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DOSSIER DE PRESSE SAISON 11-12  
L'adc au Palais des Nations, salle des pas perdus

## **WILLIAM FORSYTHE/ THE FORSYTHE COMPANY**

### ***HUMAN WRITES***

Dans le cadre du 10e anniversaire de l'adhésion de la Suisse à l'ONU  
un co-accueil de l'adc et du Festival Antigél.

Du 23 au 25 février 2012

Le 23 à 20h

Les 24 et 25 à 19h

Ouverture des portes 1/2h avant la représentation



Human Writes © Dominik Mentzos

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## Human Writes

### Définition

Un événement, car le génial chorégraphe n'était encore jamais venu à Genève, mais surtout un exploit. Pour ce projet inédit, il aura fallu trois années, les efforts conjugués du Festival Antigél et de l'adc, la complicité du service culturel de l'ONU et des représentants de plusieurs missions permanentes, sans compter l'engagement de la Confédération, du Canton et de la Ville de Genève, tout cela sous le patronage du Directeur général de l'Office des Nations Unies à Genève! Bref, un défi organisationnel et protocolaire pour aboutir à ce rendez-vous entre Human Writes, métaphore puissante de la Déclaration universelle des droits de l'homme, avec le lieu exact de son adoption en 1948.

In 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Over 50 years later, in a joint project with Professor Kendall Thomas, The Forsythe Company focuses on the act of inscribing basic rules for both the individual and society. «Human Writes» is a performative installation that reflects the history of human rights and the continuing obstacles to their full implementation.

(Immanuel Schipper)

### Lien

[www.theforsythecompany.com/](http://www.theforsythecompany.com/)

**Extrait du site internet Goethe Institut**  
**«Dance Scene and Trends in Germany»**  
**par Gerald Siegmund**  
**traduit par Marsalie Turner**

When American choreographer William Forsythe took over as Artistic Director of the Frankfurt Ballet in 1984 he was largely unknown on the international dance scene.

Since then, the former dancer of New York's Joffrey Ballet and of the Stuttgart Ballett has turned his company into one of the best known and most innovative dance companies in the world. Unlike other choreographers in such prestigious positions, Forsythe understood how to constantly develop and how to surprise the audience with exciting new productions and an unusual language of movement.

**Listening to the language of ballet**

What made William Forsythe's work stand out right from the beginning was his understanding of ballet as a living language which cannot be spoken in the same way over and over again like an inanimate object. For him, the tradition of classical ballet is not something one can own. Instead he sees it as something that is continually changing in a lively interaction with contemporary questions. It was for this reason that his first choreographies, still very much influenced by neo-classical vocabulary, held such a great fascination for the audience; because it was fun to see that a classical dancer can also move her hips and thus give the movements a rousing momentum. Forsythe listened closely to the language of ballet and discovered hitherto unknown possibilities of combining and shifting hitherto seemingly immovable positions.

**Dialogue with other art forms and fields of knowledge**

His interest in movement and what it can unleash and signify endures to this day. In the course of his career Forsythe has merged ballet with numerous other art forms and fields of knowledge, thus constantly opening up new possibilities for how the body can move. In 1990, he explored Daniel Libeskind's deconstructionist architecture drawings for his piece *Limbs Theorem*. The drawing's lines and spatial structure were the starting point for the dancers for their own lines of movement. At the beginning of the 90's, in pieces like *ALIE/N A(C)TION* or *Eidos:Telos*, he became more involved with computer technology, using it to create random systems which the dancers could design themselves, sometimes live during the performance.

Forsythe's choreographies can thus be understood as a field in which something can happen, a field not occupied by certain preconceived ideas, but open for the unforeseen, for new ideas, a room for discovering possibilities which one would not have considered before. In the same spirit, the training concept *Dance* that he directs together with other choreographers is not based on teaching young dancers a specific dance technique. The knowledge about designing videos or about architecture that is imparted to the students during the training is meant as a tool, a thought-provoking impulse with which they can set their own creative work processes in motion. With an open approach like this, ballet stops being an art of representation and portrayal of a story or a set sequence of movements. Instead the performance becomes a live situation actively designed by the dancers in which the audience can also participate. This way everyone becomes a dancer.

