

INTERVIEW WITH
LIA RODRIGUES

CRISTIANE BOUGER for RELÂCHE – CASA HOFFMANN e-MAGAZINE | 2004

LIA RODRIGUES is choreographer, creator and artistic director of Festival *Panorama de Dança*, which has taken place annually in Rio de Janeiro since 1992. Her company—*Lia Rodrigues Companhia de Danças*—was founded in 1990 and has presented its work in several cities in Brazil and abroad.

Relâche: You have been the artistic director of *Panorama de Dança* since 1992. In some private sponsoring projects, like those with Petrobrás and Banco do Brasil, we can find the topic “brasilicity” as a relevant aspect to the appreciation of a project. How do you perceive the issue of “brasilicity” in dance?

Lia Rodrigues: I think there are several ‘Brazils’. We can look at the Brazilian culture through several prisms and in each one we will find cultural productions that also are extremely diverse.

How can one judge what is being Brazilian or not in a work of art? Is this relevant? Who will stamp each work as “made in Brazil”?

If we look at the lack of consistent programs of public politics for culture when Fernando Henrique Cardoso was the President, and for the Performing Arts since Lula took office (up to February 2004), I might say that the government should worry less about the matter of who is more or less Brazilian. We should really work in the sense of creating something that does not exist: a true program of financing and diffusion of the cultural products with clear and democratic rules of application. And one that allows for a real financial investment.

R: I would like you to talk a little about how *Panorama* has been contributing in the development of an audience that is able to enjoy the art of deterritorialization, since the boundaries between dance, theater and the visual arts seem to be more and more diluted...

Lia: I think that *Panorama* contributes as it shows the works of the national and foreign artists who discuss this matter. It also contributes by means of lectures, videos, residences, promoting meetings, and exchanges.

R: What are the criteria for the selection of the artists that you bring to *Panorama*?

Lia: I created the *Panorama* and I have been its general and artistic director for 12 years. I have also counted on the precious curatorship of Roberto Pereira for seven years. Nayse Lopes has directed the residence projects for the last three years. We work as a team to discuss *Panorama*’s format and program. I have also relied on the help of many colleagues who are programmers of other festivals in Brazil and Europe, and of directors of institutions such as the Goethe Institute, the British Council, and the Consulate of France, among others. To tell you the truth, it is a large cooperation network. The Rio de Janeiro City Hall is our main sponsor, in financial terms (in the year 2003 we received R\$320,000) and also regarding the cession of the Carlos Gomes Theater and of the *Espaço Cultural Sergio Porto*. We have been using the Copacabana SESC and the *Maison de France* Theater, too. But a Festival of this size actually has a real cost of approximately R\$1 million. Another part of this budget is granted by partners and supporters. Our general producer, Alexandra di Calafiori and the *Panorama* team have to participate with part of the financial investment to guarantee the quality and the programming. For you to have an idea of our difficulties, consider that it is February 2004 and the last part of the money that the City Hall should pay us has not been paid yet. The Festival has been over for three months already. This means great financial losses that we have to cover. As we all know, a Festival runs for 12 months a year uninterruptedly because the contacts, trips, delivery and receiving of material, conception of ideas, etc. take place throughout the year, and the money (a part of it) is received only a month before the Festival begins.

The *Panorama* does not have just a single objective: it may and must perform several roles. It may and must act in several areas. Likewise, it may and must also inform about and place in evidence different forms of making and thinking dance, through the works of national and international artists, unknown in Rio de Janeiro.

We are always alert to the constant and dynamic movement of dance, its creators, their different ways of establishing and associating themselves and the arising of new trends and proposals.

We think about creating a favorable environment for the free flow of information, ideas, questionings, fostering discussions and reflections, thus promoting the creation

of new contact networks.

Therefore, in the *Panorama* we work with the following proposals: Residences, which offer courses of three weeks with invited professionals; We invest in the new generation with the continuity of the *Novíssimos* [The Newest] project (an exhibition of new creators from Rio), *Novíssimos Curadores* [Newest Curators] (students from dance colleges in the city of Rio de Janeiro who are responsible for curatorship's choices and format of the night of the *Novíssimos*); *Novíssimos Críticos* [Newest Critics] is a dance workshop with college students who criticize the works of the *Novíssimos*; We offer the opportunity to try-out in other areas of artistic creation with the project Curator-Creator, which invites choreographers to grade and organize one of the nights of the festival.

