

JOMBA! KHULUMA D!G!TAL #5 ISSUE 14



DANCING DIGITALLY

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All isiZulu versions have been translated by Lisa Goldstone

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the fifth “Dancing Digitally” edition of JOMBA! Khuluma D!G!TAL.

This publication follows a 10-year history of the JOMBA! Khuluma Writing Residency, JOMBA! Khuluma Blog and mini newspapers. In 2010 the inaugural JOMBA! Writing Residency was hosted under the mentorship of veteran South African dance writer and theatre journalist: Adrienne Sichel. Over the years Sichel has been joined by both Tammy Ballantyne and myself who have worked alongside her in mentoring the young writers and offering support for their growth as reviewers and de-coders of dance. In 2018, we were joined by Chicago dance critic Lauren Warnecke who wrote for and co-edited our “Legacy” edition. This year, being forced to host the entire festival digitally due to covid-19, Lauren has once again come on board as part of the Khuluma writing residency. In the first ever three-country collaboration for the Khuluma platforms, for our Digital JOMBA! 2020, we’ve welcomed: Lauren Warnecke and Dr. Raquel Monroe (through a partnership with “See Chicago Dance”), Tammy Ballantyne (The Ar(t)chive, WITS School of Arts), and Dr. Sarahleigh Castelyn from the University of East London in the UK. This collaboration has enabled this year’s “Dancing Digitally” edition to include a wide range of voices both locally and globally.

This year too, we have brought on board JOMBA! crew alumni and UKZN Drama and Performance Studies Honours Graduate, Lisa Goldstone, who has acted as our isiZulu Translator for this edition. Through Lisa’s careful translations, we have managed a broader inclusivity in terms of our online readership, and this is a partnership that we hope to continue in years to come. This Khuluma D!G!TAL Edition includes both isiZulu and English submissions.

As in the past, our current Khuluma participants are joined by ex-Khuluma participants, who are mostly drawn from UKZN’s Drama and Performance Studies Honours graduate pool. I am ever grateful for the inputs of our guest writers, as they allow our Khuluma D!G!TAL editions to extend across a community of dance writers who are part of the extended JOMBA! family.

Our [JOMBA! Khuluma Blog](#), runs alongside the festival, and offers written engagements from our writers and participants with the festival ‘in real time’. The culmination of the residency is this digital magazine. In the past, the publication took the form of the JOMBA! Khuluma print edition (mini newspapers).

2020 marks the fourteenth issue, and the fifth digital publication which this year, celebrates 22 years of JOMBA!

What follows are a series of engagements with JOMBA! 2020 through the eyes of our writers who have generously offered their time to participate on this platform. I hope, in some small way, that this document captures the spirit of JOMBA! in all of its critical beauty.

- Clare Craighead

MEMORY MEETS LEGACY AT JOMBA! 2020: ARTISTIC DIRECTOR DR LLIANE LOOTS DELIVERS HER OPENING NIGHT SPEECH

At this moment, tonight — at the beginning of our 22nd JOMBA! festival — amid a world in the grip of a pandemic, with everyone desperately looking forward to a time beyond Covid-19, a time when we have the anti-virus, a time when we can safely dance with each other, a time to safely embrace ... I am going to take this moment to instead look back and to walk back into memory.

We are often taught not to trust memory. We are told that spending too much time in the past makes us nostalgic for a history that is remembered without the turmoil and trial of the present.

Memory, we are taught, is for the weak, for those who do not live in the present 'now' and for those who cannot imagine a future. Progress, we are taught by our father anvils of capital, is about looking forward. The forward of comfort, of ease, of privilege and simply the forward of more (having more and being more) ...

Tonight, I claim author Toni Morrison's re-vision of memory when she talks about her effort — in her own artistic work, her writing — to substitute and rely on memory instead of history, even contemporary history. She argues that as a Black woman she cannot — and indeed should not — trust recorded history to give her insight into who she is. As such personal memory becomes a political act of revising the grand narratives of our histories, of patriarchy, of race and of who “belongs.”

For us, as art and dance-makers and as cultural workers, to journey into this imaginative terrain, memory becomes our map and our metaphor for a very active process of re-creation and of becoming. Memory is active; it is doing. As Toni Morrison says: History versus memory, and memory versus memory-lessness. Re-memory as in re-collecting and remembering as in re-assembling the members of the body, the family, the population of the past.

For a dancer, memory sits on and in the body. Our re-remembering and re-assembling happens in the politics of our bodies moving and narrating embodied, somatic and personal “her-stories”. For dance, memory is an act of liminal defiance against histories told and re-told by the narrow, headfirst progression to one version of our future.

JOMBA! 2020 has arrived this year when the steep learning curve of our current zeitgeist has asked us to re-imagine this place (and space) of memory. As we shelter in place, and while our bodies can no longer touch in either studio or on stage (certainly still here in South Africa), JOMBA! has decided to offer a different kind of engagement with memory.

We have curated seven distinct platforms for our digital festival and all of them, in some way or another, look back into what Toni Morrison calls a “re-assembling (of) the members of the body.”

Very seldom in the ambit of contemporary dance (certainly in Africa), are choreographers afforded space to go back, re-visit and sit again with past work. In our endless survival proclivity, we are forced to constantly make new work to access new funds. Time is not given to re-remember and re-visit older danced memories. Deeply intimate danced narratives are left behind as we are forced to move forward to the next big thing. JOMBA!, now in its 22nd year, has taken a mindful step back into re-remembering. We have invited nine key choreographers and dance companies who have been seminal to our festival's 21-year history to share dance work in an act of memory.

We sit, in our **LEGACY PLATFORM**, looking back at pivotal contemporary dance works that require us to value the politics of a re-versed return home — of valuing the memory of lineage and legacy.

I think, for example, of Gregory Maqoma's *Exit/Exist* that journeys back to his own intimate “re-assembling of ... family” (to use Toni Morrison's words) in a work that returns to his ancestral past to re-interpret the complexities of his (and our) contemporary world. Maqoma reconfigures memory.

I think, for example, of Germaine Acogny's solo *Somewhere at the Beginning* danced at age 73 — a memory of a woman, an African and a dancer's beginning ...

In our **CONVERSATIONS PLATFORM**, we have set up space to engage four globally significant dance-makers whose work — socially, culturally and artistically — is looking forward but only by virtue of the memories of a self-reflection that allow multiple ways of thinking about the politics of the “now.”

- South Africa and France's Vincent Mantsoe's tradition and heritage fuse with the technology of filmmaking
- Kenya's Ondiege Matthew creates an embodied politics in locked down Nairobi
- Switzerland's Jürg Koch uses his own dancing memories to create a digital dance engagement that values the archive of remembrance
- And,
- South Africa's Themba Mbuli, traces male family legacies to premier a new dance film at JOMBA!

At a time in our history in South Africa when dance is collapsing and artists are literally starving, and in the absence of any sustained coherent governmental support of our sector (at either a regional or national level), JOMBA! remains deeply gratified to have offered commissions to nine local KZN-based dance-makers whose digital dance offerings will be screened tonight and available for viewing on our JOMBA! website throughout the festival.

I take this moment to honour these amazing nine Durban and Pietermaritzburg-based artists who have fought so hard to make the conceptual leap from stage to screen and to have created the intimate and terrifyingly beautiful work you will watch tonight. All of these nine works delve into the 'intimacies of isolations' that is the existential grind of living in a time of Covid; they have fused personal memory with survival and the short films they have produced are brave and daring.

Finally, tonight, I claim, the vision of a self-named Third-World Feminist, India's Chandra Mohanty in her eloquent ruminations on the state of global feminist struggles.

She argues that while North/South and rich/poor divides and the specificities of localised histories make it almost impossible for women to talk of a global sisterhood, what she does offer is the intriguing concept of a transitory “imagined community” that for a moment in time shares a “common context of struggle.”[1]

Tonight, across all sorts of divides that include North/South and East/West, that include race, gender, class, disability, sexuality ... and all the intersections of identity — I am humbled by JOMBA!'s meaningful temporary community of dance-makers, dance audiences, dance writers, and arts practitioners who share with me a common context of struggle that is a dedicated space (at this time and as a welcome holding space) to keep dance alive in our hearts, our imaginations and — importantly — alive in our re-visions and memories.

I welcome to our artistic 2020 JOMBA! 'imagined community',

- Chicago's DEEPLY ROOTED DANCE THEATER
- New Orleans' BODY ART DANCE COMPANY
- The Netherlands' INTRODANS
- India's Anita Ratnam
- Durban's Musa Hlatshwayo
- Nigeria's Adedayo Liadi
- Senegal's Germaine Acogny
- South Africa and Germany's Robyn Orlin
- Johannesburg's Gregory Maqoma and Vuyani Dance Theatre
- Kenya's Ondeige Matthew
- Switzerland's Jürg Koch
- South Africa and France's Vincent Mantsoe
- Cape Town's Themba Mbuli
- I welcome our *USA DANCE ON SCREEN* curators and filmmakers who have shared their work with us,
- I welcome Val Adamson whose retrospective digital exhibition of 21 years of sublime dance photography for JOMBA!, is the very memory that binds our “re-assembling of the body”,
- I welcome dance writers and the **JOMBA! KHULUMA** team from London, Chicago and Durban

I also wish to thank a team of people who sit with me and who have made me begin to love technology (no small thing) and who have become my new neighbourhood.

- I begin by thanking Ismail Mahomed, the new director of the Centre for Creative Arts. I thank him for immeasurable support, for new avenues and pathways around this neighbourhood, but mostly for his intense kindness.
- I acknowledge the CCA team who have helped get JOMBA! here tonight, especially Yenzi Ndaba.
- I continue to thank the University of KwaZulu-Natal and our College of Humanities for having the vision to support and nurture the Centre for Creative Arts.
- I thank Wesley Maherry, Dhesan Gounden and Mahomed Sheik for being the technical gurus that have made a digital delivery for JOMBA! possible.
- I thank Sharlene Versveld, whose media and publicity campaign has supported the global reach of this festival. I want to acknowledge her passion and ethics.
- I thank Clare Craighead for her careful leadership of the **JOMBA! KHULUMA** blog and writing residency.
- I thank David Tatanelo April, Smangaliso Ngwenya and Tiny Mungwe for being so caring in their adjudications of the **JOMBA! DIGITAL FRINGE**

And finally, a really huge (and continued) thank you to the U.S. Embassy here in South Africa and especially the regional U.S. Consulate in Durban for being our partners for JOMBA! 2020 and for also being mindful of the need to go back into the intersections and memories of alternate and artistic “re-assembling of ... the population of the past” (to quote Toni Morrison again).

I end tonight with the words of Arundhati Roy from an essay she wrote at the beginning of India's Covid lock down and whose words, I believe, speak to our own continually significant struggle for authentic memory that is not simply a history remembered by dominant anesthetising culture. She says:

Our minds are still racing back and forth, longing for a return to “normality”, trying to stitch our future to our past and refusing to acknowledge the rupture. But the rupture exists. And in the midst of this terrible despair, it offers us a chance to rethink ... Nothing could be worse than a return to normality ... We can choose to ... [drag] the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can [learn to walk(or dance?) again] lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it.[2]

May **DIGITAL JOMBA! 2020**, remind you of what we need to fight for: for artists, dancers and choreographers who carry our memories.

THANK YOU!

[1] Mohanty, C., Russo, A. & Torres. L. Eds. 1991. *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

[2] Arundhati Roy: '*The pandemic is a portal*' Copyright © Arundhati Roy 2020

To read the isiZulu version of the 2020 Opening Night Speech, click [here](#)



Dr. Lliane Loots has been JOMBA!'s Artistic director for 20 of its 22 year history, over this time the festival has become one of South Africa's premiere contemporary dance festivals. This has been enabled through support from the University of Kwa-Zulu-Natal and the Centre for Creative Arts.

Loots is also Artistic Director to Durban-Based Flatfoot Dance Company, initially set up in 1995 as a student-training company that offered free and open classes to anyone able to attend. In 2003 Flatfoot Dance Company was launched professionally and has since garnered a local and international reputation both for its critical performance work, international and intracontinental collaborations as well as for its ongoing community dance education initiatives. The company has received numerous accolades over its professional working history including a 2007 KZN DanceLink award for choreography.

Loots is also the dance lecturer in the Drama and Performance Studies Programme on the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Durban) campus. She holds a PhD in African contemporary dance performance from UKZN (Howard College).

Background image: a scene from Fana Tshabalala's "Indumba" performed at JOMBA! in 2013, taken from Val Adamson's photographic retrospective

PHYSICAL ENCOUNTERS IN THE DIGITAL FRONTIER

BY THOBILE MAPHANZA



Zimbabwe-based Tumbuka Dance Company perform their "Solo for a Street Child" at the inaugural JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience in 1998

Image is from Val Adamson's photographic retrospective

The 22nd JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience, like everything else, has had to stop, re-figure and negotiate its survival in the current global pandemic. As most things fighting to stay alive, the organisers and dancers, in observing precautionary regulations have gone digital.

This year's programme, that boasts seven platforms, is bursting with echoes of the past and glimpses into the future. Opening on Tuesday, 25 August at 7pm, nine KZN-based commissioned dance works will premiere on the **JOMBA! DIGITAL EDGE** programme. Themed "Intimacies of Isolation", this programme of short dance films straddles the vastness of uncertainty, isolation and contemplation brought on during this time.

The **LEGACY** Platform reaches into the festival's memory bringing back iconic dance-makers from four continents that have illuminated the JOMBA! stage in the past. Celebrating women's month in South Africa this platform fittingly showcases work by Germaine Acogny, who is considered the Mother of Contemporary Dance in Africa and the controversial Robyn Orlin.

Resident JOMBA! Photographer, Val Adamson pulls focus with a digital exhibition: **JOMBA! THROUGH THE LENS**, showcasing her 21-years behind the lens for JOMBA!

The **USA DANCE ON SCREEN** platform threads together a selection of ten dance films that amplify the marginalised voices and experiences of contemporary America.

DIGITAL JOMBA! FRINGE, the open entry platform, includes entries from the continent that we might not have seen had the festival been live, with entries from Uganda and Madagascar screened alongside a variety of local inputs.

DANCE IN THE DIGITAL AGE draws us into conversations that hint at the future with four dance-makers showcasing short works and engaging in discussions about dance-making in lockdown.

THE JOMBA! KHULUMA, a closed dance review writing residency programme, will keep audiences updated with daily reviews posted to the [JOMBA! Khuluma Blog platform](#), culminating in a digital publication released after the festival. Through this platform, writers from three continents will engage and review all the platforms to document the first ever digital JOMBA!

This annual contemporary dance festival, that has for the past 21-years responded to the ever-shifting climate of our world, continues to do just that. Finding its new legs and extending into the online world it brings the same promise of meaningful engagement of the body to provoke thought and shift sensibilities as it adapts to the 'new normal' on a global scale.

Uma ufuna ukufunda ukulandisa yokubuka kuqala yesiZulu yalo mkhosi, chofoza [la](#)

Background: A scene from Sylvia Glasser's "Stone Cast Ritual", performed at the second JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience in 1999 with Moving into Dance Mophatong, taken from Val Adamson's photographic retrospective



Johannesburg-based ELU performs in his "The Goatfoot God Pan" at the third JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience in 2000

Image is from Val Adamson's photographic retrospective

JOMBA! KUCISHE KUNULWE

ngulazi ramashia
UKUHUNYUSHA ngulisa GOLDSTONE

Ngokuphathelene nobuhle obusha buka-2020, JOMBA! imaka ukugubha iminyaka engama-22 ngomkhosi wayo wokuqala oku – inthanethi. Uhlelo lokudansa lwamasonto amabili luzoqala ngo-25 Agasti luze luphele ngo-6 Septhemba.

Lenguqulo yalo nyaka yethulwa ngendlela yamapulatifomu ayisikhombisa agxile ekusakazweni okuhlukahlukene kwe-JOMBA! umphakathi.

Ipulatifomu yokuqala enesihloko esithi **JOMBA! LEGACY** inikeza umsebenzi wochwepheshe bamazwe ayi sishi-yagalolunye kulokho okungabizwa ngokuthi umgubo “weminyaka ewu-21 weJOMBA!” Ukusuka eMelika six-hunyaniswa kabusha ngokuthandwa kwenkampani eseChicago Deeply Rooted Dance Theater kwaLeslie Scott waseNew Orleans kanye ne-BODYART Dance Company. Ngaphakathi kokuphuma kwe-Afrika, sithola uGregory Maqoma waseNingizimu Afrika (uVuyani Dance Theatre) kanye noMusa Hlatshwayo (Mhayise Productions), owedlule enikeza umsebenzi okhokhela uCredo Mutwa ongaseko. Ngaphezu kwalokho, amaqembu kaRobyn Orlin waseBerlin/waseGoli usebenza ngokubambisana ne-Moving Into Dance Mophatong kwesimemezelo esithi *Beauty remained for just a moment then returned gently to her starting position....* Kuhlanganiswa futhi noGermaine Acogny yaseSenegal kanye no-Adedayo Liadi waseNigeria kanye ne-Ijodee Dance Company ngokubambisana neFlatfoot Dance Company yaseThekwini. Ukusuka eNdiya, u-Anita Ratnam unikeza kabusha imibiko enesibindi yabesifazane abangamaHindu, futhi okokugcina INTRODANS eNetherlands ngesitayela sabo esisezingeni eliphezulu baletha i-**JOMBA! LEGACY** ukuvala.

Nge “Intimacies of Isolation” njengesihloko sokuqala, ipulatifomu yesibili, i-**JOMBA DIGITAL EDGE** kukhombisa ngemisebenzi yabasiki bengoma abayisishiyagalolunye bomdanso baseKZN, iningi labo lisebenza ngokokuqala ngqa. Lezi zingcezu zomdanso zizobe zivele ukubonakala kwazo ngobusuku bokuvula komkhosi futhi zizot-holakala ekusakazweni kuwo wonke umcimbi.

USA DANCE ON SCREEN kuyingxenye yesithathu futhi kunamafilimu wokudansa ayishumi enziwe encazelweni yehora lonke yamava aseMelika ahlukene, kugxilwe kakhulu kwizethulo ezahlukahlukene.

Ipulatifomu yesine, i-**DIGITAL JOMBA! FRINGE** nakanjani ijabulisa ngenhlanganisela yayo ebanzi yokulethwa. Kuzobhekwa imisebenzi eyisishiyagalombili (ekhethiwe kusuka kokulethwa kweziyishumi nesishiyagalombili) kule nkundla, ngemuva kwalokho kuzomenyezela abemukeli abathathu abaphambili be –“Pick-of-the-Fringe”.

Amaseshini wangoMgqibelo nangeSonto azothathelwa izingxoxo zasesiteji sesihlanu i-**DANCE IN THE DIGITAL AGE** noVincent Mantsoe, uJürg Koch, uThemba Mbali no-Ondeige Mathew, njengoba bekipha izinqubo zabo zokuvala indawo.

Ipulatifomu yesithupha yakhiwa i**JOMBA! KHULUMA BLOG** ne-**KHULUMA DIGITAL EDITION**. Lesi sigcawu sibonisa ukubuka kuqala, ukubuyekizwa kanye nezingxoxo zabahlanganyeli a avela kule ndawo yokubhala umdanso wokuvala umdanso, kulo nyaka kubandakanya nababambiqhaza abavela eThekwini, eGoli, eMelika nase UK.

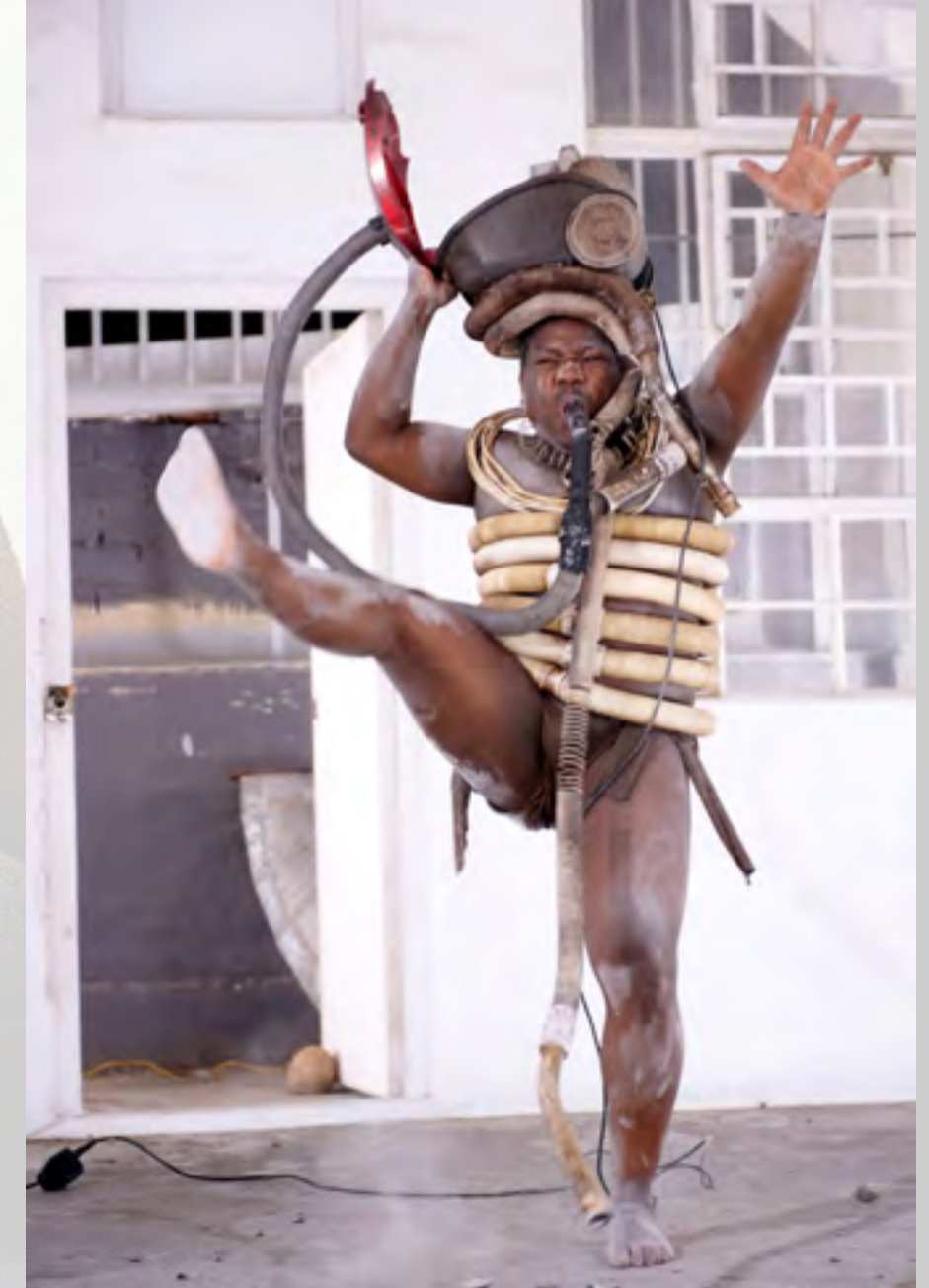
Ipulatifomu yokugcina **21 YEARS OF JOMBA! THROUGH THE LENS** inikeza umbono omncane kokunye okubalulekile kwesithombeni somthwebuli zithombe uVal Adamson weminyaka engama-21 ethwebula lo mkhosi.

To read the English version of this festival preview, click [here](#)

Background: A scene from Musa Hlatshwayo's "Abakhweta: The initiates" (2002), taken from Val Adamson's photographic retrospective



Top: Nelisiwe Xaba in her "Plasticization" (2006) at the KZNSA
Bottom: Kieron Jina and Joni Barnard in Jina's "Synergy" performed as part of the 2012 JOMBA! Fringe
Images are from Val Adamson's photographic retrospective



Top: Faustin Linyekula performs in his solo "Le Cargo" at the 2015 edition of JOMBA!

Bottom: Nhlanhla Mahlangu performs in his "Chant" at ARTspace Durban in 2015

Images are from Val Adamson's photographic retrospective

DANCING STORIES DURING LOCKDOWN

BY PİÖF KETU H KALĀK (GUEST WRITER)

“My Journey is not finished. I’m not done”, poignant words of iconic South African dancer, Vincent Mantsoe whose work, *CUT (Part I)*, 2020) even on this camera-shot film was electrifying during digital JOMBA!’s rich offerings for audiences across the world. Mantsoe’s bodily presence is attuned to the spirit world of sangomas (traditional healers); his unbroken connection to this ritual practice is part of his upbringing in Soweto, Johannesburg. Dancing in a studio in France, he retains that link in his body’s musculature, his feet, arms, eyes, and expressive face; his entire body and the space around embodies his body memory. Mantsoe is a gifted communicator, in uncanny and impeccable ways, almost heart to heart, with viewers. *CUT* lived up to its title, conveying, Mantsoe’s profound sense of being cut off from family and friends, without travel, while retaining his spiritual practice. During the conversation with Lliane Loots, the master-mind behind 22 years of JOMBA, Mantsoe was honest, human, and vulnerable, grateful for the digital medium, though admitted to feeling uninspired to create *CUT, Part II*. Even as the professional outlook is dim, Mantsoe recognised the importance of keeping his spirit alive. Or else, “life gets dimmer inside” he remarked wisely, and as if that dimness was palpable to him, he shed tears. Just as quickly, he recovered saying, “My journey is not finished.” Loots sympathised as she noted finding strength in community. The final takeaway of this heart-wrenching interview, and Mantsoe’s dance leaves us with hope that asserts, “we’re not done.”

