

Funding application for the project Skimmed Words

This application concerns the production activities and performances of the project 'Skimmed Words'. Skimmed Words is a dance performance that works with the poetics of dance and spoken language to illuminate the stage's fantastic capacity for *creating our realities*. Four performers transform an empty black box into continuously changing dramatic and aesthetic scenarios. The dancing bodies and poetic texts explore how imagination creates our realities, our bodies and their emotional landscapes.

Skimmed Words is co-produced by Dansehallerne and will premiere at Dansekapellet in Copenhagen Nov 2023. We will then perform at Teater Momentum in Odense in Dec 2023. Leading up to the shows, we will have residencies at Moderna Dansteatern (MDT) (2-13.10.2023) in Stockholm, Dansstationen in Malmö (16-28.10.2023) and Dance Cooperative in Copenhagen (30.10-12.11.2023).

Skimmed Words is a collaborative project, made and performed by dancers and choreographers Antonia Harke, Andreas Haglund, Stina Ehn and Denise Lim. All graduates from the Danish School of Performing Arts (class of 2019/2020), the artists belong to a generation of new voices within the Danish and international context for dance and choreography, carving new ways for what the artform can look like and do.

About Skimmed Words

Skimmed Words takes the audience on a journey of fantasy *de luxe*, and by doing so asking the questions: What does it mean to imagine today? How do fictions create the understanding of our lives? And most of all *Skimmed Words* dances and talks/sings/shouts its way into that endless potential of fiction, it reminds audiences about the responsibility we all share in how we perceive our bodies, our communities and our world.

The performance *Skimmed Words* consists of an improvisational score for movement and voice. As the performers articulate out loud what they touch and experience, the audience is invited to follow as they trace the interiors of the theater. The score is divided into two modes of scanning the room; observations and associations. In the first version the performers respond to the room's different shapes, temperatures, weights and textures, highlighting what is already present. In the second, the architecture and objects of the theater are used as surface for projection. Association is here used as a tool to call imaginary worlds into action, opening for the fictions that are to be found in ordinary objects; the walls become a forest, the audience become lollipops and the stage lights become a dozen shimmering suns.

The scores propose multiple ways of being with each other, and creates a space where meaning, narratives and dance steps sweep by without ever settling for a single interpretation. *Skimmed Words* unfolds a poetics of collective imagination by inviting the thrill of fiction to an intense dance.

Previous research

“...da vi går derfra, går jeg og smager på den [titeln] og tænker, at det er sjovt hvordan 'Skimmed' på engelsk både indeholder betydningen at skimme noget, som i at læse hurtigt for at få et overblik, men også at skumme noget, som i at fjerne et lag fra en væske – og at begge dele måske kom i spil i aften: at de både skummede deres omgivelser og skummede sproget, fjernede bestanddele fra dets overflade.” -Filip Vest (*bastard.blog*, Nov 2021)

The performance Skimmed Words is the result of a solid research project that took place between 2020 and 2021 in residencies at HAUT and Dance Cooperative in Copenhagen and højden studios

in Stockholm and ended with a public presentation at HAUT's works-in-process festival at Teater Zeppelin in October 2021. The research was supported by Statens Kunstfond, Slots- og Kulturstyrelsen and HAUT.

During this period, the artists joined forces following a shared interest in language and collaborative strategies for artistic creation. The research focus was on experimental use of spoken language combined with movement and we searched for expressions where the two could exist in a co-dependent state, shining new meanings on one another. As Bastard Blog's Filip Vest points out, the research has generated exactly that - a performative material for dance and language to create multifold ways of producing meaning, fantasy and perceptive change on stage.

To the research we invited visual and sound artist Cara Tolmie (SE/UK) and dancer and vocal artist Kai Merke (DK), to share their practices and expertise in working with a voice and sounding bodies. These exchanges turned out fruitful and opened up new logics for how body, voice and words dance together.

Relevance

We believe in dance and choreography that challenge the viewers perceptions about their world. By operating on a scale from realist to absurd, *Skimmed Words* proposes a space for collective imagination where the everyday is shaken up.

In a world where things are constantly pushing the limits of being more effective, time saving and profit making, we believe in art as a place where we can gather around different values and ideas. We believe that the theater is a key place for focused time and attention that is otherwise rare to find in today's society. *Skimmed Words* invites the audience to fantasize and speculate together and lets the audience leave with the feeling that things might not always be as they seem. We believe a core strength of experimental choreography as an artform is to push audiences in new directions and new ideas, bringing attention to the less obvious and less visible.

Collaboration and building sustainable networks

In this international project, collaboration is both the starting point and the method used to make the piece. Our collaboration started during our studies at the Danish National School of Performing Arts and *Skimmed Words* is our way of continuing this dialogue and supporting each other artistically. We find value in shared authorship as the constant negotiation within the group creates space for breaking with the presumptions and boundaries of our creative habits. This becomes present in the performance, where the aesthetics of the piece continuously move through many scenarios, proposing a cacophony of performative qualities and references. Thus, pushing the conventions of dance by arriving at new aesthetic expressions.

Moreover, the project ties together several venues and places for dance and choreography. By collaborating with Dansehallerne, Teater Momentum, MDT, Dansstationen and Dance Cooperative we build a network around our work and artistry. All these places operate on the highest professional levels within the field and are important partners in order to support and promote the performance, both within Copenhagen Municipality and abroad.