

AND...

NAVE OF IMAGES

– Excerpts of *Dialogue 20-13* (2013), *Insideout* (2007), *Zweiland* (1999), *Na Zemlje* (1999), *Impromptus* (2004), *Dialogues* (2000) by Sasha Waltz
 – *noBody* (2002) by Sasha Waltz,
 July 8 at 14:30, église des Célestins

THE WORKSHOPS OF THOUGHT

Encounter Research and creation in Avignon, *The game and the rule!*
Performance, movement, and language, with Sasha Waltz,
 National Agency of Research, July 10 at 9:30, cloître Saint-Louis

TOUR DATES AFTER THE FESTIVAL

- November 1st to 3, 2018, Next Wave Festival, Brooklyn Academy of Music, New-York (United States)
- December 8, Festspielhaus St. Pölten (Austria)
- December 12 and 13, Les Théâtres de la Ville de Luxembourg
- December 19 to 22, Radialsystem V, Berlin (Germany)
- April 12 and 13, 2019, Teatro Arriaga, Bilbao (Spain)
- April 17 to 20 avril, La Villette, Paris
- June 16 and 17, Staatenhaus Oper, Köln (Germany)

KREATUR

Kreatur is about the human body. Isolated or attached to a community, it becomes distorted under pressure. The show's based on the ideas of taking or losing power, of thinking about otherness or looking at oneself, of loving or hating oneself. And in visiting a former Stasi prison in Berlin, Sasha Waltz and her dancers found memorial and sensitive points of reference to work on the inhuman confinement that forced people to stay forever upright and awake. The choreographer alludes to a world in which physical and physiological constrictions force us to stay in movement. The body becomes the symbol of a struggle, caught as in a vice between concrete sensations of imprisonment and feelings of a freedom still to experience. To find our respective parts of light and darkness, she wanted to work with great artists to design the costumes, the space and its reflections, the metallic and concrete sounds of the show... All of it comes together to create a minimalist world in black and white, in which only the skin, the living, create colour, and where the creatures we see are images from a potential future, at once familiar and unknown.

SASHA WALTZ

After training as a dancer in Amsterdam and New York, Sasha Waltz founded the company Sasha Waltz & Guests. In 1996, she inaugurated her production centre for theatre and modern dance, Sophiensaele, with the show *Allée der Kosmonauten*. She was also a member of the artistic direction of the Schaubühne from 1999 to 2004. That same year, she created her first opera, *Dido & Aeneas*. Sasha Waltz's dance is at once carnal and abstract, and she conceives the scenography of her shows as an aesthetic challenge. She has received many European awards as ambassador for the arts, and in 2019 she will become co-director of the Staatsballett Berlin with Johannes Öhman. At the Festival d'Avignon, Sasha Waltz has already presented *Na Zemlje* et *Zweiland* in 1999, *noBody* in the Cour d'honneur of the Palais des papes in 2002, *Impromptus* in 2004, and *Dialogue 20-13* in 2013 as part of the programme "Des artistes un jour" at the Opéra Grand Avignon.

72th
EDITION

In order to bring you this edition, over 1,750 people, artists, technicians, and organisational staff, have worked tirelessly and enthusiastically for months. More than half of them are state-subsidised freelance workers.

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INTERVIEW WITH SASHA WALTZ

With *Kreatur*, you're coming back to a dance show while working with first-time collaborators for the light, sound, and costume design.

Sasha Waltz: Indeed, after writing for the opera for eleven years, with symphonic music and complex scores, I wanted to come back with *Kreatur* to electronic music, to working on the body and on its pure movement. Soundwalk Collective is made up of three musicians who, for this creation, recorded the sounds of large urban and formerly industrial spaces, like club Berghain in Berlin. I also started working on the costumes with Dutch stylist Iris van Herpen two years before the creation of the show. Her creative process is long and complex, she doesn't use the usual textile materials, but mostly metallic materials, such as wires, which she cuts with a laser. We wanted to create images and forms that would question the space itself, that of the stage but above all the space between the body and the costume itself, as close to the skin as possible, in order to play with the constraint of the narrow interstice between the "clothes" and the body. The costumes were part of the creative process right from the start, they have to be taken into account when designing movement because they restrict the body and reduce its sensitivity. The lighting by Urs Schönenbaum doubles up as the show's scenography, with the light reflecting on metallic surfaces to shape the space of the stage. The only set is a fragment of stairs which goes nowhere, and whose side is almost invisible. Its highly geometrical silhouette disappears inside the back wall, and it symbolises much more than just stairs. Its meaning remains open. Visual elements are minimalist, in order to put the bodies and their relationships at the forefront.

The question of the individual—me and my "skin"—and the question of the collective—relationships within a community—are at the heart of *Kreatur*, and seem very important to you.

The dancers move through a wide open space without limit, but at the same time they are absolutely isolated. They can't go anywhere, they can't escape the situations they experience. I wanted to work on a new physical language for this show. To do that, we visited a former Stasi prison in Berlin, which became in 1994 the Hohenschönhausen Memorial. A former inmate guided us into the cells and through the history of the place. During the Soviet occupation, from the end of the Second World War to 1946, German prisoners left for the gulag from there. It gave us a sensory understanding of the experience of confinement and of the loss of freedom, of the feeling of always being watched, in an extremely confined space. It drove part of my research on the body and led to improvisation with the dancers, focusing on questions of power and loss of power, on the speed at which things change in our societies. I wanted the current political and social climate to be felt in the show, for it to give the audience an idea of our times, our insecurities,

of the terrors we have to face individually but also of the collective fears of our communities and of the tricks we have to use to overcome them. *Kreatur* gives shape to those fears, it's a pretty dark show, although it has its fair share of moments of humour, mostly created by absurd situations. There aren't any references to specific events, but rather situations that generate fright or constriction. The meaning of it remains open, some might find elements hinting at current events or personal references. Isolation is something you feel within yourself, both physically and physiologically, sometimes even as part of a group. Some situations can become unsettling for the audience, even disturbing, while remaining fascinating.

What hides behind that title, *Kreatur*?

Bodies sometimes lose their humanity and move closer to the animal: the group then becomes a horde. The dancers really transform into creatures at times, thanks to their physical work, but also to the costumes. When a group has all the power in a community, its humanity disappears under the pressure and the desire for ever more power, and human bodies transform. There are scenes of great violence, in particular when one of the groups forces the other to submit and obey, through the use of terror. How far are we capable of going when it comes to humiliation? And how far can we go and remain human? The show is all in black and white and obeys a minimalist geometry, the only visible colour is that of the naked skin of the dancers. The lights shift from a series of white lines to a deep, invasive black. The soundtrack shifts as well: omnipresence of sound, moments of emptiness and silence, words or breaths... After working for so long for the opera, I wanted to come back to the body, in a more intimate and narrow perspective, and to go back to working closely with a number of collaborators and with the dancers, freed from the demanding writing of scores. I wanted to explore the present of perception, a sensory stream of consciousness in a way, because the times and the events we're experiencing are particularly difficult and punishing. Each member of the audience can therefore use their own experience to read and interpret what's going on in front of them. That's how humour appears, through associations of ideas, through incongruous or extreme images which lose their tragic aspect. The creatures here are but images of a possible future, at once familiar and unknown, perhaps archaic or tribal, but whose exact references remain for us to imagine.

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Interview conducted by Moira Dalant and translated by Gaël Schmidt-Cléach