Search Party vs...
a search party performance

“(Search Party vs...) is playful, humorous and oddly moving... a truly entertaining and innovative work.”
Gregg Whelan, Co-artistic Director Lone Twin & ANTIfestival (Finland).

Description of Search Party vs...

Search Party vs... is a 3-day interactive durational performance in which Search Party challenge the host city/town to a marathon game of table tennis. The performance is situated in public space, and for almost 20 hours, over 3 days, spectators and passers-by are invited to form a team and play against Search Party. The performance is accompanied by a live durational commentary text, which creates real and imagined contexts for spectators and participants.

The commentary text is re-written before every performance incorporating reference points, mythologies, official and personal histories specific to the host town/city. At the end of each day the commentary text is developed to include stories of the participants who have represented their town/city – the players of today become the stories of tomorrow.

Existing somewhere between mass public spectacle and intimate 1-on-1 performance, Search Party vs... borrows the notion of team from sport to examine connections between the personal and the geographic, exploring ideas of community, place and belonging.
Sample Copy for Search Party vs...

50 words
Search Party challenge you, the people of (Town/city), to a marathon game of Ping Pong.

You are invited to compete against Search Party; to represent (Town/City) and support each other through thick and thin. We want a good clean fight, no biting, no diving, no tackling from behind – and the umpires decision is final.

150 words
Search Party are throwing down the gauntlet. They challenge you, the people of (Town/city), to a marathon game of Ping Pong.

You are invited to form a team and compete against Search Party; to represent (Town/City) and to support each other through thick and thin. Sing, chant, wear your hearts on your sleeves, take your tops off and swing them round your heads...

As the tournament develops and fatigue sets in, new unexpected narratives will emerge, rousing team talks and comfort breaks will be needed and the allegiance of each supporter will be tested. Search Party want a good clean fight, no biting, no diving, no tackling from behind – and the umpires decision is final.

Quotes
“Over the three days, people become very involved, sometimes discussing strategy and organising rotas; it's a performance that spans both mass participation and the intimacy of a one-on-one experience.” The Guardian (UK)

“...you can’t help but smile.” The Guardian (UK)

“...consistently heartfelt and thought-provoking work.” Exeunt Magazine (UK)

“(Search Party vs…) was incredibly successful, attracting the attention of local and national media along with a huge amount of audience interest and involvement.”
Gregg Whelan: Co-artistic Director of Lone Twin & ANTIfestival (Finland).

“...moments of emotional beauty dotted about an arid landscape of salt and smoke.” Realtime magazine (Australia) on Growing Old With You.

Education
Workshops & Talks
Search Party offer opportunities for workshops and talks around the themes explored in Search Party vs... and Search Party’s approach to devising site-based performances. Workshops are most suitable for small groups of University students or emergent artists. Search Party are keen to work in academic contexts as co-artistic director Pete Phillips is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Chichester, where he is also working towards his PhD.
Technical Information

How the performance works
• The performance can take place over a minimum of 2 days to a maximum of 3.
• The performance lasts from 10am – 4pm each day (with seasonal variations)
• One performer plays table tennis against members of the public whilst the other performer commentates.
• 2 stewards are on hand to answer questions and encourage participation.
• Each participant has a brief warm up then plays one game (first to 11 points).
• The result is recorded on a scoreboard.
• At the end of the 3 days the winning team are awarded a bottle of champagne to spray into the air.
• We will need to take breaks in the performance for high winds.

Site Specification
The performance is a substantial intervention into public space and as such requires careful planning.
• A pedestrianized town/city centre, with high footfall.
• Other sites include major train stations, indoor shopping centres, town halls or gallery foyers.

Site Visit
Ideally, Search Party will be able to visit host city and discuss potential sites with a member of festival/venue staff. Alternatively, Search Party would require photographs detailing several potential sites in advance.

We would require the Festival/Venue to provide:
Equipment
• Microphone
• Boom stand
• PA (outdoor power source)
• Full size outdoor Table Tennis table (often borrowed from local sports centre)
• Props table (150cm x 50cm approx.)
• ‘Search Party vs...(host city)’ banner (see pic)
• 1 x chair
• Scoreboard: we have one we can freight if needed (see pic)
• Bottled water
• Access to a printer

Personnel
• 2 x stewards (volunteers or university students)
• Support to set up and take down the equipment each day

Other
• Travel, accommodation and subsistence (2 x rooms)
Images

Video

http://www.spinetv.net/video/search-party

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pDxVPSqE7Qs
Search Party

About
Search Party playfully explore ideas of place, duration and intimacy. Established in 2005, Search Party is the collaboration of artists Pete Phillips and Jodie Hawkes. Search Party are committed to making immediate, hopeful performances that re-negotiate the relationship between artist and audience, creating temporary communities and inviting spectators to become co-collaborators in the live event.

Search Party make duo performances for theatres, galleries and public spaces, and have performed in venues and festivals in the UK and Internationally, including Culturegest (Lisbon, Portugal), The National Review of Live Art (Glasgow, UK), ANTIfestival (Kuopio, Finland), Plateux (Frankfurt, Germany), Nuit Blanche (Amiens, France), PAD (Mainz, Germany), InTacto (Vitoria de Gadiz, Spain) and Junction Arts Festival (Launceston, Australia).

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