



# FESTIVAL TRANSAMÉRIQUES

6<sup>TH</sup> EDITION / MAY 24 – JUNE 9, 2012

## PRESS KIT

### LE CORPS EN QUESTION(S) /

EXHIBITION + DANCE / WORLD PREMIÈRE

MAY 29 + 30 + 31 + JUNE 1 + 2, 2012

**ISABELLE VAN GRIMDE**  
**VAN GRIMDE CORPS SECRETS**  
MONTRÉAL

*Press kits consist of material sent by the company that produces the show, original material and research conducted by the festival team.*

**LE CORPS EN QUESTIONS (S)**  
*(THE BODY IN QUESTION(S))*

PRODUCED BY **Van Grimde Corps Secrets**  
CURATOR AND CHOREOGRAPHY **Isabelle Van Grimde**  
ASSISTANT CHOREOGRAPHER **Soula Trougakos**  
PERFORMED BY **Marie Brassard + Sophie Breton + Robin Poitras + Soula Trougakos + Brian Webb**  
VISUAL AND MEDIA ARTISTS **Derek Besant + Brennan/Caulfield/Mills + Kate Craig + Nadia Myre + Marilène Oliver + Monique Régimbald-Zeiber**  
MUSIC **Thom Gossage**  
ARCHITECT AND SET DESIGN **Anick La Bissonnière**  
IN ASSOCIATION WITH **Éric O. Lacroix**  
LIGHTING DESIGN **Lucie Bazzo**  
VIDEO **Foumalade**  
ESSAYS **Dr Cristian Berco + Dr Dawna Gilchrist**  
VISUAL ARTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE **Louise Déry + Kitty Scott**

IN ASSOCIATION WITH **Brian Webb Dance Company (Edmonton)**  
COPRODUCTION **Festival TransAmériques + Brian Webb Dance Company + CanDance Canadian Network of Dance Presenters (Toronto) + Festival Danse Canada (Ottawa) + Centennial Theatre (Lennoxville) + University of Alberta**  
CREATIVE RESIDENCIES **The Banff Centre + Agora de la danse**  
CODIFFUSION **Galerie de l'UQAM**

## PRESS QUOTES

### ABOUT *BODIES TO BODIES I ET II*

« Isabelle Van Grimde fait littéralement vibrer les corps. Et les spectateurs. [...] Le travail sur la lumière, qui souvent échappe, se remarque ici tant il est délicat, harmonieux et jamais démonstratif. [...] Une danse en partage, voilà le spectacle d'Isabelle Van Grimde. À voir absolument. »

Gaël CALVEZ, *Le Républicain Lorrain*, 5 mars 2009

« Côté danse, une création très réussie. Les quatre danseurs maîtrisent parfaitement leurs corps, effectuant des mouvements tantôt langoureux, tantôt rapides, parfois en solitaires, parfois en couple ou à quatre. [...] Le coup de cœur revient tout de même à Soula Trougakos. C'est incroyable de voir à quel point une seule danseuse peut à elle seule créer un univers. Sensuelle, dynamique et d'une expression incroyable, c'est bien la première fois qu'une personne m'envoûte autant. »

Patrick White, *patwhite.com*, 10 mars 2010

### ABOUT *PERSPECTIVES MONTRÉAL*

« L'aventure engagée par Isabelle Van Grimde avec des femmes de théâtre et autres artistes a rappelé combien la mise en scène peut agir comme un révélateur pour la danse. Le dialogue sensible de Maris Brassard avec cet art du mouvement a ému, et l'impressionnante scénographie a fait rêver à un avenir où nos artistes auraient les moyens financiers de leurs ambitions. »

Fabienne Cabado, *Voir*, 7 juin 2007

“Here, the choice of beauty is manifest. A “designer” dance, always esthetic, always modeled towards perfection. [...] it is always with intense fluidity that this formal sensibility is danced. Van Grimde poeticized the dancing machine, calibrating it on “beauty” mode.”

Eve Lalonde, *Dfdanse*, May 27<sup>th</sup> 2007

## ABOUT THE CREATION

In each of her works, choreographer Isabelle Van Grimde attempts to uncover the secrets of the human body, evoking its numerous dimensions. She envisions each new piece as a mystery in action, keeping it alive by presenting it to the public in a context of open creation. Her collaborations with artists from other disciplines lead her to probe that mystery while enriching it, multiplying perceptions of the creation and its points of access. Driven by an unquenchable thirst for learning and an insatiable desire to break down the limits of her understanding, Isabelle Van Grimde has since 2004 researched perceptions of the body with many artists and intellectuals throughout the world.

The interviews compiled in this study, entitled *The Body in Question*, have created a complete choreographic corpus in which the very meaning of dance and gesture becomes more and more refined as our understanding of the human body gains in depth. The primal body of our origins and instincts enters into a dialogue with the body of the future, a sum of energetic vibrations subjected to the influences of an environment in perpetual mutation.

In offering this theoretical and gestural matter as a source of inspiration to visual and media artists, Isabelle Van Grimde takes on the role of an exhibit curator, and delves further into the transposition, the transformation and even the deconstruction of her choreographic materials, in order to enhance the theme of the body. Echoing the creations of the invited artists, five solos developed from the same materials inhabit the space of the exhibit, which is also named *The Body in Question*. Through their thoughts and writings, several authors, philosophers, historians and anthropologists broaden perspectives on the overall process.

