

A Memorable 'This is just to do/Part 2' in the Monty

by Clara van den Broek, in de Morgen, March 3rd, 2001

Do you know that bunker feeling in the arts? Artists who go underground to do radical things. The public who comes to watch gets the feeling that they are experiencing something special. Those who weren't there can hear stories for years about 'the good old days in the cold, dark bunker'. That is the atmosphere of 'This is just to do/Part 2', tonight in the Monty.

Do you also know that stuff about 'work in progress', that 'the process is more important than the result' and the artistic slander of result orientated thinking? Do you sometimes have the feeling that the blah-blah has to cover or justify the lack of quality and unfinishedness ?

Well, that is not 'This is just to do/Part 2'. It is a work where the process was so important that the result stands head and shoulders above the usual.

'This is just to do/Part 2' is a concept by the German Isabelle Schad (who has danced with Wim Vandekeybus and showed her own work in the Ultima Vez presentation evening) and by the Portuguese Adriana Sá, who is specialized in sound, installations, mixed-media projects and visual art in the largest sense of the word. But an interdisciplinary collective of twelve artists also worked on this creation.

The work came to exist through five international residencies in different work places, from Hamburg to New York and Neerpelt, where there was always a showing, with different artists from the twelve. In between, the artists improvised and created, together or separately. All these works in progress were ingredients from which the seven artists distilled 'This is just to do/Part 2'. The least you can say about such a process is that the participants are not easily distractable.

Luckily. They've made one of the few (real) multi-media performances where the whole doesn't get suffocated under the parts. Even though the collective is quite broad, there is no overkill with the input, strengthening the different media instead of making each other superfluous. The arts which take part are: dance performance, live sound and visual art, sound installations, video projections, light creation and visual installations.

What the performance is really about is hard to say. What is sure is that the artists are playing with fetishes, image-culture and life in the big city as a context. The two female dancers play with their icon-status through high heels, a Bugs Bunny mask, wigs, breasts and movements that make one think of manequins. Also, the male dance performer captures his own sexuality in a comparison with Bugs Bunny, via an installation with white boxes. These boxes also serve as temporary screens for video projections, such as a film of a carjacking (speeded up, repeated, forwards and backwards). Later, the performers imitate the movements from the film. This is not really revolutionary. The Woostergroup did it first. But this collective isn't trying to open anyones eyes to some kind of human condition.

But at the same time they do say something about that condition. About our habit for stimulus, for example via the noise-soundscape, which works on you aggressively, but which you get used to. Or the flickering of lights under the stage, through which you realize that you had forgotten them. There are also the live video recordings, visual work which makes the body a stackable building material. At the end, the stage empties, and a lonesome bunny remains behind, a lost rabbit in a stone desert. The ladies and gentlemen of the collective looked proud and relieved at the bow. Within their right.