each other, and how to use the props positioned on the table. Rotozaza will bring Etiquette to MASS MoCA on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, October 2, 3, and 4. There will be two stations set up in Lickety Split, the MASS MoCA Café, so two groups of two -- four people total -- can participate during each thirty minute block. Reservations are available on the hour and on the half hour from 11 – 5 on Friday and Sunday and from 1 – 7 on Saturday.

Mercuriali explains, "There's something very rare and special when two people find a bubble in a public space. It's like when two people have a genuine exchange of ideas

or when they are falling in love. It's that sense of event and of moment that we're trying to recreate." Some participants have commented that it's good to do this with someone you know, someone to share this with. Others say it works well with a stranger.

Etiquette exposes human communication at both its rawest and most delicate and explores the difficulty of turning thoughts into words we can trust. The show, which makes the point quite creatively that every conversation is a performance, was a huge hit at New York Public Theater's Under the Radar Festival in January, opened in London in February and has been performed since in Portugal, Argentina, Germany, Norway, Italy and Minneapolis.

Much of Rotozaza's recent work involves instructions given live to unrehearsed and often non-professional actors. These "guests" often describe the strange thrill involved in handing themselves over and simply doing what they are told – to relinquish responsibility and to allow a different kind of performance to emerge. Now in a deft and generous move, Rotozaza invites its audience members to experience this for themselves while at the same time enjoying a "show". Magically participants are both performer and audience.

Mercuriali says, "Etiquette offers the fantasy of speaking with someone without having to plan what you say; that the responses become unpredictable only means that to do this with someone you know is particularly interesting." All this is achieved with an extreme economy of means – two stereo headphones and a few small objects. With Etiquette Rotozaza has created an entirely pre-recorded and infinitely portable piece of live theater available for translation into any language.

This program is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

At MASS MoCA there will be 26 spots available each day on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, October 2, 3, and 4. Tickets are \$20 for two people. MASS MoCA members get a 10% discount. The galleries will be open until 8:00 PM on Saturday night and Leah Siegel will perform in an Alt Cabaret on Saturday night. Tickets are available through the MASS MoCA Box Office located off Marshall Street in North Adams, open from 11 A.M. until 5

P.M., closed Tuesdays. Tickets can be charged by phone by calling 413.662.2111 during Box Office hours. Tickets/reservations are not available on line.

MASS MoCA, the largest center for contemporary visual and performing arts in the United States, is located off Marshall Street in North Adams on a 13-acre campus of renovated 19th-century factory buildings. MASS MoCA is an independent 501C3 whose operations and programming are funded through admissions and commercial lease revenue, corporate and foundation grants, and individual philanthropy. Except for an initial construction grant from the Commonwealth, and occasional competitive state and federal grants for specific programs, MASS MoCA is not government-funded.

Etiquette
Friday, October 2, 11AM – 5PM
Saturday, October 3, 1PM – 7PM
Sunday October 4, 11AM – 5PM
\$20 for two participants
Box Office: 413.MoCA111