

dumb type



voyage
creation 2002

Voyage

conception / creation
dumb type

creative members
Takayuki Fujimoto
Manna Fujiwara
Yuko Hirai
Ryoji Ikeda
Takao Kawaguchi
Seiko Ouchi
Hidekazu Maeda
So Ozaki
Noriko Sunayama
Shiro Takatani
Yoko Takatani
Mayumi Tanaka
Hiromasa Tomari
Misako Yabuuchi
Ichiro Awazu

performers
Manna Fujiwara
Yuko Hirai
Takao Kawaguchi
Hidekazu Maeda
Seiko Ouchi
So Ozaki
Noriko Sunayama
Mayumi Tanaka
Misako Yabuuchi

Visual creation
Shiro Takatani
Takayuki Fujimoto
Hiromasa Tomari
Sound creation
Ryoji Ikeda

Stage manager
So Ozaki
Video assistant
Ichiro Awazu
Sound operator
Yoshihisa Fukuhara

Company manager
Yoko Takatani

acknowledgement
Noriko Kitamura (costume)

production
dumb type

production, touring
Richard Castelli – Epidemic

in co-production with
Centre de Developpement Choregraphique de Toulouse
Theater Drama City, Osaka
Le-Maillon Théâtre de Strasbourg
Maison des Arts de Créteil
REDCAT (Roy & Edna Disney/CalArts Theater) Los Angeles

with the support of
Kyoto Art Center
Biwako Hall, Shiga

An unprecedented atmosphere of opaque

uncertainty surrounds us. If you try to dismiss

it, or paralyse your mind, it stays with you like a second skin of anxiety and fear. You may feign unconcern, but you cannot stay disaffected for long, nor write it off as someone else's problem or a distant event beyond the television screen.

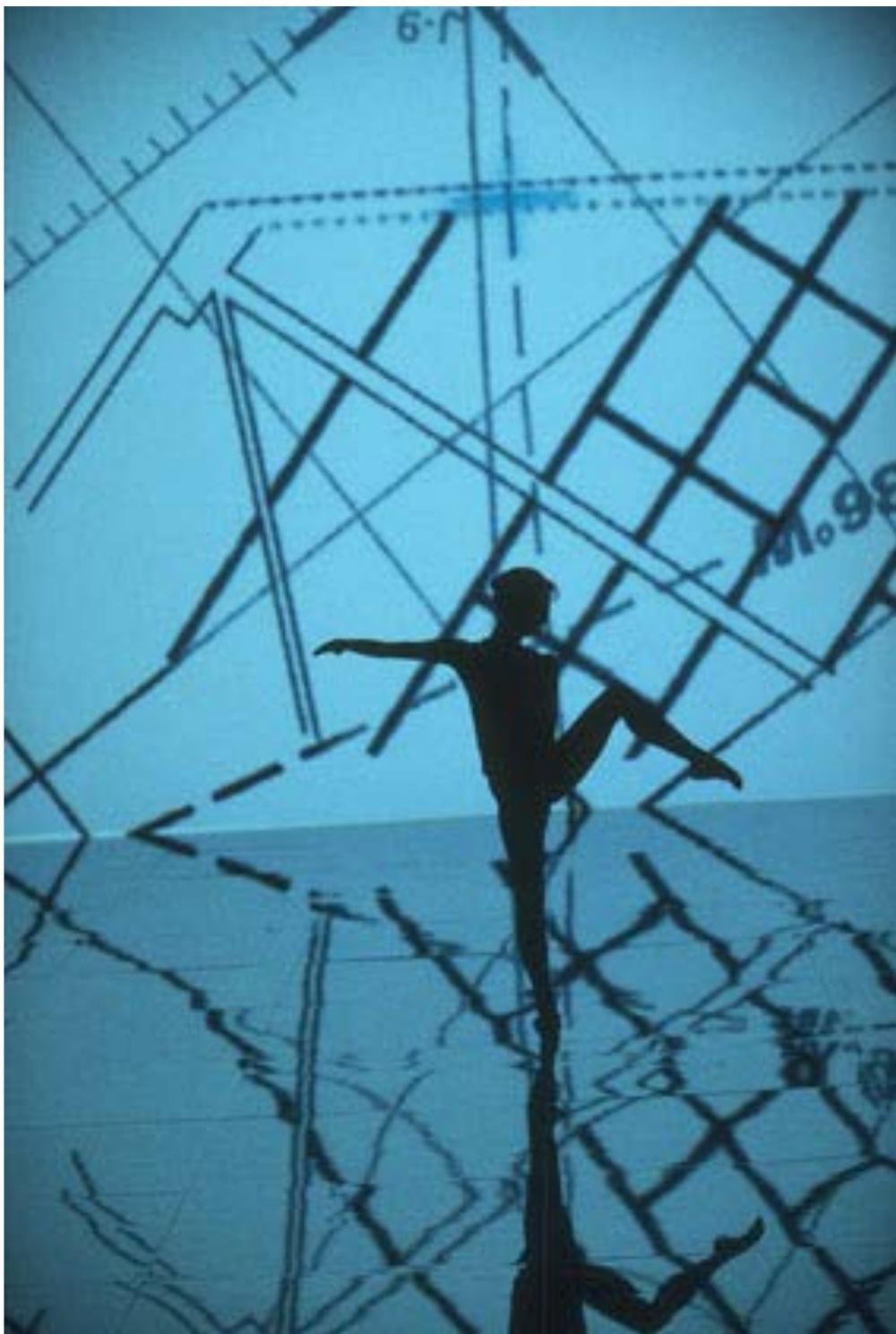
More people than you can possibly imagine are encountering a sense of crisis, struggling to find some way to come to terms with this condition. Some would speak of "an inexplicable helplessness", others of "a decay of intelligence". But no matter how thoughtfully the phrase is chosen, words fail us.

Under these circumstances, what could be more ridiculous than innocent "art activities"? Time and again we need to ask ourselves why we are still trying to express ourselves through the performing arts and why we should continue with our creative productions?

At times like this, we remember the words of Pina Bausch – something she once said about "*a Turkish man whose aged mother always told him "Don't cry, sing!"*"

We have chosen not to verbalize or otherwise comment upon the circumstances that currently encompass us. We hope to reclaim true communication without relying on any verbal pretexts. But is performance a true substitute for such mutual resonance? Once again, we find ourselves questioning the very essence of performance.

dumb type, April 2002



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dumb type, an artist collective

dumb type is based in Kyoto, Japan. Members are trained in varied disciplines, including the visual arts, architecture, music and computer programming as well as writing, acting, dance, and other forms of performing arts. dumb type's work ranges across such diverse media as art exhibitions, performances, audio-visual and printed publications.

