

MABOU MINES & RESTLESS NYC

# ARCHIVE: this was the end

A LIVE AUDIO/VISUAL INSTALLATION



CREATED BY  
**MALLORY CATLETT & KEITH SKRETCH**  
IN COLLABORATION WITH  
**G LUCAS CRANE**

**SEPTEMBER 10 - 27, 2021**

**Friday 9/10, 5-8pm**

Opening reception in 122 CC courtyard

**Saturdays and Sundays: 2-5pm**

**Mondays: 4-7pm**

MABOU MINES & RESTLESS NYC PRESENT

# ARCHIVE: this was the end

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INSTALLATION RUNS ON A 45 MIN LOOP  
STAY AS LONG AS YOU LIKE

CREATED BY  
**Mallory Catlett & Keith Skretch**  
IN COLLABORATION WITH  
**G Lucas Crane**

**On Video: Performers** Black-Eyed Susan, G Lucas Crane, Jim Himelsbach, Rae C Wright and Paul Zimet **Costumes** Olivera Gajic

**Set** – Peter Ksander

**Video and Programming** – Keith Skretch

**Sound and Video Manipulation** – G Lucas Crane

**Interaction Design** – Ryan Holsopple

**Video Supervisor** – Simon Harding

**Technical Direction** – Bill Kennedy

**House Technician** – Wyatt Moniz

**Sound Engineer** – Jørgen Skjærvold

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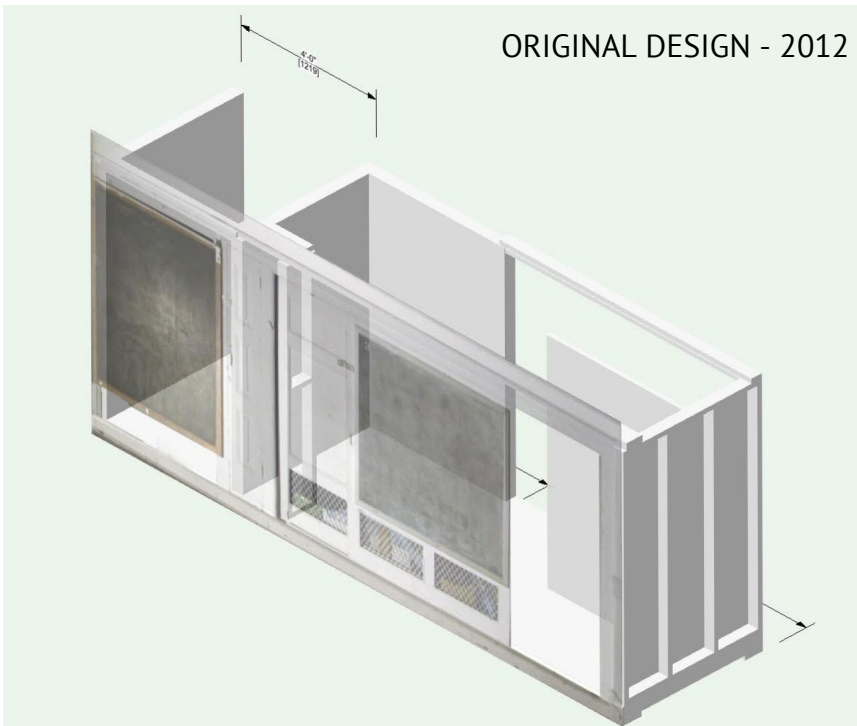
“Chekhov wrote in a naturalistic style; Ms. Catlett prefers a supernatural one. A meditation on memory and decay, “This Was the End,” . . . is less of a play and more of an apparition, a ritual, a haunting in one act”. **New York Times**

**Featured in** American Theatre Magazine’s “The Age Advantage”, Howlround’s Performing Age: Mallory Catlett’s This Was the End, Brazil’s Questao de Critica’s “Trompe-l’oeils disjuntivos de Mallory Catlett” & Performance Research (on Aging) This Was The End: the pseudoscopic effect.





