

DeRonde/Deroo

It really hurts when your head hits the concrete

INTRIGUING MIME PERFORMANCE ABOUT AMOROUS POWER RELATIONSHIPS



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From a beautiful dune they come stumbling down: the man in the neat shirt (Nick Deroo) and his seemingly lifeless companion (Tom de Ronde). With *It really hurts when your head hits the concrete*, the two-man collective DeRonde/Deroo presents an intriguing mime performance about physical and amorous power relationships.

The “bale” that Deroo seems to unceremoniously unload is the nod to what seems to be one of the main inspirations of this physical performance: Daniel Radcliffe's film *Swiss*

Army Man (2016), a somewhat bizarre film in which a shipwrecked man makes a commitment to a washed-up corpse that only farts.

The question is whether our man in the tidy shirt, plodding through the sand with his burden, is actually dealing with a corpse - a disembodied object - or some other kind of returned 'incarnation'. Sometimes the limbs remain rigidly erect, other times they give in. Is it a corpse, a doll, an utensil? What is certain is that one shamelessly 'uses' the other in the most literal sense: as a chair, as a horse, as a juke box. He is a *swiss army knife* - with practicable application in every situation.



The indeterminacy of the 'thing' intrigues. And evolves, especially when it slowly rebels, seems to develop a will of its own that eludes the will of its 'master'. (At one point, the man in the shirt checks the teeth of his 'horse' - or is it that of an enslaved one? Creepy how one gesture opens up a reservoir of thoughts and associations.)

The crucial moment is the moment when the 'thing' suddenly makes eye contact, and instantly loses its 'thingness,' its objectivity - suddenly we are dealing with a subject. Philosopher and semiotician Roland Barthes argued that only in the gaze is the human soul truly born. This 'birth' (or: rebirth) brings with it a shift in power relations: suddenly two *people* face each other, 'using' each other in a mutual game of oppression.

Was that also what happened between them in the past? More and more it begins to look as if the thing coming to life is the incarnation of a relationship that is supposed to

be dead, quite dead. Only traces of past love and caring remain: an enforced kiss, the caring gesture with which one brushes the sand off his former companion's face. In a tight mix of mime, clownery and acrobatics, DeRonde/Deroo show what happens to a love that is lost: it continues to spot you, haunting you like a living corpse, which you have to push to the ground, floundering, for minutes at a time, until it finally stays quiet. And even then. Again and again the beloved returns, continues to stare at you, mouth open, gaping with impotence - hushed in perpetual disbelief.

Photo: Joshua Walter - Nocturmax.com

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