

INSPIRING TALKS

CINARS BIENNALE 2018



MAXIME FLEURIOT

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(Lyon/France)

MOVING WITH THE TIMES: BENEFITTING FROM THE DIGITAL WORLD WHILE LISTENING TO YOUR BODY

An interview with Maxime Fleuriot, by
Anne-Laure Mathieu

How can we listen to our body in the digital age? How can the digital world benefit dance? How can dance and digital technology help us be together? These are the kinds of questions Maxime Fleuriot has been asking himself. Maxime is a dance and innovation consultant, former artistic advisor to *La Biennale de la danse* in Lyon and initiator of the first Dansathon -- a hackathon dedicated to the future of dance held last fall in three European cities: Lyon, Liège and London. We had the opportunity to invite him to speak at La Biennale CINARS 2018 and to recently interview him.

The revolution will take place through the body

"Today we see widespread interest in dance, be it in communication, in the media, in advertising. I think this is because the body acts as a safe haven in a climate where we see a growing mistrust of words, ideologies, political rhetoric, the rise of populism ... Dance brings with it a sense of lightness, of something joyful.

"There is also this sense that the body cannot lie, thus being more mindful of one's body means greater mindfulness of self. This is in line with a profound movement within society that promotes being more eco-friendly, paying attention to what

is present around us and must be protected. It also involves paying attention to the body – our own and that of others. I see dance (in particular contemporary dance) as a laboratory, a path to the body. Dance allows one to be present to another. It is the expression of what connects us. It raises key questions about our relationship with our body, with others, with spaces, with the environment. It enables this ecological imperative to be seen not only as a great punishment, but as a spiritual and physical road, the discovery that we have a body.”

Corporal artists: guardians of the human being in the digital world

“Digital technology invades our lives and impacts living beings. We know its constricting effects -- how it creates isolation, dependencies, self-forgetfulness. We now see its effects on the body, too. At first glance, it is the opposite of what we seek with dance -- to reconnect with ourselves, with others, with our surroundings. However, if we choose not to turn our backs on it, we can also view the digital world as a source of new languages. Creative tools and creative potential that digital technology also gives rise to are not strictly sources of pollution. I found that interesting when I had the idea of organizing a danceathon, of reuniting people with their body and with dance so as to reflect upon digital technology. Digital tools are not developed by people who work with the body. But it seems to me fundamental to invite choreographers -- these corporal artists -- to take part in this discussion.

In this way they can become guardians of the human temple. They don't share with the digital world a fascination with the image. They can contribute their expertise in bodily feelings (weight, speed, relationship with space, etc.). This is clearly seen, for example, in a field like virtual reality. Choreographic artists are true experts in what digital developers call 'the user experience.'”

The first Dansathon: the start of an international community

“Dansathon means Hackathon + dance. Hackathons have the advantage of freeing knowledge, of working horizontally and deploying playful energy that replaces conventional frameworks and allows for strong, concrete ideas to emerge. This Dansathon was not intended merely to develop pure creation, but also to see how dance can present itself to new audiences in new areas through digital technology. It's an issue common to all actors in the dance field that has called for collective solutions. We therefore invited choreographers, dancers, communications professionals, virtual reality and drone specialists, programmers, but also lighting and sound designers, to take up this challenge.



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