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DANCE FESTIVAL STEPS

Steps Seismograph
9.5.2022, Equilibre Fribourg

Documentation of Keynotes
and Open Space Sessions



A project of



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INTRODUCTION

In addition to staging performances across the country, Migros Culture Percentage Dance Festival Steps organized in collaboration with BravoBravo on May 9th, 2022 an event that brought together the Swiss dance scene. «Steps Seismograph» was a day dedicated to meeting peers and exchanging ideas. Choreographers, dancers, producers, teachers, directors, program organizers, marketing heads and representatives of funding institutions were invited to share their expertise and views on the hot topics currently stirring up the Swiss dance world.

Claire Cunningham, self-identifying disabled artist and choreographer, gave input on Choreography of Care and Fouad Boussouf, director of Le Phare - Centre Chorégraphique National du Havre Normandie, shared his thoughts on Dance as a factor of intellectual and civic emancipation.

Alongside those two interventions and after a brainstorming involving all participants, five topics emerged and were discussed in self-organized groups:

- Redefining the collective
- Improving the dance community
- Implications
- Dance, Labels, Dis/ability?
- Creating without appropriation

The keynotes and open space sessions were documented in the original language by five art students under the coordination of dramaturg Natania Prezant.

KEYNOTE BY CLAIRE CUNNINGHAM: THE CHOREOGRAPHY OF CARE

Before Claire Cunningham starts speaking, she plays a short clip for us. We see a silhouette in front of a window and hear Cunningham's voice talking about the activism she feels in her work. The silhouette moves and a dance develops which plays with different materialities of shape: Her crutches form straight lines against the backlight and within these two lines, her body flows in its corporeality.

After this short impression of Cunningham's work, informed by her focus on techniques within disabled bodies – terminology she has reappropriated – the choreographer introduces us to her concept of the choreography of care. She chooses the word 'care' despite the problematic semantics of it – or maybe because of them. 'Care' is, she explains, associated with an aspect of passivity for people who self-identify as disabled. It is 'done for or to' someone, and can therefore be very patronising.

But Cunningham re-evaluates this word's meaning – for her, 'care' is an important part of her work, and during her speech it becomes increasingly clear that it should be part of artistic and cultural work in general. The prioritisation of disabled communities influences the whole process as well as the artistic result. Cunningham has been developing this idea of the choreography of care through exchanges with a diverse group of artists and academics, involving crip, queer and ally knowledge. The concept consists of five main focal points that are all interconnected: 'design as care', 'time as care', 'communication as care', 'performance as care' and 'the complexity of care'. Cunningham explains these focuses one after another in a very encouraging voice. To me, the way she speaks is very central in relation to the content of her speech: there is no anger or

accusation in the sound of her words, but rather a very clear and confident respect. She seems to be concentrating on making us familiar with the concept of working with an 'ethos of care', as she calls it.

'Design as care' can refer to design in a conventional artistic sense, for example the design of costumes. But it also refers to the design of projects, budgets, schedules, and so on. It is about including care in the development of the entire process. One example Cunningham gives for careful thinking is the taboo of leaving during an ongoing show. We mostly perceive it as a comment on the show, but it really can be caused by so many other reasons. When you follow the aim of designing with care, the following questions may arise: Who is the intended audience for your performance? How can you reach them and grant them access to it? But also, who do you not want to see your performance?

'Time as care' in Cunningham's first example concerns the scheduling of work. She pleads for a collective development of a schedule with consideration of the specific people working together. Because some people, for various reasons, can't work eight to ten hours per day, this should be reflected in the structure of everyday work. As these needs can also change, she says, it is important to schedule in time to review the schedule. But 'time as care' also implies considering the audience's time. Audience members have chosen to come and give their time to a show. Attendance is a choice, and it might not be easy for everybody to attend.

The third point, 'communication as care', deals with how to communicate on different levels. From the medium – the idea that writing an e-mail might not be a suitable choice for every situation – to the habits of a regular get-together when working together. This is also part of the point of 'time as care' as it has to be considered in the process of scheduling and maybe re-scheduling. But communication also has a lot to do with considering different ways of expressing thoughts and ideas –

people communicate in different ways, for example some don't want to speak publicly, and this ought to be respected.

Cunningham then makes quite an interesting and effective pivot when she is about to talk of 'performance as care'.

She simply says: «This one I'm going to leave you to consider for yourselves.» By doing so, she gives credit to the people in the room and also – as most of them are artists – to the potential of art to deal with care in a productive way.