Having existed for 12 consecutive years in Brazil is in itself a resistance manifesto. The price of the ticket being R\$1 opens up and also forms new public, allowing for inclusion and democratization in the access to the culture. In fact, this festival has only survived to this day due to the partnerships that were established: with the artists, with the institutions that invest in it, with a wonderful production team, with special people who have been supporting us each year, with the press that opens an incredible space. At last, the *Panorama* is a festival built upon the union of strengths and desires.

I think that the word 'mission' explains well how I feel about being the head of this project. The working conditions are not the ideal ones, but when I watch the shows and see the crowded seminars, everything is worth it.

R: It seems to be a privilege (an achieved privilege) the fact that Rio de Janeiro has two events as the *Panorama*, under Roberto Pereira and your curatorship, and *Dança Brasil* [Dance Brazil], directed by Leonel Brum. How do these events relate to and contribute in each other?

Lia: The *Panorama* was already five years old when Leonel came to me to talk about a festival that he was just starting to organize for the CCBB [the Cultural Center of the Bank of Brazil]. We had already worked together, he as an actor and I as a choreographer in a theater play. We talked extensively and I told him exactly how the *Panorama* was.

In the following year, in 1997 the first Dance Brazil festival took place and it was there that I first showed two of my creations, *Folia* in 1997 and *Formas Breves* [Brief

Forms] in 2002. This is a festival that I respect a lot and we have worked in true collaboration, enriched in the last years with Silvia Soter joining the curatorship.

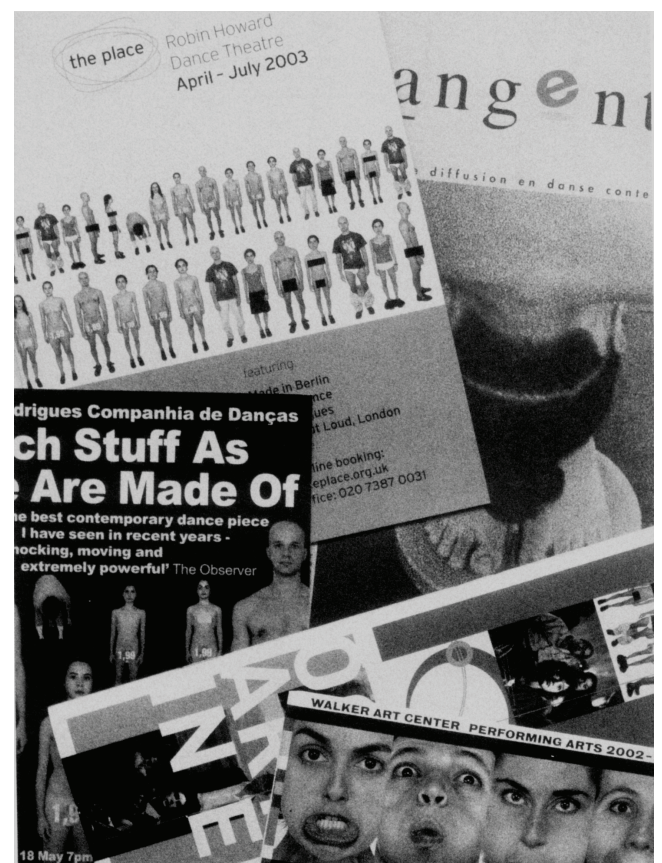
But nowadays, Rio has a real privileged profile, because there are several events and programs of professional dance such as: the SESC Copacabana (the regular annual program and the 'Solos do SESC'), the *Carioca* Circuit of Rio City Hall, the 'X-ray' Project of UniverCidade [UniverCity], created by Roberto Pereira, and The *Cahier de la Danse*, a project which Silvia Soter and I developed in partnership with the Consulate of France, among other initiatives. The *Panorama* was by itself for many years, but now the dialogue with so many other projects is very stimulating.

R: You declared during your workshop at Casa Hoffmann that you tour with your shows as much to festivals abroad as to small cities in Brazil. Is there any difference in the audience's reception?

Lia: Audience reaction is practically the same in such different places as Paris, Berlin, Montreal or there in the

Lia Rodrigues Cia. de Danças

Photography: © Tatiana Altberg and Lucia Helna Zaremba | Design: Monica Soffiati



Crato, interior of Ceará or in Acre, Tocantins, Rondônia, or Rio.

