

Prototype Status Dance Company Ground(s) Diptychon Schwere Reiter, Munich

Classically trained Swiss choreographer and dancer Jasmine Morand founded Cie Prototype Status in 2003 after further studying contemporary dance at the Modern Dance Academy in Rotterdam. Her association and subsequent collaboration with David N. Russo, former dancer with Ballet Theatre Munich and now very much part of the free dance scene in the city, began soon afterwards, and they have been working together regularly since 2005. This two-part programme set out to establish the integration of innovative technology and movement with interesting results.

Inspired by peep shows, *Underground* is an installation set in a darkened room; a barely transparent rectangular structure stands in the centre with diagonal slits on all sides allowing restricted vision to the inside of the box where, in silence, a couple moves slowly, their actions triggering the lights to flicker off and on, creating a strobe-like effect. Keeping a distance at first, their movements become ever more tactile, frantic and ultimately sensual, unwittingly drawing in the audience to witness the intimacy of their deeds. Observing the audience and their reactions was infinitely more fascinating, as some of them began to mill around the box, more following behind like sheep, taking a closer look through the openings with one even choosing to film it with her iPad! It seemed awkwardly voyeuristic but at the same time gracefully aesthetic.

Playground is a game, a rivalry between three men, a competition to see who will triumph. Initially, the rules appear quite simple: testing their reflexes, they each slam one foot into the centre of their circle, the winner receiving a friendly slap on the shoulder from the others. Slowly the play area evolves as the stage lights are rearranged to form a large open space, a small cylindrical object is introduced to upset the calm and the conflict begins. Repetition of short sequences of steps whose dynamics constantly changed increased in complexity and tempo, engulfing the entire performance area and creating a sensation of anticipation and angst for both the dancers and audience. Dominating video graphics and lighting joined the fight, at times swallowing up the scene, diminishing the dancers' roles, thus emphasising the irrationality of the situation. Russo is still an exemplary performer; his intensity, exactitude and instinctive

Prototype Status Dance Company in Ground(s) Diptychon. Photo: Prototype Status Dance Company



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quality drove the performance, with Fabio Bergamaschi and Manel Salas Palau, to a remarkable level, which was totally unexpected.

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