



DANCES IN LITTLE FORMAT

DOUBLE BILL 2

JIMENA PÉREZ SALERNO

& MUGENI

22.04.2023 - 19:30 - Kaaistudio's (Concert Studio / 1st floor)

NL – De afgelopen twee jaar was danseres en onderzoeker caterina daniela mora jara een van de vaste huiskunstenaars van workspacebrussels. Tijdens de Open Studios rondt ze haar traject af met een minifestival waarin ze vijf andere kunstenaars uitnodigt om het podium met haar te delen. **Dances in little format** presenteert een reeks artistieke proposities in diverse vormen en fases van het artistieke proces. Het programma verbindt verschillende dansen en danstradities: het somatische, het virtuoze, klankreizen, kleine bewegingen. Van transoceanische trajecten tot ontheemding en vervorming in koloniale erfenissen van dansbeleving: de performers stellen 'dans' in vraag, en genieten van het dansen zelf.

FR – Depuis deux ans, la danseuse et chercheuse caterina daniela mora jara est l'une des artistes associées de workspacebrussels. Lors d'Open Studios, elle achève son parcours par un mini-festival et invite cinq autres artistes à partager la scène avec elle. **Dances in little format** relie différentes danses et traditions de danse : le somatique, le virtuose, les voyages sonores, les petits mouvements. Après une résidence de recherche de trois semaines focalisée sur l'incarnation conflictuelle, les six artistes invitent le public à faire partie de leur processus. Des trajets transocéaniques au déracinement et à la distorsion des héritages coloniaux de l'expérience de la danse, les performeur-ses mettent en question la « danse » tout en prenant plaisir à danser.

EN – For the past two years, dancer and researcher caterina daniela mora jara has been one of workspacebrussels' resident artists. During the Open Studios she will round off her trajectory with a mini-festival in which she invites five other artists to share the stage with her. **Dances in little format** proposes artistic works in different formats at different points in the process. It connects a diversity of dances and dance traditions: the somatic, the virtuoso, sound journeys, small movements. From transoceanic trajectories to displacement and torsion in colonial legacies of dance experience: the performers put 'dance' into question and enjoy dancing for its own sake.

JIMENA PÉREZ SALERNO

Unproductive will

dance / in English / 45 min.

NL – De Argentijnse choreografe Jimena Pérez Salerno onderzoekt in *Unproductive will* of we een andere relatie tot tijd kunnen creëren dan degene die het dominante wereldbeeld ons voorhoudt. Op een speelse manier deelt ze praktijken uit haar sentimentele en culturele opvoeding, met als doel een ervaring van politiek bewustzijn te creëren. De noties van lineaire tijd en productief gedrag beschouwt ze als collectieve koloniale wonden die ons werk, onze affectieve relaties en onze levens doorkruisen, waar we ons ook bevinden.

FR – La chorégraphe argentine Jimena Pérez Salerno se demande dans *Unproductive will* s’il nous est possible de créer une relation au temps différente de celle que la vision hégémonique du monde nous propose. De manière amusante, elle partage des pratiques issues de son éducation sentimentale et culturelle dans le but de créer une expérience de conscience politique. Elle considère les notions de temps linéaire et de comportement productif comme des blessures coloniales collectives qui traversent nos œuvres, nos liens affectifs et nos vies, où que nous soyons.

EN – In *Unproductive will*, the Argentinian choreographer Jimena Pérez Salerno investigates whether we can create a different relationship to time than the one presented to us by the hegemonic worldview. In a playful way, she shares practices from her sentimental and cultural education with the aim of creating an experience of political awareness. She considers the notions of linear time and productive behaviour as collective colonial wounds that run through our works, affective bonds and lives wherever we are.

Jimena Pérez Salerno on her work:

“*Unproductive will* is a choreographic practice installation that is part of a larger research. It suggests revisiting our relationship with the hegemonic notion of linear time and productive behaviour. It proposes thinking of them as collective colonial wounds and impositions that run through our practices, affective bonds, and lives, wherever we are. How can we create a different relation to time than the one the western worldview imposes on us? How can we produce market-wise non-productive things?”

In this project, I work with the notion of never-ending warm-up to re-think the idea of practice and engage with everyone who participates as a collaborator. This process does not seek an end but wants to remain in the continuity of the search. I observed how much thinking in a forward direction brings associations that build a certain life perspective. It means, forward-better-future-progress or backward-worst-past-degrowth. This reinforces a system of values creating a sense supported by binary thoughts. In an attempt against this logic, I stepped forward to my own past as a methodology, to follow a reversed path. I started to investigate, trying to detect how bringing practices from my sentimental and cultural education in Argentina to my current research could speak of my relationship with a twisted time.

I am interested in observing the transformations the project traverses in each place it is presented. To change its language and perspective, that is to say, the thickness that its affective, geographical, and political implications take both for me and those who participate in the experience. This research challenges the definitions of audience-participant, performance-practice, and encounter-training affecting the presentation dynamic that sets all of them in motion.”

