

UTOPIA PARKWAY

Someone to trust when it comes to art, beauty & culture ...
in Belgium

« One of these things doesn't belong here. Or: the difference between a handkerchief and a chunk of wood

Welcome to the chapel of colours! Six thoughts on MIMA, as it opens its doors in Brussels »

Underwater love, so beautifully liquid: Bárá Sigfúsdóttir's "The Lover"

Brussels. Belgium. How to deal with everything, these days? Some keep on devouring the news sites or get really active on social media. I tend to go in silent mode. Try to quietly look for solace where I've always found it: in art. And so I bought a ticket for the last Belgian performance of [Bárá Sigfúsdóttir's](#) *The Lover*. A piece I had already seen at its premiere, exactly a year ago, and once again I was slowly seduced by it. A thoughtful choreography, cleverly combined with visual art (work by French photographer [Noémie Goudal](#)), set design ([88888](#)) and soundscape ([Borko](#)).



The Lover is the second piece by this Brussels-based Icelandic choreographer, who has studied at [Icelandic Academy of the Arts](#) (Reykjavik), [MTD](#) (Amsterdam) and [PARTS](#) (Brussels). It was selected last year by the jury of [Het Theaterfestival](#) in Belgium for [Circuit X](#), which tries to bring a new generation of artists to a broader audience. The title doesn't refer to a love affair between two human beings, but between man and nature. Aren't we egoistically taking advantage of what nature has to offer us? Shouldn't we be looking for long-term solutions instead of going for the quick win? But Bárá Sigfúsdóttir isn't forcing her views on her audience at all.

The piece starts with Sigfúsdóttir sitting on the floor, on the left hand side

of the stage, against a big backdrop: a picture by Noémie Goudal of some sort of old building, with massive pillars. She's wearing a blue overall and the only thing you clearly see are her arms. Slowly the volume of the soundscape is raised, slowly you see those white elbows moving. Just slightly. She's setting the mode of the piece: it will all be in the details. As she slowly moves across the stage, she keeps her body low. Crouched. Curled up, on the floor. Sometimes a leg goes up, or an arm.



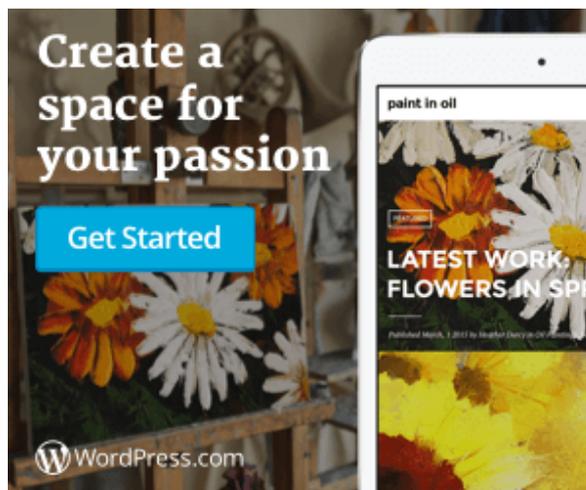
Some elements made me think of Meg Stuart's choreographic language, or Xavier Leroy's. Just by the way Sigfúsdóttir succeeds in making you believe that her arms, her feet, or even her tongue have a mind of their own. There's a particularly beautiful scene in which she's lying on the floor and her fingers and her toes start moving, looking like underwater plants, moved by the currents. What is this figure she's presenting, actually? A human body? An animal? A plant? All of these three?

Towards the end a couple of impressive changes happen, which I will not give away. But they really add something to the piece. Maybe some will find it a bit too dramatic, I liked the way in which this young choreographer tried to combine everything she has at her disposal to make a poetic, reflective piece that gets under your skin. As I was leaving the theatre, I was thinking: I am really curious to see her next work. That says it all, doesn't it?

You'll find an interview with Bárá Sigfúsdóttir about "The Lover" [here](#), and a short trailer [here](#).

(Review title: taken from the lyrics of Smoke City's "Underwater Love")

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