

Igor Dobricic
Spectacular existence (of theatre)
pp. 4-5

David Weber-Krebs
**Spectacle, spectacular
and a piece of wood**
p. 6

Cuqui Jerez
Brazo & Charco
pp. 7-8

Diego Gil
The conceptual and the spectacular
p. 9

Stamatia Portanova
The sobriety of theatre
pp. 10-11

Carolien Hermans
The spider
p. 12

Ramsay Burt
E-mail response
p. 14

Konstantina Georgelou
E-mail response
p. 14

Bertha Bermudez
**Intended () perceived:
memories of performing**
p. 15

Martin Nachbar
The loud and the wet
p. 16

Julia Willms
Create your own spectacle
p. 17

Andrea Bozic
On staging drama queens
p. 18

Shaz Dada
Strophe
p. 18

Interview with Boris van der Leer
p. 19

Jona Claveaux, Luuk Scheers and
Jochem van der Valk
Drawings of monsters
p. 20

Norberto Llopis de Segarra
Monsters
pp. 20-21

André Nusselder
**The eye of horus (or: flight from
that which is real to reality)**
pp. 22-23

Sher Doruff
Insert diagram

Minor gestures and their monstrous little brothers: the 'spectatorship of the catastrophic'

RTRSRCH is a publication of the ARTI (Artistic Research, Theory and Innovation) research group at the Amsterdam School of the Arts. The journal aims to provide a complementary/ parasitic dissemination forum for themes linked to international external event structures (festivals, conferences, exhibitions, projects, etc.), contributing alternative, interdisciplinary perspectives.

RTRSRCH reflects the interests and problematising strategies of the ARTI research group concerning current discourse in practice-based research in the arts, exploring and facilitating processes for creating, sharing and distributing emerging knowledge(s). The presentation of content will vary from issue to issue, dependent on the topic and stylistic concerns of the guest editor. RTRSRCH is published three times a year.

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Deze thematiek werd niet zomaar gekozen: het is eerder een vaststelling dat de hedendaagse dans- en performancemunst een ontslag heeft gemaakt... vandaag de dag zijn steeds meer makers overtuigd van de noodzaak om op de basis van analytische en conceptuele uitgangspunten ook op een genueruze manier te communiceren naar het publiek. Dit levert voorstellingen op die soms erg energiek bijna brutaal zelfs zijn in de manier waarop zij communiceren. Het 'dionysisch' pleitert zelfs ontfermt en grote theaterale gebaren blijken weer te kunnen...

...het kan echter net zo goed gaan om meer interne voorstellingen die het directe contact met de toeschouwer op een heel interne, microscopische, maar toch genueruze manier weten te installeren. (Nicole Beutler)



Self-portrait, Amsterdam, 2 January 2009

This night (02-01-2009) I went at 3 pm to the toilet. It was dead quiet with only a few late New Year bangs. Because I could not sleep and I was dreadfully bored, I took a picture of myself while I was urinating.

I admit that there is not much to see, it's because I didn't use a flash. I am pretty satisfied with this picture: I think it serves well as a self-portrait. Something else. Jeroen Peeters writes in his essay 'Replace the Monstrous'¹ (2006, p.3): 'One of the origins of the image is rooted in a ritual exchange with death: where life ceases to exist and the human body starts to decay, an image or material object functions as a stand-in.' A while ago, I had an appointment with Nicole Beutler and I discussed with her the idea to launch the first issue of the ARTI journal at the Something Raw festival. It seemed a good idea to her. Nicole immediately mentioned a theme. How wonderful! 'The search for the spectacular.' Of which, as soon as I arrived home, I wondered what exactly is the nature of the spectacular. According to my own standards then. At that moment, nothing came into my mind... 'something beautiful, something cadaverous beautiful...' Like the avant-garde electronic composer Karlheinz Stockhausen who claimed that 9/11 was 'the greatest work of art there has ever been'. Completely inappropriate though². (The British artist Damien Hirst, too, claimed, in the British media, that those responsible for September 11 should indeed be congratulated because they achieved 'something which nobody would ever have thought possible' on an artistic level.)³ The spectacular is associated with pain. And with death. Something can only be spectacular when it houses a certain danger. The first thing that falls into my mind when I think of 'spectacular', are natural phenomena. A hurricane. An earthquake. A volcanic eruption. A tsunami. A sand storm. Read: the behold of natural catastrophes is spectacular. But Superman, the credit crisis and 9/11 also belong to the same line of thinking. Such forces are inhumane, it makes us defenceless, small and vulnerable. It causes a rupture. Suddenly we realize that we can relate to the gods but we will never be one of them. By the way, there is a substantial difference between natural and social

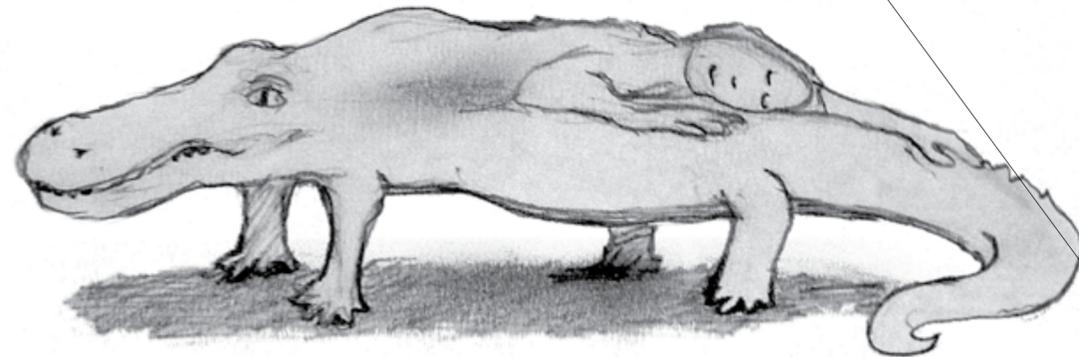
disasters. Harald Weizer notes in the NRC-Handelsblad (January 10, 2009): 'Maatschappelijke catastrofes vinden, anders dan wervelstormen en aardbevingen, niet abrupt plaats, maar zijn een voor de contemporaine waarnemer vrijwel onzichtbaar proces, dat pas achteraf door begrippen als 'ineenstorting' of 'breekpunt in de samenleving' tot een spectaculair gebeuren wordt verdicht' (p.3, Opinie & Debat). The question which should be asked, is whether, with all possible disasters glooming above our heads (eg the financial crisis, terroristic attacks, global warming, scarcity of natural resources...) the time has come to prepare ourselves. And: How do we do that? It is perhaps no coincidence that in contemporary theatre a shift is seen towards the spectacular. Although the theatre today, at least in its Western form, is a representational space par excellence (at least in its Western form), a stage still suffering from psycho-linguistic suffocation⁴, 'something' more urgent seems to pop up. Is there, as the word catastrophe itself indicates, indeed a shift taking place, a radical turn in contemporary theatre making towards the spectacular? And how then do the spectacular and the catastrophic relate? What is truly spectacular? Is the 'spectacular' connected to excessiveness and 'big dramatic' gestures? Or is the non-spectacular the only way nowadays of being spectacular? 'A minor gesture, so microscopic small that it closes our vision?' And is this minor gesture not exactly what we should call monstrous? I like the idea of walking in two directions simultaneously (not because it is

impossible, but because you feel so clumsy afterwards). The big dramatic gesture on the one side: its excessive nature, never knowing when to stop, loud, vulgar and brutally, without any modesty nor shame, it imposes itself on the spectator. The gesture that screams for attention: it penetrates the viewer with a toxic Dionysian force, full of pathos and rich of drama. We laugh, we cry, and we laugh once more. The minor gesture on the other side: diminution and sobriety. A small, insignificant detail, which easily merges with the background. A nothingness. An absence. How monstrous it is. It attacks our gaze violently because it extracts and removes everything and leaves us...with what? Monstrous creatures (like crocodiles) are usually located under the bed. Although there are quite some crocodiles in the wild, an occasional crocodile in the zoo, by far the most crocodiles live under the beds of sleepy boys and girls. It is still our imagination where most catastrophes and disasters take place, therefore, the imagination is a very suitable place for us to prepare and weapon ourselves against possible future catastrophes.

So.

The theatre.

Or a good night of sleep.



