

“Monument 0.10: The Living Monument”, a spectacular choreographic piece from the Hungarian Eszter Salamon, transports viewers into another dimension

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With her new creation, Eszter Salamon invites the audience into a reverie with her 14 creatures that play and merge with materials at the Théâtre Nanterre-Amandiers until 14 October.

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A dull sound comes through the ages and fills the room. A dim light appears on the stage, revealing black humanoid forms. They flicker amid the dark fabrics that hang over the floor. These creatures are frozen in time, like the inhabitants of Pompeii, trapped in motion under the lava. They move gently, gradually stepping out of their initial positions. It is impossible to distinguish their faces, covered with lamé fabric, lace hoods or masks.

These beings are performers from Carte Blanche, the Norwegian national company of contemporary dance. They form a new “monument” in the series created ten years ago by Hungarian choreographer Eszter Salamon, present for the third time at the Autumn Festival.

Body-materials

Monument 0.10: The Living Monument is an immersive choreographic piece positioned between dance and theatre. It leaves room for an extraterrestrial, even futuristic ambiance, without actually falling into the category of science fiction. The body is intertwined with the different costume materials, becoming one with them. Around 10 tableaux follow one another with their singular atmosphere, their materials and their costumes perfectly fitting in with the colour of their surroundings. The audience see living artworks created before their eyes, tableaux from another world, another time.

The interactions between the performers are no longer human. The bodies cross paths without touching, moving the entire room in slow motion, like prisoners of a spatio-temporal flaw. The creatures struggle to get up and move forward amid the muffled murmurs that reverberate through the room and the bodies. The black drapes slowly disappear to reveal the others. Blue, golden, silver or red, each colour has its own aesthetic, costumes and staging.

Eszter Salamon (Carte Blanche company/Théâtre Nanterre-Amandiers)

Reverie

From this performance (which lasts almost two hours), we emerge amazed by the power of costume and what can be achieved using fabric. But the choreography develops above all a dramaturgy and absolutely not “a deployment of costumes in a sort of staggered fashion show”. Her show is open to interpretation and encourages reverie and reflection.

All of a sudden, everything turns red. A majestic queen comes forth, accompanied by two others, boxing gloves on. Like the queen at the centre of the film *Alice in Wonderland*, she watches two figures in red jumpsuits embrace. They kiss, fabric to fabric, like in the famous painting *The Lovers* by René Magritte.

The abstract movements fall within “dynamic monochromes” as Eszter Salamon describes them, areas of colour or different materials and textures produce “body-materials”. It’s a show that will delight the senses and definitely should not be missed.

“Monument 0.10: The Living Monument” at the Théâtre Nanterre-Amandiers until 14 October.

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