Suzana Marjanic Published in Zarez 19/7 2001 Translation from Croatian: SU-EN Butoh Company

THE HEADLESS BODY

Last year at the International Theatre Fesival PUF, SU-EN, dancer and choreographer of the 3rd generation of Butohdance Art, was questioning the melting point between the body and the extended hand. In this year's performance, "Headless - love on the other side", she has replaced last years' white colour with red; which together with gold, silver, white and black are characteristic colours of butoh.

In the first part of the performance, her head is wrapped in a red scarf. She wears red short pants, and her skin is naked. She was performing the birth of a great mind on a headless body. Fritjof Capra says that in ancient society's civilizatons, there was an opposition between body and soul. Today, the main difference is between body and mind.

There was a hanging metal installation on stage, in the shape of a floating head. Under it was a circle filled with mud. Parallell to the installation was SU-EN, in the position of a fetus over a light bulb on the floor. This was the main source of light during the first part. Around it, SU-EN's body was transformed, moving into different positions, but always like a fetus; crawling. In the background a huge shadow of her body was projected. Hands are shaped into fists, changing her body into something animal like, natural and free.

SU-EN defines her own butoh technique as a point where body and time melt together. Before the moment of mind's birth, the Headless body, still wrapped in red is banging forward and backward to the rythm of a heartbeat. She crawls to the metal installation of the floating head where she covers her body with mud - the source of life. The awakening of the body follows, accompanied by animal voices and sounds. Parallell to the story of the transformation of Headless body into rational body goes the story about the dancer's work with the body, in terms of timing, shaping and positioning the body parts.

In the moment of the shaping of the mind, SU-EN takes off her red scarf and puts on a red dress. This indicates the last part, which is composed mainly of the stretching out of arms and red lights on stage. The song "Love on the other side" is played in the end. Body movements are minimalistic, including the play with eyelashes. She expresses the state between life and death. In the moment of awakening she makes an attempt to eat her own meat.

With this self cannibalism, SU-EN connects to the words of the song; "the ground between Bardo" - the space where the bones are exposed. Cannibalism and beauty exist at the same time, the biting of the flesh is an act of life, an act of love.