



EXCHANGE RADICAL MOMENTS!

Live Art Festival

22.9.2011 – Béatrice Didier – Into Your Arms

<http://11moments.org/755-2/>

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INTERVIEW #15: Today we meet with Béatrice Didier, an artist from Brussels, Belgium. Her work „Into your arms“ will take place in Linz, Austria and is part of the Exchange Radcial Moments! Live art Festival. Hi Béatrice, where are you at the moment?

Béatrice Didier

Hi Silvia, i'm in Brussels at moment.

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Can you explain your project in one sentence?

Béatrice Didier

"Into Your Arms" comes from an impossible affair after which a woman decides to love the man through the world, asking men and women to take her into their arms.

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When did you start with „Into your arms“? And does it have an autobiographical background?

Béatrice Didier

I started two years ago during a workshop with Rebecca French and Andrew Mottershead. The title of the workshop was "Contaminate the city".... and yes, this project has an autobiographical background.

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Memories, especially feelings have often the tendency to lose their intensity and sometimes we lose them all and we start to think about them in an abstract way. Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote once that his memories of his feelings bring him back to the situation as if it would happen right now. How does your feeling memory work?

Béatrice Didier

Wow, I didn't know that Rousseau wrote about this. I should be interested to read about this... Well, how to tell? Yes, for me memories of my feelings come back also, but they start to be mixed with feelings of present situations. When I walk in cities and meet women and men, some encounters are so intense that the memory of the first feeling become just a



EXCHANGE RADICAL MOMENTS!

Live Art Festival

motor for "Into Your Arms" ...

One feeling maybe stays. In the first letter – as write during this project – I wrote: " To be into their arms is like to be into your arms which clear of your arms."

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When you think back to the beginning when you started your project and confront it with today, did your intention change, did you heal? What are you feelings now, when somebody is taking you into their arms? Is it still the same now like in the beginning?

Béatrice Didier

For me the question is maybe not about the "beginning". What or who I'm today is not what or who I was yesterday. Life is changing all the time and we change all the time also. All depends also on the situation, on the place where I am, on the people who I meet. And every encounter evokes different feelings.

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How important is it for your work to write about your experiences?

Béatrice Didier

To remember and to share. To share some stories, some encounters. When I "work", when I walk and ask men or women, this action is "invisible" for other people. It's only after that others can see or read what happened. And trough this project people can discover about society, human beings, about what it means for this or this person to take – or to refuse taking – someone he/she doesn't know in his/her arms.

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How do people react when you ask them to take you into their arms?

Béatrice Didier

Oh, there are so many different reactions. Some people refuse directly, some people accept immediately, some start to discuss, do not understand why. It also depends on the countries because I can discuss in French or in English, but in India for example it was difficult to discuss in some places because sometimes we were not able to communicate in a common verbal language.

I have for example a strong memory of Brussels. A man explained me that he was completely afraid of physical contacts since his divorce. So I told him: "Ok, maybe it's a good moment to stop being afraid" and he was looking at me in silence. I said: "Ok, one two three and we



EXCHANGE RADICAL MOMENTS!

Live Art Festival

go?" And finally he took me into his arms. After that I asked him: "Are you still afraid?" He said "No" and left with a big smile in his face... But I have also bad memories like a priest who finally said: "Do you know, I can call police for this!"

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Did you experience radical moments during your performance? Or life-changing moments?

Béatrice Didier

I performed in Brussels, in different cities in India, and very very shortly in Paris and in Helsinki (I have to go back there to really experience this). Well, for example in India, first I was afraid because there a man and a woman never walk hand in hand in public space, although it slowly changes. So imagine what "Into Your Arms" means for them. But finally it worked also in another way. In Paris, I did this in another way. I was sitting in the street with a poster saying "Can you take me into your arms?" It didn't work because I was like a beggar for them. But for me it was really interesting.

Well, we can speak about this for hours. It depends on the country, on the culture but also simply on places – it's not the same if I go in a shop or in street.

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And was some of it life-changing? Or radical? Or both?

Béatrice Didier

Both! It depended again :-). I remember an old man in Shimla who started to ask other persons to take him into their arms after it!

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Interesting, a kind of movement. Can we find your work online? If yes, where?

Béatrice Didier

Yes you can find a video about the first step in Brussels on:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQw9jLmFteE>, a montage of fotos about the experience in India on http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hUpAfcgG6g&feature=mfu_in_order&list=UL and a presentation of the project (with a lot of things in archives) on my blog: <http://beadidier.blogspot.com/p/into-your-arms.html> (with for example the project "Into Your Arms" in a prison in Ranchi for example here: <http://beadidier.blogspot.com/2010/03/into-your-arms-ranchi.html>). There is also a documentation of it as an installation at gallery 10/12: http://10-12web.blogspot.com/2009_10_01_archive.html and about a performance in



EXCHANGE RADICAL MOMENTS!

Live Art Festival

relation with this project here: <http://10-12web.blogspot.com/2009/11/performance-de-beatrice-didier-debie.html> ;)...

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Fantastic. I will have a look at it. Thank you for your time and the interview. I am looking forward to see you here in Linz.

Béatrice Didier

Thanks a lot, Silvia. I'm very excited to come to Linz with this. I'll let you with some song :-)
<http://vimeo.com/23532593> Have a nice day and see you!