From material body to conceptual body, from living organism to nanotechnology, the diverse viewpoints developed in this exhibit-creation aim to offer a unique experience to the visitor-spectator, an opportunity to open new pathways for their own perceptions of the body. The dance, the writings (presented on audio or media technology supports), the installations and the visual or media works echo each other, strain against each other, within an architectural framework that multiplies perspectives on the body - all the more so because the participating artists come from varied geographical and cultural backgrounds. The visual and sound environments, created by architect and set designer Anick La Bissonière and composer Thom Gossage, guide the path of the performers and visitor-spectators through the exhibit. The multiform dimension of this exhibit is reflected in its choreographic component, which diversifies perspectives on the body by its choice of dancers with contrasting profiles.

*The Body in Question(s)* exhibit will be presented for one-month stretches in several big Canadian cities, and will be accompanied by live performances during the first or last week of the exhibit. By bringing together more than twenty intellectuals and artists from various origins and disciplines, this exhibit-creation opens a window to the wealth and vitality of contemporary creation in Canada. By breaking down barriers between the arts, it also allows the different artistic milieus to benefit from the mingling of audiences brought together by such an event.

## INTERVIEW WITH ISABELLE VAN GRIMDE

**All the artists involved in *Corps en question(s)* were inspired by transcripts of interviews you conducted on the subject of the body plus several books on the subject, as well as excerpts from some of your previous work. What led you to collaborate with visual and multimedia artists?**

The questioning of the body that I pursue in my research has long been echoed and expressed in their work. In *Perspectives Montréal*, the pilot project for the series, visual artists were particularly well-suited to the task as they transposed and transformed my choreography. In this piece, they created work from the intellectual and choreographic source material I gave them. In parallel I created solo pieces in advance, which led to all sorts of questioning about my approach. Having living bodies as part of the exhibit calls everything into question, not the least of which is the relationship to the other elements. Are the solos there to enliven the other aspects? Is it now performance? No. I wanted all the component elements – choreography plus the visual, sculptural and written elements, the installations – to have equal weight. Given that they all emerged from the same breeding ground, the challenge was to seize and highlight whatever resonated. I called on the services of an architect to design a space that would facilitate a conversation between the component elements, bringing to the fore the links connecting them and adding layers of possible perceptions.

The context of the exhibit also turns upside down the notion of time in the performing arts, where pieces are conceived for a captive audience, with a beginning, a middle, a climax followed by moments of calm, etc. Here the spectator can arrive and leave at any time during the solo. From the idea of cyclical time where things are repeated in a loop, I came to the idea of holographic time with solos where each component encompasses the whole. The spectator should be able to grasp the essence of the piece within a few seconds. It makes for a very interesting link to new visions of the body that the research on stem cells offers, which suggests that we will soon be able to reproduce an entire organism using only a single one of its cells.

**If this exhibit-show is a weaving together of disparate works where no single art form dominates, what is the significance of choreography in the exhibit when no dancers are present?**

The source of this protean piece is the body viewed, perceived and studied by the choreographer. In addition, every time that the solos are danced they leave traces. The exhibit is in movement during the week of performances because things have moved and shifted. When the dancers are not there, the spectator can see filmed solos that give movement to the exhibit in transient, deconstructed fashion. That concept is linked to one of the interviews where a person states that dance allows us to perceive things on the periphery of our field of vision. In my way of working with dancers, one finds that idea of perception on the edge of, and sometimes even outside, the field of vision. We are attempting to revive senses in the body that we no longer use today but that still exist, such as perceiving not only what faces you but also what's behind you. That changes the sort of presence required of the dancers, and is expressed in fleeting images that emerge unexpectedly at irregular rhythms so that they can't be anticipated.

The soundscape also contributes to making the space come alive by playing not only with barely perceptible sources of sound but also louder, more dominant sounds and by using a random, multi-layered broadcasting system. That favours the spectator's perception of snatches of conversations, of both the small and the big component elements, for a vivid evocation of each component space.

**Using dance soloists of varying ages and levels of professional experience must have forced you to adjust your working methods.**

All the performers learned the same basic material, but the solos were designed and developed based on what resonated in each person and on what seemed promising. The movement is a hybrid that combines primal choreography from works like *Bodies to Bodies* with material developed for *Les gestes*, a work in progress that deals with the body of the future. Using my vocabulary in a different manner leads to a very different visual result. I realized that in this context of proximity to all these pieces, the mere fact of being close to a dancer breathing into her hands placed on her ribcage is enormous. There is no projection here. The dancers bring us into their bodies, into their space, which is why I did a lot of cutting and purging.