For more information about this project, visit <https://apass.be/profile/unproductive-will>

Research & performance: Jimena Pérez Salerno – Supported by: a.pass, Pianofabriek in the frame of the programme '100% free space' in collaboration with Kunstenwerkplaats (BE), Fundación Cazadores, Tecnodanza (AR) – Thanks to: María Sabato, Diego Echegoyen, Jeremías Pérez Salerno, caterina daniela mora jara, Gustavo Ciríaco, Eleonora Fabiao, Lilia Mestre, Vijai Maia Patchineelam

Jimena Pérez Salerno is an Argentinian artist, based in Brussels and recently graduated from a.pass (advanced performance and scenography studies) (2021-2022). She works and researches between Brussels and Buenos Aires. She experiments in the performing arts, artistic research, and teaching fields. As a dancer and choreographer, she collaborates and engages continuously with other artists as a fundamental part of her exploration of collective work. She considers choreographic practice as a system of relations that enables modes of imagination, attention, and coexistence. Her work leans towards performative practices that contemplate the activation of an unexpected context to think together through the experience of an implicated body. In her last project, she has been researching on the concept of expanded choreography as a critical modality for political awareness, reflecting on linear time and productive behaviour.

MUGENI

Perle Noire

spoken word / en français / 30 min

NL – In *Perle Noire* meandert de jonge Brusselse slamdichter Mugeni doorheen persoonlijke herinneringen, reflecties en ervaringen. Ze brengt een ode aan zwarte vrouwen en hun strijd om eigenaarschap te claimen over hun geschiedenissen. Een verhaal over complexen, stigma en discriminatie. Een verhaal over Mugeni en over degenen die ze liefheeft.

FR – Dans *Perle Noire*, la jeune poétesse Mugeni zigzague à travers ses souvenirs personnels, ses réflexions et ses expériences. Elle rend hommage aux femmes noires et à leur lutte pour s'approprier leurs histoires. Une histoire de complexes, de stigmatisation et de discrimination. Une histoire sur Mugeni en personne et celles et ceux qu'elle aime.

EN – In *Perle Noire*, the young Brussels slam poet Mugeni meanders through personal memories, reflections and experiences. She pays tribute to black women and their struggle to claim ownership of their histories. A story about complexes, stigma and discrimination. A story about Mugeni and about those she loves.

By: Marie Paule Mugeni

Mugeni is a Brussels-based artist active in the field of slam poetry and multidisciplinary scenes (traditional Rwandan dance, theatre, writing). She has performed on stages such as Festivals Voix de femmes and KVS. She has realised poetic performances at Bozar, CC Jacques-Franck and Maison de la Poésie in Namur, evoking her experience as a black woman living in Belgium.

DANCES IN LITTLE FORMAT

IN CONVERSATION WITH CATERINA DANIELA MORA JARA



From 2020 to 2023, caterina daniela mora jara is one of the house artists at workspacebrussels. During this collaboration, which focuses on the development of artistic practices rather than on creating concrete output, caterina is frequently in residency in the studios and builds a dialogue with the team and other artists. Caterina has roots in Argentina and Chili, and is now living between Brussels and Stockholm.

How would you describe your artistic practice to someone who doesn't have the habit of watching performances?

Very practically speaking: I dance, move and talk at the same time. Usually, I am alone on stage and often work with a catwalk setup with people sitting on two or three sides of it. In terms of content, I try to embody erotic justice: I try to speak with the voices of women who have been made invisible, who are unrecognised or were persecuted. I sort of take their place on stage. These voices are not limited to language, they can also be dance or movement.

Where does the erotic element have a place in this?

It's me trying to answer the question of what it means to warm up. How to get closer and raise the temperature. I like small audiences in an intimate setup. The erotic is for me in the in-between: in between people, but also in between the forms I use: publication, songs, dance. I approach them with an erotic quality in mind.

Which themes are central to your work?

I work with translation. There is a big discourse going about translation and I try to be very specific about what it means to me, without being exclusive. I start from the problem of dance as language. I try to hack the very present idea of

dance being a language by translating dances to other dances. Another element that is crucial to my work is space: how spaces and territoriality determine thinking, practices, ways of being, networking. My guiding question that's at the core of everything I do is: How to deal with context? How to bring the context on stage, how to talk to it, be infected by it.

What do you mean when you say 'context'?

A concrete example is production context. Who is giving me space, who is supporting my work, who is managing my production time? But also: who cleans the space I work in and how, that's also context to me. I try to acknowledge everything that is present. This is what I call context: the visible and invisible parameters that define my work.

If you would write an autobiography, what would be its title?

La Gota Gorda, which means 'the fat blob', or a drop of sweat. This phrase comes from Julio Bocca, a famous Argentinian ballet dancer. I don't relate to him artistically but he was very present in my childhood. It reminds me of how you always take a second t-shirt to the dance studio, because you will get sweaty. So, my second option for the title of the book is *Second t-shirt*. As a dancer you always have one in your bag!

Which artworks have made a lasting impression on you?

The first one is a book by dancer and philosopher Marie Bardet called *Perder la cara*, which would translate to *Losing the face*. Her work is about navigating Western binaries and it's been very interesting for my practice. The second one is another book, *Romper el corazón del mundo* (in English: *To break the heart of the world*) by Val Flores, who is from the same area in the Upper Valley of Rio Negro I am from and I feel very connected to her. She writes about how the desert is connected to extractivism and other ways of epistemology.

