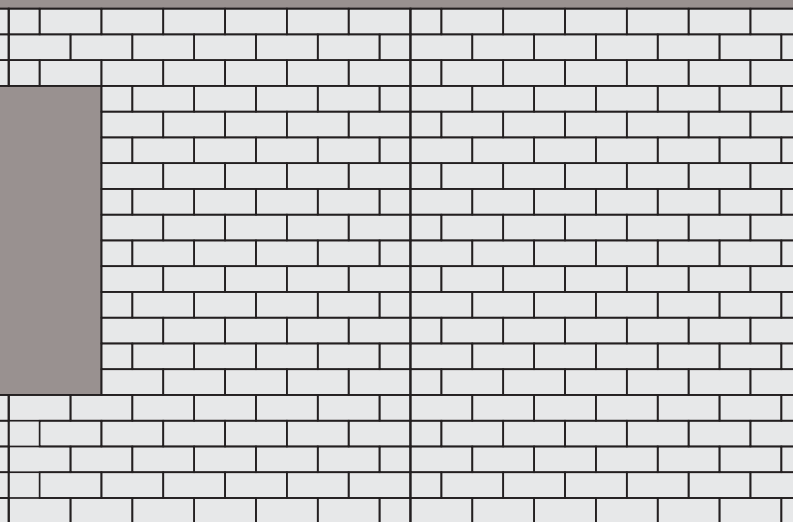


# Transfer Laban Wolfgang Weileder



**Montgomery Square  
Canary Wharf, London E14 5JJ**

**13-24 June 2016**

**Monday-Friday 7.30am-4.30pm**

**Performances by students from  
Trinity Laban Conservatoire  
of Music and Dance**  
12.30pm + 4.30pm daily

**Transfer Laban has been commissioned  
by Locus+ and is part of the  
London Festival of Architecture 2016**



canarywharf.com  
locusplus.org.uk

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## Wolfgang Weileder Transfer Laban 2016

Chris Fite-Wassilak

In the city, we're constantly surrounded by surfaces. Stone, glass, metal, concrete, brick and tarmac shape the roads and buildings that we navigate. Wood, plaster and plastics cover our interiors. Assembled in such a way, these constructions have a sense of permanence – or at least longevity, that they will hold together in this way for at least a few years. Walking among the shining silver, black and blue structures of Canary Wharf, passers-by might, for ten days in the middle of June, notice another surface being set up: a stack of white concrete blocks, backed by a web of scaffolding. Passing by in the morning, you might see a short square of them, like a small wall; by the evening you would see an over two metre high stretch, perhaps a square gap in its otherwise uniform shape. It's an odd sort of construction site, positioned on Montgomery Square, a plaza just outside the tube entrance. The builders are fenced off, but they're not digging below the pavement at all, not putting any foundations down. The next day, it will have moved on, the previous section disassembled, and a new, similar sized stack being erected just next to the previous one. This daily constructed surface is **Transfer Laban**, a temporary outdoor artwork by German sculptor Wolfgang Weileder.

The propped up surface might look like a part of a film set, a reminder of old Hollywood sets where whole towns were simply the two-dimensional fronts of buildings held up by bits of wood. But the performance going on here is more of a slow dance: each daily stack of concrete is an excerpt, that together over the ten days form a full-size replica of the single façade of a building. The building being replicated – or, as the title says, transferred – might be difficult to recognise in pieces, but it is in fact a building that is situated less than two miles away almost directly due south, just on the other side of the river in Deptford. The Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music & Dance (Laban Building) was opened in 2002, designed by the Swiss architects Herzog & de Meuron. At the time, when it opened on the bank of Deptford Creek, the sleek modern building was relatively on its own in the area, with its curved front of glass



Laban Building, Deptford  
Photo: Peter Smith/Trinity Laban

and plastic panels tinted pink, green and purple. The interior of the Laban Building was modelled as an 'urban streetscape', with unruly surfaces and unexpected areas where the students might meet, the bright colour palette chosen in collaboration with artist Michael Craig-Martin.

Weileder's re-placement of the Laban Building is all surface; the urban streetscape of the interior becomes the actual streetscape of Canary Wharf. The performances that normally take place contained within the building escape its confines: students from the conservatoire itself, led by choreographer Charles Linehan, will be on site in Montgomery Square responding to the artwork each of the ten days. The building's performativity becomes infectious: the people setting up the scaffolding and placing the concrete bricks become dancers; we, even just walking by inadvertently, do too.

This isn't Weileder's first such transfer; his work has seen temporary structures built both inside galleries and outdoors, as a way of undermining our understanding of architecture as a fixed, seemingly permanent entity, and as examinations of how we understand space. Weileder's transfers are often situated in public thoroughfares, construction that isn't hidden with hoardings, being built in front of anyone who stops to watch, and that also has no apparent function. In Milton Keynes in 2006, Weileder built a similarly staged replica of the Milton Keynes Gallery, just down the road in front of the town's train station. Last year, his wooden structure **gap** (2015) was a 1:4 scale reproduction of a section of the Dunston Staiths, an old riverside cargo loading structure in Newcastle that had been destroyed by fire, remade in smaller size and displayed for a short time in the Great North Museum. Weileder's building-performances become almost existential questions:

why do we build at all? How long do all these other buildings last anyway?