- 1 Jeroen Peeters (2006), Replacing the Monstrous. Notes on transformation and fiction in the margin of the rehearsals and preparations for REPLACEMENT, in Christoph Gurk and Jeroen Peeters (eds.), Normal, Berlin, Volksbuehne am Rosa Luxemburg-platz/Alexander Verlag, pp. 33-48
2 Arnon Grunberg (2005), Techniek van het Lijden, Amsterdam: Nijgh & Van Ditmar
3 Steve Redhead (2009), The Art of the Accident: Paul Virilio and Accelerated Modernity. See: http://www.uta.edu/huma/agger/fastcapitalism
4 See Sobriety of Theatre by Stamatia Portanova

Paul Virilio defines catastrophes as 'original accidents', as the kind of accidents we bring forth ourselves. The accident is 'invented', it is a work of creation. In order to study them, he says, 'one of course must research them, but also expose them. Who could be more apt than artists to make feel the tragic dimension of human development ('progress')? Virilio calls for the creation of a Museum of the Accident, and his 'ce qui arrive' exhibition in Paris(2002) was an example of that. —(interview with Paul Virilio in Le Monde, October 2008, by Gerard Courtouis and Michel Guerrin)

[Greek, katastrōphē, an overturning, ruin, conclusion, from katastrōphēin, to ruin, undo; kata-, cata- + strephēin, to turn; see streph(-) in Indo-European roots.]

'Je staat achterat versteld dat Franz Kafka op de dag na de Duitse oorlogsverklaring aan Rusland in zijn dagboek schreef: 'Duitsland heeft Rusland de oorlog verklaard.—s Middags zwemles'. —(Harald Weizer, NRC Handelsblad, 10 januari 2009)

Spectacular existence (of theatre)

ers; the grandiose operatic narrative of climate change; the dramatic collapse of the global financial system, are bursting out of their fictional distance. Against our will we are finally getting affected by the monstrous incarnation of the spectacle that we are creating. Fragility of our embodied existence is brought into play once more, not by the power of critical discourse but by the abrupt materialization of its failure to prevent possibility of "catastrophe". Proximity of pain (and ecstasy) is looming large over our heads once more. Maybe the time is coming to acknowledge that beyond all the fashionable theories, it is not that empty spectacle is becoming our only reality. It is rather that, for better or for worse, the reality itself is threatening to become truly spectacular, once more. Seen in that light, in a society on the verge of global breakdown, politics and the aesthetics of spectacle could emerge as a new form of realism.

1
As You Like It 2/7

There is no better way to gain power over a lived experience than to 'step back' and look at it.

It is with this "sudden" realisation that, for better or for worse, a passage from an animal-like into a human-like existence got completed. At a point of separation, the subject (the one who looks) and the object (the thing that is seen) finally distinguished themselves from each other. What is, from a distance, perceived by the newly emerging human subject "as being out there" is re-appropriated as a symbolical representation of itself. Language became a tool of this appropriation and a structure of a sign its magical formula.

Contemporary spectacle is a final, totalizing stage in a semantic mediation of experience. It is an apotheosis of distance and coherence, a fulfilment of an ancient phantasm (of power) into which we got seduced at a dawn of our consciousness.

So, in today's world of spectacle everything is seen but nothing is experienced. Emptied of any immediate content, at an absolute distance from a world we created, humans are finally made into passive spectators of their own existence. That what is taking place in front of our eyes, articulated in a medium of language, is betraying our expectations by fulfilling them to the last letter.

The over-quoted line that *all the world's a stage*¹, is becoming accomplished in a much more radical sense than Shakespeare would have ever imagined. Because, it seems that in his implicit religiosity the "immortal bard" failed to realize—it is not only that humans are transient, pathetic performers of the divine comedy with *their exits and their entrances*—we are also the only audience for whom the spectacle is performed. In an enlightened absence of the "god's eye", the voyeuristic, tyrannical role of a spectator is the one that precedes and defines the existence of all the others possible parts.

In this godless universe we are engen-

dered by our own gaze. Devoid of any higher justice, theatre of consciousness betrays itself for what it is—a final disclosure of an existential status quo, a narcissistic power game of appearances that we play with (and between) ourselves. In this game, the empty stage is still a stage and we are caught in the role of spectator even when we climb on it and look back into the rows of abandoned audience seats. Our alienation is complete. In the world of contemporary spectacle, absence of spectacle is the most spectacular of all.

There is no way back to the paradise of unmediated experience. The last century is a dramatic testimony to this impossibility. After decades of repeated attempts, efforts to transform, deny, cancel out, neutralize or deconstruct society of spectacle are discrediting themselves by being smoothly assimilated into it. Yet, the ultimate paradox is that when we fully transform the world (of our experience) into the spectacle of language it is not us who are in control of it any more. The limit of our limitless power to create, manage and control the spectacle is revealed in the disturbing fact that whatever we do, we cannot escape it any more. On the contrary we are, even through our critical gesture of rebellion, contributing to it.

Only through this final escalation of the spectacle beyond our control are we unwillingly subverting our infinitely removed position of a disinterested observer. In a strange parody of divine revelation (and punishment) word is, through some kind of undesired mutation, becoming flesh again. Babylonian tower of linguistic misunderstandings that inspire our spectacular rhetorical outbursts are, before our eyes, becoming materialized into conglomerations of the real external circumstances that are moving beyond our control—colliding with each other while accelerating in all directions. The tragic fall of the Twin Tow-

David Weber-Krebs says on page 6: Dumb cows following the spectacular travels of the train in the lowlands, eternally separated from its speed pliering the space; forever ignorant of the exotic stations it will stop at.

Stamatis Portanova says on page 10-11: The theatrical gesture has to be amplified, not in the sense of an enlargement and acquisition of power, but in the sense of a close vision, so close and microscopic to lose the sense of all clear, visibility and nearness of detail; theatre as something that will never be comprehended in its entirety, so imperceptible and diffuse is its action. The movements on stage do not need generous dramatic interpretations but only diminution and sobriety.



Dear Igor,
I have a question for you. Maybe you already heard that ARTI is going to set up a new journal (three issues a year) with a specific notion on art as research. Anyway, I am going to do the first issue in close collaboration with Something Raw Festival and Nicole. Not surprisingly we will take

the theme 'search for the spectacle' as our starting point. Nicole mailed me your short text about the spectacle. I would be very happy if you can contribute...

Dear Carolien
I am in Abu Dhabi, visiting my family. Last few days around new year I spent

in Sahara, out of reach. I came back today. This is my (bad) excuse for getting in touch with you in a last, last moment. In any case, I did work on a text for arti journal and will be able to send it to you tomorrow morning. I just need few more hours to go through it once more. I am sorry for a delay...

New Year in Sahara was an extraordinary experience. I wish you all the best in 2009. Let it be quiet, cool and full of stars. Luxurious and precious. Like a night in the desert.

igor

Spectacle, spectacular and a piece of wood



pens other than that monotonous movement. We are rocked by the everlasting sound of the waves. Suddenly the wood breaks into two pieces. This separation is the beginning of a story that easily opens the doors of anthropomorphic and symbolic comprehension. This piece of wood was one and now they are two and those two will never get back together. They flow apart and ultimately one disappears at the horizon. It is the tragedy of separation brought to a simple, material form. It is also just a piece of wood breaking apart on a beach.

Why is this movie more than a somewhat clumsy nature film? What tension is coming out of those images? Why was a camera there, at that moment, putting her eye on something that would have remained unnoticed without her presence? Is there a truth to those images? And who is holding this camera? Whose hand left the wood there on the beach and how much did this person know of what would happen? Was it just a walker passing by? Or some kind of demiurge forcing the laws of nature to his will? And finally what is the spectator doing in all this?

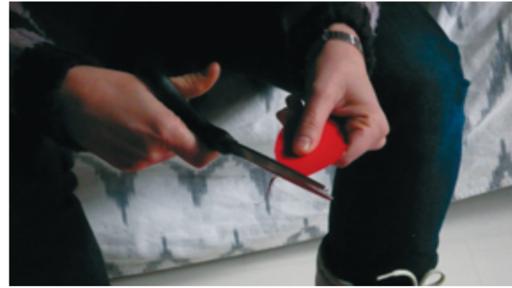
He is watching. He is fascinated. He is asking those questions.

What a spectacle!

- Is it true that we are at the phase of a more generous and dramatic treatment of the theatrical space?
- Can we say that this treatment of the theatre is spectacular?
- What in fact is spectacular?
- Is the spectacular connected to the sublime?
- And in what way?
- Is it important in your own work?

Igor Dobricic says on page 4: "We are the only audience for whom the spectacle is performed. In an enlightened absence of the 'god's eye', the non-epic, lyrical role of a spectator is the one that precedes and defines the existence of all the others possible parts."





The conceptual and the spectacular

Before I started writing this text, I tried to explain to myself in a quite simple and naïve way, what would be the difference between a “conceptual” and a “spectacular” performance. How do I experience one and the other? I decided that my response to ARTI would form a navigation between my own vocabulary and the mixed definitions of both “conceptual” and “spectacular”.

When I experience “conceptual performances” it seems to me that the organization of “signs and sensations” is made following the logic of language. Even if words or text are not used on stage, their elements are ordered by a discursive logic. When the reception of the piece happens, the spectator’s central nervous system is “more” utilized than any other body systems. Although many topics are commented on and criticized in this type of performances (critics about history, society, humanity, etc) in its intrinsic form

this type of performance is about a single mode of body organization: the rational one.

