



Souls' Landscapes

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Souls' landscapes

High tension performance

This unembellished, intense and lively encounter tends to make the stage a place where discourse full of imagery may burst forth, and in which the energy and passion in every movement matter more than the visible phenomenon. This is a space where real and imaginary masks are used or shattered in an attempt to reveal some of the fragmented realities which dwell within us; ethereal landscapes...

The topic is raw and compelling, both dreamlike and hypnotic; always seeking to push the performers beyond their limits...

Entissar Al Hamdany: Performance & Choreography

Fabrice Taraud: Performance & Choreography

Joel Lokossou: Acting & Script

Rigo 23: Scenography & artistic advice

Uriel Barthélémi: Design, Composition, Drums & Laptop, Scenography.



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Premise :

The performance has a musical basis stemming from research conducted by Uriel Barthélémi: He was invited by the Al Mamal Foundation to play at the Jerusalem Show in 2010, and began his own musical research into trance and exploration of rhythmic continuums. He has aimed to continue this research by collaborating with the dancer Entissar Al Hamdany.

Project Origination and Presentation :

This project, which was started by the musician and composer Uriel Barthélémi, came about following several meetings:

A series of meetings with Hip-Hop dancer Entissar Al Hamdany in Paris, then Beirut, with visual artist Rigo23 in East Jerusalem, then Madeira, and finally with the Beninese actor Joel Lokossou.

Our respective paths led us to debate and brought us to Frantz Fanon's writings, which are a legacy for all of us, and whose thinking resonates strongly today.

As it was not desirable - and impossible - to make a linear adaptation of his writings, the current form uses short excerpts and is intended to be an «extension» of some of his ideas, and an abstract, musical and choreographic continuation of his thinking in regard to the countless acts of enslavement of people across the world.

We shall attempt to examine how certain modern-day cultures have emerged and consider the ways of thinking derived from various types of colonization. We seek to understand where this leads us, whilst showing both the beauty and ugliness with a fervor designed to be conveyed in an almost telepathic fashion, going beyond the physical.

We aim to scrutinize through images the methods used by these types of both ancient and modern colonization, and transpose them in a radical, hypnotic and versatile manner, just like the polymorphous substance of an as yet unnamed civilization, which seems logical for those who are insulated from it, and monstrous for others...

Frantz Fanon :

Frantz Fanon is an author known for his writings, «Black Skins, White Masks» and, «The Wretched of the Earth.» He analyzed the colonization and decolonization processes from several points of view: the way colonial states acted in the decolonization era to retain complete power; and the way in which minds and belief systems have been routinely destroyed and misrepresented...

He helps us see just how effective the weapons used by colonial countries were, and shows us that, currently, fifty years after his death, these weapons remain so — if not even more powerful...

In spite of the extreme, growing complexity of the geopolitical situation since the decolonization era, some of the processes in effect during colonization are still in place. Although some of the former colonial states are a shadow of themselves, the dominant states remain, continuing flagrantly and alarmingly to perpetuate the colonization mindset. This has now reached a level never seen before.

Such a mindset, either overt or concealed, progresses with the support of an administration which is able to divert attention efficiently away from itself.

As it is neither our intention to take excessive shortcuts, nor to mix politics, geopolitics, conspiracy theories and the performing arts, this project is limited to sketching out an abstract portrait which is nonetheless as clear as it possibly can be as to some of the consequences of various colonization's; consequences which are still visible, and more deeply rooted than ever.

Transmission :

We only seek here to address ourselves as we cannot even guess at the depth of influence of a complex tradition perpetuated over several centuries which has mutated, becoming ever more polymorphous and caustic, and which has partially generated the complexity of today's world.

Through others, by cross-media debate, and the outwardly silent but nonetheless active dialogue with the members of the audience, we seek to question what dwells deep within us, with the aim of it taking form onstage.

We wish to convey images whose extreme intensity is conveyed by their onstage enactment, sometimes becoming violent, thus evoking a kind of drama which exceeds the outlook of so-called civilized or uncivilized minds, questioning ancestors; our ancestors from here and elsewhere.

As performers travel on the musical continuum, they are asked to keep their eyes open, transforming them into mirrors for the audience, so that they, without any form of process, may contemplate what connects us across the barriers of an uncertain, polarized future.

If there are as many weapons as there are tears, then their proliferation can only be the logical outcome. In such a case, we would like to take a non-chronological direction which does not discuss time, but rather suspends it... and read the situation in an abstract, overall way without judgment or trial; and attempt in the way we interpret it to transcend and in a sense embellish it.