It is very important to dance in cities that normally remain out of the restricted routes where the artistic Brazilian productions circulate. We are always welcome by respectful and interested people, clearly anxious to be in contact with the artistic scene of other states. The biggest issue involves the presentation conditions. Certainly, this is very different. The same distance that separates Rio de Janeiro from Peru, for example, separates us from the north of Brazil, as incredible as this might seem. The high cost of transportation, the lack of adequate places for performances and the belief that there is no audience for art in this region make an excursion to the North seem completely improbable. The merging of efforts and projects sometimes enables us to cross this frontier. An example was our participation in a very important project created by Sidnei Cruz for the SESC National called *Palco Giratório* [Rotating Stage] in 2001. We performed from the northeast in the interior of Ceará, (Crato and Juazeiro) to 18 cities in the southern state of Santa Catarina.

In 2002, with the maintenance sponsorship of Brazil Telecom plus the project *EmCena Brasil*, of *Ministério da Cultura*, and the support of SESC National, we were able to dance and have practical and theoretical workshops without any cost in Palmas (Tocantins), Rio Branco (Acre), and Porto Velho (Rondônia).

To dance in this large country called Brazil, always brings joy and some surprises. In João Pessoa, during a rehearsal, the stage collapsed a few centimeters, frightening everybody in the dance company. It rained in the evening of the 8th *Festival Nacional de Arte – Fenart* performances in 2002. The water drips were so intense that it was necessary to wear a raincoat to operate the sound table. Backstage a flood was coming down the stairs.

When we arrived in Palmas, Tocantins, it was the first time the ballet dancers were in the north of Brazil, and they were anxious about the reception the show would have. It could not have been better. The audience was respectful and interested, and lots of people signed up for the practical and theoretical workshops.

The same thing happened in Rio Branco (Acre) and in Porto Velho (Rondônia), the other places where we performed. However, the conditions were sometimes perilous. The performances took place in small rooms,

carpeted floors and even at a party house.

R: Talking about Tate Modern Gallery and the supremacy of resources from countries as England and the USA and their almost unrestricted access to art, you raised the following question: “Has the art we do been making people better?”. This question causes much anguish, since the uselessness of art seems to reverberate with the question. How has this issue been presented to you?

Lia: I cannot get away from this anguish of asking myself if my work is worth anything. I believe I will never find an answer that will satisfy me. I have tried to learn to live with this anguish, and I think that it is one of my motivations to continue creating. In a world where everything has to be “useful”, bringing immediate results with a lot of visibility, always for millions to consume, where the idea of success is tied to quantity it is always hard to travel another road. To travel on this other road is to have excellent company.

I will quote (in Spanish) parts of a text written in 2003 by many French artists who reflected upon this question.

“Es cuando el poder comienza a decretar lo que es ‘útil’ y lo que es ‘inútil’ que la vida en sí está en peligro. Nos muestran con un dedo acusador: ‘ustedes no son útiles, no son suficientemente rentables, hay que racionalizar todo esto’ y buscan una complicidad con otros sectores de la sociedad.

‘Miren, miren... ellos quieren hacer teatro, danza, películas, música... mientras que estamos en plena crisis, ustedes están de acuerdo con nosotros: es un escándalo!’ Las leyes de la economía y nuestros nuevos dioses exigen el sacrificio de los inútiles y la salvación exclusiva para lo útil. ¿Pero lo útil para quién? Lo útil para la racionalidad económica, que no siempre coincide con la vida. Racionalizar quiere decir... descartar todos los problemas. Un solo inconveniente: los ‘problemas’ son para nuestra sociedad los cuerpos, los humanos. Limpiar, descentralizar, programar... difícil de ser más razonable, más racional, solo quieren ‘sacar lo inútil’... Pero lo inútil de esos vendedores es el fundamento de la vida para nosotros. Si seguimos sacando lo inútil según la lógica neoliberal, la vida en sí está en peligro. La vida es inútil, el sentido de la vida es inmanente.

El espacio, los espacios del arte, siempre fueron espacios públicos, estos verdaderos laboratorios sociales donde la gente experimenta otras dimensiones, otras ‘estéticas de la vida’. Este mundo unificado que se volvió un mundo-mercancía,

se opone a la multiplicidad, a las infinitas dimensiones del deseo, de la imaginación y de la creación. Y se opone fundamentalmente a la justicia... Resistir es crear y desarrollar contrapoderes y contraculturas. La creación artística no es un lujo para los hombres, es una necesidad vital de la cual la mayor parte de la gente se encuentra privada."