In “spectacular performances”, the primacy of the central nervous system is momentarily suspended, confusing the logical / rational way to interpret the work. The intrinsic form of the piece is about the multiplication of many body

systems. The spectacle takes into account two things: the kinetic relation between signs and sensations and the mechanism of the paradox. Intelligible signs awake ineffable sensations and vice versa. The same paradoxical movement happens in the physiological level: sensations affect the brain and the brain affects somatic and visceral sensations.

The advantage of spectacular experiences is that they diversify the functioning of our perceptual system putting into movement our interpretation of signs before they stagnate.

Nowadays, spectacle is the basis in which capitalist consumerism functions and this is why its mechanism should be investigated: to explore a different usage in the performance field.

Since spectacle is the way to communicate with our habits of consumption in all levels (experiences, things, human relations, etc) a subversion and resistance of its mechanism would bring awareness in our modes of communication. For example, one characteristic to observe is the state of semi-rationality in which the spectator finds him or herself when sensually overloaded by the experience. In this case, there is a first approximation for a “larger notion of body” (as a sum of many more systems than the rational one), and a first approximation to a state of being in the “here and now”, because of the non-speculation of past and future.

It is the responsibility of art—and not spectacle—to offer an experience of a “larger body” in the “here and now” which does not contain anything to be appropriated or consumed.

In this sense the act of communication becomes a gesture of openness in which there is nothing to capture, but the felt intention to “give and take”. Such an opening gesture would be the first step for a more generous performance art to come.



Igor Dobricic says on page 4: Contemporary spectacle is a final totalizing stage in a semantic mediation of experience. It is an apotheosis of distance and coherence, a fulfillment of an ancient phantasm (of power) into which we got seduced at a dawn of our consciousness.

habitual way...As you see I feel very inspired about the issue.

of conceptualisation break down. Maybe critical thinking is so much part of our non-conscious perceptions that to release it into sensual experiences will not leave us unprotected to the manipulation of the media. It could even happen that we distribute our critical intelligence in a more intuitive way and perhaps more precisely than before...more flexible...in a less

Hi Diego,
As you might know, ARTI is initiating a new journal. The theme of this issue is: search for the spectacle: ecstasy, heroism and the monstrous. Is it true that we are at the phase of a more generous and dramatic treatment of the theatrical space? Can we say that this treatment of the theatre

is spectacular? I read your article in Vocabulaboratories about intensity and I wondered if you could write something about the relationship between the spectacular, the excessive and intensity.
Hi Carolien,
I read your email this morning and I

could not stop thinking about the accurate timing with which it reached me. I finished a short time ago my work in collaboration with Igor “About falling” and when thinking about the next step to research, the idea of “spectacle” came into my mind: Why do I enjoy so much, with less critical mind and more openness at

the level of sensations the experience of a concert? Is it possible to start a project not being afraid of becoming spectacular? Would not that attitude release so much critical thinking and perhaps transform the work into a more “warm” experience of communication? As you said, maybe generosity comes into play when the defensive barriers

- Is it true that we are at the phase of a more generous and dramatic treatment of the theatrical space?
- What is a big dramatic gesture?
- Is it an amplification?
- Do we need to blow up the theatrical gestures, even in monstrous proportions, in order to make it visible and perceptible?

The sobriety of theatre

In his article “One Manifesto Less,” Gilles Deleuze introduces Carmelo Bene’s oeuvre as a unique possibility for the rescue of theatre from its inevitable representational death. Already in the *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze (together with Felix Guattari) had visualised the stage as the representational space par excellence (at least in its Western form): a stage suffering from psycho-linguistic suffocation under the symbolic sign of Oedipus, the theatrical work continuously remade by an excessively ‘familiar’ psychoanalysis that could only conceive the unconscious as a representational scene. Set against the theatrical conception of the unconscious as an immobile symbolic dimension where bodily perceptions and desires congeal, is Deleuze and Guattari’s idea of the unconscious as a factory, a place of continuous production, of connection and disconnection between bodies or, in the philosophers’ terminology, between ‘desiring machines’. Theatrical death, thus, as opposed to the factory of the unconscious.

The death is only apparent. Theatre is re-born, in the words dedicated by Deleuze to Bene, this time totally changed in its form, in its material and in its functioning, a theatre which has now itself become a factory. The original and productive creativity animating Bene’s stage does not emerge through any augmentation or addition of pre-existing theatrical schemata, but rather through subtraction and amputation: subtraction of narrative coherence, of signification, of subjective rationality. Carmelo mumbles, language stammers in his mouth, and all the bodies on stage, thwarted in their freedom of movement by the presence of innumerable cumbersome objects, get entangled and twisted, stumble, fall; aphasia and hindrance predominate, while everything seems to conspire against the actors’ perfect mastering of their role. **In this way, theatre becomes the place where the character can die and be re-born through the actor’s bodily composition with prostheses, things, colours, noises, lights, an actor forming and de-forming himself, his own words and gestures caught in infinite variation, in a metamorphosis that reaches far beyond the useless presence of the ‘self’.** The scene has become a factory-theatre where nothing remains immutable or intact, and every

element or fixed category is put into an uncontrollable variation.

In order to have a factory-theatre, a theatre where every representational demand is replaced by a creative urge, not so much is needed, and yet the task is arduous. It is actually not enough to have done with text, plot or choreography, or even less with characters, and in any case it is not necessary to reach that point. What is fundamental is that all representational accessories retreat, leaving the scene as a generative place where the character can be left free to move across intensities and sensations, an energetic space traversed by nothing else than an incessant alternation of high and low speeds, of catatonia and spasm. It is the ‘material’ substratum of the scenic surface that has to emerge, like a vibrating desert plane covered by a thin representational film. Everything: actors, objects, stage have to tremble, shaken by a continuous and imperceptible subterranean motus. Behind the story, behind the plot, there is always an intensive level of gestural and perceptual qualities that overcomes the character’s subjective will, qualities springing from a material will.

At this point, it is important to clarify the ‘abstractness’ of the materiality of the stage: without coinciding with a pre-formed phenomenological physicality of perceptions, movements and feelings constituting the natural basis of successive cultural developments, the materiality of the field can be better understood through its abstract character, whereby this abstractness refers to a non-positioned and non-formed matter, a matter which does not pre-exist but is immanent to the evolution of all physical and cultural formations and organisations. In other words, the immanent scene that associates all stages and scenes is the matter of theatre, **deprived of any subjective (conscious or unconscious) residue** and subtracted from **the intoxicating capture of too human feelings**. Different but coexisting with the objects and subjects, the actions and characters of a performance, the immanent dimension of theatre can be re-conceptualised through Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of the ‘plane of consistency’, a productive matrix or a field of emergence for all the formations, positions and movements of organisms

and structures with their variable quantities and qualities. All the processes of individuation (or formation) happen on the plane of immanence after the action of desiring machines that ‘machine’. The logic is therefore not one of representation or narration, and even less one of human feeling: it is a logic of cuts and combinations of material flows, a logic of impersonal multiplicities and of potential differences of intensity. It is the logic that moves what in the *Anti-Oedipus* are defined as ‘desiring machines’, and in *A Thousand Plateaus* are renamed as ‘abstract machines’ (in their virtual dimension) and ‘assemblages’ (in their actual dimension). An a-signifying and a-syntactical theatrical matter thus forms itself, through the cutting and sampling of flows, into forms of visibility and audibility, forms of luminosity and sonority, flashes and noises, sparklings and resonations, all moulded by stage machines (bodies, technologies, objects) and by ‘abstract machines’ of precise mathematical calculation that re-distribute light and dark, high and low frequencies, perceptible and imperceptible. Proliferating at all levels as a suspension of subjectivity and of mastering, as a dissolution of choreography and script, the ‘machined’ desire (or formed matter) of theatre keeps in itself a power, a force of stratification: in other words, desire contains its own negation, which traps its energetic intensity in the grid of representation and scatters it in the folds of discourse. From here, the representational and phenomenological aspects of theatre emerge as power formations. In the performing arts, the power of stratification appears as a physical self-control and as a communicational, signifying capacity of the acting body, a body that is able to dominate its own energetic excesses.