Turning to 'complexity of care', Cunningham poses the question of how the needs of some can affect the needs of others. For example, including audible descriptions for visually impaired people creates additional spoken content for translation into sign language so that deaf audiences are forced to follow information that may be not useful or necessary for them. She proposes transparency as the solution: Communicate that you have been aware of certain needs that you could not meet.

Claire Cunningham ends her talk by sharing how the development of this concept changed her understanding of the word 'care' and, by bringing together all these 'acts of care', she definitely redefined the word for me.

documented by Anna Ebner

Biography

Claire Cunningham is a performer and creator of multi-disciplinary performance and lives in Glasgow, Scotland. One of the UK's most acclaimed and internationally renowned disabled artists, Cunningham's work is often rooted in the study and use/misuse of her crutches with a conscious rejection of traditional dance techniques. Her current works 'Give Me a Reason to Live', 'Guide Gods' and 'The Way You Look (at me) Tonight', a collaboration with Jess Curtis, have toured extensively across the globe. In July 2019 her new ensemble piece 'Thank You Very Much' will premiere at the Manchester International Festival.

KEYNOTE BY FOUAD BOUSSOUF: DANCE AS A FACTOR OF INTELLECTUAL AND CIVIC EMANCIPATION

Le chorégraphe et danseur Fouad Boussouf partage avec les participant·e·s du symposium un éclat de son parcours de vie. Il a la conviction que la danse, clé de voûte de son input, peut être un facteur d'émancipation intellectuelle. Fouad raconte comment, grâce à la danse, il a pu penser le monde différemment, voire oser le penser différemment.

Ce potentiel de reconsidérer le monde est étroitement lié avec les déplacements dans l'espace, que ce soit dans le sens direct, en dansant, ou par le biais de déplacements géographiques, qui dans son propre parcours étaient le résultat de son parcours et finalement du métier de danseur. Ainsi on se déplaçait pour des cours, pour des auditions, pour des battles... Le déplacement géographique se démontre comme déplacement social, comme déplacement mental, qui permet de se rendre compte que le monde tourne beaucoup plus loin que son propre quartier où l'on a grandi.

Les déplacements permettent aussi une redécouverte de ce qui existe déjà en soi. Dans le cas de Fouad Boussouf, le corps lui rappelle qu'il vit aussi une autre musicalité et temporalité par rapport à celle de la France normée; une musicalité, une rythmique et une culture de mouvement provenant d'un héritage familial marocain. Avec une approche chorégraphique fortement informée par cet ordre du corporel, le chorégraphe met en scène des spectacles sur ce qui touche au plus profond.

Car le théâtre – qu’il ait lieu dans la rue à la rencontre des publics ou dans une salle de spectacle – est l’espace de liberté par définition. «Si tu ne vas pas le dire là, où ailleurs?» Influencé par ses études et son propre vécu, il s’en prend souvent aux thèmes sociologiques: «Pourquoi ma condition me fait-elle agir de telle façon dans un tel endroit?» est une de ses questions clés. Fouad est persuadé que l’histoire qu’il a partagée, celle de son parcours, appartient tout autant à lui-même qu’à autrui.

En conclusion, Fouad Boussof explique que le moteur de son travail provient d’un fort désir de transmettre ces accès, savoirs et cheminements potentiels à une nouvelle génération. Il souhaite transmettre le goût de la créativité et, grâce à nos corps et nos parcours, mettre le monde en mouvement pour pouvoir le repenser autrement.

Lien vidéo: [La Minute du spectateur de Fouad Boussof – Maison de la Danse Lyon](#)

documenté par Natania Prezant

Biographie

Le chorégraphe, danseur et pédagogue Fouad Boussof est né au Maroc et a déménagé en France avec sa famille alors qu’il était encore un enfant. Il y suit une formation de danseur hip-hop et fonde la compagnie Massala en 2010. Sa signature chorégraphique moderne, où se côtoient hip-hop, danse contemporaine, danses traditionnelles d’Afrique du Nord et nouveau cirque, se base sur sa carrière multidisciplinaire et ses expériences de danseur. Ces éléments fusionnent pour créer quelque chose d’inédit et confèrent aux chorégraphies de Fouad Boussof leur diversité stylistique. En 2021, le chorégraphe est «artiste associé» à la Maison de la Danse de Lyon et à l’Équinoxe, Scène nationale de Châteauroux. Début 2022, il est nommé directeur du Phare – Centre chorégraphique national du Havre Normandie.