We started as a group of frustrated students

in conceptual art, painting, architecture design, video, photography, and other areas at the University of Kyoto of the Arts in 1984. "Frustrated" because as students we were not allowed to learn anything outside the category of the department each member belonged to:

oil painting majors could only learn oil painting, and so on. But being in our early twenties at that time, we wanted to try new things. During this time we were greatly influenced by presentations of artists in multimedia performance around the world, especially by the early Brooklyn Academy of Music's NEXT WAVE presentations of Robert Wilson, Laurie Anderson, Pina Bausch, and other now internationally acclaimed artists. Performances by these artists in Japan then ignited the national performance art boom.

dumb?

Our aspiration is and has always been to create something interesting and new by departing from the conventional style of theatre, which in Japan is predominantly based on dialogue. We experiment with many different ways to invent new vocabulary for theatre performance. We fuse the wide range of our group members' skills and knowledge to forge a creative style that overcomes the boundaries between the visual arts, theatre, and dance. The word "dumb" in our title literally means "not speaking", but it also symbolizes our stylistic freedom in artistic expression, which, nonetheless, does not exclude use of text. The word can also imply being stupid and idiotic. Naming ourselves "dumb," therefore, is a cynical antithesis to the more refined and established world of "high art" that we perceived dominated the art scene. Rather than holding on to the refined tastes and values of the conventional art world, we did (and still do) choose to be idiots capable of bringing revolutionary visions to the arts.

process

Being a collective, we not only bring together artistic skills, ideas, and concepts, but also our personal day-to-day experiences, interests and concerns. dumb type founder Teiji Furuhashi once said that the core group (Furuhashi, Toru Koyamada, Yukihiro Hozumi, Shiro Takatani, Takayuki Fujimoto, and Hiromasa Tomari) "wanted to start creating something new with our skills. Most of the time we spent discussing society or whatever, not specific art things. When someone had an idea it would be presented on a piece of paper. If the group was interested, we made it come true. At first the idea would be really open and gradually it became something very specific. In that way we're really democratic. dumb type is a collaboration group. We don't want someone to be king." Once the group sees a theme, the individuals explore it in different directions, and later bring his/her findings to the group, as words, movements, phrases of music, lighting ideas, costumes, stage architecture, video images, and so on. The group's assemblage and editing of those materials and ideas is a central source of our creativity. Everyone has a say in any aspect of the creation, and nobody is limited to his/her expertise. Anyone can take any kind of initiative, and no fixed sequence exists in building what comes first and what follows.

History

We were aiming at deconstructing conventional theatre and inventing new language for the theater when we organized in 1984. What we have created is work that is as formally complex as it is socially complex. Our most visible and well-known artworks fall somewhere within the boundaries of performance, oftentimes accompanied by museum installations.

In the early 1980s, a cornucopia of different cultural movements emerged in Japan in tandem with the rapidly growing economy. Our early years (from *Pleasure Life* to *pH*) coincided with those movements: post-modernism, subculture, performance art, and the Japanese underground “small theater” movement, the interaction between the arts and philosophers and intellectuals, a growing interest in the arts among the general public, and the rise in corporate sponsorship for the arts.

At the same time the work of many artists from overseas was being introduced to Japan. The founding members of dumb type were graduating from the university, and our former director Teiji Furuhashi returned from New York where he had lived for some time. Soon, Spiral and Wacoal Arts Center, a corporate-funded art producer in Tokyo, produced our first major world-tour performance piece *pH* (1990). We received our biggest-ever four-year grant from the Japanese Saison Foundation in 1993, becoming the second recipient of Japan’s first long-term art support program. With *pH*, dumb type began performing world wide.

In the 1990s, Japan’s “bubble” economy burst, the worldwide AIDS crisis escalated, and Japanese society responded with a series of drastic changes. Local grass-roots activism arose to counter the AIDS crisis, and issues of sexuality and human rights were loudly discussed in private circles and public arenas. dumb type was thrown into the thick of it when

Furuhashi came out to his colleagues and friends about his HIV infection, and the impact was devastating. Our work *S/N*, the last directed by Furuhashi before his death in 1995, was born under such circumstances.

What now?

Our work has naturally changed after Furuhashi’s death. With the experience of painful loss and grief, and new insight gained, our work style has turned somewhat more introverted, looking within one’s self more than at the outside world. It doesn’t mean we have lost interest in what is happening “on the outside.” Living in the post-9/11 world, it is impossible to not be concerned with what is happening worldwide: wars, terrorism, crimes, poverty, hunger, environmental issues, falling economies, political corruption, and so on.

Under these circumstances what does it mean to be personally and professionally committed to art? What can art do to make a difference? This has always been dumb type’s concern. But now we address it and the world with more “internal eyes”. We continue to explore what it means to be a human being and reject the trappings of a pre-conceived idea. But how should (could) we look, where, for what answers, through what eyes, and from what angle, in order to live, commit and move on? It is also worth a mention that the advancement in computer technology, most notably the shift from analogue to digital in music and video, along with the changes in our society, are influencing both the formal and thematic language of our work. Thus, *OR*, and *memorandum*.

Biography

PLAN FOR SLEEP (1984–86) ... **EVERY DOG HAS HIS DAY** (1985) ... **THE ORDER OF THE SQUARE** (1985) ... **036 PLEASURE LIFE** (1987) ... **PLEASURE LIFE** (1988) ...

pH (1990–93) was dumb type's largest scale work to-date integrating performance, installation, video, and printed material. The audience's seats lined up above both sides of a slender sixteen-meter white linoleum floor. On the stage a horizontal bar moved across the floor suggesting a giant photocopy machine. Installed on the bottom surface of the bar were a number of slide projectors, which projected images onto the floor where performers (human beings) acted and danced under the mercy of and/or against the machine (society.)

S/N (1992–96) was triggered by the former director Teiji Furuhashi's infection by the HIV virus that causes AIDS, the political issues of AIDS, and, more significantly, dumb type's overriding interest in how individual identity is conditioned within each individual's self. The performance challenged the fine line between the fiction of theatre and reality through its unusual 'live' talk show style (in which Teiji himself comes out, together with a couple of other performers, as "homosexuals" and "HIV positive"). A wide range of images, texts and vignettes surrounding such themes were combined with strikingly new dance as well as video and slides, lighting and sounds. The piece reverberated across many groups in society; its message "what can art do for society and the individual?" shocked both the theatre and the visual arts community, as well as the general community and activists, all living with the HIV/AIDS crisis.

