

DansBrabant presents:

I AM MY BODY



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BRABANT

 Fontys

DE
NIEUWE
VORST

Impressions
International
Choreographers
Week 2019

tilburg
dans
stad

DansBrabant

In collaboration with
Fontys Dance Academy
& Theater De Nieuwe Vorst
In the context of Tilburg Dansstad

DESIGN
Remco van Dun

PHOTOGRAPHY
William van der Voort

Dear all,

thinking about inequity
in society at large, as well as in my
art practice

i asked myself this past year
what structures are waiting to be
deconstructed?
what is not openly being discussed?
what processes am i ignorant of?
what power relations haven't i found
the vocabulary for?

how am i complicit in fascist living?
and how can i investigate this
specific question from a somatic
standpoint?

inspired by a queer
phenomenological approach to
orientation

a desire arose to facilitate a dialogue
about what is not being said in your
practices

in our communities

in our institutions

in the relationships with colleagues
mapping (dis)orientation in the body
allow me to revisit

and share some thoughts and
questions

that stayed with me

even as some time has passed since
our bodies shared space

you are invited to engage in an
experiment

let us try to create an inclusive space

where we take responsibility

can we have a space of not knowing?

can we refrain from making
assumptions?

can there be a safe space?

can there be a space for asking
questions?

for bewonderment

for bewilderment

this is not a performance

this is not mentioning the elephant
in the room

this is not looking at the bodies that
are not represented

as dolls are positioned on the floor,
objects representing the supposed
ideal female

found washed up in thrift stores
after the brain washing is done,
Justin Timberlake repeatedly asks
you to

say something say something

how to go about creating a safe
space?

what happens to the invitation to
follow the impulse?

maybe disorientation hasn't even
entered the building?

where are the questions concerning
the abject use of non-inclusive
brainwashing toys?

how about articulating your
disapproval?

do you always stay within the frame
of the exercise?

what does it take for you to actively
engage in a critical exchange in
programmes, events, institutions,
exercises?

do you make assumptions?

do you talk over people?

what can institutions learn
from non-norm-conforming
communities?

in what ways do these communities
guard, treasure, protect, enact their

traditions and structures?
how can we start building communities?
where are the propositions for other structures?
how can bodies that aren't represented be supported?
how do we evoke awareness of the loneliness colleagues in the field experience?
how do we verbalize the nuances of exclusion?
are you ready to relinquish power?
what do you need, to carry the responsibility of power?
are you afraid of power?
how do you offer support to those excluded from power structures?
who told you that you can't articulate your thoughts?
who told you that writing texts isn't your forte?
when are we going to acknowledge that excavating embodied knowledge is of value?
how do you propose new forms of instituting? being? performing? engaging? writing? articulating?
how can we unpack structures where we perform identities?
how about toxic masculinity?
how about black bodies on stage perceived by the white gaze?
how about sharing knowledge?
how about social structures and segregation?

how about empowering novice performers in socio political art?
how about emotional labor?
how about performative allyship?
how about accountability?
how about consent in all contexts?
how about a non-innocent approach to learning?
how about being more aware of the social and cultural space you take up?
how about being more aware of how your body moves in space?
how about being more mindful of other people's feelings?
how about bystander intervention?
how about somatic intellectuality?
how about sharing space in new and unexpected ways?
how about consciously connecting with the bodies present?

how about becoming aware?
of bodies
those that don't have a seat at the table
whose life experiences are not represented
whose histories
herstories
theirstories
are not being shared

say something

kindly
sandra

BIO

Sandra Lange is a performance designer and researcher situated in the Netherlands. Her body-based practice is rooted in socio-political engagement and theories of complex embodiment. Performances are considered to be a shared activity of felt thinking, in which disorientation is a strategy to evoke an embodied sense of solidarity, interconnectivity and accountability. As an advocate for radical slowness, Lange currently focuses on the fluidity of a bodies' ability and mobility in relation to oppressed social locations, and the knowledge and propositions that can arise from these perspectives and experiences.

Everyone knows the story of their own body. What it has felt, seen, would like to forget or will remember forever. Body stories are deeply personal testimonies of someone's life. If we all sat down more often to tell each other about ours, we would get to know and maybe understand each other much better too. But we don't do this easily. It needs organization. And isn't that precisely what choreographers spend their time doing? With his article 'I am my body' (2003), in which dramatist Guy Cools tells us the story of his life through physical memories, he gave us the decisive nudge to choose this theme, which can be relevant to each of us in a very personal way, for the ICW 2019.

