

# FINNISH DANCE

## AT AN EXTENSIVE GATHERING

TANSSIARTENA

### RECONSTRUCTION

Old Krapp had it easy. In order to remember, all he had to do was flip through his old catalogue, pull the right box out of a stack, and finally, with great pleasure and a satisfied grin, take the "spooooo" out of its cover. The tapes play back his own voice.

They are recordings of his personal experiences, which he has saved in this manner year after year, for over thirty years, and which he plays back with running commentary in a never-ending cycle of irrevocability. In a life that has run its course, the past can no longer be explored or transformed by any current experiential horizon – it is useless, mechanically reproducible knowledge, no longer capable of inspiring anything in the present.

BY GERALD SIEGMUND

Since the premiere of Samuel Beckett's play 'Krapp's Last Tape' in 1958, the voices have multiplied. It is no longer our own voice alone penetrating unmistakably to our ear out of the past in order to ensure our identity. A myriad of strange voices insinuates itself between myself and me, until that which is my own is no longer distinguishable from that which is foreign. The Hamburg choreographer Jan Pusch called his piece 'Wish I Was Real' in order to demarcate the chasm between one's own perceptions and those of the other. Advertising, video and disc collections, the Internet, CD-ROM, and other electronic storage media – not to mention good old-fashioned radio, television and film – explode the present into a fantasmagorical space that does not allow for the reality of death. Old corpses live longer.

It no longer seems possible to have a self-enclosed past like the one of Beckett's figures, who were already incapable of dying back then, caught in their endless endgames. The state of the media has come to a head, and made the impulsive rummaging through notepads superfluous. The tapes are running all the time, simultaneously, in *heavy rotation*. The gates of our cultural memory stand wide open, and through them waft the images and

"Vital, expre

voices of a past that Krapp, forty years ago, did not even suspect to be his own. Voices that can be called up quickly and arbitrarily, without delay; voices accompanied by ghostly images that do not show a body corresponding to the speaker. Contemporary dance immerses itself in the very midst of this information stream, perhaps predestined to do so more than any other art form because of its great capacity for abstraction and its flexible means. It can deal with questions concerning the transformation of subjectivity or, equally well, investigate our processes of perception, which it stands completely on their head.

In Thomas Plischke's production 'Events For Television (Again),' Merce Cunningham carries on a sophisticated conversation about art with Marcel Duchamp. "Dancing is movement in time and space; its possibilities are bound only by our imaginations and our two legs," says Cunningham, who made – at the intersection of modernism and post-modernism – a radical incision between the individual experiences of the body and its capacity for movement. Igor Stravinsky holds forth on the genesis of 'Le Sacre du printemps'; Mary Rambert, Nijinsky's assistant at the 1913 premiere, reminisces; and Millicent Hodson speaks about her reconstruction of the lost choreography.

While this remembering is going on, the audience is witness to a further reconstruction. Plischke does not present the original as though it were the first time, however. He makes the distance, the RE-playing, clearly felt. Instead of delivering a reconstruction that is supposedly true to the original, which would be an impossible aim in any case, Plischke integrates this iconic breakthrough piece into a construction of new contexts and perspectives that question the status and the means of the original. With this fragmentation, he opens up a space of investigative recollection between voice and body, in which the dancers, the audience, and the dance reexamine themselves questioningly. In the process, the boundaries between all the participants in the theatrical space are redrawn.

The dance of the '90s betakes itself in search of traces: traces of its own history, like with Thomas Plischke; traces of an identity – its own identity, its body and movements. What constitutes dance in relation to the myths and documents in which it is handed down? How is dance manifested in the perception of the audience, between what is remembered and what is seen? Under the analytical gaze of the new

## RECONSTRUCTION



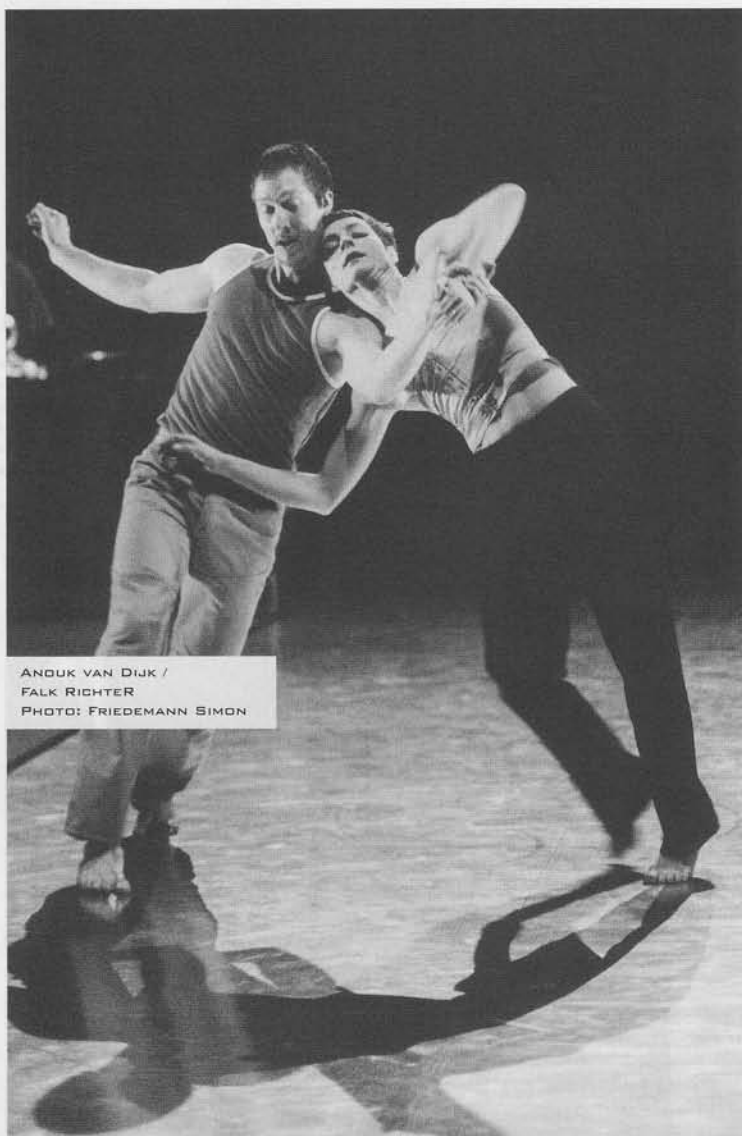
dance generation, the object increasingly dissolves, and is newly reconstructed. It shatters into a thousand shimmering shards whose myriad facets no longer allow us to speak of what dance or choreography may "actually" be.