OR (1997–1999) was created in France in March 1997, following a one-month residency at the Théâtre du Manège in Maubeuge. **OR** is a reflection on the border(s) between life and death, the meaning of its title ranging from the binary system, to the alternative A or B, the 0 (zero) radius, an operation room. Some of the most advanced techniques combined the human body and various media to elicit a range of viewpoints, whether religious, philosophical, medical, cultural, or emotional, onto a blinding-white stage that consisted of a circular floor and semi-cylindrical wall. dumb type described the work as being "about the state of 'white out' like in a blizzard, where you are deprived of ability to see, where you can't recognize anything, where you don't know where you stand anymore, where you may not know whether you are alive OR dead. But what distinguishes one from the other? Where is the border? What is death? What is it?"

memorandum (1999–2002) The first version of this show was presented in October 1999 by Le Manège, Scène Nationale de Maubeuge, France. The final version was premiered at the National Theatre of Tokyo on November 27th 2000. Combining elements of multimedia, dance and fragmented narrative,

memorandum explores the hazy dimensions of recall that ground and disquietly erode our experience minute-by-minute.

Voyage, the last performance by dumb type was first presented by the Centre de Développement Choréographique de Toulouse in April 2002 at the Théâtre National de Toulouse, France.

Art installations by dumb type include **Lovers** (*Dying Pictures*, *Loving Pictures*), created in 1994 by Furuhashi and now in the permanent collection of Museum of Modern Art in New York. It consists of a dark square room with walls appearing empty at first and gradually imaging several nudes, nearly life-size men and women, walking, standing still, and embracing one another in slow movement. In the time a viewer approaches a wall to see the images better, a new figure, Furuhashi himself, appears, moves slowly in the viewer's direction, and then vanishes on the wall behind the person. The installation piece **OR**, related to the performance work, was commissioned by the Inter Communication Center (ICC) in Tokyo for its opening in April 1997. A new version of the **OR** installation was purchased by the Musée d'Art Contemporain Lyons in 2000.

This artwork was exhibited by the CDC in Toulouse (2002) and Lille 2004 – European Capital of Culture in Lille (2004), which presented also **Lovers**.

frost frames was created by artistic director Shiro Takatani in May 1998 for the Spiral Hall Tokyo and was presented at the Musée d'Art Contemporain Lyons, EXIT Festival Créteil, VIA Festival Maubeuge (France) in 2000, and CDC in Toulouse in 2002. Other installations in 1999 and 2000 include **Love/Sex/Death/Money/Life**, exhibited in Artsonje Center Seoul, Korea, and Vision Ruhr Dortmund, Germany; and **Cascade** at the Rotonda della Besana Milan, Italy and Haus der Culturen der Welt Berlin, Germany.

Commissioned by NTT ICC, the new installation **Voyages**, related to the performance **Voyage**, opened in Tokyo in August 2002.

Music projects include Takatani's contribution as artistic director on the first opera by Ryuichi Sakamoto, **LIFE**, which premiered in September 1999. In March 1998, dumb type designed the "symphonic novella" by Gérard Hourbette for the first cycle of **Dangerous Visions**, a project of Art Zoyd and the Orchestre National de Lille, France, combining philharmonic orchestra and new sound and image technologies.



Tours from 2002

Performances

memorandum

- 10-12 January 2002 :
 - 28 February-3 March 2002:
 - 7-10 March 2002:
 - 14-16 March 2002:
 - 21-24 March 2002:
 - 17-18 May 2002 :
 - 24 May-1 June 2002:
 - 22-23 June 2002:
 - 28-29 June 2002:
 - 16 May 2003:
 - 13-14-15 June 2003:
 - 27 September 2003:
 - 9-12 October 2003:
 - 28 Oct-2 November 2003:
 - 14-15 November 2003:
- New Opera of Tel Aviv (Israel)
 - Chicago (USA)
 - Seattle (USA)
 - Portland (USA)
 - Minneapolis (USA)
 - Festival Art Rock, St Brieuc (France)
 - Créteil (France)
 - Singapore (Singapore)
 - Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia)
 - Seoul (Korea)
 - Venice (Italy)
 - Bangkok (Thailand)
 - Melbourne (Australia)
 - Los Angeles (USA)
 - Pittsburgh (USA)

Voyage – creation 2002

- residence 10 Dec 2001-5 Jan 2002:
 - 24-26 April 2002:
 - 30 April 2002:
 - 30 August-1 September 2002 :
 - 6-8 September 2002:
 - 29 September 2002:
 - 3 October 2002:
 - 9 October 2002:
 - 20-22 November 2002:
 - 21-22 February 2003:
 - 2-3 August 2003:
 - 5-8 November 2003:
 - 3-13 December 2003:
 - 20-21 February 2004:
 - 2-4 April 2004:
 - 1 October 2004:
 - 9-10 March 2005:
 - 15 March 2005:
 - 7-9 April 2005:
 - 25-26 May 2005:
 - 7 June 2005:
 - 9-10 September 2005:
 - 16-17 September 2005:
 - 11 April 2006:
 - 15 April 2006:
 - 20 April 2006:
 - 12-13 May 2006:
 - 26-27 May 2006:
 - 20-22 October 2006:
 - 20-23 March 2008:
 - 3-4 October 2008:
 - 16-19 October 2008:
 - 26-27 November 2008:
 - 5 December 2008:
 - 25-26 November 2009:
 - 3 December 2009:
- Toulouse (France)
 - Toulouse (France)
 - Ibos Tarbes (France)
 - Tokyo (Japan)
 - Osaka (Japan)
 - Vilnius (Lithuania)
 - Tartu (Estonia)
 - Riga (Latvia)
 - Strasbourg (France)
 - Weimar (Germany)
 - Shiga (Japan)
 - Los Angeles (USA)
 - Créteil (France)
 - Yamaguchi (Japan)
 - Taipei (Taiwan)
 - Düsseldorf (Germany)
 - Angoulême (France)
 - St Médard en Jalles (France)
 - Stockholm (Sweden)
 - Bergen (Norway)
 - Seoul (Korea)
 - München (Germany)
 - Düsseldorf (Germany)
 - Châlons en Champagne (France)
 - Nîmes (France)
 - Linz (Austria)
 - Glasgow (U.K.)
 - Ljubljana (Slovenia)
 - Melbourne (Australia)
 - Bogotá (Colombia)
 - Troy (USA)
 - Montclair (USA)
 - Mulhouse (France)
 - Le Havre (France)
 - Athens (Greece)
 - Cannes (France)

Exhibitions

Cascade installation/performance

Commissioned by the Milan Design Salon, *Cascade* was the large entrance installation of the enormous architectural exhibition "Rooms and Secrets" at the Rotonda della Besana, Milan (Italy) leading to rooms by Peter Greenaway, Emir Kusturica and Bob Wilson. It was presented in Milan from April to May 2000 and at the Exhibition "Translated Acts" at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin.

