

PRIMAL MATTER

DIMITRIS PAPAIOANNOU

EDINBURGH

15-16 MARCH 2013



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Dear friends,

I am very pleased to host Primal Matter by leading Greek performer and director Dimitris Papaioannou in Edinburgh, as a parallel event to the exhibition *From Death to Death and Other Small Tales*, Masterpieces from the National Gallery of Modern Art and the D.Daskalopoulos Collection.

Deeply rooted in my conviction that the arts can awaken and release human potential in profound and unique ways, this performance is presented as a powerful example of contemporary art's ability to stimulate, inspire and instigate a rethink of one's relationship with the world around us. It is also a token of the creative vitality ever present in Greece even in times of hardship.

Primal Matter investigates human nature. The exhibition *From Death to Death and Other Small Tales*, brings together two different collections with a common theme: the notion of the body as the vessel of creativity and existential struggle. Through another medium, Papaioannou's work is a poignant account of an exploratory engagement between the body, reality and surrealist notions of existence. It offers a space for contemplation and reflection on issues of heritage, identity and being.

We are here this weekend in Edinburgh to celebrate great art, learn and share experiences. Enjoy the performance.

Dimitris Daskalopoulos



Primal Matter, is Dimitris Papaioannou's personal response to a new political, social and ethical reality, where issues of national identity are re-interpreted. The challenge that lies ahead is how to face a wounded national identity, the trauma continues, but so does the resistance of creativity.

Papaioannou employs the simplest means, the body itself. Primal Matter offers a universal language of decoding, and a shortcut to the truth - the fusion of the two bodies through optical illusions is a fusion of attitudes, of identities and a struggle between the matter and the mind, the shadow and the light, the creator and its creation.

His intellectual foundations are rooted in literature, philosophy and the notion of the archetypal. His artistic language is informal, but also supremely capacious, able to develop ideas that cross with contemporary society, ethics, divinity and the notion of 'time in theatre performance', with a deep range of reference to universal values that through movement become embodied ideas. In his performance, brutality matches with softness; repetitive moves suggest a power that even the most unaware and indifferent must succumb to.

Dimitris Papaioannou drew international recognition as creator of the opening and closing ceremony of the Athens 2004 Olympic Games. An avant-garde director, a choreographer, a performer and a visual artist, he has reached out far above visual and performative arts, while his work lends authority to a new formative story-telling on identity.

Elina Kountouri

Director - Demergon Daskalopoulos Foundation

Concept - Direction - Set, Costumes and Lighting Design: Dimitris Papaioannou

Sound Design: Kostas Michopoulos

Assistant Director - Artistic Production Coordinator: Tina Papanikolaou

Assistant Director - Technical Director: Dinos Nikolaou

Rehearsal Director: Pavlina Andriopoulou

Space set up: Dimitris Theodoropoulos

Technical team: Yorgos Bambaras, Miltos Athanasiou

Creative Production Assistant - Communication: Kali Kavvatha

Set Construction: Lazaridis Scenic Studios

Costume Production: Islam Kazi

The music theme of the performance is a "taxim" (improvisation) in bouzouki by Yiannis Papaioannou

Performers: Michalis Theophanous + Dimitris Papaioannou

Production: Athens Festival, Greece, supported by EMPAC

Primal Matter is produced for the Edinburgh performance in 2013 as a parallel event to the exhibition *From Death to Death and Other Small Tales*, Masterpieces from the National Gallery of Modern Art and the D.Daskalopoulos Collection (15 DEC 2012-8 SEP 2013).

Duration: 80 minutes



PHOTO: Nikos Nikolopoulos

Dimitris Papaioannou

BIOGRAPHY

Dimitris Papaioannou's ground-breaking creative direction of the ATHENS 2004 OPENING CEREMONY – hailed a “triumph” by Time magazine and The Times of London – is widely considered a high-water mark of large scale spectacle.

