

KAAI THEATER

Volmir Cordeiro

L'oeil la bouche et le reste

17>18/10/2017 – 20:30 – Kaaistudio's
dance • 75 min

Mette Edvardsen

We to be

20>21/10/2017 – 20:30 – Kaaistudio's
performance • 50 min

EXTRA

- **Voor en na de voorstellingen** kan je in de concertstudio luisteren naar de **podcast-serie** *In Mijn Hoofd* van Anke Van Meer (in het Nederlands).
- On **21/10** Christophe De Boeck (Overtoon) invites Saïd Gharbi and Anke Van Meer for **a conversation on sound and imagination.**

IS SEEING BELIEVING?

Piet De Vos on the Western Sensory Framework and New Avenues

Piet De Vos in conversation with Katleen Van Langendonck, Hilde Peeters & Eva Decaesstecker (Kaaaitheater, 2017).

Since last season, the Kaaaitheater has been looking for ways to make the aesthetic experience of dance accessible for the blind and visually impaired. For example, some performances are accompanied by audio description or a *touch tour* beforehand. Others have been created inclusively for both the sighted and visually impaired. Piet De Vos – who has been blind since he was five – is an author and specialized in sensory research. He dismantles the Western sensory framework and opens up new avenues for exploration: ‘There is more to the senses than their physical dimension.’

More than ever, our society is oriented to the visual. We constantly pump Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat full of photos and selfies. Everyone has a smartphone and exchanges images with other people non-stop. It is not the experience itself, but the visual communication of that experience that now predominates. What is your perspective on this evolution?

Visual dominance is not new: the rise of television in the 1960s made our society very image-oriented. But I do feel as though that visual culture is gradually becoming even more dominant. Travel is a good example of this evolution: the most important has become that you share a picture of yourself next to the Statue of Liberty on Facebook. The need for Wi-Fi, has thus becoming a central part of traveling. But images have also become the most important component of the news: people have to have seen something to believe that it really happened.

This photographic culture is much less important to people who are blind or visually impaired. This does not mean, however, that they know nothing about social media and new technologies. On the contrary, they are also active users. Integrative or inclusive technology has allowed various target audiences to use the same devices. For example, there are not only settings for the visually impaired, but also for spastic or deaf people. This has created many new possibilities.

Does our visual culture make the world less accessible to you or does new technology redress the imbalance?

Accessibility is relative. Concerning access to information, the situation has improved, not only thanks to devices like iPhones, but also thanks to the internet. The internet is very important because everything that used to be printed had to be translated into braille or recorded as audio for it to be accessible to the visually impaired. Human translation is no longer necessary. Every digital text is legible for us. Depending on your needs, you can connect something to your laptop: a braille terminal, letter enlargement, or a voice synthesizer. Instead of people, the software can translate the text, and this has drastically increased the accessibility of information.

Throughout history, sight has always been the most important sense in the West. This is related to the fact that sight and hearing are distance senses; you do not engage in direct physical contact with the object that you observe. This model, in which sight is the most important sense, is a result of Greek philosophy. During the Enlightenment, sight was even equated with rationality. The idea being that it is only through visual observation that you can create an objective image of the world. In other words, seeing is believing.

We often think that the senses are simply a part of our body. Some people have four, others have five. But the senses are much more than merely physical attributes. The way we perceive things is determined by what you say about them and the perspective of your culture. These are unwritten codes that influence you from infancy. In Europe, children are taught that the visual is incredibly important from a very early age. For example, we have a very visual vocabulary. A question that blind or visually impaired will certainly have heard while traveling is 'What's the point of traveling if you can't see anything anyway?' If you don't reflect on ideas like this, visual culture can be extremely difficult.

Touch is by no means self-evident. Including for the blind and visually impaired. Choreographer Vera Tussing, who uses a lot of touch in her productions, was told during a try-out: 'It's not because I'm blind that I want to be touched.'

That is a fine example of the effect of visual culture. Touch, but also smell and taste, are much more physical. They are all considered more primitive, instinctive, and impure. Touch is very ethically charged and we easily associate it with eroticism and violence. Who can touch what, when, and how is highly regulated. This is also profoundly linked to our Christian culture. So it is certainly not a bad thing to voice dissenting opinions.

A current example of such dissent is the popularity of podcasts. Are there other forms of counter culture?

Radio is a medium that is still very popular among the visually impaired, and the podcast is a wonderful addition. Radio plays have also made a comeback recently. They were very popular in the sixties and seventies, but they disappeared from the radio waves in the decades afterwards. Fortunately, that is changing, especially among public broadcasters like the BBC, and that is partly because sighted people are showing increasing interest.

