**NATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL**

**2014**

PRODUCTION

*WHAT DOES THE EARTH THINK IT IS?*

DURATION

50 minutes

AGE RESTRICTION

None

CREDITS

Tossie van Tonder ~ Dance Performer

Chas Unwin ~ The Line consultant

Clinton Osborne ~ Costume Design

Dani Swai ~ Video Edit

Jeremy de Tolly ~ Sound Design – Original Swimming Party

The living body in dance desires to express that we are not only our bodies.

The body is that mysterious and multifaceted singularity that always accompanies our awareness. It is the primary agent for an associative empathic landscape.

As many people are looking for new forms of living, avenues of participation, ambient engagements with others, with Nature and with the future, our scientific, educational, political and economic models will make space for our inner abilities and potentialities that investigate imagination, intuition and inspiration. Our relationship to the outer world will become more responsive and might better serve us in developing what is described as a sustainable future.

Our human part in the genesis of knowledge in its most crucial aspect – in the face of climate change – is to prepare ourselves aesthetically and spiritually for the reception of this knowledge. Increasingly our learning needs to enable intuitive, embodied experience that deals with the immediate reality of our circumstances.

Climate change calls for an activism that is not elevated, ideal or abstract, but an integrated part of everyday consciousness, located within our cultural histories and ecologies. Such a climate-change justice considers the local/global and present/future features through sophisticated deliberation, reflexive engagement and aesthetic response to the urgency of self-expression – the core of activism.

This performance aims to evoke the aesthetic representation of empathy, listening, response, an unfurling process that accommodates *emergence*, an inner reality to the outer world – or creative agency. Through the artistic choice of a filmic device projected onto the body, the dance wishes not to explain the world, but to observe as closely as possible the way the world provides evidence to the awareness, the way things arise in direct, sensorial experience – in the human form where body movement correlates many senses; of self, thought, balance, warmth, life.

For survival, we shape a connective practice that enables us to respond, and not remain numb to this living environment.

Therefore the choice of danced film to play a question

*what does the earth think it is?*

*“This anti-nature comes with a desire to strip and superimpose, to displace sensation and affect so the body appears monstrous, beautiful and ridiculous in its refusal to give in to either truth or illusion*.” Chas Unwin in an exchange on this work.

Tossie van Tonder is a South African dance pioneer, psychologist and writer. Her dance performance works at this festival span 30 years.

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