



HET NET / Roberto Olivan

# natural strange days

*Natural Strange Days* is a reflection on the duality tradition/ contemporaneity, community/fragmentation-individualisation and simplicity/complexity that some people experiences nowadays.

All this is exposed in a context where technology and the impact of the media are confronting our natural evolutionary rhythm with the artificial needs that we create.

The people involved in the performance look back to their roots and observe what their present relationship with their own past is, at this very moment.

The proposition after assuming all that is to regain simplicity and pure, simple things, as expressed in the three-line Japanese Haiku poetry.

**It is with pride that we would like to inform you that SACD and Scam\*Belgium have awarded Roberto Olivan the 2001 Dance Creation Prize for his piece 'Natural Strange Days'.**

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## Colophon

Direction	Roberto Oliván
Creation and Performance	Kasia Chmielewska, Martin Kilvady, Roberto Oliván and Sandra Sales
Soundscapes and video works	Ramón Balagué
Set design and costumes	Ruth Estevez
Composition music	George Van Dam, John Paul Jones
Execution music	Miquel Bernat, Gerrit Nulens or Michael Weilacher
Lights	Robbie Boi, Ramón Balagué and Roberto Oliván
Production manager/technician	Robbie Boi
Dramaturgy	Marianne Van Kerkhoven
Production	HET NET Sint Jakobsstraat 36, B-8000 Brugge T: +32 (0)50 33 88 50 – F: +32 (0)50 33 51 97 het-net@skynet.be
Co-production	WERKHUIS/producties (ROSAS)
Distribution	Marc Olivé Rue des Secours 18, B-1210 Bruxelles T: +32 (0)2 22 33 44 6 olimarclo@hotmail.com

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*"It has become appallingly obvious that our technology has exceeded our humanity"*

Albert Einstein

*Natural Strange Days* is Roberto Olivan's first full-length choreography. Olivan, born in a small Spanish village in 1972 received his first dance education in Barcelona; in 1995 he became part of the very first students of P.A.R.T.S. the school which Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker founded in Brussels. Before the end of his studies Roberto Olivan was asked to join De Keersmaecker's company Rosas where he participated intensively in the creative process of performances such as *Just Before*, *Drumming*, *I said I* and *In real time*. Today he feels the need to be more than just a performer, and become a choreographer-dancer, giving his own shape to the ideas that occupy and drive him.

In *Natural Strange Days* Roberto Olivan starts from the attitude a young Western person can or has to adopt towards the society he lives in: the consumerism, the globalisation, the domination of technology, the culture of information and media, the speed we are obliged to adopt in our lives... In opposition to this Roberto Olivan places the simplicity, his search for pure and simple things, for living in harmony with nature. This simplicity and harmony with nature he finds a.o. in the three-line, Japanese, 18th century Haiku-poetry of the monk Ryokan, which is integrated in the performance. Also video-images, music and scenography will be important elements in this production whose basis is mainly an interesting movement-language. In the first part the four dancers form a vehement and dynamic tangle, experimenting with weight, balance and gravity; later on the choreography is expanding in more quiet duets and solo's. In this choreographic debut we are witness of the development of a new and personal movement idiom.

Roberto Olivan: "The idea of extreme simplicity is opposed to the complexity of contemporary life, and there is also the notion of memory: the way all the people involved in the project look back to their roots and what their present relationship with their own past is, at this very moment".

Since Roberto Oliván wants to start in *Natural Strange Days* from the memories and feelings of the participants and since some improvisation will be integrated in the production the input of Oliván's fellow performers will be of prime creative importance. One of the objectives of the piece is to take all the performers to the same level, while respecting each individual's own background and reality.

In *Natural Strange Days* Roberto Oliván dances with the Slovak dancer Martin Kilvady, with whom he worked already in the Rosas-company, with the Barcelona-born Sandra Sales, who had previously participated in earlier Oliván projects and with the Polish Kasia Chmielewska. Moreover musician and percussionist Miquel Bernat, video artist Ramón Balagué and set designer Ruth Estevez will play an important part in the production.

