

KASHYL

Ashley CHEN

Distances

creation January 5, 2021

Le Rive Gauche, Scène conventionnée danse, Saint-Etienne-du-Rouvray



Contacts

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Project Note

What is a person's private space?
When is one too close to another?
What are the signals which invite one into someone else's private space?
At what distance from another is one actually alone?

Distances is a piece in which I want to explore the idea of the space between individuals. Moving further away from one another or coming closer to one another. What does that mean? How is it perceived? What are the boundaries of the private space that establish a feeling of well-being? Would that be the idea of a comfort zone?

At what moment in time does a short distance between two individuals become intrusive?
What is the cut off point between distancing oneself and isolating oneself?

I would like to explore the different stages between the two extremes. To observe how an individual undergoes an intrusion or initiates an invitation.

According to anthropologist Edward T. Hall, there are four main categories of inter-individual relationships: public, social, personal and intimate distances. How do we cross the lines between these categories? Everyone reacts differently depending on personality, experience and desires. Furthermore how aware is he of the decisions he makes (or not). Does one always have to accept other people's choices?

In working with 10 dancers from diverse backgrounds, I want to create a peculiar entity with 10 bodies in a constant state of reorganisation. Concrete images emerge from abstract movements, as one might experience in a «phantasmagorical dream» or a «psychedelic peplum».

Ashley Chen

After *Unisson* (creation 2018), a piece for 8 performers about the joy and the need for togetherness in a mixed group and *Rush* (creation 2019), a duo on urgency and speeding forward relentlessly, Ashley Chen keeps on running with *Distances* (temporary title), a piece for 10 performers.

*This is from the book *The Hidden Dimension* by Edward T. Hall published in 1966.

Choreographic Criteria

Instead of a recognizable dance/technical choreography I see figures in motion, moving around exploring new developments, new structural links. In this way, an organism would evolve, like a bug travelling in the body going from the elbow to the shoulder then on to the nape of the neck up to the head and back down to the other shoulder and into a part of the ribcage etc.

Like a pulse beating sometimes stronger, sometimes weaker, sometimes faster, sometimes slower, it would connect up the performers or at least create a bond between them.

The idea is of the ten performers in continual motion as if all the protagonists were constantly evolving within one and the same entity.

Cast

Conception - choreography

Ashley Chen

Performance

Magali Caillet-Gajan, Alexandra Damasse,
Olga Dukhovnaya, Peggy Grelat-Dupont,
Mai Ishiwata, Haruka Miyamoto,
Andrea Moufounda, Marlène Saldana,
Asha Thomas, Solène Wachter,
alternately with Pauline Colemar

Music

Pierre Le Bourgeois / Animaux Vivants

Lighting

Eric Wurtz

Costume

Marion Regnier

Kashyl

Ashley Chen founded the Kashyl Company in 2012 in the county of Calvados in Normandy, France. After a career as a performer with a wide and eclectic range he has the urge to write original and unusual choreography through which he can take the liberty of creating in depth exploratory pieces for the stage. His choreographic interest is to be found more in the way the audience is plunged into diverse moods –rather than on a harmonious composition of movement or a narration of situations.

He tends towards experimenting with what is real in the dancer's physical performance, as he pursues the task conscientiously and determinedly, thus revealing the performer's deep-seated raw dedication. He pushes the dancer's body to a certain physical state of commitment In order to reach a stage of exhaustion in which movement is to be found both ethereal and true.

He therefore puts to question various topics, such as the need for the dancer to rehearse until he's exhausted, or the persistence of the performers as they go about their tasks in *Habits / Habits* (2013). Or again the need for one man to outdo another and the absurdity of the competitive spirit in *Whack !!* (2015). He questions the way the audience's view is influenced by the way light, props, music or choreography affect them, or by playing on the unexpected in *Chance, Space and Time* (2016). In *Unisson* (2018) he puts to question the positive social dimension of folk dancing based on the energy and meaning of togetherness within the group. He starts up a new piece to be shown called *Rush* (2019), a duo with Julien Monty based on the concept of running a race to reveal how it affects the mind and the body, experiencing the urgency of it and the paramount need to speed things up. He is already looking forward to his next group choreography *Distances* (2021) starting up a piece on the awareness of the performers' interaction within their private space, it is a question of living space, intrusion, distance and isolation, but also proximity, what is exposed when individuals are close, too close, far, too far.