The contemporary alternative to seeing is predominantly hearing. Audio tours in museums are another great development. Many blind people think they are fantastic because they are so inclusive. Both the sighted and the visually impaired enjoy them as well. Occasionally there is even greater attention to the blind or visually impaired. For example, some museums in Spain provide historical background in audio tours, and there is also an option for audio description. There are many opportunities here, especially for permanent collections.

The sense of touch is much more sensitive. I just mentioned that we prefer to observe at a distance so that we don't have to make physical contact. A further element is that we don't want to 'contaminate' objects through our touch. We live in a don't-touch culture. Just look at our museums. Touch continues to be thought of as something that is dirty and makes you dirty. The funny thing, especially with respect to sculpture, is that many sculptors think that their art should be touched because creating it was such a tactile experience for them. Anthropologist David Howes, the founder of the Canadian Centre for Sensory Senses, has been making the argument for multi-sensory ethnographic museums for years. By displaying implements in glass cases, you deprive people of more than half the information about the object and the lives of those who used the object. It would be much more interesting to experience how to use these objects. In other words, we still have a long way to go to bridge the gap between art and its audiences.

Whenever the focus is on sensory experience, the critical power of the artwork is always questioned. Why is that?

Our entire system of knowledge is based on visualization to an incredible extent. I have been conducting research into this subject for years and I am still amazed by it. Take the fact that we systematically map things out, for example. The maps that we make of the world are always visual. This feels so logical to us that we don't even think about it. But perhaps it would be interesting to make a sound map of a city. Or to plan a route by smell. To take another example, data always has to be presented in graphs. In protest, somebody at the Centre for Sensory Studies illustrated his PhD through dance rather than graphs.

The reactions to initiatives like this are still generally very pitying, which is primarily due to our almost complete unfamiliarity with non-visual models of knowledge. These models exist, but they are not well-known and children are hardly ever exposed to them. Our classic education system is very audio-visual, despite the fact that all educational reformers – Steiner or Montessori, for example – campaigned to teach children to use all their senses. We are taught to recognize plants based on their visual characteristics, but we could also do that via touch or smell. Examples such as these illustrate how deeply rooted visual culture is in our mentality.

The sense of touch is also charged affectively. To touch also implies being touched. When someone touches you during a performance, it is different from watching someone move 20 metres away. When you focus more on the direct senses, your aesthetic experience changes, and is perhaps more emotional in the moment itself. But touch can also be aesthetic. It makes you think and stimulates your senses.

So there is a future in touch?

The sense of touch as a source of knowledge is very valuable. Philosophers have even developed theories about it. Maurice Merleau-Ponty wrote beautiful things about how you discover the world through touch and movement, and how helpful they are to developing a growing familiarity with your environment. Many people are able to move around their house easily even when the light is switched off: you know where everything is and you are familiar with your surroundings. We do many things without looking at them. For example, people often ask me how I am able to type. But there are numerous sighted people who touch type. We all do so many things through movement, touch, and automatism. Blind and visually impaired people are simply more conscious of these aspects of life because they are more explicitly present: exploring space with a stick, identifying objects through touch.

Lees de Nederlandse vertaling van dit gesprek op
>> www.kaaitheater.be/blind

Volmir Cordeiro **L'OEIL LA BOUCHE ET LE RESTE**

nl/ Na een reeks solo's maakt Volmir Cordeiro een eerste werk voor vier dansers. In *L'œil la bouche et le reste* nodigt hij je uit om het kijken anders te zien. Hij vertrekt vanuit het oog om alles aan te raken wat bolvormig is: de zon, een ei, de maan, een arena. Hij maakt een dans die de fysieke werking en handelingen van het oog wil weergeven: huilen, staren, knipogen, spioneren... Het innerlijke, het verborgene en zelfs het pre-menselijke en kannibalistische komt bloot te liggen in deze heftige, bijna obsessieve zoektocht naar dans, naar dat wat je niet kunt benoemen.

- Dit is de eerste keer dat de Braziliaanse danser en choreograaf Volmir Cordeiro op het Kaaitheter-programma staat. Hij was wel al als danser te zien in *The Clean and the Dirty* (2016) van Vera Mantero.

fr/ Après une série de solos, Volmir Cordeiro crée un premier spectacle pour quatre danseurs. Dans *L'œil la bouche et le reste*, il nous invite à considérer différemment l'acte de regarder. Il part de l'œil pour toucher tout ce qui est sphérique : le soleil, un œuf, la lune, une arène. Il crée une danse censée reproduire les actions et les fonctions physiques de l'œil : pleurer, fixer, cligner, épier... L'intériorité, la latence et même le pré-humain et le cannibale sont mis à nu lors de cette quête intense, quasi obsessionnelle de la danse et de l'innommé.

