

Vis Motrix

COCOON
DANCE



Video-Trailer (01:59) <https://vimeo.com/258431435>

[Pictures](#) by ©Klaus Fröhlich:

[Technical Rider](#)

Premiere: 10 January, 2018, Theater im Ballsaal Bonn

Duration circa 0:45 h

By and with: Fa-Hsuan Chen, Martina De Dominicis, Tanja Marin Friðjónsdóttir, Susanne Schneider / Marie Viennot // Choreography, direction: Rafaële Giovanola // Composition: Franco // Light, space: Gregor Glogowski // Costume: CocoonDance // Choreographic Assistant: Leonardo Rodrigues Photos: Klaus Fröhlich /// Dramaturgy, concept: Rainald Endraß /// Management: Mechtild Tellmann

A production by CocoonDance in collaboration with: Théâtre du Crochetan Monthey (CH), Ringlokschuppen Ruhr Mülheim, Theater im Ballsaal Bonn.

Funded by: Ministerium für Kultur und Wissenschaft des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen, Bundesstadt Bonn and within the frame of the residency programme: Théâtre-ProVS, Le Conseil de la Culture Etat du Valais, La Loterie Romande

Touring



02.03. (Premiere) 03./ 04./ 08./ 09./ 10.03.2018, Theater im Ballsaal, Bonn (DE)
13./ 14.03.2018, Orangerie Köln (DE)
14./ 15.04.2018, Theater im Ballsaal, Bonn (DE)
08./09.09.2018, Theater im Ballsaal Bonn (DE)
09.11.2018, Festival MOVE!, Fabrik Heeder, Krefeld (DE)
07./ 08.12.2018, Ringlokschuppen Ruhr Mülheim (DE)
14./ 15.12.2018, Theater im Ballsaal Bonn (DE)
08./ 09.02.2019, Festival tanzOFFensive 2019, Theater in der Eisfabrik Hannover (DE)
23.03.2019, Staatstheater Darmstadt (DE)
02.04.2019, tanzmainz Festival #3, U17 Staatstheater Mainz (DE)
17.05.2019, tanz nrw 19, Theater im Ballsaal Bonn (DE)
18.05.2019, tanz nrw 19, Alte Feuerwache Köln (DE)
25.09.2019, Theater de Nieuwe Vorst, Tilburg (NL)
05./ 06.10.2019, Theater im Ballsaal, Bonn (DE)
13.10.2019, KORZO, Den Haag (NL)
18.10.2019, AINSI, Maastricht (NL)
16.11.2019, 11. Festival „Theater in Bewegung“, Theaterhaus Jena (DE)
18./ 19./12.2019, Theater im Ballsaal, Bonn (DE)
28./ 29./ 30.01.2020, Theatre du Crochetan, Monthey (CH)
13./ 14./ 15.02.2020, Festival Antigal, ADC, Genf (CH)
04./ 05.03.2020, Dance Platform Germany, Kammer 2, Kammerspiele Munich (DE)
23./ 24.10.2020, Eintanzhaus Mannheim (DE)
01.12.202, Live streaming - free of charge, Theater im Ballsaal Bonn (DE)
17.05.2021, Théâtre du Crochetan, Monthey (CH)
18.05.2021, Théâtre du Crochetan, Monthey (CH)
27.05.2021, Livestream Múltipla Dança - Internacional Festival Florianópolis (BR)
04.09.2021, 6. NU DANCE FEST Asociácia súčasného tanca, Bratislava (SK)
11.10.2021, tanz_house FESTIVAL 2021 ARGEkultur Salzburg (A)
04.12.2021, Live arts, Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Forum (DE)
06./ 07.04.2022, Theater im Ballsaal, Bonn (DE)
09.04.2022, Osterfestival Tirol, Innsbruck (AU)
03./ 04.06.2022, Sima Performing Arts, Dubai (ARE)
23.06.2022, Frauenstimmen Festival, Zeughaus Kultur Brig (CH)
02.09.2022, 60 years jubilee celebration Goethe-Institut Salvador, Goethe-Institut Salvador-Bahia (BR)
06.09.2022, Movimento Internacional de Dança, Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil - CCBB Brasília (BR)
08.09.2022, Movimento Internacional de Dança, Sesc Teatro Newton Rossi Ceilândia, (BR)
09.09.2022, Teatro Glaucê Rocha, Campo Grande, Mato Grosso do Sul (BR)
25./ 26.10.2022, Retrospective, Theater im Ballsaal Bonn (DE)
08.03.2023, SKIN Festival, Dschungel, Wien (AT)
12./ 13.05.2023, Rencontres chorégraphiques de Seine-Saint-Denis, Théâtre Public de Montreuil (FR)
29.06.2023, Tanzfestival Bielefeld, Theaterhaus Tor 6 Bielefeld (DE)
12.10.2023, Tipperary International Dance Festival (IE)
16.11.2023, Regensburger Tanztage, Theater an der Uni, Regensburg (DE)
30./ 31.01.2024, Theater im Ballsaal Bonn (DE)
02./ 03.02.2024 Theater im Ballsaal Bonn (DE)
01.03.2024, Les Hivernales Avignon (FR)
03./ 04.05.2024, Theater im Ballsaal Bonn (DE)
11./12.06.2024, Dance Week Festival Zagreb (HR)
26.10.2024, Pakistan International Theatre Festival, Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi (PK)
04./ 05.02.2025, Lux – Scène national Valence (FR)
17.10.2025, TenDance Festival, Teatro D'Annunzio, Latina (IT)

