

Interview on Making/Becoming Eifo Efi

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MAMAZA: Our departure point was on one hand considerations of multiplicity from the philosophy of Bergson and Badiou, and on the other images and illustrations of mass activities in contemporary culture. The task we set for ourselves was to create a scenic event: a virtual environment of multiple impressions. Our initial description of the work (written in autumn 2012) is still a useful forecast what actually takes place:

“In Eifo Efi, the performers offer their understanding of two persons, as the more than of what two people can be. The performers fill the performance space with versions or echoes of themselves. While only two bodies appear, reflective elements and diverting strategies enhance the visual to stimulate the sensorial, making the ‘just two’ reveal others’ presences.”

Eifo Efi: The performers performing performers, and watching watchers performing watching, and moving together. Personal meets public, becomes hidden and reappears; two among the you, we, here, there and now.

MAMAMultiplicity

Fabrice: For our dossier we drafted questions. How is one’s individuality multiple? How are we an element of something different from us: me part of it, us within them, performer within audience, I within we?

Ioannis: Is the audience a unity?

Fabrice: Is the performer a multiplicity? How does the individual influence the multiple or does the multiple reduce the individual?

MAMAZA: How many are we?

Liz: As with many philosophical terms, perhaps the worst choice being deconstruction, the common sense usage of the term pollinates, or to a skeptic contaminates, its meaning. Multiplicity is one of those words. Thus I would like to address its particular presence in your working process.

Eifo Efi: The multiple is not automatically a multiplicity. Composition by addition, layering, or simple juxtaposition would not achieve a multiplicity. Nor could a coherent compositional whole suffice. This piece is a distinct alchemy of juxtaposition—an assembly of theatrical elements, multilayered movement, and spoken language that is unusually ripe or potent for differentiation.

Alain Badiou: Nothing exists alone. We are always in a situation. We are always elements of something that is not reducible to ourselves. No solitude. We are an element of something different from us. The ontology of Multiplicity is immediately an ontology of difference. Difference is first. The difference versus identity. To exist is to develop the experience of different identity in the experience of the other.

MAMAZA: Eifo Efi confuses and explores the syntheses of unity and multiplicity. Ideally, the performers, the space, and the audience mix.

Liz: I still wonder what you mean. I could read this as science fiction. I could also understand this as an honest description of being in the theater, and the fact that artistic work does invent perceptual conditions and problematize our limits.

MAMAZA: There is an abundance of signs and visual/auditory stimulus passing continuously, challenging memory, and disturbing common modes of perceiving or making sense.

Liz: Invention that produces excess. Presumably invention always does, but in Eifo Efi juxtaposition is other than the sum of its parts.

Liz: It's not just that in watching, you "miss" things and "fill in" the gaps. Sure, complexity is a factor tipping the scale into interesting affects. Chance too.

Liz: I think the real potential of this composition is its tenuous liveness; potency is created in the feedback-loop of the audience's act of understanding their experience of the performance, with your (the performers') enactment with them.

MAMAZA: Presumably everybody participates or receives the work in his or her own way. It's also not important that the modes of composition are transparent to you.

Eifo Efi: Superposition offers the possibility for infinite readings. We hope that to superimpose is neither wasteful nor imposed. Rather, compositional abundance enables consideration of the intertwining of conscious and unconscious—the interacting of thought, perception, sensation, and the virtual.

Another Play on Sight

William Blake: If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is, infinite.

Ioannis: Let's talk about the floor.

Fabrice: We knew early on that we wanted to create a new and different environment for Eifo Efi, one that would build upon our experience in P.A.D. (2007), Z.E.R.O. (2009), and Cover Up (2011) using materials and light to divert/obstruct. The task was to stimulate the sensorial—to enhance or alter normal ways of seeing. We chose a mirror-like floor covering that scatters and reflects the visual image of our bodies.

Liz: Much can be read into this choice, ranging from referencing Deleuzian taproots to the Lacanian mirror stage.

MAMAZA: Read into it what you will. For us the interest was more formal: pure enhancement of visual experience. It's an effect that is real and continuous throughout the piece. It supports (we hope) playful imagination and a sense of infinite depth.

Eifo Efi: A technology to experience your experiencing.

A Play on Sight

Liz: I'm surprised that you're emphasizing sight so much. This piece for me was absolutely an auditory composition.

MAMAZA: Our initial intent was to cultivate a way of watching. We made scenic constructions that blur and hide movements within a stream of resemblance, knowing that we were also infolding our action within a field of spoken language.