Kashyl company has presented its pieces in Paris (Le Regard du Cygne studio, l'Etoile du Nord), in New-York (LaMama Experimental Theatre Club, Dance Festival: a French-American festival of Performances and Ideas), in Le Havre (Le Phare / CCN du Havre, Festival Pharenheit), in Ireland (Dublin, Cork, Carrick on Shannon, Limerick and Galway), in Tours (CCN de Tours, Soirées Spots), in Nantes (CCN Nantes, Festival Trajectoires), in Lyon (Maison de la danse), in Marseille (KLAP), in Reims (Le Manège, Scène Nationale).



Selection of Extracts from Choreographies

***Rush* (2019)**

<https://vimeo.com/326433882> (teaser)

***Unisson* (2018)**

<https://vimeo.com/258223075> (teaser)

***Chance, Space & Time* (2016)**

<https://vimeo.com/172231592> (teaser)

***Whack!!* (2015)**

<https://vimeo.com/150577432> (teaser)

Photographic credit : Sabine Meier, Kashyl

Ashley Chen

Choreographer - dancer

Ashley Chen trained at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et Danse de Paris from 1994 to 1999. After working on the creation of a piece with Thomas Duchâtelet, he left for New-York in 2000 to join the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. He stayed there for four years contributing to the creation of five choreographies and dancing up to ten pieces from the repertory.

Ashley came back to France and joined the Lyon Opera Ballet, where he performed the choreographies of Christian Rizzo, Angelin Preljocaj, William Forsythe, Russel Maliphant, Mathilde Monnier and Trisha Brown.

In 2006, he left the Ballet to travel across Europe collaborating with John Scott and Liz Roche in Dublin, Michael Clark in London, Jean-Luc Ducourt and Michèle Ann de Mey in Brussels, Philippe Decouflé, Boris Charmatz, Mié Coquempot, Fabrice Dugied in France.

In 2002, Ashley Chen wrote the choreography *We're all grown up now!* in New-York. One year later, he created *I'm not a Gurre!!*, with Marise la Lagrave, a vidéo-dance filmed in New-York state. In 2008, he wrote *I meant to move* with the group Loge 22 in Lyon.

In 2012 he established Compagnie Kashyl based in Normandy (France). He has a strong desire to investigate his individual creative process leading to significant and unconventional works. He has since created *Habits/Habits* (2012), *Whack!!* (2015, in collaboration with Philip Connaughton), *Chance, Space & Time* (2016), *Unisson* (2018) and *Rush* (2019). He is currently working on a group piece for 10 performers, *Distances* (January 2021).



Programme

22 october 2020, *Unisson*, *Avis de Grand Frais !* Professional artistic meeting, Halle Noire - CCN de Caen en Normandie

5 january 2021, creation *Distances*, Le Rive Gauche, Scène conventionnée danse, Saint-Etienne-du-Rouvray

19 & 20 march 2021, *Distances*, Biennale de danse du Val-de-Marne, Briqueterie / CDCN du Val-de-Marne // Atelier de Paris / CDCN

June 2021, *Rush*, Danse à tous les étages, Scène de territoire danse // Domaine de Kerguéhennec

Residencies calendar (in progress)

20 > 25 May 2019, *Distances* - CND Centre nationale de la danse, mise à disposition et accueil en résidence d'expérimentation

3 > 7 June & 18 > 22 November 2019, *Distances* - Le Phare - CCN du Havre Normandie

9 > 13 September 2019, *Distances* - CCN - Ballet de Lorraine with a presentation on Thursday 12 September at 7p.m

16 > 20 December 2019, *Distances* - Saison Culturelle de Deauville with a presentation on Friday 20 December at 2:30 p.m

2 > 6 march 2020, *Distances* - La Villette - La Halle aux cuirs with a presentation on Friday 6 March at 2:30 p.m

15 > 19 june 2020, *Distances* - Atelier de Paris / CDCN

13 > 22 july 2020, *Distances* - Centre national de la danse contemporaine ANGERS with a presentation Tuesday 21 July 2020 at 4p.m

16 > 27 november 2020, *Distances* - La Briqueterie / CDCN du Val-de-Marne

Partnerships

Production

Kashyl Company

Coproductions (in progress)

Le Phare - Centre chorégraphique national du Havre Normandie, direction Emmanuelle Vo-Dinh (workshop studio)

CCN - Ballet de Lorraine (workshop studio)

Le Rive Gauche, Scène conventionnée danse, Saint-Etienne-du-Rouvray

Coproduction CND - Angers as part of workshop studio

CCN de Caen en Normandie (production support)

