

# M A S A K R A

This is an insightful, well-knit, excellently crafted and executed, surprising piece, which conveys concept through organization, nature of the dance, sound and sparing use of text. The dance is energetic, expressive and appealing. The scene starts to drag though, at which point the spectator is not only encouraged to indulge in observing the dancers for a prolonged period of time but to genuinely take a closer look at them. With each moment passing, we begin to notice the artificiality of the smiles contorting the dancers' faces into displeasing grimaces. What is more, while trying to capture the gaze of the dancers, we realize it's not there to communicate. It is there to mask and be used as a tool to control themselves, the audience and most importantly their co-dancers.

The performers reenter the stage for applause in a truly spectacular manner – grinning, they bow as if they had just competed in a ballroom dance tournament. This brings me to conclude that the deconstruction of the ballroom dance convention was yet another element of the show, a mere effect based on the accusation of the western culture constantly seeking to boost its self-esteem (we're not that bad after all, if we can criticize ourselves) and reestablishment of the initial status quo (these dances are so pleasurable to watch, these smiles so appealing). We are left in a state of bewilderment, incomprehension, disorientation, confusion and discomfort. It's arguably the most sombre piece, authored or co-authored by Sakowicz, I've seen so far.

*Monika Kwaśniewska, Didaskalia*

Performances that are being invited to the Brewery rarely use dance virtuosity, which in Masakra is intensively present, although in a critical and ironic way. In Sakowicz's performance we meet well-known independent artists (Kraczkowska, Kryst, Nagabczyńska and Szostak) in a radically different setting. The dancers, who are part of the generation of experimental Polish choreography, use the movement code of Latin American culture almost exclusively interpreted by Western European ballroom dancing. As a result, Masakra is a dance competition in two acts: the performers position themselves in the middle of the stage surrounded by spectators and perform more and more dances.

Although Masakra fulfills his attempt to criticize Western culture by realizing that its aesthetics is hidden in colonizing darkness, a feeling of insufficiency dominates after the performance. Perhaps it is an integral part of the horror movie: after so many jumpscare games you realize that what is really scary, has already happened, or is still happening somewhere behind the scenes.

*Teresa Fazan, taniecPOLSKA*

Paweł Sakowicz - currently associated with modern, new choreography, and once himself quite successful in ballroom dance competitions - decided to make a piece that asks primary questions about the genesis, history and today's popularity of what we know as „Latin American dances”. Sakowicz designs a situation in which the viewer watches four dancers (Karolina Kraczkowska, Agnieszka Kryst, Ramona Nagabczyńska, Iza Szostak) performing individual latino-style sequences. They catch the eye contact with the viewers, look defiantly in the eyes, smile happily. Over time, these broad smiles begin to be disturbing, even ominous.

The second part is based on the text that brings the whole postcolonial problematics. It asks questions about who is dancing, who is the beholder, and what exactly are these culturally appropriated movements. A repetitive question: "Are we latin division or the bleach squad?" - translated in various ways using the displayed subtitles - is an attempt to problematize the position of the creators themselves (white Europeans) towards the subject of „Masakra". The varied translation, even to the point of absurdity, also strengthens the message about cultural appropriations that always change the sense of the original.

*Stanisław Godlewski, Kultura u podstaw*