Heleen Volman, Artistic leader, DansBrabant

International Choreographers Week 2019

Our body, an amazing tool made of flesh and blood, an instrument with thousands of interacting parts. Always built according to the same construction kit, yet at the same time a carrier of unicity and identity. To what extent does our body determine who we are and what we do? And to what extent is the way we see and experience our bodies influenced by cultural, social, political, economic and technological data and developments?

Our own body, the bodies of dancers, the bodies of the audience ... In the practice of a choreographer there are several bodies that influence how work is done, communicated and received. How do people experience their body today, which influences play a role in this experience of the body and what does that mean in the choreographic practice?

The International Choreographers Week (ICW) is a platform for meeting and exchange. It offers choreographers and dance artists from all over the world the opportunity to learn from each other and enrich themselves despite – or perhaps because of – their differing approaches. Over the course of five days, a program of workshops, readings, introductory visits, meetings, meals, presentations and discussions is offered, with and by people with expertise from the dance world and other domains.

In the edition of 2019 we welcomed 14 choreographers, 1 master of scenography and 1 theatralogist/dramaturge with 12 nationalities.

Motivation Letters

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Hannah Buckley (UK)

Marie Pullerits (EE)

Elisabeth Borgermans (BE)

REPORT



Photographic report on
Guilherme Miotto's workshop

Choreographer Guilherme Miotto's Instinctive Performance is the rich result of many years of experience gained as a dancer. It uses a physical approach that releases the body from its daily straightjacket of social and cultural conventions. It allows room for earlier experiences stored in the body and encourages even non-dancers to move. It is founded in the premise that our experience of the world resides not only in our brain, but also and above all in our bodies. From our deepest subconscious, our physical stock of experience determines the way we move. Instinctive Performance adheres to all the techniques stored within the body, but finds its base even without that.

In 2017, Guilherme Miotto set up Corpo Máquina on the basis of Instinctive Performance. Corpo Máquina conveys the credo that there is a dancer in everybody, capable of knocking down walls, tearing down divisions and breaking open people's fixed habits and relationships. The power of expression of the body will forge its way right across cultural differences, age boundaries and social and linguistic barriers. Corpo Máquina brings people, worlds and approaches together in performances, artistic projects and social programmes that would not easily converge otherwise.













ESSAY

by Ilona Roesli on RUN / Corpo Máquina

The driving force of physical memory

“What’s past is prologue”, says Anthony to Sebastian in Shakespeare’s play *The Tempest* to persuade him to take part in a conspiracy to murder the king of Naples. As so often with Shakespearian texts, these words have been widely quoted ever since. In essence, they mean: the past determines the prologue to the story taking place on stage.

From that stage, six pairs of eyes stare at me one Saturday evening in the theatre De Nieuwe Vorst. The six young men wearing tracksuits are standing behind three metal structures with a light source at their centre. The bright light, together with the gear they are wearing, conjures up a football field at sunset. Still staring at me, they start moving the structures.

Essay from Ilona Roesli after seeing RUN by Corpo Máquina on the 9th of March in Theater De Nieuwe Vorst, Tilburg as part of the ICW 2019. Ilona was 1 of the participants of the first edition of the Dance&Dare writing course, an international project for creative writers who dare to look for new words for dance and performance, by Domain for Art Criticism & DansBrabant. Read more essays on the DansBrabantBlog: <http://dansbrabant.nl/en/blog>.

A few millimetres produce shrill tones and heavy crashes from the displaced and falling light sources. This polyphony in unbridled freedom reaches its limits when the young performers no longer look at us, the audience, but at each other.

These moves form part of *work in progress* and the new performance *RUN*. The initiator and foundation behind *RUN* is Corpo Máquina, consisting of choreographer Guilherme Miotto and social worker Amine Mbarki who works in Tilburg-Noord. For Miotto, “what’s past is prologue” translates into what he calls ‘innate intelligence’: the physical memory of experiences that largely determine our movements. Here, too, the past determines the performance we are watching. With *RUN*, Miotto goes in search of the relationship between an individual’s physical memory and his own practical choreographic work. Mbarki and Miotto place this quest against, together with, next to and in dialogue with the quest of six young seventeen-year-olds with a Somali background. *RUN* mirrors not only the dynamics between performers and choreographer, and between two cultures (or rather four, since Miotto was born in Brazil and Mbarki’s roots are in Morocco), but also the group dynamics that become manifest between the young performers themselves.