R: Is art made for an elite? Who are the people in your audience?

Lia: I do not think that the audience is a problem for dance in Brazil. I think it is difficult to survive only with the money that comes from the box office, provided that dance seasons are never too long. The three weeks season we had at Vila Lobos Theater in December 2003 is something completely new because dance does not have a regular schedule in the city theaters. When it does, it is only for four days, or a maximum of two weeks.

It is the first time in the 13 years of the Company that I dance in this theater, which one of the most important ones in town and has a marvelous stage. What happened before was that I had to fight for the theater with dance institutes that rented the space for their performances at the end of the year. This is a permanent struggle. I think that artistic manifestations should be available to any citizen. I believe there are different audiences for different performances. During the long 2000 season of *Aquilo de que somos feitos* [Such stuff as we are made of] in several places in Rio, with popular tickets at R\$1,99—there was a significant amount of people who usually do not go to dance performances attending them. These people would probably watch more performances if they could afford it. We charged the maximum price of R\$2 [two reais], in keeping with the Company's commitment to develop new audiences, looking for the most opportunities to meet with the public—this is a moment for closure and feedback in the cycle of creation.

R: In the 500th anniversary of Brazil you presented *Aquilo de que somos feitos*... In this piece, the nudity of the bodies, sculpture-bodies, collapsing bodies, overlapped bodies, gives way to the explosion of brands, slogans, mediatic and ideological symbols: Pikashu, Aiwa, Just do it, Coke, Che Guevara... Parallel to that, you charged R\$1,99 for the tickets in Rio, stating: "We are second-rate meat". What are your perspectives for this Brazil?

Lia: Being more specific about the cultural issue, making art in general in Brazil is unpredictable. One never knows

whether the existing projects will continue or new ones will come out. And continuity is crucial for those who want to work seriously. So, the central question is the creation and maintenance of public politics of investment.

Regarding my perspectives for Brazil, in a more general sense, yes, I hope, with some assurance, that it is possible to have a country with less inequality. I see many wonderful initiatives, many people developing incredible works in different areas, and that makes me believe that another world is possible, with each one contributing in his/ her own way. I believe we build our history everyday, and that each one of us is responsible for it. I want to keep alive the possibility of surprising myself, of getting angry now and then, of acting, and keeping informed. More information equals less prejudice.

I do not know for sure who wrote this sentence, but I copied it in my personal book and I make it mine: "I still believe there can be a world where we can be happy, loving, creative, keeping the sense of justice and solidarity with each other."

R: In *Formas Breves* you approximate Calvino and Oskar Schlemmer. How did this meeting come about?

Lia: *Formas Breves* is an imaginary corner where the unexpected meeting of two creators takes place: the German Oskar Schlemmer (1888–1943), one of the founders of Bauhaus architecture and design movement, and Ítalo Calvino (1923–1985), one of the biggest names in Italian literature. What they have in common is the discussion about mankind and its future and the investigation of the structures behind the artistic work. Calvino's book which serves as a theme for *Formas Breves* is called *Seis Propostas para o Próximo Milênio* [Six Memos for the Next Millennium]. The Bauhaus movement proposed to make the "construction of the future". Schlemmer worried about the relation of the body with geometry and space; Calvino, with the structure of the text. The dialogue of the Company with the two artists had another interlocutor—the art critic and playwright Sílvia Soter, who enriched the creation of the two choreographies, providing the Company with suggestions and information. This process offered the dancers a chance to investigate in depth some questions that had already been discussed in previous works. The performance originated from the invitation of *Culturgest*, one of the main Portuguese cultural institutions, to honor Oskar Schlemmer with the creation of a duo. We knew very little about the designer, composer, and



AQUILO DE QUE SOMOS FEITOS

Lia Rodrigues Cia. de Danças, *Aquilo de que somos feitos* [Such Stuff as We Are Made of]
Design: Monica Soffiati | Photo: © Tatiana Altberg

visual artist who also made important incursions through dance. He was responsible for works of vanguard such as *Triadic Ballet*. Reflecting upon the questions raised by Schlemmer on the basis of his own experiences, we developed a collective work that maintains common points with the work of the German artist, and recreates it following our own experiences as Brazilians of 21st century. Thus, the 30-minute performance opened in Lisbon, in 2002, was called *Buscou-se, então, falar a partir dele e não sobre ele* [We tried to talk through him, not about him].