*"God is not dead, he is alive, healthy and busy in another project less ambitious".*

Graffiti in London



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Music

GEORGE VAN DAM      'Natural Strange Days'

JOHN PAUL JONES      Extract from 'Macondo'

Soundscapes made by RAMON BALAGUE as a tape base, and live acoustic improvisation made by Gerrit Nulens and/or Miquel Bernat (with steel drum, jembe and telephone-water-drum).

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by Roberto Olivan

With many years of experience in the performing arts, I have been able to identify myself with certain methods and ways of expression. I have developed compositional skills during almost 4 years of work with the internationally acclaimed company Rosas. In addition, I have extensive knowledge of anatomy (studied natural medicine). All these elements, added to an artistic vision which is subtle, coherent and shrewd, mean the possibilities of creating movement are infinite. My personal research is reflected in projects I have already presented. The piece will combine possibilities and elements common to everyone, circumstances revealed by daily experience. They will be performed by a specific number of individuals who represent the universe, in a micro-universe defined at the same instant as the performance.



Let us analyse an example that normally goes unnoticed and yet happens all the time: a person experiences a sudden change of emotion. This event will be filmed and stretched into slow motion. We shall call this transition from one state to another 'initial moment'. From this 'in-between-state' evolves an entire world. It is the root of an expansive emotional tree. This small change causes major consequences in the whole, which is the basic principle of chaos theory. The objective is to recover the notion of the most primary instinct, to re-enhance this 'initial moment' far from rationality. It is a key factor in the analysis of ourselves, the conscience, the perception of reality.

To generalise on this example I would like to relate the concept of 'nature' to the concept of

level. This is a basic fact of our 'nature'. Nowadays the sense of 'nature' in city life is replaced by another type of practical need. This is when we can talk about 'speed', though it is always present in any kind of urban activity. This makes us act mechanically in our everyday life, diminishing our own intuitive capacities, and therefore our 'natural capacities' too. One of the characteristics of the present day is technical complexity. This means 'speed' and a certain dependence on artificiality.

Fashion, for example, also reflects this situation. We dress like farmers and prisoners, in khaki and in olive green like soldiers, in grey and blue like Chinese workers. In the contemporary plastic arts we give so much importance to the artist's ability to make completely twisted statements. On the underground railway and other public places we are invaded by music so the only thing we do is avoid spending time alone with ourselves. While researching the tragic we are denying our own intelligence, and our common sense becomes less and less useful, in favour of things that stay outside our own experience and which could have been productive.

Art, as a reflex of society, is also passing through these 'strange days'. Where the hermeticism of forms and the excess of technology dissolves the foundations rather than making them even more solid. This is the result of social confusion. We have been blinded by exceptionally attractive fantasies, but they constantly give more importance to the gift wrapping rather than to the content.

My proposition does not exclude all this technology. I propose a return to our 'natural' activities, to our instincts, and to replace them in our present reality. In fact the performance is based on high dynamics, where the objective is the balance between technology and a consciousness of our nature.

I consider artists in general to be dream-makers exploring new ways of expression, reflecting the reality of their moment. They induce the spectator to foresee the new needs or directions in which society can move. In the 60s there was a movement that fought for values and principles. Our present era is saturated with information and possibilities but in addition to the speed with which everything happens, it becomes impossible to accept the idea of 'stability'; weakening the individual's strength. All this provokes in me the reaction: to fight for the handmade rather than for mass production, and to emphasise the importance of human emotions over artificiality.

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## Curriculum vitae

### Dancers

**ROBERTO OLIVAN** was born in 1972 in Tortosa (Spain). He had his first dance classes at the Institut del Teatre in Barcelona. During his education he danced with the company Selene Lux in the creation *Fenix*. For *Cancion de Cigarra* the company was awarded the second prize in the Ricard Moragas contest in 1994. In 1995 Roberto entered the P.A.R.T.S. school of contemporary dance in Brussels, where he contributed to the creation *Prometeo* directed by Robert Wilson and danced in a piece based on *Set and Reset* by choreographer Trisha Brown.



