

**Uppsala Nya Tidning**  
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**Translated by: SU-EN Butoh Company**  
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"RAPTURE"  
Dansens Hus, Stockholm, Sweden

## **GRADUAL SUGGESTIONS**

### **SU-EN's new performance offers intense energy, writes John Sjögren**

SU-EN, Sweden's keeper of the tradition of Japanese butoh dance, was inspired by tarantism in her new production "RAPTURE", which premiered at Dansens Hus last Thursday.

Tarantism is rooted in rural southern Italy, where peasants were threatened by bites from the tarantula spider, especially during harvest time. To cleanse oneself and expel its poison, they danced a ritual dance that touched on the nature of exorcism. In this piece, SU-EN and Japanese flower artist Junichi Kakizaki have transformed the theatrical space to a harvest festival. Ripe grain frames the central space on the stage where the woman bitten by the spider dances to expel the madness from her body. Large stacks of straw are illuminated against the backdrop and eventually give birth to human bodies. Kakizaki moves through this drama and adds beauty to the space: placing wet autumn leaves on the stage and constructing a formless shape of a human figure with the rolls of straw.

"RAPTURE", meaning ecstasy, is the name of this production. It brings to mind the spiritual, an out-of-body experience. In this piece, rapture is more in the flesh, however, almost like an obsession. The madness is caught in the slow, highly stylised movement of butoh dance. And it is this highly stylised body that creates an atmosphere that is ritualistic, almost religious in the performance.

SU-EN and Japanese-American sound artist Aki Onda pull the audience into a slow suggestive flow. However, a highly charged energy remains in the midst of these lingering moods, a concentration in the bodies that carries such an intensity that it can move the entire auditorium into a silent shiver.

SU-EN stands at the edge of the stage. We cannot fight off the energy. It shines out of her body.