OPEN SPACE: REDEFINING THE COLLECTIVE

Session 1

Our discussion topic 'Redefining the collective' stems from the general wish to strengthen collective work forms. Not only because as a collective, it is easier to master potential practical and organisational challenges within an artistic project, but also because within a collective, a potential of energy, support, knowledge, and inspiration is to be found that can create fertile ground for innovation and new solutions. Beyond these reasons, for many, working artistically implies creating connections and human bonds. In these ways, collective working structures shape an artistic process and its product in a meaningful way.

The point was brought up that, in general, the current structures of the Swiss cultural landscape could do much more to encourage collaborative work. There are few possibilities for artists, companies, theatres and festivals to support each other in meaningful and lasting ways. Meanwhile, on a smaller level, there is a great will to collaborate.

For instance, in various projects, artistic worlds are brought together that otherwise would not collaborate. Some examples mentioned were projects in which the 'Freie Szene' meets the National Theatre, or in which ballet, contemporary dance and circus art come together.

These projects often happen because artists or groups of artists are interested in the work of other artists they know, and in many cases the primary goal is to present a final product together.

At this point in the conversation, a speculative wish emerged: What would result from a format in which artists from different disciplines, who may not know each other yet, meet, not necessarily in order to create a product together as described above, but to truly let themselves 'be bent' by the others? What would it be like if artists worked together driven solely by their interest in the artistic universe of their fellow collaborators, and were open to experiencing a transformation through this encounter?

Throughout the discussion, the need was expressed for collaborative processes to be able to reach beyond the world of artists. Often, when new productions are made, reaching the public proves to be a challenge. And when the public and the production do finally meet, the discourse about the social questions that the production raises remains limited. What could happen if people connected to, and concerned with, the social questions articulated in a piece were included in the production process from the beginning?

A production could focus more on a pre-creational phase in which these people could be integrated in the project and be considered as a part of the team, as a part of the collective. Establishing this sort of collaboration would shape the rest of the process: The artistic project could become a space in which social questions can be dealt with, not only among artists, but with people from other social realities who are affected by these questions. The sharing process and the discursive moment would not be restricted to the point of time where the performance happens, when the project is already finished. Furthermore, in this way the idea of the 'untouchable artist' could be deconstructed, encouraging encounters at eye level.

The conversation then circled around the observation that the idea of a 'genius' is still very present within artistic contexts, and that we often believe a 'genius mind' to be behind an artistic work, and not a group working collectively. What if we

considered all participants within a project to be creators and shaped the working structures accordingly? Would it become more common to name all participants as co-creators in the credits of a production?

Through our exchange, we realised that talking about collaboration led us straight to what contemporary art is fundamentally striving towards: To observe what is present and create with that. To really get in touch with whom and what we work with.

documented by Simon Thöni

Session 2

Die kleine Gruppe besteht aus Menschen, die überwiegend im Bereich Netzwerkarbeit, Inklusion und/oder Kommunikation im Bereich Tanz tätig sind. Zunächst fragen wir uns, warum das Thema der Gruppendiskussion im vorangegangenen Plenum mit «redefining the collective» formuliert wurde. Sei es notwendig, das kollektive Arbeiten zu redefinieren? Momentan gäbe es doch zumindest einige funktionierende Beispiele von kollektiver Leitung, wie die Produktionen von Rimini Protokoll oder Milo Rau. Es wird darüber gesprochen, dass hier Innen- und Aussenwahrnehmung möglicherweise auch divergieren würden. Eine Person fragt, was daran falsch sei, wenn am Ende eine Person entscheidet. Eine andere Teilnehmende sagt, dass es auch in kollektiven Prozessen Organisationsstrukturen gäbe, aber eben nicht immer dieselbe Person entscheiden würde. Vielmehr würde in einem Gruppenprozess beschlossen, wer in welcher Angelegenheit verantwortlich ist. Eine Teilnehmerin berichtet von ihren guten Erfahrungen beim Zirkusquartier im Kochareal. Dort würden die Verantwortungsbereiche nach den jeweiligen Kompetenzen sowie nach Neigung verteilt; die auftretenden Konflikte gehörten zu einem normalen Gruppenprozess dazu.