- C'est la première fois que le danseur et chorégraphe brésilien Volmir Cordeiro est à l'affiche du Kaaitheter. On a déjà pu le voir danser dans *The Clean and the Dirty* (2016) de Vera Mantero.

en/ After a series of solos, Volmir Cordeiro has created his first work for four dancers. In *L'œil la bouche et le reste*, he invites you to change your perspective on sight. He starts with the eye and then extends his exploration to all spherical things: the sun, an egg, the moon, an arena. He has created a dance that aims to express the physical movement and behaviour of the eye: crying, staring, winking, spying... The interior, the hidden and even the pre-human and cannibalistic is exposed in this intense, almost obsessive inquiry into dance, and into the ineffable itself.

- This is Brazilian dancer and choreographer Volmir Cordeiro's first appearance on the Kaaitheter programme. He has previously performed on our stage as a dancer, however, in *The Clean and the Dirty* (2016) by Vera Mantero.

Mette Edvardsen **WE TO BE**

nl/ Mette Edvardsen verruimt het klassieke speelveld drastisch. Ze speelt *We to be* op drie plaatsen tegelijk: in het **boek** waaruit ze voorleest, op de **lege scène** als projectiescherm van je verbeelding, en in de ether als een live **radio-uitzending**. Edvardsen rondt met deze voorstelling een trilogie af waarin taal en stem de bovenhand krijgen, en het visuele aspect zich verplaatst naar de verbeelding van het publiek. In het eerste deel *Black* liet ze onzichtbare objecten verschijnen door ze simpelweg te benoemen. In *No Title* ging ze omgekeerd tewerk, door aan te duiden wat er niet is.

- Choreografe, danseres en performance-artieste Mette Edvardsen verrast keer op keer met fijnzinnige voorstellingen. *Black* (2011) en *No Title* (2014) stonden eerder in de Kaaistudio's. Tijdens Performatik17 presenteerde ze *oslo*. Voor *We to be* ontving ze de prestigieuze Noorse Ibsen Award.

fr/ Mette Edvardsen étend considérablement l'espace d'interprétation classique. Elle joue *We to be* dans trois lieux à la fois : le **livre** dont elle fait la lecture à haute voix, la **scène** vide qui fait office d'écran de projection de l'imagination du spectateur et les **ondes radiophoniques** à travers une diffusion en direct. Avec ce spectacle, Mette Edvardsen achève une trilogie dans laquelle la langue et la voix prennent le dessus et l'aspect visuel se déplace vers l'imaginaire du public. Dans *Black*, le premier volet, elle faisait apparaître des objets invisibles simplement en les nommant. Dans *No Title*, elle procédait de manière inverse en désignant ce qui n'était pas là.

- Chorégraphe, danseuse et artiste de la performance, Mette Edvardsen surprend à chaque fois avec des spectacles subtils. On a pu voir précédemment *Black* (2011) et *No Title* (2014) aux Kaaistudio's. Durant Performatik17, elle a présenté *oslo*. *We to be* lui a valu le prestigieux prix norvégien Ibsen.

en/ Mette Edvardsen is drastically expanding the classical stage. She is performing *We to be* at three locations simultaneously: in the **book** from which she reads aloud, on the **empty stage** as a projection screen of your imagination, and in the ether as a live **radio broadcast**. This production is the final instalment in Edvardsen's trilogy in which language and voice predominate and visual aspects are transferred to the imaginations of the audience. In the first part, *Black*, she made invisible objects appear simply by naming them. In *No Title*, she did the inverse, by indicating what was not there.

- Choreographer, dancer and performance artist Mette Edvardsen always surprises us with refined performances. *Black* (2011) and *No Title* (2014) were previously performed at the Kaaistudios. During Performatik17, she presented *oslo*. And she was awarded the prestigious Norwegian Ibsen Prize for *We to be*.

Christoph De Boeck, Anke Van Meer & Saïd Gharbi

OVER GELUID EN VERBEELDING

nl/ Christoph De Boeck (artistiek directeur Overtoon) vertelt hoe blinden hun omgeving waarnemen door subtiele veranderingen in akoestiek te interpreteren. Met behulp van kleine echo's ontstaat een letterlijke 'ver-beeld-ing' van de ruimte. Ook kunstenaars zijn aan de slag gegaan met klanken en echo-locatie om een ruimte te scheppen, waarvan hij enkele voorbeelden bespreekt. Nadien gaat Christoph in gesprek met Anke Van Meer en Saïd Gharbi.

