

INTERNATIONAL NOTICE

in collaboration with Theaterscoutings Berlin

A SEASON OF PERFORMANCE WRITING #2
PERFORMANCE #4

CHOROS VI
MORITZ MAJCE + SANDRA MAN
DISTRICT BERLIN
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with texts by:

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text coming soon from FF

When did human kind started seeing itself as separate from nature?
In the mechanical conception of reality created by 'Western' culture, human kind has strived to gain complete control over our environment - to dominate it. This has led to its slow destruction.
On the other hand, 'Eastern' philosophies have kept on believing that humans are as much a part of the universe as any other living being, and have no control over the world.
Choros VI reminds me of this more holistic vision of reality; the six performers, all dressed in white overalls, blend into their environment like unmissable pieces of the puzzle.
They activate their space in relation to each other, like particles of the same cell. They are atoms agitating around the nucleus of a blade of grass, a drop of water, or the Earth itself.
They relentlessly repeat, moving together, slowly at times, and fast and steady at others, similarly to one another and yet always different.
As they step on the hexagonal patch of grass, they intensify its smell.
We see their faces, filmed up close on large screens, while listening to a voice recording, which seems to me like a poetic description of natural phenomena.
'Eyelids flatters the black whole shed tears'.
We see the performers wandering in different directions on the shore of lakes that have, at times, maintained their wildness, and at other times become a backdrop for manmade energy production.
The number six reoccurs; I ask myself why? Are the performers a visualization of the energetic fields we exist in, jumping at times gently, and at times energetically on trampolines? I feel like a scientist trying to crack nature's code. I use my intellect to think and rationalize what I see, but when I listen to the voice talking in the installation's headphones once more, I remember: I can neither understand nor explain nature. No one can. I can only contemplate it.
' I am a dot '.

CHOROS VI

thirty sentences in thirty minutes

one.

it is very slow in here, and quiet, when you take off the earphones, just the sound of feet on grass, or the creaks of the trampolines.

two.

“I stick and get stuck to myself”

three.

the light of white screens bouncing onto me from four directions fades through black into a landscape.

four.

the six performers are female-presenting, in white jump suits, uniformed, not saying a word to each other

five.

there are a lot of black cables, too many to count, they snake between plywood, and gather into boxes behind stapled canvas.

six.

the eyes look at you and don't look at you, sometimes coordinating blue with blue with blue, glassier than I remembered.

seven.

on a podium, six landscapes on flatscreens, on tripods, in each, the six performers trace slow pathways on the sand next to water, my eye is drawn most to the reeds and the long, low metalwork; an industrial hangover.

eight.

when the feet stamp more rhythmically into the hexagon of turf, it increases the smell in the room.

nine.

what are they thinking?

ten.

how long will it take before things are revealed to me?

eleven.

I'm reminded of field recordings, sound and image and dances caught in the landscape and re-heard, re-seen in the calm of the institution.

twelve.

maybe this is why one needs headphones, to hear the clarity of the voices, the buzz of the fly.

thirteen.

in the second loop of bouncing, they bounce on different trampolines.

fourteen.

a lamp in the darkness acts as a magnet to night-flies and midges, swarming and reorganising in a pattern too complex for me to follow.

fifteen.

they jump very slowly and methodically, unclear if they have to hit the white crosses on the stretched black, no hint of joy, unreadable.

sixteen.

a long pipe stretches from the right of the screen to the lake edge on the left, like a dead thing, not sucking or leaking.

seventeen.

I wonder if I'm being worked on, if the movements reach inside me, or if I need to puzzle this one out with my brain, adding layers up, like sums.

eighteen.

the screen images are so clear, the landscapes still and slow.

nineteen.

sometimes I find myself in the supermarket, when I've spent too long looking at the computer, and I'm over-hungry and alone, wandering the aisles, getting hungrier, incapable of making a decision.

twenty.

the tools are big in this piece, I noticed that, a lot of wood, big surfaces, six films, six more, four more, grass, trampolines, there's a fullness.

twenty-one.

a woman walks upstream, time passing, and cut between the different screens.

twenty-two.

a woman dances naked in the landscape.

twenty-three.

there are wind-turbines moving very slowly in one of the TV landscapes, I'm looking for signs of climatic disaster.

twenty-four.

there's something unknowable about these performers, despite the proximity to their faces that gaze and gaze away, looping, their score unknown, unclear if there is a common task.

twenty-five.

a man's voice narrates the movements of a herd, over-enunciating certain words - 'backs', 'up', 'arid', 'heat', 'prick', 'frost', 'red' - underscored by an ominous, science-fiction composition that cuts in and out.

twenty-six.

I try to think what changed in me during these ninety minutes, I make a body-scan, feeling thoughtful, slowed down, disconnected, interior.

twenty-seven.

the room is post-industrial, white concrete, red quarry tiles, long, glass windows, a gallery-like situation, out in the south of the city.

twenty-eight.

I am curious about what the starting-point was for Sandra and Moritz, the nucleus that kicked off this fascination.

twenty-nine.

