The protection of fragility

Julie Nioche

Photography ‘Matter of fact’ de
Julie Nioche / A.I.M.E. © Photo
Matié Matthias Bovier - Le Manège
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With pictures like a choreographic poem, Julie Nioche, a unique figure of the contemporary dance scene in France, gives answers with her artistic and social actions over the last fifteen years not only to the question of the ‘fragile’ of being, body and identity but also to its protection.

Text Béa Fylla

“The notion of fragility often comes to guide and define my projects. ‘Fragility of the subject’ is what I call our fortitude to demonstrate our adaptability, efforts, failures, or our attempts to attain our goals rather than the result of the attainment itself. In other words, the situation we are in where we are dominated by a feeling, when we feel our feelings and our senses.

What touches me concerning dance is what cannot be not only fully controlled, what slips of the control of the dancer but at the same time paradoxically enough it defines him profoundly. My work aims at placing the bodies in destabilizing environments and makes the dancers react with intuition, sensibility and creativity. Other times I think that action is not necessary, sometimes their placement and presence on stage is enough. This is also a fragile situation, as action could sometimes be considered as a state of inertia.

If, in the context of my artistic actions, I am aiming at stimulating the emotional participation of the viewer, sharing and evincing the vulnerable situation we are all experiencing, my workshop's target is to utilize the perception of our senses and demonstrate all this fragility it conveys.”

After so many years of experience in the performance and choreography field and a series of valuable collaborations with accomplished artists, in 2007 she formed A.I.M.E. – Association d’Individus en Mouvements Engagés (Associations of Moving and Committed Individuals) in collaboration with Isabelle Ginot, Gabrielle Mallet, Stéphanie Gressin Michel Repellin (each one specialized in specific programmes and roles) with a purpose to combine her artistic creation with the relay of body techniques far from the social field of performance and the expansion of actions in the social field and the field of pedagogy. Her studies in osteopathy and psychology encouraged her from the beginning of her career not only to develop a new approach for an unbreakable combination between Dance and Society, as well as the socio-medical and the therapeutic field, while trying to make her presence obvious in all those sectors, but also to seize the opportunity of protection to someone else by making him a massage or by just touching him. A human chain around a protected space, a theatre for example, a kind of garden or another kind of space, which the eyes of the participants would be important. We adjusted this idea in the context they have proposed to us. With the students name all those things they want to protect and keep in their lives. They read and recorded their texts which were later composed by Alexandre Meyer. This sequence of sounds was broadcasted by a pattern of speakers placed in an open area, around of which the students were performing the choreography we made together. Simple moves, based on the students’ gestures and spectacles, as well as a reconsideration of dance, not exclusively as a product of the glance, but also as a product of our senses!

“Indifference or even denial, that we often come across in some contexts make us think that we haven't protect our bodies, feelings and senses. The question however, is from what and from whom? It is still difficult to further analyse that but we could probably talk about their protection against the dominance of discursive knowledge and the power of those who possess it. As well as for our protection against the value system that defines our everyday life, performance, action power buying, realization of specific goals depending on our age, career development.

Protecting our space, where we have the possibility to put a parenthesis in all those pressures and relativize them, are considered to be parts of our actions. Reacting and resisting with mildness, proposing alternative ways or other evaluative criteria like feeling, charisma, pleasure of moving and mobilization, expression and autonomy become our priorities.”

While searching for suitable words and images, Espace Protégé (2009) project responds with an open space.

“We worked on fragility and how it is not to talk about protection. I wanted to create a human chain in which every participants would make a move towards of protections to someone else by making him a massage or by just touching him. At a human chain around a protected space, a theatre for example, a kind of garden or another kind of space, in which the eyes of the participants would be important. We adjusted this idea in the context they have proposed to us. We worked with high schools of Pierre De Coubertin where students contributed by instigating workshops of small groups, where the participants could have a better approach to the ‘touch’ in parallel raised the writer Valentine Goby to organise a writing workshop in order to enable the students name all those things they want to protect and keep in their lives. They read and recorded their texts which were later composed by Alexandre Meyer. This sequence of sounds was broadcasted by a pattern of speakers placed in an open area, around of which the students were performing the choreography we made together. Simple moves, based on context touch and feeling, a choreographic assembly in which the young students were asked to jointly protect their words.”

Today Julie Nioche is collaborating with the academic professor and choreographer Federikknas (Isabella Grint) on a new project, Sensational, which will be presented for the first time in Aix-en-Provence early in 2013, suggests an extraordinary interactive way for three to two performances viewer a small war against the hegemony of speech and glance, the power of images and spectacles, as well as a reconsideration of dance, not exclusively as a product of the glance, but also as a product of our senses!”

With respect to the observation of others and respect for the individual, Julie Nioche adds her own personal comments to the context’s fragility. She underlines, “If one is to be free, one must know how to love oneself. If one is to be free, one must learn to respect oneself. If one is to be free, one must learn that one is responsible for oneself, and for his actions. If one is to be free, one must learn to love others. If one is to be free, one must learn to respect others. If one is to be free, one must learn that one is responsible for his actions.”

Cash compensates for a sole access to the protection of fragility, body and identity, but it also to its protection.

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