About the piece

For affectation, as you know, appears when the soul (vis motrix) is located at any point other than the center of gravity of a movement.

(Heinrich von Kleist: On the Marionette Theatre, 1810)



VIS MOTRIX creates some strange as well as fascinating beings. The dancers seem to come from another world, they move through space and merge into an organism, a mixture of human being and machine, creating a hypnotic power that one can not escape. What is the driving force, the soul (Vis Motrix) behind the movements of these hybrid beings? CocoonDance continues with this production its research of the "unthought" body: transhumanism as a traumatic round dance that does not leave our unconsciousness untouched.

VIS MOTRIX is already the second production which has been developed in several stages over the course of months as a part of the company's "triennale", 3-year residence in the Swiss canton of Valais. Like MOMENTUM, which was initially inspired by an exchange with the non-academic movement patterns of Parkour, VIS MOTRIX started out with a workshop and subsequently independent research on the (male-dominated) techniques of breaking and krumping and modifying and transforming these street dance styles with regards to hybrid and post-human energies and impulses.

Nomination for "Performance of the Year" in the critics' survey of the professional magazine "tanz 2019" by Bettina Trouwborst (Westdeutsche Zeitung): "'Vis motrix' by CocoonDance, Bonn: a work of hypnotic motion intelligence." (Jahrbuch Tanz 2019) Invited to the TANZPLATTFORM DEUTSCHLAND 2020 in Munich.



Press clippings



... these bodies here seem like aliens. Alien in the form, alien in the movement, alien in the outfit. They seem to come from another world. Not human, not animal, not machine - and yet something of everything: hybrid beings as they display through their movements. ... In the last part of the piece, the lighting design gives the female dancers their faces back, they become more human. The floor is no longer their only element. ... In this VIS MOTRIX part, arms and legs not only now shoot aggressively upwards, but the dancers also slam their legs loudly on the floor. Finally, one would almost like to say with relief, finally. The dancers, Fa-Hsuan Chen, Martina De Dominicis, Tanja Marin Friðjónsdóttir and Susanne Schneider, are above all the ones who are strengthening the hybrid choreography by Rafaële Giovanola --oscillating between human and animal-- through their strong presence. (Klaus Keil, tanzweb.org, 04. 03.2018)

Fascinating Organism - CocoonDance creates with "Vis motrix" a female counter-project to its male-only predecessor production 'Momentum'. (Headline) 'Vis motrix', which stands for moving force, is, from the outset of its entire concept, directed towards a higher level of abstraction. ...

For Fa-Hsuan Chen, Martina De Dominicis, Tanja Marin Friðjónsdóttir and Susanne Schneider, it must be a tremendous challenge to endure for 45 minutes such an extreme body tension. They master it with bravery. Like insects they are gliding across the floor, turning 180 degrees in a flash, moving their limbs with a sudden jerk, and thereby creating for the spectator something that strangely oscillates between a biological organism and a mechanism. And that is very fascinating. Appropriately, the performance last Saturday ended in a strong applause. This unusual and exciting three quarters of an hour long evening would have deserved a few more spectators. (Bernhard Hartmann, General-Anzeiger Bonn, 05.03.2018)

Fa-Hsuan Chen, Martina De Dominicis, Tanja Marin Friðjónsdóttir and Susanne Schneider are doing this kind of dance very intensively, to sheer perfection, fluently and with an admirable sense of timing! (Jürgen Bieler, Bonner Rundschau, 08.03.2018)

Pure movement can not be visualized, but we can sense its magic as well as its mechanical effect inside every living being. At first, Fa-Hsuan Chen, Martina de Dominicis, Susanne Schneider and Marie Viennot are lying on the sprung floor in the Orangery at the Volksgarten; then they lift their arms behind their backs and move on hands and feet in a horizontal position. Raphaele Giovanola offers her audience a view of the female body never seen before. Just for this visual stroke of genius the production deserves attention. Only briefly, towards the end, the black figures rise up. Beforehand, we only experience them as amphibians, gracefully moving and so refined in timing that, time and again, their repetitions surprise with their elegance and subtle humor. The shadow play of Gregor Glogowski's light design multiplies the silhouettes of the dancers in a virtuoso manner, while the gentle, pulsating electro sound of Franco Mento grounds the spectacle. CocoonDance shows how entertaining a production can be which is developed with strict formalism and playing out, with mathematical precision, multiple combinations of four bodies in space. (Thomas Linden, Kölnische Rundschau, 20.03.2018)