### **Choreography as a reflection of social spheres**

In *City of Abstracts*, passers-by in the city were able to watch themselves on video monitors thereby spontaneously developing small choreographies. In his installation performances such as *Human Writes* or *Heterotopia*, to which Forsythe has dedicated an increasing amount of his time in recent years, choreography becomes a social practice. Forsythe's installations are controlled test arrangements in which all the participants can observe themselves, their bodies and their movements together. When a performance like *Human Writes* deals in substance with the difficulties surrounding universal human rights, it becomes clear where the potential of dance and movement can lie. After all, it's not abstract universal laws alone that guarantee our co-existence. It is much more our physical actions, our daily movements that create and shape the community. Herein lies the political meaning of Forsythe's notion of dance. He creates spaces where he places people in a new, unknown relationship to themselves so that they reflect differently on their (social) spheres and in so doing explore their own potential scope for action.

### **Unique funding model in Germany**

With the founding of *The Forsythe Company*, which took up its activities at the beginning of 2005, William Forsythe has been working independently of the municipal stage set-up in Frankfurt am Main in a «Public Private Partnership», a model which is unique in Germany. In this partnership the cooperation partners, the *Länder* Hessen and Sachsen as well as the towns Frankfurt am Main and Dresden, provide three quarters of the annual budget of the company (3 million euros) as well as the venues, the Bockenheimer Depot and the Festspielhaus Hellerau. The remaining quarter is covered by private sponsors. Since then Forsythe has been working in Frankfurt and in Dresden. His group continues to very present internationally at festivals. Forsythe has expanded the spectrum of his activities worldwide with numerous installation projects. At the moment the contracts for *The Forsythe Company* run to 2010. One can only hope that this unique laboratory situation for dance will continue well beyond this date.

## Journal de l'adc n° 56

### Gérald Siegmund a vu le spectacle pour l'adc traduit par Manon Pulver

C'est par un martèlement entêtant que le visiteur appréhende tout d'abord l'espace, une entrée en matière acoustique peu habituelle. Saisi et attiré par ces sons insistants, le regard effleure alors un océan de tables métalliques identiques, toutes tapissées de papier blanc. On s'approche prudemment des tables. Sur chacune d'entre elles, un interprète exécute des mouvements étranges : une danseuse debout devant sa table projette son fusain, qui laisse sur le papier de petits points aigus avant de voler en éclats en tombant. En s'approchant davantage, on remarque qu'il y a des choses écrites sur les tables, des mots, des bribes, des phrases entières – tracées au crayon, d'une écriture fine, à peine perceptible, en plusieurs langues. Les traits ou jets de fusain visent les mots écrits, les manquent, les recouvrent ou les ourlent plutôt que de les souligner. Après un certain temps, les danseurs invitent les spectateurs à les aider dans leur travail d'écriture. Les formulations sont celles de la Déclaration universelle des droits de l'homme adoptée en 1948 par les Nations Unies à Genève, après la catastrophe de la seconde guerre mondiale. Transposer ensemble cette déclaration, et aider à la valoriser, c'est le cœur du propos de *Human Writes*. Ce texte est pour le chorégraphe William Forsythe et le professeur de droit Kendall Thomas le fondement de leur performance-installation, dont le titre joue avec la paronymie anglaise des mots *Right* et *Write*.

