

LA SOSPENSIONE DEL GESTO

opere 2005_2008

LA SUSPENSION DU GESTE
oeuvres 2005_2008

THE SUSPENSION OF THE GESTURE
works 2005_2008

Virgilio Sieni

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Virgilio Sieni

progetto grafico, disegni, tavole
Virgilio Sieni

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Giorgio Agamben, to Virgilio Sieni

Dear Virgilio,

I will try to relate to you what your extraordinary choreographic pieces have communicated to me. Most of all, that which seems to be one of the essential characters of your gesture.

Years ago, Talia Berio told me about a Central Asian people that practice a chant called "diphonic" in which the voice emits two sounds at the same time, the base and the harmonic. However the singer manages to separate what we normally perceive as one sound like the timbre of the voice or an instrument. I have never managed to hear this chant, but I often imagine it and dream of it as the music I would like to do with my mind. From the time that I started to love your work, or should I say "your joy," it has seemed to me that you dance "diphonically." As the voice of the singer, who is often a shaman, emits two sounds contemporarily, it is as if you carry out two movements at the same time. Or better, one gesture plus something that, inside and through it, undoes it, moves it, speeds it up and slows it down, twists and disarticulates it, looses and re-finds it. It is as if in all your gestures and all your "creations" there is a de-creative force at work, which interrupts and keeps it hanging there, only to resume immediately, all whilst the action is being accomplished.

Perhaps it is this that you had in mind when you wrote of the "dancer who loses his gesture seizing it only in

moment of its disappearance." Or when you speak of the body as in an event in which everything ceaselessly "happens and decays." Or of an "energy course" from the vertebra to the pelvic zone, made of "pressures and undulations." It is this intimate diphony that sets your dance apart from the canon of contemporary dance.

In your case, the energy course is possible not only in the temporal succession, but also and most of all, in the instant, in the gesture itself. As if the energy in the act of moving itself and moving the body, suspends and renders itself inactive. The "air bubbles" on which you write a particularly dense note: spaces or "empty architecture" in which the dynamic is left hanging and in which you find yourself "in a state of floating in the suspension of a movement that evolves restraining the figure and does not let it go". Recently the idea to which all the lines of my research seem to converge is something whose provisional name is "inactivity". Not on the sense of inertia, but in one of an active operation that consist of making the action inactive, to the "des-ocver" to open it up from the inside for another possible use. This operation which may appear harmful, is in its core festive and that of a sabbath, because, as during a party or the sabbath, the daily gestures of man, the eating, the clothing, the walk, the exchange of words and things are suspended from their "economy" and open to a new use. What is poetry if not a linguistic operation that con-

sists of rendering inactive language, that by deactivating its communicative function opens it up to a new use? What is dance if not the display of gestures in their pure inactivity? In short, it was this that I was thinking whilst watching you dance yesterday, and, in a certainly inadequate way, I was suggesting to you to accentuate all the parts in which you seemed to undo, displace, disjoint (and then re-vertebrate) your gestures in a sort of constitutive "difonia" or dismorf. As if a person, whilst walking, should each time have to relearn to walk, suspending their gait to gropingly re-find it in fits and starts, as if in a terrible loss of memory. It is as if in your performances an energy appears that renders inactive the energetic concentration of the body and bones, to re-find in them and not elsewhere the body without organs. It seems to me that the studies that you are elaborating on, could be the moment in which you assemble and push to the extremes the messianic impulse central to your dance and which is already perfectly evidenced in the last study (I was greatly moved when you told me about the film of a half crippled soldier who slowly re-finds, or rather re-invents, the use of his limbs, because it was the sense of that lesson that seemed to me to be able to be read). Excuse the hasty character of this annotation, but it was pressing me to be sent.

See you soon
Giorgio Agamben