In a world where movement is increasingly being controlled by and outsourced to others, we can ask ourselves: which movements are still truly ours (the person – the individual)? Is there such a thing as a unique move? To what extent are my positions and physical reflexes determined by my past?

RUN is a performance that searches, but mainly repulses and attracts. A performance that becomes uncontrollable in the repetition of moves. While a hint of the identity of the performers might emerge from this uncontrollability, the quest surrounding identity remains generally elusive. This is why many art forms relate to existential philosophy in some way, with protagonists and performers asking themselves above all: what is the purpose of my existence? (from Peter Handke’s *Self-Accusation* to Marcel Proust’s *In Search of Lost Time*). However,

in this respect, dance has a limitation that is also a privilege: dance is capable not only of inhabiting the mind; it represents the exchange of both spiritual and physical experiences. Here we enter the true domain of 'innate intelligence'. But how does this translate into choreography? Where do you start looking?

The action of running is wild and unlimited if you run as fast as you can. Running becomes competitive when you realize that others are faster. And running is fundamentally faster than walking. In this light, searching comes closer to running than walking. Searching for your keys is usually done in a hurry. Looking for a job takes place in the same hurried way once you stop feeling challenged, are dissatisfied with your working conditions or are shortly due to graduate.

Looking for a job is different when you already have work that makes you happy. Here, I would say, searching is done more from an attitude of I'm-keeping-my-eyes-and-ears-open-for-something-better. Searching, like running, has something compelling about it, something propelling you. Heading towards something different or better - quality is not what counts - as long as you're headed towards a different point in the distance. Searching and running have spatiality as their common denominator. And in that space you want to change position, to propel yourself. In choreographic terms, I would like to add: propel yourself towards being creative. And in that context, it is smart to start out from the running position.

In a post-discussion with Guilherme Miotto and Amine Mbarki, we spoke briefly about the young men's smartphone behaviour. For Mbarki, the biggest change seen in the lads was the pleasure they experienced in the process of creating as opposed to passively absorbing whatever appeared on the screen. *RUN* shows how you can generate meaning from wild and unlimited movements. How, without pretensions and choreographic labels that come and go, you can still create polyphony. And that is an interesting fact seen in the context of our boundless consumerism that appears to be masking our 'innate intelligence'. Is it standing in the way of creativity?

“Most of the people are just anxious or unknown of what’s going on with them. In 95% of the cases, people just needed to be heard and calmed down. There is face to face interaction and there’s a value in that. ”

From an interview with
General Practitioner Wim Wouts

“John knows a lot of stories, and I think he understands the depth of human condition because of that. It goes beyond our own skin, our clean body.”

Choreographer Marlieke Burghouts
on her interview with John Hagenaar,
owner of a sex shop

“A lot of musicians and singers often have injuries, because they don’t warm-up. They don’t take care of their bodies as much as performers do. They don’t realize that they use their body a lot.”

From an interview with
cellist Jacqueline Hamelink

“How choreography is not an art that is fed by the ego, but that is a sense of tapping from a pool of love and building relations with others. it could be a model to live a full way of life.”

From an interview with
choreographer Katja Grässli

“Circus artists have an apparatus, something else they work with. For the most part, we work with our body. So when given a task, we start to perform. When taken away from their tool, they can dive easily, without getting stuck in the head.”

From an interview with
choreographer and dramaturge
Nikita Maheshwary

“The focus of the camera can have a very big impact on how people look at the body. In a way this is quite obvious, but when I hear this, I think it’s good to realize. It could also work this way with people.”

From an interview with
photographer Claudia den Boer

REPORT



Photographic report
Sharings





QUOTES

ICW quotes deelnemers

WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS YEAR'S ICW?

LEIGHANN The theme I felt really connected with. At first the fact that there was a theme. I didn't know whom I was going to work with and I didn't really care, because there was a theme that drew me in.

INNA It is a fruitful space and place to meet people again and to reflect on my own work. The master studies I am following does provide in that too, but I want to create my own network and search for multiple triangles.

MARLIEKE For a choreographer, it is important to step back every now and then without the pressure of having to create. To just open up your mind and be able to simply inquire, without having to provide the answers. I use political subjects in my work, but I think in terms of my body. That's why I really like this theme.

WHICH ACTIVITY THIS WEEK WAS MOST RELEVANT/INTERESTING TO YOU AND WHY IS THAT?

LEIGHANN We worked with writer Sandra Lange. She gave us a construct and gave us to consider how we would fit into this construct: there are people who are an authority in the dance world and people that are not, where do you fit amongst them? It was nice to - instead of acknowledging that there is an authority and then there is us - discover that we often are the authority. Not only in the roles and positions that we take, we hold authority over our body and our work.