I am always humbled at JOMBA!’s multiple offerings that include not only professional performances, but Fringe artists whose emerging work is fostered. Digital JOMBA! 2020 showcased nine “**LEGACY**” artists, nine **DIGITAL EDGE** artists, four choreographers in webinars on “**DANCE IN THE DIGITAL AGE**”, ten short dance-for-screen films from the US (**USA DANCE ON SCREEN**), and **DIGITAL JOMBA! FRINGE** with short films, of which three received a cash prize. Artists from KwaZulu Natal, and across South Africa, along with international companies participated. This year, talented photographer Val Adamson, JOMBA!’s memory maker with stunning images from the past 21-years (always a presence in the first row of Durban’s Elizabeth Sneddon Theatre), curated an excellent collection, “**21 YEARS OF JOMBA! THROUGH THE LENS.**” Kudos to Festival curator Lliane Loots’ continued energy in mounting JOMBA! digitally; kudos to Wesley Maherry and team in presenting a seamless experience via technology to viewers like myself, in California, and others across the globe.

JOMBA! opened with Ismail Mahomed’s supportive words for artists as Director of the Creative Arts Center at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (the host organisation for JOMBA!). Loots’ opening remarks followed, memorable as always. She asserted the relevance of walking back in memory, quoting Toni Morrison. In this 22nd JOMBA!, Loots suggested that we re-value, reconfigure memory, even deploy the archive as memory. Dancers carrying memories on their bodies during this time of not touching, faced obstacles of creating in isolation, even undertaking, “acts of liminal defiance” (Loots). Loots reminded us that despite zero government support to dancers during Covid-19, “brave and daring” Durban-based artists created work that journeyed from stage to screen. Loots cited feminist writer Chandra Mohanty on the need to create “a transitory, imagined community” where we share common struggles (respecting differences of race, gender, class) in “transitory” moments of solidarity, when dance connects performers and audiences between Durban and New Orleans, Johannesburg, Switzerland, Chicago, and Cape Town.

Opening Night premiered nine South African **DIGITAL EDGE** dance films representing “Intimicities of Isolation” created by KZN dancers; memorable moments of choreographic prowess, personal story-telling, and skillful use of camera and editing. The body appeared on a screen split in two or four with different assemblages of images and props conveying grief, statements like “stop raping us.” Settings were thoughtfully selected; inside rooms, using corners as if trapped, or outdoors in urban, gritty wastelands, with dilapidated buildings. Profoundly resonant questions from a young girl to her father remain etched in my mind: “Baba, what is happening in the world? Why are children scared? Women are killed—why are husbands and fathers not protecting them?”

“**LEGACY**” artists echoed Loots’ remarks about looking back in memory, honoring the past, and creating “transitory” communities of support. Vuyani Dance Theater’s Gregory Maqoma in *Exit/Exist* honored his Xhosa ancestor who tenaciously fought the British against illegal stealing of indigenous land; land, dispossession remains painful even today in South Africa. Maqoma danced powerfully, graceful and vigorous, with ritualistic shaking, lyrical hand gestures, props such as horns, sand, grain, and costumes. At times, incredibly light on his feet, at others, Maqoma executes strong rhythmic stamping, retaining an intensity throughout. He poured sand from a metal plate onto the stage in an oblong shape; he poured water over his head, rubbed his body with it and his sweat. Water as a life-giving motif appears in other choreographies. At the end, in blue script: “Where are the cattle now?” Although we saw a 2015 filmed version in France, Maqoma’s telling comment in 2020, reminded us that “South Africa has not achieved the ideals of a democratic state”, and that Covid-19 makes deep-seated inequities visible.

Similar to Maqoma’s homage to his ancestor, Germaine Acogny’s *Somewhere at the Beginning* (2015), recreates family members, some valued such as her Yoruba grandmother, others probed, scolded, ultimately forgiven. Her father’s autobiography raises Acogny’s rage at his Christian conversion, abandoning his traditional “amulets”, and water as “the most powerful amulet.” The work reached outward from family into social justice issues with skilled projections of images of black children, memories of colonial education demeaning black people. Acogny, at seventy-three is a magisterial, towering presence on stage with her beautiful, long arms and expressive hands; one hand flutters over her forehead and heart in a repeated gesture. Ultimately, an assertion: “Power passes from woman to woman,” a statement echoed in other works.

Feminist evocation of Indian womanhood is danced in Anita Ratnam’s signature choreography, breathing contemporary relevance into goddesses and wronged women from epics. Ratnam’s profound engagement with the “divine feminine” is connected to her own female family lineage (similar to Maqoma, and Acogny). Excerpts from *MA3KA* portrayed Lakshmi, goddess of prosperity, both as a benediction and a thrilling send-up in Ratnam’s effective dramatisation—a modern Lakshmi wearing a red leather jacket, trousers, feather in her hair, confidently walking down a catwalk, a model in goggles, holding a cell-phone. A long braid, wrapped around Ratnam’s neck, is part of the choreographic arc. Ratnam is talented in selecting layered soundscapes; traditional Carnatic akaram (syllables intoned without words), religious slokas, chanting, Tamil words, a snatch of Bollywood music. From Lakshmi’s auspicious red motif to green, as Ratnam embodied goddess Meenakshi, born with three breasts, one of which would fall off when she selects her husband—none other than Lord Shiva with his powerful third eye! Ratnam adds skillfully to the traditional tale: Meenakshi negotiates (!) with Shiva to keep her three breasts, similar to his three eyes; they will love as “freaks” on the margins of society. Meenakshi merged into Shiva as Ardhanareshwara—half-male, half-female.

Ratnam’s danced excerpts from *Stone... once again* embodied oppressed Ahalya from The Ramayana. Ratnam gives Ahalya agency, desire, and finally a non-male defined status as a strong woman. This symbolic and riveting tour de force work is performed in a gold, metallic, stretchy fabric, “a prism” Ratnam remarks, to evoke female confinement under patriarchy, and the politics of female desire. Ratnam, seated on a stone, backs the audience, covered completely in fabric; the metallic gold echoed in sounds of chipping away at stones, accompanied by devised limb movements while seated; at times, showing her defiant eyes (like a veiled woman), lips and wide-open mouth in a silent cry. Her legs open as we see a trapped body stretching, pulling, tearing at the fabric imprisoning her. Ratnam purposely evokes Martha Graham’s iconic work, *Lamentation* (1930), performed seated with wide open legs. However, in Ratnam’s feminist retelling of Ahalya’s story, the focus is not on lamentation but on resistance. As Ratnam stands, the projected words, “Not even this prison of stone can silence or weaken me” resonate while she is surrounded by many stone Lord Ganeshas (remover of obstacles). She lifts the heavy stone burdens, then places her foot on one as we read projected words: “I am a Woman. Hear me Roar”, “We women are finally free.” This rebellious Ahalya, is an inspiration to women, giving them strength to defy male domination. Towards the end, Ratnam steps out of the gold fabric, to show an Ahalya awakened to a new womanhood, shedding the injustices forced upon her.

Background: Vincent Mantsoe teaches a workshop at UKZN in 2016, taken from Val Adamson’s photographic retrospective

Robyn Orlin’s choreography with vigorously trained Moving into Dance Mophatong Dancers delightfully created fleeting beauty of the sun, water, ripe tomatoes, a dazzling costume for “the goddess of recycling” with many pockets in which plastic bottles were gathered, when thrown by spectators to the stage. Orlin’s *Beauty remained for just a moment then returned gently to her starting position...* communicates via a light, humorous touch, carefully crafted audience participation, along with serious matters of environmental damage to the earth, oceans, and rising heat with climate change that are devastating for poor communities in South Africa and beyond.

DIGITAL JOMBA! FRINGE with eight beautiful dance films, showcased poignant images of loneliness in lockdown conveyed via imaginative spaces—near a stream, a construction site, city street, indoors in corners, bodies hugging walls. Some artists used spoken word to convey the agony of aloneness, others had words inscribed on their body. Provocative questions wafted to spectators: “Washing hands is a privilege, so should we stop washing hands?” “Working from home is not an option, so should we stop working?”

International artists and companies that JOMBA! has collaborated with over the years participated—Leslie Scott and BODYART Dance Company, from New Orleans, USA, presented excellent work in selections from “Dance for Camera”, and “Dance for Stage”. Also, **USA DANCE ON SCREEN** showcased ten award-winning films curated thoughtfully by Lauren Warnecke, and team. Movement was intertwined with spoken words such as “coping is a constant, performative practice”, to facing personal traumas, to grim stories of recovery, to an upbeat live jazz band and tap dancers. INTRODANS from the Netherlands was a tour de force technologically magical showcase of bodies, shadows, silhouettes, projections, colour, and dissolves executed with humor and whimsy. *Swingle Sisters* portrayed three heads (of state) behind a table with a red table-cloth”, coughing rhythmically, exchanging places, puppet-like, appearing and disappearing, looking askance, eating and throwing food around, generally shirking responsibilities.

A remarkable film, *ManMade* (from the **DANCE IN A DIGITAL AGE** platform), choreographed by Themba Mbuli reminds us again of family, legacy and memory, here of Mbuli’s grandfather, conveyed via his clothes neatly folded and stacked in a closet even a year after his death, as if “memories of him are archived through his clothes” remarks Mbuli, “each clothing item telling its story” (Programme Notes). An exquisitely choreographed struggle with the clothes ensued where they took on a life of their own, thrown at Mbuli who puts on and takes off shirts, jackets, trousers with frenzied moving from closet to passage and back. As if weighed down by clothing and memories, he strips down to his briefs and curls up, fetus-like, on his side, inside the empty closet at the end, and the closet doors shut. Mbuli’s own soul-searching, questioning his masculinity, and his responsibility in what he assesses as two pandemics ravaging South Africa—Covid-19, and gender-based violence.

Digital JOMBA! 2020 left *rasikas* (appreciative viewers) with lasting images, movements, bodies coping with lockdown, amazing danced transitions and transformations from stage to screen, all testifying to the human spirit that endures and connects us across the oceans.



DIGITAL JOMBA! EDGE PLATFORM

Cue Ngema (L) and Sandile Mkhize (R) perform in Mkhize's "Time" on the Digital Edge Platform for Digital JOMBA! 2020

UKUBUKEZA: UKUHLUKANISWA KWEZASEKHAYA

нэишлуканисва (UMBHALI WEZIVAKASHI)

UKUHUNYUSHWA нэишиса GOLDSTONE

Ilinde emaphikweni oBusuku Bokuvula be-JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience kwakungab-adansi nabenzi bomdanso baseThekwini nabasePietermaritzburg abayisishiyagalolunye ababezenzele ezabo izimpendulo “Eenzweni Zokuzihlukanisa” njengengxenywe yesikhulumi se**DIGITAL EDGE**. Ukuzula leyo mibuzo ekhona nezinkinga ezivele esikhathini esinzima, le misebenzi eyisishiyagalolunye ibiyizibonelo ezinesibindi zokuqhamuka nezindlela ezintsha zokubandakanya ababukeli bedijithali.

Umzimba uqala ukuqhaqhazela futhi unyakaze ekhoneni lekamelolo. Kumbozwe ebunmyameni, kunokukhanya nje okwanele ukubona isithunzi somdansi nomenzi womdanso, uJabu Siphika, kodwa asenele ukumbona njengomuntu. Unguye Wonke umuntu wesifazane. Wonke umuntu wesifazane. I-*Ya Kutosha* ikhuluma ngendikimba yokuhlukunyezwa kwabantu besifazane ngendlela edlula esikrinini bese ikubamba inhliziyo ikhiphe umoya uphume emaphashini akho. Lokho kumboza ubuso bakhe obugqokayo kusinda hhayi nje ngoba kukhombisa i-Covid kepha kungenxa yomthwalo owengeziwe obeke phezu kwalabo ababanjwe, unomphela, ezindaweni eziyingozi kakhulu eNingizimu Afrika: ikhaya.

Usizi, ukukhathazeka nokuthula kwakungezinye zezincinane ezafaka uphawu luka *Fellow...* nguKristi-Leigh owayefuna ukuphenya isimo somdansi eyedwa. Futhi kokucatshangelwa okuningi, kwaba ukuthula okuvala izindlebe okwakungibambelele okweqile kimi ... futhi kungavumi ukudedela! Kusukela ngesikhathi iso elibona konke lingena kuhlaka kuze kube umzuzwana ngaphambi nje kokucabanga kabusha, umuzwa wokuzwakalisa umsindo wokuzikhipha inyumbazane kwaba ukukhetha okunomthelela. Ukuphindaphinda kokuphila kwansuku zonke okuqala ukwenza njengamanje kube njengesithunzi sempilo yakho yakuqala. Leli gciwane seliphoqe sonke ukuthi silinde uGodot. Abanye bethu basalindile. Kepha ukuthula kuyashintsha, njengoba uGresse esikhumbuzo, futhi sizophefumula ngokukhululeka futhi.

Ifilimu ephazamisekile, ekhubazekile ibidlala phambi kwamahlo ami njengoba ngangiphuza ezindaweni ezinezici eziningi ze*Kairos* kaLeagan Pepper. Umuntu ophakathi nendaba uya phambili naphambili phakathi kokudlala owesifazane oyengayo oyingozi, isikhohlakali kanye nohlupheka wesimo njengoba umdanso wabona futhi wezwa ekwakheni kabusha ubudlelwane bakhe nabanye kepha futhi naye. Umdanso bekungukudlala ngothando kunoma yimuphi umbukeli, njengami, othanda isikrini cishe ngendlela athanda ngayo inkundla. Izendlalelo ezidlalwayo kulo mdanso owelukeke kahle zangishiya ngijabule njengoba ngangikhomba amaphakethe amancane encinane ngaphakathi kwamaphuzu kanye namagama kuzwi lomsindo elivela kuthelivishini nakumamuvi. Kwakukuhle ukubona uhambo lweqhawe njengoba lingena esikheleni sokubuyiselwa njengoba uRobin Williams’ “Mister Keating” ekhuluma engikuthandayo: “Ezokwelapha, ezomthetho, ezamabhezini, ezobunjiniyela, lezi yizinto ezinhle kakhulu futhi ezidingekayo ukuxhasa impilo. Kodwa izinkondlo, ubuhle, ezothando, uthando, lokhu yikhona esihlala siphila ngakho.”



Imidlalo efana nale yake yangisabisa. Ukusebenza okunembile. Izingcezu ezikwenze wazizwa ngaphambi kokuba zikwenze ucabange. Izingcezu ezazinamandla ngandlela thile zokukhambisa ohambweni, ngaphesheya nangaphakathi kwazo zonke ngasikhathi sinye. i-*U n g a n y a k u m* kaNomcebisi Moyikwa kwakuyilelo hlobo locezu futhi, kunokuba lungisabise, lwangishiya ngingakhululekile kakhulu kuyo yonke indlela. Ngokusebenza okuningi ababukeli obekufanele bathembele kukho yilokho esikuzwayo, noma esingakuzwanga, nokuthi lokho kusenze sazizwa kanjani njengomuntu ongaziwa engena ohambweni. Kepha imizwa yakhe ezimweni zakhe nasendleleni yakhe ayibonakali ebusweni bakhe ngoba ubuso bakhe buyisifihla futhi abuhambisani. Ngakho-ke sithathwa ekucabangeni kokuhlangenwe nakho ngokushaya ngamandla njalo, ukuphefumula okuhlabayo, ukucula ngokwesiko kanye nokukhala okungaphakathi. Iqhubeka iphinda ngokujikeleza. Ngubani ohlanganyela kulolu hambo? Ngabe lo wesifazane ozifihlile wamukela noma yini yako? Kufanele siqhubeke sizibuze le mibuzo ngathi nangabanye.

Umzimba wakhe okhathazekile uyakhukhumeza kuze kube, njengenguqulo emnyama yesikhafu semibala yemilingo, akhiphe intambo yeteyipu yokuqapha emlonyeni wayo. Kwenzeka indaba eyahlukene phakathi kukaSandile Mkhize (wePhakama Dance Company) noCue Ngema njengoba behlola izindlela zokuba ngesikhathi se-Covid-19 ku*Time*. Ukuxhumeka kokunye kuphazanyiswa yilezo zinto okungenzeka ukuthi besizithatha kalula: ukuthinta, ukusondelana, uthando, ukubamba ngokuqinile, abangani, ukuze sibancane. Iteyipu yokuqapha ivela futhi maphakathi nomdanso wabo futhi yize beqhubeka nokudansa ndawonye ngokusobala futhi bahlukile ngobuhle komunye nomunye. Iwebhu yeteyipu iyabangcwaba futhi, yize ukunyakaza kwabo okunyakazayo kwesinye isikhathi kwenziwa ndawonye futhi kwesinye isikhathi kwehlukene, akuphindi kuphele. Umbuzo uhlala isikhathi eside ngemuva kokuthi isikrini simnyama: yini enye esiyithathe kalula?

Kungithinte kakhulu lokhu kuvezwa okubuhlungu kobunzima obukhona phakathi kokuxhumana kukababa nendodakazi njengoba bobabili bezulazula kulokho okungaba umhlaba omubi kakhulu, ku*Walls*. Yenziwe nguSifiso Kitsona Khumalo waseFlatfoot nendodakazi yakhe, uLethiwe Zamantungwa Nzama, ngikhunjuzwe kuwo wonke lo mdanso owenziwe kahle wokuthi kuyisipho esingakanani ukunakekela ubuciko emndenini. Ukudlala kwabo ngokudansa ndawonye engadini kuba nomuzwa owesabekayo njengoba sizwa inkulumbo yangaphakathi kababa obhekele indodakazi yakhe esikhathini lapho kuzungezwe khona udlame olubhekiswe kwabesifazane nezingane - okuyingoziso kubo bobabili. Sizwa ukwesaba kwakhe kuze kube umzuzu omuhle lapho bebuyekeza umdanso wabo wokuvula ndawonye kodwa, kulokhu, ubonakala ezinikela ekuxhumaneni kwangempela. Umehluko? Isikhathi esifushane iphephandaba elinezindaba zomhlaba wangaphandle alikho ndawo futhi ukwesaba obekusezinyaweni zomuntu obekwe icala lokuvikela ingane yakhe sekuthathelwe indawo umzuzwana wokuthandana nokuhloniphana nendodakazi yakhe. Mhlawumbe uma uthando nenhlonipho ngabesifazane nezingane kufundiswe kahle ekhaya, umbuzo kaNzama wokuthi “Kungani abesifazane nezingane banyamalala?” ngeke uzizwe usinda njengoba kwenzeka lapho uwe emlonyeni wale ntombazanyana.

i-*Control-Alt-Delete* engajwayelekile ibingenze ngihleke kusukela ekuqaleni kokusebenza kuze kube sekugcineni. Ekusebenziseni okuhle kwe-“stop animation”, izinkondlo zikaTeagan Peacock emzabalazweni wethu wokuthola amandla okubeka futhi sikulahle – kaninginingi – kwakuyindawo ephelile yokwamukela isidingo sokwakhiwa ezikhathini zethu zamanje. Lokhu kusebenza ngokubambisana noJono Hornby wabona uPeacock esebenzisa ngempumelelo ubuncane: udonga olungenalutho, izinsiza ezimbalwa ezithakazelisayo naye uqobo. Ukusebenza, obekungangena kalula esicupheni sokwenza lula inkinga enjalo, kuphakanyiswe kahle ngumqondo wokucabanga. Isakhiwo esijikelezayo sezimo zethu zamanje siphinde sagcizelelwa ngendlela ejabulisayo nokho ngokumangazayo ejulile... futhi ngahleka ngokuzwakalayo ngicabanga ukuthi amalambu aqhamukayo onakalise ubumnandi bababukeli abazibonela ngokwabo esikrinini kuze kube yilesi sikhathi. Impela kubi!

Ukusihambisa ngemizwa eminingi, sithuthwa ngesikhathi nangendawo njengoba siqala ukuvuselela ukungalingani kwamandla okuqhubeka kwenziwe kubi kakhulu yisiko lakwaCovid ku-*Space of Colour*. Umdanso wokuvula phakathi komenzi womdanso uTshediso Kabulu nomdansi uMotlastsi Khotle kusungule isithombe esivelele sokuthi “isizungu sisonke sesifikile” futhi kwaba yilowo moya wokusondelana owawuzwakala kulo lonke umdanso. Kwakuthokozisa ukuhlangabezana nezikhathi eziningi zobudlelwano obuseduze nobuhle phakathi kwabantu obekungavamisile ukuthi baphoqwe ukuthi babhekane ngokuzumayo bephoqeelwa ukwenza njalo esikrinini. Kodwa-ke, phakathi kwezingqikithi zemifanekiso nemibono eshukumisa ingqondo, kwaba ukuthi ukuxhumana kwezinkondlo phakathi

kwegama elikhulunywayo likaKhwezi Becker kanye nomzuzu wokugcina wokusebenza owahlala engqondweni yami amahora amaningi ngemuva kwalokho.

Futhi ekusebenzeni kokugcina kwe**JOMBA! IDIGITAL EDGE**, i-*Shadow* kaZinhle Nzama noKirsty Ndawo isinikeza ukubuka okuhle ngobungani esikhathini lapho kunezindlela eziningi kakhulu lapho uvunyelwe khona ukuba khona komunye nomunye. Imizimba emibili ihleli esivandeni, esinye senza umqhele wembali ezinweleni zomunye, njengoba sizizwa umzuzwana wokuhlola, sibheke kumzuzu osondelene wobungani babo ekuthuleni nasekuzolile. Bese isimo siyashintsha. Bobabili abangane bahlala, bahlukanisiwe, ebhentshini futhi nembali esetshen-

ziselwa umqhele inikezwa isuka komunye iye komunye, yamukelwe ngokucophelela futhi iyinkomba yangempela yokwesabeka kokuthinta okulula kunakho konke okukhona emhlabeni wethu wamanje. Izimpilo zethu, nezabo, sezivele zingasasebenzi futhi asisavumelani ngesikhathi silwa nesitha esingabonakali futhi sizama ukubuyisa lezo zikhathi ezolile nezanelisayo ebesingaba nazo engadini. Ukuba nje. Kodwa yiba ndawonye.

Imisebenzi eyisishiyagalolunye ye-**DIGITAL EDGE** iyatholakala mahhala ukubukwa isikhathi se-Digital JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience. Kungukucinga okuthokozisayo kokuqokethwe nokwakhiwa, okulandisa ngemiphumela ehluhlukeneyo nefinyelela kude yegciwane lomhlaba wonke kumdanso wedijithali. Ezweni elivame ukuzizwa lingenalutho manje, laba badansi bayisizukulwane esisha sabenzi bencinane futhi angisakwazi ukulinda ukubona ukuthi benzani ngokulandelayo!

To read the English version of this review, click [here](#)

Background image from Sifiso Khumalo's "Walls" with his daughter Lethiwe Nzama

Far Left image from Tshediso Kabulu's "Space of Colour"

Image above from Zinhle Nzama's "Shadow"

ROOMINATIONS ON INNER SPACES

BY EHOBILE MAPHANGA

An unfamiliar feeling of sitting on mom's bed as JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience opens with a welcome from Dr. Ismail Mahomed, Director of the Centre for Creative Arts, and the opening address from Dr. Lliane Loots, Festival Director. In pyjamas and not in a theatre, this is definitely weird, but is it entirely terrible?

The evening's programme, themed 'Intimacies of Isolation', showcased nine commissioned films by Durban-and-Pietermaritzburg-based dance-makers. There is a darkness that sits within most of the work on offer, all seeking light, only a few capturing it. It is a journey into the inner crevices of mind, body and spirit.

Jabu Siphika's *Ya Kutosha* deals with the urgent issue of gender-based violence that is extinguishing female lives at an alarming rate in South Africa. Her work brings us into the inner sanctum of the fear faced by women. A safe haven is turned crime scene where death finds its home. A haunting image of a slowly closing fridge and the last kicks of hanging legs as the soundscape brings us back to the introductory dripping of what we now imagine could be blood and the crackling sound of fire.

Sifiso Khumalo confronts the same topic in *Walls*. This father-daughter duet is a prayer for the safety and happiness of his daughter in these frightening times. Lethiwe Nzama delivers a sophisticated performance of childlike innocence and adolescent awareness of the realities of the world.

Kristi-Leigh Gresse's black and white, silent montage of gestures and confined movement unsettles as she struggles to find stillness in *Fellow...*. Control is replaced by contorted squirming on a backdrop of childlike wallpaper as definitions of adult emotions are offered. The contrast of a clean, cinematically shot film is juxtaposed with the feeling of wanting to scream "why is the silence so loud?". Then relief at the natural sounds of life outdoors, a swing and a prompt to breathe.

Prayer and meditation are at the centre of Nomcebisi Moyikwa's very visceral, *Unganyakum*. This interdisciplinary film shifts between the present and presence layering text, breath and prayer over a funeral soundtrack. A meeting with your inner spirit, seeking absolution in the presence of the present.

Tegan Peacock's *Control-Alt-Delete* feels like stepping into an animated movie where the absurdity of inanimate objects becoming friends that disturb the monotony of control seems totally normal.

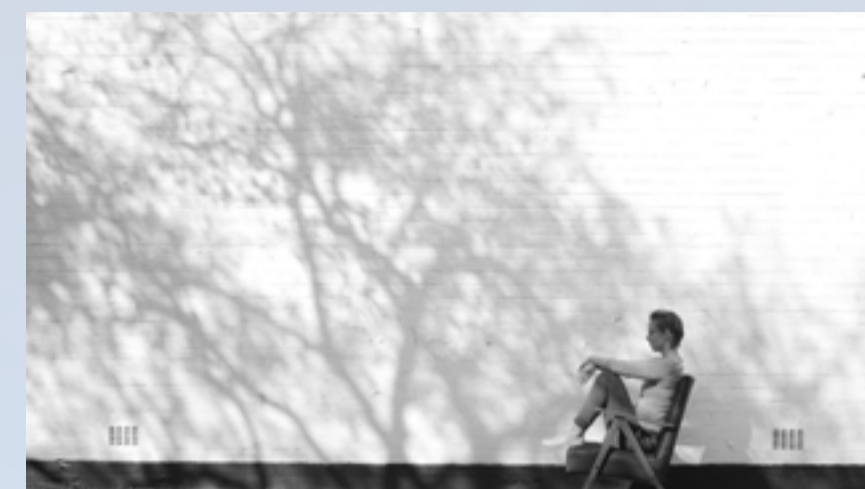
Tshediso Kabulu and Motlasi Khotle prepare for battle in the never-ending struggle for support from those who 'have' for those who 'have not'. The soundtrack by Anelisa Stuurman and text by Khwezi Becker fittingly carry this duet in *Space of Colour*.

