

Dance, objectively

"Der TanzAtlas" at Museum für Völkerkunde in Hamburg

Veröffentlicht am 13.12.2017, von Gastbeitrag

Hamburg - Von Anna Semenova-Ganz

When we think about dance, we imagine the dancing body. But what stays from dance once the body is taken away? Actually, a lot. To reflect on this question, you may watch the meditative, 5-hour-long, object-based performance "TanzAtlas". Textures, density, chemical reactions of the liquids, laws of physics, wind, impulses, momentum of inertia - all the amusing qualities of material objects are turned into choreography here.

Helen Schröder works with the material qualities of the objects and sequentially discovers their performativity. The behaviour of some textures is unique and unpredictable, the sources of the movement impulses are shifted into the situation of the body absence. Four performers who also have experiences with dance, borrow their bodies to the object theatre: they make only assisting movements, letting the objects dance, create the landscapes and stories on the table and contaminate the spectator with the focused monotonous observation.

In the lecturer hall of Ethnographic museum, decorated with wood panels, the premiere of "Der TanzAtlas" took place. This amphitheatre-like space with integrated table on stage is the traditional set for ethnographic lectures, this time dance is in the centre of the attention. The performance consists of five parts, each of them includes various interpretations of different dances: from "Gala" by Jerome Bel to "Nutcracker" and the spring ritual with a sacrifice from Kalimantan Islands - Helen Schröder interprets the significant elements from the dances and translates them from the body into objects: groceries, toys, housekeeping utensils, construction elements and other "stuff".

Using the mockumentary format "Der TanzAtlas" she traces choreography in relation to the objects. A playful "homo ludens" approach unwraps itself with the time into well thought-through and research-based work. Together with the atlas format Schröder appropriates the laboratory strategy. Like Nam June Paik explored in his "Wrap around the world" (1988) what was on TV at this day, "Der TanzAtlas" explores the dances which are danced and performed for the purpose of fake contest.

Although "TanzAtlas" is about dance, it is different from what we consider as dance performance: it is too slow and too body-less; and even the most entertaining objects cannot catch attention for the same time like human body (for example: "Der Lauf der Dinge" (1987) was only 30 minutes long). Certainly, the bodies of the performers are still there and can replace this lack for a while. But I would say that their main task is to keep a certain degree of irony which emerges in the gap of their serious attitude to their bizarre actions they do. Looks like, different to dance, the irony still cannot exist without the human.

Next shows:

Sophiensaele, Berlin 4th-7th January 2018

Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg 21th January 2018



"Der TanzAtlas" and DIE NEUE KOMPANIE at Museum für Völkerkunde in Hamburg
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