

**A conversation between Karlien Meganck (deSingel) and Varinia Canto Vila about the creation of *During Beginning Ending*. The conversation took place as a result of the première on the 22nd of April 2010, in the frame of the festival BOUGE B. in deSingel, Antwerp.**

*Why did you choose for dance, how did you become a dancer?*

My mother's best friend was a dancer and was the director of the national school of Maputo in Mozambique. My mother inscribed me and my sisters in her school because she couldn't take care of us after normal school. I continued my dance studies when we went back to Chile. Luckily I don't dance for the same reason I started, because otherwise it would sound very childish and pathetic from me, but today dancing is something I do for a mix of pragmatic and idealistic reasons. It is the only thing I know that allows me to make what I want.

*Can you tell us something about the creation process of 'During Beginning Ending'?  
What was your starting point for this piece?*

I started from two things: 1) making a solo for myself (I explain this in the next question); and 2) I wanted to find out if there was something in movement that could still interest me, because I didn't want to give up movement. For me, movement becomes uninteresting when you give away abstraction. I thought I could figure out other forms of representation by concentrating on *how* I do things, instead of concentrating on *what* I do, and that I could use this in order to communicate. I am still not sure about this issue.

*Why did you choose to make a solo?*

I always found it a misfortune that as dancer or choreographer we embody the "work of art", because I have a lot of difficulties, making artistic choices "from the inside". I presented a research project where I proposed to deal with this subject-object body issue and started to research how could I create artistic work which deals with this issue. I think my problem is that what I feel and like as a dancer is never enough. As a choreographer I can not approve the work unless I see it. This problem was the starting point for one of the scenes in the solo, where I externalize the joy I have as I move. I never really questioned if I had to make a solo or not. It seemed a very natural choice. I worked intensively with video-registrations, they helped me to have a sense of the whole architecture of the solo,

*Did you work with a dramaturge/outside eye or not, and why?*

It took me two months of work before I wanted to invite someone to watch the work. I needed to understand the material by myself first. Even if I had a clear starting point, I didn't want to work in a straight or literal way with the idea. It was useful for me to set up a frame of action that could help me to find new material. But it did not really help me to get the feeling of being productive in an effective way. So when I invited Marnix Rummens as a dramaturge, I wanted to check some specific things out. I already knew more or less what kind of issues Marnix had to keep an eye on. Later on, approximately three weeks before the premiere, I needed regular encounters with different people. For that I asked colleagues and friends to come, watch and give feedback. Pierre Rubio, who is a performer and a choreographer himself, came several times at the very end of the creation process. Inviting all these people influenced my choices to change or keep certain things. Even more: showing the work allowed me to have an idea of what I was doing, despite the approval or disapproval of the observer.

*Can you tell us what the following concepts mean to you: space – time – structure.*

All these concepts have for me the power to convey meaning. The way you place the material in space, when and for how long... influences the way things are said and understood. I use them a lot because they help me to give a context for what I do. As dance is a rather abstract form of art, space, time and structure gain a lot of value. They almost have the same role grammar has for language. They

are tools to make a performance readable. That's why it is interesting not to take these notions for granted and to avoid falling in the typical or traditional ways of using them. They can help us to open up new readings.

*What are your influences?*

I've been inspired by the writings of Roberto Bolaño because he gives the reader the feeling that he writes without a project or that he thinks out loud. That is why his literature feels very human to me, and it is by reading his book *The Wild Savages* that I got this idea of focussing on the *how* more than the *what* to say tell. The work of the American choreographer Deborah Hay gave me also a lot of tools for the creation of a performance. I took two workshops with her that really "changed my life" (to say it in a romantic way). On the idea of unfinished movement I've been reading also texts by Cezanne, writings by Francis Alÿs on structures without aim, and a lot on Art Brut. But in general I am influenced by everything I encounter, also by the things I don't like.

*You have worked together with Meg Stuart. Did she influence you as an artist?*

Meg Stuart influenced me in the way that in her work I developed an eye for translating ideas to the body. In the time I worked with her, she was already busy with the idea that by embodying emotional states one could transmit things without being too dramatic about it. In other words, in her work I had my first contact with a mix between dance and theatre that didn't force you to give up the body and that didn't get too dramatic.

*What was the importance of PARTS for you?*

Parts certainly gave me another perspective on dance because it gave me tools to think dance. That's the reason why I could start wanting to develop my own work. I think this happened because of the theoretic classes and the attention the school gave to watching performances. Before Parts my experience as an audience was very poor. This was partly due to the legacy of Pinochet's dictatorship and his poor cultural policy, and partly due to the fact that nobody in my family had a strong relation to the arts. So during my first years in Europe, Parts was a strong artistic reference to me because it introduced me to some of the newest dance techniques of the time. But, in fact to my amazement, what Parts did not do was giving the moral support and trust that I needed to develop my artistic work as a student

*You are from Chile, do you feel like these roots influence your work?*

Roots is a complicated notion for me because I didn't really grow up in Chile or another country only. Nevertheless, Chile remains my motherland because my parents taught me to consider it as such. I miss Chile a lot, but I never know if it is the idealistic idea of Chile I miss or not. Maybe I belong to this group of "modern and globalized people" that let their roots grow in people more than in countries, in ideas more than in nationalities. Therefore I don't think that in my work I deal with identity or with roots, not at least in a conscious or in a straight way.