Leagan Peffer's *Kairos*, set in a seaside log cabin, is a torturous solo expedition of picking through the debris of love lost to re-find and reclaim self.

Whereas Sandile Mkhize's *Time* affirms an amiable view of care and relationship, in a ritual of purging and negotiating boundaries of red tape with those that walk with us.

The programme closes with a delicate duet between friends and flora. Kirsty Ndawo and Zinhle Nzama's presence amid the dancing foliage becomes silhouettes that bow in unison, moving together and apart as their interaction is tracked by their passing of a flower, seated side by side on a bench. *Shadow* feels like the sun on your face on a winter's afternoon, knowing that everything will be ok.

Uma ufuna ukufunda ukubukezwa yesiZulu yalo mkhosi, chofoza [la](#)



Pictured from top to bottom:
Jabu Siphika's "Ya Kutosha"; Sifiso Khumalo's "Walls";
Kristi-Leigh Gresse's "Fellow..." and
Nomcebisi Moyikwa's "Unganyakum"

Pictured from top to bottom:
Tegan Peacock's "Control-Alt-Delete"; Leagan Peffer's "Kairos";
Sandile Mkhize's "Time" and Zinhle Nzama's "Shadow"

Background image taken from Tshediso Kabulu's "Space of Colour"

ISIFANEKISOMZIMBA OMNANDI KANYE NEMZIMBA NJENGOMBHIKISHO

nguangelinaH maponya
UKUHUNYUSHWA nguLisa Goldstone

Lapho kuvulwa i-JOMBA! Yedijitali yama-22 Contemporary Dance Experience, Umqondisi Wezobuciko, uDr. Lliane Loots, uthi: “Kuthina njengabaculi ukungena endaweni engacabangi, inkombulo iba imephu yethu nesifaniso senqubo esebenzayo yokuzijabulisa – inkombulo iyasebenza.” iJOMBA! Ukhiphe amapulatifomu ayisikhombisa omkhosi wedijithali futhi uLoots uthi lokhu kuzoba nomthelela ekuqoqweni kwezinkumbulo zomdanso abaningi abazokwazi ukufinyelela kuzo. Kumlando wayo weminyaka engama-21, iJOMBA! uthathe isinyathelo sokubuyela emuva ukuze ucabanga kabusha inkombulo futhi ugcine umdanso uphila!

Uma ubheka umbono wokuthi “Ukusondelana Kokuzimele” uhlelo olunqenqemeni lweDijithali wethule imisebenzi eyisishiyagalolunye evela kubadansi base-UKZN abathole izibonelelo ukwenza lezi zinto ezintsha.

ujabu Siphika *Ya Kutosha* kungukuhlola okwenziwe ngomfanekiso okuvusa amadlingozi okusinikeza ukubheka udlame olususelwa ebulilini ngenkathi “sibhanjwe ekhaya”. Ucezu luvunyelwe ngokufanekisa futhi lusebenzisa umzimba njengendlela yokubhikisha.

uSandile Mkhize noCue Ngema ku-*Time*, eyenziwe nguMkhize, basithatha ohambweni olungenangqondo lokugcina umlando, okhokho, bavuselela futhi sazakhela thina nobantu ngesikhathi senhlupho yomhlaba. Isikhathi sithatha sisuka kwelinye iphuzu siye kwesinye silandisa ngokuhlanganisa.

I-Kairos, eyenziwe uLeagan Peffer futhi ihlelwe uNthuthuko Mbatha kuwukusebenza okubonisa ubunzima obukhona empilweni okulethwa ukusondela kwendawo nomzimba wayo. Sithathwa phakathi kwemizwa ehlukeneyo yothando, ulaka, ukulahleka kanye nokwehluleka ngomzimba nohlaka lwalo.

U-Nomcebisi Moyikwa *Unganya kum* ngombhalo kaMlondiwethu Dubazane, uKhwezi Becker noJanelisa Mbana uqala ngengoma yomkhuleko ngesiZulu ehambelana nemibuthano yomngcwabo. Ucezu lokuzindla olubandakanye “ukuthula okukhonjiswe yizikhala ezingenamuntu”. Ucezu oluthokozisayo oluhlose ukubuza ukuthi “kusho ukuthini ukuphikelela ukuthi ungafi”.

Fellow... kaKristi-Leigh Gresse usiholela esimweni sengqondo somdansi yedwa; kungumsebenzi othokozisayo owenza okuphindwayo nomqondo welebhu kulo lonke umsebenzi. Kunomuzwa wokufuduka nokungazethembi njengoba ukusebenza kuguquka.

Walls kaSifiso Kitsona Khumalo nendodakazi yakhe, uLethiwe Zamantungwa Nzama, zisinikeza ukubukwa okuningana kobuhlobo bobudlelwano bendodakazi nobaba ngisho ‘nezindonga’ ezimiswe yimikhawulo yeCovid-19. Kufakwe kulolu phenyo iqiniso lokukhubazeka lokufika kwendodakazi yakhe eminyakeni yobudala bomphakathi obugcwele usizi lokuhlukumezeka kanye nokulimaza, ukwesaba lokhu okuvela kuyise kuyandile.

Control-Alt-Delete kaTegan Peacock yifilim emifushane ebonakalayo eboniswa nguJono Hornby ebonisa ukuthi “zilawula noma zilahlekelwe”. Ukuhlanganiswa kwezithombe namavidiyo kulingisa isenzo sokususa nokuguqula esikrinini sekhompyutha. Kuthinte zombili izinhlobo zomzimba kanye nokukhohlisa kwedijithali.

Space of Colour inikeza ukuhlolisiswa okusondelene kwesenzo samandla nesimo esenziwa ngumjaho esimweni saseNingizimu Afrika. Ucezu olucabangayo olufaka inselelo ebumnyameni obukhona emiphakathini. Enziwe ngabadansi uTshediso Kabulu noMotlatsi Khotle, izinkondlo zenziwa nguKhwezi Becker nomculo ngu-Anelisa Stuurman.

Shadow owenziwe uZinhle Nzama noKirsty Ndawo ukubukisisa okufudumeza inhliziyu nobungani kanye nokuqinisekiswa kokuba nothile lapho kuwe lapho ukuhlangana kwesikhumba kungavunyelwe ngenxa yemikhawulo ye-Covid-19.

To read the English version of this review, click [here](#)



Background image: Kirsty Ndawo, from Zinhle Nzama's "Shadow"
Top: Motlatsi Khotle in Tshediso Kabulu's "Space of Colour"
Below: Sifiso Khumalo and daughter, Lethiwe Nzama in "Walls"





DIGITAL JOMBA! LEGACY PLATFORM

Germaine Acogny, the mother of African Contemporary Dance, performs her solo "Somewhere at the Beginning" (2015), streamed as part of Digital JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience 2020 (photograph by Thomas Dorn)

DEEPLY ROOTED NGOKUJULILE E-JOMBA!

ngusamaNtsha Dalv (UMBHALI WEZIVAKASHI)

UKUHUNYUSHWANA ngulisa GOLDSTONE



Above: a scene from Fana Tshabalala's "Indumba" with Deeply Rooted Dance Theater;
Photograph by Ken Carl

iChicago esekwe Deeply Rooted Dance Theater (DRDT), isikhathi eside I-JOMBA! Izintandokazi nabahlanganyeli, zihlala zingomunye wemisebenzi engilindele kakhulu. Ngiya'thanda indlela ikampani egqoka ngayo inani elikhulu lezitayela ezahlukene zomdanso ibe yisitayela esisodwa esicebile sokusebenza esingelokhu engikukhohlwa ukushaywa umoya! Uma ungaphenya futhi uphuthelwe ngisho nesinyathelo senkampani lesi esisebenzayo, esisheshayo, okungahle kudabukisa.

Ngithethelele, ngiyazi lamagama a namandla (futhi abanye bangasho kancane). Ukusuka kude edolobheni lakithi lase Thekwini kanye ne-UKZN engithandayo kakhulu uElizabeth Sneddon Theatre, ikhaya lase JOMBA! umkhosi iminyaka emihlanu. Futhi ngenkathi ukukhokhiswa kwi-Covid-19 kusathengiswa emhlabeni wonke, ngizithola ngikhala ngemikhuleko yokubonga ukuthi isikhathi sisuse e-Elizabeth Sneddon Theatre, ikhaya lase JOMBA!, lingvumela ukuthi ngibuke eyodwa yami imikhosi eyintandokazi selokhu ukwenziwa kwemidlalo ikhona ukubukwa kwi-inthanethi.

Kulo nyaka, i-DRDT inikeza iJOMBA! izilaleli ezikhethiwe ezintathu zokudansa kusuka kweminye yemisebenzi yazo yakamuva.

Indumba iyisimo somdanso wokuqala kaFana Tshabalala owakhelwe izethameli zaseMelika ngesikhathi ehlala amasonto amathathu ne-DRDT ngoyaka ka2017. Lomdanso ithinta inhliziyi kakhulu. Ukusebenza kuqala nesiteji esimnyama esihlakazeke ngokuhamba okungafanele kwemizimba emhlophe, umuntu omubi obuka lesi sehlakalo. Umculo nentuthu kwakha ithoni eyethusayo neyesabisayo ngenkathi a Enzi bomculo besontekile futhi behamba ngokunganaki esiteji. Ukukhala okudabukisayo okuvela kubadlali kanye nomculo osuselwa kwesinye isikhathi kwenza ukusebenza kube nzima ukubukwa. Abadansi bayashintshana ukudansa ngenkathi abanye behlala emaphethelweni esiteji bebuka, bakha okuhlangenwe nakho kwememori ebuhlungu njengendlela yokuthola ukwelashwa. Ukusebenza kunomuzwa owesabisayo kuyo uma kubhekwa ukuthi le ngxenya yenziwa kuqala ukukhombisa umthelela wezombusazwe wobandlululo ongashintshiwe waseNingizimu Afrika. Izilaleli zisale nemizwa engemnadi ekhathazayo, ngendlela efanayo neNingizimu Afrika nabantu bayo bethokoziswa ifa lesikhathi esidlule esinesihluku. Kuphoqa izethameli ukuthi zibheke umlando ongathandeki.

Parallel Lives eyakhiwa uGary Abbott, ihlinzeka ngokubuka kokuhlangenwe nakho kokuphila okwabiwe kwabesifazane abasebenzayo nabampofu. Umdanso uqala ngesiteji esimnyama kanti njengoba kuqala ukukhanya, sibona umzwangedwa onesibhakabhaka okhanyiselwe ukukhanya okwesibhakabhaka. Umlingisi uqubeka nenhloso esiteji futhi maduze ujoyinwa abanye besifazane abazindaba zabo ezabiwe abatshelwa zona. Umdanso udlala ngokusebenzisa izindlela ukudala umuzwa wokuyenga ngobuhle.

Dance Revival (ukukhethwa kukaGoshen) ngumdanso ophakamisayo, nochokozisayo owaqoshwa nguTshediso Kabulu, obhekisisa izingcindezelo, amandla nokusindiswa. Isigqi somculo womdwebi wevangeli uDonald Lawrence uqinisekile ukuthi uzokuhambisa futhi uyancengeka kanye nawo. Abadansi baqubekela phambili ngokunemba njengokushintsha komthungo phakathi kwezitayela zomdanso zase-Afrika nezaseMelika (chofoza futhi uzophuthelwa yi-Gwara Gwara.) Ngeza ukumemeza okujabulisayo nokujaha kwabajabulisa ngemuva futhi kwenza ukusebenza kube ngumgubho omuhle.

To read the English version of this preview, click [here](#)

Background: Dancers from Deeply Rooted Dance Theatre perform in Gary Abbott's "The Dance We Dance" at the 2013 edition of JOMBA!, taken from Val Adamson's photographic retrospective

EMBEDDED URGENCY IN

BY GENESIS CELE

DEEPLY ROOTED'S QUALITY ENSEMBLE

Co-founded by Kevin Iega Jeff and under the artistic direction of former dancer, Nicole Clarke-Springer, Deeply Rooted Dance Theater transcends borders of space through the transformation of art and beauty that is deemed acceptable in the contemporary dance world. It merges classical and contemporary American styles as well as African-American forms of storytelling and dance. In pursuit of diversity, DRDT is continuously branching out while deepening roots at home (in Chicago) and abroad too.

For almost seven years DRDT has collaborated with South African artists through the JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience. Last night they kick-started the **JOMBA! LEGACY** programme and showcased excerpts from three of their previous works.

Indumba choreographed by SA's Fana Tshabalala, speaks to the cyclic nature of the unsettled issues of the apartheid era. An "Indumba" is a circular African healing hut where a traditional healer goes and cleanses people from bad spirits. The work calls for healing and the breaking of cyclical, unresolved issues that still affect South Africans today. Not only does the music give you a sense of being in a trance-like state that references the healing rituals that take place in an Indumba, but the work has beautiful moments of contact improvisation and vigorous repetition which also speak to the ever-present oppressiveness of the apartheid regime that still haunts Black people today.

Choreographed by Gary Abbott, *Parallel Lives* tells the complex and painful stories of "lower-class" women who share stories of life-altering events. The stage, as a meeting place for the women, reminded me of a stokvel, where women meet to help each other financially and to speak about their lives. The title of the work comes alive in the similarity of the stories the women share and the patterns and shapes created, with music shifting from being dreamlike to nightmarishly freaky. When a woman dances her story, all the other women sit in a pentagonal shape and watch her dance. The ending is very powerful, with the women marching, almost like warriors, ready to take on the world.

Dance Revival choreographed by Durban's Tshediso Kabulu is an excerpt from the full-length work *Goshen* that looks at biblical themes of power, oppression and deliverance and how they manifest in a contemporary setting. When I first saw the work, I thought, "I want to be on that stage!" The music by Donald Lawrence brought a liveness to the work that made it feel like a true revival. The voices of the church choir at the back of the stage, the colourfulness of the costumes on stage, the celebration of multiple forms of dance on stage, classical, contemporary and commercial, can truly renew one's spirit.



Above: a scene from Fana Tshabalala's "Indumba" with Deeply Rooted Dance Theater;
Below: a scene from Deeply Rooted Dance Theater's "Goshen"
Photographs by Ken Carl



Background: Flatfoot Dance Company's Sifiso Majola and Deeply Rooted Dance Theater's Elana Anderson perform in Kevin Iega Jeff's "Spell" at the 2015 edition of JOMBA!, taken from Val Adamson's photographic retrospective

CREATING COMMUNITY: SOUTH AFRICA MEETS CHICAGO THROUGH DANCE

BY NINA-JO BUTTIGIEG

Deeply Rooted Dance Theater, a Chicago dance company that strives to foster a creative community and provides audiences with emotional, visceral experiences using both American and African dance styles, showcased via live-streaming an unmissable collection of revisited performances on 26 August 2020 for JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience's Digital **LEGACY** programme. The theme of community threaded together these diverse, vibrant, emotional and thought-provoking performances.

In the raw and jarring performance of *Indumba* (Fana Tshabalala, 2017), dancers clad in white struggled against an unknown force. Despite constantly changing facings and group size, an overarching sense of struggle connected the dancers. The final duet portrayed one performer succumbing to the force, as the other restrains her whilst sharing her pain. Moreover, multiple moments of canon, repetition of phrase and passing of movement through touch, displayed cohesion between the dancers. They may have been isolated from the audience by the box drawn on the stage, but they were never isolated from each other.

The community presented and built in *Parallel Lives* (Gary Abbott, 2018), centred around the all female casts' struggles. It opened with one dancer sitting on stage, looking through their thumb and index finger held close to their face and then out in space; a gesture repeated by the ensemble, constantly seeking something; a change to happen. Together they struggled, searched and fought, as their bodies created sharp, elegant, pointed lines and internal, contracting and cyclical movements in tandem, looking externally and internally for a common answer. The dancers, with their mid-length dresses of differing patterns of both American and African fabrics, flowed on stage as a group, and leaned on one another for support. As the high strings climaxed, the dancers, matching the tempo and textures of the music, came together in a 'V' formation, interlinked in one final display of camaraderie and community.

Dance Revival (Tshediso Kabulu, 2019), an excerpt from the full-length *Goshen* displays a different kind of community; one of celebration. The vibrant, bold colours of the casual clothes of the dancers and the traditional African clothing of the community behind them, mixed together with their cheers and clapping created a warm and joyous atmosphere on stage. Even watching through a screen, one could not help but smile at the tribute to African culture and dance; old and new. The seamless fluidity between traditional African dance moves with contemporary social dances made for a grand celebration providing respite from the strife displayed earlier.

Deeply Rooted Dance Theater's performances showcased a multitude of communities and the vast experiences they share, allowing the audience to experience both their pain and joy.



Above: a scene from Gary Abbott's "Parallel Lives", photograph by Michelle Reid
Below: a scene from Deeply Rooted Dance Theater's "Goshen", photograph by Ken Carl



Background: Nijawwon Matthews from Deeply Rooted Dance Theater performs in Gary Abbott's and Kevin Iega Jeff's "The Dance We Dance" for the 2013 edition of JOMBA!, taken from Val Adamson's photographic retrospective

EXIT/EXIST RUMINATES ON BODY/VOICE IN JOMBA'S THIRD DAY

BY GREGORY KING

I wish I was capable of telling the Black story, but it requires the translation of many tongues due to its complex histories and multiple traditions usually penned by others ... those who othered us. Dances composed with Black bodies offer a plurality that should attach itself to dialogue with the dancers, the music and the audience, because the rubric for interpretation is never singular.

Premiered in 2012 at the Dance Umbrella in Johannesburg, Gregory Maqoma's, *Exit/Exist* was featured as part of the JOMBA! **LEGACY** program on the third day of the virtual festival. From my computer screen, words projected in French on the back wall of the theater provided historical contexts about Chief Maqoma, a 19th Century Xhosa warrior who fought against the British over cattle and land. Wearing a silver suit and with his back to the audience, Mr. Maqoma physicalised gestures which created their own music, supporting the strings of Giuliano Modarelli, whose artistic offering, along with that of an a capella quartet named Complete, was an invitation — a calling.

Mr. Maqoma is a transdisciplinary storyteller and movement linguist whose physical instrument speaks many languages. In *Exit/Exist*, Maqoma composed a host of events revealing ceremonial tasks like the sustained pouring of oil over his body and the familiar task of balancing a plate on his head—an act my Jamaican grandmother used to perform. Some of the tasks were illegible, but as the narrative abstractly lent itself to the life of Chief Maqoma, Mr. Maqoma embodied struggle, conflict, captivity and survival in ways one could successfully deduce.

Fourteen minutes into the hour long work, Mr. Maqoma painted the space, using his body as a brush to create circular patterns in the undulation of his spine and swift directional changes of his body's guided momentum. From the carving action of his leg on the floor, lifting it as it reached behind him to rest in a bent knee position (a Eurocentric ballet translation as *rond de jambe par terre* into a back attitude), to placing weight on one bent leg after a series of continuous small turns (my colonised mind only saw *châiné* turns and a deep lunge), Mr. Maqoma never sacrificed the percussion of his feet, stomping to complete the polyrhythmic complexities audible when the voices of Complete, the stroking of Modarelli's guitar and the gumboot sensibilities of Mr. Maqoma's sole tapping feet intersect.

The title *Exit/Exist* lives as a paradox, serving as an elusive indication that we may have to leave our colonised bodies behind so as to survive in our altruistic realism. There is no doubt that the South African dance scene has been shaped by a multiplicity of cultures, influences and motivations, but at times during my screening of *Exit/Exist*, I yearned to find where the motivations of whiteness ended and where the decolonised Black body gets to exalt in all its own beauty. Rich and skillfully crafted, *Exit/Exist* shows Mr. Maqoma to be an adept collaborator and a true creative visionary.



Above: Gregory Maqoma performs in his "Exit/Exist" as part of the JOMBA! LEGACY programme for the Digital JOMBA! 2020, photograph supplied by the artist

Background: Gregory Maqoma's Vuyani Dance Theatre performs in his "Southern Comfort" at JOMBA IN 2001, taken from Val Adamson's photographic retrospective

T-"EXIT/EXIST" YISIKHUMBUZO SIKAMAQOMA NOBUFAKAZI OBUNGOKOMLANDO

ngulazi ramashia
UKUHUNYUSHA ngulisa GOLDSTONE



Above and Below: Gregory Maqoma performs in his "Exit/Exist" as part of the JOMBA! LEGACY programme for the Digital JOMBA! 2020, photograph supplied by the artist



Background: Gregory Maqoma performs in his "Beautiful Me" at JOMBA IN 2011, taken from Val Adamson's photographic retrospective

"Kuyisikhumbuzo", kunanela umenzi womdanso nomsunguli we-Vuyani Dance Theatre (VDT), uGregory Maqoma, onobuciko obungenaphutha obudale ubufakazi bomlando obufakwe emasikweni nasezimpawu, ngamehlo enkosi yamaXhosa, uJongumsobomvu Maqoma, ukhokho ohlonishwayo.

Ukukhuluma ngo-*Exit/Exist* ukuletha ikhwalithi yomculo edlula umkhawulo wokufaka kwethu okulula komsindo. Ngicela kubungazwe umgadli wesigingci uGiuliano Modarelli ngomhlaba awutholile, kanye nokuqanjwa okuyisisekelo kukaSimphiwe Dana njengoba kuhunyushwe yiqembu le-a capella i-Complete. Kunomculo obukwayo, ocebile ngezibiliboco zezikhiye ezikhona ngomunwe owodwa, umuntu uyazi ngokuthungwa komzimba wezinsimbi namandla angaphakathi njengendawo yokulandisa.

Imizuzu engamashumi ayisithupha uGregory Maqoma ubesibophele esikrinini sethu ngenjabulo ethulile. Ukwesaba kakhulu ukucwayiza, ngokulahlekelwa umzuzwana wezitho zakhe, njengababalisi, ekusebenzeni kwakhe okucaciswe kahle.

Isiteji esiseduze nokungabi nalutho ngokushesha sizogcwaliswa ngesihlabathi, ummbila, amabhokisi amnyama kanye nokuqothuka kwamakhwaya okucashile kwe-Complete kodwa okudingekayo, njengoba uMaqoma efaka izibazi zefa likakhokho wakhe. Ekubekeni izimpondo zezinkomo ngokhuni, ufaka okunamathiselwe kwakhe athathe ingubo emhlophe ngokuthembeka esikweni lakhe lesiXhosa. Uqukethe ubufazi besifazane nobusha obusha obusobuntu bethu base-Afrika nezitayela zomdanso – isithombe esigqanyiswe ngobuhlakani yingcweti eyenziwe ngumklami wezimpahla uDavid Tlale.

Imicabango evezwe ku-*Exit/Exist* ikhombisa okwedlula obuhlungu. Izingqinamba zomhlaba namandla zisabambelele esimeni sethu samanje, njengabantu baseNingizimu Afrika. Ngenkathi uMaqoma ezihlanza ngamafutha ngasekugcineni kwengcezu yakhe, esethole ukuguquguquka kwesimo, ngakhala izinyembezi njengoba empeleni ngangikhunjuzwa ngohambo olude olwaluseza kanye nobugagu esibuphethe egazini lethu.

To read the English version of this review, click [here](#)

MAQOMA'S "EXIT/EXIST" SHOWCASES AN ECLECTIC STYLE, WITH A STRONG MESSAGE!

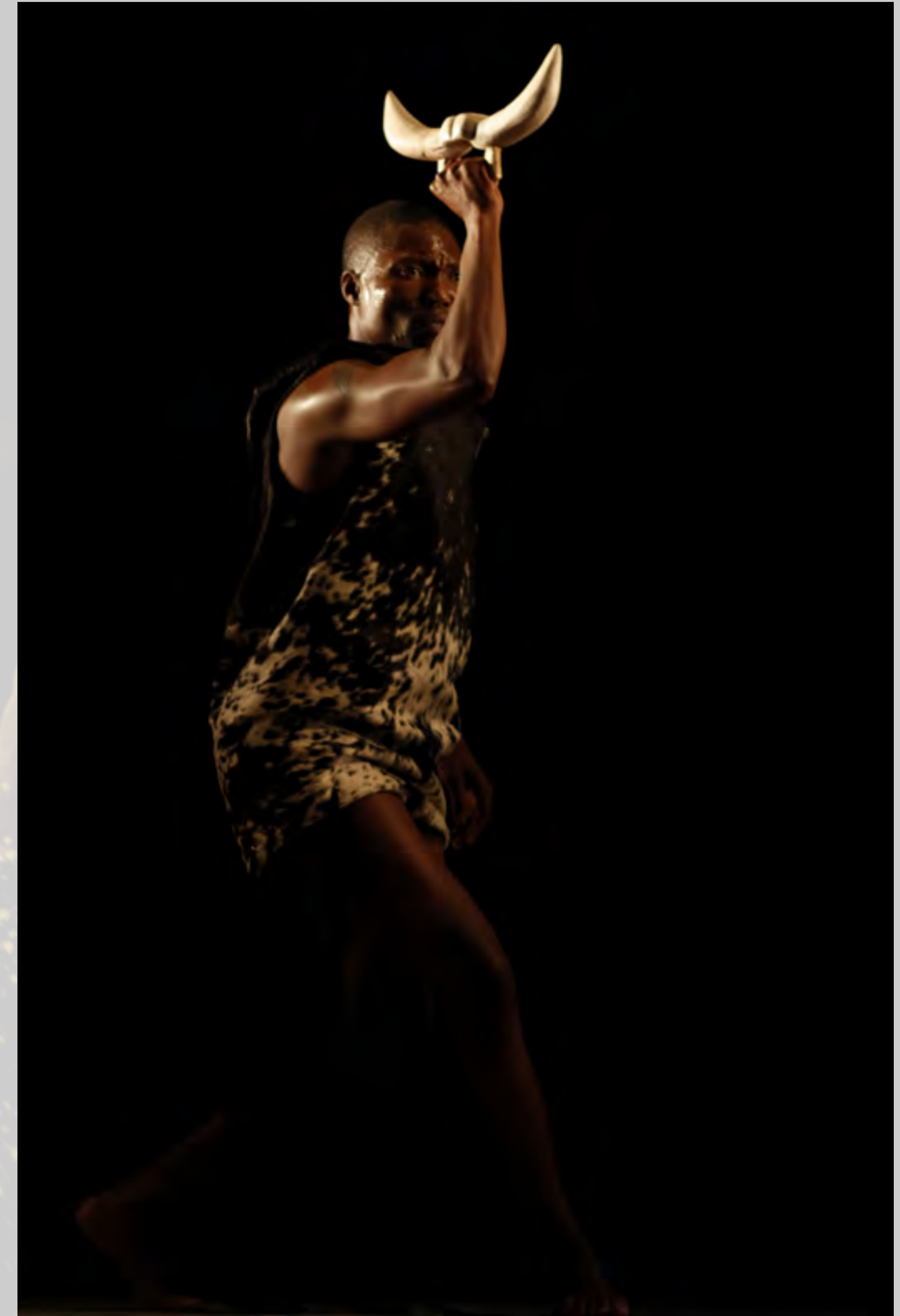
BY SVĀT BUCHHOLZ

Just like the ebb and flow of life, the audience of the dance theatre piece *Exit/Exist*, is taken on a journey from present to past and into the present again, by South African choreographer Gregory Maqoma. Slowly, as if the dancer on stage is being born, the lights fade in and present Maqoma in a golden suit, only showing his back, whilst using isolated ticking movements in his hands, as if he was reaching for something and staying in total synchronicity with the bird-like soundscape.