They appear like hybrid beings between human, animal and machine. Through the light design of Gregor Glogowski a filigree calligraphy emerges from their bodies and shadows, but signs of it remain indecipherable. The extreme body tension goes to the limits of what is physically possible. The dancers master the challenge brilliantly. (Elisabeth Einecke-Klövekorn, culture 3/2018)



They never rise on their two legs - except for a short exception, but then they fail on the solid verticalness, crashing and falling like waves. As previously in "Momentum", which was ennobled by the invitation to the dance platform Germany in March in Essen, "Vis Motrix" also pursues the depersonalization, without miming old-fashioned robots. It excavates an unfamiliar, soulless human component from the female dancers and their togetherness, which is meant to be futuristic and has something strangely magical about it: an ageless power. (Melanie Suchy, Stadtrevue, 4/2018)

"Vis motrix" is about the origin of all life, about the "moving force". ... With the grace of black spiders, they scurry unpredictably through the space, but still noticeably follow a mysterious inner logic, seem to develop a kind of swarm intelligence or to behave according to the rules mathematical combinatorics of cellular automata, as used to create artificial intelligence. ... The female dancers are fantastic sci-fi superorganisms on the track of the secret of life. (Nicole Strecker, *tanz*, 12/2018)

Anyone who has watched the guest performance of the Bonn dance ensemble CocoonDance at the Move Dance Festival at Fabrik Heeder leaves the hall both fascinated and enraptured. Fascinated because you rarely see such movements on the dance stage. Enraptured because the recent production VIS MOTRIX by choreographer Rafaële Giovanola unfolds a hypnotic maelstrom (Bettina Trouwborst, Westdeutsche Zeitung, 12.11.2018)

Clippings ANTIGEL Festival Geneva:

"Vis Motrix", by Rafaële Giovanola, is a hypnotic specimen. A cybernetic atmosphere makes the show all the more exciting – the gestures and movements of each woman are choreographed, who maintain a certain freedom of movement within a given structure that is constantly being renewed. ... It's one thing to worry about the future, but it's another to establish its dystopian fragility. Without a doubt, "Vis Motrix" manages to do both. (Victor Inisan, I/O Gazette, Paris, 02.02.2020)

The technique, the listening, the beauty, and the power are breathtaking. Everything in this hopeless construction is perfect; the light oscillates and the sound, an electro loop, completes the process of giving shape to the space. With a depth reminiscent of *Myriam Gourfink's* research and with a rage dear to *Nach*, Rafaële Giovanola has embarked on a radical and yet generous quest. The obsession with repetition of



gesture and the purity of the choreography, combined with a dose of improvisation and of the dancers' listening, make Vis Motrix a generous work that injects retinal images into our brains. This movement on four legs is a work of genius. (Amelie Blaustein, toutelaculture.com, Paris, 14.02.2020)



Rafaële Giovanola's very mechanical choreography captivates because, far from being indulgent, it tells a story – that of another world on the brink of transhumanism. Obsessed as much by the iteration of the gestures as by the purity of the grammar, she choreographs only what is essential in order to leave plenty of room for improvisation, for the dancers to listen to one another. This is what gives the ensemble a kind of harmony reminiscent of insects living in a colony. (Olivier Frégaville-Gratian d'Amore, L'OEIL D'OLIVIER, Paris, 15.02.2020)

Clippings TANZPLATTFORM DEUTSCHLAND 2020 in Munich (D)

The "Dance Platform Germany" in Munich started impressively. ... One was exposed to totally strange optics - increasingly fascinated - in "Vis Motrix" by choreographer Rafaële Giovanola. Her four dancers (Cocoon-Dance/Bonn) are lying on their backs on the floor. Then energetic rib cages arch, knees are bent, elbows are propped up. How these bodies then - comparable to electronic particles - slide across the white surface at different speeds, dynamics and dance-technical complexity is sensational. (Vesna Mlakar, Münchner Abendzeitung, 07.03.2020)

The absolute highlights of the dance platform are ultimately the pieces that are actually very dance-like and non-linguistic, pieces that are limited to an aesthetic concept and follow this consistently, delicately and with a well-worked dramaturgy. (...) "Vis Motrix", the work of the CocoonDance company, which was already at the 2028 Dance Platform in Essen with "Momentum", presents a finely crafted and exciting piece. In spider-like movements, the four dancers fight against gravity, always with their backs on the ground. An unreal atmosphere that is gaining constantly increasing more and more intensity. (Peter Sampel, retrieved 09.03.2020, www.tanznetz.de/blog)