In addition, Roberto composed his own short choreographies, including *El Lugar Del Silencio Eterno* and *Que Mas Da Si No Me Quieres*. His choreography *Common Essence* was awarded the second prize of the X Certamen Coreografic of Madrid in 1996. In 1997, with other P.A.R.T.S. students, he made *Simbiosis*, with which he toured Belgium, Spain and Finland. In 1997 Roberto became a member of ROSAS, dancing in *Woud*, contributing to the creation of *Just Before*, *Drumming*, *I Said I* and *In Real Time*, and participating in the revival of *Achterland*. Recently he collaborated with the plastic artist Charlie Case in the creation of the short film *Acid-ites*.

**KATARZYNA (Kasia) CHMIELEWSKA** was born in 1974 in Szczecin (Poland).

From 1984 to 1993 she studied at the National Ballet School in Gdansk, where she received the diploma of a classical dancer. Since 1993 she is co-creating with Leszek Bzdyl Dada von Bzdülów Theatre in Gdansk. In the theatre she teaches contemporary dance technique, performs and realizes her own choreographies, for ex.: *Sonata*, *Wapiti versus the rest of the world* and *\Si\*. During the season 1993/1994 Kasia danced in the Gdansk Ballet of the Baltic Opera. The following season she worked with the Gdansk Dance Theatre. In 1996 she received a scholarship from the Flemish Community and European Union. She studied contemporary dance in Brussels, Belgium (P.A.R.T.S. = Performing Arts Research and



1999 Kasia worked as an actress in the City Theatre of Gdynia. In 1998 she participated in an International theatre project in Stockholm – 'Euralien' (Sweden). In 2000 she took part in an International dance project for young choreographers, X-group in Brussels, Belgium (initiative P.A.R.T.S., Brussels 2000 and European Union) and danced in *Papagaj* by Tatiana Baganowa, a project of the Baltic University of Dance in Gdansk, Poland.

**MARTIN KILVADY** was born in 1974 in Banska Bystrica (Slovakia).

He studied at the gymnasium of his native city. He subsequently followed the course for teachers of contemporary dance at the University of Music and Dramatic Arts in Bratislava. The choreographers and teachers who influenced his further development as a dancer are Jan Durovcik, Mira Korarova and Libor Vaculk. From 1992 to 1996 he was a member of the Torzo Ballet Company in Bratislava. In the meantime, Martin danced freelance in several productions at the Slovak National Theater during the season 1995/1996.

During the summer of 1997 he became a member of ROSAS, dancing in *Woud*, performing in the revival of *Mikrokosmos* and contributing to the creation of *Just Before*, *Drumming*, *I Said I* and *In Real Time*, as well as participating in the revival of *Achterland* in November 1998.

**SANDRA SALES** was born in 1974 in Barcelona (Spain).

She started her studies in classical dance in the Conservatorio del Liceo de Barcelona. In 1990 she started at the Institut del Teatre de Barcelona, where she graduated from the Department of contemporary dance in 1995.

In 1994 she danced in the choreography *Pas A Pas* by Jochen Ulrich, the director and choreographer at Tanz-Forum Köln, at the Cultural Centre in Terrasa. In this same year she worked with the SELENE LUX DANS company, whose director and choreographer is Jose Angel Hevia. She participated in the creation of *Fenix*, *El Estanque*, *Lagrimas Negras*, *Azul*, *Letargo De Luna Y Delirio* and *Cancion de Cigarra* (with which the company was awarded 2nd prize in the 1994 RICARD MORAGAS contest).

In 1998 she danced with the JUAN TENA company in Verdi's opera *Aida* at the Teatro de la Passio de Olesa de Montserrat.

She created and danced in the following pieces of her own: *Siento en la Rosa Tu Presencia y el Recuerdo de una Larga Vida*, *Alguien Anda Por Ahi* and *Soy Tu*.

In 1998 she began working for the Transit company, dancing *No Man's Land*, *Mandala*, *El Punt de la Memoria* and *Rugged Lines*.