The physical isolations in his body match his soon disturbed loneliness on stage, when four men wearing masks and different traditional African costumes, enter from the left, one after the other, to sit down onto grey stone blocks. As they start singing as a male choir of deep voices, Maqoma moves stage left to slowly take off his suit, puts on a black and white attire and entering centre stage again, holding a two-sided horn in his hands.

Whilst dancing fluidly with this iconic object, he stretches his limbs towards every compass point and fills the brightly lit white dance floor with almost ritualistic movements, integrating undulations and floating movements in his whole body. No matter if moving with a blanket around his body or playing with what seems to be yellow cornflour poured onto the stage out of grey flour sacks, you can clearly see Maqoma's wide variety of dance influences, yet he plays with these dance-conventions on stage. His feet are moving fast but precise almost as a medley of isiPantsula and Flamenco. The turns that he includes frequently, are highly controlled just like in Kathak and in Ballet, yet the body part isolations which he integrates in his physique remind the viewer of a hybrid dance form mixing Umxhentso, Boogaloo and Popping, and Bharatanatyam.

Blending dance with live music, singing, screen work and physical props on stage, every art form flows so perfectly in sync with and into the others. Drawing a bow from the past of his country by telling the story of how his ancestor Chief Maqoma had to fight for his land against colonial forces, he reminds us how many people still have to fight against racism today too. When the piece concludes, Maqoma is dressed in his golden suit again, bringing the audience back to our contemporary, the backdrop slide asks "and now?"...thinking about the recent Black Lives Matter protests...this question and dance piece bind history with the present.



Above: Gregory Maqoma performs in his "Exit/Exist" as part of the JOMBA! LEGACY programme for the Digital JOMBA! 2020, photograph supplied by the artist

Background: Gregory Maqoma performs in his "Exit/Exist" at the 2012 Dance Umbrella in Johannesburg, photograph supplied by the artist

UKUBAMBISANA KWAMA-AFRIKA NJENGENGXENYE YOKHELO LWEFA LEDIJITHALI

ngudr sarahleish castelyn (umbhali wezivakashi)

UKUHUNYUSHWA ngulisa goldstone

Ukukhanya okuluhlaza okwesibhakabhaka kumboza kumboza isiteji emsebeni. Amalungu omzimba asakaza iminyakazo, ifudukela kumculo othusayo. Iphansi lesiteji libonakala libamba lemizimba njengoba izama ukumelana nokudonsa kwayo. Okuthile okunamandla okudonsa lemizimba ndawonye kube yinto yemvelo ephilayo yokuphefumula; bayiqembu elibalulekile lemizimba eshukumayo futhi ngasikhathi sinye, abantu abahamba ngesigqi sabo. Ukusuka kulokhu kuhlangukhu kobumbano, umdansi weFlatfoot uJabu Siphika uzidonsa ukuze ame amade nokho namanje aqhubeka nokuhlangana nokwakheka kwezinqubo ezingezansi. Kancane kancane, ngamunye ngamunye, umaka ngamunye wabadansi ku-Thobeka Quvane [Teekay] (waseFlatfoot), uSifiso Khumalo (waseFlatfoot), uMlondolozo Zondi (waseFlatfoot), uFrank Konwea (wase-Ijodee) noSifiso Ngcobo [Magesh] (waseFlatfoot), -futhi njengoba besukuma, bakhuluma nezibukeli, babelana ngesizukulwane samagama abo nomlando wohambo lwabo. Kukhona ubumnandi, kunosizi olunjulile, kunomlando walezi zidumbu zomdanso njengabantu futhi njengengxenywe yomphakathi kulolucwaningo lokuthi ungumuntu nokuthi kanjani uhambo lwethu lwempilo nokuthi singobani – njengabantu bodwa njengomphakathi – zakhiwe ngokuqondile nangokungaqondile ngokucabanga kwethu nezinqumo zabanye; kokubili ngamathuba nangokuzikhethela.

Umdwebi wezomdanso ohlonishwayo nomqondisi wezobuciko we-Ijodee Dance Company eseNigeria, u-Adedayo Liadi wasebenzisana kakhulu neFlatfoot Dance Company (evela eNingizimu Afrika) ngonyaka ka-2011, ukudala u-Aye Asan (UKUZIQHENYA) ngokuhlanganisa abadansi abavela eNingizimu Afrika naseNigeria esiteji ukusebenzisana okubalulekile futhi okuvame ukwenzeka ezwenikazi. I-Aye Asan ihlangana neminye imisebenzi ebalulekile kusiko lomdanso wanamuhla e-Afrika njengengxenywe yeJOMBA! Lwedijithali kanye nezibukeli ziyakwazi ukubuka lomsebenzi wokudansa onenjongo. Yize u-Aye Asan engenzelwanga isikrini, njengoba lokhu kuqopha ukubonakala kwayo okokuqala kwi-13 JOMBA! Isipiliyoni Somdanso Womdanso ngo-2011, sithatha indawo yaso njengomsebenzi wokudansa okufanele ubhekwe futhi ufundwe njengengxenywe yomlando womdanso wanamuhla e-Afrika, futhi njengesibonelo somsebenzi lapho ukuhlangana ngokubambisana kwe-Afrika kwenzeka khona; Umcimbi ovame ukwenzeka kaningi futhi ngokuqinisekile into edinga okuningi!

To read the English version of this preview, click [here](#)



Above: Flatfoot Dance Company's Sifiso Ngcobo and Ijodee Dance Company's Frank Konwea perform "Aye Asan" at the 2011 edition of JOMBA! (photograph by Val Adamson)

Background: Flatfoot Dance Company's Sifiso Khumalo and Sifiso Ngcobo perform in "Aye Asan" at the 2011 JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience (photograph by Val Adamson)

THE DUALITY OF MAN: ALL FOR ONE, ONE FOR ALL

BY ASH R DAVIS



Dancing, laughing and drinking, an ensemble of party goers teeters into believable belligerence. One performer, a man, Ijodee Dance Company's Frank Konwea, in a blue polo and blue jeans, tip toes into a violent, drunken aggression as he sets his sights on a woman dressed in red, Flatfoot Dance Company's Jabu Siphika. He attacks her. It is somehow free-form, visceral and deliberate all at once. In the crowd, no one seems to notice — or at least no one gets involved. Rather, everyone lingers. When he finishes, he leaves; so does everyone else. The woman, sobbing, is left alone, soon joined by a man, Flatfoot's Sifiso Khumalo, dressed in all black. Her cries soon become the accompaniment to his dancing.

Adedayo Liadi and Ijodee Dance Company/Flatfoot Dance Company's collaborative performance of *Aye Asan (VANITY)* turns duality on its head: the duality of man, the duality of mankind, the duality of shared experiences, the duality of Blackness and the dualities of dance itself pulsate through every moment of the piece, presented as part of the two-week Digital JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience. Fluctuating between mirror-like uniformity and a calculated disconnection of movements, moments of the performance repeat themselves in different utterances. What was once young bodies crowded beside one another, reconfigured into one moving unit. They become older, more adult-like bodies doing the similar motion. Consistent throughout *Aye Asan (VANITY)* is a protection and covering of one another that is markedly intentional as choreographer Adedayo Liadi offers an opportunity "for all human beings to show the kind of person they are," as the program notes state. Moments of both distress and ease weave through the performance, in-protection becomes a necessary and driving force. Whether that be of oneself or of another is, I believe, a question in constant oscillation here.

Entitled *VANITY*, and defined as being about "the good, the bad, and the ugly in all of us — and the choices we make along the way", what then, is Adedayo Liadi asking us as viewers to take away from this performance? The choices we make and the steps we take become a dance in and of themselves. Fluctuating in time and space, we become dancers; the world around us becomes a stage. A stage to, for, and of what, I believe Adedayo Liadi would say, is the choice we must make for ourselves.

Background: Lagos-based Ijodee Dance Company and Durban-based Flatfoot Dance Company perform in "Aye Asan" at JOMBA!, 2011 (photograph by Val Adamson)

Above Right: Muso Mandla Matsha watches on as Sifiso Ngcobo and Frank Konwea perform in "Aye Asan"
Above Left: Jabu Siphika makes her entrance from prompt side in "Aye Asan"
Below: Sifiso Khumalo in the foreground, and Sifiso Ngcobo in the background perform in "Aye Asan" at JOMBA! 2011 (photographs by Val Adamson)



GODDESS, ON STAGE AND SCREEN

BY KAMINI GOVENDER (GUEST WRITER)



Above: Anita Ratnam performs as Goddess Lakshmi in her "MA3KA" offered as part of the LEGACY platform for Digital JOMBA! 2020 (photograph supplied by the artist)

Dance is a visceral art form, a somatic meditation which has been the poignant offering from JOMBA!, for the past 22 years. In adapting to the constraints of the pandemic, JOMBA! has gone digital. Although the times do not permit the intimacy of the theatrical experience, we are once again reminded of the resilience of artists, who endeavour to create an experience that transcends space.

Such is the work of Anita Ratnam, who has contributed two of her recent pieces to the festival, *MA3KA* and *Stone...once again*. Dr. Ratnam has been described as an "intersectionist", combining storytelling, ritual, dance and dramaturgy into her work. Trained in Bharatanatyam, Mohiniattam and Kathakali, she has termed her distinctive style of movement as "Neo Bharata"; a contemporary Indian kinetic situated on a mature body. Her distinguished career has been carved by her reinterpretation of traditional Hindu mythology through a feminist lens.

Her piece *Stone...once again* interrogates the myth of Ahalya; a woman who is turned to stone for her supposed lust and infidelity. Her fate is determined by men; burdened for her pleasure and for rejecting the values imposed upon her existence. Using fabric and tonal lighting, Ratnam creates the metaphor of a stone to explore the rigid forms women are forced to exist in. The piece demonstrates the slow frustrations of being entrapped; the contemporary sentiment that women are seemingly screaming through rocks and yet, finding the freedom that exists through self-determination.

In contrast, *MA3KA*, focuses on the trinity of Goddesses: Saraswati (Goddess of Knowledge), Lakshmi (Goddess of Prosperity) and Meenakshi. (Goddess of Strength). The music and vocals outline the images created by Ratnam's Neo Bharata; elegantly moving from graceful to powerful, awesome to ferocious, to encompass the dynamism of the feminine Divine. It is a meditative, energised and playful performance that portrays the eclectic power of womanhood.

Uma ufuna ukufunda ukulandisa yokubuka kuqala yesiZulu yalo mkhosi, chofoza [la](#)

Background: Anita Ratnam performs her "A Million Sitas" at the JOMBA! 20 Year LEGACY Festival Edition in 2018 (photograph by Val Adamson)

RATNAM SPEAKS TRUTH TO POWER

BY CAMERON S GOVENDER

Anita Ratnam has, for decades, worked towards formulating a style that is unique. Considered to be her signature, the term Neo-Bharata was coined to describe her amalgamative style, a niche, within which she creates works that are both thought provoking and culturally risky.

Everything about Ratnam screams rebel, from her personal life, to her creative process, to her politics as a 21st Century Feminist. A trail blazer within the Indian dance community, her works on this year's Digital JOMBA! Legacy platform did not disappoint.

Stone... once again, is an extension of one of Ratnam's previous works: *A Million Sita's*, performed at JOMBA! in 2018, which speaks about female characters from the Ramayana. Ahalya 'cursed' with effervescent beauty, trapped by cyclical patriarchy, is turned to stone. A punishment exacted by her sage husband, Gautama for 'deceitful acts' (mythological victim blaming?).

Ratnam begins the piece in a spotlight, confined.

Referencing Martha Graham's acclaimed *Lamentation*, Ratnam creates her own lamentation for a culture that punishes women, because they are women. Confined, inside a tube of shiny fabric, she fights for space and the free extension of her limbs, but does not find freedom until, as the myth goes, she is saved by a man, a mythological prince charming...

Juxtaposed by the countless tribulations our mothers, sisters and daughters are faced with. Ratnam explores the other side of the coin, the modern day Lakshmi, Saraswathi and Parvati, the holy trinity's consorts. Take a moment to acknowledge that statement. If you know Hindu Scripture you realise, that in every action that is led by their husbands.

MA3KA was enchanting and controversial, from the costume to the exploration of the sub-dynamics. Hair is a problematic and contradictory signature for Indian women. Ratnam's works have, for years, explored a female-positive standpoint. The set, props and costumes designed for the entirety of this work was just a delight, the pure white Veena on one end, to the multiple Trisoolam's (Tridents) erect on the other. This piece managed to do all that it said, I would have liked however, if there was a third costume, to complete the concept of the holy trinity.

Kapitam, Alapadma, hastas (Hand Gestures) that represent the holding of a flower, or a flower, are used to depict the goddesses Ratnam speaks about. These hasta's are how we differentiate one from the other. Apart from the hasta used to differentiate each of them, I feel like it was a metaphor for 'her', 'she', 'them'. Those flowers that start as a mere seed, with life, growing/ blossoming and in most instances trampled, destroyed, withering away after losing its novelty a few hours after being gifted.

Ratnam's choice of music, with the sollukatte (recited notations) weaved into the swaras (melodic music) to me, contributed to what I thought was a jugalbhandi (a conversation), or maybe an argument/confrontation of some sort. I guess to the ear the music was pleasing but when I heard it, it tapped into a different frequency in my brainwaves. When I heard the music, my brain google translated it to a language that only I could understand.

What was it that I heard? TaKaDhiMe? Sa...Ri... Ga...? The brainwave that I was tapped into allowed me to hear what was under all the beauty in the music. I heard that sometimes we hold onto notions of faith and ideologies that control and keep us dancing according to the strings of the 'master puppeteer'. Ratnam breaks that down, she looks these notions dead in the eye and questions them endlessly.

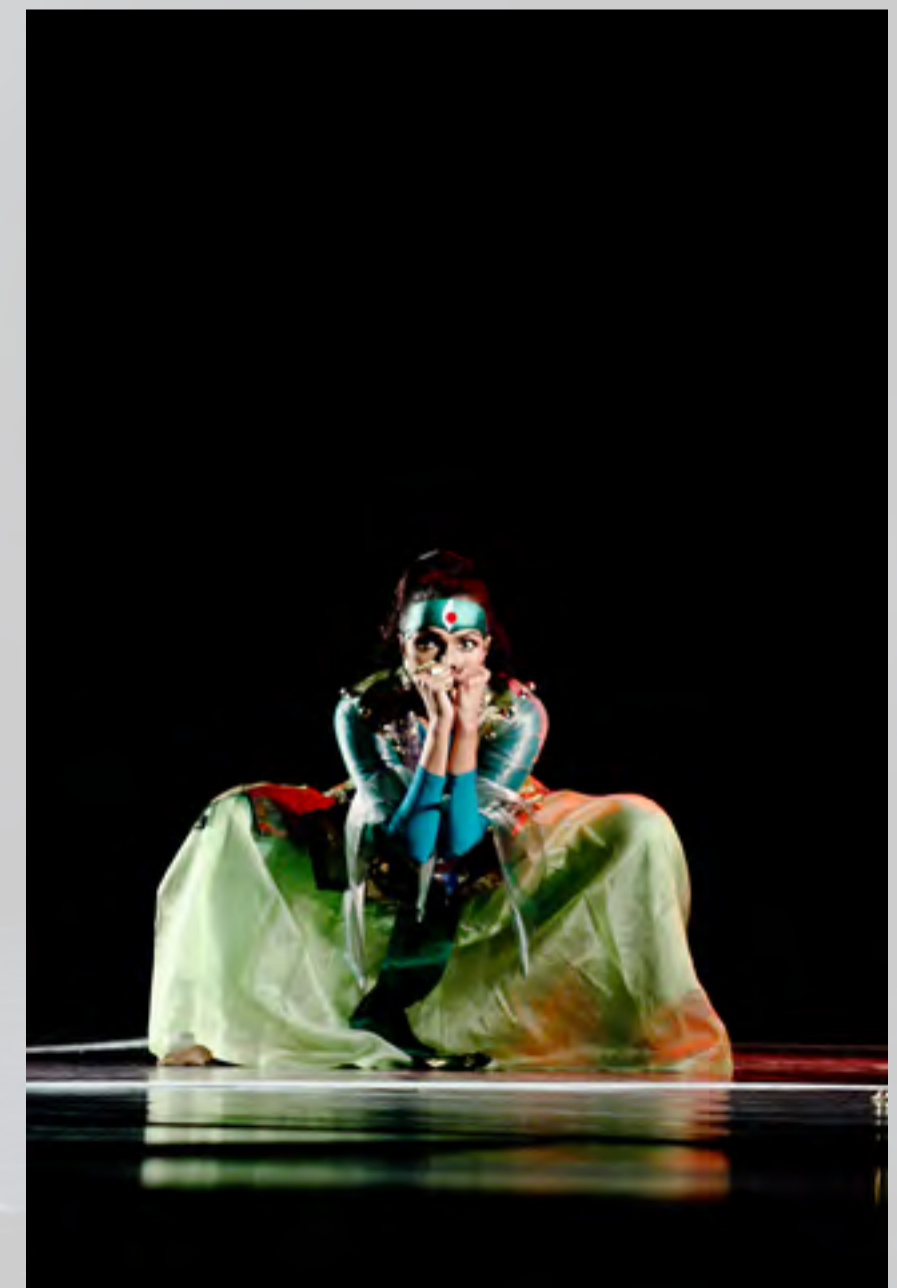
Background: Anita Ratnam performs her "A Million Sitas" at the JOMBA! 20 Year LEGACY Festival Edition in 2018 (photograph by Val Adamson)



Above: Anita Ratnam performs in "Stone... once again" offered as part of the LEGACY platform for Digital JOMBA! 2020

Right: Anita Ratnam embodies Meenakshi in her "MA3KA" offered as part of the LEGACY platform for Digital JOMBA! 2020

(photographs supplied by the artist)



MUSA HLATSHWAYO "ABOMHLABA(THI)" ISIQINISEKISO SE-UBUNTU

NGULAUREN NOBLE (UMBHALI WEZIVAKASHI)

UKUHUNYUSHWA NGULISA GOLDSTONE

Kuhlale kujabulisa ukubonga igama likaMusa Hlatshwayo kwi-JOMBA! uhlelo. Igama lakhe selifana nomqondo wokuphakama enkundleni yemidlalo yaseshashalazini kanye neyodwa esongwe ngophenyo olushubile lwezepolitiki lokuzazi ezweni elingapheli nelinzima.

Lomdanso siwunikwa nguMhayise Productions kanye nezinto ezenziwe ngu-Aphelele Nyawose, uSnet-hemba Khuzwayo kanye no-Njabulo Zungu, *ABOMHLABA(THI)* ucezu lomdanso ogcwele olwaqalwa ngonyaka ka-2019 endawo eholweni yaseKZNSA, bese libuyela kwi-JOMBA! yedijitali sika-2020.

Sishukunywisa ukudalwa komhlaba nabantu uCredo Mutwa ohlonishwayo, isihloko somdanso siyinto yokudala ezwini lokuvuma : "abantu bomhlaba yithi". Kungaphakathi kokuphindaphindwe okuvame ukubonwa kulezi zindaba — okwedlule futhi ekhona, uzulazula futhi uzimisele, ngokomzimba nangokomoya — ukuthi *ABOMHLABA(THI)* uCaroline Smart we-Artsmart owabona ngomfanekiso wabalingiswa ukuthi "ngohambo olungenzeki, [ukuthi] bazithola belandela uhambo, izinyathelo nezinyawo eziholela ekuqondeni ukuthi bangobani ezweni elixoshwe yimilando yesikhathi sethu esidlule, samanje nesizayo."

Sekuphele iminyaka eyishumi nane, uMhayise Productions enza izibonelo ezinhle kakhulu zomdanso, yaseshashalazini kanye nengxube yemikhakha eqondene nendawo kanye nemikhankaso yokufaka nokwenziwa. Sisuselwe KwaZulu-Natali eNingizimu Afrika futhi siholwa nguMqondisi Wezobuciko Nokubumba, uMusa Hlatshwayo, lenkampani isuka emandleni iya ngokuqina futhi iyaqhubeka nokukhiqiza ivusa inkanuko izingcezu eziphonsela inselelo isimo.

Uma ukuphazamiseka kwakamuya kwesimo sebhalsani yethu kusibonisile noma yini, kunguthi ukuhamba okuningana ekuqondeni okujulile nokwaziwa okukhulu kakhulu kuyadingeka ngokuzungeza omnyama emhlabeni. *ABOMHLABA(THI)* ngumdanso ohlangabezana nezidingo zale nkinga njalo lapho kwenziwa endaweni ehlukelele yababukeli abahlukile. Ngamazwi kaMusa Hlatshwayo uqobo: "Impela, imithwalo isisobhokweni."

To read the English version of this preview, click [here](#)



Background: Musa Hlatshwayo presents his work "Still Skinning" with Cato Manor Vibe at the 2009 JOMBA! FRINGE, taken from Val Adamson's photographic retrospective

Njabulo Zungu (left) and Aphelele Nyawose (right) perform in Musa Hlatshwayo's ABOMHLABA(THI) on the Digital JOMBA! Legacy platform (photographs by Val Adamson)

UNEARTHING THE PAST WITH THE PRESENT

BY EHOBIÉ MAPHANSA



Above: Njabulo Zungu and Snethemba Khuzwayo perform in Musa Hlatshwayo's "ABOMHLABA(THI)" as part of the 2020 Digital JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience (photograph by Val Adamson)

Musa Hlatshwayo's *ABOMHLABA(THI)* unearths the contentious land battle, by way of excavating the colonial story of Africa and linking it to the post-apartheid moment. Aphelele Nyawose, Snethemba Khuzwayo and Njabulo Zungu take us on a deep dig into the notions of displacement and being made a stranger in your own land.

A full-length work, *ABOMHLABA(THI)* premiered in 2019 at the KZNSA gallery. On arrival audiences received a handful of sand to hold onto for the duration of the work, a tangible way into the textures of land dispossession, ancestry, burial and desolation.

In the JOMBA! **LEGACY** presentation, a recorded rehearsal, we are greeted with Zungu struggling to untangle his boxed body from a knotted mess of ropes. Referencing the title of the section we hear the recording of Mandela's 1964 speech delivered from the dock at the Rivonia Trial. The one where he tells the court he is prepared to die for a just country.

Jumping straight into "Mrs Golden & the maids of pleasure; it's all just a game...a dark, dark game", Zungu follows Nyawose and Khuzwayo's bodies with two torches, as they dart in various directions. A weird spotlight effect emerges reminiscent of search lights. Ones that shine from clubs on a Saturday night, or those that shone from helicopters that flew over chaos-torn townships during apartheid states of emergency. A hide-and-seek-like confusion created. The women shuffle across the stage, holding onto their heads, looking into the distance as if aware of an external energy just beyond our sight. A sinister piano punctuated by the sound of stamping which becomes a recurring motif. The scene is closed with voices of the dancers, a lesson in pronouncing "Njabulo" and an "angisadlali" meaning I am no longer playing.

In "our land, the Queen's tea garden, education and violence of the missionaries" machete-wielding, boxed-soldiers make a suit-clad Zungu jump to conform, whilst an operatic track plays. Instructive "1+1 is 2" is hurled with venom and licking of the machetes that destroy suitcase structures, depicts the violence of the "civilising" mission.

A return to the ground with a floor section performed in canons to a discordant organ shows an attempt to reconnect whilst discarding the colonial impedimenta. The scene closes with the handing back of the suitcases and the suit jacket with a "here's your stuff Queeny and George".

This pours into the cleansing depicted through contact trio and a reconnection to each other. The violence has subsided and the classical music more cohesive yet echoing the residual scars.

Hlatshwayo's work, crammed with layers of imagery and symbolism, provides rich context, offering a bed of multiple readings through the seven strata. It's a journey through the dust that in the live performance we lay to rest by pouring the sand from our hands onto the tombs of pain.

Background: 2018 Standard Bank Young Artist for Choreography, Musa Hlatshwayo, presents his work "UDODANA" at JOMBA! (photograph by Val Adamson)

INDAWO! INDAWO! INDAWO!

ngukivithra nairker (umbhalo wezivakashi)
UKUHUNYUSHWA ngulisa GOLDSTONE

Umsebenzi weBODYART Dance Company waseNew Orleans ufikile ezindaweni ezinjengeNew York City, e-Edinburgh, eNew Zealand (ukusho amagama ambalwa) futhi ngesiteleka senhlanhla ifika eThekwini ngalo nyaka weDigital JOMBA!, oluthembisa isidlo esimnandi. Lesi sidlo sokudla somdanso wesine sikhonzwa ngezingxenyana ezimbili, "Dance for Camera" kanye ne "Dance for Stage".