The theatrical force of actors lies in their powerlessness, in their capacity to suspend their subjectivity and be materially ‘machined’. The word ‘actor’, Bene reveals to us, comes from the Latin ‘os, oris’ (mouth), but also from ‘agere’ (not in the sense of ‘acting’, as all the actors bustling and toiling about on stage would have us believe). ‘Agere’ does not mean ‘to act’ but ‘to be acted orally’, bodily, to be said and moved by possession, in oblivion, in self-forgetfulness. In order to be an ‘actor’ one has to complicate one’s own life, to diminish oneself, to construct oneself a series of handicaps, beyond the text, beyond culture (that same culture which comes from ‘colo’, to colonise, culture as colonisation, as Jacques Derrida reminds us). To be ‘in rigorous abandonment’ to let oneself go to the desire of theatre, which is not a chaotic emotion for something that does not exist anymore, but the methodical creation of a changing theatre, of a becoming scene. Neither the anarchy of material potential nor the discipline of culture and power seem to satisfy the need of a new theatrical critique. On stage, Bene’s Richard III performs an awkward dance endowed with power but

also with an excess of energetic or electric potential that he has to manage. But how? As Bene himself reminded in an interview, the actor is not enough anymore, and even less the great actor: you have to be an ‘actorial machine’. The questions of traditional critique (‘What does a performance mean or signify?’ or ‘What does an actor feel or do?’) are replaced by a different fundamental problematic: ‘How does an actorial machine work?’. To this question, Deleuze tries to give a tentative reply, managing, with a subtle aesthetic sensitivity for the beauty and force of the theatrical work, to reconcile the reading of two different authors like Antonin Artaud and Samuel Beckett, associating them not in the name of a cultural identity or of a commonality of phenomenological intentions, but in the field of a common intensity. Is it not an orifice of intensities immediately gushing on the scene, an ‘actorial’ orifice of sonic qualities and incredible velocities of the tongue, the mouth of *Not I*, mathematically programmed to proffer, at least as it appears to us, thousands and

thousands of words per second, and accurately timed by the director? And Artaud himself, apparently so distant, with the excesses of his theatre of cruelty, from the precision of Beckett’s organisation, had he not clarified that, in the Balinese theatre-dance, everything is impersonally regulated according to a sort of systematic, or mathematical, depersonalisation of faces and bodies? **Not a spontaneous automatism, but a mathematical corporeality as much precise and composed as it is intense and material.** Thought, but in the body. Thinking in movement, rather than planning before or reflecting after... It is this careful bodily thought which allows the abstract machine of theatre to be coupled to its stage assemblages, making the intensive continuities extracted by the ‘plane of consistency’ fully divisible, systematisable, composable, drawing matter as a sort of ‘extensive-intensive continuum’. What is really important, is that interpretative and representational necessities do not totally suffocate this seductive and immediate plane of bodily-mental composition. The same abstract

and methodical depersonalisation has even been emphasised by Deleuze and Guattari in the style of a literary author (a ‘theatrical’ novelist, as Orson Welles’s cinematographic mise-en-scene of *The Trial* has revealed) such as Franz Kafka, an author capable of obtaining the maximum affective impact through the detailed de-composition of the bureaucratic machine. The machinic language of Kafka is described by the two philosophers on the basis of an aesthetic sensitivity that does not need to deal with any ghost, neither that of the author’s Jewish identity nor that of the Oedipus always in ambush in the relationship with his father. There are no more fathers and mothers, ghosts or nightmares on the scene, but only flows and waves to be cut and re-composed, a matter full of qualities and effects, or affects, a theatre to be materially explicated, rather than semantically understood. **A rhythmical escape inside and outside of corporeality and the self, rather than a performance of stable and balanced bodily power.**

As Kafka, but also Artaud and Beckett, and Bene himself knew very well, **the theatrical gesture has to be amplified, not in the sense of an enlargement and acquisition of power, but in the sense of a close vision, so close and microscopic to lose the sense of all clear visibility and neatness of detail: theatre as something that will never be comprehended in its entirety, so imperceptible and diffuse is its action. The movements on stage do not need generous dramatic interpretations but only diminution and sobriety:** the minimal character of a ‘minor gesture’, or its abstract form. Abstract forms come into being on a surface of expression (for example a canvas or the stage as a rhythming space) through a process of ‘abstraction’, **a sober removal, a disappearance of representational features and details from figuration, so that there is less and less of representation and more and more of the reality of the thing, the form, the figure, in its genesis.** Art implies thus the same abstraction as that of Zen archery and Chinese martial arts: the de-stratification, desquamation, or elimination of everything that is of an accessory nature, even feelings and emotions, with the result of concentrating energy on the spatial plane, an energy linking the body to particular points in space, so that the point belongs to the body and vice versa, in a relation of mutual in-formation. The emergence of the abstract form of a gesture implies thus a double loss: first, a continuous desquamation (de-coding) of expression, and its becoming-flesh. For example, less representation and more sensation in theatre. Second, a loss of phenomenological re-appropriation of sensations and a bodily abstraction. And, paradoxically enough, ‘gestural abstraction’ seems to be the keyword for a reappraisal of the stage from its incumbent hyper-codification, in the new technological era of theatrical digitalisation. But this subject I would like to leave as the topic of future theatrical speculation.





The spider

Although maybe completely illogical, the image of the spider was the first concrete image which came into my mind when I thought about the spectacular. Let's take a good look at the spider. In the first image the spider is small, it is far away, it is real size. It is the size of the spider as we most probably would meet it in the street, invisible, in the corner, away from our daily view and hidden from it. The small, and in most cases harmless,

spider is invisible to us, not because we are unable to see it but because it is not an immediate threat to us. Within our day to day field of vision these spiders would generally go by unnoticed. The second image is magnified. It is probably not the spider we would meet and be confronted with in our daily life. This image functions just as a magnifying glass: it creates a magnified virtual image of an object behind the lens. Can this image of the spider serve as a metaphor for the theatre? Isn't it true that we need to blow up the image (or the dramatic gesture) in the theatrical space, in order to transform it into a virtual image? This

magnified image is penetrating us, it is a terrifying, monstrous image in all its aspects. It threatens us deeply and makes us shiver and shake. The magnified, virtual image becomes almost material: we can feel it and sense it. It affects us. We are drawn to this image of the spider because we feel the danger of it, we feel seduced by it, we feel the power of it, we feel the threat of a possible death. The magnified image is detailed, it provides too much, it is excessive because we are allowed to become very intimate with this image.

- There seems to be a shift away from conceptualisation of the performance space and giving more space to the spectacle, the drama again.

Is it true that we are in a phase of a more generous and dramatic treatment of the theatrical space?

- Do you think that these 'new' developments in dance and performance are a way to declare the subject dead, this time however through fiction and illusion?

-re1: Ramsay

Yes, I have noticed, in a few recent dance pieces, a move away from conceptually-oriented approaches toward ones in which there is a dramatic element. The performances I have in mind are ones in which the dancer takes on the role of a narrator describing what, in effect, becomes a virtual dance piece. As he or she moves around the performance space, putting into words what happens at this spot in the present moment, the beholder is invited to let this virtual choreography unfold in their own imaginations. Hence in *Räumung* Gabriele Reuter gives an extremely detailed description of the objective and qualitative contents of the stage. Sally Doughty, in her *Dance For Radio*, presents a virtual lecture demonstration about her choreographic process. From time to time she interacts with the invisible dancers who are demonstrating her piece for us in an imaginary rehearsal. This doesn't quite go to plan with amusing consequences that feed back, on a metaphorical level, into the idea of recycling as a choreographic tool which is the stated theme of her presentation. In *Miguel Meets Karima*, Portuguese choreographer Miguel Pereira tells his audience a long, involved story about a series of artists' residencies he has undertaken with Karima Mansour, a choreographer from Egypt, around the idea of cross cultural collaboration. He wears an all black female costume that suggests her absence or shadow. Pete Shenton and Tom Roden of New Arts Club work with another kind of virtuality in *The Visible Men* where they repeatedly invite the audience to participate through closing their eyes on command

Stamatia Portanova says on page 10-11: In this way, theatre becomes the place where the character can die and be reborn through the actor's bodily composition with postures, things, colours, noises, lights, an actor forming and de-forming himself, his own words and gestures sought in infinite variation, in a metaphors that reaches far beyond the useless presence of the 'self'.

14

Two e-mail responses—



and keeping them closed until they are told to open them again. If one does this, one finds that one edits the show into something like a surreal, silent comedy film of improbable events. You ask if big dramatic gestures and their excessiveness are a way of declaring the subject dead. My answer is a qualified no. None of these pieces performatively create the rational unified subject theorised by philosophers during the Enlightenment. Instead they seem to me to propose highly elusive and slippery kinds of subjectivities. Unashamedly artificial, fictional selves are brought to life within

excessively unrealistic, imaginary worlds or ones of heightened intensity. Their disguises may not actually fool anyone, but they nevertheless deflect attention away from the self through the distraction of their elaborate camouflage. The point is that, by doing so, a potential space opens up within which to imagine freedom from a biopolitical imperative to perform ones normativity.

-re2: Konstantina

- Is it true that we are at the phase of a more generous and dramatic treatment of the theatrical space?

- Can we say that this treatment of the theatre is spectacular?

Far from seeking an essence, theatre today is reconciled with all aesthetic gestures (minimalism, abstract, classical, conceptual, modern, postmodern and so on) anew. This is to say that the spectacle, the dramatic element of the <post>dramatic theatre—which was in fact never absent—is again affirmed and in many cases celebrated in contemporary performances. In the quest for a new voice, appropriate for our times of ominous economic, political and social turbulence, theatre very often *talks (back)* by creating experience that traverses along the bodies of performers and spectators. This is also the case in the work of Societas Raffaello Sanzio—the use of the 'spectacle' creates a voice that can become fearsome, aggressive or delirious and *talks back* through the bodies.