INNA Sandra Lange's words resonated a lot. It had a huge impact on my own research on identity and movement of touch. It has a lot to do with shame. Sandra was also busy with the topic of shame.

MARLIEKE Sandra Lange encouraged us in a liberating workshop to be self-willed. The assignment she gives you allows you to think outside the box. This encourages you to listen more to your own inner voice. She speaks of shame and I believe that shame is a block for many of us to delving deeper with our own research.

WHAT HAS THIS WEEK BROUGHT YOU THAT YOU TAKE WITH YOU IN YOUR CHOREOGRAPHIC PRACTICES?

LEIGHANN I am learning how to find the words to authentically represent the way I am experiencing this body, the way my work gets build, what influences it and I am feeling much more confident in acknowledging those influences.

It was wonderful to see a performance. That's a way as an artist how I intrigue and refresh myself, to watch other work and get inspired in other ways. It much feels like a regenerative practice.

MARLIEKE When you start out into a new process with a new group of people, how can you quietly communicate and connect with them so that you don't just share your research, but also unlock their input? I have been given some extra tools for this.

IS THERE SOMETHING YOU WANT TO GIVE BACK TO THE ORGANIZATION OF ICW?

INNA It is well-organized. There are five full and intense days. You have to prepare, just to open up and embrace as much as you can. It is one of the ways of working, which I excepted.

ESSAY

by Anna about Oona

God is a Catholic man from the Creggan



Essay from Anna van der Kruis after seeing HOPE HUNT & The Ascension Into Lazarus by Oona Doherty on the 13th of March in Theater De Nieuwe Vorst, Tilburg as part and ending of the ICW 2019. Anna is the master of the Dance&Dare writing courses, an international project for creative writers who dare to look for new words for dance and performance, by Domain for Art Criticism & DansBrabant.

Read more essays on the DansBrabantBlog:
www.dansbrabant.nl/en/blog

WE, IN THE AUDIENCE, need this applause more than the dancer. Personally, I am amazed by the short duration of the performance. I have only just started to relate to Oona's world. I have no real idea yet what I have just seen or how I can place what I have seen in context. Yet I am overwhelmed.

Maybe that is exactly why I am overwhelmed. I have lost touch with myself. I have just let myself go and feel no urge to find myself again.

IT STARTED OUTSIDE. It was cold. And there was a crowd of spectators. We were standing in a shopping street. That street with the expensive butcher, a children's book shop and a cookery book store. Specialized shops sheltered from the main street with the lurid chain stores. I was standing on the step, where they said I would get the best view. On the same level to my right was a window with a transparent folding blind.

A small silver-coloured three-door car, side window taped up with a bin bag, stops in the crowd. A guy in grey sweatpants, a woollen checked shirt and a black hoody underneath gets out. Lights up a fag. Music plays inside his car. I know this is a performance. The guy is not from here.

He lets us look at him. Doesn't react to us. Ignores us, in fact. It's as if we weren't standing in this street, but had accidentally found ourselves in a Ken Loach film. I feel no threat. Nor any distance between him and me. Just some slight melancholy.

When I was twenty and studied in England for a few months, I saw lots of boys like him. And girls, standing in the street without a coat in the same cold as today, on heels that were much too high, and wearing skirts that were much too short, their feet bare and their toe nails bloody. And in the clubs, the flooded toilets, too.

The guy walks round to the back of the car and opens it. A woman steps out. A woman wearing a high-neck dark blue quilted coat. Her hair is combed back severely. Dark blue sweatpants.

A dancer, dressed like a boy. She comes dangerously close. Bluffs her way into the spectators. Hugs someone, long and lovingly.

Meanwhile, the curtains next to me have opened. An elderly couple with perfect hair watches what is going on in the street. Across from us, people are also looking out. A girl in a window seat on the top floor of a mansion. From the car comes: "God is a Catholic man from the Creggan, God is a marching band from the Fountain." Oona calls: "Get into the theatre!"

INSIDE THE THEATRE I hear music, the bass slightly distorted. I remember as a teenager sitting at home with my back against the window, the volume of the stereo up high, because I liked to feel the vibrations.

A strip of light is being projected on two-thirds of the stage floor. No thicker than a few centimetres, from left to right. Oona has taken off her coat. Above the dark blue sweatpants she wears a loose dark blue T-shirt. Around her neck a link chain. She moves briefly in the light. But before my eyes can get used to the image in the strip, it is gone.