By Fabienne CABADO  
Translated by Neil KROETSCH

## A FEW WORDS ABOUT ISABELLE VAN GRIMDE

### Dance – Encounters and Experiences

Known for the rich dialogue she establishes between dance and music, the choreographer Isabelle Van Grimde has above all a keen passion for the body. Focused on probing its mysteries since 1987, her early works bore titles such as *Au sommet de tes côtes*, *Par la peau du cœur* and *À l'échelle humaine*. In 1992 she named her company Van Grimde Corps Secrets and, starting in 2004, began extensive interviews and research on the body that influenced her work, giving rise here to the exhibit-show *Le corps en question(s)*. The desire in this piece to multiply possible perceptions of the body is one of the elements that lie at the very heart of her artistic approach, as seen in the previous pieces *Trois vues d'un secret*, *Les chemins de traverse I* and *Vortex*. Similarly, her desire to open up avenues of perception has led to her choice since 2005 to present her pieces as open-ended affairs and often as part of interdisciplinary collaborations. She thus worked with artists from other disciplines in *Perspectives Montréal* (FTA, 2009) and with scientists in *Duo pour un violoncelle et un danseur* and *Les gestes*, where digital musical instruments became extensions of the body.

F.C.

## CREATORS' BIOGRAPHIES

### ISABELLE VAN GRIMDE – choreographer and curator

As a dancer, a choreographer, a founder and Artistic Director of her Montreal-based company, Van Grimde Corps Secrets, Isabelle Van Grimde has led an international career marked by interdisciplinary collaborations, furthering the horizons of contemporary dance and perceptions of the body and the potential of live performance. Her work is characterized by the quality of the dialogue between dance and music that she has developed over the years. As a cosmopolitan artist-researcher, she is regularly invited to speak of her fundamental and theoretical researches on the body at lectures and in front of international research groups. She has also published writings on the topic. In 2011 the Canada Council for the Arts awarded her the Jacqueline Lemieux Prize for her contribution to the enrichment of artistic life in Canada and abroad.

#### **A life between dance and music**

Born and raised in Belgium, Isabelle Van Grimde began studying ballet at four and took part in her first piano competitions by the time she was eight. In the 1970s, she studied art history, trained intensively in dance and created her first choreographies – partly for music videos. At 18, she attracted the attention of teachers from the Alvin Ailey Dance Center and received a scholarship to attend their school. While pursuing her training and artistic development between New York and Montreal, she met composer Thom Gossage (who would then become her life partner), and encountered musical approaches which completely transformed her vision of music. Her first stage works created in Quebec vouch for her desire to work in close collaboration with composers. Today she is at the avant-garde of research linking dance and music.

#### **An eclectic training**

Over the years, guided by teachers from leading companies and schools such as the Royal Ballet of London, Ballets du 20e Siècle, MUDRA, The Alvin Ailey Dance Center, or LADMMI, Isabelle Van Grimde has added jazz, modern and contemporary styles to her knowledge of classical ballet, as well as the Horton, Graham, Limon, Cunningham and Bartenieff techniques. In the 2000s, delving deeper into her understanding of the body, she becomes interested in Pilates and biomechanics and initiated a major research project entitled *The body in question*.

### **A career between two continents**

While the 1970s were marked by round-trips between Brussels and Paris, the next decade took place between North America and Europe, where Isabelle Van Grimde established herself as a professional dancer. Although she eventually chose Montreal as her home base, establishing her company there in 1992, she has benefited since 1996 from creation residencies in Europe, where she teaches regularly. In 2009, Van Grimde Corps Secrets became the first Canadian company to be associated for a full year with the Arsenal of Metz, an extraordinary patrimonial and cultural institution known for the high quality of its program and the acoustics of its halls.

### **A firm anchoring in Quebec**

Isabelle Van Grimde's anchoring in Canada was consolidated by her participation, in 1989, in founding Studio 303, a centre for training, research and dissemination contributing to the evolution of contemporary dance in Quebec. There she taught contemporary technique and worked as a co-director until 1991. She is regularly invited to conduct trainings, workshops and master classes, and has taught at several major Quebec institutions such as l'École Supérieure de Ballet du Québec, LADMMI - School of Contemporary Dance, and Concordia University, where she gave classes in creative process and choreography for 10 years.

A highly involved member of her community, she has served on various juries and Boards of Directors, and taken part in several focus groups. She has served on the Regroupement québécois de la danse Board of Directors since 2008 and played an active part in the elaboration of the Master Plan for professional dance in Quebec 2010-2011.

Concurrently with these various engagements, she has developed strong ties over the years with such partners as Danse-Cité, Nouvel Ensemble Moderne, Ensemble Contemporain de Montréal, Agora de la danse, Centennial Theatre, Festival TransAmériques and McGill University's Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Music Media and Technology (CIRMMT)

### **Field notes**

Author of some thirty choreographic works, Isabelle Van Grimde created her first work in Montreal in 1987, initiating a cycle in which she explored more theatrical aspects of the dancing body. *Secrets vestiges*, *Au sommet de tes côtes* and *Par la peau du cœur* are representative of this period. In 1992, she founded the company Van Grimde Corps Secrets. Four years later, with *À l'échelle humaine*, her research became more focused on the power of physicality and on communication through the body. It was then that her first creation residencies in Europe would propel her onto the international stage.

In 1998, a commission in the Netherlands for the creation of *May All Your Storms Be Weathered* marked a major shift in Isabelle Van Grimde's artistic trajectory: after which, she could no longer conceive of choreographic art without the presence of musicians on stage. In 2003, her physical approach became more visceral and sensitive with *Saetta*. Both animal-like and refined, her gestural language is now firmly rooted in the elementary drives and tensions of the body.

