

FIELD NOTES (Relevé de terrain)

Choreographer: Julie Lebel

Dancer: Karine Gagné

Musicians: Sébastien Cliche and Christian Miron

Video and technical direction: Gabriel Rochette

Length of the work: 20 min version or 35 minutes version.



FIELD NOTES is an "invitation au voyage" to far away places and personal spaces. Choreography, music and images work together in a paced and progressive manner to reveal sensory details: sounds of breaking shells under the step, images of furrows in the sand and a very small stream of water slowly draining out after the high tide, like blood in veins, sinuous and knotty movements of limbs all twisted like roots. The work is a suite of choreographic moments/objects placed in the space one after the other following the pace of a walk. During a walk, our thoughts shift from drifting to settling modes and time seems to be suspended while our attention is suddenly rapt by a detail.

Short description of the piece:

On stage, the soloist, Karine Gagné, on which Julie has choreographed the dance, is accompanied by Sébastien and Christian who produce the music in direct, out of their portable computers. Behind them, a screen is installed on which we can see a series of videos, images of natural elements selected for their direct link with the dynamic of the dance.

Processus:

In June 2006, the creative team of FIELD NOTES was working together in Sept-Îles, on Côte-Nord in Québec (about 900 km North-East of Montreal). Drift-Walks were organized with local participants to feed the choreographic creative process. While Julie Lebel was translating the collected data into choreographic motifs, Sébastien worked with Christian Miron to record bits of sound and created an electronic music score to play with the dance. During this time, Gabriel Rochette filmed and produced the videos to be projected during the performance.

Drift-Walks: improvising a walk. By Julie Lebel

In June 2006, in Sept-Îles, Québec, I worked with Sébastien Cliche a visual artist on a shared initiative involving Drift-Walks: participatory walks exploring space, nature and sensations. Participant data was collected and used as a stimulus for the set choreographed solo FIELD NOTES. Booklets guided participants attention during the walks. The title of the project suggests that by walking we did a landscape or topographic survey that would lead us to a survey of our internal spaces as well.

It would be ideal to tie the presentation of FIELD NOTES with Drift-Walks in a surrounding park as a way to invite the public into its process of creation.

I am interested in repeating the experience of Drift-Walks. I strongly feel that Drift-Walks is a way to experience what it is like to dance, what occurs in a dancers mind while improvising. The booklet is there to guide the participants attention and spark ideas. Of course, the data collected could be used for a number of purposes: another solo with a local performer; an installation; or simply as an opportunity for people to walk a dance.

The walk can take place in a park, preferably a quiet place. In Sept-Îles, we chose very specific environments known by locals, representative of their natural and beautiful environment: a long point of sand going into the gulf or the St-Laurence formed by the force of a big river; a powerful water fall; a small island. Each place was visited once by a group of participants and the activity took between two and six hours (depending on travel time to the site and back). Booklets were given to the participants at the meeting point. The booklet is of my design and is filled with questions and spaces to write and draw. An English version of the booklet will soon be created as it is needed for the upcoming Drift-Walks series during the Festival of New dance in Newfoundland.

The questions in the booklets aim to awaken physical awareness. By looking at things, small and big, hearing sounds, touching, our mind makes associations. These associations are tied to physical sensations and this is what I ask the participants to investigate. Naturally, this activity is done individually, but within a group and at the same time. There is a sense of connection with the environment and also a sense of security provided by the presence of the group, allowing participants to go deeper into the experience.

The idea is not to fill the entire booklet, but to choose exercises that mean something to them at a particular point. I invite the participants to arrive, and then begin to explore the environment. At some point, they would stop and rest, open the booklet and maybe write or draw something. I invite them to choose their point of focus. The participants creatively choose what they want to look at, hear and how their body responds to it; It's like improvising their walk.



Artist statement

Drifts-Walks and FIELD NOTES are turning points in my artistic process. Not satisfied with the traditional production model of "creation-rehearsal-performance", I think that dance can happen in different contexts, smaller actions in site-specific settings where I can fully install a dance idea: Mobile Clubbing, blind-folded walks and Drift-Walks are a few examples.

I am fascinated by contact with community and place through the body. FIELD NOTES allowed me to revisit traditional modes of dance production as well as fully incorporating a site-specific dance action. I was able to refine choreographic motifs in studio and watch beautiful movement of participants walking, totally engaged in their physicality. Participants of the Drift-Walks came to watch the performance and experienced a special connection to the dance as if they could remember some of these impressions during their walk while watching the dance.