Musical project :

The chronological suspension is musically transposed through exploration of the rhythmic continuum; an almost permanent hypnotic movement, always on the ascent, even during silence. We look to create different forms of simultaneous temporality which actually question this suspension, through the composition based on the continuum.

The multitemporality of the musical movements becomes a bewitching phenomenon, both extremely slow and almost frenetically fast, reducing the performer to his physical limitations. The quick pace also makes it possible to cross several recurrent rhythms which each have a different musical meter. All of these processes enable creation of a dense medium shaped by the musician, causing abstract, moving images to appear, floating landscapes which resonate with the topic.

These ideas are explored through drums and computer. Uriel Barthélémi has been working for ten years on incorporating the computer as an «extension» of the drum kit, aiming to change its timbres and resonances. He uses electronics as a medium which is shapeable by his instrument, and conversely, the instrument serves as the raw material by which to build electro-acoustic sounds.

The compositional technique is flexible, making use of a type of semi-random electro-acoustic programming which works like a system of windows opening onto possibilities. This type of composition leaves ample space for the dynamics of live performance and is designed to integrate the concept of the show, leaving the performer free to make his own decisions within an overarching structure.

This system can be compared to the improvisational one used in Jazz and some of the composition principles pioneered by John Cage. Here, it is implemented as a structural basis, making it possible for sound and musical composition to be considered as one and the same living medium.

Literary material :

The literary material is not to be seen as documentary or informative but rather as a sound and poetic medium. The literary composition will be completely incorporated into the sound, contributing to the mental landscapes which we wish to make appear.

It will not only be based on reading excerpts of Fanon, but also comprised of textual fragments or words designed to echo the author.

Free-form adaptation will be carried out with the Beninese actor Joel Lokossou, taking into account both the sound of the words, and their weight and corporeality through their interpretation by the actor and dancers.

Some excerpts in English will be recorded and worked on, with the source material being the voice of the American-Madeiran artist Rigo 23.

The majority of the text will be performed on stage by Joel Lokossou who embodies the spoken word with his great love for language. His vision of verbal play will allow us to explore several tones, transforming texts which were originally intended to be read, into an intense or fragmented dance of sound and movement; transposing macro or micro situations — particular policies or personal circumstances — into furious, hard-hitting, absurd and joyful verbal sparring...

Visual and Stage Design Material :

Words will not be Rigo 23's only contribution to this project; his chief role is above all a visual one. He will be called on to create the stage design which is intended to be most straightforward (in appearance), subtle and direct. With the stage design being based on lettering, street slang, if any, as well as certain kinds of illuminated objects, the key idea is for the stage design to be part of the stage and musical language, without becoming an intrusive or restrictive object. It should be in tune with the dancers' movements and the actor's voice.

In order to avoid creating objects which are too heavy in the physical sense, and in keeping with our aim of retaining a minimalist, raw look, we envisage working with recycled items:

For example, we are thinking of making a forest of «tree» pillars from plankton nets which have been recovered and put to a new use, which will loom up as the show progresses. Although, in theory, these materials might be cumbersome and heavy, they are actually extremely light and easy to handle.

The principal object on the set will take form in paper lettering, illuminated by LEDs such as neon lights, controlled by the sound computer which will send out data generated by the music, in order to make these objects interact as closely as possible with other realms. In the current project, these objects provide the main source of light onstage. So, this will create an extremely dark area where shadows will also have their say, enhancing the keynote address upon which the show is based.

The Choreography Project :

This takes a similar form to the musical project:

The basics of trance are omnipresent and we are aiming to get a sort of trance with a style similar to Voodoo.

Dancers Entissar Al Hamdany and Fabrice Taraud both come from the Hip-Hop scene, specializing in Poppin', with each having developed a special language of their own.

By virtue of his background in Paris and Beirut, Entissar Al Hamdany has created a distinctive language as an outcome of his relative isolation during his stays in Beirut.

The result is a most expressive, powerful body language with subtle, refined gestures.

His wish was to work on this project with his partner, Fabrice Taraud.

The language they have developed together showcases an organic, dense choreographic discourse which is amazing considering the various other forms derived from Hip-Hop.

The way the dynamics have been organized and the direction of the energy flow are finely in tune with the musical discourse:

- flow has several speeds and is multi-faceted due to the diversity of language used by the performers.

This diversity works thanks to their great understanding of the various sound concepts and through the proximity of the different types of energy explored both via music and gestural language. These urban, colorful types of energy can be warm, cold and electric simultaneously, without compromise.

