

YUVAL PICK'S DANCE

in 5 key words

Dance, for Yuval Pick, means being in the world, before any technical or aesthetic concerns. Dance is one's relationship with the self (a kind of self-consciousness through the fabric of the body and its own perceptions), and one's relationship with others: other subjects and flesh in the world. Starting from the idea that all movement is both a way of being and an appeal to others (including the audience), each of Yuval Pick's pieces is an experience that calls the individual and the group into play and involves them in the creative act.

Yuval Pick is developing an "author's dance", a choreographic language that draws on the living and the organic body, an original way of considering the group between singularity and plurality. For the choreographer, this means nothing less than reorganizing the memory of bodies in another way; inventing forms and a method of writing movement capable of expressing and opening up these new possibilities for the body, group and relationships.

Here, we will try to clarify these fundamental aspects in a handful of concepts and key words.

Opening bodies

In Yuval Pick's work, "opening bodies" can be understood in at least two ways. On the one hand, opening bodies means updating the essential constituents of an individual's body, in an almost surgical sense: its weight, mass, rhythms, energy and memory, made up of unconscious actions and urges. It is what you could call the "physical identity" of a dancer, which, depending on the piece, is destined for various futures and metamorphoses but will never be erased by the choreographer. The dancer is not (only) a performer who must suddenly slip into the writing of an external story or form, or let go of themselves in order to hoist themselves up to the impersonal level of a choreographic score. Everyone is, first and foremost, the interpreter of the self, the explorer of their own possibilities, the carrier of their own intentions. And to borrow a quote by Gilles Deleuze on the films of John Cassavetes, Yuval Pick's dance is a dance "where the only constraint is that of the bodies, and the only logic is that of the sequences of attitudes: the characters shape themselves action by action and word by word, as the film progresses, they invent themselves...".

The choreography impacts the dancers by revealing their possibilities. On the other hand, "opening bodies" means, in a more centrifugal way, opening

Dance is a nonverbal language that clearly has no univocal meaning, but it signifies, communicates and opens up to meaning. In Yuval Pick's work, an individual action is often combined with an intention, and causes a reaction in others, an effect, a change of some sort. In each of Yuval Pick's pieces, achieving a movement means instantly and jointly moving and going beyond the self, coming out of the self and reaching towards others. This double attention (towards the self and others) gradually creates a shared, empathetic space, an organic, living community. This is never present at the outset but is written during successive attempts, in the face of dangers or shared experiences. In the strict sense, it choreographs itself.

Life

Yuval Pick's dance is an interpretation of life. An interpretation of the worldly flesh we are made of and share. At its core, there are impulses, beats and rhythms that are neither mechanical nor regular. Hence the eruptive, syncopated aspect of Yuval Pick's body language: the body folds and unfolds to unexpected rhythms, inhales and exhales, advances and retracts, springs forward and holds back. To quote poet Francis Ponge, in each movement we can perceive this essential aspect of "élan retenu", "restrained impetus", in other words, the fragile balance between too much momentum, which would lead to a forgetting of the self, and too much restraint, which would lead to a closing in on the self.

This "élan retenu", "restrained impetus", is the ability to come out of the self while remaining aware of one's mass and gravity. Life is also about breaking out, coincidences; it is an uninterrupted series of sometimes anarchic events. According to Yuval Pick, a movement-event is made possible by the fact that life is fundamentally asymmetrical and perpetually imbalanced. This intuition contrasts with a harmonious, uniform vision of the living. The choreographer's work therefore endangers or calls into question the equilibrium of the dancers, revealing their vanishing points and chaotic lines, which are just as much their "life lines".

Movement is a disturbance: the disturbance both of their internal equilibrium and the group's cohesion. Hence the challenge taken up in each of Yuval Pick's pieces: how to create a "choreographic community" from that which makes it possible but which also puts it perpetually in danger; how to articulate, individually and as a group, the "forces that both constitute us and tear us apart" (Yves Bonnefoy).

The music

The music in the pieces of Yuval Pick is not only an element of creation, but also a new event on stage, a new opening of the frontiers of the body, and a new invitation to reorganize the memory of bodies. It is a sort of alter ego for the choreographer and the performers.