Im weiteren Verlauf der Diskussion fragen sich die Teilnehmer*innen, wie Kollektive wirklich gleichberechtigt miteinander arbeiten können. Wie kann in Anbetracht des gesellschaftlichen Machtgefälles die Stimme einer Person, beispielsweise mit Trisomie 21, genauso viel Gehör finden wie die Stimme einer Person ohne Trisomie 21? Daran anschliessend wird über die veränderten Anforderungen an Projekte auch vonseiten der Förderungen gesprochen. Die Diskutierenden stellen sich schliesslich der Frage, worin der Vorteil des kollektiven Arbeitens liegt. Eine Teilnehmende berichtet von einem Theater, das einen Strukturwandel von kollektiver Arbeitsstruktur hin zu einer konventionellen Hierarchie mit Leitungsposition vorgenommen hatte. In beiden Situationen nahm sie das Programm als sehr ähnlich wahr. Warum also überhaupt im Kollektiv arbeiten? Als Vorteile dessen werden beispielsweise die Schwarmintelligenz sowie eine wahrscheinlich höhere Berücksichtigung von unterschiedlichen Perspektiven genannt. Eine Person gibt zu denken, dass auch viele Vorannahmen über das kollektive Arbeiten existierten, die meistens gar nicht zuträfen. Die Qualität eines Kollektivs hänge ihrer Ansicht nach vor allem von einer gemeinsam etablierten Kommunikation ab. Wichtige Schlagwörter seien hier die Reflektion der Gruppenprozesse, Awareness, Sensibilisierung und gemeinsames Lernen. Es gäbe darüber hinaus viele Möglichkeiten, sich Hilfe von aussen zu holen. Beispielsweise entwickelte die [Initiative Fairspec](#) einen Kodex für das Arbeiten im Kollektiv, von dem man sich Inspiration holen könnte. Mit diesen konkreten Ideen, wie kollektives Schaffen besser gelingen kann, beenden wir schliesslich die Diskussion.

dokumentiert von Hagia Jany

OPEN SPACE: HOW CAN WE IMPROVE OUR/THE DANCE COMMUNITY?

Session 1

As a group of around 15 people, we sat around a table in order to discuss four questions that had been brought forth during the Open Space:

1
What kind of financial security is available to artists outside of creation times and budgets? What kind of financial security should be made accessible for such periods of rest?

The group mostly shared resources, tips and other examples they knew of. Here is a selection:

- Half-year scholarship in Bern, as well as in other cities
- Various COVID-19-related support structures (depends on your canton)
- Ideation, conception, research funds
- In France: le statut d'intermittent du spectacle
- Suisse culture sociale is currently working on exactly this question

Many around the table felt that the financial systems specifically in support of artists are valuable because they represent a recognition of cultural labour and the value thereof. We then briefly talked about the distinction between different types of 'in-between' periods, e.g. periods of rest, research, training, healing (e.g. after an injury), auditions, further education, and what financial factors these different periods depended on.

We concluded this topic by asking ourselves: Where can we take action?

- Become members of associations and syndicates, such as 't.' or 'reso', for together we are stronger!
- Educate art students in schools on how financing works, as well as offering this knowledge outside of schools, e.g. in workshops
- Continue to fight for recognition and, in this way, for support during low-intensity periods
- There are already many options out there, so we agreed that possibly the most important was to inform yourself, inform others!

2

What are tacit rules between creators, programmers, the public, financial players, and so on? Who has what expectations, and how are these communicated?

We talked about our personal experiences and shared tips, such as:

- Before applying for funding, ask for a meeting to evaluate what they're looking for and if it's even worth your time.
- Many associations offer support in the form of consulting as well as workshops, e.g. 'artFAQ' (ZH) or the 'bureau des compagnies' (GE)

The group then briefly considered the differing contexts in the countryside and the city centre, as well as differences between styles of dance that may be more or less commercial, more or less institutionalised.

The group concluded that one way to take action would be to centralise the information across linguistic regions and across the whole country. And most importantly: inform yourself, inform others!

3

How could the dance community be gathered, in all its stylistic, organisational and individual diversity? How can the current dominance of certain styles of dance be erased?

We've all observed an increased blending of dance styles within predominantly contemporary dance spaces. But these inputs come from very different communities, with different needs, habits and desires. Why, and for what purpose, would the entire dance community want to gather?

One reason to gather is the political heft that such a critical mass carries, as well as being able to share the valuable knowledge that each community holds. One participant added that audiences are much more used to seeing certain styles of dance, specifically those stemming from the hip-hop context. Would including these styles in a contemporary dance context make a dance piece more accessible? Some professionals around the table have found it easier to reach a common ground in and through teaching contexts. And, finally, gate-keeping is a problem we spoke a lot about, specifically in relation to the tension between institutionalising versus remaining outside of institutions. We agreed that everyone should have access, and thus be able to make a choice for themselves!

Our final suggestion for taking action was to remain curious! Honestly and openly engaging with other dance communities has proven to be a wonderful way to come together.

