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CRITIC: MARCELO CASTILHO AVELLAR

Mockery is the answer

Wagner Schwartz uses his dance to parody what a metropolis wants and what it has to offer. The public in Belo Horizonte has already seen some of the works of the performer Wagner Schwartz. In the mid-nineties, for example, he presented *The Harvest Metaphor* inspired by an aesthetic reading of *Butoh*, which was then studied in several places in Brazil. Last year, in the program *Rumos Dança*, it was the turn of *Transobject*, which as of today will be integrated into the week's performances at the International Dance Forum. *Transobject* was based on a reading of the artists and movements that left their mark on Brazil at the time of the counterculture –people like Hélio Oiticica, Lygia Clark and Tropicalism. What did the two works have in common? Wagner perceives the world and culture in particular as a system of references. This gives his work an uncomfortable contemporaneity. We grant that the world was referential before our time; but the older civilizations weren't that aware of it. They believed that either ideal model existed (like the ones during the renaissance or the neo-classical period), or that it was possible to build a completely new cultural product (the romantics and the modernists). The most recent generations succeeded in doing something that no member of a previous generation would have believed possible. At the same time that we believe in the impossibility of ideal models, we believe in the impossibility of creating anything completely new. In other words, we are condemned to digest cultural and aesthetic influences that, in themselves are already vitiated and imperfect, for the rest of eternity. How does Wagner Schwartz deal with all of this? In *The Harvest Metaphor* his answer was that poem. *Transobject* then came as a kind of declaration of the impracticability of that poem. The new answer was a kind of humour, sarcastic, rather than ironic. *Transobject* is the creation of a third-world-human-being fascinated by the European metropolis, but aware, for the first time in history, that the metropolis doesn't see him as an equal, but as a curiosity of the world's periphery. In the past we used to answer this 'look' with an exotic stylization of Brazil. Today, Wagner Schwartz is one of those who answers with mockery, with a parody of what the metropolis wants to see in the third world, as well as what this third world has to offer to make itself acceptable to make itself palatable in its quest to reach the center of the world.