MABOU MINES STUDIO - 2011



ORIGINAL DESIGN - 2012

## HISTORY

**2009 to 2011:** In-residence a Mabou Mines working on a performance based on Chekhov's Uncle Vanya.

**2012:** PS122 closes for renovations, and Mabou Mines allows the removal of the wall.

**2013:** Designer Peter Ksander, tech director Bill Kennedy and Mallory Catlett reconstruct the wall in her parents garage in NJ, in preparations for a residency at the Performing Garage.

**2014:** The performance - This Was The End - premieres at the Chocolate Factory.

**2018:** Invited to EMPAC to make an installation based on the performance.

**2019:** Installation completed at CultureHub, New York City.



MABOU MINES STUDIO WITH CABINET REMOVED - 2012

**Mallory Catlett** is a creator/director of performance across disciplines; from opera and music theater to plays and installation art. From 2009-11 Catlett was a resident artist at Mabou Mines working on *This Was The End*, a remix of Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* that won a special citation OBIE, and the design garnered a Bessie and a Henry Hewes Award. Catlett's work has premiered/performed in New York at EMPAC, 3LD, HERE, the Ontological-Hysteric Theater, PS122, Abrons Arts Center, The Chocolate Factory, The Collapsible Hole and the Ohio Theatre, has been featured at the Ice Factory, CultureMart, COIL, Prototype and BAM's Next Wave Festival and toured internationally to Canada, Ireland, UK, France, the Netherlands and Australia. She is an associate artist at CultureHub, a member of the Collapsible Hole, an artist-run development and performance venue at the Westbeth Arts Center. She has written about her work in *Theater* (2013), *Performance Research* (2019), *PAJ* (2020) and is currently working on her first book with Aaron Landsman called *No One Is Qualified: City Council Meeting's Theater of Participation* for Iowa University Press. She is the recipient of the Foundation for the Contemporary Arts 2015 Grants to Artists Award and a 2016 Creative Capital Grantee.

**Keith Skretch** (video) is a versatile media artist who explores collisions of image and space through installation, performance, and animation. As a theatrical video designer his work has been seen on dozens of stages across the US and abroad. He shared Bessie and Henry Hewes design awards for his work on Mallory Catlett's Obie-winning *This Was The End*, and has also received an Ovation Award and been a finalist for Center Theatre Group's Sherwood Award. Outside the theater, Skretch may be best recognized for his stop motion wood cut animation, *Waves of Grain*, which went viral in 2014 and has received nearly 800,000 views to date. He has also partnered with a diverse array of artists to develop one-of-a-kind films and installation works—including visual artist Kenyatta Hinkle, feminist performance artist Christen Clifford, electric guitar whiz Sarah Lipstate, WNYC's Radiolab team, and Pulitzer-winning composer Ellen Reid. His own installations have been exhibited in NY, LA, San Diego, and Warsaw. He holds a BA from the University of Chicago and an MFA from CalArts.

**G Lucas Crane** (sound & video manipulation) is a sound artist, performer, and musician whose work focuses on information anxiety, media confusion, sonic mind control and time skullduggery. His cassette-tape based sound practice explores the liminal spaces of hybrid analog aesthetics and new performance techniques for "obsolete" technology. His haunting tape-manipulation sound design style has been lent to a wide range of bands and projects. In New York City, he has variously performed at The Stone, Museum of Art and Design, Pioneer Works, Roulette, Issue Project Room and the Brooklyn Museum, and has toured nationally and internationally as tape-manipulator. He has been recognized for his sound design with a Henry Hewes award and a Bessie nomination, and was the co-founder of one of the largest collectivist art space projects in recent history, Silent Barn.



**Ryan Holsoption (interaction)** develops and programs interactive systems for live performance. Collaborations include work with Bill Morrison, Radiohole, Annie Dorsen, Mallory Catlett, Susan Marshall, Ellie Ga, Jim Findlay and many others. Ryan was awarded a 'Best Of New York 2007' by the Village Voice for 31 Down's Canal Street Station, an interactive payphone murder mystery set in the New York Subway system. Ryan has performed for Richard Foreman's Ontological-Hysteric Theater in two works, Maria Del Bosco (2002) and Panic!(how to be happy)(2003). He is a graduate of NYU's Interactive Telecommunications Program (ITP).