The investigation that started in Germany in the 1920s continued with the immersion in the proposals of Italo Calvino, chosen by Silvia Soter as the core of the 2002 edition of the *Dança Brasil* [Brazil Dance] exhibit made by *Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil/Rio de Janeiro* (CCBB). The union of these two works was called *Formas Breves* and opened this exhibition in April of the same year.

This investigation goes so deep into the structure of the movement that in certain moments it becomes a text. And in it, as Calvino teaches, the choreographic fabric is built as “a structure divided in parts where each short text is close to the others, in a sequence that does not imply a flow or a hierarchy, but rather a net within which multiple passages can be traced and multiple and branch conclusions be drawn”.

R: In the workshop at Casa Hoffmann, your creation method seemed to come from the spontaneous and personal movements of the performers/dancers and from a kind of discovering from simultaneity. Can you talk more about the creation process of your pieces?

Lia: I do not have a method of creation. In the workshop at Casa Hoffmann, I tried to direct the classes to that specific group who was there, aiming to contribute my maximum to their different creative processes.

Each one of my creations had very different processes. I will give two examples: *Folia* and *Aquilo de que somos feitos*. In 1995, I received the Vitae of Arts Scholarship to work on a project of oral literature and its relations to dance, and for that reason I deeply studied Mario de Andrade's universe. As a great part of Brazilians, I only knew Mario de Andrade as the modernist author of *Macunaíma*.

During the research I marveled as I learned about the immense richness of the monumental works by the writer, researcher, bissexite ethnographer, musicologist, com-

poser and so many other things (as he himself used to say: “I am three hundred, three hundred and fifty...”). I was touched forever by the great thinker of Brazilian culture who planted deep roots both in my artistic creation and in my vision of culture and cultural action. For practically five years, I was interested in this matter of “being Brazilian”.

These were some questions that I asked myself: ‘Am I really Brazilian?’; ‘May I represent the Brazilian culture?’; ‘How can I dive into tradition (as Mário used to propose) and mix it with what I do and think today?’ Such questions are apparently simple, but they drove me to this ‘marioandradiano’ project, which kept me busy for some years. Then several parallel projects came about: *Folia I* and *Folia II* dance performances; the recording of a CD with a sound track created by the musician and composer Zeca Assumpção (partner in my artistic creations) in collaboration with Marlui Miranda, a commemorative exhibition *Caixa de Folia* [Fun Box] of the 60 years of the Folklore Research Mission (which Mario de Andrade sent to the North and Northeast of Brazil) at *Museu da República* (in Rio), in partnership with the journalist Anabela Paiva, who made all efforts for the great exhibition about *Macunaíma*, in partnership with SESC of São Paulo, in Belenzinho.

After that, I needed a long interval to digest so much information. Between the years 1998 and 2000, I created *Aquilo de que somos feitos*. The years 1999 and 2000 were the celebratory years of the 500th anniversary of Brazil's “discovery.” So, one of the starting points was ‘to discover’ and work with the matters that were interesting to us, regarding citizenship, history, memory.

Additional issues were what it is like to make art in Brazil today, what is considered beautiful, what is considered contemporary art, how can art think the world and how its mode of thought can serve the world, and also aesthetic questions: unusual forms that the body produces, different ways to use the scenic space.

Aquilo de que somos feitos is part of a whole process that neither ends, nor starts there, but is connected with all of the other projects that I carried through, and with others that I still want to do. When it opens, I am already thinking about other creations.

R: Do you share the authorship of your pieces with your dancers? How do you perceive the issue of collective cre-

ation and the choreographer's signature?

Lia: My works are built in cooperation with the dancers. The process that leads us to the final form is always very rich. We talk a lot, about what points we are going to work on, read texts, or books, or essays referring to the theme, we move a lot and we create sequences. I also appreciate it when each dancer can 'look' at what is being produced. We change places many times.

The creation process is very chaotic. Better saying, it is extremely organized, with a proper and unique logic each time. It is very intense and always risky. For *Formas Breves*, we worked for the first time with a playwright, the researcher and dance critic Silvia Soter, who brought us other ways to approach our research. When I started choreographing (1988) and creating in other bodies it was a very curious and complex process (and it still is): I mean passing what you do with your body on to another body that will reproduce that movement in a totally new way, and, afterwards, you still modify whatever that body presented.

