

THE BODY IN ART

The focus of the present issue of *Divadelní revue* is on the body and its broad-spectrum grasp in performing arts. The body is a support, a tool, a concept, a methodology or simply a challenge for its various thematisation and reflection. Through its embedding in specific existential, cultural and socio-political contexts, it always serves us as a significant seismograph of identities, relationships and the times. In current discourse in the Humanities, the body is seen as a central carrier of specific experience and becomes an important resource for research related to questions of history, memory and knowledge. At the same time, our body has always been confronted with the various mechanisms, constructs, precarisations and categorisations to which human civilisation subjects it. This reciprocal relationship between the human and the body is also the connecting thread of all the diverse contributions in this issue.

The section Studies brings together interdisciplinary body-oriented research that is significant in its innovative approach to the topics under study and, using progressive methodological concepts, shows the dynamic transformations of views of the body due to cultural or institutional framings that can change depending on time and place. Miriam Althammer presents the body in relation to its multilayered history as a mobile bodily archive, which she makes present and archaeologically investigates as fluid *relict* using the method of *oral history*. She also comes up with an inspiring method for this type of research, in which she views the transcripts of interviews as scores – material for future re-construction and re-actualisation. With his professional expertise, Josef Bartoš links the possibilities

of dance research with the field of sport psychology, from which he adopts established methods related to mental health support. He then applies them in his scientific research, which emphasises self-criticism and also self-compassion as key factors of mental health care among students of dance conservatories in the Czech Republic. Eliška Raiterová uses interdisciplinary knowledge from the fields of social psychology, cognitive sciences, as well as religious studies in connection with autopsy in her study. She explores the relationship between contemporary participatory performances and prosocial behaviour, focusing on the effects of shared experiences such as consumption, walking, dancing and collaborative creation. Through the prism of corporeality, Vít Zeman looks at the format of authorial reading, specifically the psychosomatic concept of Ivan Vyskočil, and through his philosophical analysis and interpretation, he subsequently re-discovers the immanent potential of the somatic dimension of this format. Amálie Bulandrová enters this spectrum with her study on Růžena Vacková, in which she reflects on the theoretical and historical legacy of the professor of archaeology, art history and aesthetics, and subjects to a detailed analysis the variants of embodiment of her personality and ideas in two contemporary domestic stage productions.

In the following sections, the body and corporeality are viewed through the prism of their *variedness* (not colonising otherness). The specificity of diverse bodies is seen as an underused, but even more unique value that should be further developed and supported. Jitka Vrbková and Vendula Kacetlová point to the potential of artistic groups integrating people with Down syndrome or other mental handicaps into their work. Ester Trčková and Jitka Pavlišová, against the backdrop of the current discussion on the issue of *ageing*, map the benefits that the transgenerational interconnection of a younger

generation of dancers-performers with seniors brings to the creative process.

Touch or physical closeness as an inspirational source of the creative process is the subject of Petra Kolářová's article on Étienne Decroux's artistic method; participatory-oriented performances are introduced in the aforementioned study by Eliška Raiterová. This perspective is also immanent in Petra Ježková's interview with Jana Preková, a scenographer and teacher – among others, co-founder of the Department of Stage Design at JAMU and the Studio of Body Design at the Brno University of Technology.

The body as an instrument of subversion against the existing socio-political apparatus and its mechanisms or even as a tool of self-decentralisation is illustrated by the case studies of Andrijana Trpković, Terezie Šípová and Pavlína Drnková. Trpković focuses on the provocative work of the Austrian choreographer and performer Florentina Holzinger and explores how Holzinger, through her radical works, challenges not only traditional perceptions of the female body, but normative views of the human body in general. Šípová examines the aspects of the body and corporeality in Sophie Treadwell's 1928 expressionist drama *Machinal* through American theorist Judith Butler's reflections on the performative construction of sex and gender. She also illuminates the author's critical insight into the workings of contemporary patriarchal society and the mechanisms by which the female body and female identity were constructed. Šípová's contribution also includes the publishing of her translation of *Machinal*, which is the first translation of this drama into Czech ever. Pavlína Drnková goes even further in pursuing subversive artistic strategies in relation to the human body, towards its deanthropocentrism. In her overview study, she summarises current philosophical posthumanist concepts and traces their

application and further development in contemporary performative practice.

Unique insights, in which the personal involvement and creative experience of the authors or interviewed people play an important role, are presented in the Focus section. Lucie Kocourková introduces the readers to the creative process of the stage production *Robot Radius* at the New Stage of the National Theatre in Prague. Ester Trčková and Jitka Pavlišová evaluate two-year artistic research focused on the integration of seniors into dance. Vendula Kacetlová reveals the organisational and structural mechanisms of several Central European companies that involve people with mental disabilities in their work.

The exclusivity of the present issue is the fact that it resonates with the ideas of the emerging generation of experts in body-oriented scientific research.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the reviewers whose insights and comments have contributed significantly to the revision and refinement of the individual texts. They were: Martin Bernátek, Lukáš Brychta, Adam Czirák, Dáša Čiripová, Jan Čtvrtník, Šárka Havlíčková Kysová, Milo Juráni, Iveta Koblic Zedková, Petr Kodenko Kubala, Kateřina Kövesdi Cvečková, Eva Kyselová, Tatjana Lazorčáková, Barbora Liška, Hana Malaníková, Kateřina Mocová, Pierre Nadaud, Markéta Polochová, Lenka Růžicková, Hana Strejčková, Stanislav Suda and Julia Wehren. The scope of the issue and the breadth of research areas confirm the topicality and certain inexhaustibility of the subject. In the context of the disappearing body due to the contemporary virtuality of the world, each passing page reflects its unceasing urgency.