

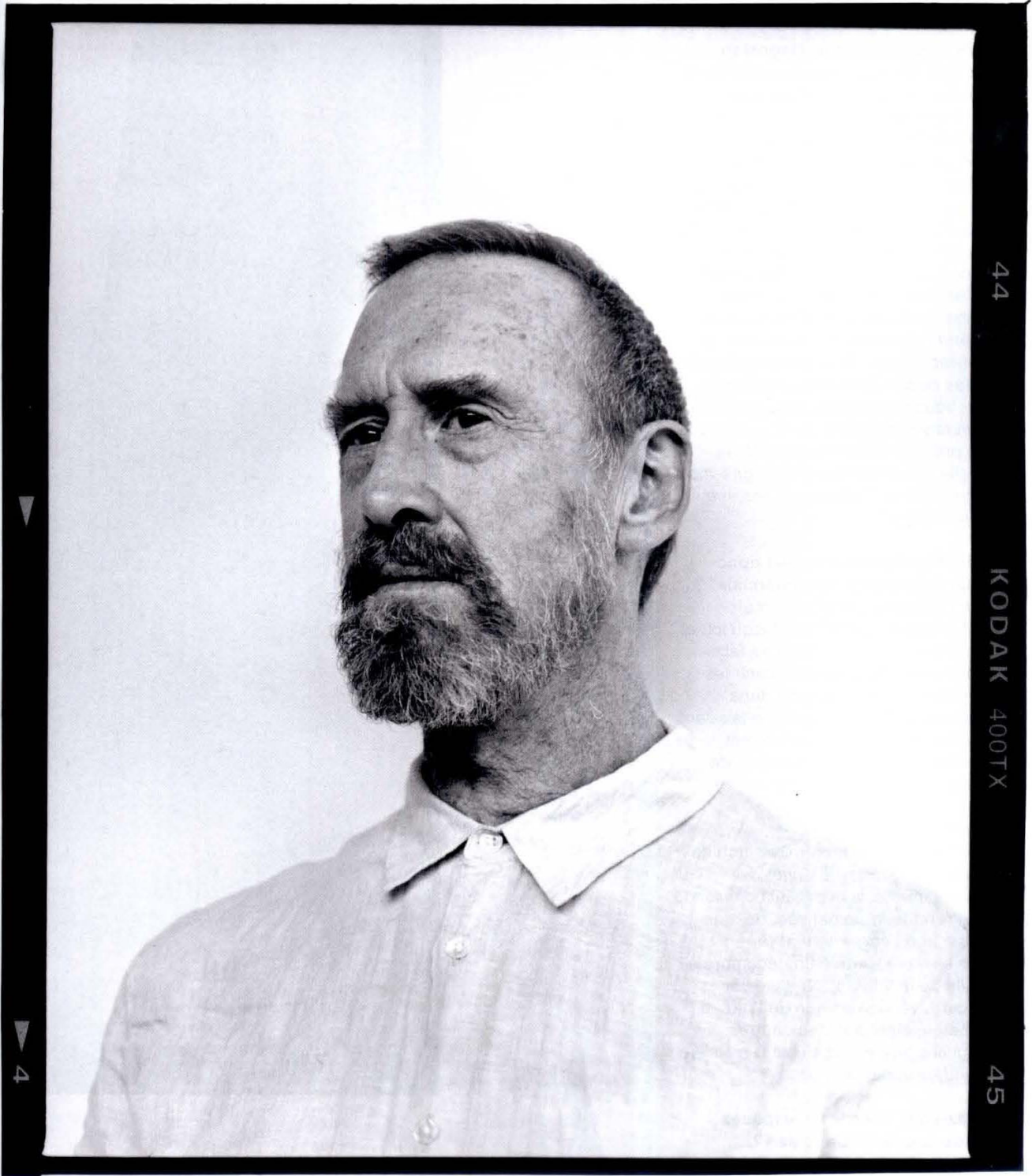
GAGOSIAN  
**Numéro**

Sacré numéro

**WILLIAM  
FORSYTHE,  
L'ART DU  
MOUVEMENT**

Chorégraphe d'importance majeure, William Forsythe s'exprime également en dehors des scènes de théâtre : de la galerie Gagosian Paris-Le Bourget à son installation monumentale à la Grande Halle de la Villette, ses *Objets chorégraphiques* proposent au spectateur d'expérimenter une dimension différente de son œuvre.

Photos Éric Nehr



## Sacré numéro – William Forsythe

Propos recueillis par Ariel Osterweis

**NUMÉRO :** Vous exposez chez Gagosian Paris-Le Bourget. Que représente pour vous le fait de montrer votre travail dans une galerie aussi importante ?