**Peter Ksander (set)** is a scenographer whose work has been presented both nationally and internationally. He holds a MFA from CALARTS, teaches at Reed College, and has won both the Bessie and Obie awards. He is a member of the Portland Experimental Theatre Ensemble, a former curator for the Incubator Arts Project, NYC, and has worked with Restless NYC on numerous projects since 2002.

### **About Mabou Mines**

Mabou Mines is a collaborative hub for diverse, intergenerational, avant-garde theater artists. Mabou Mines' creative vision is informed by the ethos of our co-founders: JoAnne Akalaitis, Lee Breuer, Philip Glass, Ruth Maleczek, and David Warrilow. Fifty-one years later, the company remains committed to collaboration and providing a platform for work that interrogates, innovates, and represents a multiplicity of identities and experiences. Today company members include Co-Artistic Directors Mallory Catlett, Sharon Ann Fogarty, Karen Kandel, Carl Hancock Rux; Associate Artists Tei Blow, Perel, David Thomson, Carrie Mae Weems and Senior Artistic Associates JoAnne Akalaitis, Clove Galilee, Philip Glass, Greg Mehrten, Maude Mitchell, David Neumann, Terry O'Reilly and Bill Raymond. (more below)

### **About Restless NYC**

Restless excavates the theatrical and literary record as a source for contemporary performance - to engage the past in a dialogue about its life in the present. The dismantling and re-purposing of stories that have already been told is a practice in transformation; an attempt to create openings, to find a way out, and forward. Led by creator/director Mallory Catlett, the company seeks to engage those who bring prior knowledge to the performance and those who might question its relevance. In this way, Restless productions strive to challenge the expert and include the newcomer.

**Support for *ARCHIVE: this was the end*** was provided by residency at EMPAC / Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute with additional support from Mabou Mines, CultureHub and the Foundation for the Contemporary Arts. *This Was The End* was commissioned by Chocolate Factory, with additional development and financial assistance from Mabou Mines, piece by piece productions, The Foundation for the Contemporary Arts, The Performing Garage, Yaddo, NYSCA and Women's Interart.

# MABOU MINES

Mabou Mines' home at the 122 Community Center provides the company with a space to create new work and support artists in our Resident Artist Program for emerging artists and in SUITE/Space, a performance program for artists of color.

## NEXT UP AT MABOU MINES:

**SUITE/Space LIVE!** December 2021

**Artistic Directors:** Karen Kandel, Mallory Catlett, Carl Hancock Rux, Sharon Ann Fogarty

**Associate Artists:** Tei Blow, Perel, David Thomson, Carrie Mae Weems

**Senior Artistic Associates:** JoAnne Akalaitis, Clove Galilee, Philip Glass, Greg Mehrten, Maude Mitchell, David Neumann, Bill Raymond

**Writer in Residence/Co-Artistic Director Emeritus** Terry O'Reilly

**Board of Directors:** Leonore Cooney, Lawton Wehle Fitt, Sharon Fogarty, Esther Fortunoff, David Preminger, Fredrick Sherman

**Board of Advisors:** Jill Godmilow, Dr. Harold Kooden, Gail Merrifield Papp, Nigel Redden

**Operations and Program Manager:** Ava Dweck

**Technical Director:** Wyatt Moniz

**Development Consultant:** Morgan Tachco

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**SUPPORT FOR MABOU MINES** is provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, The New York State Council on the Arts, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in Partnership with the City Council and Materials for the Arts, The NYC Women's Fund by the City of New York Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment/The New York Foundation for the Arts, the Axe-Houghton Foundation, The Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, Howard Gilman Foundation, New Music USA, The NYC COVID-19 Response and Impact Fund in The New York Community Trust, the Shubert Foundation, and the W Trust.