4

**Where and what are our limits as a dance community?
As an individual creator?**

Many of us around the table felt a lot of pressure to 'do everything right'. To reduce our ecological impact, improve access for excluded communities, pay everyone in the team as much as we all believe is deserved... These difficult demands

and high standards for ourselves lead to a lot of stress and drain a lot of energy compared to the impact we actually have. And yet we acknowledged that the symbolic power of certain actions is extremely important.

The group concluded by agreeing that you can't do everything, so do what you can! Do not be frustrated with your limits. It's ok to concentrate on one thing, to do that well, and once we've all worked towards a better world in our smaller context, these contexts can grow together into a larger community.

documented by Natania Prezant

Session 2

Vernetzung – Finanzierung – Zugänglichkeit

Wir – die Diskussionsrunde – sitzen im siebten Stock des Théâtre Équilibre um einen grossen Tisch. Kurz nach der Mittagspause brauchen wir alle einen Moment, um im Thema anzukommen, das sich entlang von fünf Leitfragen entwickeln könnte: (1) Wo sind die Grenzen der Tanzcommunity bzw. wie gestalten sie sich? (2) Welche unausgesprochenen Regeln bestimmen die Community und die Beziehungen zwischen Schaffenden, Programmgestaltung, Subventionierung und der Öffentlichkeit? (3) Wie kann eine finanzielle Sicherheit für Tanzschaffende ausserhalb von Projekten ermöglicht werden? (4) Wie können die Verhältnisse zwischen Tanzdisziplinen symmetrisch gestaltet werden? Und (5) wie kann die Tanzcommunity ganz grundlegend und allgemein zusammengebracht werden?

Die erste Einigkeit, die ziemlich schnell getroffen wird, bezieht sich auf die dritte Frage, diejenige der Finanzierung und Absicherung der Schaffenden auch ausserhalb der Projektzeiten. Dies sei eher eine Frage für die Politik und die Lösung nicht die Aufgabe der Anwesenden. Daraufhin wendet sich das Gespräch dem Thema der unausgesprochenen

Regeln zu, deren Problem genau in der stummen Präsenz zu liegen scheint. Da die Tanzcommunity nicht grundlegend vernetzt und organisiert, sondern eher um verschiedene Konzentrationspunkte – wie lokale Beratungsstellen – strukturiert ist, sei es im Besonderen für junge und sich etablierende Tanzschaffende sehr schwierig, diese Regeln kennenzulernen. Ein möglicher und sinnvoller Weg wäre die Konzeption von einem Mentoring-System, meint eine Beteiligte, wobei sich da die Frage nach der Realisierbarkeit stellt. Daraus kristallisiert sich trotz Bedenken sehr deutlich, dass eine Verbesserung der Community im Sinne einer Organisation derselben gedacht werden kann.

«Wo ist aber diese Community eigentlich und wer ist sie?», wird gefragt. Niemand hat eine Antwort, da Institutionen für die Bildung einer Community sicher zentral seien, doch Freischaffende damit noch nicht erreicht würden. Von diesem Gedanken ausgehend, formuliert jemand den Wunsch, dass freie Szene und institutionalisierter Tanz nicht so separiert, sondern einander gegenüber offener sein und verschmelzen sollten. Bei mehreren am Tisch besteht eine grosse Abneigung für die Boxen und Labels, die Tanzschaffende trennen, obwohl sie gesamtgesellschaftlich bereits eine Minderheit darstellen und Zusammenhalt deswegen hochrelevant wäre. Vernetzung fordern auch einige für die unterschiedlichen Regionen innerhalb der Schweiz, da grosse Differenzen zwischen dem deutsch- und dem französisch-sprachigen Raum bestehen, wobei der italienischsprachige generell kaum Beachtung erfährt und der rätoromanische oft überhaupt nicht erwähnt wird. Wir müssen mehr hinhören und anderen zuhören, sodass Barrieren überwunden werden können, fordert ein Beteiligter. Auf all diesen Ebenen muss mehr Kommunikation bestehen, ergänzt jemand, denn je mehr kommuniziert werde, desto weniger Missverständnisse gebe es.