The fleeting and undocumentable nature of performance insinuates itself self-reflexively into the choreographic process and begins, as a logical consequence, to undermine it. Dance in the '90s has abandoned the search for an ontology in favour of what the theorist of performance Peggy Phelan has termed "representation without reproduction." When the Munich choreographer Katja Wachter asks the man or woman on the street what they think contemporary dance means, and then translates the results into performance in her piece 'What You Will?', she takes the irreconcilability of the possible perspectives on her subject expressly into account in the composition of her choreography. Any possible definition of contemporary dance collapses into 'What You Will' – into an array of opinions, perspectives, images, and expectations.

Helena Waldman continually demonstrates in her performances the absurdity of our perceptions by constructing optical apparatuses in which bodies are doubled and spaces lose their three-dimensionality, so that one can no longer tell what's up or down. In 'CheshireCat®,' the images of a dancing body remain fixed like retinal after-images on a photo wall, long after the dancer has moved on. Yet in her media experiments, the school of vision does not lead to the failure of the senses. On the contrary. In the alienation that vision undergoes, these experiments seduce one into a more intense mode of looking, precisely by interrupting the forms vision commonly takes and thus short-circuiting its culturally instilled processes and laws.

The independent dance of the '70s and '80s – that is to say, dance beyond the limits of the city and state theatres, whose ballet and dance ensembles still continue decisively to shape the landscape of dance in Germany – was powered by the central idea of the democratic body. The body, simultaneously the substance and the vehicle of movement, was celebrated, in a variety of ways and with reference to a variety of traditions, as the locus of freedom.





ANOUK VAN DIJK /  
FALK RICHTER  
PHOTO: FRIEDEMANN SIMON

## ANOUK VAN DIJK / FALK RICHTER 'NOTHING HURTS'

"Cult. Stories for a virtual Generation," is the title of a text by Falk Richter, who seems to be "cult" himself. He says you have to "constantly market yourself and know how it's done, and be really familiar with the effectiveness of the media." Anouk van Dijk, the Dutch choreographer, adds: "Dancers have far better control over themselves." And so they can achieve more. Pop is notoriously young. And so it is difficult, fast work that ages in excess, that 'Nothing Hurts' evokes with drum and bass: young powerhouses who suffer under a permanent compulsion to be happy live out their lives like crash test dummies. Drugs are designer consciousness, they serve to provide energy, in order to dance the night through. And in doing so, to recognise the world in a mix of film, dance, and text – the tools of a generation that appears on the stage exactly as one expects it to: high, young, ever new.

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“Dance messes up your awareness of time, space and dimensions. Nothing is what it seems to be and at the same time it's like putting life under a magnifying glass.

→ → In Germany, it was above all dance-theatre that took up and reformulated certain developments of expressive dance and began to incorporate the individual experiences of its dancers into the thematic and formal material of its pieces. Instead of existing in the service of the representation of societal hierarchies, as it did in ballet, the body took on an emancipatory function. Moulded by social forces, to whose pressures it was subject, the body was, at the same time, a utopian site of conflict with these pressures. Instead of learning a piece given in advance, the emphasis lay on the process-like development of a choreography in which all the dancers took equal part. In the US, the rights of the "democratic body," as the critic Sally Banes put it, were advanced in the '60s by the *Judson Dance Theatre*. The agenda for dance included breaking out of the theatres and into the public sphere, the appropriation of commonplace movements such as walking or running, and also interdisciplinary collaboration with visual artists and musicians. The ability to dance required no special training, as in Yvonne Rainer's 'Trio A,' which, ideally and with a bit of practice, can be danced by anyone. Techniques such as contact improvisation translated this democratic ideal directly into praxis: without any outside direction, the participating partners simultaneously received and transmitted impulses in an equal and balanced power exchange.

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AMI GARMON  
'WHAT THE BIRD HEARD'

Ami Garmon's project 'The Lack Of North' is a metaphor for the complete lack of orientation. The first part, 'What The Bird Heard,' evokes migratory birds and their unerring sense of direction. The Berlin-based American keeps her legs as straight as a compass needle in the dark space, which has countless parallel worlds at its disposal: acoustic spaces, imaginary spaces, memory spaces. 'Sensorial Souvenirs' is the subtitle of her conceptually structured orientation tour, which suggests a revolt against the space. In a fish-eye take, two people go around in a circle, and on the stage, Ami Garmon doesn't leave the circle either. She is a prisoner of voices and images, of phenomena that no longer have anything to do with the old itineraries, with 'Go West' or Orientalism, with the conquering of space. The space has long since turned into a prison, filled to the brim with orientation, but for all that, empty and full of vision.

LACK OF NORTH. SITUATION 2.  
PHOTO: HANNA LIPPMANN

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... A house is a projection. A projection is a desire. A desire is a quest. A quest leads to others. A quest knows not its own geography beforehand. Memories are maps. Once inside the house your imagination is left entirely up to your perception. There are naturally physical balances and boundaries to support the receiving structure in which you find yourself. But that's it, we all make odd choices. Faith is an act. Act is movement. Movement is motion. Motion is an emotional response. We all make odd choices. Why is desire a weakness?

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If within the American tradition, the acculturated, socialised body produces a movement abstracted from the subject's psychic states and physical potential, in the German tradition, this body undergoes experiences that refer it back to its unconscious, its fears and yearnings, or to nature. But these separate lines of development intersect in a variety of ways due to patterns of emigration and return. Mary Wigman's influence on American (post-)modernism has come to be as undeniable as the recognition that the dance-theatre of Pina Bausch has been permeated by the scenic fragmentations of Trisha Brown.