Umsunguli kanye nomqondisi wezobuciko, uLeslie Scott, uletha ihlo lakhe elixakile nokwazi kwakhe ngendlela ebonakalayo eletha ukubumbana phakathi komzimba nezikhala. Njengoba umhlaba wethu ubhekene nezikhathi ezingejwayelekile, lemsebenzi emihlanu yokudansa isyisa ezindaweni ezisikhumbuzisa isikhathi esasilula. Basithatha basifaka ezikheleni okungenzeka ukuthi besizithathile.

i-"Dance for Camera" usinikeza amafilim amathathu wokudansa ayinjabulo ebonakalayo yezinzwa. *Afternoon Gold*, eqondiswe futhi ehlelwe uScott, eholwa ePortland Dance Film Festival ngoyaka we-2018. Eyenziwa nguRachel Abrahams, Le filimu ivutha phakathi kwezinhlela ezinhle zokhonkolo kanye nemvelo futhi ihlangana kahle nefilimu elifushane elithi *Legal Canvas* waka2017. *Re/stage* (2012) ebiqala eTriskelion Film Festival eBrooklyn, iphakamisa izithombe ezinhle zezidumbu ezihamba endaweni eyibalekayo, ebukhosini kanye nendawo yokuphila. "Dance for Camera" kuletha ukusondelana komzimba nendawo esikrinini.

"Dance for Stage" ngaphansi kokuqondisa kukaScott, kusisa endaweni yemidlalo yeshashalazi lapho yi-*WATER STORY* (2019) ne-*THREAD* (2014) ikhanga futhi silinganise ngasikhathi sinye. Ulwazi lukaScott lokuthwebula izithombe lubonakala kahle njengoba izithombe ziphila kanye nabadansi. Lemsebenzi embili yomdanso yenziwe ngenani elihlukile labadansi ababonisa amandla amakhulu avela esikrinini.

uLeslie Scott ukhombisa ubumbano obonakalayo emsebenzini ngamunye ohlukanisa ngokuhlukile komunye nomunye endaweni okukhona kuyo, umculo kanye nokugqokwa. Imisebenzi ihamba phakathi kokuchwayisisa nokuhlekisa ngokuzindla, nakanjani idili elilungele ukudansa.

To read the English version of this preview, click [here](#)



Background: Rachel Abrahams and Jonathan Bryant perform in Leslie Scott's "hymn + them" at Durban Art Gallery in 2019, photograph taken from Val Ad- amson's photographic retrospective

A publicity photo from BODYART's "WATER STORY" streamed as part of the JOMBA! Legacy platform (photograph supplied by the artist)

SITES AND SIGHTS: THE OPTICAL MAGICIANRY OF OF LESLIE SCOTT AND BODYART

BY LANGI RAMASHIA

Packaged into two categories, namely “Dance for Camera” and “Dance for Stage” BODYART Dance Company’s Digital JOMBA! **LEGACY** programme offered five distinctive works for audiences to delight in.

Beginning with “Dance for Camera”, *Legal Canvas* provided a stimulating purview in a strip of graffiti art. The vibrant performance centres around dancers Jonathan Bryant, Kayla Johnson and Heather Raburn as their action radiates off the canvas.

Afternoon Gold takes a more exploratory approach to site-specific/site-inspired work through the dynamic strokes of Rachel Abrahams. As we accompany her across the city’s landscape, the streets of New Orleans sing through her, restructuring her limbs to echo the quality of its architecture.

A 1920s abandoned movie theatre is excavated as the backdrop for the third segment of the “Dance for Camera” offerings, entitled *Re/stage*. The film navigates between an acknowledgment of the historical significance of their locale as well as an adolescent glee embedded in nostalgic discovery. The site’s inherent warm tones only add to the ambiance of the piece, and lightly compliment the glisten of the dancers’ luminous attire. As the shots switch across the various rooms and passages, the building’s structural integrity is tested beside their sharply lines.

Shifting to “Dance for Stage”, *WATER STORY* stems as a product of a collaboration with Grand Valley State University (GVSU) in Michigan. Given the state’s important relationship to water, with its Ojibwa etymology being “large lake” the piece’s subject matter is well rooted in its community. The large projections which decorate the stage appear to be in conversation with their live, moving counterparts, oscillating between synchronicity and isolation. There is also something to be said of the way light and colour is manipulated in this piece; the shadowing of one element to focus another, or the final solo’s suggestive fiery blue landscape.

The culmination of the programme came in *THREAD*, a production which had originally premiered in New York in 2014. Loosely derived from the story of Princess Ariadne and the minotaur in Greek mythology, the thirty-minute piece serves as a satisfying end to Wednesday’s Legacy viewing. The paper-like material which forms a long white curtain at the back of the stage, seemingly functions as the door between these worlds. As it crackles against the wind thus producing its own soundscape, Scott’s keen detail is once again demonstrated. Operating in language throughout the piece, we finally experience a release towards the end as the dancers drape themselves in its strands before severing its connection in calm chaos.



Background: Rachel Abrahams perform in Leslie Scott’s “hymn + them” at Durban Art Gallery in 2019 (photograph by Val Adamson)

A publicity photo from BODYART’s “WATER STORY” streamed as part of the JOMBA! Legacy platform (photograph supplied by the artist)

BODYART SHINES ON STAGE AND SCREEN

BY KAYLA WILSON

The Digital JOMBA! **LEGACY** Programme celebrates dance-makers that have had a significant impact on making JOMBA! thrive over the past 21-years. One dance maker being celebrated this year is Leslie Scott with BODYART Dance Company, a New Orleans-based dance company established in 2006. BODYART's work is displayed via a series of live-streamed performances previously created for both stage and screen.

Legal Canvas (2017), created for the screen, is a culmination of dance and graffiti art. A Graffiti artist: Beautify Earth, creates a mural behind dancers Jonathan Bryant, Kayla Johnson and Heather Raburn whilst they effortlessly weave through a series of strategic and weight bearing movements, connecting together like a chain, signifying the meshing of the two art forms. Within their movement there's strategic use of the surrounding building, allowing it to become almost like a fourth dancer within the piece. The duality of the calming and chaotic energies displayed by the dancers strongly suggests that as artists, the world is our canvas.

Afternoon Gold (2018), a solo featuring Rachel Abrahams, seemingly explores nature in various outdoor settings; the combination of flowing movements and rigid lines seem to represent an appreciation for nature and highlights an exploration of space from Abrahams. She displays an identifiable change in dynamics when comparing movements displayed in built up settings in comparison to the natural forests or rivers also seen in the video. The juxtaposition of mimicking not only the stern lines and harsh architectures but also the calmness and fluidity when at one with nature is painted side by side. Scott and Abrahams have managed to capture the nostalgic feeling of being able to create art in beautiful spaces, a feeling long since felt for many dancers.

In contrast to the above two screen works, *Re/Stage* (2012) is set inside what appears to be an abandoned cinema with dancers dressed in 90s-esque gowns. Despite this piece being set inside there is still an overwhelming sense of appreciation for the space the dancers are performing in. Dancers show great admiration for the beauty of the space, highlighting elements of the site's architecture within their movements as they move elegantly through the space.

WATER STORY (2019) and *THREAD* (2014), both directed for the stage, by Scott, individually create the sense of an 'outdoor' space indoors. With the excellent use of lighting and sound in both of these pieces the audience is instantly transported, yet fixated on the use of audio-visual and embodied imagery alongside shapes and angular movement from both the dancers and the set. This is Scott's expertise in both photography and producing dance coming in to play.

Throughout the five works, Scott has managed to portray a resounding sense of appreciation for space and highlights the importance of working with the space in order to create work and does this so in both complementary and contrasting manners.



Background: Rachel Abrahams and Jonathan Bryant perform in Leslie Scott's "hymn + them" at Durban Art Gallery in 2019 (photograph by Val Adamson)

BODYART Dance Company's "THREADS" was included on the Digital JOMBA! LEGACY programme (photograph supplied by the artist)

IMITHETHO YESIPHITHIPHITHI SIZA-ORLIN UKUHUNYUSHWA NGULISA GOLDSTONE IPULATIFOMU YAMAFRA

ngulammy Ballantyne (umbhali wezivakashi)
UKUHUNYUSHWA NGULISA GOLDSTONE

Beauty remained for just a moment then returned gently to her starting position... bukaRobyn Orlin lenziwa enkampanini esebenza ngokomlando iMoving Into Dance (MID) njengengxenywe yemikhosi yoku-maka iminyaka engu 21 yeminyaka yokuqeqeshwa kwezandla ngokugcwele.

Ukusebenza kufaka abadansi abanjengo Muzi Shili, Teboho Gilbert Letele, uSunnyboy Motau, uJulia Burnham, uSonia Radebe, uThandi Tshabalala, no-Oscar Buthelezi, uOrlin wakhiqiza umsebenzi omusha wokudansa weshashalazi, ehlanganisa umdanso, umbhalo kanye nesithombe nokuba ba iqhaza kwezilaleli futhi enikeza ihlaya lakhe nobuciko bakhe.

uAdrienne Sichel ubhale ngokubukeza i-The Star Tonight: “Izimpawu zokukhwabanisa zokuhweba ezenziwa ngu-Orlin zisenkingeni kule sekisi yombono wemithombo yezindaba ehlanganisiwe, ekufunweni, kwakhe ubuhle base-Afrika, imdedela ukuthi athathe okungajwayelekile, okukhohlisayo, okujwayelekile nokungjwayelekile.”

uOrlin uphawule wathi: “Omunye wabakhiqizi abaphambili, uMathias Leridon nonkosikazi wakhe, uGevane, bangabasekeli obuqinile bezobuciko base-Afrika futhi bayalithanda izwekazi. Bangicele ukuthi ngenze ucezu ngobuhle be-Afrika, hayi isandla njalo, izinto ezinzima ngeAfrika nokuba ngaphandle ke-Afrika isikhashana, bengikulungele kakhulu ukubhekana naloku.”

Ubuyela eJoburg lapho azalelwa futhi akhulela khona, bezama ukuthola umnyombo wobuhle ezitaladini ngakhoke, ukusebenzisana nomdwebi wemfashini uMarianne Fassler. uOrlin wathi : “Bengifuna ukusebenzisana namandla ethu a Mangaliso aseNingizimu Afrika ukwenza kabusha, Obani engizosebenzisana nabo kodwa uMarianne, izingubo eziwumgogodla wobuhle esikhuluma ngabo.” uFassler uthathe izikhwama zepulasitiki, amatini, amaphakethe ama-chip, amabhodlela amanzi zepulasitiki awenze izinto ezingabambeki.

Ukusebenzisana no-Yogin Sullaphen ukudala i-collage yomculo nobuciko bevidiyo kaPhilippe Laine, uOrlin uyaphumelela ukuletha izilaleli esenzweni njengoba egxila ekwaxhiweni kabusha kwemibono yobuhle, ukuvuselelwa kwamakoloni nobumbano ngaphandle.

To read the English version of this preview, click [here](#)



Background: Poet Lebo Mashile joins Moving Into Dance at the 2010 JOMBA! in Sylvia Glasser's "Threads"

Above: Dancer Julia Burnham performs in Orlin's "Beauty remained..." (photograph supplied by the artist)

BEAUTY IS IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

BY GENESIS CELE

Interactive, crazy, fun, colourful and innovative are the words that come to mind when one speaks of *Beauty remained for just a moment then returned gently to her starting position*. Known for her long titles, choreographer Robyn Orlin, in 2012, collaborated with Moving into Dance Mophatong (MIDM) dancers to create a work that questioned the essence of beauty. The entire show is built on one question: What is beauty? The performers spend the rest of the show trying to answer that question and give their definitions of beauty. The dancers include Oscar Buthelezi, Thandi Tshabalala, Teboho Letele, Otto Nehe, Sonia Radebe, Sun-nyboy Motau, Julia Burnham and Muzi Shili.

The piece begins with a sequence of movements by a man dressed in white; a chicken is projected on his clothing. This movement goes on for a minute or so, when one of the performers, Burnham, standing in the entrance aisle to the auditorium, abruptly disturbs this sequence by declaring that “ugly things will not be shown in this piece,” as it is only about beauty and, to her, beauty is the midday African sun. She directs Buthelezi, another dancer, on how to position a spotlight as her African sun. This speaks to the interactiveness of the piece, from making the audience drink water and make sounds with water bottles, to getting male audience members to take off their shirts and make them into a tutu. One of the main themes highlighted in this work is the importance of recycling plastic, as it negatively impacts (the beauty of) our environment. Tied into this, most of the costumes (designed and constructed by Marianne Fassler) are recycled, made from plastic shopping bags, chip and sweet packets, CDs and plastic bottles.

In *Beauty remained for just a moment then returned gently to her starting position*, the sun becomes a metaphor for beauty. It rises and falls for a short while before darkness—nothingness appears. Teboho Letele constantly speaks to God, via Skype, asking him about beauty. Has God found beauty? Or, like Teboho, is He also searching for it. The performers do their best to stop the sun/beauty from setting/fading. They stand on their heads, march and beg the sun not to set, but just like the setting of the sun, the fading of beauty is inevitable.



Above: Dancer Julia Burnham performs with Sonia Radebe and her MIDM colleagues in Orlin's "Beauty remained..." (photograph supplied by the artist)

Background: Moving into Dance Mophatong perform in Sonia Radebe and Jennifer Dallas' "Ngizwise" at the 2014 JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience, photograph taken from Val Adamson's photographic retrospective

UBUHLE BUGCINEKILE... BUPHELELE FUTHI BUQINILE

NGUTHOBILE MAPHANZA
UKUHUNYUSHWANA NGULISA GOLDSTONE



Above: Dancer Muzi Shili performs in Orlin's "Beauty remained..." (photograph supplied by the artist)

Uhlelo lwayizolo ebusuku oluthi **LEGACY** belufaka uhlelo lukaRobyn Orlin oluthi *Beauty remained for just a minute then returned gently to her starting position*. Umsebenzi othinta imibono eminingi yokuphila kwanamuhla, okuqala ngokuthanda kwethu ubuhle nokuphelela kuze kube sekuphatheni kwethu umhlaba kanye nokuzijabulisa kwezokuvakasha ngakho-ke ngamasiko.

Yize lomsebenzi ukhonjiswe okokuqala ngonyaka ka-2012, okuzwakala sengathi kudala kakhulu, kuba yisikhuthazi semicabango yezikhathi zamanje. Abaningi bathe i-Covid-19 iyindlela kaMama Yemvelo yokwenza simane nje sime futhi sibonakalise, sinikeze umhlaba isikhala esithile sokubamba umoya kule mpi eyilwe nabantu ngokumelene nawo, lomsebenzi ubukeka uphelele kulo mzuzu wokucabanga.

Izimpahla zokugqoka ezakhiwe nguMarianne Fassler zifaka ipulasitiki ngezindlela ezahlukahlukene. Ingubo enhle yenziwa ngezikhwama zepulasitiki ezelukiwe ezivame kakhulu emadolobheni angaphakathi eNingizimu Afrika, lapho amagodka ebathwala khona lapho behamba ibanga elide besuka nasemakhaya abo asezindaweni zasemakhaya, noma abathengisi basebenzise ukuphatha izimpahla zabo. Amapulasitiki amnyama alukiwe namapulasitiki amnyama asetshenziswa ngokufanayo nakwezinye izindawo zomdanso.

u-Orlin ne-Moving into Dance Mophatong's (MIDM) ukuqina kwaseGoli kumakwe kuyo yonke imisebenzi ekusebenziseni kwabo "tsotsi taal" kanye nezinyawo ezisheshayo ongase uhlangane nazo erenki yaseBree Street, okuwubufakazi obuqinile beJozi. Lokhu kuqhubeka kusibeka edolobheni elingaphakathi lapho abaningi, bemvelo yaseYurophu, bangesaba ukuya kodwa bethanda ukubona. Ngakho-ke, uhambo lwethu oluhle lokuvakasha lusithatha luthathe okungaba yilokho nje, ukuhambela ehlathini elimnyama kakhulu eNingizimu Afrika.

Ekuseni kuphawulwa izinkukhu ezibamba isiteji ku-waltz njengombono womculo, ukugxila emilenzeni nasezikrinini ezakha umuzwa ogqamile wokukhanya kwasekuseni kushaya izindawo ezicwebezelayo. UBeauty oqhamukayo uphazamisa ukuhlanza indawo, "azikho izimpaphe zenkukhu lapha" njengoba eqondisa ilanga endaweni efanelekile. Alukho udonga lwesine kulo msebenzi, wonke umuntu ungumbukeli futhi ubambe iqhaza kulo mdlalo, ngisho nabasebenzi bezobuchwepheshe abavame ukukhohlwa. Imisindo nezigcawu kuthuthukiswa futhi kuncike ekutheni ababukeli babandakanyeka kangakanani, okusingathwa ngokunakekelwa futhi kuqondiswe uBeauty bethu.

Isisho esithi "konke ngaphandle kosinki wasekhishini" sifika engqondweni kulokhu kuhlekisa njengoba konke okuvela ezingxoxweni noNkulunkulu, ubulili, ukuxhashazwa, ngisho namabhubesi kuphonswa emxubeni. Ukusetshenziswa okuphawulekayo kwezinto zansuku zonke, ulimi, ukunyakaza, nokusetha kwenzelwe ukukhombisa isifiso somuntu sokulawula lokho esingenakukujula, njengokushona kwelanga.

To read the English version of this preview, click [here](#)

Background: Moving Into Dance performs "The Woman Who Fell From The Moon" on opening night of JOMBA! 2018 (photograph by Val Adamson)

EMBODIED EFFERVESCENCE

BY JULIA WILSON (GUEST WRITER)



Above: a scene from "Face Machine" (top) and "Swingle Sisters" (bottom) presented as part of INTRODANS' 2020 Digital JOMBA! Legacy programme (photographs by Hans Gerritsen)

This year's digital platform sees INTRODANS, long time sweethearts of the JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience, bringing four distinct and vibrant stage works to our screens.

While originally created for stage and then filmed, the works are intertwined within a digital landscape that blends seamlessly with the action of the dancers on stage. Film is an inextricable element in three of the works, providing another surface upon which to, quite literally, play.

Blue Journey (David Middendorp), which premiered in 2008, is a seamless work choreographed to haunting music by the likes of Radiohead. It tricks the viewer with shadow imagery that converges and then diverges with the dancers, who seem to depict a kind of departure from their shadow selves as they weave in and out of sync with the images projected behind them. The fantastic graphics elevate the dancers' bodies to a transcendence from gravity: leaps transform into full flight, and bodies on stage emit frequencies to interact with.

Face Machine (David Middendorp) is a delightfully exploratory departure from our obsession with the selfie. Two cameras are used to great effect to project enormous reproductions of the dancers' faces as well as a bird's eye view of the stage. The two interact as bodies transform the face projected, tickling, pushing, rolling over and manipulating. The result is deeply comical and fresh.

In viewing *Swingle Sisters* (Alexander Ekman), I could not help but feel that a mirror was being held up to our quarantined selves. The dancers cough repeatedly to create a rhythmic soundscape as they sweep across the stage, seemingly seated at a table. Later in the work, two dancers lounge at front-of-stage as a third creates total mayhem with milk, popcorn and eggs. While the work was created pre-Covid, I felt like I was seeing myself in isolation, drinking milk from the bottle (because no-one is coming for tea) and endlessly snacking and lazing around as we wait for the season to pass. The work is delightfully funny, and perfectly performed by the severe, nonplussed dancers who rack their lungs percussively.

World Leaders, also choreographed by Middendorp, is a departure from the generally upbeat offerings that make up INTRODANS' presentation this year. Lending from the gestures of politicians, the work is set against a post-apocalyptic backdrop of faceless or hooded bodies, with a soundtrack that is disconcerting and sparse initially. The fists pounded on politicians' desks transform into an ape-like gait, as what sounds like a war drum beats in an upsettingly off-canter rhythm. Conversations emerge between bodies as the sound takes soulful form, as the dancers battle it out before a stark landscape of bodies. They become puppets, manipulated by the other, as the work evolves. There is a sense that the dancers are immersed in a combative video game, and the merging of technology and live performance is used to haunting effect.

INTRODANS, old friends of the festival, have brought to the table works that are on the cusp of what is possible when combining live and digital landscapes. With perfect technique, and comedic timing worthy of SNL, The company never fails to pack a punch and delight audiences the world over. A must see for audiences old and young, this programme offers a platter of delights that will intrigue, inspire and demand your attention.

Uma ufuna ukufunda ukulandisa yokubuka kuqala yesiZulu yalo mkhosi, chofoza [la](#)

Background: INTRODANS presents their programme "Superstars" at the 2013 JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience, photograph taken from Val Adamson's photographic retrospective

INTRODANS BRINGS TECHNO-DANS TO JOMBA!

BY ALEXANDRU (SASHA) BORA



Above: a scene from "Blue Journey" presented as part of INTRODANS' 2020 Digital JOMBA! Legacy programme (photograph by Hans Gerritsen)

Blue Journey (2020) uses shadows and silhouettes on a screen, accompanying the dancers in their journey of self-discovery and finding their identity. Most of the shadows are grey, lacking in individual features, but one blue silhouette appears, jumping and turning, and stands out from the others. The performers run and twist along the shapes behind them, creating duets that follow in canons. The synchronisation between the lead female dancer and the blue shadow, the cause-effect relationship between their arms extensions, their turns and winged feet, this is almost surreal. *Blue Journey* is a great example of dance interacting with animation in a live setting and enhances the concept of belonging as depicted in the duets, and furthermore the loneliness and isolation of the female dancer.

Wereldleider (*World Leaders*) (2020) involves two male dancers exploring the theme of power. They push each other, create distance and tension between each other, but they also attract and come face-to-face, chest-to-chest, making themselves dependent on each other; all this while behind them bodies are dropping onto and lying on the stage floor. Throughout this piece there is an underlying suspense, almost like a horror film, and we wait for the outcome of these fighting bodies, their pulls, their pointed fingers and their long stretched limbs. This fierce competition and strength ends as the dancers fall together to the ground, neither side victorious, reminding me about how 'World Leaders' also seem to be in deadlock so involved with their own power struggle oblivious to how their actions devastate and damage the lives of others.

Face Machine (2020) invites the audience, through the use of various cameras placed on the stage, to notice how dancers stretch, twist and react to a person's face; to a 'selfie'. The dancers shake, twist and avoid the tongue of the person on the big screen in a playful way. There is energy flowing throughout this piece, as hips move like dominoes, bodies are blown away and eyes jump out in this fascinating, multi-dimensional piece that takes inspiration from the physicality of the human face.

Swingle Sisters (2016) finds three female dancers sitting at a red table coughing in an exaggerated manner. Their coughing becomes the rhythm to which they travel across the stage with the table, all the time maintaining some sense of comedy bending and arching while coughing. In this piece, there is egg smashing against the body, eating and spitting up of the chewed food around the stage and it culminates with a milk bath. This piece is creative and amusing inviting the audience to experience another dimension.

Background: A scene from INTRODANS' 2015 JOMBA! programme "Joy 4 Dans", photograph taken from Val Adamson's photographic retrospective

THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL, INTERWEAVING HISTORY THROUGH HERSTORY

BY THOBILE MAPHANZA

The JOMBA! Legacy Platform closed with Germaine Acogny's *Somewhere at the Beginning*, directed by Mikaël Serre which premiered in 2015. This is a work that deals in oppositions as it traverses the violent schisms of Africinity and Westernisation. With the use of a book, a pillow, a smoking bowl, and an armchair; a story of our history unfolds layered with projections of her soldier father, priestess grandmother, children, machetes and a magical forest on a fringed curtain that separates the vivid outer world from a more obscure inner world.

Acogny who is considered the "Mother of Contemporary Dance in Africa" moves in an oracle-like manner as she navigates relationships in the past and present seeking answers to the possible future.

Through personal journeys Acogny seems to embody questions constantly swimming in my head. Questions of what we have adopted or become are posed in relation to what we have sacrificed.

Western religion vs African Spirituality; patriarchy and polygamy vs the wounds of the mother. A constant bickering between women and a desperation to protect the children. References to cannibalism made adjacent to ideas of stuffed geese and foie gras. The idea of education and the written word ever present, held up to "Mein Kampf" and Hitlers 'heroism'.

There is a longing to return to the beginning, but an unseen barrier exists as we never truly know where or what the beginning is. She seems grounded in her movement her skirt rarely leaving the floor, yet a sense of landlessness created in her circular pathways and ritualised repetitions that seem to bring us back to the same places that no longer seem to be ours. Finally landing in the armchair she recedes into the darkness possibly succumbing to the uncertainty whilst clinging to things that we believe will protect us.

The search into who we are and where we come from brings questions of can we ever go back to the beginning? And what would that look like? Post assimilation, what land will bring salvation? A pertinent topic as we, the continent, attempt to decolonise ourselves and find our innate power.

The play with darkness and light, the voice over and projection create a mystical atmosphere that plays on the interconnectedness of all the opposing elements she offers. The effect of the fringed curtain sometimes swallows her whole or mediates a somewhat digital looking matrix. Her voice becomes our voice and the effect is of a spiritual communication that happens in a dream state.

A fitting end to a programming of memory and healing.



