

## **DANCE RESEARCH NRW # 16 in Bochum PERIOD: 18.10.-30.11.2015**

**HOST:**  
**Bochum (Pottporus e.V./Renegade &  
Schauspielhaus Bochum)**

**Lili Mihajlović Rampre, choreogra-  
pher/performer/researcher, Slovenia &  
Germany**  
**Tomaž Tomljanovič, visual/fashion  
artist, Slovenia**

**TITLE OF THE RESEARCH:**  
**Valuable movements - fashion art  
meets choreography** - re-examining  
how to empower ourselves individually  
as well as a group through the tools of  
thinking choreography, street-fashion  
and visual design, all the aspects of our  
immediate selves – in our skin, on our  
skin, between the skins!

### **Interview before the research in Bo- chum**

**Thematic focus:** The Dance Research  
NRW #16 in Bochum deals with the ur-  
ban forms of expression and investigates  
movement in an urban environment.  
Which environment and which connec-  
tions does urban contemporary art re-  
quire in order to become effective in the  
city? Where can urbanity be located and  
how much movement does it require?  
And where does the city move?

*We are happy to host you together with  
our partner in Bochum for your research  
project. What are you planning?*  
This research is an encounter of the vis-  
ual and fashion artist Tomaz Tomljanovič  
and myself. We contextualize our re-  
search-encounter as follows:

Dance styles such as hip-hop, poppin´ &  
lockin´ and similar are considered urban  
forms of dance. However when thinking  
“urban” not as a trend setting and appro-  
priating someone’s culture, then the word  
refers to something that is characteristic

of a city, a form of expression that the  
city gave rise to because of specific con-  
ditions, necessity that expressed itself  
through citizen’s activities (e.g. krumping,  
voguing,...) In that sense, the only true  
urban movement today is the one of the  
uprise – protests where people gather  
(and walk) for an idea – DÜGIDA, Je suis  
Charlie Hebdo, Nigeria’s massacre of  
Boko Haram... at least in this part of  
Europe.

It is the walking we are all united in (if  
healthy of course), dancers and non-  
dancers, and its power has been well  
recognized in civil right movements  
throughout history, still nowadays proving  
itself to be an effective statement (some-  
times even amusing – Nazis against Na-  
zis – Germany’s most involuntary Walk-  
athon in Wunsiedel).

All the well-intended walks are however  
standing up AGAINST something when  
people find their values to be threatened.  
There is rarely a walk/gathering for the  
purpose of affirming values. If then it is  
festivals and fairs, whose purposes are  
overshadowed by sensationalistic, con-  
sumerist „performance“.

In the light of many recent gatherings,  
this research proposes mobilizing the city  
for the values of the city. A series of  
events are planned to be set in the city  
of Bochum, to intervene, to unite, to  
move, most of all to research what  
moves people today – what can really  
move them onto the streets, not only into  
the studios to take a dance class!

Protest walks and similar political acts  
are the macro-choreography of the city.  
Yet there is another important element  
we find to be a staple of urbanity. Where  
else can urbanity be found more than in  
the material that is available, the people  
who wear it and shape the city’s vibe and  
atmosphere – urban fashion. What we  
wear or what the city makes us wear and  
consequently enables us, allows, re-  
stricts movement, encourages attitudes,  
ideas and values.

With the two empowering elements where the public and personal meet to exchange - movement in public spaces and wear, street-fashion, our second skin, we want to bring forth the intersection of the two fields, social choreography and urban design/fashion to promote REDUCTION as a response to HYPER-PRODUCTION. Reducing the body to its most basic movement, forming a powerful group action, reducing design to simple words – our values on the clothing we wear, affirming what we want to be SURROUNDED WITH, not what we need to FIGHT AGAINST.

*Is the city of Bochum or North-Rhine Westphalia relevant in your research?*  
North-Rhine Westphalia is relevant in the light of recent events – there are a lot of protests happening exactly in this area, people being known for its participation, another reason is that NRW (Düsseldorf and surrounding areas) is well established as the fashion design environment, having specific sensitivity for the developments of the mentioned field, especially in combination with other disciplines.

These are the reasons we believe will motivate enough local artists and other people to get involved into the research as they are essential to it. Through that we intend to create a space to reflect and discuss and hopefully initiate further blending and participating experts – from the field of activism, architecture and urban planners.

*You bring together dance and fashion design.*

The innovative approach of the research is that it joins two fields that share so much, but have not been brought in contact substantially or their interaction has been rarely seriously questioned apart from commercial reasons. Movement and performing arts share not only the body with fashion design, but many notions of socially and culturally constructed nature – such as the (male) gaze, body and movement being approached as something else than simply

a text or a language to communicate, researching and encouraging public spaces as an arena for unconventional exchange among people, especially artistically, public space is being used as a laboratory and as a stage, which contributes to its multi-purposefulness – stretching the limits of a pre-conceived social choreographies where and how people should meet that urbanists have planned or corporations are now narrowing down.

*How will you proceed?*

We have two distinct types of research approaches: indoor events, such as gatherings, meetings, workshops, various formats through which the exchange with the local artists occurs on a physical as well as a discursive level and outdoors events or “walkshops”- actions and interventions that will include a participating artist from Bochum, as well as passersby. We want to test out a few pre-planned formats that include other artists and develop or come to new insights and methods.

The research methodology is in short based on actions and processes that allow us to re-examine how to empower ourselves individually as well as a group through the tools of thinking choreography, street-fashion and visual design, all the aspects of our immediate selves – in our skin, on our skin, between the skins!

*Which connections to persons or institutions are you going to establish in the area?*

According to the methodology, we would like to get in touch with young designers, visual artists, poets and musicians (see wall of values), as well as dancers and performers in the area.

It would be of extreme value to get in touch with all kinds of profiles – established ones as well as the ones that are undergoing a kind of education in either of these fields. The general public is definitely the target group which will hopefully respond to our actions in the city. Their reactions will then guide us to think further and question the practice of

merging street fashion/street performance with the goal of creating wider understanding, inventing new approaches as well as re-establishing work ethics in the light of the earlier mentioned values and phenomena observed in the cities.

*What are the results you would like to achieve?*

We would like to achieve a clearer sense of how the two fields merge, how they inform each other, how one can think of the body in the light of the other. We aim to come to further concrete forms/actions (apart from the ones we are starting from) that can reveal more about the subject through practice of both fields and as a result tackle the questions of how an urban “heartbeat” of the city, habits, people, artists can move together and communicate through the body and the “second” skin – the clothes which in new ways emerge from the city and, even if adopting other models, to consciously rethink their appropriation.

We are exploring this “encounter” also in other cities, by using our existing and new connections, but the first deeper research will occur in Bochum. The diversity of cities offer the broadness of the research, to see what kind of actions and concrete outcomes come from different characters of the cities. We are already separately researching some ideas but this will be the first phase with more emphasis on the body and the performative.

*How and in what kind of format should the results be presented in public at the end of the research?*

Apart from the events we will be organizing during the research, we’d like to have an open space considering the final presentation, which means it can take on various forms. Different formats of events/actions during the research are meant for gathering information, reactions from the people and the participating young designers, artists, dancers about the mentioned subject... Since we would be playing with formats (such as gatherings in the city, making art “zones”, placing messages or posters around the

cities...) the “final” presentation would embrace all relevant and interesting outcomes gathered through realized actions/events... (could then be a video or a music act, a street performance in the city...)