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Mar 24. 03

REPEATING
repeating distance
DISTANCE

To whom it may concern

Included you will find the description and proposition of the project *Repeating Distance* which we developed together over a period of almost 3 years (September 2003 - January 2006).

Repeating, over and over again, the same artistic proposal, we have developed an understanding of both its performance and educational potential as well as applications which we would like to continue to share with a larger audience and interested community of dance professionals in different cities throughout the world.

Repeating Distance has toured to Nanaimo and Montreal/Canada; Antwerp and Bruges/Belgium; London/UK and Limassol/Cyprus. In 2008, we toured to Athens and Kalamata/Greece, ImPulsTanz at the Vienna International Dance Festival in Austria, and in May 2009, to Toronto for a workshop with Toronto Dance Theatre.

In all of these places choreographers, dancers, visual artists, actors, writers and directors involved in the performing arts met to dance, witness and reflect while working together in the studio.

Because of its nature, we have chosen to use photography exclusively as a means of visual documentation. [SEE REVIEW & PHOTOS AT THE END OF THE DOSSIER]. We would also love to visit you and talk about it in more detail.

Looking forward to your interest and to meeting you,

Lin Snelling

Guy Cools

The place is repeating. The place is distant. The place is called *repeating distance*.

It is a performance.

It has two people, a man and a woman.

It is about walking in cities we love and how it changes us. Our eyes fingerprint specifics, real and imagined, and this excites and saddens us, depending on the specifics of the room we are performing in. These specifics swirl into a word or a dance or a word/dance. Our thoughts become physical and remind us we are together in the same place, listening and watching. We become intimate.

The woman moves from a wall to a river. She tells him every time how noisy the wall is, how it never stops celebrating. She can never sleep beside the wall, so she gets up and moves to the door of the apartment to find the river. She knows it is somewhere close. Her body tells her that. She is very attracted to water. So she sets off down the road with cobblestones, past the antique store Le Retour, past the open round place, where there are cafés, and it is there that she passes the two angels on top of the art gallery... they are driving chariots, drawn by horses,... she swears she sees them moving every time she looks up, but when she looks again, all is quiet and they are very still.

He walks to edit her. He takes the moving and the speaking and turns it into colour. He follows red. There is a shell inside his head collecting sounds... he is naked from the waist up, drowning in centuries of rain. He stands by the river and is tall...like the cranes that are all over this city. He says he dances because he has to, and opens his arms wide, stands on one leg and tips into the invisible river.

But it is the floor of the studio we are all in together... water and floor get mixed into river... and the telling of these places becomes full with accident, like meeting someone for the first time. We are meeting you every time for the first time... because we are *repeating the distance* of our cities to you. It is the place of my body walking towards yours.

I/eye see you here/hear you, now... now listening.

Lin Snelling



For Lin,
So many stories
shared.
The journalism
The laughter
Wedding, building
"singing" the air"
for

A R T I S T B I O S

Guy Cools. After having trained as a dramaturge, Guy Cools became involved with the new developments in dance in Flanders since the 1980's, initially as a dance critic and, from 1990 onwards, as the theatre and dance director of Arts Centre Vooruit in Ghent. In that capacity he was responsible for a large number of co-productions and collaborations with a variety of international dance companies. As vice-president of the Dance Council he contributed to the cultural policy towards dance of the Flemish Community. He curated dance events in Frankfurt, Dusseldorf, Venice and Montréal.

In 2002, he left Vooruit to dedicate himself full-time to production dramaturgy with, among others, Koen Augustijnen and Lisi Esteras (Les Ballets C de la B), Sidi Larbi Cherkooui (B), Anabel Schellekens (B), Lia Haraki (Cyprus), Akram Khan (London), Danièle Desnoyers (Montréal), Christopher House (Toronto Dance Theatre). From April 1, 2010, he's been house dramaturge at Danshuis Station Zuid, Tilburg, the Netherlands and since October 1, 2011, associate lector at the Fontys Hogeschool voor de Kunsten.

With Lin Snelling and Ginelle Chagnon, he developed a series of workshops to support the creative process of artists, choreographers in particular. He regularly gives lectures and publishes in Belgium, Canada, United Kingdom, Germany, Holland, Greece and Cyprus.