**WILLIAM FORSYTHE :** Mon travail est souvent perçu comme extérieur au marché. Mais en réalité, cela fait bien longtemps que je vends des places pour des représentations, et donc, ici, seul le contexte change. Qu'il soit présenté sur scène ou dans une galerie, mon travail est toujours de l'art. Certains artistes peuvent parfaitement se dire chorégraphes. Je n'ai donc pas commencé à faire de l'Art avec un grand "A" quand j'ai entamé le projet des *Objets chorégraphiques*. Mais je n'avais jamais envisagé de les placer dans une perspective commerciale. Vous connaissez, bien entendu, la série *Absolutely Fabulous* ? Dans un épisode, une galeriste prend le personnage d'Edina de haut, et celle-ci lui rétorque : "Épargne-moi tes grands airs, chérie. Tu bosses dans une boutique, rien de plus."

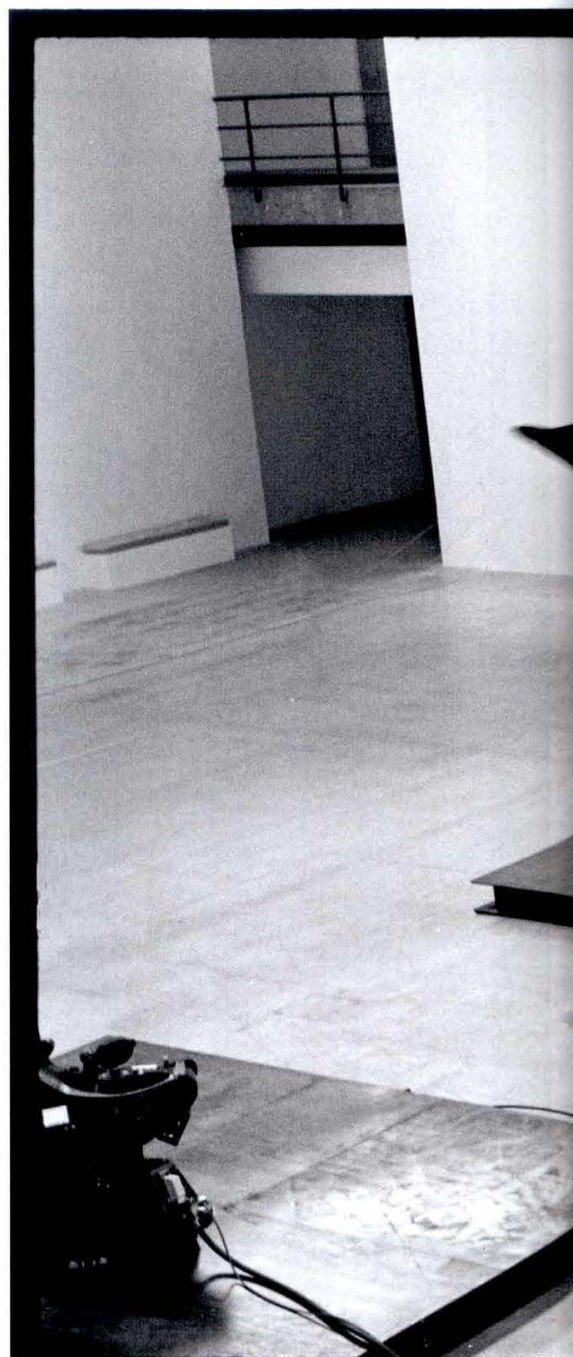
**Vos Objets chorégraphiques ont-ils donc malgré tout une dimension "commerciale" ?**  
Les *Objets chorégraphiques* n'ont jamais véritablement existé hors marché. Jusqu'ici, et dans différents contextes, il a toujours fallu s'acquitter d'un droit d'entrée pour venir les voir. Ils ont fait l'objet d'expositions dans des musées ou lors de festivals, qui tous faisaient payer un droit d'entrée. Mais évidemment, l'option consistant à acquérir ces objets de façon définitive n'était jamais proposée.

