

Kitt Johnson X-act

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Stigma

The inborn ... the self-imposed ... the inflicted

"An eye staring at itself, at a black point deep inside, that, which is left. A whisper from inaccessible frequencies, subterranean submarine, in narrow slits between the registered wavelengths.

- From passage by Pall-Helge Haugen



Photo: James Quah



Photo: Joachim Ladefoged

Touring:

University of Visual and Performing Arts, Colombo, Sri Lanka, February 2015
D'MOTION, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, December 2013
CONTACT, Singapore, December 2013
Guangdong Modern Dance Festival, China, July 2011
SIDance, Seoul, Korea, October 2010
Festival de la nouvelle danse d'Uzès, France, June 2006
Superdanish, DanceWorks/Harbourfront Centre, Toronto, Canada, October 2004
Festival Rock'n Rostoll, Palma de Mallorca, Spain, August 2004
Festival Île Danse, Ajaccio, France, May 2004
University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark, November 2003
Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, Massachusetts, USA, July 2003

Stigma has toured extensively since 1999, and with this prized artistic work Kitt Johnson fully displays her unique ability to combine all the elements of the stage with a distinct body control to master a very personal style.

Stigma is a dark enigmatic solo performance focusing on that brand (burned into the flesh) which places one apart from others. Sounds, lights and movements create a dramatic and tense expression that appeals to the emotions and intrigues the intellect.

Credits:

Choreography/dance/costume: Kitt Johnson
Composition/music: Sture Ericson & Jacob Kierkegaard. New revised version by Ericson 2006.
Light design: Mogens Kjempff

Stigma premiered at Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, Denmark, 12th November 1999. Produced originally by Åben Dans productions, presented by X-act with support from the Theatre Council in Denmark.

Awards:

Nominated for a Reumert as best dance performance of the year in 1999, and was **awarded by The Danish Arts Foundation** in the same year. Featured on **New York Times' Top 10 Dance Performances of 2003** and **Now Toronto's Top 10 of 2004**.

Tanz Tranzit, Kaliningrad, Russia, May 2003
Traces, Copenhagen, Denmark, February 2003
MIMOS, Perigueux, France, August 2002
The Full Moon Festival, Pyhäjärvi, Finland, August 2002
Danserotation, Denmark, January-February 2002
Tacheles, Berlin, Germany, September 2001
Bellone Brigittines, Brussels, Belgium, August 2001
Waves Festival, Vordingborg, Denmark, August 2001
DancEuropa, Tel Aviv, Israel, June 2001
Israel Festival, Jerusalem, Israel, June 2001
Theseum, Athens, Greece, May 2001
Dansedage Aarhus, Denmark, May 2001
Modica, Italy, March 2001
Dansescenen, Copenhagen, Denmark, February 2000
Dansstationen, Malmø, Sweden, December 1999

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More info:

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Extracts from the press

Stigma is, at heart, a meditation on connotation – not just the meanings of the title but the signs and significances of the body. When she moves, Johnson creates an incredibly flexible body-language that can be grotesquely deformed, incredibly vulnerable, richly personal yet highly expressive of inner states. Her body sets up no filters, no defences. It lays itself bare to influences of light and dark, sound, and some invisible spiritual force. When she stands unhooded, bare-breasted and almost nude, with a shower of sand pouring down on her upturned face, she completes a stunning composition of hypnotic intensity, shifting geometric shapes and planes, extraordinary animality and ineffable spirituality. She turns the gothic into something mysteriously magical.

Keith Garebian, Stage and Page, Canada, November 2004

Denmark's Kitt Johnson showed her versatility ... a riveting solo about isolation and persecution. Johnson never repeats herself, and as a solo artist she knows how to use light and sound to theatricalize every movement her muscular body makes. Hope she returns."

Glenn Sumi, NOW Toronto, Canada, December 2004

This intriguing work is very european ... Johnson's cerebral choreography contains the wisdom of the ages, and is fey, even precious in its presentation. There is a delicacy and whimsy to her work that is just not part of a North American aesthetic.

Paula Citron, The Globe and Mail, Canada, October 2004

Johnson is an absolutely riveting performer. She could almost be seen as an amalgam of two styles' greatest exponents – Kazuo Ohno crossed with Mary Wigman. Stigma is the pinnacle of seasoned artistry.

