

# INTO THE HINTERLANDS

A photograph of a person's legs and feet against a brick wall. The person is standing with their feet flat on the ground, and their legs are extended forward. The brick wall is made of red bricks with some mortar visible. The lighting is warm and focused on the legs and feet, creating a strong contrast with the background.

Directed by Julia Yezbick  
39 minutes, DCP, 2015  
[intothehinterlands.com](http://intothehinterlands.com)

# INTO THE HINTERLANDS



## TECHNICAL SPECS

Running time: 39:06 mins

Aspect Ratio: 16:9

Original Format: HD video

Screening Format: DCP

Language/Subtitles: English (Without Dialogue)

## CONTACT

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Produced in the  
Harvard Film Study Center and the  
Sensory Ethnography lab



Sensory  
Ethnography  
Lab



## SHORT SYNOPSIS

The Hinterlands, a Detroit-based performance ensemble, practice a form of ecstatic training which they see as a provocation towards the unknown. The “hinterlands” evokes an unknown space both physical and imaginary whose mystery is its source of generation and from which their creativity emerges. Their practice is one of ecstatic play, of finding the edge of one’s balance, and the limits of one’s body.

## LONG SYNOPSIS

The Hinterlands, a Detroit-based performance ensemble, practice a form of ecstatic training which they see as a provocation towards the unknown – a space both physical and imaginary. Their practice is one of ecstatic play, of finding the edge of one’s balance, and the limits of one’s body. Yezbick trained with the ensemble for a year, always filming while physically participating. Each session followed an unscripted, non-verbal improvisation during which they developed gestural “grammars” through repetition, patterned breathing and movement. Imagined affective landscapes are conjured as audio compositions from field recordings swell through the room. Rather than allow the viewer to gaze upon the ruins of Detroit, this

piece makes an aural gesture toward the city beyond and summons the space of an inverted hinterland, an unknown inside to be plumbed for creative inspiration. Continually looking for new ways to “see” with the camera (shooting with her feet, shoulder, and neck), Yezbick’s embodied camera immerses the viewer in the collective ecstatic experience; merging the space of their ludic play with the liminal space of the cinema.

## CREDITS

Camera: Julia Yezbick  
Sound Recording and Original Compositions: Julia Yezbick  
Edit: Julia Yezbick  
Sound Mix: Ernst Karel  
Colorist: Daniel Stuyck

Cast:  
Barney Baggett, Himself  
Liza Bielby, Herself  
Richard Newman, Himself



## CREDITS (CONT.)

Funded in part by The Film Study Center, Harvard University. In-kind Support provided by The Sensory Ethnography Lab and The Department of Visual and Environmental Studies at Harvard University

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## DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

JULIA YEZBICK (b. 1980, Ypsilanti, Michigan) is a filmmaker, artist, and doctoral candidate in Media Anthropology and Critical Media Practice at Harvard University. Her works have been screened at international film festivals including the Mostra Internacional do Filme Etnográfico, Rio de Janeiro, the Nordic Anthropological Film Association, Stockholm, and the Montreal Ethnographic Film Festival. She is a member of The Sensory Ethnography Lab, a Harvard Film Study Center Fellow, the founding Editor of *Sensate*, an online journal for experiments in critical media practice, and co-founded/directs *Mothlight Microcinema* in Detroit, where she lives and is currently conducting her dissertation research.

## DESCRIPTION OF DIRECTOR'S WORK

Situated at the points of productive friction between art and ethnography, Yezbick's work is grounded in phenomenological engagements with people and place. She draws deeply from her roots in observational cinema and sensory ethnography, often spending many months with her subjects. Her work concerns labor, the body, creative praxis, and the post-industrial landscape, seeking to convey the lived experiences of others, whether seen or imagined.

## CAST BIOGRAPHIES

BARNEY BAGGETT is a performer, producer, and educator based in Brooklyn, New York. He has spent the bulk of his career devising and performing new works for the stage and facilitating performance based community initiatives. He holds an MFA in Ensemble Physical Theatre from the Dell'Arte International School of Physical Theatre, and has performed with ensembles across the USA-including Pig Iron Theatre Company, Touchstone Theatre, The Dell'Arte Company, and The Hinterlands. Most recently he performed with Brooklyn's LAVA dance company in their first work choreographed for male bodied performers, and is currently writing a new play inspired by the life and work of Mary Shelley.





LIZA BIELBY is Co-Director of The Hinterlands. She creates highly physical performances that straddle hyper-local and global cultural expression. She worked for four years as the only non-Chinese national studying and performing chuanju ("Sichuan opera") and has adapted physicality in the discipline to explore distinctly American archetypes. With The Hinterlands, she is currently curating the Porous Borders Festival, a site-specific series of events, interventions and creative responses occurring along the border between Detroit and its city-within-the-city Hamtramck and exploring municipal, cultural, and digital divides.

RICHARD NEWMAN is Co-director of The Hinterlands. He was an ensemble member of Double Edge Theatre from 2004-2008 where he co-created numerous performances including Republic of Dreams and the UnPOSSESSED. He was an artist in residence with The Dell'Arte Company (Blue Lake, CA) and founded the Breaking Bread Project - a multi-year collaboration between artists in the U.S. and the Balkans. He has led workshops and trainings at universities and theatres around the world. Richard recently directed, co-created, and performed The Circuit with The Hinterlands, using the lens of vaudeville to explore contemporary American common culture and subcultures. Richard also composes electronic music and DJ's techno at venues throughout Detroit.



## DESCRIPTION OF THE HINTERLANDS' WORK

The Hinterlands create performances and public events that are highly irrational and deeply American. From our original touring pieces to the events we curate in our Detroit (USA) neighborhood, our work is built around pressing into the unknown areas of our personal and collective history with fearless physicality and a sense of humor. Our performances smash seemingly disparate images and ideas together, culminating in new, highly layered meanings that are greater than the sum of their parts. We create a space for our audience to be in this unknown hinterland with us through techniques that disarm and disorient, short-circuiting expectations and luring them into unexpected interactions. We have an ongoing physical training practice that is both a foundation of our collaborative devising process, and a means of conducting exchanges

across disciplines and cultures. Our performances center on reimagining distinctly American performance forms with content that reflects on contemporary cultural issues. Currently, we are creating two works. The first, *The Radicalization Process*, is a performance work that slams together two disparate performance styles from revolutionary moments in American theatre and politics - the birth of the American 'method' in the 30's and the explosion of the laboratory theatre movement in the late 60's - to explore the past, present and future of American radicalism. The second reimagines our 2011 live performance *Manifest Destiny! (there was blood on the saddle)* as a docu-fiction film set in Detroit that tackles the myths of the frontier and the death of Rust Belt cities.  
<http://thehinterlandsensemble.org>



SCREENINGS

WORLD PREMIER

BERLINALE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL  
FORUM EXPANDED

FEBRUARY 5-16, 2015

