

## DANCE DRAMATURGIES: BODY, MOVEMENT & MEMORY

FEB 17, 2.00PM-4.00PM

Drawing on their own practices of dance-making the four panelists discussed their strategies and processes that allow for alternative ways to understand bodily knowledge. In doing so, they also suggest different extents to the dance dramaturgies.

Daisuke Muto opened the session by introducing the term “intervenient participation”. Looking at the folk form of *Shishi-odori* or deer dance from the North-eastern shore of Japan archipelago, Muto questions the extent to which one can go contemporary with other dances. Explaining that the folk forms like *Shishi-odori* are always an amalgamation of different aspects of human life, including (and not limited to) cultural pride, forestry and livelihoods, ritual and everyday socialization, he argues for how these dances are not just a dance form. Rather it exists within a larger social frame. Articulating a new kind of contemporary dance approach where teachers taught the folk form to non-community members, Muto highlighted how the transmission of knowledge also required a willing learning participant: an interactive transmission is needed. With the restoration project of *nenbutsu-odori* (2016), he further shared that it was important to invent new ways to transmit information to a one who is not from the same community. In learning the folk arts, there is legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger) which can then become part of the larger practice. As such, Muto argued for an expansion of one single contemporaneity- a diverse “contemporary”- that tends to integrate into Western theatre models.

Helly Minarti's presentation also resonated with similar ideas of alternative modes of learning. Given that there are formal syllabus for choreography in institutional settings, her 2014-15 project *Process in Progress* re-designs how young choreographers re-think choreography. As a small independent collective working together for three years, this choreo-lab included three choreographers and experts who were not from conventional dance background. Choreographers will rework their pieces. While the experts offered home spaces, hospitality and support, they would not directly intervene into the reworking. Forced to think through terms *sasaji* (offering) and *sajia* (presentation to be served and consumed), Minarti expressed how an interplay between the cultures and disciplines allowed the chosen three choreographies to be thrown into a new kind of learning environment. Reiterating earlier concerns of lineage and tradition, Minarti argued that the lineage must emerge from the form and not from an ancestral lineage. Through the choreo-lab, notions of guru and disciple hierarchy are subverted in a playful way, and the pedagogy is turned on its head. There is still a mentorship, just not through verbal transmission. Thus, the new ways of rethinking making dance both Western and non-Western must be treated as the new rituals, for new levels of complexity.

Nanako Nakajima's presentation drew on her project *X/Groove space* that explored the mutual groove at Tokyo and Düsseldorf (Germany's Little Tokyo). The *X* is an important movement of meeting and going towards somewhere together. In this collaborative piece, the team crossed between the two nations paying special attention to the pedestrian movements of the international German community in Japan and the Japanese community in Düsseldorf. The double gaze from both the inside and the outside allows the minority of one city to become the majority in the other and this movement is important. This allowed the team to think through how one can share a single space by drawing on different places. With three visual and sound installation artists, the team also became aware of: by whom and for whom is the theatre space made? Cleaning and cleansing became the foreground of the piece and resonated across both city-spaces and it offered a spatial and temporal awareness in the social critique of cleaning. Such a movement of migratory ways through the cleaning and cleansing, reiterates the extra-daily and daily ways of looking at folk dance and dance making.

Iina Naoto's presentation offered yet another way to understand bodily knowledge through the transmission and migration of gestures from butoh master Kazuo Ohno to Takao Kawaguchi. *about Kazuo Ohno* was a piece that relied primarily on *kankopi* (to copy completely a butoh master), a seemingly simple concept. In this piece of twelve scenes Kawaguchi copies Ohno's famous pieces that were directed by Hijikata Kazumi. However, Naoto was careful to point out that the piece was about the catch-copy of the performance. It was not possible to copy everything. Using the analogy of copying your favourite musician, Naoto argued that when Kawaguchi *kankopis* Ohno, he also attempted to emulate the style. This keeps true to dance as a motif where one can try to become something/someone else. For example instead of only copying the movements, Kawaguchi drew from the absurdism inherent in the film portrait of Mr O Kawaguchi. As a dramaturg, Naoto observed that while Ohno disrupted object while trying to maintain it, Kawaguchi's approach is more disruptive. His main role as a dramaturg was to stand by the concept at all costs. Not wanting to curtail Kawaguchi's ideas, Naoto was willing to change the concept if needed as well. Although a dramaturg, he constantly saw himself as a "marginal man/person" not being inside something completely. This remaining at the margin at some instances allows him to look at *about Kazuo Ohno* while thinking about Takao Kawaguchi.

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