## Review: ‘This Was the End,’ a Spectral Riff on Chekhov



Paul Zimet plays Vanya, in person and as a projection, in Mallory Catlett's "This Was the End" at the Mabou Mines Theater in Manhattan. Brian Rogers

**This Was the End**  NYT Critic's Pick | Off Off Broadway, Play, Experimental/Perf. Art | 1 hr. and 5 min.  
Closing Date: June 16, 2018 | Mabou Mines Theater, 150 1st Ave. | 866-811-4111

By Alexis Soloski

June 10, 2018

Welcome to rural Russia. Have a swig of vodka. We'll be here a while.

Mallory Catlett's ["This Was the End,"](#) produced by [Restless NYC](#) and Mabou Mines at the Mabou Mines Theater in Manhattan, is a foxed love letter to Chekhov's 1898 play "Uncle Vanya," which opens with a bunch of characters stranded on a country estate and leaves most of them there, four acts later, a little older, no wiser, conclusively mired. Ms. Catlett's work — curious and cryptic, playful and mournful — imagines these same characters 30 or 40 years further on, still pursuing the same doomed loves and smashed ambitions.

Chekhov wrote in a naturalistic style; Ms. Catlett prefers a supernatural one. A meditation on memory and decay, "This Was the End," which first played a few years ago at the [Chocolate Factory](#) in Queens, is less of a play and more of an apparition, a ritual, a haunting in one act. Its first scene is an extended hallucination in which Peter Ksander's set, goosed by Keith Skretch's video, appears to flicker and spasm.

Projections of each actor dart across the space, pursued by the live bodies of those same actors, bodies that never quite catch up to the video. Hidden behind a sliding door, the sound artist [G Lucas Crane](#) cues these images to a soundscape of prerecorded voices and snatches from the Beatles' "White Album." The live actors speak over and around this soundscape, echoing themselves in eerie syncopation. (The dialogue is a mix of scenes from the play and rehearsal chatter in which the actors recap the action.)

The projections and the taped enunciations often look and sound, more definite than their live counterparts, suggesting that these characters are living mostly in their memories. The physical world is an annoyance, an afterthought, a place where they mislay their pills and can't seem to remember why it was that they entered a room or left it.



# Arts

## The New York Times



Black-Eyed Susan, left, and James Himelsbach. Projections of each actor dart across the space, pursued by the live bodies of those same actors, bodies that never quite catch up to the video.

Brian Rogers

The emphasis on recurrence and repetition echoes Strindberg's "Ghost Sonata" and Beckett's "Play" and more recently Enda Walsh's works, in which characters feel compelled to revisit and re-create past trauma. "This is a farce!" Astrov says. "I've said all this before. We've done all this before." Then he says it again and again.

Still the play isn't all repetition. In this version, the bored wife Yelena (Rae C. Wright) and the dashing Astrov (James Himelsbach) finally get it on, to the strains of "Why Don't We Do It in the Road." Now that's a senior moment.

All the actors are over the age of 60 — a pointed, sympathetic reply to Vanya's woeful line in the original: "What if I live to be 60?"

Black-Eyed Susan, who plays a girlish Sonya,

was an essential member of the Theater of the Ridiculous; Mr. Zimet, the artistic director of the [Talking Band](#), is an anxious Vanya. One of the pleasures of the show is how it also functions as an elegy to decades of downtown theater-making, to all the actors who walked these same floors and found their light and spoke their lines night after night after night. This show, in this space and with this cast, is summoning them, too.

This work, like most, isn't for everyone. The program offers a few pointers: Vanya loves Yelena. Sonya loves Astrov. Still, "This Was the End" will reward a thoroughgoing knowledge of the Chekhov original and may baffle the unfamiliar. About 20 minutes in, a man sitting next to me announced, "I don't know what's happening, and I don't care," then lunged for the exit.

