

Habitations Report

Sasha Kleinplatz used the Habitations residency to develop a new choreographic initiative called “miracle-ing.”

Working with sixteen dancers from Montreal, Europe and Vancouver, “miracle-ing” looks at our individual understandings and ways of manifesting and representing virtuosity in the framework of contemporary dance. I began this research with six dancers in Vancouver in March of 2017. When I began this process, I was interested in the idea of virtuosity in movement as seen in traditional North American dance forms, i.e. the triple pirouette, the layout, the deathdrop. I asked the dancers what were their most “impressive moves,” but also asked that we simultaneously work to unpack how we think about, define, and enact virtuosity in the studio and onstage. We found that we shared a complicated history with virtuosity. Our training as performers was based on an assumption cultivated and ingrained early on that we would faithfully execute anything our teachers or choreographers asked of us in order to attain virtuosity. A dancer’s virtuosity, then, appeared to co-vary negatively with our agency to consent to what was being asked of us. Our conversations moved on our respective experiences of working as performers with different choreographers and how and where consent was manifest in the choreographic process. For me, this prompted the question: How can I centre consent and dissent in a choreographic process while also hoping to find a movement vocabulary that still reads as intersubjectively virtuostic?

In the Habitations residency I worked with 12 Montreal interpreter-collaborators including Andrew Tay, Dana Michel, Winnie Ho, Simon Portugal, Malik Nashad Sharpe, Jossua Collin, Ellen Furey, Paige Culley, Hanako Hoshimi Caines, and Maria Kefirova. We worked 4 hours each day on “miracle’ing” as a space of dialogue and movement creation. When we were not working on this choreography the interpreters had access to the space to work on their own ideas and projects. We continue to work on “miracle’ing”. This March (2019) we will be in a residency in Notre-Dame-des-Prairies with all 17 dancers from across Canada and Europe, acting to develop a full-length choreography from our research.