*Background: Germaine Acogny's Jant-Bi perform in "Fagala" choreographed by Acogny and Kota Yamasaki, at the 2005 JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience, photograph taken from Val Adamson's photographic retrospective
Images Left and Right are of Germaine Acogny in her acclaimed solo "Somewhere at the Beginning" (photographs by Thomas Dorn)*

IYA TAOUNDE -- THE MOTHER HAS RETURNED

BY SARAH DAVIES CORDOVA (GUEST WRITER)

Arriving on stage in silence, the mother of Contemporary African Dance, Germaine Acogny enters into a discussion with her departed father, a former civil servant of the colonial regime of France and dances a solo in front of and with Aloopho, her paternal grandmother and Yoruba priestess from Dahomey (Benin), whom she never knew. This corporeal and vocal palimpsest-like work layers texts (readings from her father's book, other texts to be read, two oral stories, other contestatory voices and chatter on screen) and images (photos of her father and grandmother, and videos of Senegal, of France, with documentary footage of the past and present) that are projected onto a curtain of black threads cutting and weaving the intemporal stage in two time-spaces where about a plural musical score quivers, surges, pulses and ebbs moving in and out of silence and from old to contemporary music styles of Africa and the West.

With *Somewhere at the Beginning*, Acogny pursues her postcolonial autobiography with fragmentary textual and corporeal monologues in dialogue with those who released for her the roots of Africa's cultural and spiritual History (Senghor) and of decolonisation (Césaire) as well as of traditional and archaic dance (Béjart) and with the interrogation of classic myths and rituals from the past and their re-arrangement alongside contemporary desacralised forms.

As she did implicitly in *Mon élue noire #2* (2015, her solo *Rite of Spring*), and in her cameo role as Tanam in the 2018 film *Yao*, and in *Songook Yaakaar* ("Facing Hope" 2010) with its documentary scenography, Acogny in *Somewhere at the Beginning* declines her multiple identities explicitly: Germaine, Marie, Pentecôte, Salimata, Acogny to relay the personal and universal issues that matter to her: women's rights, marriage, religion, the history of enslavement and colonialism in Africa, emancipation and migration.

At the crossroads of epochs, crossing frontiers and civilisations, and furiously tearing at the silences that breaks in transmission from one generation to another create, Acogny's long spine — an undulating serpent and quivering baobab tree — transports her roots right up to the end of her arms, to the tip of her fingers that on the ground and in the air, move in horizontal and vertical figures of eight, in hand circles above and in front of her, and as deployed wings that trace in her Poetics of Relation.[1]

Aloopho's return as peace dove at Germaine's Pentecostal birth signaled her transmittal of her sacred powers to her grand-daughter, and her bequest of another vis-age, that of mother to her own father. As such *Somewhere at the Beginning* relates allegorically how after struggling out of the bird's feathered costume and beaked mask, Iya Taounde Acogny emerges as mother and daughter and baptises her papa with her words and dances her forgiveness.

[1]Edouard Glissant in *Poétique de la Relation* (Paris: Gallimard, 1991) traces an imaginary Tout-monde (all-world) that layers (in time) and puts in touch (in space) the plural diversity in and of world cultures and identities.

Pour lire la version Française de cette critique (traduite par l'auteur), cliquez [ici](#)
Uma ufuna ukufunda ukubukezwa yesiZulu yalo mkhosi, chofoza [la](#)



Background: Germaine Acogny's Jant-Bi perform in "Fagala" choreographed by Acogny and Kota Yamasaki, at the 2005 JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience, photograph taken from Val Adamson's photographic retrospective

Above: Germaine Acogny performs in her solo "Somewhere at the Beginning" as part of the Digital JOMBA! LEGACY platform (photographs by Thomas Dorn)

Pull Up

Pictured: Abdiel Figueroa Reyes

USA DANCE ON SCREEN

USA: 2020

BY KATIE HIGGINSON-TRANter

Ten films beautifully portraying America's diverse communities. These works capture the current climate whilst also exemplifying specific issues surrounding frustration, struggle and hope. Through dance, they paint a picture of 2020 America and share stories that the whole world can relate to.

Under the blue skies of Atlanta, Laurel Lawson and Alice Sheppard, fly and fall in glee. No words are needed as they explore their creative freedom, refusing any restrictions that some viewers might think wheelchairs suggest. Indulging in their strength and elegance, they show how to truly *Revel In Your Body*. This freedom is choked as Tom Tsai reveals his hardships on the road to recovery. Far from revelry, Tsai repeats his breaking techniques with intense words of frustration. His thoughts are ruled by continuance and his fears are all *About Inertia*. We next follow a young girl also struggling to adapt, but to University. Angella Bettina Carlos is identified by her Filipino background, as a rice cooker remains close. Her frustrations accumulating in ballet class, Carlos explodes with powerful turns and distressed floor work. She reveals confidence in her identity. She is *Abbey*.

Ericka Vaughn Lashley, Stacy DeMorrow Miller and Abby Suskin begin to articulate their feet in sync. Books upon their head force a motionless upper body; knowledge holds power; the books have the ultimate rule. Tearing the pages from the books gives the dancers freedom and they find they are no longer *Bound*. Similarly refusing restriction, Jasmine Hearn stands proudly outdoors dancing to the early life of her Grandmother, Claudette Johnson. Whispered memories of childhood friends, ice cream and dressmaking bring Hearn a warm smile. She is Claudette's *Memory Keep(H)ER*. This calmness is broken as we *SubMERGE* into the Los Angeles community. Samad Guerram, Bianca Medina, Chris Cuenza and Jannet Galdamez mournfully lurk around empty water bottles and dry pave stones whilst a broken speech draws reference to the 2020 California drought. The dancers beautifully encapsulate the community, whilst illustrating the struggles and effects of the drought.

Bodies dressed in white each tell their recollection of immigration; how their identity was waxed off like body hair, how the roots that once gave them life are now miles away. Though supporting each other, they cannot contain the frustration of being *Uprooted*. Moving to a dingy room, musicians and dancers await. The dancer's feet tap in synchronicity; their energy builds bringing life to the dull room and their taps decorate the musician's score. This work is a feel-good gem, combining the raw passion of jazz and tap to produce nothing but *Supreme Love*. Love abandons the screen as a young boy sees men swap handrails for prison-cell bars. Their powerful but regimented movement confirms that their *Separate Sentences*, all have the same consequences on the outside community. As colour returns to the screen the boy walks away, refuting the future being presented to him. Reenforcing hope, Abdiel Figueroa Reyes struts towards us with a ballsy, provocative attitude, leaving no room for apology. Referencing the deaths of George Floyd, Michael Brown Jr. and Atatiana Jeffersons there is clear frustration with today's America. It urges American's to *Pull Up* and the merciless rhymes of Little Simz's 'BOSS' confirm that if not, get out of the way!

Background: Amie Dowling's "Separate Sentences" formed part of the "USA Dance on Screen" package for Digital JOMBA! 2020



Above: Angella Betina Carlos performs in "Abbey" as part of the "USA Dance on Screen" package for JOMBA! 2020

Left top: Tom Tsai performs in his "About Inertia" as part of the "USA Dance on Screen" package for JOMBA! 2020

Left Bottom: Abdiel Figueroa Reyes performs in Rena Butler's "Pull Up" as part of the "USA Dance on Screen" package for JOMBA! 2020

THOUGHTFUL CURATION OF DANCE ON SCREEN, USA WRAPS US IN RAW EXPERIENCES

BY LANGI RAMASHIA

The hour-long viewing showcases an array of multifaceted representations of American experiences. Each with their own unique style and all created for the screen, **USA DANCE ON SCREEN**, as part of the Digital JOMBA! offerings is necessary viewing for our contemporary palette.

Gravity is defied in *Revel In Your Body* as dancers Alice Sheppard and Laurel Lawson levitate seamlessly in slow motion on a rooftop parking lot, whilst tightly bound to their wheelchairs. The pair's mutual trust and unwavering concentration as they lock eyes, serve as gridlines in watching the performance unfold. Though laced in athleticism and strength, the film captures an essence of movement rich in feeling. The dancers appear weightless and at one with their machinery. Their close-up shots radiate utter elation and contentment whilst maintaining military focus. As the sunset's gleam leaks through the spokes of their wheelchairs, we share in the ecstasy and zeal for what their bodies are able to conjure.

Separate Sentences uncovers the trauma born of mass incarceration as it filters down generations. The black and white film follows a young African American boy, as he steps into the shadows of his paternal lineage. Its scenes depict themes of loss and bewilderment through effortless punctuation by a skilfully choreographed ensemble. The group of Bay Area performers mould and dissemble various platforms throughout the piece, personifying prison life as lived by its inhabitants and those they leave behind. A noteworthy moment is foregrounded as the detainees descend lifelessly from the sand hill, relegated as mere bodies in the justice system. This idea is finely juxtaposed against the intense vulnerability of coming face-to-face with their family members.

The above speaks to only two of ten highly compelling films steeped in raw experience. To hear the voice of the varied existences shaped through very distinct lenses is a privilege in its own right. We tend to overlook perspectives with which we are not accustomed and as such those stories are often lost to history. Through the thoughtful curation of the USA JOMBA! contingent of Rachel Miller, Lauren Warnecke, Tara Aisha Willis and Peter Chu, **USA DANCE ON SCREEN** provides an opportunity to acknowledge them.



Background & Above: A scene from "Separate Sentences" which screened as part of the USA DANCE ON SCREEN package as part of the Digital JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience 2020

REVELS IN YOUR MIND

BY SERGEY KUNDIK



As a concept that emerged from trampolining in wheelchairs; dancers Alice Sheppard and Laurel Lawson, and director Katherine Helen Fisher, set off their audience on an adventure into the slowed-down world of their own in their dance film *Revel In Your Body*. Reveling in the sunlight at an urban car park setting, we embark on their journey with an image of linked arms supporting one another as they gaze into each other's eyes, and rotate in wheelchairs both balancing on one wheel. From this point on the wheelchairs signify the potential of enabling bodies defying the societal view of those in wheelchairs as disabled. After all, in this work the dancers balance on the railings, hold each other in an acrobatic manner and make jumps with the wheelchairs that spring; the dancers cannot be defined by the reductionist term disabled.

The director optimises the viewpoint of these two dancers by using zoomed shots that make it seem as though the dancers are levitating in mid-air. This impressive look is cleverly curated to the music with accents of the melody highlighting the lift or drop of the dancers who emerge and submerge back in slow motion. This choice of slow-motion enhances the details of the choreography and allows the audience to connect with every detail of the movements and the expression of catching a flight. The idea of lifting up in the air in slow motion and falling down heavily in real time gives insight into some of the obstacles that may dis-able these dancers or perhaps restrict their access because of their use of the wheelchairs despite desperately wanting the right to be light and free... an escape from gravity that we all desire.

The relaxed and carefree attitude in the dancers' body language and their faces when they fall is mesmerising, I revel in their movement. Music journeys through; sections are slow and passive and build to lively, playful melody and rhythm that shapes the story and supports the mood of this piece. The dancers and their moods and movements uplifting this work perhaps signify the first steps to freedom. Catching one dancer in mid-air, the other dancer soars like a bird and looks ecstatic before dropping once again. Their costumes, of brass and silver, reflect these rays of sunlight that drive their souls as they soar into the sky finishing the piece on a high note, quite literally.

Above: Alice Sheppard, a multi-racial Black woman with short curly hair, and Laurel Lawson, a white woman with short-cropped teal hair, fly through a cloudless blue sky with arms outstretched and their wheelchair wheels spinning. You don't see the ground, only sky. They both wear metallic silver and gold. Laurel's face is towards the camera and has a wide, peaceful smile (photo by Safety Third Productions, Shimmy Boyle)

Background: Alice Sheppard flies through clear blue skies with arms outstretched and a jubilant smile on her face. She is a multi-racial Black woman whose short curly hair has touches of purple and orange. Her metallic clothes and wheelchair glint in the sunlight (photo by Jared Serfozo)

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE OF JUMAANE TAYLOR'S "SUPREME LOVE" SHARES JAZZ, TAP AND COLTRANE WITH SOUTH AFRICAN AUDIENCES - ONLINE

BY KRISTAN BRUNS

“My music is the spiritual expression of what I am — my faith, my knowledge, my being...When you begin to see the possibilities of music, you desire to do something really good for people, to help humanity free itself from its hangups...I want to speak to their souls.” - John Coltrane

The philosophy of bebop saxophone titan John Coltrane is at the heart of Chicago tap dancer Jumaane Taylor's first evening-length effort. Called *Supreme Love*, the dance is a heartfelt love song to a reimagined rendition of Coltrane's genre-defining album, *A Love Supreme*. As an online answer to Covid-19, the first movement of this stage work, premiered in 2015, gets its international premiere at the 22nd (Digital) JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience. The screening is part of the festival finale, **USA Dance on Screen**, on Sept. 6.

Supreme Love opens with the wick of a drum roll alighting an explosion of sound as four musicians wind strings of melody and percussion around each other. A white light from two blazingly opaque portals bring four meditative bodies into focus. The dancers sit cross-legged on a worn plywood floor with four pairs of tap shoes beside each of them. Entranced, those in a circle on the ground are adorned not in ceremonial robes, but loose street clothes. They are everymen, blue collar and eerily pious. As the music fades into a dreamlike ambience, the dancers wipe the dust from their feet before putting on their tap shoes, treated here as fragile, sacred objects. One by one, the figures languidly rise and sleepily drag their feet towards another sacred object of power, an old tree stump. Each figure in his or her own time capitulates over the stump and when satisfied, turns back around and once again lumbers back from whence they came. A union of musicians interrupt their journey, drawing the bodies back to face towards the stump. With heavy heads and heavy arms, they slowly begin to awake. In an interview, Taylor talked about the meaning behind this scene:

“It's at the birth. It's at the beginning. We're finding out what love is, and that's the love of tap dancing, the love of music. We're touching the most natural thing that appears when we awaken and we do our dance for being born, for existing at all. That is what that first part [of *Supreme Love*] is: acknowledging the ability to live, the ability to say thank you, the ability to do this gift.”

The first movement, “Acknowledgement,” begins with an awakening and rebirth that parallels John Coltrane's mentality at the time of the album's composition. “A Love Supreme” was a turning point for Coltrane, whose alcohol and heroin abuse threatened to end his career early. With the help of friends, family and religion, Coltrane kicked the habit and came back stronger than ever, producing what is considered to be one of the most important jazz albums of all time. Taylor interprets Coltrane's epiphany and rebirth as a literal “from the ground up” story, beginning with the four acolytes in the film by sitting on the floor in a circle, replanting themselves so that they can be better than they were before. Taylor does not want his work to be about struggle and pain. Rather he's sees the dance as an expression of love and absolution.

“I really didn't want to focus on the struggle and heartache that comes with the American history, from slavery 'til now. I feel like that's what Noise/Funk was good for. I want it to be a representation of the 'now' ... to understand some type of love for the human experience. Hopefully at the end we empty out any type of racism, or any type of hate or disbelief. This is an act of love. We are trying to express our gratefulness for freedom to the fullest extent.”

The dancers' focus slants always towards the sacred stump, which like their shoes is another totem of the tap world. The stump references the famous good-luck “Tree Of Hope” that lived between Connie's Inn and the Lafayette Theatre in Harlem, New York City, during the 1920s and '30s. Today, a “Tree of Hope” stump sits backstage at the Apollo Theater as a good luck charm for those who dare test their talent on that hallowed stage.

The focus of the viewer is naturally drawn to the dancers' feet, whose heels increasingly thump to life with an ebbing and flowing devotional in the form of the “paddle and roll,” accompanied by the famously accessible down/up, down/up motif from the bass—a-looove-su-preme, a-looove-su-preme... The tide of the music continues to rise, a bebop-inspired deluge of bounding arpeggios by saxophonist Irvin Pierce, jack hammer keystrokes from pianist Justin Dillard, droopy round tones from bassist Junius Paul and drummer Isaiah Spencer's strategically placed rhythmic fills and cymbal crashes washing over the quartet.

The energy ramps up unexpectedly as the four dancers, standing in the center, break free of their trance and get to the business of tap dance. Their bodies expand and contract as is needed to produce the steps. Petite Donnetta “Lilbit” Jackson exhibits the tightest concentrated control. Starinah “Star” Dixon conducts the rhythm as much in her arms as playing it with her feet. Tall and lanky Ian Berg literally punches the beats into existence with his fists. And Taylor, who also performs in the work, cocks his head to hear the music produced by the octet of musicians and dancers.

Tap dance and jazz music have always gone hand-in-hand, both considered Negro song and dance forms until white practitioners wanted to do it, too. Then, it became America's song and dance. Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Cab Calloway—they all traveled with tap dancers (Bunny Briggs, Buster Brown and Jimmy Slyde, respectively). To imagine tap dance as another instrument among the jazz quartet is not a stretch—a tragedy for its not being included more. Taylor merely carries on a long tradition that many don't know ever existed, a tradition that extends to tap dance's perceived origins in Africa. The exact origins of tap dance are hotly debated, but Taylor finds confirmation of tap's roots in African music and dance:

“There are all these different debates about where this dance originates from, or how it's connected to this and that. Simply listening to African music—African drums especially—and looking at African dancing, you can see how much tap dance comes from that particular energy or aesthetic.”

Taylor went on to elaborate on tap dance's connection to its West African roots:

“Just bending the knees, staying so low to the ground—if you're thinking poetically, if you're thinking of how to get closer to the foundation, closer to the earth... That's an African way of thinking. An African way of living — being closer to the roots.”

The trudge of four devout bodies back and forth, pendulating between music and God, tells the story of Coltrane's rebirth and tap dance's revival. Prowess can take you so far, but it's that connection to something deeper that has allowed tap and 'Trane to survive.



Above: A scene from Jumaane Taylor's "Supreme Love" screened as part of the "USA DANCE ON SCREEN" package for Digital JOMBA! 2020

Background: Ian Berg, Starinah Dixon and Donnetta Jackson perform in "Supreme Love" as part of the "USA DANCE ON SCREEN" platform for Digital JOMBA! 2020

DANCE IN A DIGITAL AGE



"Essential Services" by Kenyan choreographer Ondiege Matthew was one of 4 works screened on the "Dance in a Digital Age" platform

"CUT" KAVINCENT MANTSOE IYAXHUMA

NGUTHOBILE MAPHANZA
UKUHUNYUSHA NGULISA GOLDSTONE



Above: Vincent Mantsoe performs his "SoliDaD..." at the 2019 edition of JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience (Photograph by Val Adamson)

Uma ukhuluma ngomdanso waseNingizimu Afrika, uVincent Sekwati Mantsoe ungumuntu ohloniphekile. Ngimane nje ****ngiyabubula****... anginawo amagama okuchaza engikuzwayo ngemuva kokumbuka, hayi ngoba kungekho okuzokhulunywa ngakho kepha kunalokho ukuthi akwenzayo, kimi, kungaphezu kwenkulumo noma amagama. Ngibusisiwe ngokuthola ithuba lokumbuka, esiteji, amahlandla ambalwa ezigabeni zaseNingizimu Afrika, isikhathi esiningi eJOMBA! njengoba manje ehlala eFrance. Ngokho-ke, lokhu empeleni kuyimizamo yokubeka ngamagama lokho engikuthola kunzima ukukusho.

Into yokuqala engiyibonayo njengoba kuvulwa ifilim, ngaphandle kokubukhali kokuqala komculo iconsi elilodwa lomjuluko eliconsaba ebusweni bakhe. Ngazi masinyane ngomsebenzi oqhubeke ngaphambi kwalesi sikhathi. Ikhanda lakhe libonakala lisunduzela isikhala esimnyama, ubumnyama obuzobuya buye futhi, bucindezele phansi, buvale, bushaye ngezikhathi ezingajwayelekile. Umculo, kaMpho Molikeng, upenda indawo engenalutho, engasebenzi. Isitayela sikaMantsoe, esifanekisayo, siya phambili nge-engeli ngendlela ebekiwe, eqondile. Izingalo zakhe zibonakala ziqhubeka njalo kepha umzimba wakhe usekelwe ngokuphelele, kuze kube... umzuzwana omfishane wokungaqiniseki, oshukumisayo, ofinyelela. Umzuzwana ongazelelwe wokucindezeleka. Isiphithiphithi esisabelayo sihamba kokuphazamiseka. Ukubuyela noma ukuqhubeka? Ngeke kufane. Ukukhathala. Ukuphefumula. Ukoma. Zama futhi. Ngokuhlukile. Ubuphakuphaku kwakheka kuze kube yilapho umculo uyeka ukudala futhi sisele kuphela nomoya osebenzayo ophikelela njengomzimba. Ukwenqaba ukunikezela. Ukwazi ukuthi asenziwanga!

Ukunikezwa okunikezwe i-CUT nguVincent Mantsoe kungokuqinisekisa kwendawo esizithola kuyo sonke, sinqunywe, sanqunywa saba yizicucu hayi ngokuphelele. Isiphiwo sakhe esiqotho sinobuntu obukhulu ngoba sikhumbuza ukuthi asisodwa kulokhu kubodwa futhi njengoba eqinisa inkulumo ethi "uhambo lwami aluphelile. Angakaqedi". Ngikhululeke ngaso lesi sikhathi ukwazi ukuthi kuningi engibheke phambili engxenyeni yesibili ye-CUT.

To read the English version of this review, click [here](#)

Background: Vincent Mantsoe performs in his "KonKoriti" at the 2016 JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience, photograph taken from Val Adamson's photographic retrospective

I KNOW WHY THE CAGED BIRD DANCES

BY KIVITHA NAICKER (GUEST WRITER)



Above: Vincent Mantsoe performs his acclaimed "Motswa Hole" at the 2001 JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience, photograph taken from Val Adamson's photographic retrospective

When I think of dancing legends in South Africa, I think of Vincent Mantsoe: a truly rare artist who exudes grace, humility and most of all, the core reason I consider theatre my temple, generosity. He is a generous human being and this translates across both the screen and oceans in his recent dance film *CUT* (June 2020). The pre-screening conversation between JOMBA!'s artistic director, Lliane Loots (Durban, South Africa) and Mantsoe (France) left me feeling overwhelmed to have these legends (virtually) in my home in Korea.

As I write, I am aware that the critical part of me is overshadowed by emotions and notions of 'home' - because to those of us who straddle borders, one foot in one country and the other across the world, Mantsoe's *CUT* is a lamentation of fear and hope.

I too am cut off in what I jokingly and guiltily call a 'self-imposed exile,' unable to leave the country and anxious of what is to come for my loved ones. Mantsoe's *CUT* left a lump in my throat days later. My visceral response to his work has reinforced the power of the dancing body; a way to express the inexplicable. In *CUT* we enter Mantsoe's studio and as he moves in his work space, I spot the instruments mounted on the wall (umrhubheand uhadi), familiar accoutrements signaling home.

This is a work that was shot entirely by Mantsoe, a feat for an artist who usually performs 'with' his audience. I say this because there is an undoubtable exchange of energy between the two; he gives off himself, unboxing vulnerabilities that I (we) may have shelved...for another time.

Mpho Molikeng's sharp soundscape builds on more than just stark images of vast land, it also plays with what sounds like a spirit caught in purgatory. Mantsoe's movements begin with images of a body adapting; to the sounds, to the space, to the solitude. His body is rooted and his head is cut out of frame. The black box, a recurrence in the film, periodically pushes the dancer out the frame but he resists, reappearing each time...and then all steadiness breaks loose. The music crescendos as a struggle to push through or give in takes over; his movements begin to unravel with franticness and disruption, fighting this clear state of turbulence while being sucked in by a force. As he drips with sweat against a moving soundscape of his resistance, his breath, his guttural sounds; this bird dances because he is not done.

CUT, an offering born out of the current pandemic, is a beacon of hope. In the post-screening talk, Mantsoe vulnerably sheds light on the difficulties of filming himself; the inconceivable nature of not being able to see one's own neighbour and for many, their families, with no end in sight. The human experience has been put to the ultimate test and Mantsoe echoes sounds of hope because we are all not done.

Vincent forever!

Uma ufuna ukufunda ukubukezwa yesiZulu yalo mkhosi, chofoza [la](#)

Background: Mantsoe performs his "SoliDaD..." at the 2019 edition of JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience (Photograph by Val Adamson)

DANCING INTO AFRICAN SPACES

BY CAMERON S GOVENDER

Ondiege Matthew from Dance Into Space (Nairobi, Kenya), choreographed two works *Generations* and *Essential Services* which premiered at the Kenya National Theatre in July this year, during the peak of the Covid-19 Pandemic in South Africa. Dance Into Space under Matthew's guidance, produced two pieces of creative expression, that has me feeling conflicted.

There is no cross-cultural guide that one can pick up to translate a twirl into 'confusion' or maybe a roll into a leap to mean 'overcoming'. I think Dance Into Space pushes western-prescribed ways of critiquing a little/ or maybe a lot further than just 'interpretation of movement'. Perhaps my discomfort in terms of my ability to 'read' these dances is because Matthew and his dancers don't just speak about decolonisation, they embody it.

The African continent, for centuries, has been trying to pull ourselves out from under the weight of colonial histories and imposed contemporary 'Africanisms'. Matthew and his company push back, finding voice on their own terms. Is this what decolonisation looks like?

Watching *Generations* and *Essential Services* made me in equal parts proud to be an African, and angry that African lives still hold less global 'value' than our 'western' brothers and sisters. *Essential Services*, in particular, with its tongue-in-cheek engagements with the politics of what is 'essential' in times of a global pandemic, and who dictates these left me yearning for a time we have yet to experience... when Africa and her people are included in 'the world', meaningfully and deliberately.

The work is a disjointed look at what it means to live in a country, on a continent, where access to clean water is a privilege that few can afford. As the work draws me in, I am confronted by the performer's words: "Everywhere on TV or radio is Corona... Now there is no AIDS, TB, Cancer or Malaria"... "Our children are dying silently from Malaria", valid statements from a continent and a people who have been living with deadly pandemics for years, without the global or government interventions that we see today. This is undercut by Matthew's disjointed choreography that urges for acknowledgement; to be seen. *Essential Services* delves into how the "Covid-essential" is maybe somehow not the only essential for a continent such as Africa. We are told to social distance, we are told to wear masks, we are also told to wash our hands: all the while many are left without access to these "Covid-essentials", let alone basic human rights essentials like food and shelter.

