

## Control Mouse

Returning your investment, whatever the cost

Tim Bright / Alex Rigozzi

Taleb made a killing that day, but it wasn't thanks to a grand plan and it wasn't happy money. "People in dark suits started coming from Paris" he says "they said that the only way I could have made that much was to have taken far too much risk." But he hadn't. They had simply failed to account for true nature of risk in financial markets.

*Panic: The story of modern financial insanity*, Michael Lewis

*Control Mouse* is an inter-reactive theatre piece in which the content of the work is affected in real time by the whims of the stock market. As audience members enter and pay the admission fee, the money will be wired to a portfolio of shares invested in the stock market. A live internet connection will monitor the progress of the shares over the course of the performance, and display the results in real time. The technicians monitoring the results will be visible to the audience as performers, as will a secondary layer of performance that interprets fluctuations in the share portfolio as a science-fiction thriller narrative.

A man is trapped in a room, forced to play out the same sequence of banal actions over and over. A phone rings. There is a knock on the door. An alarm goes off. Will the person at the door give the man a gift, or will he punch him in the face? Will the person on the phone give him information about his situation, or will the phone malfunction and make a piercing noise in his ear? These actions are dictated entirely by the progress of the share portfolio, and are signalled to the actors and the audience using sophisticated projection-mapping technology and design. On any given night, the viewing experience will be entirely different. Perhaps the man will slowly gain all the clues necessary to understand the nature of the experiment being enacted on him. Perhaps he will be subjected to a series of increasingly intense tortures. The only determinant is the minute-to-minute behaviour of the stock market.

In amongst this performance will be nestled highly advanced video design. Using a variation on the classic smoke-and-mirrors "Pepper's Ghost" illusion, we will project information, contextual data

and historical commentary onto the surface of the set. These projections will provide a historical and contemporary context for the performance, incorporating real-life stories, graphs and data from the stock market. Not only will this “Meta-Data” inform the design of the set and the layout of performance, it will also enable the progression of the narrative: Without the video design to prompt performance triggers, the performer would end up repeating the exact same action over and over in an entirely neutral fashion.

Our goal with the project is to construct a frame in which theatre and video can be effectively integrated - video is too often treated as a two-dimensional canvas of signification, at odds with the three-dimensional theatre space. We wish to work with projection mapping software that allows video designs to be mapped directly to three-dimensional objects in the world. We want to explore the possibilities of this software both in terms of technology/design and integration with narrative. As well as this, we are interested in exploring the stock market as a chaotic entity - one that impacts on people's lives through mysterious manipulations of risk and chance. In this, the project relates immediately to the Next Wave Theme both in form and content.

The form of the play is inherently risky for us as artists – by allowing the stock market to dictate aspects of the narrative, we are giving a portion of our creative control over to an essentially random force. This then creates the challenge of how to build a theatre piece that can still be interesting and engaging despite (or preferably *because of*) the chaos held within. This is in opposition to more traditional modes of theatrical practise, which often attempt to systematically cull any personal risk involved in the process through strict adherence to a “process”.

Thematically we will also be exploring ideas relating to risk – specifically the confluence of risk and greed that causes what should be a closed system (the stock market) to become a vast and amorphous manifestation of chaos.

The Kickstart programme can assist us greatly in the realisation of this project. As well as financial support, we are keen to gain the increased influence that comes with an affiliation with Next Wave. We believe an association with Next Wave will assist with negotiating extra support and collateral, whether in-kind (e.g. for set and lighting elements) or literal (e.g. additional funding sources). We would also seek assistance with locating and securing an appropriate rehearsal space, and a significant portion of the Kickstart funding would be used to hire a performance venue.