Der Blick wird nun hauptsächlich auf die Schwierigkeiten für freischaffende Künstler*innen gelegt, da diese fort dauern und ihnen scheinbar nicht gerecht begegnet wird, wobei das nie endende Ringen um Finanzierung das Hauptproblem darstellt. Dagegen wenden sich jedoch auch Stimmen, die betonen, dass das Finanzierungssystem in der Schweiz im internationalen Vergleich sehr gut für Künstler*innen sei. Trotzdem muss sich die Tanzcommunity den realen Problemen der Finanzierung zuwenden, die für viele zu einem betriebswirtschaftlich statt künstlerisch bestimmten Alltag führen. Es bleibt jedoch unklar, wie dies zu tun sei. Dass wir aber alle hier sitzen, besonders nach der Pandemie in den letzten Jahren, sei eine Form der Zusammenkunft und Reflexion über die Herausforderungen. In Events wie dem heutigen Symposium kann im Austausch eine Verbesserung der Situation entstehen, da nur mit der Vernetzung und Organisation ein Anfang gemacht werden kann. Das ist – so ein Einwand – jedoch noch nicht die Lösung, da bspw. am Tisch und Symposium nicht viele Junge und somit zukünftige Träger*innen der Community anwesend sind. Erreichbarkeit und Zugänglichkeit sind dabei ernst zu nehmende Faktoren, die beeinflussen, wer an der Tanzcommunity teilhaben kann. Darüber hinaus solle Vernetzung und Austausch nicht nur in Gesprächen, sondern vor allem in künstlerischen Begegnungen stattfinden.

Ganz konkret wird Problemen am Tisch mit einem bestehenden Unterstützungsangebot begegnet: Institutionen, die dafür da sind, Tanzschaffenden zu helfen und eine orientierende Betreuung anzubieten. Kulturhub im Raum Basel, ArtFAQ in Zürich und Danse Suisse überregional werden Anwesenden empfohlen. Auffallend und zugleich die Probleme veranschaulichend ist die Tatsache, dass die Institutionen nicht alle voneinander Bescheid wissen. Zugänglichkeit müsse mehr etabliert und Wissen um die Angebote verbreitet werden, wobei ein besonderes Augenmerk auf Unsicherheiten gelenkt werden sollte. Es fällt nicht allen einfach, sich aufgrund von Unwissen und Hilfsbedarf an Institutionen zu wenden. Eine

Beteiligte formuliert es als Utopie, wirklich zu wissen, dass hinter allen Institutionen und Formalitäten auch Menschen sitzen. Sie wünscht sich, dass diese Einfachheit wirklich spürbar werde, sodass es nicht stets Stress bedeuten würde, die eigene Kunst in Sprache zu übersetzen. Denn bspw. bei jedem Finanzierungsantrag muss das Projekt mit anderen Mitteln ausgedrückt werden, als es das eigentlich wird: mit Sprache statt als Tanz. Eine weitere Utopie, die beschrieben wird, ist die nicht bloss projektbasierte Finanzierung, sodass ein Zeitraum geschaffen würde, in dem man sich auf die künstlerische Arbeit einlassen könnte und Business endlich wieder hinter diese rückt – vom *circolo vizioso* des Managementstresses übergehen zu können in den *circolo virtuoso*. Denn am Ende des Tages und am Ende der Diskussion ist die Leidenschaft das Zentrale für alle. Eine Person sagt am Schluss der Diskussion, die Leidenschaft für Tanz mache es aber wert, diese Mühen auf sich zu nehmen – denn sie mache ihn glücklich. Dem stimmen die anderen am Tisch zu.

dokumentiert von Anna Ebner

OPEN SPACE: IMPLICATIONS

Session 1

Die Hauptfragen der Gruppe lauteten: Wie kann Tanz besser in Schulen vermittelt werden? Wie können kulturelle Einrichtungen und Schulen sinnvoller zusammenarbeiten?

Die Gruppe besteht aus fünf Teilnehmer*innen. Die meisten stammen aus dem Bereich Tanz sowie Kulturmanagement und Kulturförderung. Ausgehend von persönlichen Erfahrungen entwickelt sich eine angeregte Diskussion über die Vermittlung von Tanz. Eine Teilnehmerin beginnt mit einer ihrer Meinungen nach «steilen These»: In der Kunst habe man häufig Berührungspunkte mit dem Marketing. Es sei aber wichtig, die positiven Aspekte dessen wahrzunehmen und mehr Mut zum Marketing in der Kunst zu haben. Ausgehend davon sprechen wir darüber, dass es nicht an mangelnden passenden Angeboten für Schulen und Freizeiteinrichtungen, sondern eher an der fehlenden Schnittstelle läge. So hänge es häufig vom Engagement Einzelner wie ambitionierten Lehrer*innen und Pädagog*innen ab, ob Schüler*innen in Kontakt mit Tanz kämen. Oder aber Tänzer*innen müssten sich – meistens ehrenamtlich – an die Schulen wenden, um Kooperationen zu ermöglichen. Jedoch sollten Stellen und Ressourcen für diese Aufgabe geschaffen werden; anstatt individueller Lösungen erfordere es strukturelle Veränderungen. Denn es mache einen grossen Unterschied, ob Kinder und Jugendliche früh in Kontakt mit Kunst und Kultur kämen. Nicht nur, dass dadurch ein zukünftiges Publikum generiert würde, auch werden hier Kompetenzen vermittelt, die in der Schule häufig zu kurz kommen: die ästhetische und emotionale Bildung sowie die Förderung der Beobachtungsfähigkeit. Es wird darüber gesprochen, dass es als Künstlerin schwierig sei,