Dear Konstantina,
Please could you write something on the statement that postdramatic theatre can be dramatic as well? How? In what way? Could you comment shortly on this?
Best regards,

Carolien

Dear Carolien,
Thank you for your comments! My aim is to say that it is not so important if a performance is dramatic or post-dramatic, conceptual or searching for the spectacle (etc), because it can be everything together. So, I propose to go beyond the limitations of such thinking of theatre...
Lehmann says that dramatic theatre

still lives within the postdramatic theatre (and Lyotard also says that about the modern still being within the post-modern).
For that reason I want to avoid specifying/explaining what is dramatic and what not and suggest another way to look at theatre... which is by accepting the formlessness and seeing what it 'does' [I mean

its performativity..].
Best,

Konstantina

Intended () perceived: memories of performing

I am writing from memories of performing, remaining scars within my skin and muscles. I try to think where does the word 'spectacular' find a place within these memories that emerge from intimate feelings of effort and transcendence, where the idea of being watched is secondary and at the same time ruling each of my actions. How can I write about my experiences as a performer within the work of Emilio Greco | PC¹, now that I do not perform anymore? How can my memories help me reflect on the use of the body and its external perception? Can I recall the feeling of the space in between intentions and perceptions?

DARK, me looking at myself in the mirror, looking inside my eyes to find the deepest sign of who I am before becoming another within myself. What is it that changes throughout this trip, so well organized in time and space and many times rehearsed? Will I manage to arrive at its end? Where will I be after it? Lights, bottles of water, clothes, shoes, small rituals of preparation, "five minutes till doors open" ...darkness

LIGHT, I feel the internal awareness of what happens in me while dancing, my own priorities within the performance and how they communicate to the audience; a constant dialogue within myself that involves all possible intelligences and interactions while confronting each action to an ideal one. Judgment is part of all this, it is an under layer that keeps me self-reflecting, *en garde* as if I could see my actions from outside so I could judge the clarity of my intentions. I AM IMMERSSED IN A NEW SPACE, a space where the now is gone and needs to be created through constant transformation. I move through a known structure, an invisible path that becomes only visible once it is touched by the happenings that occur in real time. A labyrinth, a structure that needs to be lived to accomplish the exit, the performance.

The work of Emilio Greco | PC pushes the body to reach away, losing control and controlling at the same time, playing with the idea of re-creation against repetition, hoping to avoid habits and plain execution, trying to transcend each moment, to have a clear necessity for being there, at that time, on that spot, aiming for the change, making choices that can allow the path to be accomplished, re-created every night. LAYERS OF ATTENTION,

Hei Bertha
I wanted to ask you if you can write about your personal experiences with the EG/PC company.
In my opinion, the work of EG/PC the body is often used as a spectacular image, as excessive, even coming very close to ecstasy. To bring the body in a certain state (which is almost

a narcotic body)... Could you write something about your own experiences? How does your body feel when you treat it as such?

Hi Carolien
The first thought I had was on HELL, since the theatricality of the egpc's work has found in this performance a

real exposure that was not so explicit since Bianco for me. But I guess you are more interested in the personal experience right?
About the body used 'as a spectacular image, as excessive, even coming very close to ecstasy', this is a challenge for me to write about. Since at first my experiences of it are not

WHAT IS IT THAT YOU SEE/READ? You, the audience/reader, the dark eye moving slowly in the chair, keeping tension on the shoulders and not breathing, sleeping or feeling exhausted, touched, not related or maybe related to my presence, sweat, my words. You the other to whom I address my becoming, my utopias, my memories of stressing the body to become, to go beyond its anatomical boundaries. I am dancing (even in this chair), I am expressing and sharing my most intimate state with you. Perceiving, experiencing, a double path where the INDIVIDUAL meets the public, the COMMON ground where lived experiences are shared.

DARK comes back to close the circle, time to leave traces and allow the other, the spectator, to appear and reveal their state after travelling along a DIFFERENT path, a personal path where my presence was real, part of a spectacle where extremes were shown through my stressing my body to become, watching and being watched. The gap appears, the necessary space between what I INTENDED and what you PERCEIVED, a GREY area open to interpretations.

1
www.tiekamsterdam.com



Diego Gil says on page 9: It is the state of semi-rationality in which the spectator finds him or herself when sensually overloaded by the experience.

Stamatia Portanova says on page 10-11: Not a spontaneous automatism but a mathematical corporeality as much precise and composed as it is intense and material. Thought, but in the body. Thinking in movement, rather than planning before or reflecting after...

Stamatia Portanova says on page 10-11: A rhythmical escape inside and outside of corporeality and the self, rather than a performance of stable and balanced bodily power'.

so related with spectacular but intimate, effort and transcendent experiences
...and yes in my transformation I am close to your last words excessive ecstasy... I will write something and send it to you ok??

15

The loud and the wet

- I thought about your project on Velazquez painting Las Meninas, especially on the notion of 'Vorstellung'. Could you say something about this?
- What is a spectacular image?
- Which role plays imagination in this?
- What is a dramatic gesture?

When German choreographer Dore Hoyer made the dance cycle "Affectos Humanos" in 1962, her expressionist, yet cool and stylized dances were already of little interest to Western audiences. Her theatrical, almost heroic approach to dance had been replaced by a comeback of the technical and virtuosic approach classical dance on the one side, and by far cooler and formal approaches than hers such as the dances of Merce Cunningham on the other.

Which is not to say that Cunningham and others at the time weren't heroes in their own right. But **expressionist dancing** had long passed its climax. Its self-sacrificial serenity didn't fit the after-war needs of building up again from the gravel. Nonetheless it is Hoyer's "Affectos Humanos", which is the most reconstructed piece from this stylistic era. One of these reconstructions was made by me. And there was something heroic and self-sacrificial in the beginning of this work: Coming from release techniques and performance art oriented practices, I had to give up a lot of my physical habits and artistic beliefs in order to be able to enter Dore Hoyer's realm of dancing and choreographing, so rich with **pathos**. As German critic Gerald Siegmund wrote at the time, I had to put my body to the test and take the risk of failing.

In this story the heroic is defined by a physical fact: pushing bodily and emotional habits and patterns to their edges. In theatre, this is generally called catharsis. There are different forms of it. But they all share yet another pattern: the social habit of accepting and even expecting the risk of pushing edges in the theatrical space, no matter how dryly, silently, loudly or wet... What works and what does not is a matter of fashion and of individual taste. Sometimes a dry and silent treatment works generously on the emotions, other times things have to get loud and wet in order to affect anybody. And there are times in which a certain treatment of the theatrical space has become so habitual that the treatment itself has to be put to its edge—because the space for risk or playfulness has got lost in the habit's patterns.

At the moment I am busy with looking at a painting—"Las Meninas" by Diego Velazquez—and at how this painting could become a dance. Not so much in terms of staging the people portrayed but by trying to imagine how their courtly and theatrical gestures could become contemporary, maybe democratic gestures within a theatrical experience. Maybe the outcome will be loud and full of pathos, maybe it will be small and si-

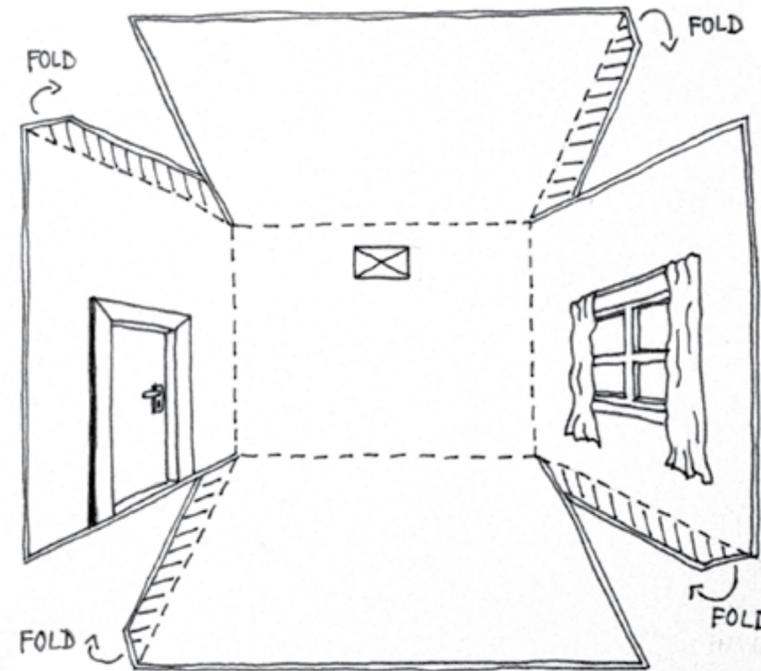
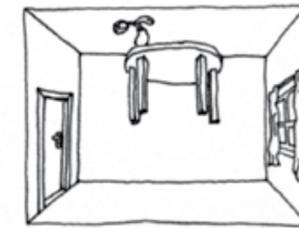
lent, maybe it will be an unforeseeable mix... in any case, I hope to break with some habits in the process.



