

KFDA011 | BORIS CHARMATZ'S PERPETUUM MOBILE

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SCULPTURAL MOBILITY

ENI 24 bodies on stage: undulating, oscillating, pulsating, shaking, and circling. *Levée des conflits* is a non-stop, mesmeric kinetic canon of movement lasting an hour and forty minutes. It's the latest offering of Boris Charmatz, 37 year-old dancer, choreographer, and founding director of one of the world's rare dancing museums. OONAGH DUCKWORTH

A one-time keen ping-pong player, then a startling dancer in reputed companies, and now author of a multitude of choreographic works and installations that are as diverse as they are successful. They include a piece for dancers perched on three superimposed platforms so that the choreography must be read vertically, a solo for an audience of one, and a duo in a lorry for himself and a well know French actress. Each new performance raises pertinent questions and always seems to succeed in spinning possible answers back to

the audience from very surprising angles. Charmatz explains the raison d'être behind *Levée des conflits*, that gets its Belgian première at the Kunstenfestivaldesarts: "Suddenly I felt the need to look for a very simple working principle. For the last three years, naturally, the notions of mobility and immobility relating to the idea of a Musée de la Danse (in Rennes, *od*) have been part of our discussions. I wanted to look for a way of creating a constantly mobile dance that nevertheless evoked a single image: the sort of image

that can be imagined when contemplating a sculpture, more subliminal than real or fixed. Another question was: 'How could we find a system where the entire choreography could be visible at all times?' I also wanted to create something for which I didn't have to deal with the usual issues of beginning, middle, and end and the dramatic significance of that. The idea of a choreographic canon arose. Now we are 24 dancers performing 25 different movements. Because there's one less movement than the number of dancers,



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a system like musical chairs comes into play. As the last dancer finishes another has to take up the 'dancerless' gesture and thus the whole group ceaselessly continues to move. It feels very trance-like to dance and similarly to watch."

Can you explain the title?

BORIS CHARMATZ: It refers to Roland Barthes's quotation that "*le neutre*" "resembles the desire for the suspension of conflicts". This beautiful phrase, which infers that neutrality is an aspiration rather than an affirmation, had been in my head for a while. As there are so many conflicts taking place in our current times, from wars to the incessant strikes in France, of course the title has


a strong resonance with the wider world. But in fact we don't have a particular aim to associate the work with the world's struggles. It's choreography. But the fact that we are 24 people on stage, sharing the same movements, that there's a permeability between the bodies, that the same gestures are carefully and consistently transmitted from one dancer to the next, all contribute to making it one of the most social and political pieces I've done to date.

This summer, you are the prestigious Avignon Festival's associate artist. You perform *Levée des conflits*, but also a new work.

CHARMATZ: Yes, we're busy rehearsing a work for the Cour d'Honneur. I felt that I

wanted to work on something very fragile and unpredictable, something small and delicate in this gigantic, grandiloquent, mythical space. Right now we're working with 27 children aged six to twelve for the new performance.

And the Musée de la Danse?

CHARMATZ: We've spent the last three years reflecting, in a very active and collective way, on what a dancing museum should be. Our *Expo zéro* was emblematic of the direction that seems interesting to take. It's an exhibition without a single stable object or oeuvre, just spaces occupied by bodies, ideas, projects, artistic visions. There are also artists, choreographers, architects, researchers in residence who present their subjective or utopic version of what a dancing museum should be to visitors. 

NL | Dans is goed vertegenwoordigd op het Kunstenfestivaldesarts. De Franse choreograaf Boris Charmatz liet zich voor *Levée des conflits* inspireren door een tekst van Roland Barthes, terwijl Charlotte Vanden Eynde in *Shapeless* afstand neemt van de bewegingstalen die haar lichaam als danseres hebben gevormd en getekend.

FR | La danse est bien représentée au Kunstenfestivaldesarts. Pour sa *Levée des conflits*, le chorégraphe français Boris Charmatz s'est inspiré d'un texte de Roland Barthes. De son côté, Charlotte Vanden Eynde prend dans *Shapeless* ses distances avec les langages qui ont formé et marqué son corps de danseuse.

 **BORIS CHARMATZ/MUSÉE DE LA DANSE:**
LEVÉE DES CONFLITS 26 > 28/5 • 20.15,
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