I am very curious about how the public in other places would react to this work. Is FIELD NOTES tied to a specific place, Côte-Nord, or is it a reflection of abstract elements of nature that can be found anywhere?



Technical Information

FIELD NOTES needs a projector and a screen placed in the back of the stage. The music comes from two computers and one microphone that needs to be amplified through regular theater venues sound system. It is low-tech, no props are required other than a high table to place the musicians (in front of the screen). As you can see in the video, we lit the piece very simply due to technical limitations in the small chapel where we premiered the piece.

Contact

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Artists Biography

Julie Lebel / Choreographer

Julie Lebel graduated from UQAM (Université du Québec à Montréal), with a BFA in 1998. In university she had the opportunity to dance for Daniel Léveillé, Lynda Gaudreau, Marie-Julie Asselin and produce her own works. After school, she dedicated my time towards choreography (Field Notes, Violent Frankness Project, Duet for a Woman and a Girl) and improvisation (Daniel Lepkoff, Lisa Nelson, Pam Johnson and Nina Martin). She has collaborated extensively with musicians in set works or improvisation settings (Scott Thomson, Ken Aldcroft, Gringoplaza, Eric Craven). She recently studied clowning with Sue Morisson. Most of her projects are community based and she loves to work with non-dancers (Non-Dancer Research Group, scale: human, Mobile Clubbing and Drift-Walks). She started rock climbing 5 years ago to train and play. Ensemble Indépendant is her company based in Sept-Îles. It provides administrative and technical support for the production of dance and related arts events on Côte-Nord.

Karine Gagné / dancer

Karine Gagné will graduate from LADMMI in May 2007. At LADMMI she had the opportunity to dance in a creation piece with Roger Sinha, Sasha Ivaochko, Emanuel Jouthe and Julia Sasso. She also was part of the remounting of Ginette Laurin's Déluge, Massimo Agostinellei's Louise and Dominique Porte's Up and Down for students at LADMMI. In 1999, Karine received a bursary from the Ballets Jazz de Montréal to highlight her talents during a workshop at Domaine Forget (Charlevoix). Karine started dancing for Julie Lebel in Sept-Îles in 1999, first for a short solo, then a duet presented at STUDIO 303 (Living Room dances, 2000) and was also part of the creation of Quatuor à Corps en F Majeur, presented in Sept-Îles in 2001.

Sébastien Cliche / Musician

Sébastien Cliche obtained a bachelor's degree in visual arts from UQAM (1995). He has shown his work in numerous solo exhibitions in Montréal, Quebec City, Rouyn-Noranda, Ottawa, Toronto and London, Ontario. Parallel to his visual artwork, he also produces experimental sound work, and has presented his project /invisible field/ at the MUTEK festival (2005) and more recently, at the CHAMBRE BIANCHE (Quebec City). He can also be heard on disk or stage with Gringoplaza, an improvisational trio of which he has been a member since 2001. At present time he's working as a curator on a project where visual artists and musicians meet around the idea of visual score. The exhibition will be presented in 2007 at the CLARK GALLERY and at the GALLERY 101.

Christian Miron / Musician

Christian Miron live and work in Montreal. He's a designer and musician, long time collaborator of Jérôme Minière with whom he compose, record and perform live. In 2000, He was involved in Post-Audio a collective project (gallery CLARK, Mtl) where he act as a sculptor, designer and musician. As a DJ he was invited to the FESTIVAL DU NOUVEAU CINEMA DE MONTREAL, at La Cité des ondes (CHAMP LIBRE) and at the MUTEK FESTIVAL in Montreal. He is also resident DJ at BILY KUN (Montreal) since 2000. In 2002 he created a sound track for the exhibition Darboral of the artist Massimo Guerrera presented at the MUSÉE NATIONAL DES BEAUX-ARTS (Quebec City). In 2005, he was performing live at PLACARD/MUTEK (Mtl).

Gabriel Rochette / Video projections and technical direction

Born in a family involved in many aspects of the art field, Gabriel Rochette began early to take part and be interested in staged arts. He began lighting at 15 and then was introduced to sound and camera work. Those experiences allowed him to work as a stagehand at the Salle de Spectacle de Sept-Îles, video editor and sound man for Télé-Québec Côte-Nord, cameraman for CFER-TV TVA, and to work at the Musée Régional da la Côte-Nord setting up exhibits. He is also a trombone and keyboard player with several music groups. His first collaboration with Julie Lebel was in 1999 for Voyage de Découverte. Since then, he has continued to play a key role in the technical production of her works and is also fully involved at a creative level with video, sound and light design.