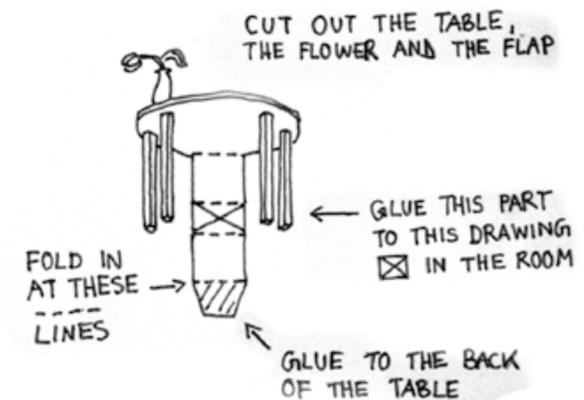
pathos (Greek, suffering; see Iwanthly) In Indo-European roots.
 1. A quality, as of an experience or a work of art, that arouses feelings of pity, sympathy, tenderness, or sorrow.
 2. The feeling, as of sympathy or pity, so aroused.

CREATE YOUR OWN SPECTACLE

- YOU NEED :
- SCISSORS
 - GLUE



- ////// GLUE THESE PARTS TO THE ADJACENT WALLS
- FOLD AT THESE LINES
- CUT HERE



- I am thinking of your last performance 'Nothing Can Surprise Us'. Why were you interested in what you might call big dramatic gestures?

On staging drama queens



Jochem van der Valk

stage this duality of being, this sense of 'I know I am overdoing it but I need to overdo it in order to allow myself to do it'. Or again: 'It affects me only when I also show that I know it is affecting me.'

Strophe

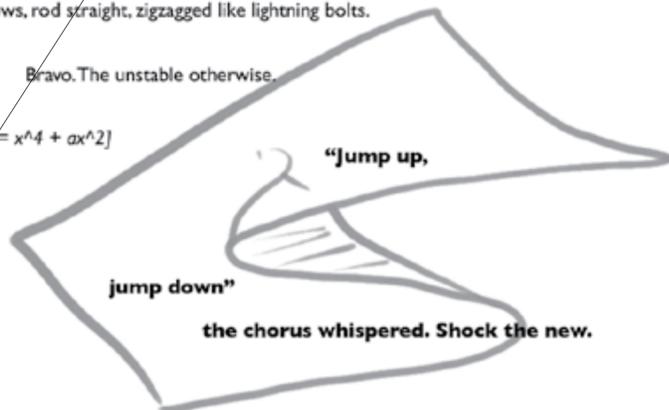
After a violent tremble, the once flat platform folded.

The rectilinear frame bowed.

Rows, rod straight, zigzagged like lightning bolts.

Bravo. The unstable otherwise.

$$[V = x^4 + ax^2]$$



And then the discontinuous, uneven ground emerges as the intensities of the bifurcating event bend the cusp of curvature in a whirlwind of turning.

Of turning over. Turning over:

A black Cata. A white light. A broken word.

A crack in the Sahara.

$$[V = x^4 + ax^2 + bx]$$

After the revolution, more of the same.

Igor Dobric says on page 4: 'The tragic fall of the Twin Towers; the grandiose operatic narrative of climate change; the dramatic collapse of the global financial system; are bursting out of their fictional distance. Against our will we are finally getting affected by the monstrous incarnation of the spectacle that we are creating.'

Interview with Boris van der Leer

was endless, and therefore it became unreal and entirely fictional?

B: Sorry, can you repeat the question?

X: Never mind. Can I ask you one other question?

B: Sure. Shoot!

X: What has been your most spectacular experience?

B (thinks and hesitates): Let me think... uhh, a year ago, I was climbing the Cho Oyu (*Cho Oyu, which means "The Turquoise Goddess", is the sixth highest mountain in the world. It is 8,201 meters high and located in Eastern Nepal along the Tibetan border*). When I reached the top of the mountain, after days of bad weather and storm, the view was astonishing. I could see miles away. I even saw the sea from a distance... it was just amazing... the air was thin, I could hardly breathe... I just can say... it was worth it.

X: Your whole crew, of ten people, died in this expedition because of ice fall near the summit. You were the only survivor. How do you feel about this?

B: What can I say? It is a tragedy and I miss these guys every single second of my life.

X: Was it worth it?

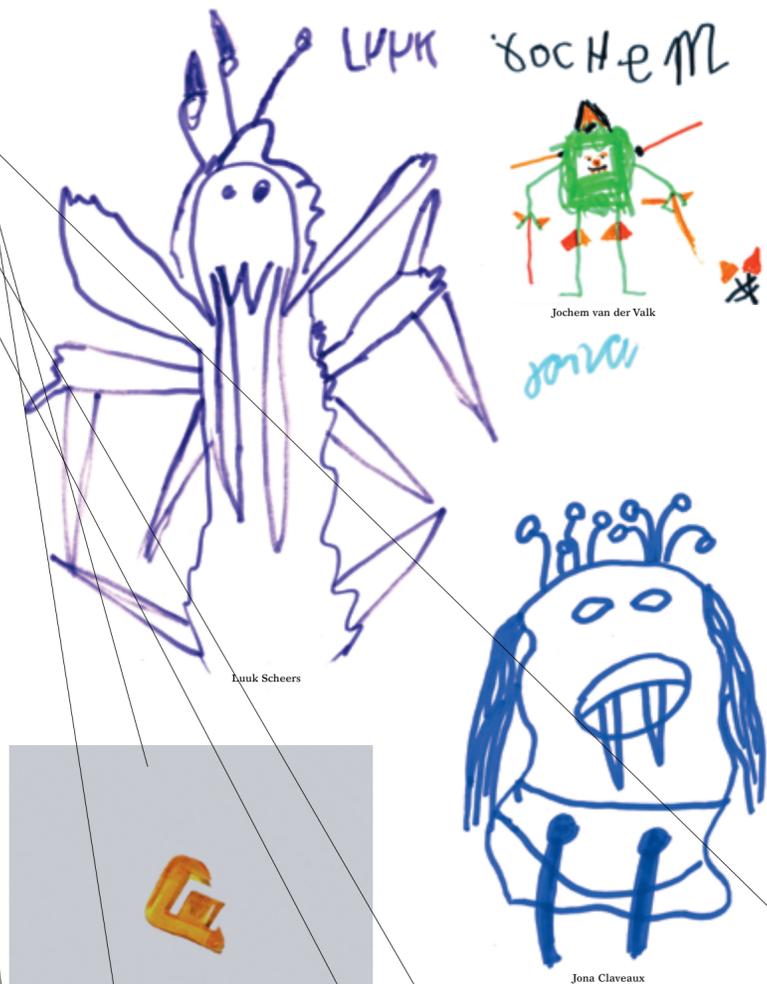
B: What kind of question is that? Are you fucking with me? (Boris walks away without answering the question, at the door he turns around).

B: I was lucky. That's all. If you ask me if I would do it again, then, sure, yes, I would take the risk of dying myself, just to stand for five minutes on the top of the mountain again... .

X: Do you think that the view was so spectacular because in a way it was out of range, it surpassed all borders and limitations, the view became infinite, it



Kristina Andersen
Ondine Cioez
Norberto Llopis de Segarra
Kjuntz ae Ro
Norberto Llopis de Segarra
Norberto Llopis de Segarra



Monsters

What is a monster?
What is the monstrous?
Is a monster shockingly hideous or frightful?
Is a monster exceptionally large?
Abnormal?
With gigantic teeth?
Can a monster kill?
Is the monstrous threatening us with death?

Or: are monsters these tiny little beings, objects or theatrical gestures which close our vision, operating on the edge of visibility. *'Slipping in and out of the twilight zone of transformation from a knotty and murky shape into a differentiated form?'*

(Jeroen Peeters, 2006, Replacing the Monstrous)

THE MONSTER (DESCRIPTION)
"The monster" is a kind of object that challenges your gaze, an object that forces you to look. It is a real monster and not a fictional monster, it is something that you could imagine in your field of vision but at the same time it conceals something weird, something obscure. You could even have found it in the street. They are not of a remarkable extravagancy, they are in fact quite common, even vulgar. You have to look at them closely to realize that they are weird, they don't show any utility at all, you wouldn't be able to guess where they come from, what purpose they served. They are blunt, boorish, nothing in them insinuates the reason for their being, they are coarse, if somebody happens to put one of them in your hands, sometimes the first impulse would be to drop it like in a knee-jerk reaction or to smile, embarrassed and say—what is this?! It looks like they are, but they are not, they are nothing, they exist, they are an unfortunate coincidence for few and a relief for others, they are monsters, that is why they menace with disappearance, they suggest absence, dissemination, they are half way between being a body without pores and a pore without body.

