

# CHRIS HARDMAN: Artistic Biography

06/03/50 – 02/01/24

**Artistic Director / founder, Antenna**

**1980-Present**

Since, 1980, ANTENNA, has produced all audio, experiential, and performance works conceived by Chris Hardman. Internationally recognized for "Walkmanology" experiments—the use of the portable audio player as an actual performance tool—ANTENNA has produced more than thirty of Hardman's original interdisciplinary pieces. ANTENNA's "audients" (Hardman's more active term for an individual audience member) have found themselves inside theatrical mazes, carnival-like environments, interactive installations, site-specific performances, radio programs, guided tours and giant walk-through sculptures. Past works have combined cutting edge audio technology with interview-driven sound designs, puppetry, masked movement, 3-D projections, sensor-tripped animation, sculptural objects, features of the natural landscape, and prefabricated environments.

Hardman's ANTENNA has also transformed the audio tour into an artistic medium by applying Walkmanology principles to museum exhibitions. Museums that have installed ANTENNA's audio tours include the Art Institute of Chicago, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the Seattle Art Museum (among others).

## **BEFORE ANTENNA THEATER**

Attended Goddard College, Stowe Vermont

Met and worked with Peter Schuman and Bread and Puppet Theatre.

1971

Coney Island, Re-designed and built the Fun House at Coney Island, New York. This project was featured on the cover of the Village Voice.

Summer 1972

Returned to Venice Beach, L.A., CA, and continued making large parade pieces and was invited to tour Northern Mexican cities with one of his pageants,

## **Artistic Director/ Co-Founder, SNAKE THEATER**

Snake Theater was one of the pioneers in the Bay Area of site-specific performance with such productions as *Somewhere in the Pacific*, *Ride Hard Die Fast*, *Auto*, *Her Building*, and *the 24<sup>th</sup> Hour Café*.

In addition, SNAKE produced several political protests including The Cardboard Front which helped save waterfront housing for artists and maritime workers in Sausalito, CA.

Chris began Antenna in 1980 after the original Snake collaboration broke up.

## ANTENNA THEATER PRODUCTIONS, Chris Hardman, artistic director

Venue	Production	Year	Location
Aboard Antenna Bus	<i>Magic Bus</i>	2010-2016	Through-out San Francisco
Harvard Theater	<i>Euphorium</i>	2009	Cambridge, MASS
Sonoma State University Theater	<i>Big Brother</i>	2007	Sonoma, CA
Bay Model	<i>Fire and Ice</i>	2006	Sausalito, CA
Berkeley High School	<i>High School</i>	2006	Berkeley, CA
Golden Gate National Recreation Area	<i>Body of Water</i>	2005	Ocean Beach, SF
Galileo High School	<i>High School</i>	2004	San Francisco, CA
The Round House	<i>Euphorium</i>	2002	London, UK
Tamalpais High School	<i>High School</i>	2002	Mill Valley, CA
Burning Man Festival	<i>Euphorium</i>	2001	Black Rock Desert, NV
Vantage Theatre	<i>Artery</i>	2000	San Diego, CA
Crissy Field	<i>Euphorium</i>	2000-2002	San Francisco, CA
Tent Pavilion	<i>The Big Bang</i>	2000	Sausalito, CA
Burning Man Festival	<i>Sands of Time</i>	1999	Black Rock Desert, NV
Rodeo Beach	<i>Sands of Time</i>		Sausalito, CA
Santa Monica Earth Day	<i>Sands of Time</i>		Santa Monica, CA
Golden Gate National Recreation Area	<i>Star*Light</i>	1997	Sausalito, CA
Golden Gate National Recreation Area	<i>Pandemonium</i>	1997-1998	Sausalito, CA
Marin County Recycling Center	<i>Skin and Bones/Flesh and Blood</i>	1995	San Rafael, CA
UCLA Wight Art Gallery	<i>Etiquette of the Undercaste</i>	1995	Los Angeles, CA
Golden Gate National Recreation Area	<i>Enola Alone</i>	1994	San Francisco, CA
Falkirk Cultural Center	<i>Making Waves (Retrospective)</i>	1994	San Rafael, CA
Sausalito	<i>On Sight in Sausalito</i>	1993	Sausalito, CA
Golden Gate National Recreation Area	<i>The Appearance of Civilization</i>	1992	Sausalito, CA
Smithsonian Experimental Gallery	<i>Etiquette of the Undercaste</i>	1992	Washington, DC
Contemporary Arts Forum	<i>Etiquette of the Undercaste</i>	1991	Santa Barbara, CA
Theater Artaud	<i>Caveat Emptor! Buyer Beware!</i>	1991	San Francisco, CA
EarthDay Festival, Drama Lab	<i>All You Can Eat</i>	1989-1990	San Francisco, CA
Earth Day Festival, Bay Model	<i>All You Can Eat</i>	1990	Sausalito, CA
Wexner Center for the Visual Arts	<i>The Grid</i>	1989	Columbus, OH
Golden Gate National Recreation Area	<i>Alcatraz Cellhouse</i>	1988	San Francisco, CA
MIT Media Lab	<i>Radio Interference</i>	1987	Cambridge, MA
Los Angeles MOCA	<i>Adjusting the Idle</i>	1986-1987	Los Angeles, CA
KPFA Radio Station	<i>The New Season</i>	1986	Berkeley, CA
Waterfront Warehouse?	<i>Dracula in the Desert</i>	1985	Sausalito, CA
Brooklyn Academy of Music, Next Wave Festival	<i>Russia</i>	1985	Brooklyn, NY
San Francisco County Fair	<i>Fairplay</i>	1985	San Francisco, CA
Olympic Arts Festival, UCLA	<i>Amnesia</i>	1984	Los Angeles, CA
Mill Valley Post Office	<i>Artery</i>	1982	Mill Valley, CA
Guanajuato International Arts Festival	<i>Artery</i>	1983	Guan.. Mexico City
Marin County	<i>Moving Sculptures</i>	1982	Marin County, CA
Tamalpais High School	<i>High School</i>	1981-1982	Mill Valley, CA
Bay Area Playwright's Festival	<i>Pink Prom</i>	1982	Mill Valley, CA
Theaters in USA and Europe Rotterdam, Ulm, Stuttgart, Paris	<i>Vacuum</i>	1981-1982	Sausalito, S.F., N.Y.,