Even the initiated may sometimes feel frustrated. Living up to its title, the show avoids a conclusion. There were at least four moments when I thought the end — or at least *an* end — had been reached. It hadn't. But this is Ms. Catlett's point and likely Chekhov's point, too: Even lives half-lived continue on long after the lights go down.

### This Was the End NYT Critic's Pick

#### Mabou Mines Theater

150 1st Ave.

E. Village

866-811-4111

[maboumines.org](http://maboumines.org)

**Category** Off Off Broadway, Play, Experimental/Perf. Art

**Runtime** 1 hr. and 5 min.

**Credits** Created and directed by Mallory Catlett;  
Live sound score and video manipulation by G  
Lucas Crane

**Cast** Black-Eyed Susan, Paul Zimet, James  
Himelsbach and Rae C. Wright

**Opened** June 7, 2018

**Closed** June 16, 2018

This information was last updated on June 15, 2018



## ***This Was the End*: Theater review by Helen Shaw, March 6, 2014**



### **This Was the End**

Theater, Drama   **\$\$\$**   ☒ Recommended   ★★★★★

Memory and image, literary ghosts and an actual possession all phase together in Mallory Catlett's sublime *This Was the End*, a postmodern séance for, among other things, downtown New York. Built as a palimpsest over half-remembered scenes from *Uncle Vanya*, the video-rich work plays with old media and new, using a quartet of older actors to imply a performance that has been going on, somewhere, for decades.

Long years have passed since their first, familiar tragedies, but Vanya (Paul Zimet), Sonya (Theatre of the Ridiculous fixture Black-Eyed Susan), Astrov (naughty James Himelsbach) and Yelena (an exquisite Rae C. Wright) still harass one another in desultory fashion, playing endless games of tag and taking mild potshots at their ancient peccadillos. Despite real gentleness in the performances, this is not necessarily a happy sunset: Astrov's bottles of morphine have turned into thousands of prescription drug

bottles, and Sonya, once so determined to keep her uncle alive, finally seems resigned to his wish for rest.

Scenes interlace, occasionally as snippets of overheard dialogue ("This is from the beginning of Act II," a voiceover recording murmurs at us) and as a sort of sliding, amnesiac's journey through the 19th-century text. It's like hearing Chekhov remixed by a mad DJ, and ah! There he is. A door swings open to show us the sound-installation artist G. Lucas Crane seated at his tape machines, looping live-made recordings of the current performance and turning them into an intoxicating, noisy score. This is matched by Keith Skretch's astonishing video design (Ryan Holsopple provides "technology interaction"), so whenever the noise-music's emotion overwhelms the room, the projected elements strobe in time to its analog frenzy. Catlett's piece has been gestating for half a decade, and the result is a work of unparalleled technical integration. The whole thing functions as a musical sculpture, a wayback machine dedicated to the material quality of memory, the way it codes itself into grooves and fissures.

Some in the audience will recognize Peter Ksander's set—a long classroom cupboard with sliding chalkboard and map—as a relic from the historic Mabou Mines schoolroom at P.S. 122. After Catlett developed the work in a Mabou Mines residency (and knowing the place would be torn apart during renovations), she took the whole long closet-wall with her. The video sometimes projects an exact image of the wall, fitting like a 1:1 scale map over its surface. Then, when the music judders, the pixelated overlay spasms, so the wall itself seems to sob.

For the performers, the closet becomes a cabinet of wonders, cracking open to let Black-Eyed Susan (or a life-size projected image of her) slip out—but it also exhales other, more otherworldly things. At the very start, when video of Black-Eyed Susan's vividly made up face peeped out from behind a hinging wall, I thought for a moment that it was recently departed Mabou Mines trouper Ruth Maleczech, checking in on the project from beyond. There are other ghosts here too; Zimet's infinite "chase" sequences recall Spalding Gray in *Rumstick Road*, for instance. It just depends on which vanished thing you love and miss most about downtown. Because that's the one that will haunt you.

**Conceived and directed by Mallory Catlett. Adapted from text by Anton Chekhov. With ensemble cast. Running time: 1hr 5mins. No intermission.**