

**Skånska Dagbladet**

**11 April 2013**

**By Jan A Andersson**

**Translated by: SU-EN Butoh Company**

**Original title: Dans med styrka och svärta**

## **Dance with strenght and blackness**

For more than twenty years, Susanna Åkerlund, under the name SU-EN and her dance company, has been the leading representative of butoh dance in Sweden. SU-EN is trained in Japan, where the art form was developed in the 1960s as a modern and urban phenomenon on a classical basis.

SU-EN has since 1992 developed her own style, and for those who have followed her through the years, her subtly expressive choreographic language is easily recognizable. Butoh is sometimes as much performance art as dance, but the body is always in the center. Actually not as the means of expression but as a holder of its own existance.

The SOOT performance, which made a guest appearances at the dance theatre Dansstationen in Malmoe this week, SU-EN focuses on the black colour, and the title that we read in the program sheet explains soot as a by-product of an ongoing and incomplete process, what is left over, that it moves in the air and attaches itself to the skin and other surfaces.

I cannot not really say that the program notes are directly visible in the performance's different elements. However, SU-EN and her lighting designer Svante W Monie work in a skilful way with blackness and darkness. The stage is of course the black box and remains dimly lit throughout the performance. SU-EN as the solo artist comes in and out of the darkness and continues through the gloom to occasionally be confronted with stronger light sources. In her quiet earthbound movement patterns SU-EN undergoes a development from almost infinitely fragile slowness to increased vitality and dynamism as the reflections of the sun is playing on the floor and the electronic sound backdrop becomes more melodic and vibrant.

We can see an artist in full control of her body and her means of expression and who, with a strong power and concentration, retains the grip of the audience.

SOOT has a strong sense of weakness and decay. The light flickers like an instable candle flame, the air is cloudy, the human being fumbles forward. In some moments there are similarities with Samuel Beckett's short plays, where the spark of life seems to fade but still, is actually stronger than one can imagine.