It is very interesting to see how the creation of movements is developed. Thus, you always work with multidisciplinary and very diverse information, as many as available in the bodies with which you are interacting.

Regarding the choreographer's signature, I believe that the search for someone's own style is built along the whole life of an artist-creator. This is how I still feel nowadays: in construction/deconstruction. In other words, in movement.

R: Do you consider yourself a dancer "developer"? How do the dancers who work with you change?

Lia: I always think of the Company as a school, where we learn together. We work for six hours and a half each day, five days a week. The dancers have classes on classic and contemporary dance with teachers such as the choreographers João Saldanha, Paula Nestorov, and Cristina Moura, among others.

The experience of traveling to other countries, and to know about other works also is very important. Many dancers who worked and cooperate intensely with the company, such as Denise Stutz and Macela Levi develop their own work nowadays. When the results for the approved projects of Itaú Cultural came out this year, I was

very happy to see that four of the chosen ones used to work and/or still work with me.

I think we have changed and taken shape together. It is a never-ending process, which only renews itself. The Company supports other groups too, sharing small financial aid, rehearsal and classroom space with both non-sponsored and sponsored artists such as Paula Nestorov, Duda Maia, Gustavo Ciríaco, Frederico Paredes, and Carmen Luz.

R: What was your experience at Maguy Marin Company like in the 1980s? How did this experience influence your work?

Lia: It was a wonderful experience, which definitely touched my life as a dancer and later as a choreographer. With Maguy I learned what it is to be a professional, I learned with her severity, her creativity, her generosity and her ethics. Without any doubt, all of this is and will always be present in any kind of work I ever do. To this day we have been very close and I am still learning with her.

R: What is the fundamental nature of *Lia Rodrigues Cia. de Danças*?

Lia: It is continuous and daily work.

R: What about the maintenance of your company? Have you received support from *Prefeitura do Rio de Janeiro* [Rio de Janeiro City Hall]? Do the fundings require any social work return?

Lia: We had the support of the Rio de Janeiro City Hall from 1997 to 2001. This sponsoring program has been very important to consolidate dance in the state of Rio de Janeiro. It has allowed us to rent a permanent training space and to give a small financial help to the participants.

Brasil Telecom has sponsored the Company since 2002, enabling us to pursue a professional stage. New collaborators joined our team, enriching our work with their specific competences; we set up an office for the production; we invested in trips, in the formation of audiences and in making the works of our Company known; and, above all, we could pay better and regular wages to the professionals who work with us. There are 16 direct salary workers among the dancers, trainees, teachers and administrative personnel. The initiative of *Brasil Telecom* to maintain groups financially is of utmost importance.



Lia Rodrigues Cia. de Danças, *Aquilo de que somos feitos* [*Such Stuff as We Are Made of*]
Photo: © Tátiana Altberg

“I believe we build our history everyday, and that each one of us is responsible for it. I want to keep alive the possibility of surprising myself, of getting angry now and then, of acting, and keeping informed. More information equals less prejudice.” — Lia Rodrigues

In Brazil, most of the money invested in cultural funding is used in the event itself. Few companies realize that a much more effective option is to invest in an artist at medium and long ranges. Nevertheless, I think that the responsibility for cultural foment should be the government's. Who is responsible for the health? the sports? Why cannot culture be a priority among government responsibilities, too? If in the political speeches culture is as important as health, I would like to see this in practice.

There are many ways of talking about Brazil, through music, through the performing arts, and all these areas must have projects and financial support. However, what happens is that, such more experimental areas, tied to research, are the ones that lack the most support and due to that we need, for instance, a sharp look at a cultural fund. In the case of private companies, they have to put their money where they want. When we talk about public money, it is different: it has to be organized and used in a conscious way.

R: How do you perceive the artists' commitment to social projects? To what extent do social projects make them drift away from the focus of their artistic research?

Lia: I made the artistic coordination of BNDES Exhibition of Art in Social Action for three years (from 2000 to 2002). In the first edition, we organized a meeting just to discuss this question: Do all products resulting from projects that use dance as motivation for education projects with young people and children under situation of social risk have to be necessarily artistic and must be shown as such? The discussion was very difficult, once that was the moment when this subject started to come up.

The incredible multiplication of projects with this profile occurred from 1999 on, as the researcher Silvia Soter explains in her work awarded with the scholarship *Bolsa Rio Arte*, where she makes a survey and analysis of the social projects with dance in the city of Rio de Janeiro. The great majority of the projects I learned about during this period, not only dance projects, but also music and theater, were not led by artists-creators but by people committed to artistic education. What is important in these projects is that they are led by capable people in their areas.