I think back to the text about the body - the narrators talking about cutting in two, ejaculating - and I feel a long way from my blood, which I imagine to be hot, coursing through me.

thirty.

if I'm not from here, an alien to this landscape, how much of the behaviour I encountered would be impenetrable, and would that inevitably result in a permanent gap in potential communication, a subsequent loneliness?

CG

These six women, all dressed in white, may appear as regular humans to the untrained eye, but after having been invited into their world for a while, I can conclude that they belong to a higher order. Together, they form a tribe of sensitive beings from the future, who can tap into a greater force that brings them in sync: the visceral awareness of the internal and the external. It is a beautiful, but harsh landscape that they inhabit - their choice of the collective above the individual perhaps comes from the instinctual need to survive. Our society may have made great technological advances, but their community has actually reached a point where they can manipulate matter. Or, if that is an overstatement, they can see from the eye of the machine. They can watch as the solitary cell divides. They can follow, precisely, the rules of nature.

On the Audience as Interference

What if the audience were to become an interference? An interference which incepts the anomaly and the disturbance into an art work? Whereas the tendency might be to consider a dance piece as having an inherent agenda of being shared and delivered to an audience, what if the rules were inverted, and the audience became the destroyers of the work? Not its facilitators, as in participatory art, nor its interpreters or receptors, but its interference, disruption, itchy elements. It has been said by the sciences that, as of the 21st century, plastic is a constituent element of the human body. Its particles and chemicals have engrained themselves unto our chemistry, leading to the decrease in fertility rates among the human population. Underlying the principle of unstoppable economic growth lies the principle of long term suicide, all alerts and alarms being regarded as interferences. Could contemporary art making in the 21st century also have begun its path towards its own conceptual form of suicide by treating its audience as interferences?

Chorus VI might just be a case study for this possibility.

In it the audience becomes an interference when they:

Sit on the chairs (Noises)

Pass by the projectors (Shadows)

Step on the white floor (Shoe marks)

Smell the grass (we wish we could step on it)

Desire the trampolines (we also want to jump)

Go up the stairs (we try not to fall at our own risk)

Chorus VI offers the dancers' bodies and faces up for scrutiny via video projections and to be observed in ritualistic choreographies. I confess that it reminds me of the movie *SAFE* (1995, by Todd Haynes), where a woman becomes paranoid about toxicity and pollution, joins a sect in the mountains, and isolates herself in a solitary confinement chamber in the middle of "nature". *SAFE* has been described as a "horror movie of the soul" (quote from IMDB). As we navigate the alleys of *Chorus VI*, we are confronted with the boxes of white canvas, both on film and along the walls, as well as in the uniforms which constrain and induce the performers into a trance like state. Maybe they wish to return to nature, to the rites of spring, yet have been enthralled and entranced by the impossibility of nature, signalled amongst other elements by the pipeline in one of the videos,

which seems to deliver sewage into a lake. The impossibility of nature or the threats that what this so called nature is facing are imposed on us subreptitiously. But I am struggling with the binary. Actually, the impossibility of nature is not mentioned at all, only its threats are mentioned. I wish the impossibility of nature would be mentioned, but maybe it is and I cannot recognize it. Maybe I am so brainwashed that I can only recognize the threats. Were the videos with the canvas and the human swarms addressing this impossibility? Maybe...

As I come back to the room, I begin to imagine that whatever was left of that non-existent and impossible thing we are used to calling nature has indeed died a slow death while I was in here. The performers have witnessed it, and know that this slow death has taken place. They would like to tell me, but it is impossible to speak about it, it is too much to be spoken of. So I became the interference. I was the one who only learned about the death of nature after leaving the room. And as I left the room I understood why I had been an interference. Because I could still smile while they could not. I did not know that today was the day when that impossible thing we are used to calling nature would collapse and die its slow death. I did not know this would be the day when the dancers' rituals would announce nature on its course to disappearance. I did not know that we were not safe. I could not understand this form of art, so I became the interference, because I did not know that we were so unsafe.

MNV

Entering the space of District Berlin and climbing up wooden stairs. Sitting still in front of videos of women walking through outdoor, but not wild, landscapes, a lake. Seeing every little movement of the plants in the wind, and thinking about the contradiction of displaying this vegetal world on high technology devices. Smelling grass. Have they grown the grass here, inside? Or cut a patch from there, outside? Deciding to stay where I am until the moment I don't feel comfortable anymore, instead of trying to see everything. Seeing those same women from the videos stepping onto the grass. Getting comfortable in the more intimate corner, surrounded by four changing projections. Listening to a recording of a text about the beginning of the universe, without looking at the video. Contemplating mountains. Wanting to be there. Lying down to relax, to conserve my energy to not get sick. Not getting sick. A tropical feeling in front of all those insects buzzing around in front of a street light. Reacting to the soundtrack falling into an abrupt silence, and standing up. I have heard enough text already so I am ignoring the last headphones. The one of the installation with the videos displaying faces. And while going out, I feel I have been relaxing into landscape.