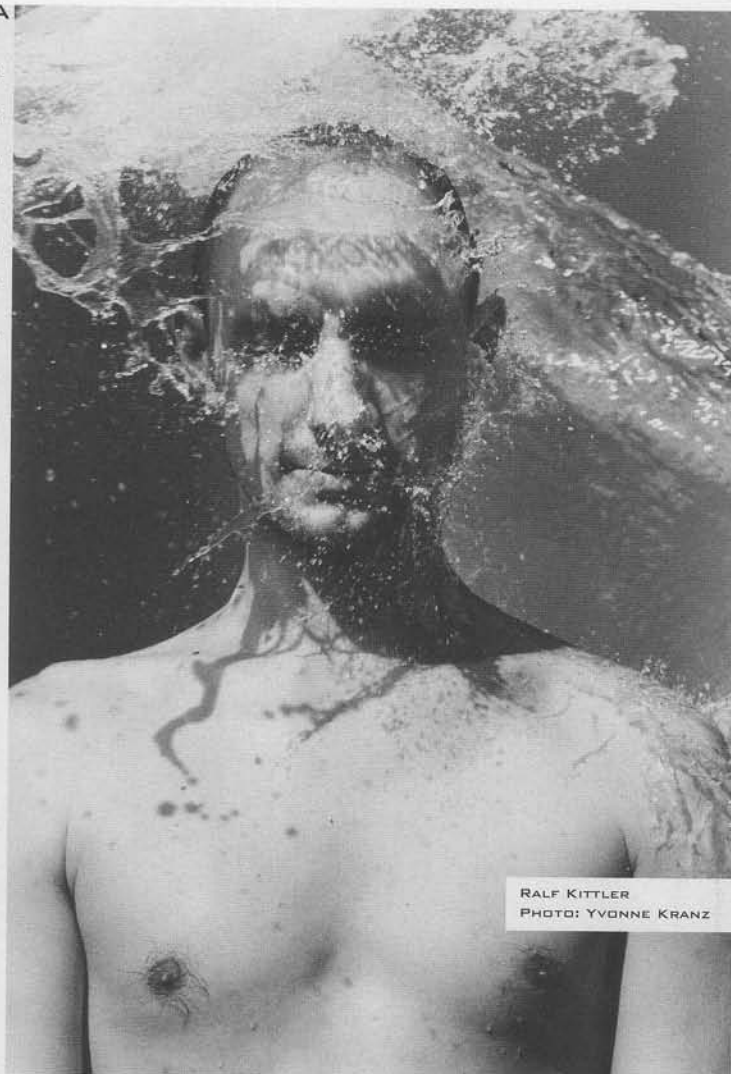
In the wake of the American liberation of movement from the corset of traditional conceptions of dance, the body in the '80s was thoroughly unbound and accelerated in the virtuostic choreographies of the Canadian group *La La La Human Steps* or those of the Belgian Wim Vandekeybus – which can certainly be understood as an affirmation of our over-achievement society, with its beautiful bodies of steel.

The techniques of contact improvisation and of body mind centering as methods of generating movement out of the imaginary bodies of the other – despite being as indispensable to the work of dance

WANDA GOLONKA  
'FRAKTALE'

After leaving Neuer Tanz in 1996, Wanda Golonka became artist in residence at the Munich Marstall. Here, she has worked in repeatedly changing constellations. In 'Gegnung,' she juxtaposed a female dancer with thermal images taken by an infrared camera: 'Feld' was a performance for two men; and in 'Fraktale,' she works with non-dancers – with the actor Frédéric Leidgens and the Frankfurt Punk Rock band Stereobugs. The nondancers dance. Their formations change almost imperceptibly: their shoes write traces in the sand on the stage; and the stage, under its wave-like image of indentations and eruptions, also changes, as unpredictably as the fractals of the unforeseeable movements of nature. Wanda Golonka loves excursions: into mathematics, into music, to Morgenstern and Mandelbrot, and preferably all at once. And through sheer contrast, the perception of the ever-immutable stage slowly changes also: the gaze feeds back on itself. Sameness is always changing.

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RALF KITTLER  
PHOTO: YVONNE KRANZ