THE SOCIETY OF THIS LITTLE CREATURES
The society of these little beings could be the society of the most common and at the same time the one of the weirdest. In this society the common doesn't mean what was neutralized, the most common is rather what wasn't still identified. This would be its only equality; so monstrous and so sexy, so monstrous and so real, so monstrous and so header grey, so monstrous and so orange, so monstrous and so brilliant, so monstrous and so whatever.

In fact they couldn't be neutralized because they are unable to become a subject, a subject as a logical identity. Unintentionally they can only remit to that semiotic of the immanency, they can't be more than what they are, their condition only allows us to look at them through that other ontology of the univocal being. The only thing that could place those creatures together, is that you don't know what they are - even if they seem familiar to you.

THE POLITICS OF THESE LITTLE CREATURES
In the customs office these would be the

objects that would refuse to identify themselves, they would give no facility, nor a clue, they do not even come from the bad hemisphere, they come from the worst, from the one that doesn't have a lineage, from the family of the bastards, from the range of those that stand in the way, they are satisfied with the mere fact of disturbing with no reason, the wind has brought them to the more centric point, to the place where they are the least convenient.

They have experienced a strange transformation, to the people keen on reading signs, including myself, these little creatures become the most abominable of the beings, they attack us with the most weird signals. It looks like they want to give meaning, but they don't. They mean nothing, instead they spread unrecognizable signs. They are poor inconsistent beings, the only thing they are able to represent is their own inconsistency. They don't accept any economy of attention, you have to look at them in a wider perspective since you can't apply any mechanism to them, any system of reduction that could economize your senses. You can not fight them with objectivity, nor can subjectivity neutralize them. Objectivity and subjectivity are concepts that come from a strange semiotic to them. They do not understand those parameters.

THE FUNCTION OF THOSE LITTLE CREATURES
These beings don't have any utility at all but they function as an eraser. They menace us with disappearance: if you don't pay attention you could lose too much. Having them close to you constitutes a danger because they erase anything they touch, they play a strange game.

I imagine that if you put a ten euro bill in between those objects that you see, its value would disappear or change. They are erasers, attention deviators. Their mere apparition is lethal, infallible but you have to realize that they are monsters, if not they could go by unnoticed.

WHERE DO THEY COME FROM?
The first question that was aroused in this project, was whether monsters are a subjective matter or rather objective. Is a monster a mental construction? Monsters are half way between subjectivity and objectivity, they deny the objectivity of "the other" but at the same time they deny its subjectivity. The object I

am looking for, is an object unable to be placed, an object that is impossible to recognize, an object in which you can't project any of your knowledge. It proves that "the other" cannot be the projection of the self since this kind of object doesn't admit any possible projection. You can project nothing onto them. These monsters in fact prove that we can still feel affected, that we can still be infected.

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1987) describe in 'A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia' the concept of becoming "the other": becoming woman, becoming animal, becoming whale etc., as opposed to the Freudian concept of becoming. We don't become the other thing by identification, by coping, by analogy of proportion or by representation, we become through the affect that the other thing produces on us.

As I said before, monsters are half way between being a body without pores and pores without a body. They are a body without pores because they are just what they are and they are pores without a body because they don't know about boundaries. They are a pure fugue, you couldn't say where they start and where they finish. They are pure invasion, they remind us that perception is not in the object, nor in ourselves but in a line that goes through us both.

(You can see the video 'Monsters' commissioned by "la Porta" in the virtual cycle "Sobrenatural"—<http://www.laportabcn.com/laportabcn/Inicio.do>)



Stamatia Portanova says on page 10-11: ... deprived of any subjective (conscious or unconscious) residue...

Stamatia Portanova says on page 10-11: ... a sober removal, a disappearance of representational features and details from figuration, so that there is less and less of representation and more and more of the reality of the thing, the form, the figure, in its genesis.

Dear Norberto,
As I wrote you before, ARTI is initiating a new, non-regular, incidental art journal. The theme for the first issue is 'search for the spectacular'. Is it true that we are at the phase of a more generous and dramatic treatment of the theatrical space? The search for the spectacle, can

also be seen as a search for the monstrous, the too much, the exaggerated, the horrible, the blunt, the monstrous as that which exceeds our imagination (so that it in fact triggers us) or which is without meaning. I think here your project can come in. Please could you send me a short text and some of your pictures?

The eye of horus (or: flight from that which is real to reality)



22

He couldn't stand it anymore. He had a feeling that inside, in the room, where it was silent, far too silent for his liking, that he would go crazy there. He fled outside, to the streets.

It was curious that he should be struck by such a sense of emptiness—a horrible, claustrophobic emptiness—in his living room, he had after all just installed such a pleasant spectacle there. Using several computers he had transformed the walls of his room into panoramic views. Thus live feeds from different webcams were projected on two walls, while a third wall was largely covered by an enormous flatscreen television which by way of uncountable digital channels provided him with even more new and intriguing images. In this manner he whiled away his free hours in an exceptionally pleasant fashion. He surfed over a sea of images, lying on the couch or sometimes sitting behind his table—whatever suited the moment. Thus he saw what was happening in Times Square or on the Champs d'Elysées, he was in all the famous places he could possibly find. And when one spectacle started to bore him, he surfed to another just as easily. Because webcams were everywhere, no matter how wildly improbable the place, one could rest assured that a camera had been put there. One of his favourite cams was in Norway, and showed a landscape in which barely anything could be

seen, but in which he could lose himself for hours. From the roof of the fisheries school in Honningsvåg all you could really see were clouds, above a vague horizon barely separating heaven and earth. He spent whole evenings zapping from one perspective to another. He wanted to see everything, be everywhere, not miss anything, and more than anything he wanted the feeling that he was not lacking anything.

But little by little something uncanny crept in through his fascination, he no longer felt so at home in his living space of images. And that unpleasant feeling became increasingly strong—however much he tried to comfort himself—and threatened to overwhelm him. Last night he had even dreamt it. He was a security guard, in charge of supervising surveillance cameras of the company for which he worked. A powerful job, because he saw everything, even though that often meant only empty corridors and bare walls. But sometimes he also saw people, like ghosts. They shuffled along the corridors, or by the gates, seeking the possibility of entering or making unseen clandestine transactions with people on the outside. This was part of the game, and he liked playing.

But now suddenly more monitors appeared in front of him and apparently the cameras were moving in all directions because the images started danc-

ing until finally all the screens went black. He panicked—even more so, after he had started to see *himself* on all those monitors, sitting on his little chair in that little room. From every angle he was seen, he saw himself, and was increasingly being zoomed in on—to such an extent that the images of his body dissolved into vague and finally completely unrecognizable spots. He had a feeling that the gazes watching him though the cameras were piercing his skin on all sides and pulling him apart. At that moment he started awake, afraid, clammy and sweating.

Once on the street he looked around wildly. What in God's name was wrong with him? He walked to a bench and sat down, with his head in his hands. What was he doing? He really didn't know; he couldn't even begin to give an explanation. All he could think of was what his friends told him, namely that he wanted too much. Maybe they were right, he thought. He wanted too much. He wanted everything. Just like he wanted to see everything that could be seen in the world—but it was still not enough. His friends had laughed about this. "We knew it," they joked. "One TV-screen would never have been enough." One of them had fled his living space at the very first, overcome by the bombardment of images, paralyzed. He could barely move, he said later, he felt almost as if he had been assaulted. David, since that was the name of the inhabitant of this uncanny space, felt that his friend was acting childishly. He himself enjoyed the firing line of images, he would take a seat for it, he would lie down for it and let it come over him, feeling caressed by the beams. It was really a physical experience when all those flashes bounced against your body. He liked it. But it was never intense enough. Certainly he could see even more, feel even more? The idea of covering a fourth wall with a screen naturally had already occurred to him.

David raised his head. The twilight grew and the neon lighting of the shops contrasted beautifully with the dark. Yes, he thought, he always wanted more, he wanted the most extreme, the impossible. The shops were open, and people hustled from establishment to establishment, talking busily and gesticulating as they passed him. "The impossible," he mumbled softly. Maybe he had now gotten what he wanted, the ultimate, but then with faded colours, in a completely different guise from the one he had expected. The dream that night had opened his eyes. It was something monstrous. It wanted to tear him apart, to pull him into a thousand bits, by a thousand glances. His desire to be everywhere was apparently less innocent than he had thought. He had called into being something that he could no longer control that was starting to control him. Now he was seated here in the street, he wanted to put it back. The monster with a thousand eyes had to return to its cage. He wanted to

be the boss again, the one who looked and not the one who was looked at from all sides. But it seemed that things were no longer so easy to control, nor could he escape. Because even here in the street the dream followed him. He felt he was being watched, shut in, anxious, the prisoner of the people around him.