Born in Athens, Greece in 1964, Dimitris Papaioannou first attracted attention at the age of 19 as a painter, comics artist and illustrator. While still a student at the School of Fine Arts he took the Greek performing arts scene by surprise, exploring the boundaries between theatre, dance and the visual arts, working not only as choreographer and performer, but also in the areas of costume, lighting, make-up and set design.

Co-founder of EDAFOS DANCE THEATRE in 1986, he conceived, directed and choreographed all of the company's productions. EDAFOS reshaped the Greek performing arts landscape over its 16 years and 17 works. L'Unità described the company as “a revelation.” “Greece Rediscovered” headlined Le Figaro's review of MEDEA, while the New York Times praised the piece for its “striking intensity” and “extraordinary passion.”

MEDEA (1993) won “Best Choreography” at the Greek National Awards for Dance, while HUMAN THIRST (1999) and FOR EVER (2001) both garnered “Production of the Year” awards.

Beyond his work with the EDAFOS DANCE THEATRE company, Papaioannou has directed operas and large-scale music shows. He has collaborated as a choreographer with Michael Cacoyannis and Lefteris Vogiatzis (in 6 productions).

In 2005, Dimitris Papaioannou was awarded the Golden Cross of the Order of Honour by the President of the Hellenic Republic for outstanding artistic achievement.

His first post-Olympic work, 2 (2006), enjoyed an unprecedented run in the Greek capital, with over 100,000 tickets sold, and was released on DVD the following year. In 2008, a revival of MEDEA, commissioned by the Greek Ministry of Culture, opened the Athens Festival, travelled to Beijing, and returned to Athens to complete another sell-out run, with over 100,000 tickets sold once more.

In 2009, Papaioannou co-curated HEAVEN LIVE, a segment of the Second Athens Biennial (with the visual artist Zafos Xagoraris). He also presented his work NOWHERE, commissioned by the Greek National Theatre to inaugurate its renovated Main Stage. The show ran for 79 sell-out performances.

He spent Spring 2010 in New York on an Fulbright Artist's Scholarship. Upon his return, he staged K.K., a concert with video projections for 13 poems by Constantine Cavafy set to music by Lena Platonos. In 2011, he created the six-hour theatrical installation INSIDE. The summer of 2012 he has presented his recent work PRIMAL MATTER in the Athens Festival, participating as a performer after 10 years.

In 2012, he included all his artistic work of the last 10 years in a 30' video: <http://vimeo.com/49349755>

More info:

www.dimitrispapaioannou.com

www.facebook.com/PrimalMatter



Michalis Theophanous

BIOGRAPHY

Michalis Theophanous was born in 1985 in Thessaloniki, Greece. In 2009 he graduated from the Hellenic National School of Dance. He has participated in various avant-garde and established performance groups as well as in international dance productions.

2005

Dance performance with Apostolia Papadamaki (Quasi Stellar Dance Company)

2007

For the Hellenic Dance Company (Choreographers Hofesh Shechter and ROOTLESSROOT)

2008

For the Hellenic Dance Company (Choreographer Jasmin Vardimon)

2009

For Carte Blanche dance company (Norway) for the performance SH:HO, with the piece "Uprising" by Hofesh Shechter (March-April)

Performed with Echo-Arts company for the 6th Summer Dance Festival in Cyprus
"Emperor's New Clothes" by Konstantinos Rigos / OKTANA dance company

2010

"Dafnis and Chloe" by Konstantinos Rigos, / OKTANA dance company

"Lysistrata - Aristophanes" by Giannis Kakleas, theatrical performance with National Theater of Greece
Rehearsing with Martin Lawrance for "Gypsy" by Richard Alston for a performance with the Hellenic Dance Company

2011

"MESA" by Dimitris Papaioannou, 6 hours performance (www.mesaproject.gr)

"Re-mapping the body" with Compagnie Linga (Switzerland)

2012

Performed with Echo-Arts company for the 9th Summer Dance Festival in Cyprus

"Additional Tones" with Compagnie Linga (Switzerland)

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