

**The Romanian audience saw you in two performances 1: Songs by Nicole Beutler and your own creation , A Short History of Crying...What can you tell us about the collaboration with Nicole Beutler, how does the process of creation take place in such kind of artistical meeting?**

The performance *1: Songs* was created through a kind of collaboration which I find very productive. Nicole wanted to work with me specifically on a solo for/with me and the idea was to make a performance about female characters from the history of theatre. As I love theatre texts and have been working with them myself, I was intrigued by the possibility of playing so many different characters. Departing from this broad premise, during the early stages we realised that our mutual interests lie in exploring the form of a pop concert. I was excited to imagine myself singing. I was asked to bring my favourite texts and I enjoyed the freedom to choose those that were close to me, that I liked. Some of the texts in the show have personal significance; they were personal choices that perhaps other performers would not make. This is why I enjoyed working on the piece in the first place – it very much reflects my own sensibility. Nicole's work is usually quite precise, but in this case she gave me the freedom in the creative process and I just ran with it.

I also worked a lot in the studio with DJ Gary Shaperd. He would mix music and make samples, and I'd interpret the texts. In one of the early sessions we created two songs that remained the same until the end.

It was a very interesting situation, how this piece came together from convergence of three different creative energies. Given how much of it was based on individual inputs, in *1: Songs* I don't feel as a performer in the classical sense. Of course, the final direction was Nicole's and that's the main difference. In my own shows I feel like I should take care of every aspect, but when I work with others I like to take a step back at some point and let things emerge from interaction between different ideas. So even though there are formal decisions that I might not have made as a choreographer, I still see this piece as a result of collective authorship.

**What is the difference between performing in a creation signed by another artist and a performance created by you, what are the main characteristics of being performing in the middle of your own concept?**

In the creative process for me it can be sometimes quite hard to make a strict

division between the roles of performer and choreographer/director. I think they are, to certain extent, inevitably intertwined, and good work only ever comes out of discussion and exchange of everybody's ideas, regardless of their 'official' role. When it comes to fine tuning, the concerns of a light technician are equally important as those of a dramaturge or a director.

In my work so far I have always performed in the piece as well as directing. It is a very demanding situation which requests carving out a space of critical distance to be able to assess what I'm doing. Perhaps that's why my processes are often long, with much needed breaks in between research, rehearsals and final montage. I like the periods of silence and contemplation that arrives after the intensive periods spent in the studio. These are the precious moments in which the pieces of puzzle hopefully begin to fall in together.

**Why, from all the manifestations of emotion you chose the crying? Was it a clear personal option or was it inspired more by anthropological mechanisms?**

I 'm interested in how emotions are manifested in different situations and why we express them publicly. Coming from Former Yugoslavia and moving to the Netherlands, I realised that there is a significant difference in the way people express their sadness or happiness through tears. Even though we are all Europeans, there are certain codes of behaviour that confirm the clichés of East and West as two opposed cultural propositions. In the performance I'm playing with these clichés, attempting to suggest their arbitrary nature and how they are often politically motivated. The performance is conceived as a journey through my personal history combined with a detached, scientific approach.

In my work I am interested in the relation between the individual and the society. As documentary material I often use (auto-)biographical facts, found footage, and personal testimonies of the performers, which I pitch against the official historical accounts. *Will You Ever Be Happy Again?* was an encounter between a German and a Serbian performer, as "bad guys" of recent European history, who share their childhood memories in order to face up to the questions of responsibility and guilt. In *A Short History Of Crying* I continue to explore the position of the individual vis-à-vis various systems of power, touching upon themes of memory, emigration and death. I used photographic and video documentation from the research trip on which I went in the south of Serbia and in Montenegro, and combined this with footage taken from TV, films and Youtube.

**How do you feel about relating with the audience? Is it a form of exposure or a mutual enriching dialogue?**

I enjoy collaborating with others on different levels, and I also see the audience as part of that process. I like physically sharing the experience on stage and the sense of a temporary community created in the space of the performance. It's a different sort of presence that offers an additional tool to communicate the issues I am interested in. The energy between the audience and the performers, and the communication that happens in that situation, is something that can't be achieved only through writing. It is an active dialogue. And even if the impact of this form of dialogue is questionable, compared to other media with much wider audiences, for me the beauty is precisely in these small, seemingly minor acts of exchange in which art and life come together, if even only for the briefest of moments.