Atelier de Paris / CDCN

La Villette

La Briqueterie / CDCN du Val-de-Marne

Supports

Atelier de Paris / CDCN et l'ODIA Normandie (Festival JUNE EVENTS)

La Tierce

Residencies at disposal

La Saison culturelle - Deauville

with the support of CND - Centre National de la Danse, workshop studio

Patrons

Normandy Region - Aid for development of activities

DRAC Normandy - Aid for structuring

Council Department of Calvados

Caen's City

Network

The Kashyl company is supported by Réseau Labaye

Press Review

About Unisson

«For once, the title of a piece –in this case Ashley Chen’s Unisson - helps give a clear idea of what it’s about. It seems that the dance-and there is dancing which is rare enough these days for us to mention it - is performed in unison by 7 dancers present on stage the whole time. Although their flamboyant costumes don’t match, they give the impression of accomplishing their task in perfect synchrony, totally, counting on themselves or on their partners, or just counting to the beat of the electro-acoustic music performed live by the remarkable composer and poly-instrumentalist Pierre Le Bourgeois. (...)Although this combination of sounds and gestures seems like a mixed-up exhibition, it is nevertheless well organized. It reveals structure as the piece unfolds and becomes extremely well ordered in the second part. Wurtz’s lighting then transforms the rubbish rejected by society into votive altars, precious displays or an Arte Povera installation. The choreography received lengthy applause from a large audience who had come to see the show at the Centre Chorégraphique National de Nantes.»

Canal Historique, Nicolas Villodre, January 2018

«While each dancer begins by performing alone to his own beat, bursts of sound mark times for them to come together.... Harmony is achieved through hybrid succession of movements performed in unison. Synthetizing variations, Unisson demonstrates the phenomena of mimicry. This is a complicated process for a generation of milleniums caught between global ecology and a taste for individualistic distinction. The tension is felt in a relentlessly repetitive movement, with the dancers determined to dance on until they are exhausted.»

ParisArt, June 2018

«By tackling space head on and raising a storm, Ashley Chen shows us how much he loves bursts of physical energy. In Unisson, a piece for six performers, a huge number of objects, accessories and bits of rubbish are strewn across the stage, apparently waiting for another lease of life. It is up to the dancers to rebuild a world with a shared enthusiasm. Potential harmony emerges from the mess, then the dancers throw up their legs and start to hum a song by The Doors. In this show imagined by a former Merce Cunningham performer, the main goal is to find a common ground that stems from gestures and sounds that bring people together.»

Sélection Critique par Rosita Boisseau, Télérama Sortir, June 13, 2018

About Whack!!

« Humour, sadness, violence and tenderness are among the conflicting emotions on display in Whack, a two-man dance show that explores a dysfunctional human relationship. »

Judy Murphy, Connacht Tribune, 25 February 2016

«If you are willing to take a risk, *Whack!!* is certainly something unique with a variety of images and movements that are rarely seen. Let the battle commence !»

No More Workhorse, 26th February 2016

About Chance, Space & Time

«With *Chance, Space and Time*, Ashley Chen electrifies The Triangle. In this piece, nine choreographic phrases have been written by three dancers. These phrases are performed three times in an order determined by a throw of the dice. Chance determines the choreography and it is the performers’ art of interpretation which brings balance to the dynamics of the piece. It starts in complete darkness. Then, the stage is lit up and the musical score begins. It is only when the spectator has accepted the lighting and the music as if they were protagonists that the dancers appear on the stage. The shaking floor that seems to recede comes alive thanks to the dancers’ performance. They run, criss-cross one another and come together.»

Unidivers.fr, Emmanuelle Paris Perrière, June 2017

«*Chance, Space and Time* are three words of a partition alluding to Merce Cunningham’s beloved themes. Choreographer, Ashley Chen and his two dancers take possession of his composition techniques to produce a clash between the different components which make up a dance piece, i.e. gestures, music and lighting. In this successful emulation, movement bursts forth, triggered by the merging of different elements. The result is totally experimental, sometimes over the top, but always joyful, thanks to the enthusiasm of the performers in their multi-coloured costumes. The deep sound of a double-bass takes over from frenzied rock and roll music. The musical fragments are played one after the other, in quick succession, so much so that the listener can sometimes feel overwhelmed. Then, the musical tension calms down and settles into a relatively peaceful physical state. All this clearly reflects intensely somatic work which, quite deservedly, makes this bold project shine.»

maculture.fr, Céline Gauthier, October 2016