As they have been long-standing collaborators, the fluidity of their physical movements is amazing and dramatic, whilst retaining the core anger of Hip-Hop dance.

The different scenes which will be created take into account all of the stage components, each having its own life. Dance is no exception to this process and the various components of the choreography are produced to this end. The independence of each main player is only apparent.

The dancers, the actor and the musician play different parts of the same expanding flow; different physicalities reaching towards the same goal...

Their respective paths cross and thus are not parallel; but they do converge into the same 'polyphony' of images which bombard us, inasmuch as they are also part of us.

Bios :

Uriel Barthélemi is a drummer, composer and electro-acoustician.

Following his studies at the conservatoires of Reims, La Courneuve, Montreuil, and the IRCAM, he embarked upon electro-acoustic compositional work. This has led him to collaborate in numerous areas of the performing arts from 2002 onwards: dance, marionettes, theatre, as well as the visual arts (Forced entertainment, Cie Pseudonymo, Cie KA, Cie PunchisnotDead, cie Mobilis Immobilis, Cie Veronica Vallecillo, Cie La Strada, Cie La tramédie, ..., the visual artists Cécile Béthléem, Elise Boual, and Nicolas Clauss).

In parallel with his compositional work, he performs as a drummer for several projects and conducts research into the drum and computer connection, developing his own software in Max-Msp.

These multiple themes have made him reflect upon the concepts of performance and improvisation, to take into account the concepts of plasticity and physicality of sound through spatial layout, as well as questioning the place of the performer (movements, energy, corporeality) and psychological contexts (intentions, cinematographic colors, sonic staging, and so on).

His recent work enquires into these themes and adopts a different angle each time.

Known for his intimate blend of drums and electronics, flexible composition and improvisation, he has had works commissioned by Césaré – CNCM, (...). He is also an associate composer of the Soundtrack Company and regularly works with Puce Muse Studios.

He collaborates and appears with many artists, such as Hélène Breschand, Tarek Atoui, Kazuyuki Kishino (KK NULL), Antoine Schmitt, Susie Ibarra, Ikue Mori, Eric Pailhé, among other.

He has played and performed in music and performances festivals such as Exodos (Lubjana), Jazzmandu (Katmandu), Scènes ouvertes à l'insolite (Paris), Villette numérique (Paris), The Jerusalem show (East Jerusalem), Irtijal (Beirut), Les Détours de Babel (Grenoble), Performa (N.Y.), Nuit blanche (Paris), Memory Marathon (Serpentine Gallery, London), Sharjah Art Biennial 2013 (U.A.E.), Ruhr Triennale 2013 (Essen, Germany).



Entissar El Hamdany

is a hip hop dancer, teacher and coach.

Entissar was trained in Paris and Lebanon. He has developed an extremely physical, energetic choreographic language based on the poppin' technique (hip hop dance).

As a teacher of hip hop dance, he gives classes at the UCPA, as well as at the Rick Odums Centre and the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts.

Since 2001, he has regularly given solo showcases for fashion parades (Waffa – Beirut), rap groups (QPA-Paris), inaugurations (FUBU, Khanito - Beirut). In 2003-2004, he was a dancer in the Kittar Beyrouth group, with whom he toured and performed in festivals, such as the Francophonie Festival in Lebanon.

In 2005, he won the Chelles Battle (poppin' style hip hop dance), and took part in James Huth's film, «Hell Phone.»

In August, 2009, he took part in Krash Nights, a series of photographs co-produced by Elise Pailloncy and Eric Minh Cuong Castaing. He took part in the Periph 2058 events at Glaz-Art in Paris, as well as the Bellevilloise. He was invited to perform for the Lebanese television channel El Hurra and for the Yamakasi.

As a performer, he works with the choreographer Nadim Daïbess («Chames,» «Hangar,» «Volume, Masse et Temps»), and gives series of solo or duo performances at festivals such as the Trianon Festival.

He also works with the Shonon Company, for which he danced in «The Krash Nights of the Heartbeat Queen» (premiering in 2008) and «Feu de Glace» (premiering in 2009), for which he was awarded First Prize at the Synodales Contemporary Dance Competition.

Fabrice Taraud has been a hip hop dancer since 1998.

Fabrice has specialized in popping since 2000. He entered the professional arena through the Pernette and Articulation Companies in 2001. After eight years of collaboration and almost 300 performances (Délicieuses, La Flûte Enchantée, La Tête à l'Envers), he worked with the choreographer Emanuel Gat for the Windungen Quintet in 2008 for Suresnes Cités Danse.