Isabelle Van Grimde initiated another major shift in 2005 with the *Chemins de traverse* series, choosing the principle of open creation to present her work. In these pieces, as in those of the *Vortex* series, the influence of the discoveries brought on by *The Body in Question* is felt in her choreographic vocabulary.

In 2007, with *Perspectives Montréal*, she extended the scope of her multidisciplinary collaborations by working with creators in the fields of architecture, the visual arts, theatre and music. This is an experience she has since decided to expand on, in a new work that is currently in gestation. As for the dialogue between dance and music, it continues to grow over time, most notably through a fruitful association with CIRMMT, Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Music Media and Technology and with the Schulich School of Music of McGill University. This collaboration has already led to the development of digital musical instruments that can be used by the dancers onstage, and to the creation of *Duo pour un violoncelle et un danseur*. It continues today in a project entitled *Les gestes*.

## **THOM GOSSAGE** – composer

Thom Gossage participated in numerous recordings during his career as a composer and drummer/percussionist. He also directs his critically acclaimed group Other Voices, who recorded their fifth disc in 2010. His multiple collaborations with renowned musicians and his work with contemporary dance demonstrate his willingness to stretch the boundaries of his own artistic practice.

As a long term collaborator of Van Grimde Corps Secrets, Thom Gossage contributed as a composer and musical director artistic consultant on over ten dance pieces performed in Europe and North America. He recently completed a BBC recording in London, England, with Tom Arthurs, and a tour/recording in Berlin, Germany, with Miles Perkin, Benoit Delbecq and Tom Arthurs.

Thom is currently involved with the creative musical projects of Thom Gossage Other Voices, Van Grimde Corps Secrets (*Les Chemins de traverse*, *The Body in Question(s)*, *Bodies to Bodies III*), Steve Raegele's Last century, Les Tourneurs, The Frank Lozano Quartet, The Eric Hove Trio, Tom Arthurs with Benoit Delbecq, Thom Gossage, and Miles Perkin, The Michel Heroux trio, as well as Catherine Potter and the Duniya Project.

## **ANICK LA BISSONNIÈRE** – architect and scenographer

After studying architecture in Montreal and Lausanne, Anick La Bissonnière began her career at the Odile Decq Agency in Paris. She then collaborated in developing almost fifty performing arts venue projects for Trizart in Montreal. In parallel with her work as an architect, she quickly developed an expertise as a scenographer for museums and urban events. Starting in 1999, she developed a privileged relationship with theatre director Brigitte Haentjens with whom she has created over ten critically and publicly acclaimed productions. While she has collaborated primarily for theatre, she now works with dance companies, including Van Grimde Corps Secrets *Perspectives Canada*, variety shows and television.

A finalist for the prestigious Siminovitch Prize in 2006 and 2009, she was honoured among the world's elite at the Prague Quadrennial. She began teaching architecture at University of Montreal's master's program a few years ago.

## MARILÈNE OLIVER – visual artist

Marilène Oliver works at a crossroads somewhere between new digital technologies, traditional print and sculpture, with her finished objects bridging the virtual and the real worlds. She works with the body translated into data form in order to understand how it has become ‘unfleshed’, hoping to understand who or what it has become. To this end she uses various scanning technologies, such as MRI and PET, to reclaim the interior of the body and create works that let us materially contemplate our increasingly digitized selves.

Marilène Oliver was born in the UK in 1977. Oliver studied Fine Art at Central Saint Martins and then at the Royal College of Art. Oliver has exhibited widely in the UK and Europe in both private and public galleries including the Victoria and Albert Museum, Royal Academy, Frissarias Museum (Greece) and Kunsthalle Ahlen (Germany) and Casino Luxembourg (Luxembourg). Her work is held in a number of private collections around the world as well as a number of public collections such as The Wellcome Trust and the Victoria and Albert Museum.

“For *The Body in Question(s)* I would hope to realize an idea that has been developing over a number of years, which is to facilitate a ‘real’ body – in this case a dancer, to interact with their digitized body/doppelganger in a real, live, analogue space in the presence of a live audience. Radiology would be used to create ‘copies’ of the dancers that would exist both as an interactive projection (that would fade from skin to bone and back again with the movements of the dancer) and a sculpture that could be ‘opened’ and ‘closed’ to reveal the scanned insides of dancer.”

## KATE CRAIG – visual artist

Kate Craig (1947-2002) was born in Victoria, British Columbia. As a founding director of the Vancouver artist-run centre The Western Front Society, Craig initiated the centre's artist-in-residence program and was instrumental in producing video works for a number of the Front's visiting artists.

The quality of her video and performance as well as her commitment to the arts community made Craig a major video art figure in Canada and internationally. Her work has been presented at venues throughout North America, Europe and Asia. Craig's attention to surface — as seen in her depictions of the human body, the porous face of a rock, the shimmering surface of a body of water or her investigation of the boundary between the contemplative space of the gallery and the structured chaos of the surrounding urban landscape — is central to her art.

