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Amateurs and Contemporary Dance: Who? Where? When? What for?

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In connection with the recent publication of M. Briand (éd.), *Corps (in)croyables. Pratiques amateur en danse contemporaine*, Centre national de la Danse, Pantin, 2017 (http://www.cnd.fr/patrimoine_ressources/corps_incroyables), this presentation analyses various types of amateurs in contemporary dance, through the semantic, aesthetic, and cultural study of fluid categories and typical examples.

1. General perspective
2. Typical features of amateur dancers:
 - who? – where and when? – what for?
3. For a non-binary typology of amateurs.
Family resemblances, prototypes and fuzzy sets

General perspective:

The so-called “amateurs” in contemporary dance present diverse and even sometimes contradictory aspects. They both intensify and disrupt the notions of choreographic work, creation, transmission, experience, and expertise. They move and transform aesthetic, ethical, and political norms and categories which contemporary dance spectacles and practices refer to. From expressionist moving choruses to post-modern experimental performances, as the body of un-professional / amateur dancers may considerably vary in age, gender, or ethnical, social, and cultural affiliations, it may be at once ordinary, neither virtuoso nor spectacular, but filled with human presence, and extraordinary, surprising, a witness of “something different”. The variegated fragility of amateurs and their tentative definitions call in question the very ideas of dance, spectacle, and contemporaneity.



Corps (in)croyables
Pratiques amateur en danse contemporaine

recherches
Centre national de la danse

Michel Briand (éd.), *Corps (in)croyables. Pratiques amateur en danse contemporaine*, Centre national de la Danse, Pantin, 2017

Typical features of amateur dancers

- - who? children, teenagers, younger - older adults / female, male, trans-, inter-gender ... / straight, gay, queer ... / diverse ethnicities, cultural backgrounds, and social classes, all in terms of intersectionality
- - where and when? on different kinds of stages, in studios, in town / countryside / natural settings, on the streets, in closed environments (e. g. sanitary, custodial, educational ...), in festivals, ballrooms, political meetings and actions ... / in diverse periods (from the ancient Greek chorus to contemporary rave parties) and styles (traditional, social, urban dances ...), especially when variously connected with contemporary dance, in a *stricto sensu* definition.
- - what for? recreation, leisure, seduction, transe, ritual celebration, show, communication, education, wellness, health, ecology, protest, activism ...

For a non-binary typology of amateurs. Family resemblances, prototypes and fuzzy sets 1

- spectators / amateurs:

bystanders, onlookers, critics, witnesses, visitors, guided – participating - immersed spectators, *e. g.* :

Simone Forti, *Huddle* (1961)

Odile Duboc, *Les Fernand*)

Olga de Soto, *Histoire(s)* (2004) about *Le Jeune Homme et la Mort* (Jean Cocteau / Roland Petit) and *Débords* (2012, about *The Green Table* (Kurt Joos)

Jérôme Bel, *Cour d'honneur* (2013)

Mette Ingvartsen, *69 positions* (2014)

Boris Charmatz, *Musée de la danse* (2009)

Tino Sehgal, *Carte blanche*, Palais de Tokyo, and *Création*, Opéra de Paris, 2016)



Simone Forti, *Huddle*, High Line (New York), 2012 (1961)

Mette Ingvarstsen, *69 positions*
(2014)



For a non-binary typology of amateurs. Family resemblances, prototypes and fuzzy sets 2

- carnivals, festivals, rituals, communities:

Dionysian dancers (trance and extasis, in traditional rites as well as ballrooms and urban cultures – hip hop, techno ..., traditional and street dancers, “other professionals” *e. g.* :

François Chaignaud and Cecilia Bengolea, esp. *(M)imosa, Twenty Looks or Paris is Burning at the Judson Church (M), Danses Libres Le tour du monde des danses urbaines en dix villes ...*

Ana Borralho and João Galante, *Atlas Lisboa, Helsinki, Rio de Janeiro, Milano, Lille, Budapest, Poitiers (2011-) ...*

Mathilde Monnier / Philippe Katerine, *2006 vallée*

Pascale Houbin, *Aujourd’hui à deux mains (2009)*



François Chaignaud / Cecilia Bengolea:
Dances Libres (2010)
*(M)imosa, Twenty Looks or Paris is Burning at
the Judson Church (M) ...* (2011)

Ana Borralho / João Galante, *Atlas Poitiers*
(2016-)

For a non-binary typology of amateurs. Family resemblances, prototypes and fuzzy sets 3

- staged / choreographed amateurs:

“pretending amateurs”, dance students, apprentices – teachers

“embodied archives” (e. g. the project *Danse en amateur et répertoire*, at the *Centre national de la danse*)

“precarious galas” (e. g. Eun-Me Ahn, *1’59 Project* in *We are Koreans, honey!*; Jérôme Bel, *Gala*, 2015)

(inter)generational groups / solos (e. g. Pina Bausch, *Kontakthoff*, 1978-2000-2008; Eun-Me Ahn, *Dancing Teen Teen*, *Dancing Grandmothers*, *Dancing Middle-Aged Men*; Thierry Thieû Niang ... *du printemps*, 2011; Mickaël Phelippeau, *Bi-portraits*, 2008, *Pour Ethan*, 2014; *Avec Anastasia*, 2015) ...



Pina Bausch

Kontakthoff - Mit Damen und Herren ab '65, 2000

Kontakthoff – Mit Teenagern ab 14, 2008 (film by Anne Linsel & Rainer Hoffmann, Tanzträume, 2010)

Thierry Thieu Niang in
A 90 years young girl
(film by V. Bruni-Tedeschi
& Y. Coridian, 2017)



For a non-binary typology of amateurs. Family resemblances, prototypes and fuzzy sets 4

- “fragile animals” and rebels:

- care and empowerment practices, *e. g.* :

Anna Halprin (*Dancing my Cancer (out of boundaries)*, 1975;
Rocking Seniors, 2005; *Planetary Dance*, 1987)

Jorge Leon (film *Before we go*, 2014)

Mathilde Monnier, *Bruit blanc (autour de Marie-France)*, 1998

Odile Azagury, with female prisoners

- rebellions and revolutions (*e. g.* Femen, Act Up, *Occupy Syntagma ...*)



Anna Halprin,
Ceremony of us
(1969)

Anna Halprin,
Blank Placard Dance
(1967)





Femen vs. Front National, May 1st 2015, Place de l'Opéra, Paris



Afterword: What do amateurs do to contemporary dance? And to contemporaneity? And to dance?

They make it

(in)credible, (in)actual, (im)patient, (ir)responsible, (in)efficient,
(in)active, (in)human, (in)correct, (im)precise, (im)perfect,
(in)nocuous, (il)legal, (ir)rational, (in)capable, (in)tangible,
(in)dependant, (in)visible, (im)possible, (ir)reverent, (in)curable,
(ir)resistible, (in)congruous, (im)maculate, (im)mobile

(un)even, (un)suitable, (un)real, (un)forgettable, (un)just,
(un)voluntary, (un)intentional, (un)clear, (un)usual,
(un)speakable, (un)bearable, (un)determined, (un)aware,
(un)avoidable, (un)balanced, (un)comfortable, (un)expected,
(un)familiar, (un)glamorous, (un)healthy, (un)known ...

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Thank you for your attention

Merci beaucoup pour votre attention

Σας ευχαριστώ παρά πολύ για την προσοχή σας

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