Eifo Efi: Where does a viewer's attention land, when his or her eyes wander in space looking at the performance?

MAMAZA: What is the origin of an action that we witness? Where does it emerge from and when does it start to emerge? When do we see it? Who is causing what? What is the cause of who?

Wikipedia: Since space is a homogeneous, quantitative multiplicity, duration becomes juxtaposed and converted into a succession of distinct parts, one coming after the other and therefore "caused" by one another. Nothing within a duration can be the cause of anything else within it.

MAMAZA: Watching or experiencing becomes a quest or a pursuit of differentiation. While each moment is different, over time the experience of constant elaboration forms an intricate assemblage, a cycle of scenic events. The sheer multiplicity of

elements that resemble each other eventually unify, amalgamating the space in a complex way.

Talking

Liz: I want to tell everyone that this is a dance piece, even though you are talking a lot. Although spoken text has appeared as an aspect of your work since your initial collaboration on the duet P.A.D. in 2007, with Eifo Efi “talking” is fundamental—stream of consciousness, stream of commentary, associative, dialogic, paradoxical, and fantastical. It seems not at the expense of movement but rather as fundamental to movement production and composition.

Eifo Efi: Perhaps we prefer the word talking because it seems less wed to an “about” or spoken object and more open to forms of listening. We consider this piece a dance piece. Dance as (among things) the nonseparation between environment, performers, and imagination, and the movement between these aspects. As our colleague David Kern said, “movement as speaking and speaking as movement.”

Liz: Can you tell me using simple language what you are doing or talking about in the performance?

MAMAZA: Most of the time we are describing clear situations. At times we converse or address each other, but primarily we speak simultaneously, without pause, describing elaborate constructions of spaces and people within them. There are scores but we prefer not to talk about those here, other than to say that the situations are specific, yet still abstract and ambiguous. Within all this, we distinguish, compare, imagine, invent, and find.

Eifo Efi: Our duality as co-speaking co-inventors, extends to the audience, as they are invited to make sense or imagine with.

Liz: The sociality of the duet seems an inescapable force in this work, as ties that entangle power structures that could produce a singular vision. Moreover, it seems that admitting your co-constituency with collaborators past and future extends to the moment of being with the audience. Sociality abstracted, divisions and power structures are considered and felt.

Post-Conceptual?

MAMAZA: A “post-conceptual” approach suggests inclusion of tools leading to a process of re-invention of methods, rather than exclusion and negation of approaches. Two principles within this are, first, to examine the work from the perspective of experience, or *the experiencing*, of the audience members and performers, and secondly, to invest the theatrical space and its context by the constant questioning of what is at the core of collaborative work.

Liz: It seems that the goal is not to tame or singularize theatrical representation, but to problematize the modes through which it is created and understood. There is the alchemy of how compositional choices generate real possibility, and the acceptance of how the piece is co-constituted by your/the audience's diverse modes of attention and personal modes of aesthetic experience. Rather than to negate, fragment, or empty representation, for me Eifo Efi is an alternative abundance that embraces the confusing, distorted, and paradoxical.

Eifo Efi: It is also the question of where we are, you and us, in that mix and the hope to speak about that in and after the performance.

Rhizome

Liz: It seems necessary now to do the dramaturgical duty and end with the paragraph that you expected to read at the beginning. One becomes two:

Emerging from a body of choreographic work that explores (among things) the perception of appearances and the production of visual paradox, Eifo Efi names the urge to speak specifically from within theatrical constructions and to find new modes of intertwining the experience of the audience with that of the performers. Returning to the format of a duet, Ioannis Mandafounis and Fabrice Mazliah use their close relationship as collaborators to produce a performative realm of doubled doubles: multiplying the perception of two bodies via dimensions of imagined reality and reflections in the actual material of the set. At once whole and multiple, the piece invites untangling the who and where of the spectacle. The Deleuzian movement of thought, as multiplicity, rendered unpretentious, fleshy, and even (gasp) entertaining!

In this talking-dancing piece, performers Ioannis Mandafounis and Fabrice Mazliah continue their research of co-constituted perception, addressing an affective realm that they fill with spoken language. The act of speaking envelops movement; neither cause nor effect, specifically imaginary or real, they assemble situations that expose real incorporeality. Speaking through a complex architecture, the performers co-compose a set of figures, asking the audience to figure out and fill in their streams of consciousness.

TEXTS REFERENCED:

Alain Badiou: *Being And Event*, 2005

Henri Bergson on wikipedia: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duration_\(philosophy\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duration_(philosophy))

William Blake: *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, 1790