In *Delicate Issue*, Kate Craig scrutinizes her body's orifices and dwells on its expanses of skin peppered with wrinkles, blotches and hair. The viewer's relationship to the female body, presented as a surface, is called into question by the words spoken by the artist. Her systematic exploration of her own body, as recorded on video, is her way of tackling the equivocal subject of female identity and attitudes towards women's roles, issues that bring us into the sphere of feminism. Such close-up observation signals a lack of distance and at times causes us to lose our bearings, so that everything is deformed and disfigured. The body as a site of affirmation and identity appears piecemeal, becoming a fragmented entity.

## **BRENNAN/CAULFIELD/MILLS – visuals artists**

Blair Brennan, Sean Caulfield, and Royden Mills have extensive careers exhibiting prints, drawings and sculptures nationally and internationally including: Recent Prints, Yanagisawa Gallery, Saitama, Japan; The Alberta Biennial of Contemporary Art 2002, The Edmonton Art Gallery, Edmonton/ The Nickle Arts Museum, Calgary, Alberta; The 14th Seoul Space International Print Biennial, Seoul Museum of Art, Seoul, Korea, and the Arlington Heights Sculpture Park Exhibition, Chicago, U.S.A., among many others.

Recently they have begun to work collaboratively creating installations and drawings. For example Caulfield and Mills completed *Through Destinations*, for the Imagining Science exhibition at the Art Gallery of Alberta (2009). This installation work is a visually engaging environment that refers to both mechanistic and naturalistic forms in order to explore themes of mutation, metamorphosis and biology/technology dichotomies. Although their work was inspired from the history of scientific technology and illustration for inspiration, its merging of mechanistic and organic languages intends to direct viewers towards a contemporary context in which advancements in technology are rapidly changing our relationship to the natural world, biology, and our own bodies.

Brennan/Caulfield/Mills are building on this creative research by creating an installation that will bring together two-dimensional drawing elements with a set of sculptural forms/tools, which viewers (dancers) can interact. The artists are interested in creating a work that will fluctuate between having a whimsical, absurd quality, while also feeling somber and oppressive qualities that reflect the feelings of hope and anxiety that society often feels in relation to the possible impacts of new technology on our bodies and the environment. Similarly the shift between the drawn and sculptural form, as well as the layered quality of the work, will remind viewers of continually changing nature of scientific research in which the discoveries of the past, influenced by a wide range of social and cultural factors, are continually being re-interpreted and re-written.

## NADIA MYRE – visual artist

Nadia Myre is a multi-disciplinary visual artist from Montreal (Quebec), whose work is gaining critical acclaim. For over a decade she has explored notions of longing and loss, as well as the incessant human drive to reconcile the two.

Throughout her work, the subtle presence of the body threads underlying connections between different media. In video, her body performs for the camera. In her 2D and 3D work, the body is implied by handwork (beading, sewing, felting), titled ‘portraits’, first person proclamations, and viewer participatory projects. Between 2000-2002, Myre beaded over all 56 pages of the annotated Indian Act with the help of more than 200 participants. In 2005, she started *The Scar Project*, an ongoing ‘open lab’ where viewers participate by sewing their scars – real or symbolic – onto stretched canvases and writing their ‘scar stories’ on paper. To date she has a collection of over 500 canvases and accompanying texts.

Nadia’s work has been exhibited nationally and internationally in such places as New York, London, France, Shanghai, and Australia. Recent solo exhibitions include *Scar Tissue*, Smithsonian Institute National Museum of the American Indian, Gustav Heye Center, New York (2010), and *Landscape of Sorrow and Other New Work*, Art Mûr, Montreal (2009), and *Skin Deep or Poetry for the Blind*, Union Gallery, Queen’s University, Kingston (2005). She has received accolades from the New York Times and Le Devoir, as well as features in ARTnews, Parachute, Canadian Art, C Magazine and Monopol. Her work is found in numerous collections including: Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, Canada Council Art Bank, Canadian Museum of Civilization, Eiteljorg Museum, Fonds Régional d’Art Contemporain (FRAC) de Lorraine, Loto-Quebec, MacKenzie Art Gallery, Montreal Museum of Archeology and History, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal, Musée National des Beaux-Arts du Québec, National Gallery of Canada, and Smithsonian Institute National Museum of American Indian.

“I am excited to have been chosen as a guest artist for the multi-disciplinary exhibition initiated by celebrated dancer/choreographer Isabelle Van Grimde. In my own work, I recognize the presence of the body as the underlying connection between media, and I am eager to further this exploration with the material Isabelle has provided me. As a point of departure, I propose to transform *Wish* (a 12m video I created in 2002) into a sculptural installation that has a direct relationship to the body. By enhancing *Wish*’s corporality I hope distill some of the key concepts mined from the extensive research Van Grimde has conducted over the last decade.”

## **DEREK BESANT** – visual artist

Derek Michael Besant is well known for his unorthodox use of materials and technology in creating exhibitions, installations and collaborations as a Canadian artist. The hybrid forms he realizes often include soundtracks that relate to his themes of memory, language, and the body as metaphor.

