

# Graham Foundation

## For Immediate Release

### *Kjell Theory*, a performance by ATOM-r

Chicago, IL (December 21, 2016)—The Graham Foundation is pleased to debut the world premiere of *Kjell Theory* by the experimental artist collective, ATOM-r (Anatomical Theatres of Mixed Reality). The performance is the culmination of a multi-year project by the group and joint residencies at the Graham Foundation and the International Museum of Surgical Science (IMSS). Presented in the historic Graham Foundation ballroom, the immersive, multimedia performances will take place over three weekends between January 20–February 4, 2017. Given the intimate scale of the presentation, seating for each performance is limited.

*Kjell Theory* is an Augmented Reality performance juxtaposing the writings of Alan Turing—a gay twentieth century computing pioneer—about pattern and shape in the natural world with algorithmic mutations of Guillaume Apollinaire’s 1917 play *The Breasts of Tiresias*, a gender fluid spectacle for which the playwright invented the word “surrealism.” The performance considers the last two years of Turing’s life wherein he expanded his focus to include biology while seeking asylum and tolerance in Scandinavia following his prosecution for crimes of indecency in the United Kingdom. Turing named his theory of morphogenesis—the autonomous generation of flowers and other natural forms—for a Norwegian love interest, Kjell.

In *Kjell Theory*, ATOM-r draws on Turing’s theory, turning it into a poetic and choreographic system to blur the boundaries between the binaries of physical and virtual space, past and future, male and female, and human and machine. The collective’s process creates a deeply entangled and fertile exchange between the live body and ubiquitously distributed data-driven systems. A project-specific ecology of source material is translated as movement, visualized on screens, and mapped onto bodies and geo-physical space through locative and computer-vision based augmented reality. The performance uses coded systems and augmentation to create a liminal theatre evolved in relation to the Graham Foundation’s specific spatial context. While the work is inherently variable, it is experienced as a tightly constrained, yet flexible, information pattern that allows for close attention, emergence, and interruption.

The Graham Foundation residency program invites practitioners working in a wide range of disciplines to directly engage the physical spaces of the Foundation’s historic Madlener House. Residencies encourage and expand the discourse around architecture by providing resources and opportunities for collaboration within the Graham Foundation community. ATOM-r’s residency began in September 2016 in collaboration with IMSS, where the group simultaneously developed an exhibition entitled *Kjell Theory: Prologue*. The exhibition at IMSS will run from January 20–February 26, 2017.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**ATOM-r (Anatomical Theatres of Mixed Reality)** is a provisional collective exploring forensics, anatomy, and twenty-first century embodiment through performance, language, and emerging technologies. The work is interdisciplinary and evolves through large-scale projects with long durations of research and practice that generate outputs across a range of platforms including Internet art, augmented reality, site specific installation, choreographed movement, books, and objects.

ATOM-r was conceived in response to the historical architecture of early modern anatomical theaters, spaces designed for viewing human dissections and early surgical procedures. This physical and conceptual arrangement is used as a symbol throughout their work to explore histories and experiences of the body, sexuality, and prosthesis.

*Kjell Theory* was created by ATOM-r core members: Mark Jeffery (choreography) and Judd Morrissey (text and technology) with Justin Deschamps and Christopher Knowlton (collaborators/performers); and features a guest appearance by Leonardo Kaplan.

Collaborators include: Grace DuVal (costumes); Laura Prieto-Velasco, Stephen Reynolds, Oli Watt (props/objects); Joshua Patterson (sound); and Josh Hoglund (lighting).

## CREDITS

ATOM-r is supported by a joint residency at the International Museum of Surgical Science and the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, with additional support from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

## PERFORMANCE DATES AND TICKETS

Performances will take place at the Graham Foundation on the following dates:

Friday January 20, 7PM  
Saturday January 21, 7PM  
Friday January 27, 7PM  
Saturday January 28, 7PM  
Friday February 3, 7PM  
Saturday February 4, 7PM

*Kjell Theory* runs approximately 1 hour and 25 minutes.

Tickets are \$15 each (\$12 for students) and can be purchased through Brown Paper Tickets by visiting: <http://kjelltheory.bpt.me>. Proceeds directly benefit ATOM-r.

## ACCESSIBILITY

The performance will be held in the third floor ballroom of the Graham Foundation's historic Madlener House, which is only accessible by stairs. The first floor galleries, library, and bookshop are accessible via outdoor lift. Please call ahead to make arrangements.

ACCOMPANYING EXHIBITION

*Kjell Theory: Prologue*

ATOM-r (Anatomical Theatres of Mixed Reality)

January 20–February 26, 2017

Opening Reception with the artists: Friday, January 20, 5PM

International Museum of Surgical Science

1524 N. Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60610

<https://imss.org/kjell/>

ABOUT THE GRAHAM FOUNDATION

Founded in 1956, the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts fosters the development and exchange of diverse and challenging ideas about architecture and its role in the arts, culture, and society. The Graham realizes this vision through making project-based grants to individuals and organizations and producing exhibitions, events, and publications.

THE MADLENER HOUSE

Since 1963, the Graham Foundation has been located in the Madlener House, a turn-of-the-century Prairie-style mansion, designed by Richard E. Schmidt and Hugh M. Gardner (1901–02) and renovated by prominent modern architect Daniel Brenner. The 9,000 square-foot historic home now hosts galleries, a bookstore, an outdoor collection of architectural fragments, an extensive non-lending library of grantee publications, and a ballroom where the foundation hosts a robust schedule of public programs.

BOOKSHOP

The Graham Foundation's bookshop, designed by Ania Jaworska, offers a selection of new, historically significant, and hard-to-find publications on architecture, art, and design, many of which have been supported by grants from the Graham Foundation.

GALLERY HOURS AND VISITOR INFORMATION

Admission to the galleries and bookshop are free and open to the public Wednesday through Saturday, 11 AM–6 PM. Group tours are available by request.

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High-resolution digital images are available on the press section of our website; email Ellen Alderman for the press login or additional information. Press tours welcome by appointment.



Images (top) ATOM-r, *Kjell Theory*, Graham Foundation, Chicago, 2016. Photo: Grace Duval; (bottom) ATOM-r, *Kjell Theory: Prologue*, International Museum of Surgical Science, Chicago, 2016. Photo: Grace Duval.



Images: ATOM-r, *Kjell Theory*, Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, Chicago, 2016. Photo: Grace Duval.