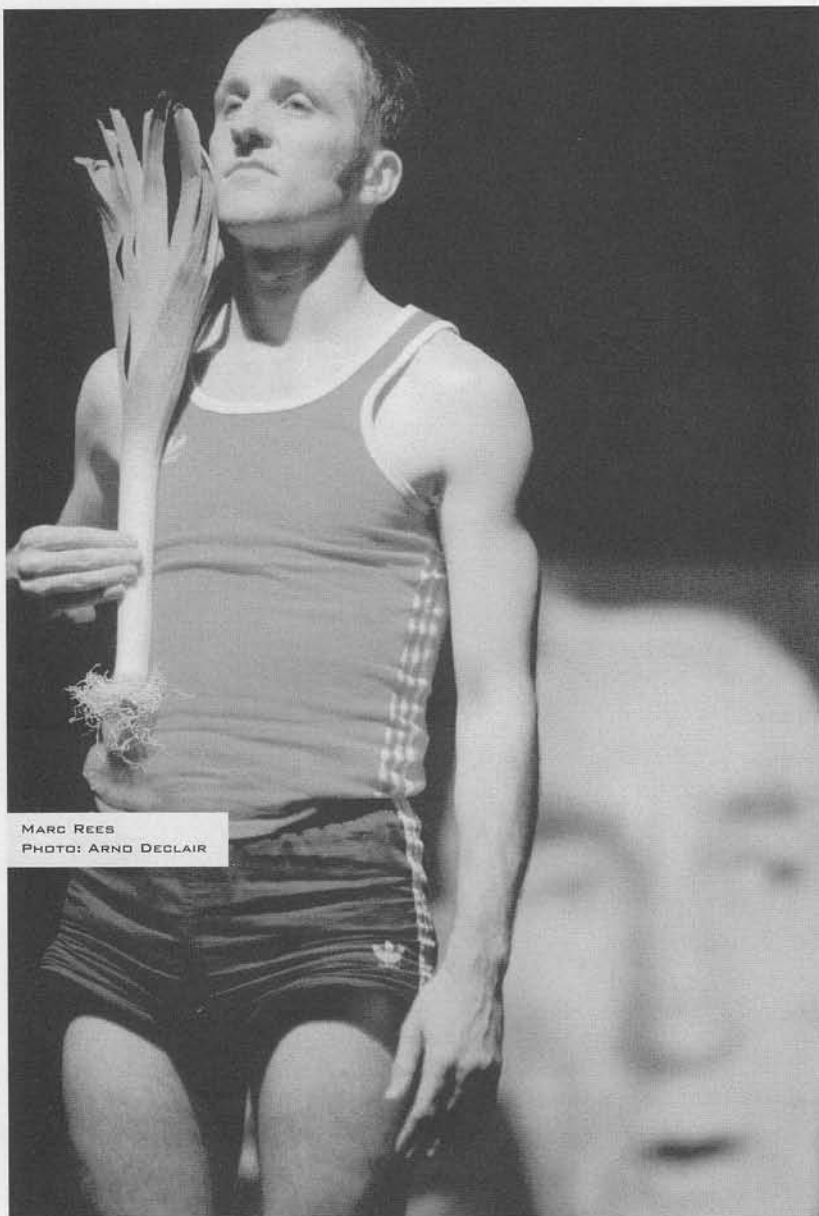


More space. Movement through non-movement.

WANDA GOLONKA

as ever – have in the meantime, as forms of artistic expression, fallen prey to the esoteric Zeitgeist and been drowned in the wellness wave. The intense, acrobatic athleticism that seemed to celebrate the unlimited potential of a liberated body has given way to the doubt of the body, to say nothing of its collapse in the face of AIDS. On MTV and VIVA, the images dance to the staccato tempo of HipHop beats. No music video is without dancing gangs, girls, guys and dolls. In the age of super-acceleration along the information highway, dance is in a bind. In our mobile society, the art of movement quickly becomes suspected of playing straight into the hands of vanity fair, the leisure industry, and the market for beauty.

Under such conditions, dance nowadays seems to acquire its potential for resistance precisely in a standstill, in the suspension of the dance movement. As early as the Renaissance, the theorists of dance knew that it is only in the pause – the pose – that the assurance and renewal of the self through memory is possible. In 'Product Of Circumstances,' a lecture-demonstration, Xavier Le Roy considers the body as a field of research, and observes it soberly, from the remove of a distanced and attentive gaze, and yet with



MARC REES  
PHOTO: ARNO DECLAIR

## ANGELA GUERREIRO 'PERMANENT PRINTS'

The Hamburg-based native of Portugal seeks the authenticity and truth of the body. Her theme is uprootedness, homelessness between cultures. In her triptych, 'Permanent Prints,' she sketches out biographical self-portraits of the dancers Cristina Moura, Aloisio Avaz, and Marc Rees. Text and video documents lay tracks into the past. With Aloisio Avaz, an increasing amount of memorabilia fills the stage; the objects join to form a still life out of 'Permanent Prints.' Angela Guerreiro and Cristina Moura crack jokes about machos and blondes; black sisters, they fall to squabbling. "Go back to the jungle!" The comically cunning Welshman Marc Rees evokes pubescent nightmares and dreams in the coming out of a small-town queer. He deconstructs his teenage idol, the athletic musclemann after whom he pines. Looking back – without anger, lovingly, but with candour.

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“... Amália Rodrigues, the goddess of Fado who died on 6 October 1999, once said that it had been her dream to be a dancer, something she never became, but she danced like no other... It is said that this has been the century of the body. Still, I ask, what are we actually doing here. Things move. Pierce our bodies to the core. "But the one thing I am absolutely unable to find is myself." The encounter goes on.

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humour. In his autobiographically tinged presentation, which traces Le Roy's career as cancer researcher and dancer, both science and dance become discernible as the expression of the normalisation of the body. Anything that does not conform to the schema of a particular dance vocabulary, or does not serve the interests of the scientist, falls through the cracks.

In this respect, Le Roy's pieces are caesurae in our understanding of a functioning and functional body; caesurae in which the body is reconstructed and anatomically assembled into a completely different state. Something similar is attempted by Amanda Miller, who comes from neo-classical ballet and whose group *Pretty Ugly* is associated with the Freiburg Theatre. Just as the title of her choreography, 'icamerA,' is an anagram of the word "America," so do her hyperesthetic, intricate movements form anagrams

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→ → of the balletic body: a continuous branching-off of new figures from a fixed, common system of movements. In 'Permanent Prints,' Hamburg's Angela Guerreiro plays with clichés, images, and preconceptions of the body, which mould our relationship to it and our dealings with it as a signet ring moulds a bit of wax. The gaze onto the body determines what the body is and what it signifies.

Jo Fabian, a native of the former GDR, finds the motivation for his own work on the standstill elsewhere. In his pieces, Fabian makes ample use of philosophical and scientific systems – at times historically faithful, such as Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, and at times his own inventions, such as his Alpha System for the reading of movements – whose universalising paradigms he collapses with great regularity. There's no such thing as absolute certainty after 1989, although the desire for it lives on. Here, too, the cessation of movement, and of the teleological intentionality of history associated with it, is a central stylistic means of artistic response to today's societal developments. The people involved in dance-theatre were responsive to the social environment as well. Nonetheless, in comparison to dance-theatre's articulation of dreams, fears, and desires, there has been an observable shift in the direction of the inquiry.

In many new approaches, human interiority has, for now, been excluded. It is the skin itself that stores physiological memories and history, circumventing consciousness and the unconscious alike. In this connection, the Berlin dancer and choreographer duo Dieter Baumann and Jutta Hell, of the Berlin group *Rubato* speak of "direct sensation as de-subjectivised feeling," which has no reference to any familiar context. "It bypasses the memory as repository of character and action in order to have an unmediated effect on the nervous system." It is another kind of memory that is at work here: a memory of what is actually non-recollectable, and can only be perceived in flashes, as effect. On this side of its "inner" nature, the body engages in a play of surfaces, which attain their primary significance through socio-cultural attribution. The differentiation between "inner" and "outer," long a significant concept for cultural anthropology, becomes untenable.