She makes a noise like a machine gun. "Pew pew pew pew pew." She uses not just her voice, but her whole body. She distorts the sounds in fits and bursts. To "deaf" and "deafening". She forms words, not sentences. "Scheiße." "Chelsea." She gesticulates. Moves two digits across her upper lip. Thumb and index finger: a moustache. Sticks her hand inside the waistband of her pants.

The whole floor is lit up now. On the left at the back against the wall, a few empty beer crates are stacked up. A sheet of plastic. I can see Oona lying on her back, can hear the intro from 'Stay Another Day' by boyband East 17. The synthesizer. 'Stay now. Baby, if you got to go, away...' Twenty seconds. Then it's quiet again. Oona coughs, bends over forward like an old man. An old man with asthmatic bronchitis. An old man...dying.

OONA IS NOT ACTING, SHE IS RECITING. She has taken off her blue suit and swapped it for a white suit that is otherwise exactly the same. I hear Gregorian chanting. Excited voices. Like the soundtrack of a film. A film that I can't understand. She closes her eyes, lifts her chin and opens her mouth. Her physicality becomes one with a soprano voice: she laughs.

She laughs. She cries. I see her pain and recognize it. I see her visualization, or rather imagination. There are no rules for the beginning, middle or end. No divisions. Just loose pictures. Shreds of feeling. Sound. Oona makes the lightness of her memories tangible. Their beauty. She gives me endless layers, but interprets nothing. She leaves that to me. To my imagination.

At the end, the little silver-coloured car stands in the courtyard of the theatre. All three doors are open. On the ground in front of it are nine or so empty beer cans, inside the car the boy and his music. Soon he is joined by a small group of smokers.



You are valuable, priceless!! You are always there for me and I am very thankful for that. You are beautiful just the way you are and unique in your own way. You are one of my biggest tools I use in my daily life. I can feel, see, hear, communicate, express myself because of you. I can take in my surroundings and experience the world around me. I ask a lot of you sometimes and I'm surprised how fast and how much you can adapt to what I ask of you. Remember when we went to school from 8:00 till 22:00? 12 hours of training every day Monday to Friday. Or the time when weekend didn't exist anymore? Or when we did 5 or so productions simultaneously? That was a tough period but still we made it. I'm so surprised how much you can endure and I'm sorry I'm not always taking good care of you. You remember when I was so under pressure and stressed to perform? I wanted to lift someone who was on my back while I was in a push-up position. The next morning you could not move your arm anymore. I could not change my clothes, shower, or cook normally. Most importantly I could not dance normally anymore. There is also the time that I used to do this very dangerous move to impress people or to win battles or to get attention or appreciation all at the cost of you. After a while you had to see a doctor because of a knee injury and you couldn't dance for 6 months. It's only in these times I realize how important you are. How irreplaceable you are and how thankful I should be to have you. I have gotten countless of compliments for work I didn't even have to do. I don't feel I even deserve it. I have impressed so many people and got so much appreciation as an artist because of you. You are one of my strong-est qualities and tool as a dancer. I choose to become a dancer to research, explore, communicate, and train with you every day. Sometimes with a lot of pain and insecurities sometimes with a lot of fun and joy. I ask so much of you to be stronger, more flexible, to go full out, to challenge, to do it again, to take in another hit, to be healthy realize how much I actually need to take care of you. Thank God I'm not soo insecure about how you look (could be better still but in general I'm happy. You make it possible for me to have a career and to realize a dream I've had for quite a while. You are my faithful best friend, my companion for life. You deserve rest, love and to be taken care off. There is still a lot ahead of us and I want to enjoy it with you every step of the way.

See you next time at:

ALL THE SENSES

Training perspectives
through sensory experience

10th International
Choreographers Week

7th - 11th
March 2020

Tilburg
The Netherlands

During this 10th International Choreographers Week we will explore sensory experiences in the broadest sense of the words and go through sensory experiences ourselves: learning by doing. We will break open the established by asking ourselves and our senses critical (research) questions: How do our senses influence the way we see our environment, ourselves and others? How individual or collective are these sensory experiences? And what if our senses are conditioned by a certain social background or cultural heritage? Can we (re)train our senses to gain new perspectives, beliefs and insights? During the week we open ourselves up to the undiscovered fields of our nervous system and let our conditioned minds be taken by surprise.

APPLY

Do you want to apply for the ICW 2020? Send your CV and motivation letter before December 20th to annemijn@dansbrabant.nl

FOR MORE INFORMATION
www.dansbrabant.nl