The dislocation of the figure often haunts his imagery, whether he explores the themes of Sleep, Dreams, Migration, Forgetting, Falling, Silence, Reflection or Submersion. The physical / psyche balance is always in question in Besant's projects, from his illusion in the form of a 50 foot high mural of a pinned veil on a building façade, a transported 115 foot high Waterfall to the heart of Toronto's Banking District, two mammoth steel chairs balanced on one another or a stretch of prairie sky arching over six lanes of traffic; his public art pieces always take on their own life within the setting they are integrated into. Besant's exhibitions in museums are often constructed around the ephemeral underpinnings of a concept without answers... only questions. Figures blur into oblivion, fall out of reach into nothing, leave their impressions in unmade motel bed sheets or sink below surfaces in poetic choreographed movements accompanied by strange soundscapes. These audio works including voice patterns reconstructed as water, train stations and freeways from London to Tokyo, bird and insect territorial calls erased by wind, or overheard partial phone conversations. But there is always a connection to the tactile materiality and the breath of whatever subtle gestures are investigated in his work.

"My work regards the human body to be considered as a land mass within a body of water. I position the figures not so much based on who they are, but what they might be as topographies: shores, tide lines, shallows, currents, undertows, depths and corrosions.

I build a psychological portrait of the individual within the theme, translated as a description of water (clear, centered, serene, disturbed, scattered, distorted, warped, elongated, magnified, etc). Each image is a reflection, or possibly a refraction of the subject, the person and the essence of a pure distilled persona."

## MONIQUE RÉGIMBALD-ZEIBER – visual artist

Artist Monique Régimbald-Zeiber lives and works in Montreal where she has been teaching at Université du Québec à Montréal's École des arts visuels et médiatiques since 1992. For more than twenty years, she has been developing an approach that examines the condition of women by questioning painting's role in the construction of perceptions and history. By using skin as a metaphor and an ideal surface for a last account of life, the question of the body imposed itself in her work.

Her works are part of various collections, including those of the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal and the Galerie de l'Université du Québec à Montréal. They have been exhibited in Quebec, in Canada and in Europe. Her last solo exhibit, entitled *Éclats de Rome*, was presented at the La Nube di Oort gallery in Rome. In June 2010, the four works that comprise the *Grandes Nudités* series will be part of the Femmes artistes. *L'éclatement des frontières, 1965-2000 - Œuvres de la collection du Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec* exhibit in Quebec City. *The Body in Question(s)* interests her because, by allowing a crosspollination of the questions, images and concepts that concern the body as well as encouraging the uncommon connections and encounters that only science and the tools provided by new technologies can enable, the project can go beyond accepted representations. For these reasons, this exploration gives a glimpse of a possible renewal of thinking and gestures in art.

## MARIE BRASSARD – dancer

Marie Brassard studied at the Conservatoire d'Art Dramatique de Québec. For several years, her career was closely linked to theatre director Robert Lepage. As a member of his creative teams and performing onstage under his direction, she participated in the creation of many new stage and film works, most notably *La trilogie des dragons*, *Le polygraphe*, *Les sept branches de la Rivière Ota* and *La géométrie des miracles*.

In June 2001, while beginning to explore sound technology, she created her first solo, *Jimmy creature de rêve*, during the Festival de Théâtre des Amériques in Montreal. This enormously successful surreal black comedy toured numerous cities in Europe, America and Australia and had an exclusive engagement at La Bâtie 2007 in Geneva.

Also in 2001, Marie Brassard took on the role of artistic director at Infrarouge, a production company she founded with scenographer Simon Guilbault and administrator Michel Bernatchez. The company's mandate is to promote research and the use of new methods of creation in theatre through the integration of new technologies and collaboration with artists from diverse disciplines and backgrounds.

In June 2003, accompanied by musician Alexander McSween, French artist Cécile Babiole, actor Guy Trifiro, lighting designer Eric Fauque and scenographer Simon Guilbault, she created inspired by the themes of real estate development, exploitation and friendship entitled *La Noirceur*.

Her new solo project, entitled *Peepshow*, was created with composer and musician Alexander McSween. The English version premiered in Toronto in May 2005 and the French in June of the same year in Montreal. It has since toured several cities in Europe and made a considerable impact when it was presented at La Bâtie 2007. In 2007, she was invited by choreographer Isabelle Van Grimde to contribute to the creation, as one of the guest theater directors and a performer, of Van Grimde Corps Secrets' *Perspectives Montréal*.

## SOULA TROUGAKOS – dancer

Soula Trougakos started dancing at the age of three at the Academie de Ballet Classique de Montréal. She then joined L'Ecole Supérieure de Danse du Québec where she invested six full years to expanding her knowledge in all styles of dance. She integrated Le Jeune Ballet du Québec in 2000 where she danced under the direction of many international choreographers. She since has worked with companies such as Création Caféine, La [parenthèse], Rubberbandance Group, EzDanza, Fila 13, Liberamæ as well as, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal and Van Grimde Corps Secrets.

## **SOPHIE BRETON** – dancer

Movement has been a calling for Sophie since her youth. After several years of competitive gymnastics and classical dance studies at Regina Assumpta College, Sophie discovered contemporary dance, widening her horizons. With this new freedom and curiosity she enrolled at Ladmmi (*Les Ateliers de danse moderne de Montreal*), where she graduated in May 2008. Shortly thereafter she began dancing with Alan Lake in Québec, and for Geneviève Smith-Courtois and several other performance-style projects. Since then, she has worked with Frédéric Marier, Isabelle Van Grimde, Thierry Huard, Sasha Kleinplatz, and Virginie Brunelle while maintaining a schedule of teaching classical ballet and contemporary dance at Louise Lapierre Danse in Montreal. She is also collaborating with the Fondation Jean-Pierre Perreault in the remounting of *Joe* and *Rodolphe* with students from five dance schools across Canada, to be presented at the Canada Dance Festival in 2012.