This development makes it possible to establish a direct connection between the body and images, new media, and even sound – like in Wanda Golonka's 'Fraktale' – since the body is itself nothing more than a body-image among other images. For many representatives of the younger generation of choreographers, the receptiveness of their work to other art forms thus takes on a structural character. → →



XAVIER LE ROY  
'SELF UNFNISHED' / 'PRODUCT OF CIRCUMSTANCES'

He spent years as a microbiologist in a cancer research lab. Since 1990, he has been investigating the body as a dancer, and has created another kind of laboratory in Berlin, which he at first called Nameless, and most recently EXT.E.N.S.I.O.N.S. Dance under these laboratory conditions is not a micro- but rather a macrobiological phenomenon that can only bring new, unexpected results in the de-hierarchising of traditional structures. Quite in the academic tradition, 'Product Of Circumstances' is a lecture-demonstration, a laying open of the experimental order, while 'Self-Unfinished' approximates more the state of research itself – a body, in an ironic stance toward itself, every movement calibrated to a T, brimming with movements that have never been seen before, a corporeal adventure, an exploratorium for a trunk, a head, and four limbs that seem almost arbitrarily detached, and then re-assembled again in entirely new constellations.

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XAVIER LE ROY  
PHOTO: VÉRONIQUE DUBIN

“... Bodies are not, but human make them be. Dance is a virtuality made real by playing. If it doesn't exhaust itself in spectacle and play, it becomes a work of art. I play games where bodies and rules are always simultaneously cultural, natural, object, subject, social, emotional, intellectual, political, historical, biological, psychological, economical, product, productive, and a fiction to challenge the space or time between reality and virtuality.

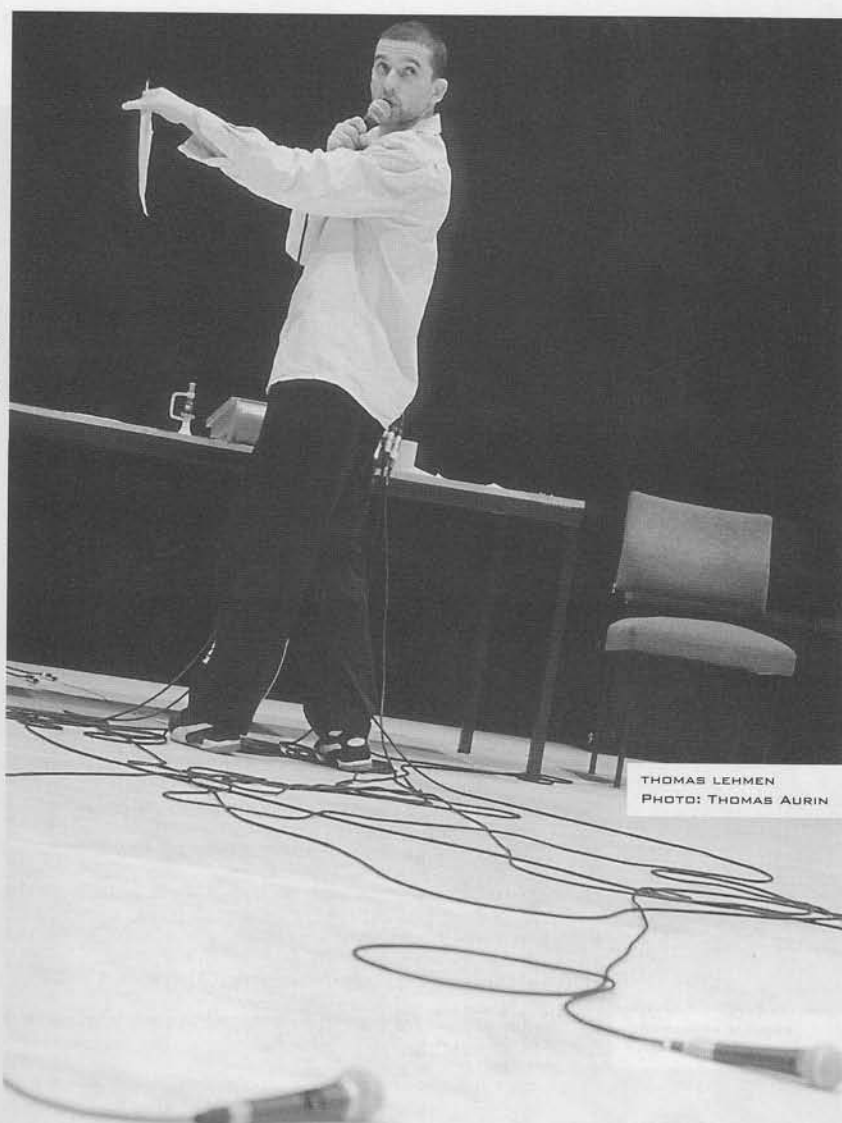
→ → These bodies – cancelled out, charged up, and interchangeable in images and projections – are defined by a condition of suspension. Firm boundaries and points of orientation become blurred, like in Amanda Miller's twilight worlds, which, in their continual state of gloaming, produce a dreamlike atmosphere. Frauke Havemann, in her dance-video situation 'Brides Uncensored,' lets the images of a man's fantasies wander back and forth between linguistic evocation and pictorial emanation. Phantasms and flesh-and-blood bodies share the stage on the same level of presence. Ami Garmon's "nostalgic body," which is consigned to eternal, directionless repetition, anchors itself firmly in situations in order to survive its lack of orientation. Remembering and repeating seem to be the only remaining possibilities for placing oneself.