#### Au pied de la lettre

La retranscription de la déclaration est soumise dans *Human Writes* à une règle prioritaire : l'écriture doit tout autant rendre compte d'elle-même que de son empêchement. Aucun trait ou lettre ne peut se produire directement. Les performeurs sont ainsi obligés à trouver des stratégies de contournement. Chaque tracé participant à élaborer une lettre devra naître d'une contrainte physique, d'un obstacle ou d'un empêchement. On peut donc voir en *Human Writes* une métaphore de la précarité de la condition des droits humains dans notre monde inhumain. Une représentation de la difficulté qu'il y a, de nos jours, à mettre en valeur ces droits. En même temps, cette proposition provoque aussi une action entre tous les participants, obligés de se frotter ensemble à la formulation et à la promotion de la Déclaration des droits de l'homme. On pourrait aussi, du coup, décrire *Human Writes* comme une situation chorégraphique de base, ou comme la mise en scène performative de la convocation du corps devant un principe. Dans *Human Writes*, les participants viennent avec leur corps particulier devant le principe censé en protéger l'intégrité et la sécurité. Par leurs actions communes, ils entrent en négociation avec la Déclaration des droits de l'homme. Des positions sont définies, qui vont se révéler intenables, physiquement irréalisables, épuisantes, et mèneront vers d'autres stratégies. *Human Writes* nous permet de trouver un accès joueur et physique aux droits de l'homme et nous force littéralement à prendre position.

Jan Fabre - Cindy van Acker - Kaori Ito - Sébastien Boucher et Walid Boumhani  
- Thomas Lebrun - Daniel Linehan - **William Forsythe / The Forsythe Company**  
- Perrine Valli - Pierre Droulers - Invitée Surprise - Edouard Lock / La La La Human Steps - Meryl Tankard - Marie-Caroline Hominal - Noemi Lapzeson -

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## Distribution

### **Performance - Installation de William Forsythe et Kendall Thomas**

**Concept** William Forsythe et Kendall Thomas

**Scénographie, lumières et costumes** William Forsythe

**Musique** Thom Willems

**Création sonore** Dietrich Krüger, Niels Lanz et Thom Willems

La collaboration avec Kendall Thomas et William Forsythe a été rendue possible grâce à l'Académie américaine de Berlin.

**Interprètes de la Forsythe Company** Cyril Baldy, Esther Balfe, Ekaterina Cheraneva, Brigel Gjoka, Amancio Gonzalez, Josh Johnson, David Kern, Marthe Krummenacher, Ioannis Mantafounis, Fabrice Mazliah, Roberta Mosca, Tilman O'Donnell, Jone San Martin, Parvaneh Scharafali, Yasutake Shimaji, Elizabeth Waterhouse, Riley Watts, Ander Zabala

**Avec la participation des danseurs genevois** Ruth Childs, Paolo Dos Santos, Laia Duran, Marie Caroline Hominal, Houssine Khald, Maud Liardon, Nans Martin, Yann Marussich, Olivia Ortega, Susana Panades, Pierre Pontvianne, Raphaela Teicher, Rudi Van der Mervwe, Manuel Vignoulle.

**La Compagnie Forsythe est soutenue par** la Ville de Dresde et l'Etat de Saxe ainsi que par la ville de Frankfurt am Main et l'Etat de Hesse. Elle est Compagnie en résidence à Hellerau – Centre Européen pour les Arts de Dresde et au Bockenheimer Depot à Francfort. **Avec des remerciements particuliers** à Madame Susanne Klatten pour son soutien à la Compagnie Forsythe. Ce projet a été rendu possible grâce au soutien de L'Office des Nations Unies à Genève (ONUG) et le Programme des activités culturelles de l'ONUG, avec la coopération des Missions permanentes de la Suisse, de l'Allemagne et des Etats-Unis auprès des Nations Unies et des autres organisations internationales à Genève. Avec l'aide du Département fédéral des Affaires Etrangères, de la République et canton de Genève (Chancellerie d'Etat) dans le cadre du 10e anniversaire de l'adhésion de la Suisse à l'Organisation des Nations Unies (ONU), de la Ville de Genève, de la Fondation Hans Wilsdorf, de JTI et du Flux Laboratory. Remerciements Rolex SA – Rolex Institute, Association Ola, Louise Barber, Anh-Thu Duong, Marthe Krumenacher, Lina Rodriguez, Elena Ippoliti.