David swore to himself. The street was supposed to save him, wasn't it? That was the feeling he had in any case when he was leaving the house: he needed room, another space with other shapes. But how in God's name could the strangers in the street save him from himself? For the moment he only felt the threatening tension that permeated the street: he darted quick glances at the people around him and they did the same with him. The others were no more than objects, good to look at from a distance, distant. And thus for them he was little more than an object, a rather pathetic case on a bench. The glances struck at him back and forth; it hurt. Slowly he raised himself once again, he straightened his back. When he looked at something he felt his own gaze rebound just as hard. Apparently he couldn't elude the fear, which drove him out of himself. David almost begged for something which would bring him once more among the people, which would bridge the distance between them—that inimical void—even if only for a moment.

With a sense of purpose that he had not expected from himself he stood up on the bench.

He started speaking as he stood on his bench. First softly and insecure, but as soon as his story took a more definite shape, more strongly and with a louder voice. The words apparently went their own way. He followed them. And he told the legend of Isis and Osiris, mythological founders of the Egyptian world—a story that he probably had picked up from some television channel.

"Osiris, powerful ruler of the Egyptians, magically transformed the dry land into fertile fields and was torn apart by his jealous brother Seth, who governed over nothing but desolation."

Most of the people just kept on walking and barely paid any attention to him. One said in passing: "Yeah and so what?"

David looked around. There were already quite a few people on the street. Most of the people were keeping up a pretty fast pace, rushing from shop to shop. What a wonderfully light tread people have who drift through the street this way, he thought. David recalled the many evenings he had allowed himself to be carried off by the worlds which appeared on his LCD screens. Then he felt a similar illumination, a wonderful forgetfulness. But with those thoughts the fear that lately had gained such a hold on him surfaced again. Obviously that feeling had not been left behind in his home. He had to continue.

"Osiris." He continued his story which

now became more of a presentation with busy gestures, "Osiris was torn apart and his body parts scattered over all of Egypt. But he was found again, re-encountered, he found himself," emphasized David sharply, pronouncing the words, "through his wife Isis. And as his last deed he gave her a son, Horus."

Some of the passers by stopped and looked at him with surprise. Nonetheless he did not feel their gaze as a threat. He had found the words to defend himself, to catch their gaze instead of repelling it. The looking was softened by the power of the story, the people no longer only saw him, they also saw his heroes. David felt better. He told of the battle Horus fought with his uncle Seth, the murderer of his father who now also wanted to get rid of him in order to obtain the throne. David could not remember that he had been so enamoured of this story. What was it in this story that interested him? And why should it interest others? But something happened through which he was sucked into his own stream of words and people kept standing, listening attentively, more and more people. David spoke at length about the climax of the battle between Seth and Horus, fought on the bottom of the Nile. He told how both changed themselves into hippopotami and swam towards the sea. He who came up for air before three months had passed would not have the throne. David saw a few people come closer in order to hear the denouement. and he spoke with

even more fire about the fight in which Horus threatened to kill Seth, until his uncle plucked out one of Horus' eyes. But Horus was healed by the moon god Thoth who replaced the eye. The people around David looked relieved, that was how much they were being carried along by the story, and even more so when he told how the battle finally ended in favour of Horus, the Healed.

And David also told about the meaning of the eye, for the Egyptians—but perhaps even more for himself: the eye of Horus, the symbol of recuperation, of healing. It gripped him, this story of the eye.

"The eye," he expounded, "can start to lead its own life when it is separated from the body. Then it gets the ability to fly everywhere, no longer restricted by the limits of the body, capable of seeing everything and of terrorizing the people. But when it is returned to the body of which it is a part, it is mostly a sign of healing. When we only see with our eyes, they are plucked out and they turn against us."

The people looked at each other somewhat surprised. Afterwards they wandered off, disappearing into the crowds of shoppers. David still stood on his bench, surprised by the curious inspiration which had overcome him, but also cheered, as if looking at the world through a new window. That he had presented such a bizarre story and strange spectacle barely affected him. Carefully he stepped down from the bench.



23

Bertha Bermudez Pascual

As a dancer she was part of Frankfurt Ballet, Compañía Nacional de Danza in Madrid and Emio Greco | PC. In 2005 she stopped performing and started working for Emio Greco | PC transmitting their work and doing research around dance notation. Since then she has coordinated the interdisciplinary project Capturing Intention and became a member in 2007 of ARTI. Right now she is one of the coordinators of the research project Inside Movement Knowledge.

Andrea Bozic

is an Amsterdam-based choreographer with an educational background in dance, literature, English and new media. She makes interdisciplinary performance work in which film, dance, theatre and new media collide. The performances, installations and actions all deal with the issue of presence, often bringing real and imagined people and spaces next to each other. She has produced her work at the Frascati (former Gasthuis), Amsterdam and tours it internationally.

Ramsay Burt

is Professor of Dance History, Department of Performance & Digital Arts at De Montfort University, Leicester, UK. His publications include *The Male Dancer*, *Alien Bodies*, and *Judson Dance Theatre*. His research interests include the performance of gender and identity in twentieth and twenty first century dance theatre. With Professor Susan Foster, he is founder editor of *Discourses in Dance*.

Igor Dobricic

is a dramaturge and theatre maker, born in Belgrade, Serbia. For the time being Igor is living and working in Amsterdam. He is collaborating internationally with a number of choreographers (Diego Gil, Nicole Beutler, Keren Levi, Martin Nachbar). He is also a guest teacher at the School For New Dance and a research fellow with the Amsterdam School of the Arts.

Sher Doruff

is an ARTI researcher and a mentor in the Amsterdam Master of Choreography program at the AHK. She is currently engaged in diagrammatic praxis.

Konstantina Georgelou

is a PhD candidate in Dance and Performance Studies at the University of Utrecht. She is working as a dramaturge in dance companies, as an editor for art-magazines and occasionally she performs. She is a collaborator for the International Dance Festival of Kalamata in the field of programming and research.

Diego Gil

is a choreographer and performer working in Holland. Since his graduation from the School for New Dance Development in 2003 he has been making performances that mix philosophical theory with dance practice. Investigating the potential of the body and (its) movement to produce thoughts and feelings that shift away from common sense frames of interpretation.

Carolien Hermans

With a professional background in performing arts, orthopedagogy and new media, Carolien Hermans works as an artist in Amsterdam. From January 2005- January 2009 she has been affiliated to ARTI as an artistic researcher.

Cuqui Jerez

studied dance in Madrid and New York. Since 1990 she has been working as a dancer and performer in several companies, films and productions. She created the following pieces: *Me encontraré bien enseguida solo me falta la respiración* (1995), *Dígase en tono mandril* (1996), *Hiding Inches* (1999), *A space odyssey* (2001) (2001), *The Real Fiction* (2005); and *The Rehearsal* (2007).

Norberto Llopis de Segarra

Born in Valencia and currently based in Holland, he graduated in dance and choreography in the "institut del teatre" Barcelona. In 2005-2007, he took a Master's course in performing arts at DasArts in Amsterdam. He has carried out work in several different forms in Barcelona, Brussels and Holland and has performed in different creative processes with artists including Carolien Hermans, Paz Rojo, Diego Gil and Jeftha Van Dinther, amongst others.

Martin Nachbar

is a choreographer and performer from Berlin. Occasionally, he also writes for European dance and theatre magazines. His work has been touring internationally, notably his collaboration with Jochen Roller, "mnemonic nonstop", and his duet with his father, "Repeater". His on-going work on the reconstruction and re-contextualization of Dore Hoyer's "Affectos Humanos" has achieved acclaim in Germany and Europe. He teaches and is currently also studying at the AMCh.

André Nusselder

is a Dutch philosophical writer. His book on imagination in information technology will be published in Slavoj Žižek's *Short Circuits* series at MIT Press (Fall 2009): *Interface Fantasy. A Lacanian Cyborg Ontology*. For more information and contact: www.nusselder.org

Stamatia Portanova

received her PhD from the University of East London, School of Social Sciences, Media and Cultural Studies. She is currently a post-doctoral fellow at the Concordia University of Montreal, and she is working on the preparation of a monograph dedicated to the relationship between choreography, technology and science. She is also a member of The Sense Lab and of the editorial board of *Inflexions*. A journal for research-creation. Her articles have been published in various books, peer-reviewed journals and online magazines.

David Weber-Krebs

is an artist developing ideas that find their realisation in performances, videos and installations. He is co-founder of LISA and artist-researcher at the art practice and development research group at the Amsterdam School of the Arts.

Julia Willms

studied Visual Communications at the Academy of Fine Arts in Maastricht and Media Art at the University for Applied Arts in Vienna. She makes video installations (often site specific), photo collages as well as installations and drawings. Her work has been shown in solo and group exhibitions as well as in media and video art festivals. She is in a long ongoing collaboration with Andrea Bozic.