Constanza Macras stresses the indistinguishability of reality and fiction, which inextricably intertwine with one another in daily life in order to separate I from I. Samir Akika prefers cinematic narrative

## THOMAS LEHMEN 'DISTANZLOS'

There isn't a single solo in which he hasn't told a story of the "Ruhrpott" – his home, which just a few years ago was the very epitome of working-class solidarity. Nowadays, it's more an amusement park than a nest of chummy proletarianism, and Thomas Lehmen, on the border between performance and dance, imbues it with an identity that stands for the region, and which is now made manifest on the body. Movement in the proletarian sense is bound to function or combat. Performance – shifting around stacks of sand, walling up a space – makes reference to an old concept of work that, in dance, has been sublimated for ages. There is nothing against which Thomas Lehmen can direct the energies of the body, nothing that the body can "tackle." His dance tells of an actionism that was an aggressive overexertion back in the '60s. Today, this body is a service industry; for the production process, it is unusable. It is merely the refuge of memory and narrative.

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THOMAS LEHMEN  
PHOTO: THOMAS AURIN

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... The trick is not to subjugate the movement to any style-oriented logic. Also, not to cling to your own clichéd images and just confirm them constantly to yourself, but rather continually to reshape the parameters anew from each new perspective of a completed movement. Then it won't be hard to find an opportunity where you can show it all.

structures, together with the attendant stereotypical cast of characters and appropriate soundtrack, which he uses to make manifest the extent to which our reality is permeated with prefabricated visual and auditory patterns.

This unanchored condition, which drives the subject out on the open seas of images and sounds, engenders fear. When the boundary between the symbolic and the imaginary, between the commonly-shared reality and its ideal images, collapses, the subject disintegrates into states of paranoia. In 'No Fear,' Thomas Lehmen shows the fear in the face of a self whose identity is forfeit, whose reconstruction of itself as something living is now only possible at the extremity of sensation. The craving for adrenaline and the ultimate kick, which only barely avoids injuries, is thematised by Anouk van Dyk and Falk Richter in 'Nothing Hurts.'

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In the interstice between bodies and images, nerves and surfaces, which is produced by the interruption of the middle course of representation, and occupied in differing ways by formal influences and emotional colourings, they all explore all sorts of new directions. Here, we are far from a Gesamtkunstwerk concept in which the individual arts and symbolic systems making up the production, such as stage decor, light, and music, are all integrated into a harmoniously unified whole. Instead, the other arts place the status of dance productively into question. They reflect on dance's limiting conditions of possibility by cutting the ground from under its feet, and, in turn, from under their own, in their nonidentity and noncompatibility.

And this development also taps into another tradition of modernity that might be referred to as technological modernism. Its inception may be traced to the variety-theatre dancer Loïe Fuller, who employed the most up-to-date lighting technology in her serpentine dances, in which she wasn't after the expression of feelings or psychic states, but rather the imitation of natural forms. The tradition continued on the stage of the Bauhaus, with Oskar Schlemmer's material dances – possibly a surprising connection from the contemporary perspective, but one that was made by the dance historian Fritz Böhme by 1926. After 1945, the ideas of the Bauhaus, which concentrated primarily on the analysis of the formal "how" of an art work, rather than on the content-based "what," were revived in the US by émigré Bauhaus teachers at the Black Mountain College, the very same school in North Carolina where Merce Cunningham and John Cage premiered their first untitled "Event" in 1952.

The line is finally drawn from Cunningham and Cage – who, in their long-term collaboration, divorced music from movement, and the moving object from every form of interiority or psychological motivation – to the Judson Church group in the early '60s. Despite the group's rejection of Cunninghamian technique, its interests were equally focused on abstraction and objectivisation, that is to say, on experimentation with materials and their possibilities, as opposed to focusing on dance as an arbitrarily defined expression of sensibilities set to music. In Germany, this line of development was taken up in the early '70s by Gerhard Bohner in his artistic engagement with Oskar Schlemmer. Consequently, today's young choreographers who deploy new media and the de-subjectivising gaze need not be met with incomprehension. Many are concerned with the potential of dance, but only those who unduly restrict its history → →

AMANDA MILLER  
'FOUR FOR NOTHING' / 'ANTIQUE' / 'DEMONSTRATION'

Following her European debut at the Deutsche Oper Berlin and at the Frankfurt Ballet, the American Amanda Miller founded the Pretty Ugly Dance Company in 1993, and, in 1997, moved with it – nominally, as an independent company – to the Freiburg Theatre. Here, she converts the high artifice of choreography into vital energy, and breathes pulsating life into the rigorously formalised, Cunninghamian and Balanchinian language of tradition. In this way, Miller has catapulted Freiburg into the major leagues of German dance, above all with her ironic reflections on the relationship between the body, language, and myth. She operates within a territory rich in possibilities, on the frontier between perfect classicism and modern ballet, where her most recent piece, 'Demonstration,' endowed with a great measure of corporeal self-awareness, has also found its place.

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FLAVIA TABARRINI, GUNTHER GROLLITSCH  
PHOTO: KLAUS FRÖHLICH

“... A muscle is a mind and so is a bone. The democracy of the body is at the heart of what I am doing now.”  
AMANDA MILLER

→ → to the representation of emotions will wonder about these new tendencies. Dance in the '90s has gone through other experiences. Experiences without any interiority that must be hidden or, at the most, marked as lacunae; medial experiences whose often rarefied, distilled, and terse forms paradoxically achieve precisely the opposite of evading the complexity of our media reality. The overlapping images, and the accompanying state of suspension of the subject can be seen as analogous to the production processes of the artist. For their duo, which incidentally is also concerned with states of fusion, Anna Huber and Lin Yuan Shang abandoned their usual working environment. In Paris, Antwerp, Barcelona, Lucerne, Mulhouse, Zurich, and Geneva, they found the freedom to begin repeatedly from square one in order to investigate



The members of the audience are greeted with a handshake, and before they know it, declared performers. There is no difference between dance and movement. The disciplining and training of the body, according to Plischke, doesn't happen just in dance, but in daily life, too: combing, scrubbing, washing. Merce Cunningham, to whose 'Events For Television' the title refers, speaks of the autonomy of art. Is there such a thing? Thomas Plischke, who trained most recently with Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker in Brussels, inquires into the autonomy of dance. Onto the "sacred" choreography of 'Le Sacre du printemps,' he grafts the banal ritual of eating and drinking. Six dancers take off their fancy suits, slip into ballet tights, and stuff videos, dolls, memories, into their dancer's second skin. As an accompaniment, videos show small boys being examined to see if they're suited for the dance profession. Only that which the body has experienced, on Plischke's account, is autonomous.