## Biographies

### William Forsythe

is recognized as one of the world's foremost choreographers. His work is acknowledged for reorienting the practice of ballet from its identification with classical repertoire to a dynamic 21st-century art form. Forsythe's deep interest in the fundamental principles of organisation has led him to produce a wide range of projects including Installations, Films, and Web based knowledge creation.

Raised in New York and initially trained in Florida with Nolan Dingman and Christa Long, Forsythe danced with the Joffrey Ballet and later the Stuttgart Ballet, where he was appointed Resident Choreographer in 1976. Over the next seven years, he created new works for the Stuttgart ensemble and ballet companies in Munich, The Hague, London, Basel, Berlin, Frankfurt am Main, Paris, New York, and San Francisco. In 1984, he began a 20-year tenure as director of the Ballet Frankfurt, where he created works such as *Artifact* (1984), *Impressing the Czar* (1988), *Limb's Theorem* (1990), *The Loss of Small Detail* (1991, in collaboration with composer Thom Willems and designer Issey Miyake), *A L I E / N A (C) T I O N* (1992), *Eidos:Telos* (1995), *Endless House* (1999), *Kammer/Kammer* (2000), and *Decreation* (2003).

After the closure of the Ballet Frankfurt in 2004, Forsythe established a new, more independent ensemble. The Forsythe Company, founded with the support of the states of Saxony and Hesse, the cities of Dresden and Frankfurt am Main, and private sponsors, is based in Dresden and Frankfurt am Main and maintains an extensive international touring schedule. Works produced by the new ensemble include *Three Atmospheric Studies* (2005), *You made me a monster* (2005), *Human Writes* (2005), *Heterotopia* (2006), *The Defenders* (2007), *Yes we can't* (2008/2010), *I don't believe in outer space* (2008), and *The Returns* (2009). Forsythe's most recent works are developed and performed exclusively by The Forsythe Company, while his earlier pieces are prominently featured in the repertoire of virtually every major ballet company in the world, including The Kirov Ballet, The New York City Ballet, The San Francisco Ballet, The National Ballet of Canada, England's Royal Ballet, and The Paris Opera Ballet.

Awards received by Forsythe and his ensembles include the New York Dance and Performance "Bessie" Award (1988, 1998, 2004, 2007) and London's Laurence Olivier Award (1992, 1999, 2009). Forsythe has been conveyed the title of Commandeur des Arts et Lettres (1999) by the government of France and has received the German Distinguished Service Cross (1997), the Wexner Prize (2002) and the Golden Lion (2010).

Forsythe has been commissioned to produce architectural and performance installations by architect-artist Daniel Libeskind, ARTANGEL (London), Creative Time (New York), and the City of Paris. His installation and film works have been presented in numerous museums and exhibitions, including the Whitney Biennale (New York), the Venice Biennale, the Louvre Museum, and 21\_21 Design Sight in Tokyo.

His performance, film, and installation works have been featured at the Pinakothek der Moderne in Munich, the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, the Venice Biennale and the Hayward Gallery, London.

In collaboration with media specialists and educators, Forsythe has developed new approaches to dance documentation, research, and education. His 1994 computer application *Improvisation Technologies: A Tool for the Analytical Dance Eye*, developed with the Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie, is used as a teaching tool by professional companies, dance conservatories, universities, postgraduate architecture programs, and secondary schools worldwide. 2009 marked the launch of *Synchronous Objects for One Flat Thing*, reproduced, a digital online score developed with The Ohio State University that reveals the organisational principles of the choreography and demonstrates their possible application within other disciplines. *Synchronous Objects* is the pilot project for Forsythe's Motion Bank, a research platform focused on the creation and research of online digital scores in collaboration with guest choreographers.