IRIS - Special creation for the Valencia Biennial (Spain)

This 120m long fog sculpture was presented in June 2001 at the Tinglado in the Valencia seaport.
Creation: Shiro Takatani (dumb type), artistic collaboration: Fujiko Nakaya

Lovers / Teiji Furuhashi

Dying images, loving images. *Lovers* was created in 1994 by Teiji Furuhashi.
The new version was produced in 2001 and was exhibited in Lille (2003/2004), Tokyo and Kyoto (2005) and Shanghai (2006).

[OR] installation

The original version is part of the permanent collection of the ICC in Tokyo.
The new version of the installation belongs to the Musée d'Art Contemporain in Lyons (France) and was recently exhibited in France (Toulouse, 2002 and Lille 2003/2004).

Selection from critics

Voyage

Intra muros (France). 2001

"C'est à l'évidence l'événement de l'année scénique toulousaine : dumb type sera en résidence au CDC du 9 décembre au 8 janvier pour créer leur nouveau spectacle. . .

Avec leur quincaillerie électronique mutante (et les harmonies turbulentes du compositeur Ryoji Ikeda), leur maîtrise de l'occupation de l'espace visuel et sonore, dumb type demeure la meilleure raison de danser l'ultra moderne solitude au XXI^e siècle.

Observateurs acides de leur temps, leur mélancolie parfois douceâtre, souvent douloureuse, est pour le moins tenace."

Jean Szurewsky

Ramdam (France). 2002

"Ceux qui ont vu leur memorandum au TNT, il y a deux ans exactement, n'auront sans doute pas oublié leur esthétique séduisante et froide, leur sens du tempo scénique et de l'événement dramatique, et surtout leur capacité à créer et imposer des images inoubliables à l'aide du corps, de vidéos et de lumières, grâce à une très juste mesure des effets, extrêmement efficace."

Dominique Crebassol

Intra muros (France). 2002

"Un univers sinueux peuplé de danseurs tendus et inventifs, de sons étranges et débrillés, d'images expérimentales et sélectes. Un mélange étourdissant de danse, de vidéo, d'informatique, de graphisme et de musique électronique produit par d'infatigables aventuriers de la danse contemporaine depuis dix huit ans."

Jean Szurewsky

Le Monde (France). 2002

"Champions des ouragans spectaculaires, le collectif japonais dumb type composé d'architectes, de vidéastes, de danseurs et de musiciens, sait l'art de porter à l'incandescence un détonnant mélange d'effets visuels et sonores. "

La Dépêche (France). 2002

"Le spectateur "décroche" dans le bon sens du terme, c'est-à-dire se laisser porter, se laisser planer. "

Agnès Trémoulet

Tout Toulouse (France). 2002

"Voyage, c'est le nom de cette nouvelle création, apparaît curieusement hybride. On y trouve ce qui fait l'originalité et le talent de dumb type, notamment un jeu de danse sur un miroir où le corps, le reflet et l'ombre portée occupent l'espace de façon troublante."

Techniques & Architecture (France). 2002

Sommeil paradoxal

"Soutenus par des tempos rythmiques obsessionnels, ces artistes médias aux expérimentations de haute technologie entraînent par d'obscures descentes vers les abîmes insoupçonnés, et par d'étranges envols dans des hauteurs quasi célestes jusqu'à un total éblouissement des sens. Hypnotique et bouleversant."

RM

Aftonbladet (Sweden) *. 2005

(...) "What this group can do like few others is to sculpt stories through a sublime combination of sound and light, of the dancers bodies and spoken language. Our longing – and inability to find – is given a both amusing and existential expression (...) Language has it's own place here. Words run over the dancers bodies and are written directly on the backdrops picture of an enraged sea. The problems appear when the lack of interpretation becomes too obvious, or the story itself becomes to shallow. An exhilarated airport scene with dancing stewardesses shows off the groups sense of humour, but the civilisation critique is a bit thin. (...) But as long as the journey gets to be a metaphor for imagination and longing Voyage is an experience you must not miss. "

Dagens Nyheter (Sweden) *. 2005

(...) "as heart tearing insane as the best from Pina Bausch. (...) the theatre is, in my opinion, not renewed by dumb type. Nor dancing, which is a lot of running and some acrobatics and which only heats up in the slow motion-parts (...) Instead dumb type mixes picture, electronics and nature sounds in a totally shaking way. Take for example the scraping sound when the dancers shuffle stones over plastic. Or take the beep sound over their whimpers. And the of course it's the venture itself! That nothing is strange to them and that everything is possible. I would like to thank dumb type for that attitude! "

*(English translations by Dansens Hus,Stokholm)

Aftenposten (Norway) **. 2005

"Confronting and describing our situation in life – dramatic, beautiful and thrilling."

"*Voyage* convinces in its diversity and excels in its choice of expression."

The performance is described as a naive, simple and insightful composition of sound, movement, lights and images, but with a human focus. It was the story of a generation, or any generation. The performance is seen as open-ended and diverse, with possibilities for provocation and endearment, but not for anger, due to its complexity. The broad range of impressions created a sense of awe. Details which at first seem random, soon become parts of new patterns and realities. Naïvety is seen as a key to breaking up the predictability of traditional productions, resulting in moments of truth, in turn creating planes of meaning.

Bergens Tidende (Norway) **. 2005

"Dumb Type's detailed attention to the visual potential of dramatic expression is fascinating."

The review describes as a journey through a chaotic cacophony, man's journey, however not one that ends in chaos. Dumb Type is credited an exceptional ability of integrating the spectator into the performance by creating different worlds for them to enter into. These worlds are created by use of video, sound, objects and words, and the moods change by slight alternations to these parameters. The shiny floor creates a distorted, dreamlike mirroring effect. Other scenes portray artificial constructs of reality, amplified and smoothed out by manipulative technology. *Voyage* portrays both worlds controlled by technology, as well as worlds in which human thought, hopes and physical reality still exists.

Bergensavisen (Norway) **. 2005

"Advanced and incredibly impressive opening performance, showing exceptional timing and precision."

"Amazingly surreal and blissfully postmodern."