Weileder's deliberate transpositions recall other such temporary gestures and architectural misplacements – such as Rachel Whiteread's **House** (1993), a concrete cast of the interior spaces of an entire terraced house in Mile End. The building itself demolished, the stern, grey boxes of its former spaces that remained became a structure that sat on its own for just eleven weeks before

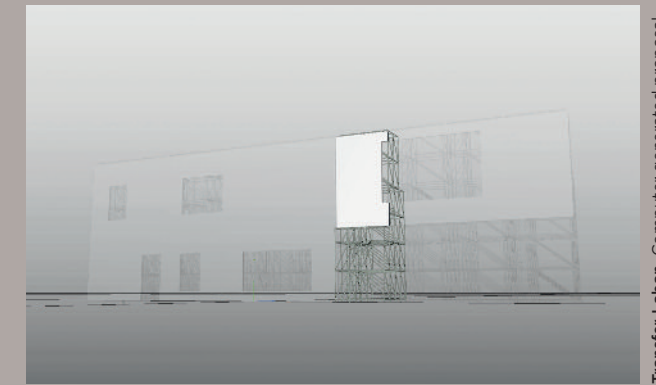


Transfer, Milton Keynes, 2006





Transfer, Milton Keynes, 2006



Transfer Laban, Computer generated proposal sequence, 2016

itself being torn down, a short term monumental elegy to a wartime bomb-ravaged and now renovated area. In Detroit, USA, the late artist Mike Kelley created a portable replica of his suburban childhood home in the industrial centre of the city, plonking its white-panelled family ideal amidst dirty brick former factory buildings that tower over it. His **Mobile Homestead** (2012) is still used as a community centre. Weileder's work is often compared to the architectural incisions of American artist Gordon Matta-Clark – who made large geometric holes and precise gaps in abandoned buildings as site-specific installations – but there is more civic concern at the heart of his practice. Weileder's transfers become open-ended questions into how we feel a part of the buildings that surround us, how we all, whether we like it or not, take part in architecture. The replica of the Laban Building appearing in Montgomery Square this summer takes an educational institution and places it in the outdoor space of a business centre, in a space that is ostensibly public; though it isn't public as such – it's private land, owned by the Canary Wharf Group plc, through which we have temporary 'right of way'. Our encounter with this version of the Laban Building is of a meeting of concrete and flesh, on territory where we are both equally transient. The encounter implies, too, the dissolution of the buildings that surround it, imagining a time when these buildings might also be disassembled. All architecture, Weileder implies – all these surfaces – are temporary.



Transfer, Milton Keynes, 2006

**Chris Fite-Wassilak** is a writer, critic and curator based in London. He is a contributor to Art Monthly, Art Papers, Art Review, frieze and other publications, and is contributing editor to Tate Etc.



Project Description

Transfer Laban has been commissioned by Locus+, in partnership with Canary Wharf’s Sculpture at Work programme and Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance and is presented to coincide with the London Festival of Architecture 2016.

The façade of the Laban Building (Herzog & de Meuron, 1997) is being re-created by artist Wolfgang Weileder as a performative time-based sculpture. Each weekday over the two-week period, passers-by can experience the choreography of the construction process as a form of architectural dance and spatial gesture whereby the shape and dimensions of a building are only momentarily revealed.

The construction team, provided by temporary structure experts **Media Structures**, will work through a process of simultaneous construction

Charles Linehan and students from **Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance**, a series of new dance performances is

being developed in response to the work and will be presented on site each day during intervals in the construction process.

The project is being realised with support from students at Tower Hamlets, Barking & Dagenham and Havering Colleges who are engaging as volunteers on all aspects of the event, offering them an invaluable opportunity to learn new skills and engage with an exceptional art/architectural



Transfer-back, Milton Keynes Gallery, 2007

environment. His works are investigations into the relationship between time and space, the interface between permanence and transience, and how these can be explored to question our understanding of the landscape, both built and natural. His work engages with the world through large-scale temporary site-specific installation and sculpture; temporary recordings of spaces and environments through photography, film, performance and sound installation.  
[www.wolfgangweileder.com](http://www.wolfgangweileder.com)

**Locus+** is a visual arts commissioning agency that works with artists on the production and presentation of socially engaged, collaborative and temporary projects, primarily for non-gallery locations. In each project, place or context is

and deconstruction. The 40m-long façade will appear section by section as the structure moves slowly across Montgomery Square until it is completed. Erected from white lightweight concrete blocks and supported by a system scaffolding structure, each section will be visible for a single day before being deconstructed and rebuilt as the next section in the sequence. The process will be recorded using time-lapse video and long exposure photography, capturing the entire façade as it materialises over time.  
Working in collaboration with choreographer

project. The Ytong blocks, supplied by **Xella UK** will be distributed to the colleges after the event to be used for future training.

**Wolfgang Weileder** is originally from Munich, Germany, and moved to the UK in 2000. He is currently Professor in Contemporary Sculpture at Newcastle University. His work is primarily concerned with the examination and critical deconstruction of architecture, public spaces and the interactions we have with the urban

integral to the meaning of the artwork. Locus+ creates new opportunities for artists whose work is issue-based, to work in different contexts and across formats. Locus+ responds to and initiates projects with a great degree of flexibility and freedom, and has worked with artists with significant reputations as well as others beginning their careers. Equal value is afforded to each project regardless of scale or location. Every Locus+ project is generated by the organisation, which does not act as a host for existing projects.  
[www.locusplus.org.uk](http://www.locusplus.org.uk)



**London Festival of Architecture 2016** celebrates London as a global hub of architecture. The theme of the London Festival of Architecture 2016 is **Community**, and the festival aims to connect with as many people as possible to demonstrate architecture's relevance to London and its diverse communities. The festival programme features exhibitions and events organised by London's leading architectural, cultural and academic institutions alongside architects, designers, curators and community groups from around the UK.

[www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org](http://www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org)

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**Credits**

**Transfer Laban** has been realised with funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council and Canary Wharf Group and is supported by Arts Council England and the University of Newcastle upon Tyne.

Photographs courtesy of the artist unless otherwise credited.



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Transfer Laban, Canary Wharf, 2016

