

MICHAEL PAVELKA SET & COSTUME DESIGNER

OFF THE WALL

Dramatic narrative by the creative team of *Stan Won't Dance*, with original music by John Barber, 2007

Royal Festival Hall, Hayward Gallery and South Bank environment, London, July 2007

Off the Wall was a devised, futuristic spectacle to reopen the transformed South Bank Centre. I worked closely with Liam Steel and Rob Tannion to create a street fable that incorporated a large choir, parours, circus and dance; well over 100 performers in all. The ambitious site included the exteriors of the Hayward Gallery, Royal Festival Hall and piazza, and adjacent offices. We collected, swapped and amalgamated stories and matched them to diverse images, often drawing in each other's sketch books until their origins became untraceable. Our preoccupations were the gravity of a mechanised lifestyle as epitomised by the brutal site, and contrasting release of weightlessness. What surprised us was how dynamic this collection of architectural forms was to work with, using their height, opacity or transparency to transform their appearance or overturn their everyday use. We added geometric structures such as a skeletal grid and geodesic globe, and linked the roofs with zip lines across concrete canyons. Our challenge was to make maximum visual impact using single or multiple bodies to create a human story in an inhuman environment, whereby a single voice became a choir, a tiny spark became a flame, and an action became a formidable movement.

Theatre Company: Stan Won't Dance

Directors: Liam Steel and Robert Tannion

Choreographers: Liam Steel and Robert Tannion

Lighting Designer: Huw Llewellyn

Sound Designer: Andy Pink

Aerial Skills Consultant: Alex Frith