As an educator, Forsythe is regularly invited to lecture and give workshops at universities and cultural institutions. In 2002, Forsythe was chosen as one of the founding Dance Mentors for The Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative. Forsythe is an Honorary Fellow at the Laban Centre for Movement and Dance in London and holds an Honorary Doctorate from the Juilliard School in New York.

### **Kendall Thomas**

Nash Professor of Law and co-founder and Director of the Center for the Study of Law and Culture at Columbia University in the City of New York. Joined the faculty in 1984. Teaching and research interests include U.S. and comparative constitutional law, human rights, legal philosophy, feminist legal theory, Critical Race Theory and Law and Sexuality.

Visiting Professor at Stanford Law School, and Visiting Professor in American Studies and Afro-American Studies at Princeton University. Has taught or lectured in France, The Netherlands, England, The Czech Republic, Germany, Haiti and South Africa. His writings have appeared in several academic journals and volumes of collected essays. He is a co-editor of *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings that Founded the Movement* (The New Press, 1996) and *What's Left of Theory?* (Routledge Press, 2000).

Thomas was an inaugural recipient of the Berlin Prize Fellowship of the American Academy in Berlin, Germany and a member of the Special Committee of the American Center in Paris, France. Past chair of the Jurisprudence and Law & Humanities sections of the Association of American Law Schools. Founding member of the Majority Action Caucus of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power, Sex Panic! and the AIDS Prevention Action League. Former member and Vice-Chair of the Board of Directors of Gay Men's Health Crisis.

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### **The Forsythe Company**

With the founding of The Forsythe Company in 2005, William Forsythe created a new, agile structure within which to further pursue the multi-faceted creative work begun with Ballett Frankfurt. Together with an ensemble of 17 dancers, he carries forward the intensive collaborative processes developed over 25 years, producing works in the areas of performance, installation, film, and educational media.

The Forsythe Company is supported by the city of Dresden and the state of Saxony as well as the city of Frankfurt am Main and the state of Hesse. The Forsythe Company is Company-in-Residence of both HELLERAU – European Center for the Arts in Dresden and the Bockenheimer Depot in Frankfurt am Main.

## Informations pratiques

### Lieu de la représentation

Organisation des Nations Unies

Salle des pas perdus

Avenue de la Paix 14

1202 Genève

**Accès** > Bus n° 8, 28, F, V, Z arrêt Appia

### Tarifs - Dons

Par l'intermédiaire du festival Antigél et l'adc, nous avons l'immense privilège d'organiser la venue de la performance-installation *Human Writes* de William Forsythe et Kendall Thomas dans le cadre exceptionnel du Palais des Nations Unies.

Cette démarche hautement artistique et symbolique, nous tient à cœur et est possible uniquement grâce aux dons des personnes qui nous soutiennent. Nous vous invitons donc à encourager notre initiative et à vous inscrire comme donateur.

Pour accéder à l'inscription des donateurs, il vous suffit de vous rendre sur le site du festival Antigél et cliquer sur:

- Je désire faire un don pour soutenir la venue de la Forsythe Company et souhaite participer à la performance

Pour toutes informations complémentaires, vous avez la possibilité de contacter le festival Antigél au 022 901 13 00 ou l'adc au 022 329 44 00 dès le 10 janvier.

### Brunch Vente aux enchères

25 février à 11h00 - Flux Laboratory

Vente de dessins issus de *Human Writes*/ The Forsythe Company

Commissaire priseur: Bernard Piguet

### FLUX Laboratory

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## **À suivre à l'adc**

### **Prochains spectacles**

#### *Si dans cette chambre un ami attend...*

Perrine Valli

Du 14 au 25 mars 2012

L'adc à la Salle des Eaux-Vives

82-84 rue des Eaux-Vives

#### *De l'air et du vent*

Pierre Droulers

Du 28 au 31 mars 2012

L'adc à la Salle des Eaux-Vives

82-84 rue des Eaux-Vives