

Transcultural Protocol

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The research and study points for the piece come from photography and sculpture, while its choreography is rooted in both traditional and contemporary movement from diverse cultures related to the personal lives and practices of the two artists.

“While we find ourselves living through a difficult time, riddled with conflicts and tensions, we believe the key to a better reality is the understanding of one another’s fluidity and flexibility. Through our collaboration and working process, we examine our different backgrounds, individualism, beliefs and concerns in order to rethink the basic structure of communication between Africa and the West. The goal is not to blend into one another by erasing our own cultures, but to nurture respect and understanding with the desire to empower both as equals.”

Artists’ Note

At that moment sitting and talking under the muhacha tree, it seemed so natural to collaborate. Inspired and invigorated, we started to explore our boundaries, attesting to our own inner egos. What seemed to be our vast differences became our mutual connection binding our understanding of humanity. Gradually we became aware of one another’s individual, maybe even selfish artistic pursuits. Armed with this new knowledge, we unfolded issues relevant and irrelevant to the piece, yet similar within our two cultures. Day and night, time ceased to exist. We were changing, evolving through one another’s concepts and reflections.

Two years later, sitting on the New York train from Esses to York Street we became aware of our boundaries within this new context. We arrived at the creation of this performance work, Transcultural Protocol.

Through appropriation of familiar images from Western art history, Jewish praying practices and Zimbabwean traditional gestures, we unfold movements that seem simultaneously familiar and strange, strong and weak, aggressive and loving—all while asking the same questions: who are we?

In three acts, movement and body reflect upon how we perceive ourselves and the other, while addressing society’s systems and patterns that cause tension within and between diverse groups. We mirror private and public space, presenting images of melancholy with the flavors of cliché.

What if we forgot the dance?

What if we forgot the rhythm; forgot the movements?

What if all the fragments were mixed together until nothing was left and the questions of who you are cannot be answered?

Your past is gone and you don’t really care about the future. Is it the dance of The Now?