die Vermittlung aus eigener Kraft zu stemmen. Inspiriert von Claire Cunninghams Input fragen wir uns: Wenn wir im care denken und diesen Raum schaffen wollen, wo nehmen wir als Künstler*innen zusätzlich zur eigentlichen künstlerischen Arbeit den Mehraufwand an Zeit und Ressourcen her? Wir sprechen auch über einige positive Beispiele, bei denen die Arbeit an der Schnittstelle zwischen Kunst und Vermittlung scheinbar besser laufen würde. So wird Israel genannt, wo Tanz eine grosse gesellschaftliche Relevanz habe und deutlich besser gefördert sei. Auch wird über das Theater Basel oder das Theater am Gleis in Winterthur gesprochen, wo Schulklassen teilweise schon vor der Premiere in die Probenarbeit eingebunden werden. Ein Fazit der Diskussion lautet, dass die Netzwerkarbeit sowie die Arbeit an der Schnittstelle zwischen Tanz und Bildungseinrichtungen immens wichtig ist. Wir brauchen finanzielle und personelle Ressourcen für die Vernetzung von Schule und Tanz. Für einen strukturellen Wandel in der Politik muss auch mehr Druck von unten – von den Tänzer*innen – kommen.

dokumentiert von Hagia Jany, Master Theaterpädagogik, ZhdK

Session 2:

Three terms often used in the conversation:

Diversity, Passion, Sustainability

How to implicate?

Artists need to implicate themselves into the reality of the audience and search for different ways to invite audiences and frame performances, for example: relaxed performances

The theatre is a social space: improve accessibility, «diversify the entrance door»

Spend more time preparing: involve audiences before the premiere, for example, organise a meet-up with the artists

Organise introductions before the show (possibility: «body keys», body-centred mediation proposals) as well as follow-up talks

Implication might work through participation, so create possibilities for the audience to participate in courses and projects

Education

Dancing needs to be part of children's early education

Dance is proven to improve children's abilities to learn

Create sustainable cooperations with schools

Aging Bodies

«Dancing is like being brothers and sisters»

There is a need for...

- a change of perspective: valuing ageing bodies pursuing a professional career
- classes that are welcoming for ageing bodies, for example: «les âgeliers»
- easily accessible studios
- more communication with ageing communities in online spaces

Suggestions for action

- Keep on going!
- Create a platform for exchange of artistic practices
- Create personal connections between artists and audiences
- Combine implication and participation
- Cooperate with diverse cultural institutions and age groups

documented by Janna Rottmann

OPEN SPACE SESSION: DANCE, LABELS, DIS/ABILITY?

Three terms often used in the conversation:

Value, Censorship, Imagination

Language

We could, should, do...

- search for words, search for ways of describing things without creating binaries
- acknowledge that being disabled can be an important part of personal and artistic identity
- not only use the word disabled, also use the word non-disabled
- No censorship!

Value

We need a shift in how we value bodies and techniques in dance:

What is dancing?

Where has value been placed in terms of form and techniques of dance?

And why?

Dance can reinscribe, render abstract things concrete, and challenge our values:

Learn from disabled dancers!

Disabled bodies have the power to question society:

These bodies carry important knowledge from people who encounter time, space, people, culture differently than the dominant norm.

Inclusion

Prioritise disabled communities!

When trying to invite and include: reach out for consultation, invite experts (and pay them!)

Invite people who are aware of their agency – they might inspire others

Perspective

«I never imagined myself dancing.»

It's important for companies to hire disabled dancers in order to create perspective for future generations.

You need experience it, to know it's possible: If you can't imagine it, you will not make it happen, and cannot express the needs or conditions thereof.

Education

Professional schools need disabled teachers!

Inclusion is essential, and for this reason must be included in schools' budgets.

Suggestions for action

- Practice: a change of values and mentalities
- Question: why these techniques, which ideas, why did we develop those?
- Cause: a change of mind in people who finance shows
- Fight: censorship!
- «Because dissonance is artistically exciting, I will organise a programme or venue, create projects, events, and teach with disabled artists and partners in my sphere of influence.»

documented by Janna Rottmann

OPEN SPACE SESSION: CREATING WITHOUT APPROPRIATION

The discussion on the topic of appropriation in the performative arts was divided into two parts with a different constellation of people in either half. The question 'What is appropriation?' was put forth in relation to what artists do when they take up elements in a creative process that don't necessarily come from them, but from other people, communities, and places.

