

M M E T T E

I N G V A R T S E N

G U I L L E M

M O N T D E P A L O L

A L L T H E W A Y O U T
T H E R E ...

9 + 10 APRIL

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1. Pieter Ampe & Guilherme Garrido "Still Difficult Duet" & "Still Standing You" (8-10.3 2011)
2. TIR Performance "Kartläggare DEL 1" (15-16.3 2011)
3. Robin Jonsson "Simulations" (19-21.3 2011)
4. Mette Edvardsen "Black" (26-27.3 2011)
5. Aron Blom "SAM", Salka Ardal Rosengren & Mikko Hyvönen "Trash Talk" (30.3-1.4 2011)
6. Daniel AlmgrenRecén & Alma Söderberg "Abdikation Nu" (2-3.4 2011)
- 7. Mette Invartsen & Guillem Mont de Palol "All the way out there..." (9-10.4 2011)

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MDT is an international co-production platform and a leading venue for contemporary choreography and performance situated in a reconstructed torpedo workshop in the Stockholm city center. MDT has since 1986 supported and collaborated with Swedish and international emerging artists. MDT is supported by Kulturrådet, Kulturförvaltningen Stockholm stad and Kulturförvaltningen Stockholms läns landsting.

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ASSOCIATIONS AND REFLECTIONS

Mette Ingvarstsen about "All the way out there..."

The texts below were written in relation to the rehearsal process of All the way out there...a performance created by me and Guillem Mont de Palol. The task I gave myself was to write one A4 page a day about the process we were going through. I tried to enlarge the ideas of the performance to reach beyond the performance itself. I used associations and reflections as a frame for the writing, that would allow me to bring in references from outside which would not be directly relevant to the performance but for the writing itself. During the process I wrote a total of 46 pages over 10 weeks which I am currently rewriting. The small extract below is from the unedited version and I made the selection thematically to evolve around questions of extreme expression.

Extreme bodies

06.12.2010

Pink!

Bodies painted in a color which is not natural, a color that immediately makes a difference and make us think of artificiality and cultured-ness. Animation figures whose only mode of expression is one of extremity. Today we understand bodies through notions of avatars, body doubles and artificial replacements of organic bodies. We are living in a time where it is actually possible to construct flesh, to grow human tissue and the notion of the bio-mechanic has been entirely altered. Think of the time where Meyerhold thought of the functionality of the body as a mechanism. Then think about the new 3D avatar movie where bodies have been cultured to live within a hyper organic world, a world in which it is no longer possible to breath if you are a normal human being but where you can only exist in exaggerated extension. Think also about how movie theaters have become more and more advanced with the arrival of new 3D technological glasses. Experience economy coming to its extreme, where you as a spectator actually feel like you are inside the movie, not that you are playing an important role in it but that you are walking around in the forest as a hidden insider who knows exactly how to avoid being caught by the bad american war force. But this inclusion into the image is also a way of removing the critical "standing outside". So when artists today are interested in working on immersive environments and to find a way to deal with manipulative forms of experience culture, can they then still manage to produce a distance that makes a critique possible?

For me there are 2 possible approaches. Either I entirely stay outside of dangerously manipulative forms of expression, or I search for a way to use and work through the types of expression that are constantly at work in the society today. Moving out on the countryside, growing vegetables and staying independent will not in change the production of mass-produced agriculture.

However, the approach of working through, or working from within the excess of expression is an approach that could change how expression is understood. If in social democratic, but also in neoliberal modes of governing there is a tendency to even out expression, to only allow for the mediocre and the middle scale of expression, could working on extremes then be a way to reintroduce strong polarity, discussion of difference and actual political positions, instead of creating an evened out middle zone.

Extremity is often attributed to what lies outside of the normal and is therefor mainly considered dangerous. Fanatics, terrorists, insane people but also the euphoric and the ones lost in love, all the sensations that fall outside of the "normal".

Pink sensations!

And what interests me especially is how the pink after a while becomes normal. Once we establish a new frame for what we are looking at, extremity becomes normal. You see a body in a color that no body in the real world could have. It is artificial and strange but after a little while you start considering it as normal. You start to know the color, how it behaves and how it function. I find it interesting to think about how easy it is for the mind to get used to something different if we really allow it. If we do not stick to the fact that this is artificial and constructed but that it is just another possible mode of expression. I find it interesting to think about how easy it is in theater to invent theatrical conventions that allow us to accept these type of differences when it is so hard in the outside world to find the balance between bodies that do not resemble or behave in a similar manner.

Hyper representation

13.12.2010

Hyper representation is a notion I have already tried to elaborate for quite a while by now.

Hyper representation is not about escaping representation but by over doing it in such a manner that the code dissolves into sensation and experience. That the way the expression is executed makes it step out of the "normal"

reality to a point where one cannot look at it as realistic. Realism somehow strangely always relies of believability and authenticity whereas hyper reality purely relies of conviction. I purposely use the word of a fanatic as I am interested in this non-negotiable expression that people would be forced to produce a clear relationship to. But it is not only about loudness and overload. It is rather about precision.

What does hyper real expressions refer to? It perhaps refer to the extension of experience and sensation that it is to be found in most cinemas today. The kind of hyper realistic imagery that renders reality glossy and shiny or that makes it look much more blurry or dirty than it really is. What is to be examined in hyper representation is the relationship between the form and the content, the theme that artist chooses and the formal approaches with which she treats it. I come back to the choreographically unconscious, the notion that choreography already exists in manyfold all around us and that we simply need to open our eyes to see it. But the choreographic unconscious is also the way the work of choreographers reflect the tendencies and the understandings of movement in our society, wether they are aware of it or not.