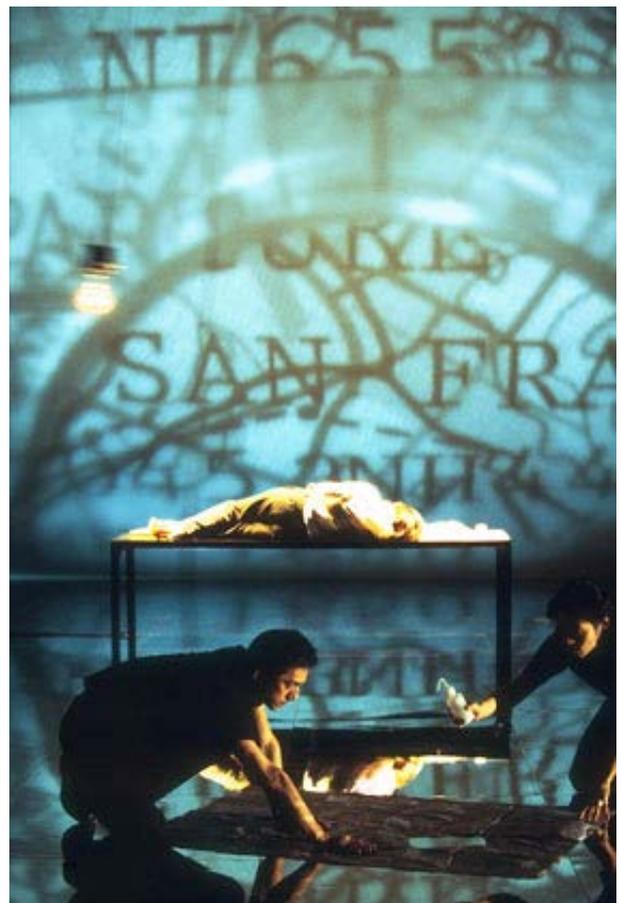
"Everything is movement, even when it is still."

The multiartistic expression melts together, or collides in powerful thrusts, still maintaining its wholeness. The reviewer restrains from description, claiming that the non-linear and associative nature of the performance would resist any such attempt. The performance is characterised as a journey, in all senses of the word. Every scene is an installation in its own right; "auditive paintings in movement."

** (English translations by Festspillene – Bergen International Festival)

Bergens Tidende (Norway) **. 2005

The article refers to the success of the performance, and that it now finally has come to Norway. The group is characterised as "European" in Japan, and "Japanese" in Europe, and whereas it is rather unknown in Japan, it is quite well-established in Europe. The reception in Asian and European countries is also quite diverse, but also has some things in common, for instance in seeing the more humorous points. It also refers to the paradoxical fact that although the performance has been put on for some time, and the ensemble feels like doing something new, the performance that is to be held in Grieghallen, Bergen, will be unique and different from any other version of the performance, as the performance history corresponds to the performance itself, as an existential journey. The article then moves on to discuss the varied critical reception of the performance, and how Dumb Type has grown accustomed to this; "*It is always like this. [...] Some people understand us. Others don't.*" The article turns to the monotonous, childlike verbal statements ... "*slowly turning into word paintings.*" This has been received as both banal and childish (in Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter*) as well as beautiful poetry. Although members of the group claim that they do not pay attention to negative criticism, the reporter does not know whether to believe them or not. The political aspects of Dumb Type's projects are discussed, as the representatives for Dumb Type express their intention to highlight and discuss rather than conclude. "*In a way, Voyage is optimistic. We in Dumb Type are at least not pessimistic. We are not happy, but accept the fact that we are here [...] in a confused world.*"



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The Herald (U.K.). 2006

"[...] It's a gentle meditation that gives way to various scenes of journeying. Some are funny – such as the cheesy little dance routine by miniskirted air-hostesses – and some are quite hauntingly wistful, as they cut through an onscreen blitz of projected departures, flight paths and destination boards to promote, instead, a lyrical appreciation of natural scenic beauty and the value of taking time out. The spoken litany of little wishes that accompanies this footage is wryly poignant. Even space travel gets a look in, with the glossily reflective flooring creating a remarkable illusion of boundless, surrounding heavens.

The visual effects are ravishing, but can be as disquieting as the techno-whammy of a soundscore that shakes you in your seat. For this is a radical production that uses a variety of technologies to positive advantage, even as it questions how those technologies are disorientating humanity."

Mary Brennan

Finance (Slovenia). ***. 2006

For a Different Theatrical Practice

Voyage by Japanese group Dumb Type is an extremely contemporary dramatic production made of hybrid media, a real multicultural opera that combines different periods and spaces in a post-Brechtian theatrical mosaic of examination on the politicized present-day world.

The show persisted on the media rim of the theatre of images, technological performing arts and physical theatre and embraced a streaming sequence of fragmentary examinations which the performers summed up in the manifesto: "Many people, more than we think, are faced with a feeling of crisis, without being able to find a name for this crisis. Some call it 'inexplicable helplessness', others the 'collapse of the intellect'. In these circumstances we need to continually question ourselves why we insist on expression through the media of performing arts, why do we insist on taking on this task?"

Tomaz Toporisic

*** (English translation by Cankarjev Dom, Ljubljana)

memorandum

Le Temps (Belgium). 04/09/00

"La compagnie nipponne fait de la scène un espace de tous les possibles. Leur technologie sans failles et une imagination foisonnante aidant, ils déploient pendant une heure et quart un univers inquiétant et fascinant, où on ne demande qu'une chose : être englouti par la beauté."

Anna Hohler

Tribune de Genève (Belgium). 02/09/00

"Fondée il y a seize ans, cette troupe de quinze danseurs, musiciens, architectes et informaticiens fait des ravages à chaque fois qu'elle quitte l'Archipel (...). dumb type, c'est stressant et zen, drôle et tragique, technologique et envoûtant. Bref, c'est complètement nippon."

Emmanuel Grandjean

Le Temps (Belgium). 01/09/00

"... memorandum, cinquième spectacle de la compagnie a créé l'événement au fronton des plus importants festivals d'Amérique et d'Europe (...). Une technicité multimédia d'une dextérité hors norme, des thèmes coup de poing, (...) Memorandum se présente comme une cascade de sensations."

Lisbeth Koutchoumoff

La Clef (Belgium). September 2000

"Un spectacle à tendance hypnotique à voir impérativement"

Chloé Gabathuler

Kultur in Düsseldorf (Germany). 29/08/00

"memorandum, Gedenken : die Summe aller Gefühle, Gedanke und Instinkte, die Menschen in einem Moment durch den Kopf gehen."

Ursula Pfennig

Düsseldorfer Feuilleton (Germany). 28/08/00

" memorandum erzählt 70 Minuten lang vom Stress, von Gefühlen, Ängsten, Phantasien, Erlebnisfetzen junger Menschen von heute. Das kann kaum chronologisch sein, ist aber bei ständigem Wechsel zwischen ralen und absurden Bildern, von Tanz und Performance, von schmerzhaft hämmernden Geräuschen und Hawaii-Schmusemusik formal strikt gearbeitet."