## Gallery Exhibitions

Presidio Officers' Club Galleries	Transforming Art	2008-09	San Francisco, CA
San Luis Obispo Gallery	Juried Exhibition, Furniture	2005	San Luis Obispo, CA
San Rafael Artists Gallery	Transforming Art	2005	San Rafael, CA
The Blue Room	Bay Area Furniture Art	2005	San Francisco, CA
Bay Model	Transforming Art	2004	Sausalito, CA

## Exhibit Design, Consulting Projects, and Presentations

Venue	Production	Year	Location
Sausalito Foundation	Calendar Talk		Sausalito, CA
California Academy of Sciences	Exhibition Consultant Panel	2005	San Francisco, CA
Exploratorium	All Time, a lecture	2004	San Francisco, CA
Oakland Museum of California	Gold Fever! Interactive Exhibit Design	1998	Oakland, CA
Department of the Interior	Consultant Panel: Uses of the Mall	1992	Washington, DC
Museum of Intolerance	Interactive Exhibit Design	1992	Los Angeles, CA
Old Red Courthouse	Interactive Exhibit Design	1989	Dallas, TX

## Other Projects

EcoCal	2008
Eco Time	2008
The ECOlogical Calendar	2005-Present

## Additional descriptive material on Antenna's productions by Chris Hardman

### 2009 EUPHOR!UM

A walk-through dreamscape of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's imagination. Featuring digital audio effects, three-dimensional paintings, and a few Coney Island funhouse tricks thrown in for good measure. Inspired by the poem "Kubla Khan." Reworked with a new tape and performed at Harvard?

### 2004-2008 TRANSFORMING ART

An interactive exhibit featuring sculpture works by ANTENNA Theater artistic Director, Chris Hardman. The exhibit is set in an environment that Hardman calls, "an experimental Funhouse where scientific understanding of perception is manipulated and presented in an artistic and accessible way." The exhibit includes one room filled with real 3-D imagery created by Mr. Hardman and using a process called Anaglyph 3-D. This piece has been invited to The Bay Model in Sausalito, CA in 2004, ? Gallery in San Rafael, CA in 2005, and the Presidio Officer's Club Gallery in 2008.

### 2007 BIG BROTHER

Produced by a Drama Class at Sonoma State with Chris Hardman as their guest lecturer.

