

superposition corps: interview

with Saskia Hölbling

by Gilles Amalvi for the Rencontres Chorégraphiques Internationales de Seine-Saint-Denis

Your choreographic work starts from the body as the raw material, a body that is made of layers we have to penetrate to attain depth. What new levels has “superposition corps” reached in this search?

In the “superposition corps” work process, the stress was on the conditions of diversion, although from the beginning we were oriented toward joy and pleasure. It was important that the work on the eyes and other physical interfaces was not really oriented toward functioning, so we could facilitate the discovery of other conditions, to facilitate other ideas, to take the risk of following a different kind of logic, to permit the body to go wild.

One of the tasks we gave ourselves, was, for example, to “switch off” the eyes and allow the looks to independently cross each other, another was to relax and contract the pelvis floor, or to connect the fingertips with the internal pelvis ... although these body parts are always recognised as a living substance (and not only as a structure): We would like to investigate different qualities of connections, imaginary contacts, and have these feelings spread out in the entire body, to follow these physical yearnings and sensations, to enjoy the desire that is created, to examine it, to enjoy it once again, to let ourselves be captured by it, to devote ourselves to it and to go after this other imagination that appears.

It's like entering into another world, a world beyond efficiency, beyond the useful and the reasonable. Above this de-socialised body a universe opens up that has hardly been explored, a very wild universe in its fragility, which is unknown, difficult to put into words, but strangely close. The unknown tries to foster the foreign.

Your last piece “exposition corps” was a solo. In this new production you are part of the ensemble. How has this changed your investigation of the body?

Since I have worked with the ensemble since the founding of DANS.KIAS in 1995, the question should actually be: Why did you decide to do a solo after “other feature”? For me “other feature” was the beginning of the discovery of inner spaces, this enormous wealth and potential that is necessary to explore – with extreme restrictions: naked female bodies or backs, without allowing a view of the face, without the quietest gesture, without reference to the outer space. Since I directed this production from the outside, I had the great need to embody the experiences from the work process of “other feature” and to carry on with them – alone. This is the reason I decided to do the solo “exposition corps”.

I wanted to consolidate and expand the idea, shift the borders, without giving up the essential: developing movement – not from outer images – but from an inner impulse, which is the impetus for the investigation of inner spaces. The work on “superposition corps” is about the confrontation of individual conditions in the sense of coexistence and the overlapping of presences. This is not about touches, but about the other's feeling. Even if the courses of the dancers remain individual, a collective body forms, which grows and even includes that bodies of the viewers. From the beginning they are a part of it, even just as a viewer, but towards the end to a certain point they are a part of the piece. Guido Reimitz directed the piece and was responsible for the interactive spaces.

How do you work with the different performers? How is this intimacy that is reflected in all of the bodies created?

First I worked with each dancer alone for some time. Intimate things only manifest themselves through intimacy. We began exploring physical limits. Each dancer approaches this dance differently, something we must respect and discover. After this solo phase each dancer has a part of about 25 minutes. Then we began to confront and overlap these solos, while respecting the individuality of each of the parts.

The body and its depth is suppressed all too often in our society and replaced by the aesthetics of advertising. Does the necessity exist for you to explore this hidden part?

It's necessary to have bodies and wild fantasies, a certain type of anarchy, chaos as a lively dimension. It's necessary to also have another logic beyond the functionalism, efficiency, and usefulness. Resistance is a necessity.