Regarding the commitment of artists in social projects, my question is: Doesn't the artistic work per se already have a social and political function? I believe that the act of creating something is revolutionary, libertarian, and to

make art in Brazil today is a continuous process of affirmation, investment, and resistance. I think of art as an instrument of knowledge, and knowledge is the first step to change something.

R: How have you perceived the work of *Ministério da Cultura* [Ministry of Culture]? What changes do you consider necessary in the cultural laws for the development of dance in Brazil?

Lia: We still do not have any projects for the performing arts or at least some directions for this area from the Ministry of Culture. This is very disappointing. I always voted for PT [*Partido dos Trabalhadores*/ the Worker's Party], and I had great hopes that there would be a special look to these matters, according to what I saw in the government proposal. It is interesting to know that the Ministry have heard the people, but just that is not enough. Everything that existed in this area in the last eight years was little and does not exist anymore. Take as an example of circulation and assembly the EnCena Brasil project. There should be an articulation to make the productions happen among the district, state and federal powers, in the State and in the country. The Ministry would keep the circulation and incentive projects, as The National Fund for Culture, with a plan that would direct funds to different projects. Considering what I saw in the recently launched Petrobras proposal of cultural encouragement, there is nothing directed towards the performing arts at the Federal stance.

In Brazil, there is not an internal market able to guarantee the subsistence of dance and theater companies. We are a country of continental dimensions, where travelling is not easy most of the times. It is necessary to invest a lot to assure the dissemination of a cultural product. The company travels abroad very often, but it is not a big party, it is hard work. Our agenda has more presentations in Europe (we have performances scheduled in 2004, and until the end of 2005) than in Brazil. In 2003 we had to cancel performances in the Center-West due to lack of resources. We tried to get in touch with the Ministry, but we did not even know who to talk to. I am not a specialist to tell you what law changes should take place, but what is clear to me, is that the money is public (which is the one used by the companies that make use of the incentive laws) and it should be managed by the Ministry of Culture.

R: How was your experience at Casa Hoffmann?

Lia: I loved it. I loved the project as a whole and I was very pleased with the quality level of the students. It was a touching experience to me. I learned a lot with them. I had never been to Curitiba and it was a way to learn a bit of what has been happening there.

R: After the several awards your company has received and more specifically the award for the best piece in the 11th *Festival International de Nouvelle Danse*, in Montreal, Canada to *Formas Breves*, what can you say about the future projects and expectations of your company?

Lia: We have been creating a new work to open between 2004 and 2005. I was invited to create one of the *La Fontaine Fables*, which is a project from France and it will have the premiere there in March 2005. We have also been cooperating with the CEASM (*Centro de Estudos e Ações Solidárias da Maré*) of Maré community in Rio de Janeiro since last year.

On our trip to Canada, it was an ongoing saga. We went to Buenos Aires first, where they paid us very little (due to financial hardships in Argentina) and air tickets were not included, usually the government of the invited country pays for it through their air companies. We used our own allowances for the tickets. From there, we went straight to Canada. There were 34 companies, and the respective governments paid for the air tickets, unlike mine. We put our money together and had a deficit. The visas were expensive also: US\$200 for each one. From there, we went to Ireland, to receive the money there and cover the deficit in the budget. Only after all this struggling, when I arrived here, I heard about the award, which was excellent, because it came from popular judgment. Of course, it was great to receive this award, but I would rather not receive any award and have a solid basis for people who work with dance in our country. I think my generation will not see that. Somehow I hope to be contributing to that. ♦

Lia Rodrigues is choreographer, creator, and artistic director of Festival Panorama de Dança, which has taken place annually in Rio de Janeiro since 1992. Her company, Lia Rodrigues Companhia de Danças, was founded in 1990 and has presented its work in several cities in Brazil and abroad. Among her pieces are: *Folia*, *Aquilo de que Somos Feitos*, and *Formas Breves*. In 2003 *Formas Breves* won the prize for best dance piece, on a popular jury vote, at the 11th International Festival of *Nouvelle Danse*, in Montreal, Canada.

Lia Rodrigues Cia. de Danças, *Aquilo de que somos feitos*
[*Such Stuff as We Are Made of*]
Photo: © Tatiana Altberg

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