## **ROBIN POITRAS** – dancer

Holding a Bachelor of Fine Arts honours degree in dance from Toronto's York University, she began her professional dance career in 1984 and has performed as a solo artist throughout Canada and Europe.

As co-founder and artistic director of Saskatchewan's New Dance Horizons, choreographer Robin Poitras has created a world of dance, filled with imagery and imagination. Through New Dance Horizons, she has not only entertained and introduced audiences to the artistry of movement, but has engaged them as well. In addition to its exciting repertoire, the company offers dance training, workshops and artist talks.

## **BRIAN WEBB** – dancer

Brian Webb graduated with distinction from the University of Alberta with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Theatre. He then moved to New York City, working with Eric Hawkins who had an influence on his early dance making. During the 1970's, Brian premiered many of his first dances with the Carol Conway Company in New York. Returning to Edmonton in 1979, he formed the Brian Webb Dance Company with his “company in residence” at Grant MacEwan College.

In 1986, Brian completed a Master of Fine Arts degree in Choreography at the California Institute of the Arts. He returned to Edmonton and began to create a solo dance theatre repertoire that presents a series of “self portraits” in collaboration with composers, writers, and visual artists. He has received three Interdisciplinary Project Grants from the Canada Council.

In 1995, Brian was awarded the Syncrude Award for Innovation in Artistic Direction, and in 1998 won the Telus Award for Arts of the Future (for *Project Desire: the mountains and the plains*). He was selected as an interdisciplinary artist in the 2000 Alberta Biennial of Contemporary Art. Brian is also the Artistic Producer of the Canada Dance Festival in Ottawa. He has been inducted into the Edmonton Cultural Hall of Fame (June 2002) and received the Queens Jubilee Medal (September 2002).

## **ÉRIC OLIVIER LACROIX** – scenographer assistant

Theatre consultant, Eric Olivier Lacroix has a degree in architecture at l'École d'ingénieurs de Genève and l'École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne (Switzerland). Since he arrived in Montreal in 1990, he has worked for various design and architecture firms and taught scenography at the National Theatre School. After working for Trizart Alliance, Go Multimedia and Cirque du Soleil (Complexes cirque), Eric specializes in the programming, design and construction of cultural spaces. He has been involved as a designer / artistic collaborator in several theatrical and museum projects, especially with architect / scenographer Anick la Bissonnière.

Convinced of the necessity of interdisciplinary fusion, Éric is keen to decompartmentalize approaches, facilitate encounters between new creators, and explore singular experiences in meaningful architectural spaces (In situ). The search for the simple gesture, delicate materiality, and a genuine poetic space is at the heart of his artistic preoccupations.

## LUCIE BAZZO – lighting designer

Lucie Bazzo has been designing lights for theater and dance for more than 20 years. She began her career with director Robert Lepage with *La Trilogie des dragons* and *Plaques tectoniques* for which she won the Critics Prize. During her vast and heralded career she has collaborated with numerous choreographers including Jean-Pierre Perreault, Danièle Desnoyers, Ginette Laurin, Lynda Gaudreau and Crystal Pite. In 1999, Lucie opened the Agora de la danse season with her personal project entitled *Luminosités Variables*, she also participated in *Espaces Dynamiques II*.

Recently she has actively re-established her work in theater by designing numerous creations such as *L'Inoublié*, *Le Rire de la mer*, *Les Reines*, *Visage Retrouvé*, *Couche avec moi*, *C'est l'hiver*, *My Name is Jean-Paul*, and *Sonate d'Automne*.

Lucie also does lighting for art exhibitions, including the exhibit on Mangas at Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec where she is a regular contributor), and John W. Waterhouse at the Musée des Beaux Arts de Montréal.

## FOUMALADE – video designer

Comprised of artists from cinema, photography and graphic design, Foumalade is an audiovisual creation studio serving the artistic community. They work with artists from diverse backgrounds to support their independent efforts and work in the spirit of rebellious, free, and liberating art.

Their work has been seen in several Youtheater pieces, including *Simon & the Egg*. In 2010, they worked with Melissa Auf der Maur to design the video environment for her tour *Out of Our Minds*. As collaborators of the Ensemble contemporain de Montréal (ECM+), they worked as video designers on the comic book opera *Les Aventures de Madame Merveille*, (2010) and the concerto series *Les Cinq As* (2011). Foumalade also figures prominently in *Souffle et réminiscence*, a recent installation by Jeannot Painchaud, presented at the Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal as part of the *Big Bang* exhibition.

## **Dr CRISTIAN BERCO**

Dr. Cristian Berco is Associate Professor in the History Department at Bishop's University. He also holds a Tier II Canada Research Chair in Social and Cultural Difference and coordinates the Crossing Borders Research Cluster. He has published extensively on gender, sexuality, and disease in early modern Spain. Currently, he is working on the body, gender and ethnicity in inquisitorial Spain with support from a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada grant.