In VIS MOTRIX, "the moving power" in Latin, the Cocoon Dance ensemble manages to bring to the stage a piece that merges the boundaries between man and machine with the aid of staccato, mechanically precise movements and mesmerizing music. Driven by the "moving power", the dancers gradually teach themselves to dance. This leads to a consistent tension build-up which manages to capture the audience's imagination, even without a grand finale. (Tobias Faget, M94.5, THAT WAS THE 2020 DANCE PLATFORM! Retrieved 09.03.2020, <https://www.m945.de>)

At the 2020 Dance Platform Germany, which celebrated its 25th anniversary in Munich, the audience could explore how the art form now deals with the political sphere in which above all the body speaks. The best or most interesting of contemporary dance promulgated loudly and quietly, bluntly and indirectly the world we live in. This year's dance platform has lived up to its reputation as a discovery platform. While established ensembles, such as Gintersdorfer / Klaassen, are self-congratulatory tongue-in-cheek ploughing through the field of cultural appropriation - ... - there are many successful new productions that are stingy with distinct proclamations. Even so their topic is decidedly political. ... And what about strictly formal works like "Vis motrix"? In the piece by Bonn's CocoonDance ensemble, four dancers slide in a sustine position on a white squared stage. Their minimalistic, only gradually increasing, alien to ant-like movements offer a glimpse into a frighteningly fascinating post- or transhuman future. For this glimpse, the stupendous dance technique disappears, whose full mastery in turn led to the disappearance of the concrete bodies of the dancers. Gender, skin color and corresponding attributions no longer play a role at this level of abstraction. (Sabine Leucht, taz, die tageszeitung 09.03.2020)

This gliding and sliding seems as if they were powered by a lubricated mechanism below the center of gravity; the twitching and leaping, the rapid 180-degree turns, the slow-motion movements, all this generates a hypnotic maelstrom. The movements, in unison and individually, cause sensory delusions. Due to the sophisticated stage lighting, shadow images of the bodies appear on the wall as well as on the floor. Who is in control of these unprecedented bodies? What moves those humanoid beings who are not aware of one another, never touch or look at each other? Choreographer Rafaële Giovanola does not provide any answers, she entices the spectators into another world and lets them ponder over the future of the human race. Fa-Hsuan Chen, Martina De Dominicis, Tanja Marin Friðjónsdóttir and Susanne Schneider go to the limit of what is physically possible, their bodies are under constant tension, the hips are flexible and even the extremities seem to have built-in hinges. The flow of energy, constantly pulsing through them, is almost visible. Fascinating. (Ditta Rudle, tanzschrift.at, 03/13/2023)

Movements! And what kind of! Almost unbelievable physical theater. (Heinz Wagner, kijuku.at, 03/16/2023)



About the company



Rafaële Giovanola (Choreographer), Swiss, born in Baltimore, USA. She studied at Marika Besobrasova in Monte Carlo. Following her first engagement as a soloist in Turin. After one season in Turin, Rafaële Giovanola was engaged by Egon Madsen for the Frankfurt Ballet. There, she danced the classical repertoire and co-operated with several modern choreographers like Jiri Kylian, Uwe Scholz and William Forsythe, the Frankfurt Ballet choreographer. Under his direction she stayed with the Frankfurt Ballet for eight years, being involved in all productions of this new groundbreaking era. During her engagement in Frankfurt, she met the guest-choreographers Daniel Larrieu, Stephen Petronio and Christoph Nel. Since 1990, when the Choreographic Theatre was founded, Rafaële Giovanola is a member of Pavel Mikulášťik's

company. In 1995 Rafaële Giovanola was mentioned in the annual poll of critics of „ballett international/tanz aktuell“ in the category „exceptional dancing personalities“. Rafaële Giovanola has been teaching for different Compagnies like in the Opera of Bonn at the Städtischen Bühnen Freiburg in Breisgau, the tanzhaus NRW in Düsseldorf, the Brotfabrik Bonn, the Theater in St. Gallen (CH), at the Staatstheater Nürnberg and for the Ewgenij Panfilow Company in Perm, Russia. In collaboration with partners like Goethe-Institut and Pro Helvetia she has given workshops around the world.

In 2017 she established a junior company in Monthey (CH) and before 2012 in Bonn, which have been awarded numerous prizes like “Kinder zum Olymp”, “Auf dem Weg zum Kinder- und Jugendkulturland NRW” and was invited in both 2016, 2019, 2023 and 2025 to “Tanztreffen der Jugend” as part of the Berliner Festspiele.