Ria Theens

La Nouvelle Gazette (Belgium). 17/03/00

" memorandum alimente(ra), avant tout, une réflexion sur le caractère aléatoire du temps et suscite quelques questions essentielles : quel sens notre précieuse mémoire peut-elle préserver des ravages de l'efficiencie renouvelée de la machine?"

J.C. Herin

La Terrasse (France). September 1999

" Munis d'une ironie subversive, ces artistes média hors normes se servent des technologies de pointe pour plonger de spectateur dans des univers vibrants de sonorités et d'images, jusqu'au total éblouissement des sens."

Maria-Daniella Strouthou

Les Inrockuptibles (France). September 1999

"dump type vient donc de déchirer la surface lisse et fait exploser les cadres à coups de sons violents, de lumières aveuglantes, d'images, de propos qui ne laissent aucun doute sur ses intentions : provoquer des ondes de choc et affirmer haut et clair que le monde est loin d'être rose et bleu."

Véronique Klein

Libération (France). 16-17/10/99

"Non seulement dumb type ne manque pas de talent et de précision, mais le collectif propose également un Japon d'aujourd'hui, tenu à distance respectable en s'amusant beaucoup d'eux mêmes et du tout-numérique."

Marie-Christine Vernay

Aden Magazine – Le Monde (France). 13-19/10/99

"memorandum, va encore plus loin en plongeant dans les zones les plus obscures de la mémoire (...). L'effet, très beau, est à la fois inquiétant et envoûtant. On se laisse prendre au jeu sans effort (...). A ceux qui pensent que l'imagination se laisse toujours piéger par la technologie, le collectif dumb type démontre avec bonheur tout le contraire."

Télérama (France). 13/10/99

"Pour ceux qui ignorent encore cet électrique et éclectique collectif de japonais tout à fait hors norme, aillent découvrir leurs expérimentations hautement technologiques, fortement incandescentes et parfois brutales."

Fabienne Pascaud

La Tribune (France). 15/10/99

"Dumb type surprend encore"

Jean-Pierre Bourcier

TIP Magazin (Germany). 28/10-10/11/99

"dumb type aus Kyoto forschen in memorandum nach der Ästhetik des Computer-zeitalters... Der Computer defragmentiert seine Festplatte, und auch wir defragmentieren unser Gedächtnis auf der Suche nach Erinnerungen. Am Ende des Schlussteils entsteht aus Nummernsalat schließlich ein Bild : endlos weiter Strand und ozeanische Wellen."

Thomas Hahn

[OR]

Le Monde (France)

"C'est un voyage extraordinaire dans l'inconscient de l'homme, [OR], comme l'indication d'une alternative, un combat entre la vie et la mort qui utilise à leur paroxysme les possibilités actuelles de la technologie rapportées à la scène. Impossible de décrire la violence des déflagrations sonores et visuelles à laquelle sont soumis les spectateurs médusés de la Maison des Arts de Créteil."

Olivier Schmitt

La Terrasse (France)

"Spectacles hybrides, alliage de théâtre tribal, de performances technologiques, de musique tonitruantes et d'images hallucinantes de violence et de beauté, les délires de dumb type envahissent depuis bientôt dix ans les musées d'art moderne du monde entier."

Le Monde (France)

"Un engagement physique total, un travail sur la lumière et le son sans devancier connu, une décharge d'images qui transperce un public médusé, puis chaleureusement reconnaissant. [OR], est un spectacle "grandiose et terrifiant".

Le Nouveau Quotidien (Switzerland)

"A Paris, Le Festival d'Automne accueille un spectacle multimédia du collectif japonais dumb type. Epoustouflant."

Ghania Adamo

Le Monde (France)

"Leur recherche est de celles qui compteront dans l'histoire des arts de la scène et de leur tolérance - ou de leur résistance - à la modernité."

Olivier Schmitt

Ulysse Télérama - Hors série Japon (France)

"Aujourd'hui l'avant-garde dramatique se plaît toujours à des spectacles d'une grande beauté plastique. Sous des lumières incandescentes et brutales, les acteurs créent volontiers des situations d'une violence à la limite du supportable. Derrière leurs gestes codés, leurs mimiques impassibles, se devine l'implacable cruauté du temps, de la vie, comme dans la dernière pièce [OR] du groupe dumb type de Kyoto."

Fabienne Pascaud

Overwhelmed by style (U.K.)

"Attempting to explore the meaning of life in 90 minutes is a tall order for any group of performers, but in its own original way, Japan's leading performers collective, named dumb type, do just it (...) They bring energy and skill to a performance, the images of which could long be remembered."

Lisa Martland

Time Out (U.K.)

"dumb type's current show is techno-thrilling and fast, with a soundscape that sets you vibrating (...) It really is a case of not believing your eyes."

The Independent on Sunday Culture (U.K.)

"I hated parts of this show, was bored or irritated for minutes on end ; yet its store of disturbing and stimulating images haunts me still."

Jenny Gilbert

Insight Japan (U.K.)

"Is it dance ? Is it matter ? Christopher Cook reports on the extraordinary Japanese performance group, dumb type
When you have tidied up your jangled nerves, optical and auditory, who can doubt that this has been a moment of extraordinary theatre ? (...) Not that dumb type's achievement in performance is anything less than remarkable - and deafening too as the evening proceeds."

Christopher Cook

The Times (U.K.)

"Ignore the daft jargon and enjoy this Japanese phenomenon, says Ros Drinkwater"

Ros Drinkwater

S/N

Le Monde (France)

"Ils sont seize, sur ou derrière le plateau de S/N, tous engagés dans l'aventure de dumb type... Tous ont conçu un spectacle hautement technologique et pourtant d'une émotion extraordinaire."

Olivier Schmitt

L'Événement du Jeudi (France)

"Avec S/N, les japonais dumb type présentaient, au festival transfrontalier de Maubeuge puis au festival Exit, à Créteil, l'un des événements les plus marquants des saisons passées."

Pierre Notte

Catalogue of the exhibition **l'Ere binaire** (Belgium)

"dumb type devrait rester au premier plan en développant avec dynamisme de nouvelles sortes de collaborations artistiques qui nous touchent tous... "

The Seattle Times (USA)

"S/N packs a moving social message on several fronts. They have a lot to say about the way people classify and stigmatize others who seem different, exotic, dangerous. And they say it for 90 minutes in modalities hot and cool, literal and abstract, arty and naive, arresting and tedious...
With equal parts sophistication and naiveté, dumb type really is making a plea for tolerance – yes, and even love."

Misha Berson

The Advertiser (Australia)

"It is a richly layered and complex work of performance art. dumb type's work examines many of the political and social issues that cynics label as PC (Politically correct). Unlike other artists, however, dumb type does not deal with these issues didactically and simplistically, and the performance looks good too."