In *Score*, for example, the urban clamor and rumors of Israeli towns confront the dancers with a certain urgency that must be experienced. The grainy electroacoustic music by American composer Ashley Fure interweaves directly with the choreographic material. In *Ply*, the dancers' bodies and the music, which consist of the same "substance", echo and enter into a dialogue with each other. The techno neo-romanticism of Kraftwerk in *Are Friends Electric?* acts like a tidal wave, pushing towards unison and calling for a possible utopia, already present in classic romanticism and traditional dances. The music neither dominates nor simply accompanies the pieces; it is an actor in its own right, with which the dancers enter into a relationship and a dialogue. Whether the choice of music is pop or highbrow, Yuval Pick pays particular attention to its instinctual, even tribal and archaic accents.

The ritual

It might seem strange to evoke the idea of ritual with regard to Yuval Pick's dance. The world of choreography is more attracted by deconstruction, reconstruction, imbalance, asymmetry, escape routes. Nonetheless, beyond these differences, there are common elements: repetition, the attention paid to the tribal aspect of the music, the desire to capture essential rhythms and vital impulses. Above all, ritual is a symbolic operation of metamorphosis and passage, from one age to another, one world to another, one individual to another.

When Yuval Pick choreographs repetitive gestures, loops of movement and unfinished movements that are repeated several times by his dancers, it is essentially so that there can be a surpassing, a transformation, even a rebirth. The repetition of a movement by a dancer is not reduced to a closed hypnotic loop, but aims to make them surpass themselves and reach another bodily state.

Ritual is still eminently a group action, and often constitutes and gives structure to a community. Many of Yuval Pick's pieces also question the idea of commonality, of being together, of the group. The ritualistic aspect of his dance is to be found in this collectively shared energy, these vibrations or reprised movements that seem to transmit from one dancer to another, from one space polarized by the individual to another space polarized by the group. The stage multiplies these crossing points and transitional spaces. Nuance is primordial in ritual, and it remains for Yuval Pick to try and reconcile the singularity of the subject with the existence of the group, without obscuring the sense of conflict inherent in the group. A group without conflict or dissymmetry would be inert or alienating. sans conflit ni dissymétrie serait alors un groupe inerte ou aliénant.

The space between

If the dancers do not always seem to be in tune with each other, if the harmony is broken, or if the group sometimes seems to be acting in a chaotic way, there is, nonetheless, always something happening in the space between two dancers. These are small or large choreographic events: tensions, or conversely, reconciliations between the performers, gestures in dialogue, counterpoints, sketches of being-together. The stage is not a "natural", formatted geometric space, but a space with several planes, with exploded and inventive geometry, a space constantly remodeled by the performers. The dancers sometimes appear not to dance with each other, but really they dance in relation to each other, with echoes and differences that are very specific to Yuval Pick's approach. They are often organized according to a few simple, fundamental operating principles: giving and taking, launching and receiving, opening up to others and enriching themselves with their otherness.

Indeed, as the choreographer notes, our relationships with others are highly codified, the distances between individuals subject to cultural imperatives that are almost unconscious and quite alienating. It is therefore a case of making this space "in between" more elastic, more flexible, freer and more creative. Why not imagine, for example, that dancers can be very far away from each other and

accounter. Why not also imagine collective spaces with lines that are irregular, and apparently a little more chaotic than usual? Why can't the group function according to plastic modalities, with contradictory elements, a few empty places, a few uncontrolled singularities?

By making the space between flexible and elastic, Yuval Pick allows the group to experience itself differently so as to imagine distances, discrepancies and dissonances. It is not in mimicry or symmetry that the individual and group find themselves and forge themselves, but in distance and difference. Addressing the question of the space between therefore means addressing the fundamental question of limits: limits within the individual, limits between two individuals, and limits of the group itself. Contrary to certain common beliefs, these limits are neither fixed nor set in advance (there is nothing "natural" nor "normal" about them). And it is by working and reworking the space between, that dance, with its great physical power, can reinvent relationships between the individual and the group. We could even hypothesize that, in some of Yuval Pick's pieces, the space between is not secondary but primary: it is in our very relationship with the other, in the space between, that everyone can find their own limits, a new singular rhythm, and a new way of being in the world.

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