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“... As a choreographer, I confront the participants (in the case of solo choreographies, myself) with a theme. What ensues defines a process (which varies from theme to theme) that critically examines the theme in a manner as free as possible from exclusionary mechanisms (personal style, reason, dance technique). In so far as the participants abandon themselves to a theme, choreography is an "abandonment" of the self. And the role of the choreographer is to direct the intensity of this self-abandonment toward a dramaturgy of interests and not toward ingrained, positive convictions.

## THOMAS PLISCHKE 'EVENTS FOR TELEVISION (AGAIN)'



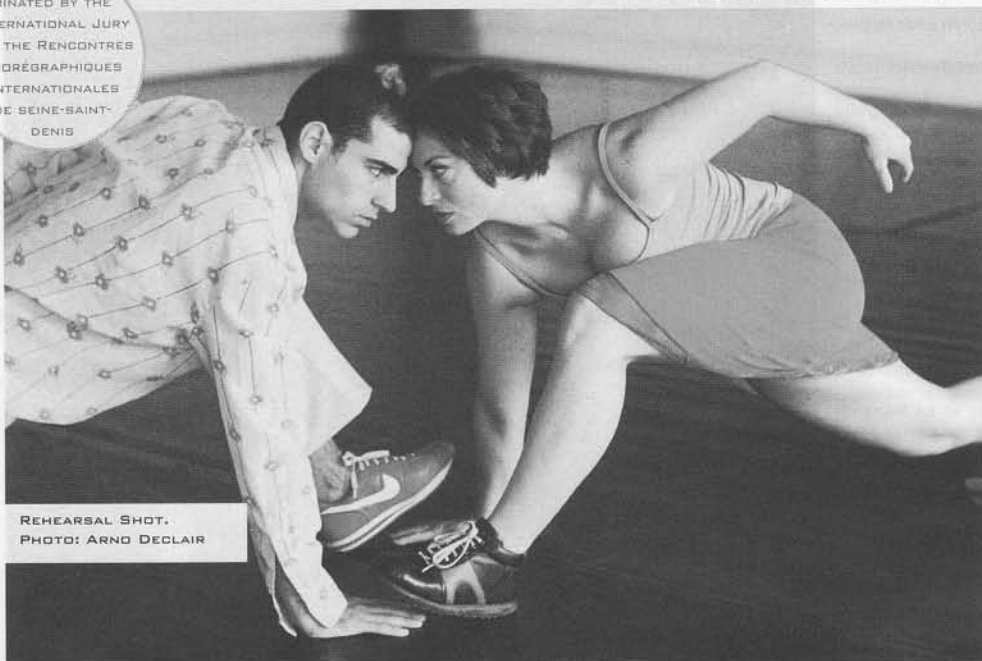
THOMAS PLISCHKE  
PHOTO: KATRIN SCHANDER

repeatedly the arrived-at results from a different, unbiased perspective. They enter a site as strangers, and derive from this uprootedness the purifying energies for their self-examination and concentration on essentials.

The international nomadic condition gives rise to a kind of virtual production space that is superimposed over the real spaces – a network of relationships and references that is independent of the particularities of the specific site and always manifests itself spontaneously wherever certain constellations coalesce. Samir Akika was born in Algeria, went to school in France and the US, and completed his dance training at the Folkwang School in Essen. Wanda Golonka, a Frenchwoman also educated in Essen, now lives

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MINATED BY THE  
INTERNATIONAL JURY  
FOR THE RENCONTRES  
CHORÉGRAPHIQUES  
INTERNATIONALES  
DE SEINE-SAINT-  
DENIS

## JAN PUSCH 'WISH I WAS REAL'



REHEARSAL SHOT.  
PHOTO: ARNO DECLAIR

He never investigates movements, but rather always the impulse from which they emanate. The former Hamburg Ballet dancer is in search of the moment before the event. In 'Wish I Was Real,' it is the calm before the storm, the tension before the explosion, virginal and clear, before it is displaced by the event itself. Without the subsequent event, this one brief moment of freedom would be a palpable reality, the unmediated state of being before the effect is absorbed by the end-point of the event. Five dancers directionlessly search for direction, let themselves drift aimless-

“... What's at stake for me in choreography is not a particular technique, or a particular style, within the bounds of which movement is developed. The important thing is that you have clarity about what you want to communicate, and that the dancers or performers on the stage can remain true as personalities. For me, this means developing the formal means to be able to create the atmosphere and space for immediacy: the moment in which whatever one wants to convey becomes realised through the dancer or performer.

ly just to feel that they're there. The dancers from Hamburg want to engender a feeling of authenticity, the palpable reality before the merely describable action; and so, a choreography before the finished choreography is born, absurd, and also tragic – for the reality prior to the effect it has effected is difficult to grasp, and yet it is the absolute truth.

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and works in Munich. Jan Pusch was actually a musician, but then decided to study dance in Frankfurt and Munich before joining John Neumeier's *Hamburg Ballet*. Constanza Macras came to Berlin from Buenos Aires via New York's Cunningham Studio, and Helena Waldmann, who is from Giessen and has a degree in theatre studies, initially worked at the Bochum Schauspielhaus.