In South Africa, for instance, we have seen, on the news, how the government, Essential Services Unit, took many homeless people, and put them all together under one tent (how noble of them), with a tap that needs to be opened using a spanner, with baths that require someone to hold a hose.

Matthew and his company achieve much in the presentation of their works, resoundingly though, they offer a layered narrative that combines injustices of history and of the present, bringing into sharp focus the devastating realities of an imposed (arguably un-African) one-size-fits-all model of engagement with Covid-19.



Above and Below: Dance into Space perform in Ondiege Matthew's "Essential Services" an edu-dance theatre performance that takes a sharp look at the impact of Covid-19 in an African context (photograph below supplied by the artist)



Background: Kenya's Dance Into Space perform "Essential Services" at the Kenya National Theatre in July 2020, the filmed version was screened as part of Digital JOMBA! 2020

UKUFIHLA/UKUVEZA AMA-SELFIE

ngukivihla nairker (umbhali wezivakashi)
UKUHUNYUSHWA ngulisa GOLDSTONE



Umdanso we-JOMBA! ku-**DANCE IN A DIGITAL AGE** usiyisa eNairobi, eKenya ngomsebenzi ka-Onndi-ge Matthew (kwi-Dance Into Space). Yenziwe uMatthew eKenya National Theatre ngesikhathi sokuvalwa, iGenerations (eyenziwe ngoMeyi 2020) yingoma eyodwa edanswa uMatthew futhi ihambisane nezwi elikhulunywayo elenziwa yiTeardrops. Okuhlenganisa lomsebenzi ndawonye Umculo owesabekayo kaDJ Richie, uAlacoque Ntome (umtshingo) noKeni Gakuo (izigubhu). Lomsebenzi mfushane kepha usenomphumela omuhle lapho ama-Teardrops ulahla amagugu amancane ngesizukulwane sethu kanye nokudideka kwezingane okuzayo kwi-inthanethi, elambebe ingqondo ebonakalayo 'yo-kuthandwa'. uMatthew ufanisa le mibono nokunyakaza njengoba edansa ngaphansi kokukhanya, eshaya izingalo nemilenze yakhe, ezama ukundiza ngenkathi evalelwe ngesiyingi wokukhanya. "Isizukulwane esilala nezingcingo zazo ngaphansi kwemiqamelo", iTeardrops ihlala ngaphansi kwesiyingi wakhe wokukhanya njengoba uMatthew ehlanganisa la mazwi, umzimba wakhe unwebela emaphethelweni yesiyingi kodwa ungaphumi. Ukuhamba kwakhe kwesinye isikhathi ukuma ngokweqile kwe-yoga, edansa ngesikhundla se-'cobra' kanye 'nenja ebheke phansi'. Kunomqondo owesabekayo wesahlulelo kanye nomzabalazo wethemba ophuma kule ngxenye njengamagama weTeardrops, "Isizukulwane esiya ejimini kodwa imiqondo yaso isesimweni esikahle" sinikeza umuzwa osobala wokwesaba ikusasa.

iEssential Services (eyenziwe ngoJulayi 2020) yenziwa uMatthew futhi yadlalwa uKennedy Wafula, uLorriette Aluoch, uNovaline Akoth, uKelvin Tesha noRodgers Maithya. Lomsebenzi usinikeza umbono wezimpilo zabantu baseKenya njengoba bezulazula empilweni ngesikhathi sikaCovid-19. Kungalesi sikhathi lapho ngithola khona ukuthi ngifuna ukubheka eceleni, okukhumbuza ukungafuni kwami ukubuka izindaba. Iqiniso eliningi kakhulu. Umdanso uqala nabathathu abadansi besilisa abahamba ngesikhathi sinye. uMatthew ukhethe ukukhulisa lokhu kusebenza, esebenzisa ingxoxo ukukhombisa impilo eKenya ngesikhathi sokuvalwa. Abadansi besifazane bangena baxoxe ngokubuzwa ukuthi bageze kanjani izandla kodwa bengenayo insipho namanzi ahambayo phakathi nesikhukhula. Umbhinqo yalokhu kushintshana okuncane kunzima ukugwinya. Lomsebenzi uveza okwenzeka ku Covid-19 ngokungabi nabulungisa okuba yingxenye yempilo yabantu yansuku zonke. Ngokunyakaza nangezingxoxo, lomsebenzi uletha umqondo wokuthi kuyinto ejwayelekile yokuba nohulumeni okhohlakele futhi ozithoba emandleni ombuso ezandleni zabaholi ngesikhathi lapho isifo esibulalayo sithatha umhlaba. Yikho lokhu okukhombisa usizi lwabantu baseNingizimu Afrika. Kusikhombisa ukuthi sisondelene kunalokho esicabangayo futhi ngaphandle kokungabaza, sikulokhu 'ndawonye'.

To read the English version of this review, click [here](#)



Above: Dance Into Space present "Essential Services" at the Kenya National Theatre, Live in 2020, the filmed version was streamed as part of Digital JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience 2020.

Background: "Essential Services" performed by Kenya's Dance Into Space raises uncomfortable questions (photograph supplied by the artist)

THE TALKING BOOK THAT IS THE BODY

BY JULIA WILSON (GUEST WRITER)

Jürg Koch's latest offering to the JOMBA! platform, *The Printer's Tray*, is one that looks back over a choreographic career of over 20 years, and simultaneously takes inventory of the body: it's potential, the space it takes, and the qualities it can bear. It is also a sentimental look at the artist in isolation: how does one perform a canon alone?

A printer's tray is designed to hold the individual block letters that are transformed by the printer into words, and sentences, that create meaning. It can also be used to keep memorabilia and items of significant personal importance. I had one as a child, and it stored my grandmother's hair barrette, a little jewellery box I found and loved, a dead moth that I thought was pretty, and a medley of other fragments of memory that were precious to me.

Koch's work, similarly, is compartmentalised into fifteen pieces, which can be accompanied by forty-one pieces of music, ranging from classical piano to bluesy guitar and techno. For the festival, Koch selected six of the works, in a fixed sequence with a dedicated musical score. I mention this, as in future, live iterations of the work, Koch plans to allow the audience to select both the choreographic and musical score.

The parts are short and direct: the first examines 'Walking line, straight and curved' where the feet initiate movement, in a specific spatial pattern. Later, Koch creates a solo canon for the arms. This speaks so plainly to the life of a dancer in isolation, as has been the case for most of this year. It is playful but somewhat lonely: there is a sentimentality that comes with watching a lone dancer fill a large space.

The last compartment delivered, '*Pathways used in the pieces Untelling Stories (2005), Parts (2015) and Human Scale (2018)*', is a kind of archive or library for work Koch has done in the past. In conversation with JOMBA! Artistic Director, Dr. Lliane Loots, Koch noted how working in this way makes one conscious of one's habits, tendencies and patterns of dance-making. This process of taking stock has been a way for Koch to decide what of his repertoire to dispense with, what he consciously brings with him and what is simply ingrained in the body after a decades-spanning career in dance.

Speaking around the shock that Covid-19 has delivered to the world at large, and to the arts community, Koch acknowledges the privilege he has had in taking a forced sabbatical this year, although he has plans for live performances as soon as this month (albeit to audiences of sixteen people and no more). These performances will allow audiences, as mentioned, to make choices as to the structure and soundtrack of the work, which transforms it from an internal archive to something that the public has access to, and may view in their own way. The element of chance elevates the potential for 'happy accidents' and opens up possibilities, both for Koch and the audience present.

The work is a kind of case study for a dancer in isolation. Watching the conversation between Koch and Dr. Loots, it is very clear that while our lives on one hand have gotten smaller, there is a need for us to come together as a global community of dancers and dance-makers if we are to survive. That, while our worlds are shrinking, we must use the means we have to maintain connection. Living in a digital age gives us the opportunity to stay connected, and conversations like the one between Dr. Loots and Koch remind us of the warmth that is still out there, and the possibilities that abound if we continue to reach out across the distance.



Above top: A scene from Jürg Koch's "The Printer's Tray" streamed as part of Digital JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience 2020
Above bottom: Jürg Koch's "The Printer's Tray" streamed as part of Digital JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience 2020
(photograph supplied by the artist)

Background: Koch performs his "The Printer's Tray" in isolation, under Covid-19 lockdown restrictions in Bern, Switzerland 2020

DANCING WITH MYSELF

BY EVELYN RAMÍREZ

THE STUDIO, IT SPARKED

BY SOPHIE BARKER

The Printer's Tray (2020) by Jürg Koch took place on the Digital JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience's **DANCE IN A DIGITAL AGE** platform.

Koch is a freelance dance artist based in Bern, Switzerland with a MA from the London Contemporary Dance School and 20 years of experience in the industry from performer to educator. *The Printer's Tray* is a compilation of different explorations that Koch started in 1999, and the six sections shown at JOMBA! were produced in self-isolation and filmed at the studio Freiform, Bern, in May 2020.

The main concept of *The Printer's Tray* is that each segment is like a souvenir or keepsake storage in a printer's tray and represents an individual memory or a story, but it also is part of a whole collection. As every souvenir can be completely different from others, each of the dance sections of this piece has its own very unique remarkable facet. Although the six fragments happen in the same space – a dance studio - the dancer, the music, and the dance style change; these variations are identifiable and distinguished by, amongst other devices, the music ranging from classical music, to electronic, to spoken words, and Koch's movements, from walking, to the use of isolation of arms movements, to recognisable contemporary choreography. However, there is definitely a sense of coherence and relation between these sections. The changes are dynamic feeding the viewers desire to spectator and curiosity; this is one of the strengths of the production – the structure and the engagement of the viewer.



Above and Background: Koch performs his "The Printer's Tray" in isolation, under Covid-19 lockdown restrictions in Bern, Switzerland 2020

The studio, it sparked.

The Printer's Tray,
produced in self isolation,
oh, how the self was at peace with him throughout the
phrases.

Choreographic pieces
hands that picked parts of the air
moving fast like summer in the seasons.

The four corners were touched with his every glance.

Reflected energy from his white coloured sheets whenever
he pranced.

Extended parallel lines and dips around the space,

the

visual art that rippled from his fingertips from place to
place

it

felt

safe.

The moving body appointed with turns,
trailed and glided his way through fate.

The presence and focus of Koch had our eyes amazed,
glazed.

Planting seeds in hearts, he flourished at pace.

The connection between the music and Koch was never
outweighed.

The musicality.

The passion.

Flowing across the floor,
couldn't help but follow his pattern.

He walked.

He reached.

He leaped across the onyx surface with his bare feet in re-
peat.

The musicality.

The passion.

Bouncing with every step,
couldn't help but follow his pattern.

Printed provoking thoughts out of instruments
sorted through the trays filled with pallets of devises and
brilliance.

The art forms are *fascinating*
with the body and sound there is so much relation-

a conversation

common ground.

The Printer's Tray -
it was
fascinating.

THE WHISPERS ECHOED THE ROOM NAKED

BY SOPHIE BARKER



Above and Background: Themba Mbuli performs in his "ManMade"

One man made this
thought provoking and creative.

In one space
the whispers echoed the room naked.

The burden of clothes
upon shelves
upon those
that waved the truth into the air.

Between the walls
there lied thoughts and questions that only the body and voice mentioned.

There was so much beauty within his extensions.

How his hands told a story

you felt it.

How he was honest with every stretch
as he stepped and rolled into spaces around the wooden floor
and when his eyes saw mine

it was felt in the core.

Thrown around vulnerability
with many colours and tees
the dance
it educated eyes attached to the screen.

Mbuli has opened doors into thoughts.

Covered every corner with his limbs
given movement that we can't ignore.

The information was raw.
It made us think.

What do we feel and what do we see?

What do we know and what type of person are we?

And In that one space
the whispers echoed the room naked

Man made this.

MANMADE PONDEERS PATERNAL LEGACIES

BY EVELYN RAMÍREZ

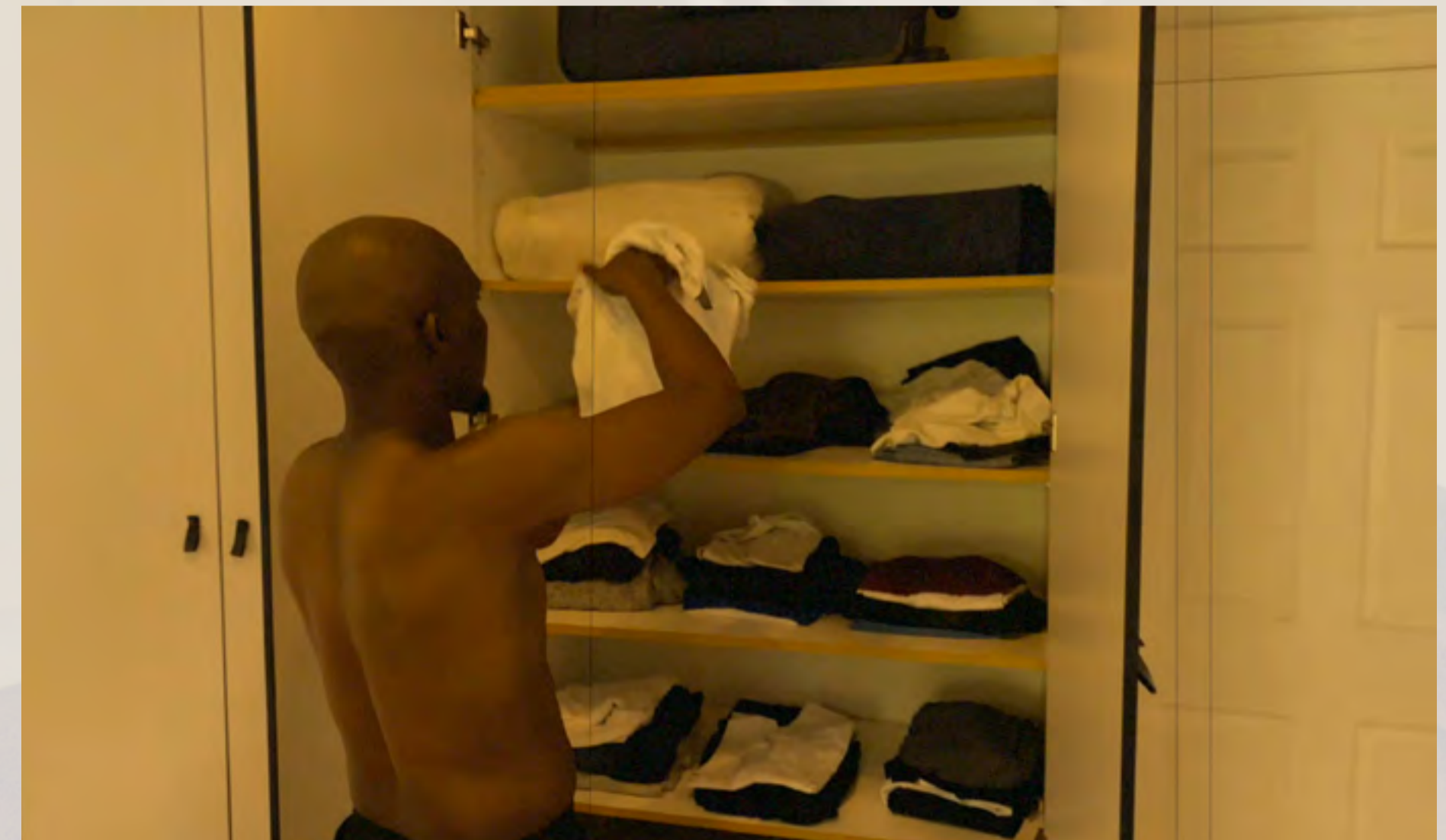


The profound dance film *ManMade* took place on the Digital JOMBA! **DANCE IN A DIGITAL AGE** platform on September 6, 2020. The nine minutes performance choreographed and danced by Themba Mbuli - co-founder of art company Broken Borders Arts Project - is a contemplation on his grandfather's death.

The Cape Town-based dance artist is known for pieces as *Dark Cell* (2010), which won the "Pick-of-the-Fringe" award at the FNB Dance Umbrella Festival in 2010, and he won the Standard Bank Young Artist Award Recipient in 2016. During Covid-19 lockdown, Mbuli created this film in memory of his grandfather. Taking inspiration from his grandfather's clothes which were still in the wardrobe a year after he passed, Mbuli's choreographic exploration shows us the process of acceptance through the use of the clothes as a metaphor.

The set of *ManMade* is a simple, almost empty room, except for a big white closet full of clothes. The set focuses the viewer only on the dancer and his interaction with the clothes. This is further anchored by the musical arrangement, multiple voices talking and whispering, captures the possible thoughts filling his mind. As in every dance film, the video editor has a considerable influence on the direction of the viewer's gaze and Tapiwa Mukanganise (videographer and editor) does an outstanding job with the use of filter and assembly of the clips. From the moment Mbuli opens the closet until he closes it, we witness his journey of fighting, understanding and final acceptance of his grandfather's passing.

We see him beating the clothes with a belt, we see him naked and exposed, we see him vulnerable inside the empty closet' we know the memory of his grandfather will always remain.



Above, Right and Background: Themba Mbuli performs in his "ManMade"

THE CLOTHES THAT MAKE THE MAN

BY JULIA WILSON (GUEST WRITER)

Themba Mbuli, winner of the 2016 Standard Bank Young Artist's Award, co-founder of Broken Borders Arts Project, and co-founder and Associate Artistic Director of Unmute Dance Company, brings to JOMBA! this year his first digital work, *ManMade*. It premiered on 6 September, the closing day of the Digital JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience, and it seems fitting that it should be released on this platform, at this time.

ManMade tackles legacy, inheritance, masculinity, Blackness, and the gender-based violence which has been exposed to the nation in all its horror during the Covid-19 lockdown.

The work is inspired by Mbuli's grandfather, who, having passed a year ago, has left his legacy in the form of his clothes. Each item holds memory, and through this thoughtful, stark and somewhat painful work, Mbuli investigates his own manhood, interrogating what he has inherited, and what he has accumulated through his life.

The work begins in a stark, unfurnished room with only the cupboards displayed. On the right, there are neatly folded and shelved clothes, while on the left, a nearly-nude, Black, male body is confined in the wardrobe. As the work evolves, Mbuli searches through the clothing, seemingly seeking something specific: he finds a white dress shirt and dons it. The film cuts to Mbuli wildly whipping the air with a belt, a shocking image after the intimacy of putting on his grandfather's shirt. A hooded figure, bound and suffocated by the clothes which have been thrown out of the cupboard, writhes on the floor, inducing a panic in the viewer that takes the breath away. The blind rage Mbuli embodies is unsustainable, and he begins to slide across the floor on discarded clothing, falling and flailing as he continues to whip the air. The soundtrack, composed of deep male voices chanting and whistling rhythmically builds in intensity until the tension breaks, and Mbuli continues to dress.

Fully dressed in a formal suit, Mbuli is pictured in a narrow closet, resembling a coffin. Film is used to defy gravity, as clothes fly from the floor out of frame, and Mbuli moves between the cupboard doors frantically before the scene returns to stillness. The clothing is in a pile while the shelves are empty and unlevelled.

The film hits a crescendo as Mbuli, nude, twists and contorts in a confined space. He is trapped as the chanting and shouting gets louder, until it breaks into panting. Mbuli lies naked at the bottom of the closet as the doors close on him, clothes scattered about.

In conversation with Dr Lliane Loots, Artistic Director of JOMBA!, Mbuli discusses clothing as having a life of their own in memory. During this bizarre era of Covid-19, in which we have been given time and space under lockdown to literally 'clean out our closets', Mbuli began to ask himself what luggage he has inherited.

Gender-based violence in South Africa, the second pandemic, as Mbuli calls it, has been exposed in stark light during this time. "The manhood I know is the manhood I've learned from him," Mbuli explains, and as he has unpacked his manhood, and the gentleness with which he has been taught by his grandfather to interact with those of the opposite sex, he has asked himself where he picked up the habits of not speaking out, of silence. Mbuli is in the act of addressing his own 'skeletons'.

What is so brave about Mbuli's work is his willingness to use himself as a mirror to society. As Dr. Loots put it, his work focuses on the personal, and in doing so becomes deeply political. For Mbuli, the first point of departure for a work is himself, and it must have meaning for him for it to have meaning for an audience. Though this means that his process is difficult, and asks him to go to dark places, and be vulnerable, healing and catharsis can be reached through the act of creation.

Mbuli's next project is with Unmute Dance Company, and entails a month-long digital festival that coincides with International Disability Month. With multiple residencies on the go, and involvement in so many valuable projects, it is inevitable that we will be seeing more of Mbuli's intentional, personal and deeply moving work soon.



Above: Themba Mbuli performs in his dance-film "ManMade" which premiered at Digital JOMBA! 2020 (photograph supplied by the artist)

Background: Themba Mbuli performs in his "ManMade" which premiered on the closing day of Digital JOMBA! 2020

JOMEN! DIGITAL FRINGE



VOICES FROM THE FRINGES OF AFRICA

BY RUTH ASIDI

17:57, with my phone perfectly propped up against an empty mug, the countdown on the screen draws to an end. Fringe! The 8th night of Digital JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience presents an open platform where eight selected dance-makers (Robert Ssempijja, Sabelo Cele, Pavishen Paideya, Phumlani Life Mndebele, Jena Woodroffe, Kaldi Makutike, Sifiso E. Kweyama and Julie Veronirina Iarisoa), from the continent of Africa are given the opportunity to showcase their digital dance films. As these defiant emerging and established artists set to take on our virtual stage, only three winning films will be shortlisted.

Gloved fingers walk along a brick wall. Masked, the dancer's body leans upon it. Red roofed houses tightly packed together. An alleyway so narrow, only one body could pass at any one time. As part of the **Digital JOMBA! Fringe**, first prize winner Robert Ssempijja, twists and contorts his body in ways that brings our attention to the limited space and reality that his and other bodies live in. In this Covid-stricken world where social distancing, working from home and the regular washing of hands is too easily thrown around as a 'one fit all' solution, *THE MYTH OF SELF ISOLATION* cries out for the intimate living conditions in Ugandan communities. Such privilege, not all can afford.

White chains, white paint contrasting deep dark-brown skin. Shackling, restraining, and yet the body continues to wrestle. Sabelo Cele's (*Rea*)-*Leaze Chains*, nominated second prize winner of the Fringe Programme, takes us on a journey from a black and white imprisoned indoor space to that of colour and openness, outdoor by the sea. An appreciation of colour arises when presented with it, along with the open-air as we watch Cele walk towards the sea, footprints left behind.

Exploring the theme of individuality and a refusal to be cramped into boxes of literal and metaphorical kinds, Pavishen Paideya's *AHAM-I Am* wins third place on the **Digital JOMBA! Fringe** stage. Fusing the traditional Indian classical dance form Bharatanatyam with contemporary dance expressions, what starts off as an orderly group composition breaks out into several duos and solos, shining light on themes of effeminacy, gender-based violence and discrimination. Precise hand gestures follow the release of floor work techniques, as *AHAM-I Am* thoughtfully pokes at the neatly drawn boundaries that seem to leave no room for those who choose differently.

And different indeed this night proves to be. The rapid rippling, lizard-like movements of *Thirst*, pulsating against the tall grey walls of the container within which the body is held. Fingers tensely spread apart. Screams that seem to produce no sound. Bare-skin, muscles taut, the body resists.

Resist, the body does. Restless, seeking comfort. Rigid, staccato movements reveal an internal battle. Limbs extend softly, and yet gentleness retreats once again. *Balanced Isolation*, a desire to ascend with the dancer arises, as we are left watching her spinning shadow on the ground.

Isolating different body parts, the dancer's head is covered with black balloons. An exploration between men, dead air and therapy. *Therapy Session*, captures the steamy sensation you get from breathing in your own air. Enclosed, even whilst being outdoors. Bodies fade into oblivion. When finally the balloons disappear, the dancer's body collapses.

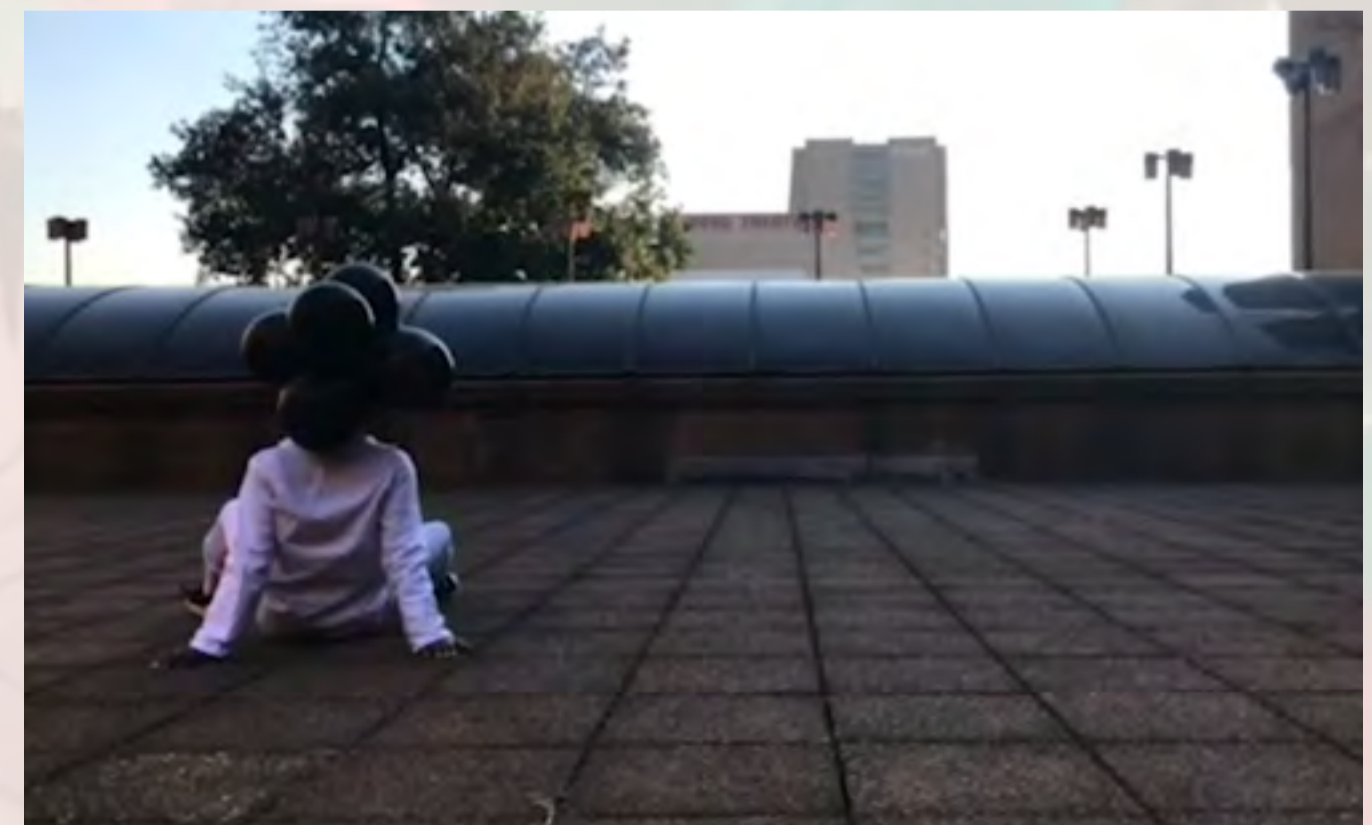
A body bent forward over a basin, water pours onto the back of its head, yielding, surrendering to the fall of water on skin. With grace and embrace arms, '*Like a river fill-up*', captures the outpouring of movement from a confined hollow-squared window.