Appropriation is defined as the [act](#) of taking something such as an [idea](#), [custom](#) or [style](#) from a [group](#) or [culture](#) that you are not a [member](#) of and using it yourself. In the performing arts, this can take place in a variety of ways – the appropriation of different movements, stories, cultural practices, psycho-physical qualities and so on. Discussing the possibilities of artistic work and process that aim to be more inclusive, it is as important to clearly phrase the questions as it is to find answers: Who are we making the show for? How can we not offend someone while making work? Who is performing the work? Does the content come first or the performers? How do we avoid stereotypes? Who has the right to appropriate? How can you be an ally rather than a sympathizer? And, most importantly, how do you treat a topic with respect?

An important aspect of this is also the fear that comes from misrepresenting something. This misrepresentation may not reflect the intention of the artist, but can be quickly labelled by the public as a gross misappropriation. Social media, with its limited possibilities and consumerist timeframes, can play a defining role in negatively affecting the scope of a work. The fear stemming from these limitations was a key part of

the discussion; where one important aspect was the possible processes we could employ to create more representative works.

At one point during the discussion, the possibility of representing someone or something that doesn't have an immediate connection to the artistic process and the people working in it was examined. In the context of institutional limitations, this can be a good reflection to begin with, for often, in a homogeneous ensemble, people from similar backgrounds come together and form the artistic process. In tandem with the bodies, minds and backgrounds of people involved in the process, these institutional ensembles often offer limited possibilities in terms of choosing an approach that employs existing stories or works as a starting point.

Throughout the discussion, it was repeatedly mentioned that for these reasons, it is very important to proactively invite people of all backgrounds, especially those from marginalised communities, to audition when a new ensemble is formed – maybe in 10 or 20 years, when the current norms may have changed, this will no longer be necessary. At the moment, stating this explicitly helps more than it limits. It often provides a more comfortable space for consideration, for a person or community with certain limitations or marginalisations to participate in processes that would usually be unwelcoming or exclusionary.

The influence of institutional structures extends to the matter of the composition of an audience and who a show is performed for, and the question of the effect of the programming of an artistic house on the composition of its audience is a pertinent one. Not engaging with these factors tends to lead to a homogenous offer for audiences, and also keeps artists from sharing their works with spectators who are living different social realities. Interpretations that might be misrepresentative to a certain community are brought into

discussion when audiences are diverse, and their presence can and does prove beneficial to civic dialogue and the artistic process. It becomes equally important for the institution to ensure that it works towards accommodating audiences that otherwise would not even think of visiting a theatre.

When talking about the development and interpretation of an artistic act representing someone or something, it was pointed out that for some, it is not always clear where representation becomes appropriation: An individual can never fully represent a group of people and is not part of only one 'culture'. Different (sub-)cultures as such have always been in exchange with one another. How is it possible to understand where appropriation begins? It is important to acknowledge that, based on their differing perspectives, people often 'don't know that they don't know'. However, being truly interested in the material and where it comes from may bring clarification, and may also nurture the creative and artistic process: In this way, artists can take on the role of mediators and communicators, getting in touch with and entering into a dialogue with people who are connected to the material they are artistically working with. This engagement can lead to an inclusive process, instead of the artist's lack of familiarity with the subject matter appearing as a limitation.

The process is then aimed at bringing different forms of knowledge and performativity to a larger public. Cultures and communities do not exist isolated from one another, but rather in a complex net of hierarchies and dependencies. The process becomes an act of building communication with the different participants and the material they bring in an attempt to renegotiate these set structures – process can become a way of defining, and potentially altering, these fault lines.

Perpetuating stereotypes is one of the consistent problematics of appropriation. While one person's performance may be considered 'beautiful' or 'virtuosic', they may, in fact, be

performing a body language that is appropriated from a very specific marginalised community. In this manner, what is appropriated serves to further the artistic process and success of a privileged few, while leaving others on the sidelines. As it was named during the discussion, 'inspiration porn' can often lead to appropriation of various artistic impulses that serve to gratify the normative (narratives).

The first step towards appreciation rather than appropriation then must be informed by how appreciation can lead to or imply structural changes in the creation of a work. This means making space for different identities to meet and engage with one another. To be transformed through encounters, rather than residing solely in ideas, can influence a work profoundly in its development.

documented by Tejus Menon and Simon Thöni