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NANCY MAURO-FLUDE ARTIST

TECH SAVVY

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Artist Nancy Mauro-Flude likes to deconstruct things. As a young Tasmanian dancer studying performing arts in Amsterdam, she became a computer hacker because she wanted to "open up the machines and name the parts".

"I spent about a decade in Amsterdam, where I trained as a performing artist," Mauro-Flude says. "In Amsterdam, there's a big underground hacker scene, a kind of counterculture, and I became involved in it. At the same time, at the end of the 1990s, there was the rise of wifi cafes, the internet and emails.

"When I began to incorporate computers and technology into my work I wanted to know how they functioned so I could control it and not let it control me."

Mauro-Flude's experiences in Amsterdam have informed her art practice since. The fifth-generation Tasmanian, whose great-great-grandmother performed mesmerism and tap dance at the Bellerive Institute in 1877, left the state when she was 17 to study dance in Sydney.

She returned in 2008 after studying at DasArts: advanced institute for Performance Art Amsterdam School of Art (2001-04) and completing an MA in Media Design at the Piet Zwart Institute, Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences, in 2007.

"You could never work here [in Tasmania] in an experimental field and I was working in experimental performing arts and with electronic media," Mauro-Flude says. "When you're doing very experimental things in a very conservative place that has a class divide, it's very hard to follow your dreams. [But] at the end of 2008, I thought, 'I think Tasmania can handle me now, and I can handle it', and then of course Mona popped up."

Some Tasmanians will have interacted with Mauro-Flude in recent weeks, in the lead-up to her largest ever show, *Divination*, presented by Dark Mofo and Contemporary Art Tasmania.

The *Divination*, *Pirate Girl Maiden Voyage* performance was held last night at Dark Park, but ticket-holders started receiving texts from Mauro-Flude days before, after "opting in" and submitting their personal data (name, email, mobile phone number, Twitter handle, dream ship name) online.

Personal data is the modern-day pirate's treasure, Mauro-Flude says. "Many of us don't even understand how our data is used. *Divination* is a traditional method of visualising the unseen and the artwork highlights that we can access our so-called private data and it offers an alternative view of that data through a performative lens." The installation includes performative elements, such as pirate girl chatbots driven by audience data, the pirate ship, prayer flags and video segments.

Elements from *Divination*, including electronic textiles and pirate queen paraphernalia, will be displayed as part of an exhibition of Mauro-Flude's multimedia at Bett Gallery from next week.

The *Divination* installation is on at Dark Park, Goods Shed, Macquarie Point, from 5-10pm this weekend, and from Wednesday to Sunday, June 19. Nancy Mauro-Flude's *Labyrinth* show opens at Bett Gallery, North Hobart, on Monday and runs until June 27

