**DIAGRAMS SYMPOSIUM GRADCAM, 18 SEPTEMBER**

**The Sensible Stage**

**Dr Bridget Crone**

There has been a renewed interested in questions of time and encounter in recent contemporary art practices, particularly performance and moving image practices. In this paper, I will discuss how this focus upon the time of encounter produces a diagram that I will term *staging*. Staging is not simply an aesthetic gesture towards the theatrical but a conceptual operation that produces a discrete, bounded space – a space of encounter as the work of artists such as Gail Pickering (UK) and Lizzie Fitch / Ryan Trecartin (USA) demonstrates. Therefore, staging (and the appearance of the stage) results from a tension between two distinct forms: that is, between horizontality, or the world as a flat ontology, and verticality – the world (or *worlds*) governed by appearances and encounters.

Through discussion of the artists’ work, I will build this diagram of the stage – or indeed, *the sensible stage* – as a contingent structure. In developing this diagram of the sensible stage, I will begin with the problem of horizontality as a flat ontology – that is, a delirious production of bodies and images within the visceral matrix of the neo-liberalist machine. I will then turn to the bounded space of the theatrical stage, which I will explore through the concepts of time and encounter. Here I superimpose a Deleuzean diagram of becoming or ‘becoming animal’ with Alain Badiou’s work on sets (though I will specifically touch upon Badiou’s writing on theatre) in order to address the way in which the artists’ work navigates the tension between the two, and produces what I term ‘the sensible stage’.