

Oxford Slip Performance Plan

Oxford Slip and *Exercise Slip* are part of a sequence of performances exploring different aspects of sport and games, focusing on the gap between ambition and achievement in bodily control and fitness, and the ambivalence of viewers - who hope for and enjoy both excellence and failure.

Exercise Slip shows me preparing for the London Olympics by following the Canadian Marine's 5BX training schedule *Chart One*. Designed to gradually bring the body to a peak of fitness without harm, even at its simplest 5BX is almost impossible for me covered in clay.

For *Oxford Slip*, I will be in training again, but this time I take the sporting theme a step further into classical ballet. I will be doing my best to complete perfectly a set of five basic ballet exercises. With the clay weighing me down and making the ground slippery, and as an unfit middle-aged man, my attempt is likely to fall short. However, I will not give up and I will make a serious endeavour. The effect may be humorous although my intention is not. Spectators will be complicit in my suffering if they react with laughter at my endurance and ineptitude.

For *Oxford Slip* I will enter from the preparation area entirely covered in clay and wearing black knee-length leggings of the kind worn by dancers in rehearsal, and carrying carefully a bowl of clay slip. I will walk to the performance space, an octagonal sheet of canvas taped to the floor.

I will finish covering myself in clay by dipping my feet in the clay and add extra clay to my legs and any other area that is poorly covered. I will move the clay out of the performance space.

I will perform my sequence of five exercises.

I will pick up my container of clay and return to the preparation area to clean - up.

The exercises will be:

Exercise One

The five *classical ballet positions*

Exercise Two

A sequence including *plié, relevé, port-de-bras*; in each of the five positions

Exercise Three

A sequence of five *rond-de-jambe à terre* and then five of the same but *en l'air*, followed by a *rond-de-jambe*, culminating in a *first arabesque* - all leading with the right foot. Followed by the same leading with the left foot.

Exercise Four

A *retiré* exercise leading with the right foot and then with the left.

Exercise Five

A *sauté* exercise in each of the five *classical ballet positions*.

Philip Lee - June 2012