- Anke Van Meer is met *In Mijn Hoofd* de winnaar geworden van De beste podcastwedstrijd, georganiseerd door Radio 1. In haar inzending probeert Anke te verklanken wat zich in allerlei hoofden afspeelt. Hoofden van een afasiepatiënt, van een blinde, van een verliefde, van iemand met het syndroom Gilles de la Tourette... Hoofden waarin het anders maalt dan in de onze. In de Kaaistudio's kun je ook naar deze podcasts luisteren.
- Saïd Gharbi – blind sinds zijn veertiende – begon in 1992 te dansen bij Ultima Vez en Wim Vandekeybus. Later creëerde hij zijn eigen voorstellingen als acteur en danser.

fr/ Christophe De Boeck (directeur artistique d'Overtoon) raconte comment des aveugles perçoivent leur environnement en interprétant de subtils changements acoustiques. À l'aide d'échos minimaux naît littéralement une « image » de l'espace. De Boeck expose aussi des exemples d'espaces que des artistes ont créés en travaillant avec des sons et de l'écholocation. Ensuite, il engage la discussion avec Anke Van Meer et Saïd Gharbi.

- Avec *In mijn hoofd* [Dans ma tête], Anke Van Meer a remporté un concours de podcast organisé par la chaîne de radio publique flamande Radio 1. Le lauréat du concours pouvait réaliser une série complète de podcasts. Dans *In mijn hoofd*, Anke Van Meer tente d'expliquer ce qui se déroule dans différents cerveaux : le cerveau d'un patient atteint d'aphasie, d'une personne amoureuse, d'une personne souffrant du syndrome de Gilles de la Tourette... Des cerveaux qui fonctionnent différemment. Aux Kaaistudio's, vous pouvez écouter cette série de podcasts.
- Saïd Gharbi – aveugle depuis ses quatorze ans – a rejoint la compagnie Ultima Vez et Wim Vandekeybus en 1982. Plus tard, il a créé ses propres spectacles en tant qu'acteur et danseur.

en/ Christoph De Boeck (artistic director of Overtoon) explains how blind people perceive their environment by interpreting subtle acoustic changes. Thanks to little echoes, they are literally able to imag(e)ine the space. He also discusses several examples of artists who have also employed sounds and echolocation to create spaces. Afterwards, Christoph will sit down with Anke Van Meer and Saïd Gharbi.

- Anke Van Meer won Radio 1's Best Podcast competition with *In Mijn Hoofd*. The prize was a podcast series. In her submission, Anke attempt to express what goes on in various heads. The head of an aphasia patient, of a blind person, of a person in love, of someone with Tourette's Syndrome, etc. Heads that process things differently. You can also listen to these podcasts at the Kaaistudios.
- Saïd Gharbi – who has been blind since he was fourteen years old – started dancing with Ultima Vez and Wim Vandekeybus in 1992. He later created his own productions as an actor and dancer.

Beluister Van Meers podcast online
>> www.radio1.be/podcast-in-mijn-hoofd



EXPERIENCE DANCE IN NEW WAYS

Again, we search for ways to make the aesthetic experience of a performance accessible to all. **Whether you are sighted, partially sighted, or blind.**

For **Volmir Cordeiro**, we're providing audio description (in Dutch & French) and a touch tour. **Mette Edvardsen** addresses an empty scene and lets you create your own images.

Vera Tussing and **Anne Juren** opt for feeling over seeing, for nearness over distance (17 & 18/11 Kaaistudio's).

>> www.kaaitheater.be/blind

credits

Volmir Cordeiro **L'OEIL LA BOUCHE ET LE RESTE**

choreography Volmir Cordeiro | **performers** Volmir Cordeiro, Calixto Neto, Isabela Santana, Marcela Santander Corvalán | **lighting** Abigail Fowler | **sound design** Cristián Sotomayor | **sound manager** Arnaud Delacelle | **costumes** Lucas Ossendrijver, assisté de Boramy Viguier | **outside eye** Carolina Mendonça, Ana Paula Kamozaki | **administration and production** Margot Videcoq and Charlotte Giteau | **production** Margelles | **co-production** CN D Centre National de la Danse, Le Quartz Scène Nationale de Brest, Centre Chorégraphique National de Caen en Normandie, Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication, Arcadi Île-de-France, Adami, Département de la Seine-Saint-Denis | **presented by** the European The Humane Body-project, co-financed by the EU's Creative Europe programme | **thanks to** Slagerij Etienne (Forest)

Mette Edvardsen **WE TO BE**

created and performed by Mette Edvardsen | **light design** Bruno Pocheron | **sound design** Peter Lenaerts | **graphic design** Michaël Bussaer | **production** Mette Edvardsen/ Athome and Manyone vzw | **co-production** BUDA (Kortrijk), Black Box teater (Oslo), Teaterhuset Avant Garden (Trondheim), BIT – Teatergarasjen (Bergen) | **support of** workspacebrussels (Brussels), Contour (Mechelen) | **support** Norsk Kulturråd, Vlaamse Gemeenschap

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