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Lin Snelling has toured the world extensively as a performer with Carbone 14 (1989-2001). As choreographer, performer and teacher, she continues to investigate, perform and teach improvisation, both as a tool for creating choreographic material and as a way to keep performances alive and present - which has cultivated an exploration into body work in relation to dance and the spoken, sung and written word.

She creates works and collaborates with many choreographers and directors throughout Canada and Europe, most recently in Austria, Athens, Belgium, Cyprus, Dublin and the UK with *Repeating Distance*, a collaboration with the dramaturge Guy Cools. Presently, Lin is teaching dance and improvisation to actors in the Drama Faculty at the University of Alberta, living in both Edmonton and Montreal, and deciphering dialogues between these two cities and artistic communities.

She performed in Tedi Tafel's *Life World* and in *Calendar*, and her most recent dance collaborations are *Loop Thing*, *Room* and *Performing Book*, presented in Calgary, Vancouver and Edmonton respectively. *Performing Book* opened the Brian Webb Dance season at the Art Gallery of Alberta last September, with artists Michael Reinhart, Jérémie Roy, Shelagh Keeley and Nick Blais.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Genesis:

Montreal-based choreographer Lin Snelling and Belgian dance dramaturge Guy Cools met when Lin participated in the improvisation project *Blind* by Flemish choreographer Alexander Baervoets which was produced and presented for the even *Vooruit Danse en Avant*, curated by Guy Cools.

Out of fascination for each other's city - Antwerpen and Montreal - they went into the studio in both cities to find a meeting ground between movement and text; between body and external eye.

Repeating Distance, the improvised dialogue which resulted from this, was developed and presented during residencies in Arts Centre Monty in Antwerpen, the Fondation Jean-Pierre Perrault and Studio 303 in Montreal. In May 2005 it was presented 15 times in only 3 days to a large audience, as part of the project *Body Walks* in Brugges.

During workshops given in Toronto and Montreal, the educational potential of the project, for both choreographers and performers, was researched.

As an artistic project *Repeating Distance* investigates:

- new ways to edit language and movement;
- the translation process between the presence and fluidity of the articulated and highly trained body of the performer and the verbally articulated consciousness and physical economy of the dramaturge;
- how to use a local, urban landscape and an actual performance space as a source for a non-linear form of contemporary story-telling;
- how to develop a collective repertoire and memory of movements, images, stories to be used within an improvised performance form;
- performance time and space as a balance between the deep structure of the rehearsal practice and the surface structure of the actual performance.

We are paying attention to how the body moves and writes. It is a slow process that involves the experience of "going for a walk" and then "remembering the walk." What are we choosing to remember? And why? And how does this

recall become present in real time? As we walk and remember we discover the most overwhelming activity... that of slowing down and opening up. We are writing the body and moving the word.

In our work as dance artists, the body is the word. Each one at its most essential is poetic by nature, full of paradox, mystery and practicalities; a kind of intelligence that poetry captures and movement evokes. This intelligence demands an articulate way of repeating movement so as to refine and edit... a method involving subtraction... so the words and the movements become charged with energy and can carry the memory of the viewer back into a sentient dialogue with place.

We are *repeating distance* so that the imagination of all watching can emerge. We become guides into the myriad fluid connections held and carried inside the body, inside the spirit, and inside the soul of a city as it transforms itself endlessly under the influence of the time of day, season, and age. The timing of a city is the chance crossing of millions of lives... all weaving into the amazing texture of a day. The threads are so fine and so dependent on routine, necessity, livelihood, occasion and accident. Just like the human body; also a miracle of timing and accident; a fluid reality with a beating heart; something we take for granted and marvel at; a conscious and unconscious paradox.

As and educational process, *Repeating Distance* can teach:

performers,

- to integrate voice and movement;
- to improvise with language and movement in non-linear, narrative ways;
- to develop a higher awareness of performance time and space;
- to use their own daily reality as a source to create material;

choreographers,

- to use improvisation both as a tool to create choreographic material and a way to keep their performances alive and present;
- to work with both trained and non-trained bodies and performers;
- to include the act of 'watching' as a meaningful theatrical device;

non-professional dancers,

- to discover their body and memory as creative sources for both physical and verbal expression.