David O'Halloran

Herald Sun (Australia)

"Even the most seasoned festival goer had to admit that Japan's avant garde compagny, dumb type, was a hard nut to crack. Using text, video, music and live action, their show S/N challenged all the normal conventions of theatre-going – and showed what happens when art synthesises different media."

Simon Plant

Sunday Mail (Australia)

"Using an anti-homosexual prejudice discourse as a political platform, this work is not just content with exposing and whinging about the world's injustices, but dares to proffer possible solutions. In a multi-media format on a U2 Zooropa scale, this blend of theatre, danse, television, live cinema, techno, art and living and electronic sculpture is what festivals and new theatre are about."

James Mullighan

The Sidney Morning Herald (Australia)

There were a much greater sense of urgency, innovation and synthesis of East and West in the high-tech contemporary performance from dumb type. This group, formed in Kyoto in 1984, really did push the social, sexual and artistic boundaries in the festival, exploring the politics of personal identity, even to the point where its critique of homophobia tipped over into misogyny. But it was a visually rich and theatrically dense layering of sound and image in four dimensions, ensuring that time also became part of the equation through the process of frequent repetition.

Bob Evans

The Gazette (Quebec)

"Performance art troupe explores collective mind. The interpreters excel in their multiple roles. They are natural and convincing, and the viewer is drawn immediately into the situation and issues presented on stage... dumb type takes the audience on a much-advanced tour of our technological culture...
dumb type's frankness in nudity and dialogue is so humorous, philosophical and to the point it retains a dignity that keeps the show from being offensive."

Camilla Malashenko

The Seattle Time (USA)

"dumb type : hardly typical
And the magic may strike again with dumb type."

Misha Berson

PH

The prize for the Best Stage Recording, of the Dance Screen 1992 (International Music Centre – Wien), went to pH.

Jury citation : "Directed by the choreographer himself, this work is extremely televisual while remaining faithful to the live performance."

The Australian (Australia)

"It is a bold, disquietening and occasionally, satirical piece of performance art and a definite must for anyone interested in the avant-garde."

William Shoubridge

Gairrhydd (U.K.)

Better than raw fish

dumb type combine dance, visual art, computer programming and film to produce a rare example of true originality...The quality of the performance is particularly good. The precision of the dancers and technicians are excellent. Together they work to provide imagery which forces the spectator to feel involved in the action. Within the phrases are moments of humour, fear, intense activity and quiet relaxation. Watching pH is like viewing daily life from a new perspective. dumb type are a wonderful reminder that Japan has more to offer than Karaoke, raw fish and microchips.

Emma Burns

Ryuko Tsushin (Japan)

"pH, a device for mapping the structure of this Post-Historical age. As dumb type presents it to us, this is truly a strategem of highly attuned sensitivity housed in cool surfaces."

Yukiko Shikata

The Japan Time (Japan)

"In many Western productions dealing with similar themes, the intention is either parody or parable. pH attempts neither and the result is a seemingly effortless new form of expression which is stimulating and remains in the memory long after the performance ends."

Julia Cassim

Lovers

The New York Time (USA)

"Back in Fashion, Video Installations

The increasing sophistication of video equipment allows artists to push the technological aspects of their works into the background, and concentrate on the ideas behind them. This welcome development is especially apparent in "Lovers". Mr. Furuhashi's elegant installation and one of the show's real standouts...

Mr. Furuhashi and Mr. Viola's complex and powerful pieces are the strongest in the show."

Charles Hagen

Pleasure Life

The New York Times (USA)

"Pleasure Life, presented Sunday night in New York City by the Japanese experimentalist group dumb type, is a mad yet endearingly ingenious enterprise involving miniature searchlights, four small television monitors, sleek Rude Glodberg sculptures... and ranks of shoulder-high platforms made of steel rods... The elements work together like parts in an orchestra in this 80 minute piece...

As is frequently the case with the newer experimentalist performance group, dumb type was founded by people trained in the visual arts. And the visual imagery is as important here as anything else."

Jennifer Dunning



© Kazuo Fukunaga

dumb type

Berlingske Tidende (Denmark)

"dumb type's performance shows us technological society in sampled form. However, technology itself is not the issue here. Rather, it is the hidden powers and means of controlling people..."

No less than in other theatrical arts, dumb type succeeds in reflecting a great many ambiguous truths due to the masterful handling of an aesthetically perfected mechanism. At time, silence proves more eloquent than excessive words."

Jens Kirtrup

Financial Times (U.K.)

"If the ecological burden is predictable, the methods are stimulating and beautifully executed in their work..."

Those for whom the term "performance art" conjures up the incoherent in pursuit of the incomprehensible could sample this and be happily surprised."

Martin Hoyle

Image Forum (Japan)

"Spectators, staggered by the multi-level time-space-crosstalk information overload, are forced to assume an active stance. Before their eyes, routines and sub-routines unfold to the very rhythm of their own daily life ; scenes here and here begin to reflect their own immediate situations - it becomes real. This performance showed me the reality of the abstract."

Takashi Nakajima

Dance Magazine (Japan)

"They first approached performance as an art problem, then pushed it closer to theatre, and now effectively seem to have taken on the task of reinventing theatre itself. Which would suggest that these initial "art problems" are exactly what theatre had neglected in the first place."

Shogo Ohta

Bijutsu Techno (Japan)

There is a concept design characterised by taking what are ordinarily irredeemable boring everyday activities and re-presenting them via a nanosecond program as a form of computer control. Actually, the who-does-what of it all begins with designing the most striking stage space. Container precedes content - just as everything from board games and pinball machines to ball games and sports to military manoeuvres and financial power games all vary in their rules due more than to anything to their different playing fields."

Asahi Graph (Japan)

"Undeniably, dumb type has come forth with a new direction in performing art. This particular offering will surely give a strong jolt to both dance and theatre."

Masashi Miura

Shoten Kenchiku (Japan)

"An alternative take on the live organic actions and subtle responses we show toward our own mechanised, computer-controlled information age society existence, and pedantic reading or explanation of which would conversely forfeit the purity of the group's art... Sensing a dead-ending to the myth of individual expression, they have created their own common language - a language of concise signs and reduced imagery - as the core of their practice... The refinement in equipment and audiovisual design notwithstanding, their hidden art tests the limits of spatial experience. Quietly yet keenly probing the viewer's every sensor, repeating patterns of stimulation and boredom are orchestrated into more than an hour of performance art."

Yukiko Shikata

Zone of Love - exhib. Cat. (Australia)

The group dumb type reflects upon the apparently random yet highly controlled present and future possible lives of humanity..."