## **2006 FIRE AND ICE**

A one evening , special event at the Bay Model docks in Sausalito, CA, depicting the destruction of Chris Hardman and families home.

## **2006 HIGH SCHOOL**

Originally commissioned by the Bay Area Playwright Festival in 1981, "High School" is a narrated walk-through of the high school campus from the perspective of, "inside the head" of the students. Audience members travel through the school, listening to student voices while interacting with actors and puppets. Berkeley High School drama students contributed to this tour of their school.

In 2006, an entirely new production ANTENNA's original "High School" was preformed in Galileo High School in San Francisco, CA.

## **2002 HIGH SCHOOL**

celebrating 20 years of Walkmanology and the anniversary of ANTENNA's original "High School" production. A walk-though of Tamalpais High campus from "inside the head" of the students. Audience members travel through the school, listening to student voices while interacting with actors and puppets.

## **1981-1982 HIGH SCHOOL**

Audients walk through and interact with the campus of Tamalpais High School, Mill Valley, California, while listening to the reminiscences of a recent graduate on portable stereo. This was the first use of Walkman's in theater.

## **2005 BODY OF WATER**

## **2000-2002 EUPHOR!UM**

A walk-through dreamscape of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's imagination. Featuring digital audio effects, three-dimensional paintings, and a few Coney Island funhouse tricks thrown in for good measure. Inspired by the poem "Kubla Khan." Preformed in Crissy Field.

## **2000 ARTERY**

A remount commissioned by Vantage Theatre of San Diego, where each audient is transformed into the main character of a noir-like mystery thriller and sent through a 17 room performance maze.

## **2000 BIG BANG**

A Millennium-eve performance with fire eaters, stilt walkers, giant puppets, a sound and light show, and a giant performing waterclock counting off all 12 billion years of time since the Big Bang.

**1998-2002                      SANDS OF TIME (Rodeo Beach, Santa Monica Earth Day)**

An outdoor interactive public art project that blends science, art, history, and popular culture to examine the meaning of the Millennium. Carved into 1,000 yards of beachfront, this performance sculpture is designed to resemble a gigantic Zen Garden. Featured as a principal sculptural art piece of the Burning Man Festival in the Nevada desert, invited to be a centerpiece of an Earth Day celebration in Santa Monica and performed on Rodeo Beach in Sausalito, CA.

**1997                              STAR\*LIGHT**

Loosely based on Dickens' A Christmas Carol, this performance examines the tension between technology and nature—specifically artificial light and natural light. The production mixes giant puppets, masked actors, shadow shows and dance with circus performance such as stilt walkers and vertical rope performance.

**1997-1998                      PANDEMONIUM**

A nighttime outdoor theater adventure in the forests and meadows of the Marin Headlands. The show is a homage to Pan and the metaphysics of Springtime and a send-up of the spring wedding season. The production features audience members in headphones walking through the woods to encounter 35-foot puppets, masked actors, and site-specific lighting effects.

**1995                              SKIN AND BONES/FLESH AND BLOOD**

A site-specific theater performance at the Marin County Recycling Center which examines physical, political, and metaphysical borders and their impact on the "common citizen." The production features a bilingual collage of the voices of Marin County residents broadcast to audience members through localized FM transmission.

**1994                              ENOLA ALONE**

An interactive theater maze that puts each visitor into the boots of a World War II bomber pilot. The show combines elements from museum exhibits, radio theater, carnival funhouses, and audience participation to create an innovative, personal, and deeply affecting experience for each participant.

**1994                              MAKING WAVES**

Commissioned by the Falkirk Cultural Center, this combination of theater, installation art, and historical retrospective features artifacts, photographs, masks, puppets, video, and audio from Antenna Theater's performance history.

**1993                              ON SIGHT (IN SAUSALITO)**

A site-specific performance using an entire city as its stage. Audience members encounter scenes in private homes, local businesses, public parks, and city streets. The production blends Bunraku, shadow performance, cubist-constructivist masks, and an interactive radio broadcast to explore the emergence of bohemian lifestyles, art and philosophies in post-WWII America.

**1992 THE APPEARANCE OF CIVILIZATION**

An outdoor performance event on the nighttime beach, developed in response to the Columbus Quincentennial. The play draws from 16<sup>th</sup> century documents, the testimony of Holocaust survivors, Vietnam veterans, and others to draw disturbing parallels between Columbus' time and our own.