For her debut “Jigaboo” she got the award of the Patrizia-Van-Roessel Foundation (NL), in 2007 she won the international internet-dance festival SideBySide-net, in 2010 the sponsorship grant from the canton of Valais, in 2021 she received the cultural award of the city of Monthey and in 2022 the Deutsche Theaterpreis DER FAUST and in 2025 she was honored by the Italian magazine “danza& danza” with the D&D Award in the category “Best Contemporary Choreographer 2024”.

CocoonDance Company

In the year 2000, Rafaële Giovanola founded the performance art collective CocoonDance together with the dramaturg Rainald Endraß. CocoonDance has been producing and performing in the independent Theater im Ballsaal in Bonn (D); since the season 2004/05 the company also is curating the dance program and is responsible for organization and financing of the theatre. CocoonDance has established itself as a dance-arts institution with an extensive network not only within the artistic world, but also in the field of cultural education.

An important pillar of the company is located in the Swiss Canton of Valais, where CocoonDance has been co-produced since 2005. In 2020, CocoonDance was appointed Associate Artist of the Théâtre du Crochetan in Monthey. Since its founding, the company has produced about fifty full-length productions that have toured through five continents, have been awarded numerous prizes and been invited to showcase festivals in Germany and Switzerland like the TANZPLATTFORM DEUTSCHLAND - DANCE PLATFORM GERMANY in 2018 and 2020 and important festivals like STEPS Switzerland, ANTIGEL/Geneva, CODA/ Oslo, MilanOltre/ Milan.

The engine behind these 20 years of artistic development is the improvisation, a strong dramaturgy and a pronounced focus on continuous teamwork. With its productions CocoonDance not only breaks down spatial barriers of the conventional stage experience, but also plays in a sophisticated way with our perception of bodies. The audience does not only participate in a (new) representation of reality, but in its generation. The work of CocoonDance can best be explained as a reflection about the dance and the body itself, as a shift of the dance space away from the narrative space into a space of perception and thinking.

The 'unthought' body



CocoonDance elaborates a working method that was already crucial in the development of pieces like **MOMENTUM**, **VIS MOTRIX**, **HYBRIDITY**, **STANDARD** or **RUNTHROUGH**. In intensive research periods outside of the theatres with movement experts like Parkour athletes, Breakers and Krumpers, boxers, rappers, folklore dancers, actors, voguers, baseball players and as well: non-academically trained bodies the company explores disciplines and movement techniques that are often alien to dance. This exchange is followed by process-oriented phase of reflection, in which the learned techniques are applied in an open and unbiased way in improvisations and the qualities of the material are explored together. The physical encounters with for dance unfamiliar forms of movements and body images, their reflection and communication, have gained the group to an enhanced understanding of body and movement and the creation of new forms of embodiment that should be able to change our idea of the body – and – it's habitus. "Habitus" (Marcel Mauss) refers to the visible and tangible nature of an organism, its form and behaviour, which are shaped by "techniques of the body" with which people in a society traditionally use their bodies: Our postures, our steps, our gestures. Habitus can be understood as a cultural choreography, as a habit that can be learned but also changed. The productions that result from this are "experiments to investigate the perception of the body, of the other and one-self" which do not follow any particular dramaturgy, except the one of the bodies. Bodies that are transformed into something new and alien, and movements that not only move the bodies of the dancers, but also those of the audience. The approach of the 'unthought body' follows Laurence Louppe's (*Poétique de la danse contemporaine*, 1997) classification, according to which exactly the missing heritage in contemporary dance is its decisive characteristic and potential which gives contemporary dance the freedom as well as the necessity to constantly reinvent itself. This work is creating completely new bodies, imaginative creatures with their very own, astonishing vocabulary of movement. Trailer (03:05) <https://vimeo.com/749231162>

MOMENTUM (2016) – Exchange with Parkour

MOMENTUM is a short journey through evolution. It reminds us that first there was movement and then man. Dancers and spectators alike take the increasing energy, as well as the increasing exhaustion, and let it exhaustion and let it become the constituting moment of the moment of the production. – Invited to the Dance Platform Germany and nomination "Dancer of the Year" in the annual critics' poll of the professional journal *tanz* 2018. – Trailer: (01:45) <https://vimeo.com/162518895>

VIS MOTRIX (2018) – Exchange with Breaking and Krumping

VIS MOTRIX is about the origin of all life, about the "moving force". The dancers move through space like creatures from another world, merging into a symbiosis of man and machine and animal while generating a hypnotic pull. But what exactly is this «Vis Motrix», this moving force, the soul of these hybrid beings' movement? – Invited to the Dance Platform 2020 and shortlisted as performance of the year in the annual critics' poll of the professional journal *tanz* 2019. Trailer (01:59) – <https://vimeo.com/258431435>