## **Dr DAWNA GILCHRIST**

Dr. Dawna Gilchrist is a general internist and medical geneticist with an interest in the History of Medicine. Dr. Gilchrist is currently a Professor and assistant chair of the Department of Medical Genetics in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Alberta where she has been on staff since 1990.

Dr. Gilchrist defines herself as a clinician-teacher. Clinical interests include cancer genetics and genetic disorders of adult onset. Teaching interests include the approach to differential diagnosis, medical genetics, and the value of history of medicine to medical trainees.

In approaching her contribution to *The Body in Question(s)*, Dr. Gilchrist combined her understanding of medical genetics with an appreciation for the issues currently in discussion about human evolution.

## PRESENTATION / VAN GRIMDE CORPS SECRETS

In 1992, Isabelle Van Grimde established Van Grimde Corps Secrets. Since then over twenty works created, seven of which in the last three years. Its first creations explored more theatrical facets of the dancing body. These pieces, created through partnerships with Danse-Cité and les Rendez-vous du cinéma québécois, toured in several Canadian cities. They are *Secrets Vestiges*, *Au sommet de tes côtes* and the multimedia work *Par la peau du coeur*, which combined cinematography and choreography onstage.

Until 1996 to 1999, Isabelle Van Grimde focuses her work on the power of physicality and communication through the body with *À l'échelle humaine*. She is invited to Europe in the context of several creation residencies and co-productions: Charleroi Danse, the Leuven Klapstuk Centre, Dans in Kortrijk, Le Manège, Scène nationale de Maubeuge and Centre chorégraphique National de Rennes et de Bretagne. Propelled onto the international scene, Isabelle Van Grimde creates in Montreal and abroad: *May All Your Storms Be Weathered*, a commission from Netherlands' Erepijs Ensemble, a project pairing four composers with four choreographers from different countries ; *Maisons de poussière*, *A Thousand Parts-Inseparable* and *Three Views of a Secret*. These works position Van Grimde Corps Secrets into the ranks of Montreal's most visible dance companies.

Its repertoire is presented:

- In Montreal: Maisons de la Culture, Centaur Theatre, Salle Pierre-Mercure, Agora de la Danse
- In Europe: Arnhem, Nijmegen, Apeldoorn, Breda, Groeningen and Amsterdam (Netherlands); Maubeuge, Metz and Marseille (France); Antwerp, Charleroi and Liège (Belgium); Potsdam, Leipzig, Dresden, Ludwigshaven (Germany); Warsaw and Lublin (Poland) and finally Bratislava (Slovakia).

### 2000 Choreography-concerts

Isabelle Van Grimde directs her creation process towards the search for a new dialogue with contemporary music, integrating the musicians onstage and using bodies and sounds to recreate the space (*Apocryphal Graffiti*, *Trois vues d'un secret*). With this project, the choreographer undertakes a fascinating exercise in the integration of musicians onstage, reflecting seriously about the impact of music on her work : *Erosio*, a choreography-concert project initiated by saxophonist Rémi Bolduc.

In 2003, in collaboration with French composer Marie-Hélène Fournier and inspired by the symbolism of the horse, *Saetta* ("arrow" in Italian, but also Sagittarius) is a piece which explores the precision of movement, of trajectory. In 2004, Isabelle Van Grimde begins interviews for the research project *Le corps en questions* (*The body in question*).

In 2006, *Vortex*, is a pivotal work containing new approaches to the body, the scenic environment, and the relationship with the audience. It also initiates the exploration of open creation, and therefore of a different relationship to the structure of the piece and to the work with the dancers, who share the stage with NEM musicians and their conductor. She created three new versions of *Les chemins de traverse* and *Perspectives Montréal*, co-produced by the Festival TransAmériques and the Schouwburg in Arnhem, and created in collaboration with theatre directors Marie Brassard, Martine Beaulne, Dominique Leduc and Alice Ronfard, painter John Brown and video artist Martin Lemieux, is in continuity with this process.

In 2009, *Bodies to Bodies – Les chemins de traverse Metz I, II and III* was created while Van Grimde Corps Secrets was Associate company at the prestigious Arsenal de Metz (France), the work has been presented in Metz, Arhem, Montreal, Lennoxville and Bruges. As part of its role as Associate company, Van Grimde Corps Secrets created a series of cultural outreach activities in dance and music involving the Arsenal's partner institutions.

## A FEW SHOWS

<i>À l'échelle humaine</i>	1996
<i>May All Your Storms Be Weathered</i>	1999
<i>Maisons de poussière</i>	2000
<i>Trois vues d'un secret &amp; Pour quatre corps et mille parts inséparables</i>	2001
<i>Érosio</i>	2002
<i>Saetta</i>	2003
<i>Chemins de traverse I, II</i>	2005
<i>Vortex</i>	2006
<i>Chemins de traverse III, IV, V</i>	2006
<i>Perspectives-Montréal</i> (coproduction du <b>Festival TransAmériques</b> )	2007
<i>Duo pour un danseur et un violoncelle</i>	2008
<i>Bodies to Bodies I et II</i>	2009
<i>Bodies to Bodies III</i> (Les chemins de traverse – METZ)	2010