## Musicians

**There will only be one musician in the performance! Who will be playing, depends on their availability.**

Voor meer details : Het Net – Annemie, tel. +32 (0)50 33 88 50 of [het-net@skynet.be](mailto:het-net@skynet.be)

**MIQUEL BERNAT** was born in 1966 in Valencia (Spain).

He received his musical education at the Conservatories of Valencia, Madrid, Brussels and Rotterdam, and participated in the Aspen Summer Music Course. He was granted the 'Premio Extraordinario Fin de Carrera' at the Conservatory of Madrid, the GAUDEAMUS Special Percussion Prize' in 1993 and the 2nd prize at the Aspen Nakamichi Competition. Being an eclectic musician, he has played with the Orquesta Ciutat de Barcelona and with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam, as well as in the contemporary music ensembles Ictus, Ictus Piano and Percussion Quartet, Trio Allures, Duo Contemporain, etc. As a soloist in numerous recitals, he participated in the first performance of David Del Puerto's 'Concerto pour Marimba et 15 instruments' in the Ars Musica festival in Brussels and in Valencia.

Formerly a professor at the Rotterdam and Brussels Conservatories, he is now intensively engaged in teaching activities at the Escola Superior de Musica do Porto and the Escola Profesional de Musica de Espinho (Portugal). There, he founded the Drumming percussion group, which has been selected as a Resident Music Group of Porto 2001, Cultural Capital of Europe.

Miquel is regularly invited to the most highly-reputed international contemporary music festivals (France, England, Brasil, Venezuela, Australia, USA, Finland, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Thailand etc...) to perform as a solo percussionist and to give Master Classes. In 1998 he performed as a soloist in stage music (Xenakis) for *Just Before* by the Belgian choreographer Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker.

A passionate performer of new music, Miquel has worked with numerous composers (many works being dedicated to him), thus contributing to the expansion and constant evolution of the contemporary repertoire for percussion.

### **GERRIT NULENS**

MICHAEL WEILACHER



## Scenic Artist

**RUTH ESTEVEZ** was born in 1977 in Bilbao (Spain).

She studied Fine Arts at the University of Pais Vasco, where she got a scholarship to study afterwards in the Accademia delle Belle Arti in Vitermo (Roma). She got specialized in performing arts and video installations. Ruth also studied scenography at the Real Escuela de Arte Dramatico in Madrid for one year.

In her professional activity she designed and produced the costumes and set for *La Intrusa* (1999) for the Teatro de la R.E.S.A.D. She also worked as scenography assistant in *Scapino* in the Teatro San Leonardo in Viterbo (Italy).

In the decorative field she was awarded in contests from entities as Banca BBK. Ruth also designed in magazines like 'MENTA Telecomunicaciones' in Barcelona (Spain).

She had her personal video exhibitions in the Galeria Araba in Vitoria (Spain) and in exhibitions room of BBV in Bilbao. She also exhibited in Rome and USA.

## Video Artist

**RAMON BALAGUE** was born in 1974 in Tortosa (Spain).

He finished his university studies in Audio-visual communications in 1998 at the Facultat de la Comunicacio in Barcelona. He studied Application Arts for 5 years in Tortosa. He is specialized in digital treatment of image (photo and video) and in non-linear-editing-systems. Ramon developed musical studies at the same time.

He realised several industrial video works for enterprises like DOMINTEL, IKK Espana and JMF lighting, for private clients or presentations and exhibitions (Dvi, Broadcast Madrid 1999) and for Departament de cultura de la Generalitat de Catalunya. He also made the design and production of the promotion video for Hotel Majestic 2000 Barcelona with the publicity agency Altraforma. Ramon worked for TV Catalunya Tarragona creating the spot 'Festa del vi de Gandesa'. He has been camera operator for 'la revista del espectacle' emitted on Canal 33 by Scenic Drive productions (weekly TV program about the performing arts). He collaborated to the Lotto Catalunya advertising with Ferrater-Campins-Morales Agency. During 6 months he was camera assistant for Gestmusic-Endemol productions (TVE channel). In Tortosa he contributed to the Local TV in realization, camera operator and realization and reportage editor. He assisted Roberto Olivan's piece *Common Essence* as a light and sound designer at the Certamen Coreografico de Madrid 1996.

By his own, Ramon also directed 3 music video clips and assisted two others.



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