In 2009, he was choreographer for the first performance of Modjo, a play combining dance and theatre. It was then that he realized the importance of transmission to a new generation. He took the plunge in 2010, personally training dancers, some of whom have since joined large dance companies.

He is open to interchange and has danced for live jazz orchestras, an opera, and rap groups: Kmizol, and for Milk, Coffee & Sugar (Motown France). Lately, he has been working with the Massala Company which combines hip hop dance and live electronic music, and for the renowned theatre company in Rue Opposito.

Joel LOKOSSOU is an actor in the same way that others are doctors, astrophysicists or mathematicians – in a completely natural way – and with the studious character essential for rehearsal. His patience and determination are supplementary assets. He was born on the 21st of May, 1971, in Cotonou. He discovered theatre at school. Since that time, he has remained true to what he wanted to be, devoting himself completely to the art since 1993. He then took part in a string of productions: Marivaux, Karl Valentin, Maxime N'Debeka, David Jaomanoro, Moussa Konaté and other authors up until 2004, at which time he emigrated to Lyons, France. His meeting with Franck Taponard gave rise to several collaborations, «Brenda Oward,» «Les Confidences de Monsieur GL,» and others.

He premiered in «Drôles de Gueules» and «Théâtre de Masques Balinais» for the same company, under the direction of Fabrice Taponard. He also acts in other companies, including José Renault's «L'Alliage Théâtre» («Le Premier» by Israël Horowitz) and «Ici est une Jungle» by Pierre Gope which premiered in 2011), Patrick Collet's Théâtre de l'Utopie and «La Strada,» with whom he acted in «Bureau National des Allogènes» by Stanislas Cotton and «La Morale du Héron» by Pascal Adam. In 2012, he took part in the «Les Nègres» show by Jean Genêt, directed by Emmanuel Daumas, premiering at the «Nuits de Fourvière,» as well as the first performance of Mireille Perrier's adaptation of «J'habite une Blessure Sacrée» at the Maison des Métallo. He also performed «Cahier d'un Retour au Pays Natal» by Aimé Césaire, with the Persona Company.

RIGO 23 (Ricardo Gouveia)

Born 1966, Madeira, Portugal

Lives and works in San Francisco, United States of America

Rigo 23 is an artist interested in the different forms of community-based practice. In the 1990s he painted a number of large-scale Pop Art-inspired murals which highlight world politics and the plight of political prisoners including the «Black Panther Party» and the «Angola Three». Some of Rigo 23's most memorable murals appear on the sides of buildings, including the large black and white mural One Tree, 1995. In this mural Rigo 23 painted the words 'one tree' in a giant traffic arrow which points to a lone tree in a crowded industrial setting – a reminder to the people who pass it of what is lost in urbanisation.

Selected exhibitions (solo):

Autonomous InterGalactic Space Program, REDCAT Gallery, Los Angeles, 2012; Tate Wikikuwa Museum: North America 2024, Warehouse Gallery, Syracuse University, 2010; The Deeper They Bury Me, the Louder My Voice Becomes, New Museum, New York City, 2009; Cracks in the Highway, MAC – Museu de Arte Contemporânea, Niterói, 2007. Selected exhibitions (group): Autonomous Regions, Times Museum, Guangzhou, 2013; Kochi-Muziris Biennale, Kerala, 2012; Fifty Years of Bay Area Art – the SECA Awards, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2011; The Jerusalem Show IV, East Jerusalem/Ramallah, Palestine, 2010; 10th Lyon Biennale, 2009.

Production and Partners :

- Sharjah Art Foundation (production), (united arab emirates)
- Le Nouveau Relax, Chaumont
- Danse à Lille / Le Gymnase, Roubaix

Schedule & working stages :

- May 2011, performance in duo @ festival Orbis Pictus, U. Barthélémi & E. Al Hamdany (co production Césaré & compagnie Pseudonymo)
- August 2013 : performance in trio @ Estalagem Ponta Do Sol, Madeira island, trio U.Barthélémi, E. Al Hamdany, & Fabrice Taraud.
- 2014 : text written by Joel Lokossou.
- october 2014 : residency with the complete team, work in progress @ Danse à Lille / Le gymnase
- February 2015 : residency with the complete team, work in progress @ Espaço Espelho d'Água - Lisboa
- March 2015 : premiere (part one and three) @ Sharjah Art Biennial 12 , official opening
- May 2015 : part two @ Sharjah Art Biennial 12 , March Meeting
- may 2015 : part two @ Nouveau Relax theater , Chaumont