HYBRIDITY (2020) – Exchange with Muay Thai Boxing and Romantic Ballet

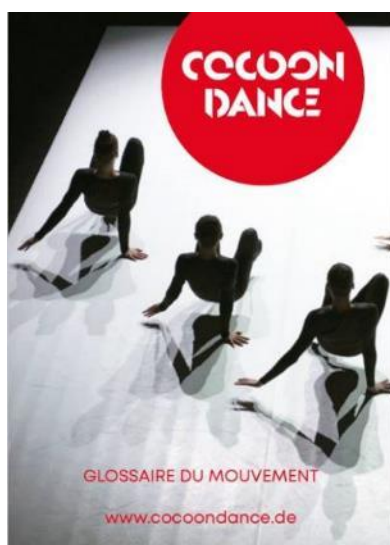
CocoonDance dispels the physical imagery stereotypically associated with martial male warriors and fairy-like female ballerinas and transforms its performers into floating, transcendent creatures. Bodies alternate between strength and fragility, explosiveness and paralysis, human and animal, desire and rejection and ultimately blend into hybrids. In "Hybridity", the movement languages of the romantic ballet and Thai boxing are transformed into a "hybrid". – Trailer (01:52) <https://vimeo.com/467059626>

STANDARD (2021) – Exchange with Ballroom

In **STANDARD** everything is upside down: the bodies and also our image of ballroom dancing. Ballroom dance becomes a subject of research, because of its numerous implications with regards to genre, ethnic identity, gender and habitus. In search of the 'unthought body' CocoonDance explores the contradictions inherent in ballroom dancing, of freedom and control, improvisation and notation, desire and decency. The resulting creatures take us into a world of swaying elegance. – Trailer (02:17) <https://vimeo.com/634435860>

RUNTHROUGH (2022) – Exchange with Folk dance, Rap, Disabled Theater, Voguing

A project in which choreographic styles intermingle to create a composition that combines a plurality of body languages. Creative experiments with movement have emerged from the joint research of workshops with multiple performative universes: the Serbian folk group Kud Kolo, the rappers Kamau & the Wolf, the voguers of The Iconic Kiki House of Juicy Couture, the disabled actors of Theater Hora, the players of Bonn Capitals baseball team and the Indian dance group Bharatanatyam. The gestural material collected during these residencies becomes a source of inspiration. On stage, eight dancers and a live DJ translate and transform them into a new language. – Trailer (01:05) <https://vimeo.com/706690536>



CocoonDance company has been dealing for some time with the understanding, conveying and recording of movement through language. Since 2017 it has developed a steadily growing glossary with the aim of creating an open archive that not only stores the collectively gained knowledge, but is constantly dialogically re-examined, supplemented and shared. As a result of the glossary work a special working method has evolved that at the same time proves to be a more efficient way of communicating. In search of an appropriate form of presentation of choreographic principles and motoric practices, the dancers explore, the spectrum of linguistic, written and graphic forms in order to describe movement. The continuous and processual movement requires the describing persons to be always in the moment: each slightest movement of the body, the lifting and lowering of their limbs, the twisting and turning of their trunk or head, the shifting of weight, every step and glance - every smallest temporal and spatial change in the movement brings up the challenge to look at the whole picture in detail and the detail in the whole. This

means letting the gaze wander as well as being able to describe with every glance what happens. "With its glossary, the CocoonDance ensemble has perfected the work of a 'moving glance' (Jeschke 1999). It provides a toolbox to capture and describe the complexity of movement in connection with sensation, quality and motoric. This is not about fixing movement through description, but about communicating it and generating a suitable glossary. The project's aim is not just to archive the company's own choreographic movement practice, but to make it available to others, which leads to a very unique form of observation and description of movement. The view is therefore always focused on the 'receiver': How can I convey a certain feeling, a mood, a picture of movement to make it comprehensible to others? How to describe an impulse of movement that sets in motion a whole chain of actions? What is the special characteristic of this movement? What motivates others to pick it up and perpetuate it?" (Dr. Isa Wortelkamp, University of Leipzig)

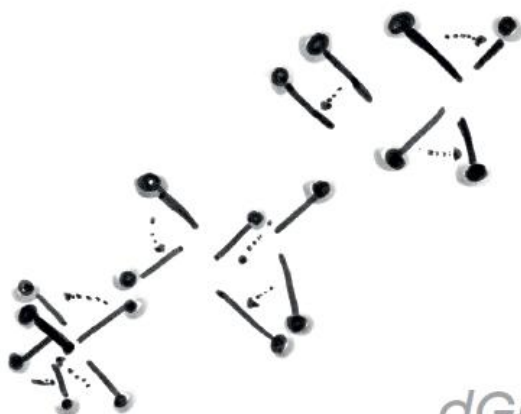
[MORE ... https://www.cocoondance.de/english/downloads/](https://www.cocoondance.de/english/downloads/)

