

On a twirling shoe

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Jan Rae, performing at Draw to Perform 4
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Developed over centuries, reflexion means the act of a retrospective rendition, the account or interpretation of a preceded event. It is first and foremost considered as a task carried out from the outside, a re-view on the exposed object of investigation. Such an object hangs statically framed on a white wall, while generations become overwhelmed with its outer expression, so that this monologic encounter may be understood as the universal form of cultural reception.

If, accordingly, I am to reflect on this dance photograph, taken while facing the move of a twirling shoe, one could assume that this photographic record, this static image of a past and distant event had nothing in common with the fullness of the encounter that brought it to life. Then, any reflexion, any emerging thought, and any layer of memory turns out to be meaningless, since truth and reality only mean the immediacy of the shoe's past and ephemeral expression. This text has come too late and should not have been written.

If, however, I nevertheless undertake this effort, I need to acknowledge photography, memory and textual re-enactment—contrary to the preceding hypothesis—still bearing the immediacy of the real, even more bringing forth the real in a continuous and novel form. The past event, its documentation and reflexion no longer stand in a hierarchical relation to each other, giving the intensity of the past a firstborn supremacy. Rather, it allows for dimensional metamorphoses of one and the same natal process, whose continuous equality is felt, becomes manifest, without falling into a final objecthood.

The floor, the dancing shoe, the moving foot, and the embedded body are all part of an act, which can be considered as the emergence of a diagram. To quote Deleuze and Guattari here, it is precisely the diagram—not to be confused with the constraints of an established system—that opens up a new type of reality. Encountering the body and its shoe is no longer separated from its photographic image or its remembered words; just an obvious materiality allows for optical differentiation, whereas the haptic—the feeling of the dance—flows through these lines as well as the muscles of the moving foot or the light of the photographic shot.

The body, so gently embedded in space and time, feels and breathes. It is the same body that becomes manifest in the materiality of the dance photograph—enclosing something, which lives not just for the moment, but which takes the visitor, the observer, even the stranger at any moment into its continuous vibrancy, into an incessant birth of life. It is no coincidence that performances and workshops at Draw to Perform are entangled with each other, so that the visible and the invisible, the outer expression of dance, and the inner becoming of mysticism happen simultaneously. The artistic essence of the dance was perceived immediately during the symposium's two days in winter 2017, and still going on.

Here, it seems important to note, that there is no reason to escape into metaphysics. For each body, if expressed in dancing (Jan Rae), bordering (Rossella Emanuele), enduring (Jasmin Schaitl), colouring (Cesar Forero und My Johansson), criticizing (Echo Morgan), listening (Katrina Brown), sounding (Ram Samocha und Paul Hartnoll), miming (Nelly Lewis), spatialising (Marega Palser), projecting (Yael Flexer und Nic Sandiland), or transforming (River Lin) unfolds the real itself, a vibrant landscape of the artistic affect. Each line, drawn in dusty coal or dusty air, points to an equal, i.e. human space, whose essence is real and tangible, while withdrawing from objectified solidity.¹

The fourth edition of *Draw to Perform* at the Fabrica Centre for Contemporary Art in Brighton was not only an event of corporeal synergies, but the collective formulation of a new and moving space, transcending established boundaries. What the symposium made possible was to locate an open space, wherein all present bodies

¹ François Laruelle and Alyosha Edlebi (trans.), “First Choreography: Or the Essence-of-Dance,” *Qui Parle: Critical Humanities and Social Sciences*, 21 (Spring/Summer 2013): pp. 143–155.

became enfolded by a new essential wholeness, giving them fragments of life. Ram Samocha succeeds to curate a poetics of the ordinary, wherein a walk in wintery Brighton resembles the wave's movement whose lively flow is round the shore of yellow-shaded buildings—as does the photography that opens this text. It shows no stasis, but a flow, coloured and loud, sensitive and unseen. It allows a call into the great wide open, where I stand, too, removed in time and space, but equally an immediate part of the shoe, the floor, the wall, and the body.

The quality of this short symposium showed the beauty of an aesthetic, which refuses to be beautiful. The dimensions of the emerging spatial drawings go far beyond the time and the place of the original event. Exactly for this reason it does matter to write this text. For the dancing shoe also formulates an ethical dimension, in making visible—as Bracha L. Ettinger has psychoanalytically noted—the affects' living subreality. No longer do we deal with a one-dimensional abreaction—a Freudian being-towards-death—but to the contrary with a post-conceptual, collective being-towards-birth. My own and the dancer's sensing intellects are not subsumed by a destructive potential, but move towards a humanising horizon of new life: we do not need a war machine, but a peace instrument for art. Draw to Perform was and is a tool for such human becoming: I breathe and feel the matt white floor—the tango begins to play and life—the One—is born.

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