

Press

### **„SELF-UNFINISHED“**

By Xavier Le Roy

No matter what kind of label is attached to this piece, if you still call it dance or if you prefer calling it performance art: It broadens Art into a new dimension, which is not only corporeal. Xavier Le Roy is not only an imaginative choreographer (we will have to use this term even for Movement-Creators like Le Roy for lack of any better one), but also a great, unusual Performer. His naked back is more expressive than some faces are. During the entire premiere one would have heard a pin falling to the floor.

**Jochen Schmidt/ Berliner Zeitung**

"Self- Unfinished"- the world-famous Performance by Xavier Le Roy from 1998, which was now finally shown in Zurich in the context of "Körperszenen" (organized by the TheaterNeumarkt) works with transformations of matter and provokes viewing habits and also theatre habits. The Frenchman living in Berlin is- together with his countryman Jerome Bel and the American Meg Stuart-one of the dance creators, who began in the nineties to question the originality of the body, making the loss of identity a subject of discussion and exploring the crossing point of "Having" a body and "Being" a body. How is it possible to show the loss of control? The body seems no longer to be a support for messages, but instead a dismembered thing, which constantly transforms itself depending on the view. And Xavier Le Roys' corps appears as a body which visibly does have a centre, but no head. This of course is an illusion- it is the head that moves this creature, on the floor or in the mind. The dance will never manage to get out of this dilemma. But Xavier Le Roys' "self-Unfinished" at least makes it visible.

**Lilo Weber/Tanzhaus Wasserwerk (24.02.01)**

The most interesting dancing not-dancer reflects the body in a very consequent, very mature way: Xavier Le Roy, the former molecular biologist, reverses his naked torso including his extremities and with it the entire world. Top is bottom and bottom is top, the human being actually is a chicken.

**Eva- Elisabeth Fischer/Berliner Zeitung (27.01.00)**

"A chair, a desk, a soundtrack, that doesn't start. A dancer in a shirt uses strong sound effectsto imitate a robot. Indeed an understandable, even conventional idea, that is until Xavier Le Roy's (1963, France) play turns into a gripping mental space. Head over heels, the dancer's body is transformed in a real time into a series of hallucinogenic morphological aberrations, representing images of body that reconfigures itself based to unwritten laws and a disquieting, inhuman rhythm. It undergoes long stages, makes infinite movements and begins to crawl abruptly. In addition to the torsion carried out in the "spectacle de danse" (dance

performance), Xavier Le Roy taps into a new field where scientific and social data is transferred and imprinted in imaginary representations of the body."

**Francois Piron in the journal des arts of Connivence, 6<sup>th</sup> Biennale de Lyon**

"Mechanical man" is another familiar concept. You do it very well. When somber lighting and music are laid over the isolations of arms and the "paralysis" of locked knees in "Narcisse Flip" we are forced into some heavy and unrelieved metaphoric readings - all more or less cliché - like "existential angst", an at the abyss, crisis of faith - you name it. I visited that place in the 50's, it now puts me to sleep. Which is why I liked "Self- Unfinished" so much more. The brightly lit performing area gives no clues to "how to read" and the mechanical - man beginning is offset with a return to ordinary task - like activity: walk, sit, turn off tape machine. By the time you're into the contortions with the dress, we're given this extraordinary hybrid creature which confronts us with a multiplicity of interpretations. For me it alternated variously as insect, martian, chicken, watering can, caterpillar into pupa, et al. What saved it from being a Pilobolus - like entertainment (a crowd - pleasing American group that combines bodies to create biomorphic oddities) were the stillnesses and extended durations. We must sit with our attention riveted, waiting for the next stirring. Like watching a spider or snail. Your timing in this piece is exquisite: no pandering to short attention spans here. Somehow I didn't mind the metaphor of struggle here. Perhaps because of a more total transformation of the body, the struggle is more "real", certainly more physically demanding - therefore "actual" - than in Narcisse. Further, the reading is produced by the task rather than by an atmosphere (produced by music and lighting). But by this time you know my biases.

**Yvonne Rainer (22.12.1999)**