The scene is nourished by its international character. To speak of a "German" dance scene means, in effect, nothing more than naming the country in which the artists coincidentally currently work, where favourable working conditions are offered them. To speak of a "dance" scene is to suppress a diverse variety of areas, from acting to music, that influence the work of the artists. The "scene" is as international as its techniques – from neo-classicism, to modern, to release – are multifarious. The techniques, too, however much they may have been rooted in a national culture and tradition at the time of their inception, have in the meantime become international common property that can serve any interest. Specialists in a

# TANZCOMPAGNIE RUBATO 'KISS ME HERE (THE BRUTALITY OF FACTS)'

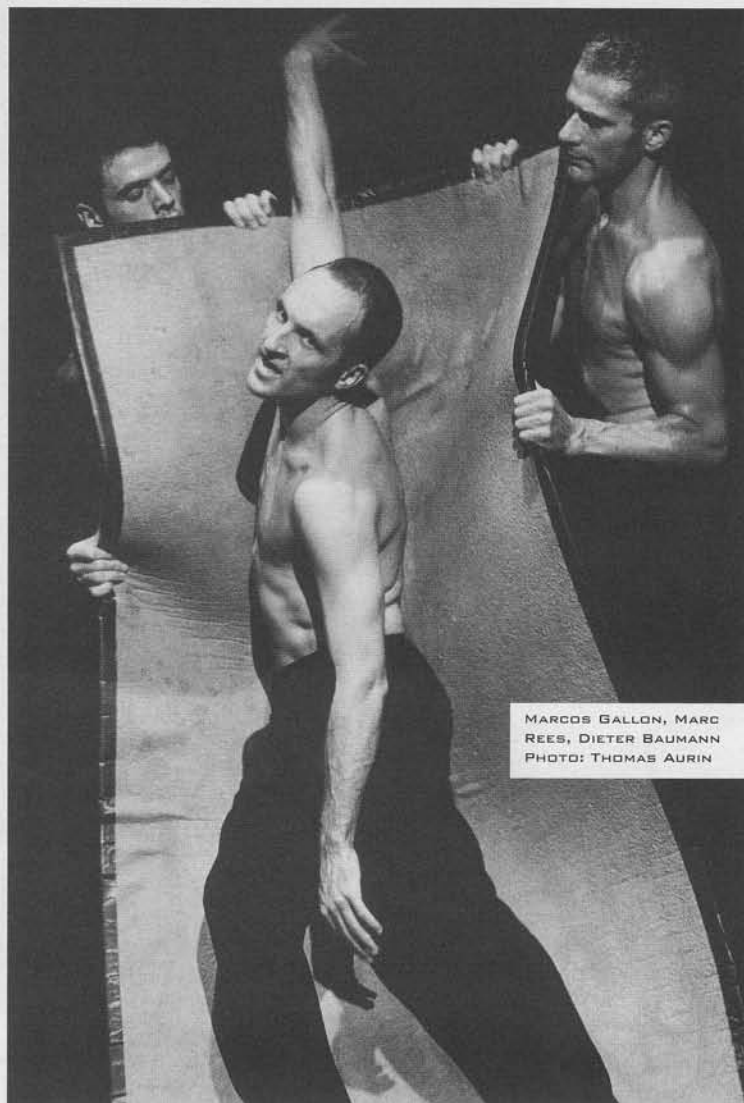
The Berlin company Rubato is 15 years old. At its core are Jutta Hell and Dieter Baumann, whose attentions are focused on corporeal memory and the logic of movement, on the oscillation of an "interstice" between the individual body and choreographed movement. They generate "tempo deviations" (i.e., rubatos) between body and event. 'Kiss Me Here' is a performance in a tension field produced by three male bodies and three sites – three benches, wrestling mats, and coat racks. The vocalist Christian Wolz singingly takes apart the poses, the image of the male body, the eroticism, the face of a man (made to dance by two hands massaging it into a grimace). Thus, the body is deconstructed in a way not dissimilar to the paintings of the English painter Francis Bacon: deconstructed, in that the image, according to Gilles Deleuze, once it is set in motion, loses its pictorialness and its identity along with it, becoming instead sensation and event.

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When the remote reaches of our thought, the electrified darkness, the ironic twinkle in the eye is finally transformed ... into gesture, leap, dance – then we have succeeded in capturing the energies of the "impulse." Impulses must be conducted

from the memory to the nervous system over the most direct possible path. It is a rather unforeseeable process, which has to do with courage, curiosity, astonishment, and even with shaking your head. Whoever goes in search of these impulses is often kept at a distance and considered unpredictable. To still be unpredictable after 15 years, that, for us, is real quality.



MARCOS GALLON, MARC REES, DIETER BAUMANN  
PHOTO: THOMAS AURIN

style or in a genre are rarely in demand nowadays. "Inside" and "outside" can be considered valid criteria for differentiation neither for national borders, nor for the means employed in dance. The question of which means are allowable and which must remain excluded is just as inadmissible as the question of what kind of dance and which artist will be turned back at the border of definition. Unrestrictedness is to be understood precisely as a quality of progressive democratisation that is spreading increasingly beyond the purely aesthetic concerns immanent in dance to include the institutional infrastructure.

In the meant time, between what is traditionally known as the "independent scene" and the subsidised theatres of the establishment, a variety of models for the promotion of dance have been developed. The gamut of possibilities ranges from associations, such as the one Amanda Miller entered into with the Freiburg City Theatre, and regular collaborations with a house, like that of Wanda Golonka with the Munich Marstall, to networks of production centres and art houses, or municipal sponsoring of festivals



and project grants. In this sense, the international character of the scene takes into account the globalisation of our society. This should not be understood as the impoverishment of national diversity on the assumption that the same thing is now to be seen everywhere. It is precisely against the backdrop of narratives, historical contexts, styles, and formal means that an inexhaustible diversity is produced in dance, which results from the possibility of creating constantly new and constantly changing relationships among the individual elements.

The questions that are asked of dance in the '90s revolve around the theme of medialisation. In contrast, the individual opportunities for raising these questions, of motivating them in order to create a (personal) picture of the world, are greater than ever before. The internationalism of modernity, which was in part enforced by political circumstances, today bears nothing but fruits of freedom. Notwithstanding the great degree of abstraction in the theatrical approaches presented here, the form alone in which the artists express themselves is already a concrete statement regarding the situation of humanity in our technologised world on the threshold of the new millennium. But even old Krapp should have no cause for despair. Between one tape and another, there is still enough room for a playful testing of one's limits.