The continuation of movement, as depicted by Julie Veronirina Iarisoa against the changing backdrop of different workplaces encapsulates the ongoing-ness of life. If anyone were to ask what one did during these time of crisis '...And during that time I was dancing...' she'd reply.



Above: Jena Woodroffe in her "Balanced Isolation"
Below: Kaldi Makutike in his "Therapy Session"

Background: A scene from Pavishen Paideya's "AHAM - I Am"



JOMBA! I-DIGITAL FRINGE -- UMBONO OSHUKUMISAYO KU-COVID-19

nguthobile maphanga
ihunyushwe ngulisa goldstone

I-JOMBA! Digital Fringe kwakuyi-cocktail yemvelo yokudlala yamafilimu wokudansa azungeza induku yeCovid-19. Ngifunde kwenye indawo ukuthi i-cocktail enhle inesixazululo esikhona kubhalansi phakathi kwezakhi zayo. Emisebenzini engu-8 enikeziwe, ukunakwa kuhloselwe indawo, ukufinyelela, amaqiniso, nemingcele.

Ngezinga elijwayelekile lekhono lokuhamba elingenacala, le misebenzi ikhombisa ubunzima bokuthi ubhadane lungasho ukuthini esimweni sase-Afrika. Izinto ezivamile zabenzi bomdanso ziyahlangana zizungeze izindonga namanzi, zingaki obhekene nazo? Futhi unamalini?

Njengomfula Ungenisa eyenziwe nguSifiso Kweyama osebenza emakhaya. Ukuqondwa okulula kwemithetho yale ndlela entsha yokuphila nokusizakala kwayo kunzima ukukuvumelanisa nokuqonda amasiko ekubhekaneni nokulahlekelwa. Cishe njengesimemezelo somsebenzi womphakathi usebenzisa umsindo nendawo ukusibeka ngasemfuleni.

(Rea)-Leaze Chains eyenziwe nguSabelo Cele ne*Therapy Session* kukaKaldi Makutike baphendukela ngaphakathi ukubhekana nokulimala kwengqondo kokuhlukunyezwa emzimbeni, ngokujule kakhulu kodwa ngokwezepolitiki ngokulinganayo. U Makutike usingenisa esimisweni sakhe seTherapy. Umphumela wezwi lakhe lokungena kalula lapho ehamba usinikeza thina, ababukeli bakhe, umuzwa wokuba semzimbeni wakhe naye, sabelana ngemicabango efanayo, ukungaqiniseki, nokungavikeleki. Umzuzu omuhle ongagadiwe wokuphulukiswa ngokuhlanganyela.

UCele usebenzisa isithombe esinamandla, ukudlala ngombala, nokumaka komzimba ukudlulisa umyalezo wakhe. Umehluko wamaketanga nalezo zephepha lasendlini yangasese, zombili ziphathwe ngezinga elifanayo lomthwalo ziveza ukuthi umuntu angaba buthakathaka kanjani. Isembozo esithungiwe ebusweni bakhe esenza umshayi wesigubhu angaboni futhi abe ngumuntu ongakwazi ukukhuluma ngenkathi ebeka ithempeli elimangazayo, kimi, izinto ezenza ukuthi *(Rea)-Leaze Chains* kube indawo efanelekayo yokukhetha indawo yesibili ye-"Pick-of-The-Fringe". Yindaba yethemba eveza okunye ukulandisa kokuphulukiswa kwabesilisa.

Thirst kukaPhumlani Life Mndebele kuvulwa ngomkhuleko weNkosi futhi umzimba wanamathela uhamba ekhoneni, ubuza umbuzo othi "kwenzekani uma uphuma kulolo donga?" Ukuboniswa kobudoda obenziwe, umbukiso wamandla, ukuphoqeelwa nokuphonswa okubonakala kungenamsebenzi kulo mzuzu. Ubonakala ememeza ngomzimba wakhe wonke, nokho lokho akusizi. Uhlala evalelekile, ubuyela ekhoneni lakhe.

Balanced Isolation kukajena Woodroffe isenzo esidelela ukufa. Njengoba ephakamisa phansi edonsa yedwa esikhaleni, ezizwa engazinzile futhi engavikelekile uyabamba futhi alenge kodwa akalokothi abe namaphutha.

I-AHAM - I Am kaPavishen Paideya ethathe indawo yesithathu ku-"Pick-of-the-Fringe", iyisibonisi esimibalabala sobuhle, ukwelashwa kanye nalokho okufihliwe ngemuva kwezindonga zasekhaya. Ihlelwe esontweni elizimele, iphawula ngemikhuba yobunikazi bobulili emphakathini waseNdiya. Ukuqoshwa, okugcwele ukukhanya kudala izinga lokuthula eliqhathaniswa nezikhathi zengxabano.

Amafilimu kaJulie Veronirina larisoa noRobert Ssempijja azwakala njengokuqhubeka komsebenzi womunye nomunye, zombili zinqamula izindawo ezinabantu eziqinisekisa ukusinda kwansuku zonke, kepha abadansi babonakala bengabonakali kubantu. Lapho uRobert Ssempijja's *THE MYTH OF SELF ISOLATION* ekhombisa ubuhlanya beCovid-19 imithetho yabantu abaningi abahlala kuleli zwekazi ngokubuza imibuzo ebukeka ngathi ayinakwa.

uJulie Veronirina larisoa's ... *And during that time I was dancing ...* kuveza umuntu osebenzisa amandla ngokugxuma, ukujikajika, nokuntengantenga okuqala phansi kube ukonga ngesikhala, ngaphandle kokulahlekelwa ukunyakaza. Abadansi bacishe babe yigciwane ngokungafani nabantu abadansa phakathi kwabo. Kulokhu kufunda kuba mnandi ukuthi uSsempijja nguyena kuphela ogqoke okokuvikela. Ukuhlangana kwakhe ngqo nezinselero zezehlalo nezombusazwe zemithethonqubo yezempilo nokuhamba kwakhe esikhaleni kumbeka endaweni yokuqala ku-"Pick-of-the-Fringe".

Izihloko zokulahleka, impilo yengqondo, amandla, ukukhetha, nokuvinjelwa kuhlangana ndawonye kulo mmeleli wesiphuzo esinamandla ngalesi sikhathi. Umuzwa wokungabonakali, njengokungathi isithako semfihlo, sihlala emisebenzini. Isitha esingabonakali sike sibe khona phakathi kwabantu abaqhubeka nemisebenzi yempilo yansuku zonke.

To read the English version of this review, click [here](#)



Background and Above: Julie Veronirina larisoa's "...And during that time I was dancing..." screened as part of the Digital Fringe platform at Digital JOMBA! 2020

JOMBA! I-DIGITAL FRINGE: UMZIMBA ODANSA OMNYAMA NGESIKHATHI SE-COVID-19

REGESORY KING

IHUNYUSHWE NGULISA GOLDSTONE

UKUGCINA AMAKHAMERA... ISENZO!

i-Covid-19 isishintshe ukujwayeleka kwempilo kwabaningi, kubandakanya nokuthi ababukeli bayayizwa kanjani imidlalo yeshashalazi. ULLiane Loots, umqondisi wobuciko weJOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience, yethule i-2020 JOMBA! Digital Fringe ngokusikhumbuza ukuthi ipulatifomu iyawaseke-la amaphimbo amasha, enikeza abenzi bomdanso abangawaziwa kangako amathuba okukhombisa imisebenzi yabo esigabeni sobungcweti.

uLoots ikhombise ukuthi noma ngabe kunezingqinamba nemikhawulo ubhadane lomhlaba luziveza nalo, iJOMBA! besisafuna ukukhulisa imisebenzi yabadansi abathembele kupulatifomu yabo yokuvez-wa. Ngaleso sizathu, bacele abaculi abancane nabasafufusa ukuthi baphakamise imisebenzi yedijithali yomkhosi kunalokho.

Ukwehlisa inani elikhulu lezethulo ezifanelekile, i-JOMBA! bathembele ebuchwepsheni babadansi abathathu abadumile — uTiny Mungwe (waseKapa), uSmangaliso Ngwenya (waseGoli), kanye noDa-vid April (waseGoli) - ukwenza iziphakamiso, bekhetha abaphezulu kwabayisishiyagalombili. Kulabo abakhethiwe, abathathu abafinyelela kowamanqamu bazobe sebethola imiklomelelo yemali encane yokubona impumelelo yabo.

Imisebenzi eyisishiyagalombili ekhethiwe isukela ezindabeni zomuntu kuya emibonweni egxile ezind-abeni zenhlalo nezepolitiki. Umdanso ngamunye wawunokuqabula kokuphelelwa yithemba, kung-abhekiseli ekuphelelweni yithemba kepha kusuka ebucayi bokukhombisa ukuthi yiziphi izinyanga zokuhlukaniswa yedwa okwenziwe; isidingo sokucabanga izindlela ezithokozisayo zokwenza ubuciko njengoba bexoxa izindaba zabo.

Emidansweni eyisishiyagalombili, emine yangidonsa iso kodwa emithathu yanamathela kimi.

SIKA... ISENZO!

uJulie Veronirina Iarisoa wenza umdanso wasina emcimbini wokugubha ...*And during that time I was dancing....* Iphazili elibukwayo elihamba lisuka endaweni yesehlakalo liye endaweni yesehlakalo, ularisoa udedele phambili ngasempumalanga nabantu abambalwa abangabambiqhaza abahlanza izingubo benza imisebenzi yabo yasekhaya ngemuva. u-Iarisoa akazange anake ukubukeka kwaban-tu emgwaqweni omatasa ngenkathi evula izingalo zakhe, enweba umlenze wakhe emzimbeni wakhe futhi ezungeza ngaphambi kokugxuma. ularisoa wayemele ukuphazamiseka njengoba ayegoqana nen-doda esondeza umgqomo wobhanana oluhlaza futhi ezulazula ngemuva kwamabhodwe namapani emakethe. Kusuka ezindaweni ngezindawo, ubedala injabulo yakhe njengoba umsindo womoya, aman-zi, ukuqhuma kwezimoto, ukushaywa kwamathuluzi nezingxoxo ngemuva bekusebenza njengomcu-lo wakhe. ularisoa wasina futhi wasina... futhi wakwenza ngendlela ejabulisayo – inkulumo eyaziswa kakhulu njengoba abesilisa nabesifazane abansundu abangenazikhali beqhubeka nokubulawa eMelika lapho ngimbuka khona. Umdanso kalarisoa ungikhohlisile. Futhi imizuzu emibili namasekhondi ay-ishumi nantathu, ngizinikeze imvume yokuba khona enjabulweni, ngijabulela injabulo yakhe.

SIKA... ISENZO!

Umsindo wokuqhaqha iminwe, noma mhlawumbe ama-shutter, ungimeme ngezindawo ezifushane ezibukhali zokuphefumula. Lowo-ke bekungumculo, umenzi womdanso nomdansi, uPhumlani Life Mndebele uphendulile emi ngezinyawo odongeni olumhlophe, enza konke okusemzimbeni wakhe kuhambe kancane ukusuka kolunye uhlangothi kuya kolunye. uMndebele wayesekhoni lekamelo efulathele ababukeli; umzimba wakhe wakhuluma nami buthule. Egqoke izikhindi ezimnyama nange-sibhakela esiqinile, uMndebele wadonsa izindololwane ngemuva kwakhe, ukuma kwakhe. Uhlaneke-zele ukunwetshwa kwesifuba sakhe, njengoba eguqukelana ngaphandle wabuyela kuye. Wayenobukhona beqhawe, esebenzisa umzimba wakhe njengesikhali — nesihlangu. Njalo ukuphenduka kwekhanda nokuncipha kwesibilini kwakuzwakala kungukusabela ekamelweni, sengathi kufakwe ikheji.

Akekho umuntu omnyama ophendula ngenjabulo embonweni wokuvallelwa.

Njengoba kunikezwe igama elithi *Thirst*, izenzo ezethusayo zikaMndebele, ezentukuthelo nezinqumayo, zivele sengathi ukhetha noma uzophendula kanjani. Ngaphandle kwaleyo ndawo enamatshe amhlophe, umzimba wakhe omnyama wabonisa ukuvukela. Ngazithola ngincika eqinisweni lokuthi umzimba wesilisa omnyama kade wabukelwa kuwo, wathandwa futhi umdlinzo ngamakholoni, noma ngabe wesatshwa.

Ngazizwa nginecala. Nginecala ngoba nami bengimfaka kulokho kwehliswa ngomqondo wami ovi-laphayo. Ngabheka ngaphesheya kwenyama yakhe... ngisabuka. uMndebele usebenzise izandla zakhe ukushaya udonga ngokungathi uzama ukuthola indawo engamakiwe ebusweni bayo ezomkhulula, kodwa akuphumelelanga. Waphenduka, wawela odongeni, wase ethula. Okuwukuphela kobufakazi bemizamo yakhe kwaba ngumzimba wakhe njengoba ephefumula.

SIKA ... ISENZO!

Selokhu ngabuka lemisebenzi, sekumenyenzelwe abaphumelele abathathu: Umdanso kaRobert Ssem-pijja ethi *THE MYTH OF SELF ISOLATION* bese kube i-(*Rea*)-*Leaze Chains* kaSabelo Cele nokaPavishen Paideya ethi *AHAM - I Am*. Bafanele ukuthola izindondo, kahle -imisebenzi esetshenziswayo. Futhi yize ekaSsempijja, *THE MYTH OF SELF ISOLATION* kwakuyincazelo enhle yokunqoba nge-Covid-19, uCele (*Rea*)-*Leaze Chains* wakhuluma nami kakhulu, njengoba isipho sakhe sazitshala engqondweni yami futhi sahlala.

Umlando wakhe wanikela ngamaketanga amhlophe. Imibhalo emhlophe emzimbeni wakhe omnyama. Mhlophe.

Amagama ezocansi, eyedwa, angaqhamuki, ukwamukelwa kanye nobuphofu, avele unomphela — uku-bonwa okuthusayo. Kodwa imibhalo yabamhlophe namaketanga amhlophe kwakungahambisani nok-uphuthuma komzimba kukaCele. Wanyakaza kwangathi usezinhlungwini, wagoqa umzimba wakhe ukuze azikhulule emaketangeni alesi sibopho. Ubeke amaketanga abonakala enesisindo entanyeni yakhe, enza umqolo oyisicaba ngomzimba wakhe osebenzayo. Akawile. UCele ubephethe. Amagama apendwe emzimbeni wakhe angikhumbuza indaba eyakhiwe yobumhlophe. Futhi njengokwakhiwa, ihlala icindezela.

SIKA... IZIKWELETI ZIJIKA!

Amajaji akhethe imisebenzi eminingi eveza ukungalingani, impilo ebungazwayo, ekhona ebumnyameni namasiko ahlonishwayo. I-Covid-19 isisiphoqecelele ukuba siqhelelene, kodwa futhi yaqhamuka nama-phimbo amasha — amaphimbo amasha edijithali. Uma i-Digital JOMBA! UFringe usifundise noma yini, ukuthi imizimba yethu ihamba ibalandisa izindaba, kokubili nasesikrinini.

Ukuphathwa kwale Dijithali Fringe kwakuyisivumelwano samathuba — ngisho nasekuhlukanisweni.

To read the English version of this review, click [here](#)



Above: Sabelo Cele's "(Rea)-Leaze Chains" was awarded second place in the "Pick-of-The-Fringe" selections

Background: Phumlani Life Mndebele performs his "Thirst" as part of the Digital JOMBA! Fringe

DIGITAL JOMBA! FRINGE TRANSCENDS AFRICAN BORDERS

BY GENESIS CELE



The JOMBA! Digital Fringe is a platform that gives new and upcoming artists specifically choreographers and dancers the opportunity to showcase their digital/dance films. The Fringe has always been an 'open application' platform for established South African dancers to try out new work, or for upcoming dancers to debut new work. However, due to the pandemic and the Fringe going online, JOMBA! Received close to 20 applications from all over Africa, including places like Madagascar, Nigeria, The DRC and Uganda.

Only eight of the submitted pieces were showcased on the Fringe platform, and the top three received cash prizes for their outstanding work. The expert adjudicating panel included David April, a director, choreographer and lobbyist in the realm of South African dance and performance, based in Gauteng; Tiny Mungwe, a South African film/ Tv producer based in Cape Town; and Smangaliso Ngwenya, a dancer, performer, writer, choreographer, videographer and editor based in Gauteng.

The winning performance piece came from Uganda's Robert Ssempijja. His piece, *THE MYTH OF SELF ISOLATION* spoke to the challenges of self-isolation in spaces with poor living conditions. He starts the piece dancing in a very narrow corridor between a house and a brick wall with the camera carefully directing the viewers eye to the bricks creating the wall and how they are each isolated by the cement that separates them. This speaks to confinement. It is impossible to self-isolate in spaces where, like the bricks, people live on top of each other. Ssempijja's piece speaks to how self-isolation is a privilege that not everyone can afford. Something as simple as washing one's hands or working from home is impossible for some due to the living conditions (largely on the continent of Africa) they find themselves in.

Ssempijja performs in a market place to show that even working from home isn't an option for people who work as street vendors, selling food and other goods at markets. His fluid movement language and astute message painted against a backdrop of poverty that ravages these spaces.

In second place was South Africa's Sabelo Cele. His piece *(Rea)-Leaze Chains* speaks to breaking free from whatever chains keep us mentally and physically enslaved. For most of the piece the video is in black and white, maybe as a metaphor of the colourless, trapped, spaces we find ourselves in. Written on Sabelo's body are some of the things that keep him chained such as poverty, sexuality, loneliness and wanting to be accepted by other people. He calls for people to firstly realise the chains that keep them bound and to break free from them as he does in the last series of shots, where he walks into the ocean, unchained, no words written on his body and living in full colour.

South Africa's Pavishen Paideyen came third with his piece *AHAM-I Am* that speaks to the prejudice that South African Indians face. The colour, the synchronicity of the performers, the choreography as well as the use of the camera to direct the audiences eye to what the choreographer wants them to see, was beautifully executed. There were truly great moments in the piece, one that particularly caught my eye was when one of the gender non-conforming dancers who seemed to identify with the LGBTQIA+ community was being forced to fit inside a box. Instead they break free and use the box as a stepping stone to dance on. This piece was an excellent way of showing the issues that the South African Indian communities face.

Uma ufuna ukufunda ukubukezwa yesiZulu yalo mkhosi, chofoza [la](#)

Above Top: Robert Ssempijja from Uganda takes the 2020 "Pick-of-the-Fringe" title

Above Bottom: Pavishen Paideya's "AHAM-I am" is placed as the third-prize winner for the 2020 "Pick-of-the-Fringe" awardees

Background: Second place "Pick-of-the-Fringe" was awarded to Sabelo Cele for his "(Rea)-Leaze Chains



THROUGH THE LENS

THE DANCE BEHIND CAPTURING DANCE PHOTOS: JOMBA! FESTIVAL'S "THROUGH THE LENS" GALLERY

BY JORDAN KUNKEL

For arts photographer Val Adamson, the trickiest part about this year's JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience moving online has been watching the works without taking photos. Having photographed the festival since its first season 22 years ago, Adamson has been the one person responsible for creating these snapshot archives of the artists and their works. This year, the JOMBA! team decided to integrate photography in a different way: a virtual photo gallery, **Through The Lens**, with photos selected by Adamson and festival director Dr. Lliane Loots spanning back to the festival's first year in 1998. The gallery was accessible on the JOMBA! website throughout the festival's duration—along with two videos of Adamson talking through her favorite photos in the gallery and conversing with Durban dance artist Musa Hlatshwayo.

As a writer and dance artist from the United States and a first-time audience member at the festival based in Durban, South Africa, I am an outsider to Adamson's work. Yet, immediately from scrolling through the gallery, I instantly appreciated the amount of action and personality in each photo. Her photos move. She captures dancers—halfway through a jump or kick, faces dramatic and wide-mouthed—at exactly the right moment before the artists transition to the next step.

So how does she do it? Years of practice, a love for dance and a few happy accidents. Adamson came to photography through a last-minute decision when applying to college. She came to dance photography through an unexpected job offer at the State Theatre in Pretoria and later the Playhouse Company in KwaZulu-Natal. She has since embraced whole-heartedly her role in the artistic process.

Adamson has internalised a sense of timing in dance that allows her to anticipate when a magic moment is going to happen on stage—a skill she has been honing for years. She's even learned the different time structures that define different dance styles.



Above Left: Steven Cohen performs his "Limping into the African Renaissance" at the 2000 edition of JOMBA!



Above Right: Nigerian dance company Ijodee perform their award winning "Ori", choreographed by Adedayo Liadi at the 2004 edition of JOMBA!

Background: A scene from Mark Hawkins' 1998 "I Looked Behind and He Was Drowning"

All images on this page are from Val Adamson's "Through the Lens" retrospective photo gallery for Digital JOMBA! 2020

"It's difficult to explain, but it's a timing thing based on how the body moves in different genres of dance," Adamson said. "I'm watching the dancers so closely that I can figure out that something is coming or they're gathering their body to do something—a jump or whatever. I often don't know what they're going to do; I press the button and hope it's something spectacular."

In the early years of the festival, Adamson would often shoot in black and white film, as it captured low stage lighting better. Since moving to digital cameras, the continually upgrading technology has allowed her to adapt to JOMBA! performances which she observed had grown more adventurous in their approach to movement, setting and stage elements over the years.

"The JOMBA! festival has gotten a lot more experimental over the years in that they're trying more interesting things. I think that's due in part to technology. I mean lighting itself has progressed so far over the years, so artists are able to do more interesting lighting," said Adamson. "And through the whole world opening up with the internet, people are exposed to more things, so the artists have gotten more adventurous with the works they create."

Adamson sees the future of photography moving towards risk-taking, noting Leslie Scott's creation on BODYART in 2019, "Hymn + Them." The work was presented in an intimate setting where Adamson could be close to the dancers while also capturing audience reactions in real time. The dancers wore red-flowered headpieces that covered their faces, so Adamson had to capture other elements to portray the personality of the piece. Much of the piece was lit solely by floor lamps, something that was easier to capture with current camera technology.



Above Left: Members of Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre perform in the site-specific "Paradise" curated by Jay Pather, at the KZNSA for the 2005 edition of JOMBA!

Above Centre: Desire Davids Performs her "Who is this Beneath my Skin" at the 2010 edition of JOMBA!

Above Right: Theatre Talipot from Reunion Islanda perform "Ma Ravan" by Philippe Pelen Baldini at the 2009 edition of JOMBA!

Adamson recognizes how instrumental her role is to documenting both the JOMBA! festival and the works of presenting artists. Even with the ability to document dance via film, Adamson pointed out how photographs have the power to show more of the details in a work because people tend to stare at the singular image for longer than a video, which is continually moving through different frames or images.

"With a photograph, you can take time to notice all of the details—the costume, the lighting, the props, everything. And it's always very important to keep a record of live performances, especially with festivals where there's no time to go in and do a pre-publicity shoot and then a dress rehearsal shoot. Instead, you have one opportunity to shoot the performance, and that's it," Adamson said.

As my conversation with Val went on, she continually turned the conversation back to the artists, even asking me about my own work at one point. Though she doesn't consider herself a dancer, she has never held back her admiration of dance artists. I believe that is what allows her to capture such stunning photographs.

"The thing that is so important when taking and editing a photo is trying to get people to appreciate everything that goes into these dance works," Adamson said. "Photographs can't necessarily show the years and years of training that a dancer has put in, but they can show you the idea that went into the piece, the lighting, the costume and the choreography. I mean so much goes into a dance work. It would be nice if people thought about everything that went into getting that shot—because I am just full of admiration for dancers and choreographers. They are very incredible people."

In her video conversation with Hlatshwayo, the two laugh over Adamson's tendency to sway along with the performers as she's photographing, surfacing the question: isn't her photography so captivating because Adamson, herself, dances?



Above Left: young dancers from Flatfoot Dance Company's "Project Dudlu Ntombi" perform at the 2013 Youth Fringe at Cato Manor's Wiggins Hall

Above Right: Jazz Art Dance Theatre perform in Sifiso E. Kweyama's "Cape of Ghosts" at the 2019 edition of JOMBA!



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Background: Bonwa Mbontsi performs his work "Testify" on the 2012 JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience's Fringe platform, photograph taken from Val Adamson's photographic retrospective



Musa Hlatshwayo's "Umthombi" premiered at JOMBA! 2004 (photograph by Val Adamson)