TETRIS

(Game for a minimum of two participants)

34

- Sensation:** geometrical feeling. Always ready to react.
Being part of an organism
- Quality:** sharp, clear movements, constant full body tension
- Motoric:** shift of placement while keeping the same body shape. Single actions in reaction to the others.
The spatial relation is either parallel or perpendicular



Organisation cellulaire

Suivre les règles
Parallèle ou perpendiculaire
Au sol
Trouver des solutions
Provisoires
Stimuli de créatures terrestres
Chacune son tour
Se libérer de l'ennui
S'imposer à soi-même ses propres lois
Créer une forme

dGuut dgut dgut

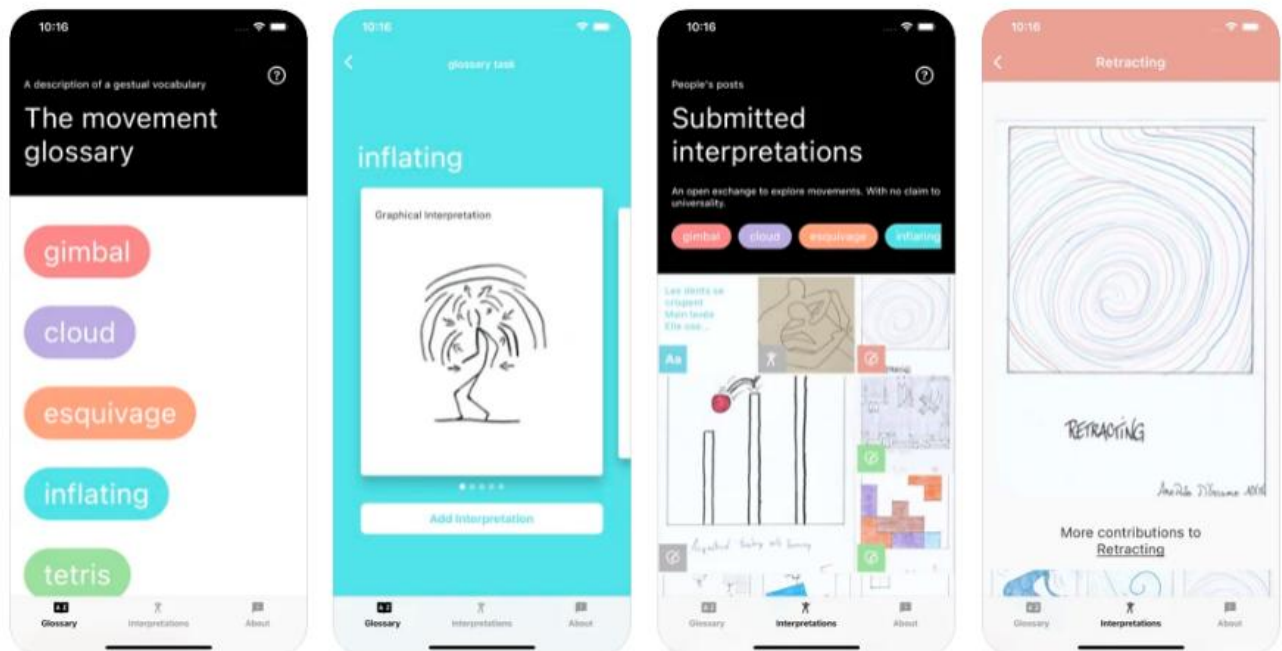


Videosequence TETRIS
<https://vimeo.com/325596350>



How can a choreographic language be created, explained and shared? CocoonDance examined this question by developing a movement vocabulary based on the movement material of its pieces. The **MoveApp**, an interactive digital continuation of the glossary work, launched thanks to the “Close Distance”-program by Pro Helvetia, aims to assist users to explore and expand the possibility space of their bodies through terms and their explanations. How the individual bodies / users themselves interpret the linguistic descriptions is intentionally kept open. The MoveApp is an invitation for the user to explore and expand the potential scope of his/her body through new terms and explanations. The creative process of how these individual bodies interpret the linguistic descriptions for themselves is deliberately kept open. First and foremost, new terms and their influence on movement and body sensation should flow into the app. It is expressly desired that this app grows beyond the movement knowledge and vocabulary of CocoonDance and that other performers, dancers and choreographers leave their mark on the app. In the long run, the goal is to develop a tool that will serve a large number of “movement practitioners” to create, explore and facilitate an open exchange about movements and body images with others, without presumption of general validity.

