

Society for Dance Research

NEWSLETTER #5 Mai 2023

**Editorial by Dr. Jutta Krauß, PhD
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@Maurice Korbel

Dear members of the Society for Dance Research,

The board sends warm greetings to all members. It's gradually getting warmer, and the evenings are getting longer. This makes the journey to performance venues more enjoyable. The path to the performance venue E-Werk in Freiburg takes me (Jutta Krauß) along the Dreisam river by bike. There, on April 20, 2023, I saw the premiere of "Fin de Siècle." I would like to share the performance and the encounters with you in the following.

In the performance "Fin de Siècle," developed by Julie Jaffrennou and other members of Compagnie LaPerformance, the building material Ytong represents a bedroom, a living room, fragments of a house where the performers - children, teenagers, young and old people (program booklet, E-Werk Freiburg) - constantly build new spaces and explore relational networks. Many people walk through this stage space created with Ytong blocks during the performance. However, at the beginning of the piece, the performers Paul Bartdorff, Tjadke Biallowons, Nurya Cremonesi, Alice Gartenschläger, Lilith Korbel, Olivia Maridjan-Koop, Michael Schmitter, Yoel Schneider, and Rania Seiter sit on a pile of stones until an elongated and repeating process begins: the performers move, placing one stone after another, as if crossing a stream on stepping stones. The expressed weight of picking up and passing on the stones interrupts the seemingly mechanical process. The act of picking up and setting down the stones evokes repetition. "[R]epetition finally brings about change: hitched to a goal, driven by a will, repetition is creative" (Brook 1983: 182). The concept of repetition draws a circle in the performance, starting from the pile of stones, moving through the stage space, and returning to the pile of stones. The repetition is characterized by warmth as the

performers carefully pass the stones, hold each other, and strive to maintain their own balance and that of others. It continues until they are back sitting on the pile of stones. The possibility of lingering is also evident later in the construction of small dwellings where individual performers or only a few tarry. The temporal elongation is torn apart by a scream, and the performers dance to search for the seemingly lost time and to encounter each other. Different spaces are repeatedly constructed and imagined to establish and define relationships. These are "relationships that are so intense that we need them as much as we need air to breathe. Home is a force that influences our entire being and everything within its magical circle" (Coccia 2021: 13). In the stage space, various places that could be a home are constantly created, where encounters are so close that the performers obviously breathe each other's air. The frames, places, dwellings, and rooms created with Ytong blocks refer to time, numerous events, and changes - in the way the performers play, fight, touch, and dance. However, the frames are always unstable.

One week after the performance, I received an email: "...we are giving away our set design...!!! 180 Ytong blocks are available for pick-up at the ramp in the parking lot of the E-Werk in Freiburg" (private email, April 25, 2023, emphasis added). This not only highlights how practical the aesthetics of the performance seemingly are but also reflects how the handling of Ytong blocks mirrored a life that couldn't be experienced in a single moment. ("The aesthetics are practical. (...) The stage is a reflection of life, but this life couldn't be experienced in a single moment (...)") (Brook 1983: 129))

In my framing – interpretation – of the performance “Fin de Siècle”, no definitive meaning should emerge, but rather my own passionate entanglement should be expressed. Perhaps you would like to share your thoughts on current or past dance movements and performances in our next newsletter?

**With warm regards,
Jutta Krauß**