The imagery associated with dumb type's performances is highly stylised : advertising logos, cute wind-up toys, nostalgic pop songs. But behind the cute superficiality is a rigorous and rigid system which mechanises and controls daily life. dumb type remain relatively uncritical of the relationship between people and technology ; their critique is instead of the mechanisms of control and our awareness of these, particularly in relation to modern Japan.

Judy Annear

Against Nature - exhib. Cat. (USA)

"dumb type develops a form of interdisciplinary theater which would mirror their understanding of the new Japan, an ancestral yet technologically sophisticated society immersed in competing bits of information... Picnics occur amid the grid of computers and video monitors on which familiar television shows, prefilmed sequences, and live images of the performers interact. There is no central story ; like the television drama created subliminally by the punctuation of the apparent storyline with the advertisers narrative, time is fractured and imagery from high and low sources is mixed without regard to value. Most importantly, unlike traditional characters who are the mercy of their inventors - their authors and directors - these actors are in control of their own destinies."

Thomas Sokolowski

Selected performances & exhibitions

- University of the Arts of **Kyoto** (Japan)
The Museum of Modern Art of **Shiga** (Japan)
Osaka International Arts Festival (Japan)
Toga International Arts Festival (Japan)
Yokohama Art Museum (Japan)
Inter Communication Centre of **Tokyo** (Japan)
New York Internat. Festival of the Arts (USA)
Theater im Pumpenhaus **Münster** (Germany)
ICA, **London** (United Kingdom)
Musée Royal des Arts **København** (Denmark)
Museum of Modern Art **San Francisco** (USA)
Centro de Arte Reina Sofia **Madrid** (Spain)
Museum of Contemporary Art **Sydney** (Australia)
Glyptotek Museum **København** (Denmark)
Guggenheim Soho **New York** (USA)
Seattle Art Museum (USA)
Adelaide Festival (Australia)
Festival of **Granada** (Spain)
Wiener Festwochen **Wien** (Austria)
International New Zealand Festival of Arts **Wellington** (NZ)
Teatro Central **Sevilla** (Spain)
Festival Sonar **Barcelona** (Spain)
Biennale d'Art Contemporain **Lyon** (France)
Landesgalerie **Linz** (Austria)
Festivals VISAS and VIA **Maubeuge** (France)
Festival Exit, Maison des Arts **Créteil** (France)
Das TAT **Frankfurt** (Germany)
Marstall **München** (Germany)
Ars Electronica Festival **Linz** (Austria)
Palermo Festival (Italy)
Tramway **Glasgow** (United Kingdom)
Kobe Art Village Center (Japan)
Park Tower Hall **Tokyo** (Japan)
The Wood Street Galleries **Pittsburgh** (USA)
Festival d'Automne à **Paris** /
Créteil Maison des Arts (France)
Julidans / Stadsschouwburg **Amsterdam** (The Netherlands)
Expo '98 **Lisboa** (Portugal)
Zürcher Theater Spektakel **Zürich** (Switzerland)
De Warande **Turnhout** (Belgium)
Barbican Centre **London** (United Kingdom)
Kampnagel **Hamburg** (Germany)
Stockholm Cult. Capital of Europe '98 (Sweden)
Donau Festival **Krems** (Austria)
On the Boards **Seattle** (USA)
Portland Institute for Contemporary Art (USA)
Walker Art Center **Minneapolis** (USA)
Museum of Contemporary Art **Chicago** (USA)
Artsonje Museum **Kyongju** (Korea)
Artsonje Center **Seoul** (Korea)
Haus der Kulturen der Welt **Berlin** (Germany)
Festival de Otono **Madrid** (Spain)
Charleroi/Danses **Charleroi** for Brussels 2000 (Belgium)
GRAME / Maison de la Danse **Lyon** (France)
- C.D.C. /Théâtre de la Cité **Toulouse** (France)
Musée d'Art Contemporain de **Lyon** (France)
Salon du Design, **Milano** (Italy)
The Museum of Art, **Kochi** (Japan)
New National Theatre, **Tokyo** (Japan)
Theater Drama City, **Osaka** (Japan)
Vision Ruhr- **Dortmund** (Germany)
Tanzhaus NRW **Düsseldorf** (Germany)
Festival de la Bâtie **Genève** (Switzerland)
New Opera of **Tel Aviv** (Israel)
Valencia Biennial (Spain)
Le Parvis, **Tarbes** (France)
Festival Artrock, **St Brieuç** (France)
Singapore Festival of Arts (Singapore)
Japan Foundation, **Kuala Lumpur** (Malaysia)
Saitama Arts Theater, **Tokyo** (Japan)
Theater Drama City, **Osaka** (Japan)
Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theatre, **Vilnius** (Lithuania)
Vanemuine Theatre, **Tartu** (Estonia)
Latvijas Nacionāla Opera, **Riga** (Latvia)
Le-Maillon Théâtre de **Strasbourg** (France)
Deutsches Nationaltheater, **Weimar** (Germany)
Modern Dance Association of Korea, **Seoul** (Korea)
La Biennale di Venezia - Teatro Piccolo Arsenale, **Venezia** (Italy)
Biwako Hall, **Shiga** (Japan)
Bangkok Playhouse (Thailand)
Melbourne International Festival of the Arts (Australia)
Redcat Center - California Institute of the Arts, **Los Angeles** (USA)
Pittsburgh Dance Council (USA)
Cinémas du futur / **Lille** 2004 European Capital of Culture (France)
Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media (Japan)
Novel Hall for Performing Arts, **Taipei** (Taiwan)
3 Wochen mit Pina Bausch Festival, **Düsseldorf** (Germany)
Théâtre d'**Angoulême** (France)
Le Carré des Jalles, **St Médard en Jalles** (France)
Dansens Hus, **Stockholm** (Sweden)
The Bergen International Festival, **Bergen** (Norway)
Modern Dance Association of Korea, **Seoul** (Korea)
Muffathalle, **München** (Germany)
Altstadtherbst / Isis Zelt, **Düsseldorf** (Germany)
La Comète, **Châlons en Champagne** (France)
Théâtre de **Nîmes** (France)
Posthof, **Linz** (Austria)
Tramway, **Glasgow** (R.U.)
Zendai MoMA - **Shanghai** Museum of Modern Art (China)
Cankarjev Dom, **Ljubljana** (Slovenia)
Melbourne International Festival (Australia)
XI Festival Iberoamericano de Teatro, **Bogotá** (Colombia)
EMPAC, **Troy** (USA)
Montclair State University, **Montclair** (USA)
La Filature, **Mulhouse** (France)
Le Volcan, **Le Havre** (France)
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