

Summary of public discussions from keōja Klaipėda 2013

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Discussion on "National Art and Identity"

Highlights revolved around how we can talk about representations of national identity within dance under conditions of global society, where hybrid and nomadic identities begin to dominate. On the one hand, conscious efforts to create something national, what could be recognized as local product and expression of national identity, even in the frameworks of contemporary dance are noticeable. On the other hand, contemporary dance tries to dissociate itself from such a straightforward relationship. However, it is often contextualized by foreign audience, as being of Russian / Lithuanian, etc. expression. Anthropologists also claims, that it is possible to identify specific movements and motives (without music) of the dance that allow identification of an individual dance and choreography, or which country the dancer derives from.

The question of creation *grand narratives* in the dance has been also discussed. Can story created in choreography still be related to the nation's myths and representations? Katarzyna Pastuszek from Poland has emphasized that intersection between nationalism (in a good sense of this word) and the globalized identity is very clear, but idea of individuality is more exposed in the dance, what results in attempts to give up national identity and rather to choose other forms of identities' expression. Alexander Andryashkin (Russia) turned attention to the context – customers, audience, political actions, and other, which influences reading and interpretation of one or another idea of an abstract dance much more than choreography does itself. He claims that dance is quite open phenomenon and can be easily bound to various political or social values. Russian artists would prefer to be identified with European identity, however abroad, they are inevitably identified with Russia. Their main narrative is the idea of freedom. Therefore, dancers should look deeper into the context itself. Idea of *grand narratives* and representations in contemporary dance has been suggested as a possible theme for another keōja encounter. Speakers concluded that contemporary dance can be successfully used in purposes of nation's representation.

Discussion on "Exporting Identity"

Discussion was related to the dance export and import: how and what foreign projects are selected by the festival managers, and what identities would dancers like to transfer to other audiences. Discussion faced with different levels of understanding dance, because recognition of good project or artist depends on professional knowledge and contextual things, otherwise it is difficult to say what is good, masterful, and what is not. From individual point of view, we need to think what artist himself wants to achieve – perfection of technique, creation of own style, joining the network. It is important to talk about dancer's interests also on the level of the organizers, which are often pragmatic, dependent on a variety of knick-knacks. Discussion reached its peak, when the question of audience's reaction has been touched: whether and how the audience should understand and percept contemporary dance project. On the one hand, it is possible to speak of an abstract confrontation of work of art with the audience, which is left free to choose its own interpretations. In this case the work must encourage and provoke questions, thoughts, and then audience's ability to perceive the work of art can be left aside. However, there is another provision that the organizers should be acquainted with their audience, which is a major participant in communicative action. At the same time, context of "here and now" gives its values to the dance. Thus sometimes esoteric modern knowledge should be conveyed to the audience by a hint, it should be educated and constructed.