**1991 CAVEAT EMPTOR! BUYER BEWARE!**

An epic multi-media stage play featuring masked actors and a pre-recorded soundtrack. The play is structured into three alternating stories dealing with the historical exploitation of the unsuspecting masses by those who sell the idea of security.

**1991 ALL YOU CAN EAT**

Commissioned by Earth Drama Lab, this original farce and grand processional satirizes Bay Area history, illustrating how man's greedy appetite has unbalanced the environment.

**1988-95 ETIQUETTE OF THE UNDERCASTE**

An interactive performance installation, which leads visitors through a maze of thirteen rooms where they experience poverty and powerlessness first hand. Upon entering the installation, the visitor "dies" and is "reborn" into a life characterized from birth by a succession of ever-worsening circumstances, ultimately leading to homelessness.

**1987 RADIO INTERFERENCE**

Developed as an artist-in-residence project at MIT, this show explores the subject of communications through the use of infrared headset receiver technology and through the audience's interaction with thirteen different theater events.

**1986 THE NEW SEASON**

An experiment in improvisational broadcasting where the audio messages of selected television programs are replaced with an original soundtrack via radio.

**1986 DRACULA IN THE DESERT**

This performance piece tells the story of Dracula's retirement to New Mexico utilizing 3-D effects, portable stereos, masked actor/dancers and original music.

**1986-1987 ADJUSTING THE IDLE**

This interactive play consists of seventeen simultaneous portable stereo events on the subject of the American fascination with the automobile. Audiences participate in stage events, such as convincing a "parent" to let them drive, attending traffic school, and buying a car.

**1985 RUSSIA**

A stage play involving slide projections, sound effects. Masked actors, and audio collage to explore the American perception of the Cold-War Soviet Union. Featured at the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Next Wave Festival.

**1985 FAIRPLAY**

Originally commissioned for the San Francisco Fair, this series of audio tape events on the subject of San Francisco history and culture leads audiences in such activities as ringing cable car bells, signing the U.N. Charter, and visiting Alcatraz. Each audience member is transformed into a patient in a clinic struggling to regain memory while participating in stories from the past.

**1982-84 ARTERY**

In this recorded mystery play, each audience member becomes the main character of the story by wearing headphones and interacting with a 17 room maze-like set.

**1982 MOVING SCULPTURES**

Over a period of months, plywood figures of local residents follow the paths of their real life counterparts—jogging, shopping, and walking the dog—in five Marin County, California cities.

**1982 PINK PROM**

Sixteen actors in prom dress perform to pre-recorded stereo choreography. A commission of the Bay Area Playwright's Festival.

**1981-1982 VACUUM**

A blend of dance, performance sculpture, taped narrative and original music. The play, developed from man-on-the-street interviews about door-to-door salesmen, housewives, and vacuums, is an inside look into the life of a man who sells emptiness,

**ECO projects, conceived and executed by Hardman**

**2008 ECOCal**

In 2008, ANTENNA launched the ECOlogical Calendar on the iPhone allowing people to access the natural world through the ECOCal, an immersive daily calendar application for the iPhone. It was in production for 17 years, through 2021.

**2008 ECOTime**

These brief radio pieces were written and read by Chris Hardman for National Public Radio to examine ecological phenomena occurring around the date of broadcast and around the world, such as fruit ripening or birds migrating, in an exciting and scientific way, and are designed to reconnect the listener with the natural world. New programs were broadcast weekly for several years.

**2002-2021 THE ECOlogical Calendar**

A new calendar concept that celebrates the passage of a year season by season. The ECOlogical Calendar is a mix of artistic visual interpretation and scientific facts relating to the cycle known as the year. It is a type of visual almanac to emphasize seasonal wonders of the natural world.

## **Awards / recognition**

Bay Area Critic's Circle Awards, years ago when they were still relevant.

### **ESQUIRE Magazine 1985**

The Esquire Register; Golden Collector's Issue of 1985

America's New Leadership Class, Men and Women Under 40 Who Are Changing the Nation:  
To Chris Hardman in Theater

This was followed by an article with full-page, color photo of Chris and a headline which asked, "Is Chris Hardman Sabotaging American Theater or is he Saving it?" by Steve Erickson.