



English Translation

International Dance Day Message 2018 – Africa

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Dancer, choreographer

Dance, or sense of the future.

How to deliver this message directly to the community of humans without having a thought for all these migrant bodies, forced into exodus and exile around the world?

As a choreographer and dancer, having travelled all continents to present my work and have enriching experiences in contact with others, can I look away from the chaos that shakes the world, and in particular, the migratory peril? No. I look at it and see its darkness, its brutality, but also its opportunities; the opportunities that contemporary dance has allowed me to discover in order to be part of an epoch.

The question of migration summons, beyond its political connections, the question of the self-gaze on the other. A look fed by imagination that drains a biased, condescending, stereotyped idea from abroad, that is to say, an intrusive body of the social fabric.

However, whether we like it or not, whether we recognize it or not, we all share, whatever the colour of our skin, whatever our origins, wherever we live, a common base: humanity. It is this paradigm that guides and nourishes my creative process.

If in my work as a choreographer the question of boundaries, territories, cultures, and the evidence of the humanities, is always present or even recurrent in a proven or more diffuse way, it is invariably because I maintain a curious relationship to time, to spaces, to displacements, based upon sensitive and sometimes fragile relations constituted, then undoubtedly tested, in my double belonging to Africa and Europe.

With the show "Desire d'horizon", whose choreographic vocabulary as dramaturgy came from my experiences of working in dance workshops with refugees in camps in Burkina Faso and Burundi, I tried to transcend the images produced, tried to transcend the incredible violence observed in these places, these non-places, where each tries to live or at least tries to reinvent a little of oneself.

Dancing for a living is the message that I come to bring with the firm conviction that an artist must find strength, drive and energy to get in the wake of life. This experience of strangeness, where I felt in my flesh the deep bleeding of fear, misery, unworthiness, gave me a courage and a difficult force still to be defined today. This interzone where nothing human, logical, or ethical is taken into account anymore, this space outside the common law, in the confines of nowhere, where vacillation, absurdity, and incessant violence are rife; when living there my fear became the maxim of my courage, yes I admit it, this hitherto unknown state gave me the will to reconquer, with dance, a little future and a snatch of present, surely uncertain but starred with hope.

Yes, I express it loudly, dance can invent and reinvent itself, here, now, and elsewhere! Yes, the movement sometimes has its flashes, its harmonies in unusual places as in a refugee camp, a whole story that can, gestures against gestures, body against body, spectres against spectres start to dance. Dance to deceive loneliness, waiting, pain, dance to give light to a look, dance to ward off fear, dance and dance again.

This unique experience has shaped an unprecedented approach to movement in my choreographic work, it has revealed new perceptions to me, it has undoubtedly guided me to the essentials of knowing that dance is a major art, that it conceals a universal knowledge that has survived all the time, it is a reflection of cultures and traditions that are as rich and varied as the many lines of union between peoples. It is a source of meaning. For me, it is the art of life, of poetry and hope, it is the courage and the first step in being able to "fight the destiny, to surprise the disaster by the little fear that it makes us sometimes to face the unjust power, sometimes to insult the drunken victory, to hold on, to stand up; this is the example that people need, and the light that electrifies them", a magnificent quote from Victor Hugo, extracted from *Les Misérables*, that I deliver to you in conclusion and in sharing.

Thank you.

Translation: Malory Domecyn and Tom Johnson