Link to download the app: for [IOS / Apple devices](#) / [Android devices](#)



Repertory 2025/2026

Choreia – a PolyBallet (8 performers, 1 DJ, stage: 12 m x 12 m, 1 h)

Chora (2023) 7x Performer, stage: 15 x 12 m, no seating, 1 h

Runthrough (2022) – 8 performers, 1 DJ, stage: 12 m x 12 m, 1 h

Standard (2021) – 6 performers, stage: 12 x 12 m, 1 h

Body Shots (2020) – 5 performers, stage: 6 x 6 m, 0:50 h

Hybridity (2020) – 6 performers, stage: 12 x 12 m, 0:55 h

Vis Motrix (2018) – 4 performers, stage: 10 x 10 m, 0:45 h

Momentum (2016) – 3 performers, stage: 12 x 10 m, no seating, 0:45 h

Press comments on CocoonDance



The German premiere of Choreia demonstrates once again how unique, creative, and consistent choreographer Rafaële Giovanola and her ensemble CocoonDance are. ... What this distinctive choreographer creates with her art bodies – figures somewhere between human and insect, plant, avatar, or machine – at times verges on the magical, as these beings move in ways never seen before. (Bettina Trouwborst, tanz – international edition, August/September 2025)

In response to the question, “Which people from the dance scene do you think should play a greater role in the near future?”, Rafaële Giovanola was named one of the twelve most influential personalities in the dance scene for 2024/25 by the online dance journal *tanznetz.de*. In this professional survey, over 90 names were mentioned from across the independent scene, municipal and state theaters, classical ballet, contemporary dance, dance theater, street dance, and more – whether on stage, behind the scenes, or working alongside it. (<https://www.tanznetz.de/de/article/2025/branchenumfrage-tanz-100-im-juni-2025>)

Swiss choreographer Rafaële Giovanola conducts pure research, following neither concepts nor narratives. ... She has a beguiling ability to lead the spectator to explore alien forms of the human body and flip what they already know, using the principles of regenerative movement, and reflection on all forms of movement, from parkour to Thai boxing and ballroom dancing. Her glossary, contained in the free app MoveApp, is a breath of fresh air and a real surprise for audiences. (Jury statement D&D Award the "Best Contemporary Choreographer 2024", Danza&Danza International no. 47 - January-February 2025)

For more than 22 years they have developed time and again, under the CocoonDance label, surprisingly innovative productions ... Indeed, they are never before seen artistic beings, who have unleashed a hypnotic power in all their productions to date. ... So far, all artistic performances from this series have been – due to their highly aesthetic quality of movement and choreographic originality, yet also tiny, humorous accents – fantastic dance utopias. (Bettina Trouwborst, tanz, 05/2022)

CocoonDance has made a name for itself in recent years with extraordinary, finely shaped pieces that revolve around questions of the digital age. (Eva-Maria Magel, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 12/23/2021)

Bonn's internationally renowned CocoonDance company have celebrated many successes. From their base camp at the Theater im Ballsaal in Bonn-Endenich, they developed again and again new intriguing forms of dance and movement that delighted both the experts and the audience. (Bernhard Hartmann, General-Anzeiger Bonn, 04.12.2020)

... according to Bonn's dance company CocoonDance one can discover completely different creatures in a human that are much more significant for his existence today: animal and insect-like, amorphous-fantastic, technoid beings. And those are currently breaking fresh ground with every new piece that the ensemble choreographs. (Nicole Strecker, kultur.west, 02/2020)

The company is experimenting with different narrative and perception perspectives with the aim of breaking up the local understanding of art. To see the viewer as the perceiving element is a central point here. Staging him/her as a performer who reflects and participates and flows together with the movements of the dancers. ... The artistic freedom and improvisation work help to ensure that their pieces are internationally successful. (Barbara Franke, Bonner Rundschau, 21.01.2020)

Again and again ... the duo immersed itself in these intermediate worlds to decode the moments when the dancing body creates new connections between space and time and new forms of choreographic presentation are developing. That staging curiosity and choreographic urge to explore have earned them prizes and awards and the enthusiastic applause of an audience that is fascinated by the difficult choreographic and dancing implementation of philosophical questions and highly appreciative. (Klaus Keil, www.tanzweb.org, 13.06.2019)

... CocoonDance receives more recognition for its work than ever ... It seems like the company is now fully fledged and has at the time arrived inside the dance. (Melanie Suchy, Die Deutsche Bühne 06/2018).

Hardly any company in Germany is working on their productions with a comparable aesthetic density. (Thomas Linden, Kölner Rundschau, 27.06.2017)

Like no other ensemble, the two dance creators venture repeatedly on seemingly complex topics and questions, only to reduce them to their core in their performances and to make them visible to the audience through movement and dance. Rarely, dance has been as eloquent as with CocoonDance. (Klaus Keil, TANZwebkoeln, 26.06.2015)

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BODY SHOTS (2021)