



## **SWOP SEMINAR: How do children experience dance?**

Over the past decade dance for young audiences has seen a remarkable development which has in fact turned it into a new and vibrant art form, particularly in Europe.

*Aaben Dance*, the regional theatre of the city of Roskilde, Denmark, is launching the international dance festival named “*SWOP*”, specifically aimed at children and young people.

As part of SWOP we are organising a seminar about children’s experience of dance in collaboration with The Danish National School of Theatre and Contemporary Dance - Continuing Education:

**Saturday 26 May 2012, 10:00 – 18:00**  
**Aaben Dans, Roskilde**

### **About the seminar**

Two specialists **Liesbeth Wildschut**, associate professor at Institute for Theatre, Film and TV, Utrecht University, the Netherlands, and **Charlotte Svendler Nielsen**, assistant professor at Department of Exercise and Sport Sciences, University of Copenhagen, will both contribute with a concrete case relating to how children experience dance.

**Monna Dithmer**, dance critique and performing arts editor at the leading daily Politiken, will be the moderator.

In addition to these two presentations and the subsequent discussion, the seminar includes two performances: the Dutch Keren Levi & Ugo Dehaes’ highly praised *Couple-Like #2* and a new performance *Chalk About #2* by Christine Devaney (Scotland) and Leandro Kees (Argentina/Germany).

The seminar will also include a presentation of Fresh Tracks Europe (FTE) – a new, innovative network for artists and producers who work with dance for young audiences. FTE-producers, choreographers participating in the SWOP festival as well as the dance educator **Maria Speth** will participate in the seminar.

## **How do children conceive dance? How can we prepare children for a dance performance? How do children experience being involved in dance as an art form?**

These are some of the questions that will be discussed during this seminar. Wildschut's paper *Look! You see what is not really there – The imagination of children watching a dance performance* is based on an empirical study with 70 ten year old children who watch the same dance performance. Wildschut questions whether there were any difference between children who participated in a workshop before the performance and those who did not. Wildschut also asks about their thoughts evoked by the performance (did they see other things than what was visible on stage?) in order to strengthen our understanding of about how we can prepare children for a dance performance.

Svendler follows a 4<sup>th</sup> Year Class from Peder Syv Skolen in Roskilde with a camera before and during the SWOP festival, both when they themselves dance, and when they watch a dance performance. In *Unfolding children's multi-modal experiences of dance as artistic practice* Svendler takes a phenomenological point of departure in her exploration of school children's embodied learning processes when they collaborate with professional dancers. Svendler will present her absolutely fresh observations during the festival with focus on how children experience being involved in dance as an art form.

### **Discussion**

Besides these two studies the two specialists will engage in a discussion in the afternoon, that touches on both theoretical and concrete issues e.g.: How do children perceive the narrative versus the abstract? How do we prepare the children before and after the performance? What are the opportunities for learning that dance can offer children? Dance- and schoolteachers agree that dance can contribute with something special in the school setting – what is it that is special about dance as artistic practice? How does children's conception of dance change when it collaborates with other art media (music, light etc.)? How does dance influence children's motor function?

### **About Liesbeth Wildschut**

Educated as a dancer from Fontys Dance Academy in 1973. She has as a dancer and choreographer been involved in performances for children. Since 1995 she has taught dance history, dance theory and dance dramaturgy at Utrecht University. The subject of her Ph.D. from 2003 was children's experience of theatrical dance performances. Her main research interests include emotional and physical involvement strategies of people watching dance performances. She is co-editor of *Routledge Reader Contemporary Choreography* (2009) and chair of the Dutch Society for Dance Research.

### **About Charlotte Svendler Nielsen**

Ph.D. in dance and movement pedagogy. Does research and teaches within the fields of dance and education studies at the Department of Exercise and Sport Sciences, University of Copenhagen. Primary research areas are learning and teaching of dance, movement and sports with focus on embodied, aesthetic and creative learning processes. Her Ph.D. *Into the movement* from 2009 was a phenomenological field study about body, meaning and creativity in children's learning processes in dance and physical education in school. Member of the Executive Committee of Dance and the Child International.

## When and where

**Date:** Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2012, 10:00 – 18:00 (including two performances *Chalk About #2* and *Couple-Like #2*).

**Place:** Aaben Dans' flexible event room at Musicon, Roskilde (30 km. from Copenhagen)

**No. of participants:** Max. 50

**Working language:** English

**Prize:** 300 kr. / 40 € (including lunch and tickets to the two performances)

**Registration:** Statens Teaterskole [www.teaterskolen-efteruddannelsen.dk](http://www.teaterskolen-efteruddannelsen.dk)

**Host:** Aaben Dans, Rabalderstræde 1, 4000 Roskilde. Information: [www.aabendans.dk](http://www.aabendans.dk)

Read more about SWOP and reserve tickets here: [www.swopfestival.dk](http://www.swopfestival.dk)

## Seminar programme

10:00 – 10:05	Welcome!
10:05 – 10:20	Briefing of FTE-network & its members
10:20 – 10:50	Performance: <i>Chalk About #2</i> (GB/D)
Break	
11:00 – 11:10	Introduction to the topic and the two speakers
11:10 – 11:35	Liesbeth Wildschut: <i>Look! You see what is not really there – The imagination of children watching a dance performance</i>
11:35 – 11:50	Questions & Answers
11:50 – 12:25	Charlotte Svendler Nielsen: <i>Unfolding children's multi-modal experiences of dance as artistic practice</i>
12:25 – 12:40	Questions & Answers
Lunch	
13:40 – 13:50	Summing up of the two presentations
13:50 – 14:45	1 <sup>st</sup> discussion round
Coffee break	
15:10 – 16:10	2 <sup>nd</sup> discussion round
16:10 – 16:50	Conclusions & Next step
Break	
17:00 – 17:45	Performance: <i>Couple-Like #2</i> (NL)

## Other useful links:

About Liesbeth Wildschut: [www.theatrestudies.nl/wildschut.html](http://www.theatrestudies.nl/wildschut.html)

About Charlotte Svendler Nielsen: [www.ifi.ku.dk/ansatte/profil/?id=21224](http://www.ifi.ku.dk/ansatte/profil/?id=21224)

About the performance: *Couple-Like #2*: [www.kerenlevi.com](http://www.kerenlevi.com)

About the performance *Chalk About #2*: [www.freshtracks-europe.com](http://www.freshtracks-europe.com)

About Christine Devaney: [www.curious-seed.co.uk](http://www.curious-seed.co.uk)

About Leandro Kees: [www.leandrokees.com](http://www.leandrokees.com)

Kind Regards

Aaben Dans