Then there is a film, *La Flor (The Flower)* by Mariano Llinás. It lasts about 12 hours and the construction and composition is fantastic. It explores different genres within one film from comedy to thriller. It took 10 years to make and I would call it a masterpiece. Another film, made by a director who is part of the same collective, *El Pampero* cine as Llinás, is *El Loro Y El Cisne (The parrot and the swan)* by Alejo Mogueillansky, a director who I follow closely. It is a retelling of *Swan Lake* through the rehearsal of several Argentinian dance companies and it is composed extremely well.

There is an Argentinian dance group called Grupo Krapp and they recently made a performance called *La última cinta (The last track)* which they made in memory of Luis Biasotto, a member of the collective who died from covid. I saw the piece on YouTube and I was really moved by it.

Is there someone, dead or alive, fictional or real, that you would like to collaborate with?

Not really. I mean: when I want to work with someone, I just do it. And there are a lot of people present in the dramaturgy of my pieces, often through fantasy and fabulation, but they are there. Figures like Aphra Behn, Kitri, Odille et Odette, Maria Baderna, Marie Geneviève van Goethem, my mom, my sister, my dad and my professors are always surrounding me.

If you think back five years and try to remember how you saw your future then, how does that image relate to where you are at right now?

That's an emotional question. Today is November 15. If you go back 5 years and 2 weeks from today, you find yourself on the exact day I arrived in Brussels. I remember the cold. I didn't have any suitable winter clothes with me. I remember feeling lost. I couldn't talk: I didn't speak any French or English. At all. It's so emotional to think back because back then I wouldn't have dared to even dream of what I have now. I am just amazed by everything that has happened since then. My aim was to situate myself a bit, to share my work. Now everything has changed. My idea of what my work is, my way of networking, everything. It's another life.

I'm reminded of a saying my dad likes to use. A loose translation from Spanish to English would be something like: "Be careful not to desire something too much, because life can give it to you twice." I constantly remind myself that 5 five years ago, the life I live today was a promise. I am very grateful for that, but it's also scary, because I need to find new dreams now.

What are the most significant steps you have taken in your work during the period in which you were a house artist at workspacebrussels?

A realisation that is extremely important to me, is that I don't need to be exposed all the time. Going public is not as crucial for my work as I thought it was. It's thanks to the luxury of having support and time that I can look at my work in this way. I get to decide when I want to share what I do with other people, which is a very politically charged power to have. Related to that is my incessant impulse to challenge my position in the art market: I am both part of it and outside of it at the same time. There are many roles I can play as an artist, and being on stage is just one of them.

You also share the time and resources you have with other artists. How is your practice evolving from a solitary one to a shared one?

I think it was during the pandemic that I started to seriously question what I wanted to do with the money I had access to, especially since the obvious option of performing wasn't possible at that time. Paying other artists and practitioners seemed like the best choice. There was also a frustration about having little presentation dates, which I managed to turn upside down by

organising a small festival within the context of being in residency somewhere. So there was a desire for me to be alone while still being surrounded by other people, the option to redistribute means and the creation of my own contexts for presenting work, both my own and other artists' work.

Who would play you in a movie about your life?

A good friend of mine, called Lucila Sol Roberto. She is an amazing dancer who just like me got married for papers and she has a similar movement energy to me. She'd be perfect for the role.

What is something you think every student should learn in art school?

There are two things. The first one is critical historicism, which is very important but hard to find. Secondly, I would have loved to have more information about networking, project making and positioning oneself in the art world. You can learn the second thing after graduation too, the first should be an integral part of every arts education. I work as a teacher and PhD researcher and I co-developed a free-standing course with Maipelo Gabang at SKH called Canon and Visibility: Hacking the Hegemony which hacks the idea of Western dance canon from a Global South perspective.

Is there a part of your life that a lot of people don't know about or that you don't often talk about within the performing arts world?

Motherhood and sustainability. Those topics are always present for me but the contexts I work in don't always allow space for them.

If you hadn't become an artist, what would you do for a living?

I would be an electrician. Before getting into the PhD programme, I almost started a formation to become an electrician. My father is an electrician and I think it's such a beautiful and important profession. It's so practical: how to create light? I grew up hearing conversations about cables and outlets and it stuck with me.

What songs or artists are on your current playlist?

Baja a La Tierra by Kevin Johanssen and *Maldigo del Alto Cielo* by Violeta Parra.

Choosing to work as an artist is not an evident choice, and it can be very challenging. What keeps bringing you back to art?

Transformation. The question of when and how to transform something. And hope. Art gives me hope.

Interview by Simon Baetens, 15 November 2022

The Open Studios programme is curated by workspacebrussels in dialogue with associated artists caterina daniela mora jara and the collective Dancing at the Crossroads (As We Walk). A big thank you goes to the team of Kaaiteater, and especially to Christian, Eva, Frank, Geertje, Geni, Godfried, Helena, Jan, Jonas, Lieselot and William for making this happen.

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