Presentations or Workshops of *Repeating Distance* / with Lin Snelling

- 2004** ♦Residency at Arts Centre Monty in Antwerpen and first public presentations.
♦June, Presentation of solo version in Vienna/Tanzparenz 2.
♦September, Residency / presentation, Fondation Jean-Pierre Perrault, Montréal.
- 2005** ♦March-April, Residency / presentation at Studio 303, Montréal.
♦March, Workshop in Toronto.
♦May, 15 presentations as part of the project Body Walks, Brugges.
- 2006** ♦January, Workshop for choreographers / performers at Circuit Est, Montréal.
- 2007** ♦May, Workshop for performers and 2 presentations in (Newcastle Island), Nanaimo, British Columbia, Canada
♦August, 2-week workshop and 2 presentations at The Place, London UK, as part of Choreodrome: Directed Research Studies.
♦September, Workshop and presentation in Limassol, Cyprus by invitation of Lia Haraki and PELMA Dance Company.
- 2008** ♦July, Workshop in Vienna, Austria / Impulstanz International Dance Festival.
♦July, Workshop / presentation, Isadora Duncan Dance Centre, Athens, Greece.
♦July, Workshop at Kalamata Dance Festival in Kalamata, Greece.
- 2009** ♦May, Workshop with Toronto Dance Theatre company, Toronto, Ontario.
- 2010** ♦Workshop / performance, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.
♦Workshop, Station Zuid-Tilburg, Netherlands.
- 2011** ♦Workshop / performance at The Place, London, UK.
♦Workshop at Dance Centre, Dublin, Ireland.

P R O P O S A L

What we propose is a one-week residency in your city where we can both perform and/or teach the underlying principles of *Repeating Distance*.

What we require:

- a large space (can be either a studio, venue or non-theatrical space) with a good floor and preferably an inspiring view on the city or environment;
- no technical requirements at all, we use whatever is available in the space;
- a week's fee;
- lodgings and per diems for two people;
- travel costs (which we will try to have subsidized).

Translating place into dance

CITY: Artists took inspiration from Nanaimo to create a great performance

BY SHIRLEY GOLDBERG
FOR THE DAILY NEWS

Every city, every location on earth, has its own distinctive aura and its own history. The challenge that Lin Snelling and Guy Cools, an amazing pair of contemporary artists from Montreal, have set for themselves is to capture this essence of place through dance and spoken word.

Their *modus operandi* is to visit a city for at least a week before performance, scavenging bits of experience and history, which they will incorporate into a completely improvised program that is performed in an unconventional setting and will become part of their ongoing repertoire of cities.

As Cools explained, after their performance for Crimson Coast last Friday night, their approach is super low tech — no music, no special lighting or effects.

For them the space itself is the third party in their act. They use only what is available in that setting.

For Nanaimo, the choice was inspired — the long, beautiful dance-hall pavilion on Newcastle Island,



Contemporary artist Guy Cools performs on Newcastle Island on May 4. — MICHAEL REINHART

which had just been opened for the first time this season, with the winter ghosts and chill still lingering.

The audience sat on benches

against opposing walls while the artists used the entire expanse. Even the natural environment performed on cue. After Snelling struck a pose

that was amusingly and unmistakably that of a deer, Cools flung open the pavilion doors to reveal actual deer posing casually outside.

At a later time when they were both evoking the angel statuary of a European city, a heavenly flock of honking geese flew overhead. But, most suggestive of all was the use they were able to make of the full-size wall mural at the east end of the hall, a greatly enlarged photograph of a throng of people enjoying a CPR picnic on Newcastle in the '30s.

Snelling — wearing a fabulous, hand-knit, creamy white dress from the '40s, which she had bought at a local consignment shop — blended eerily into and out of the mural.

As they looked at the picture, they speculated about the people in it. But Snelling reminded us more than once: "Of course, I'm only guessing. I might be lying."

A similar reservation involved their musings about the statuary of Antwerp, which carried the burden of both fantasy and history for the other featured city in their program — Guy Cools' hometown.

If all of this sounds alarmingly postmodern, let me emphasize that their performance was also charmingly funny.

Lin Snelling is an amazing dancer who can make the most challenging movements and acts of balance look both impeccable and effortless while Cools, as both an actor and writer, brings an unusual dimension of creative imagination to the project.

Next they will go on to places like London, Cyprus and Bruges — taking a bit of Nanaimo with them.



GUY COOLS

PHOTOGRAPHY: MANON DE PAUW

LIN SNELLING