Michael Crabb, National Post, Canada, October 2004

Not since Ingmar Bergman filled the screen with haunting images of gloom and doom has such a character visited us...

William Littler, Toronto Star, Canada, October 2004

Disturbing transformations powered by inner states ... elegantly, phantasmagorically minimal.

Deborah Jowitt, The Village Voice, USA, August 2003

The body is a microscope or telescope through which we observe the minute and the vast pulse of life simultaneously ... Johnson's exposed back and flanged shoulder blades, her ribs and breasts become gaping mouths, planes and hollows, shifting optical illusions under the influence of which we loose our grip on reality ... a wonderful manipulation of audience perception that also carries a profound social message. What is a stigma? ... Johnson's tight, controlled work remains etched in our minds, covering less ground and more constricted meaning, but full and complete. It suggests that the power fo the solo is the ability to stand both inside and outside a work of imagination, as both shaman and artist, medium and message, if you will, controlled and controlling.

Allison Tracey, The Berkshire Eagle, USA, July 2003

... as a tribute to the downtrodden ... a female counterpart of the lackless fellow who became a cockroach in Kafka's story ... unusual, vividly expressive solo ... the continuing vitality of the soloform was affirmed.

Jack Anderson, New York Times, USA, July 2003

... dance in a class of its own ... she needed no stage hardware to transform the space into one breathing presence, gathered up into one tremendous concentration on the marginal, yet immortal, being which was created before our very eyes. It in turn became creatures, beyond control of the possible ... fetched from the cells' blacked out memory.

Janus Kodal, Politiken, Denmark, February 2003

A Sorceress in the greatcoat of a desert insect ... undergoing various curious and alarming deformations she exposes the body from the angle of a peculiar and cold animality. An extraordinary composition ... scalding and rigorous. Don't miss it.

L.V.D.W., L'Express, Belgium, August 2001

Kitt Johnson's presence enchants the soul ... as a character from an early Ingmar Bergman film – dark and ominously enigmatic. This modest, yet brave and mature work is touching emotionally as much as it is challenging intellectually.

Ora Brafman, Jerusalem Post, Israel, June 2001

A rich inner world of images ... the body looks hollow and spiritual ... the touch of her extremities on the floor is hypnotizing ... Her movement quality creates a halo of magic.

Ruth Eshel, Ha'aretz, Israel, June 2001

A masterpiece on stage. Huge bravura, a lot of atmosphere, deep emotion. The plasticity of the body, the perfection of the gestures and the absolute harmony between sound and movement fused into the most excellent artistic expression.

La Paginaquattro, Italy, March 2001

Alarming, inciting, etching the retina, your mind is stigmatized when you leave ... with complete commitment and distinct charisma Kitt Johnson reaches the universal. The stigmatized human being. Absurd ... grotesque ... shocking ... a modern lithography by Palle Nielsen and at the same time a classical mix of Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Breugel.

Press release from the Danish Arts Foundation on the occasion of the award given to Stigma, December 1999

The hit of the evening ... a gothic magic picture transforming a deathly pale pietist and suffering Madonna to an insect in the desert, a fallen black angel and a screeching witch riding across the stage. Brilliant!

Majbritt Hjeltsboe, Weekendavisen, Denmark, November 1999

A victory for Kitt Johnson who enters the endless column of puring dust grains in no-man's-land ... the most bizarre endurance ... a clarity of form and a dramaturgic balance of tension which marks the result of years of work – nonchalant and unostentatiously served like rare delicacies on a sushi plate ... impelled by the fiery music of Sture Ericson and Jacob Kierkegaard.

Anne Middelboe Christensen, Information, Denmark, November 1999

Via deformations of the body, including the creation of absurd body dimensions and perspectives through an imaginative utilization of costume and light, one experiences an incredible intensity in Kitt Johnson's slow and minimalistic body language ... nicely accompanied by fine sound images.

Vibeke Wern, Berlingske Tidende, Denmark, November 1999

A sinister creature in whom the stigmatization has worked marking all joints of a crumpled, gnarled, hunchbacked body ... a composition of extreme control ... more efficient than most solowork.

Alexander Meinertz, Politiken, Denmark, November 1999