If I would imagine my choreographic unconscious (not my psychoanalytical subconscious) what would it be hyper representing?

The cultural need for extreme sensations.

The manipulative movements of political speech relating to fanaticism.

The energetic vital flow of bodily increased power to act.

The animalistic tendency in the body that we have to fight against not to become savages.

The underlying principle of bodily manipulation called affect.

The affective capacities of the body to move in and out of sensory stimulation.

A structure of interruption.

An accumulative but non-logic structure of material assemblages.

I think hyper representation become even more powerful from the fact of being interrupted. Not in the way of *verfremdungseffekt* but by simply stopping the action, dropping the flow all of a sudden so that the body that is being overwhelmed by its physical sensations all of the sudden become visible as a deciding subject. We should be operating our sensations not be overwhelmed and manipulated by them. We should be able to deal with the high level of information flow that is all around us and at the same time negotiate its meaning and its relation to our bodies. We should be able to separate what we like from what we dislike without getting confused by our

gut feeling. We should be able to resist seduction and erotic stimulation. We should be able to retain from terrorist action. We should be able to negotiate our positions. But somehow it is not always so easy to resist, to separate, to distinguish.

It is about the post human nature of the body. Because the human nature is too often understood to be to follow your impulses, your desires, your animalistic uncontrollable-ness. The post-human is on the contrary about the renegotiation of your natural sensations and the understanding of the non-natural logics that are at play in the manipulation of your sensations. The post-human is a complex of stimulations from all sides and directions, having to figure out its relationship to technology, to non belonging, to cybernetic surroundings, to zeros and ones, to wiki-leaks and other net scandals.

How to work on extreme expressions?

14.12.2010

There is a difficulty in working on extreme expressions. It is simply tiring! It is easy to understand that people live their lives in a sort of middle scale level of expression because being out in the extremes imply types of exhaustion that the body in some way or another have difficulty in maintaining. Think of how your body feels after you have cried for hours, or laughed for that sake. Think of the muscles that have been so tensed that they simply need release. Think of the laugh that gives you stomach or headache because of its intensity.

So when practicing extremity one somehow need to be extremely intelligent to not simply waste and throw away energy.

Thinking in advance what it is that should be produce.

Thinking retrospectively what a certain proposition produced, but maybe more simply rehearsing on less intensity. Marking, or practicing other level of expressions that somehow prepares the body for going all the way. However there is of course a danger in the fact of getting bad habits, of rehearsing the midway expression when what is actually wanted is the full burst out of energy.

The complexity of what I want to do is also connected to the structure of interruptions, of never letting the body go fully into the organic, or the impulsive where expression is self-reproductive. In the practice I have to work from an idea of flow, and then later interrupt it. Flow makes continuity possible, flow makes momentum take place and it helps to find the rhythm of

the doing. But flow is also immediately related to organicity and this is the trap to avoid getting caught in.

The bodies we are searching for in the piece are not only organic and natural, but strangely constructed between natural flow and interrupted manipulation. Almost as if we as performers had an on/off bottom and that it would be possible to enter right into the highest level of expression, without preparation or build up. In that sense we are also mechanically constructed and we have a logic of functioning that is not directly dealing with the human.

Exercising Extremes

15.12.2010

Vocal expression: Starting from a series of vocal expressions that are all connected to a certain state of being, without attaching it too much to the emotional or the personal. From enthusiasm, to forceful animalistic roars, to light screams and heavy sighs. Each expression can be worked into a different physical material but the first step is to become familiar with all the range and capacity of the voice in itself. The voice is already a bodily movement, it is already a dance. The dance of the vocal cords that stretches itself into space, that reaches much further than the visual body. The voice reaches into the ears of people, it literally penetrates them in the sense that sounds waves are actual, physical vibrations moving through air. Maybe this is why the voice has such a huge capacity to affect?

In this practice we work on a looping transformation principle of voice expressions. Each sounds we produce is a repetition of the previous but with a difference, in this way the repetitions are never pure. They are constantly giving rise to shifts and changes, to small mistakes and corrections, to sounds that we do not exactly know how to recognize and it is in following these sounds that we discover something else than what we already know. It is in the discovery of these small differences that the work on the voice moves from being about representation to be based on sensation and experience, on listening to the sounds and trying to locate not what they mean but rather how they can be heard, sensed, felt. However the interpretation always follows as a second step. We deal as well with the representational, trying to make it hyper-representational through the repetition and the ability to follow all the organic changes in an almost mechanical manner.

Each repetition is both mechanical and organic at the same time. It is in this interstice between machine and organic body that the relationship between

culture and nature is articulated in complex intermingling. It is impossible to clearly separate when the expression is organic and when it is mechanic. It is for sure true that repetition belongs to the organic world as well as to the mechanic and that it is not enough to repeat in order to have the sensation that bodies are mechanically defined. Again coming back to the biotechnological sphere it is important to note that we can no longer clearly distinguish between what an organic and a mechanic expression of the body would look like.

I think that we have to take culture into consideration. Culture as a machine that produces bodies and how bodies can possibly understand each other. It is highly important to acknowledge that there is no organic truth of the body, nor can expression be understood as essential. However it would of course be interesting to be able to say what it is that we as humans share. I keep coming back to the notion of the common, be it gravity, the fact that our hearts beat and that we breath in and out. I am not interested in working on this as a universally common. But, I am interested in finding out how when working through cultural expressions we can still use some of the bodily functions in order for spectators to be physically engaged in what they are watching.