**Est-ce désormais une option ?**

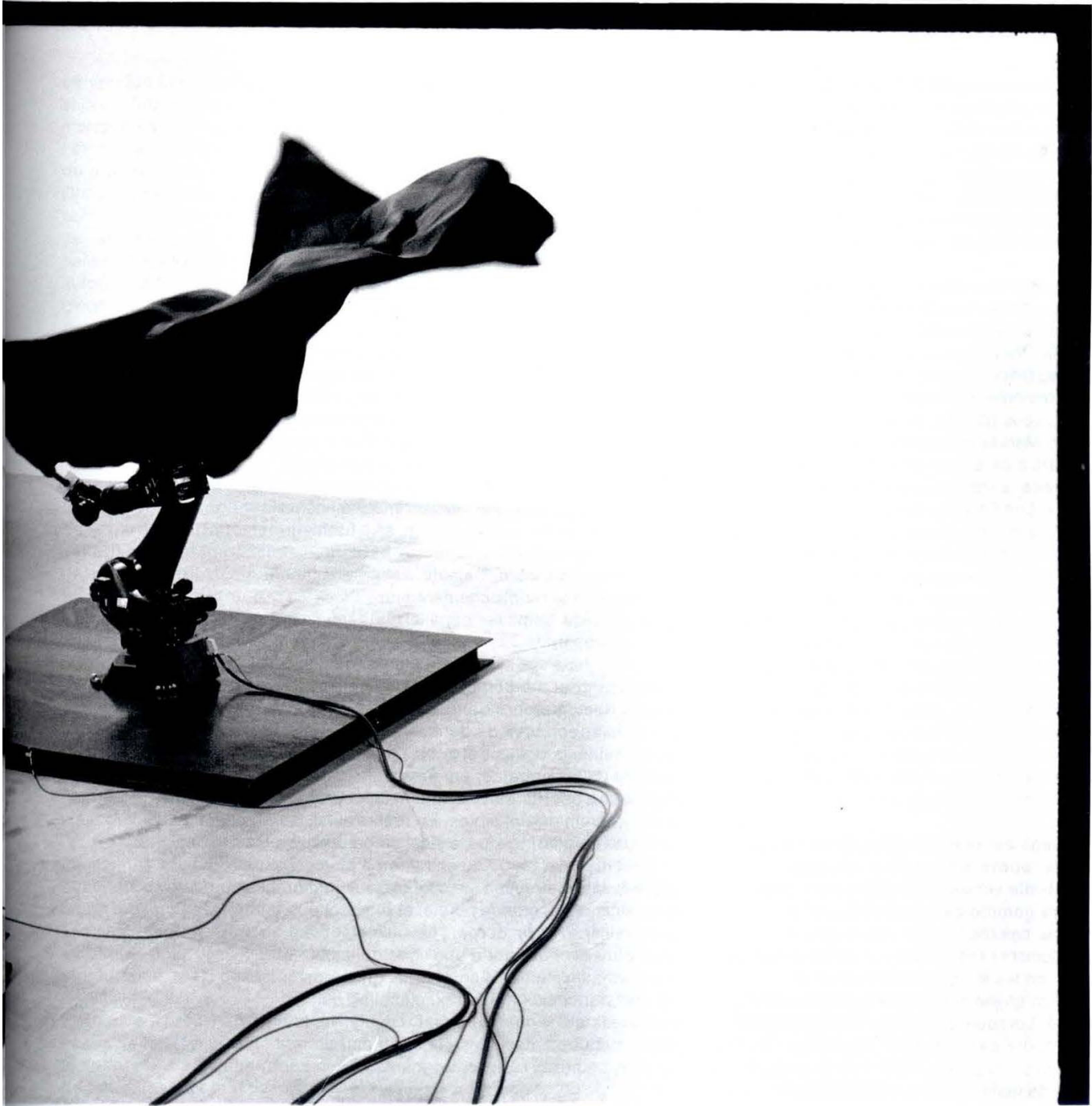
Ça l'est devenu à partir de mon exposition au MMK, le Museum für Moderne Kunst de Francfort. Les organisateurs m'avaient commandé une version différente, automatisée, de mon œuvre *Nowhere and Everywhere at the Same Time* [présentée jusqu'à fin décembre à la Grande Halle de la Villette]. Nous avons donc réalisé cette version unique de l'œuvre, et ils l'ont achetée, ainsi que deux autres. En plus de vingt ans de carrière, c'était la première fois que je vendais quelque chose.

**Comment avez-vous abordé les espaces d'exposition de la galerie Gagosian ?**

Gagosian dispose, entre autres, d'un hangar aéronautique ! Je ne pense pas que de nombreuses galeries soient susceptibles de proposer un espace de cette envergure. Il y a donc une excellente synergie entre nous, notamment parce que la question des espaces est essentielle dans mon travail, et que ceux de Gagosian sont vraiment extraordinaires.



*Black Flags* (2014) de William Forsythe. Robots industriels ready-made, drapeaux en soie, mâts en fibre de carbone et plaques en acier, dimensions variables.



# “Les objets chorégraphiques aident à prendre conscience

Envisagez-vous vos *Objets chorégraphiques* comme un prolongement de votre travail sur les scènes de théâtre ou d'opéra ?

Pas du tout. Absolument aucune expérience de la danse n'est requise. Il s'agit d'instruments de découverte. Ils vous aident à prendre conscience de réalités physiques auxquelles vous n'aviez probablement jamais prêté attention.

**Il me semble tout de même que, du point de vue spatial et kinesthésique, ils exigent une participation active de la part du public.**

Tout à fait. Vous ne pouvez pas vous contenter de les regarder. Cela dit, en ce qui concerne les œuvres présentées chez Gagolian Paris-Le Bourget, vous pouvez, de fait, simplement les regarder. Mais la plupart ne sont pas seulement des objets à caractère visuel : il faut en faire l'expérience, à travers un engagement physique avec eux. Les *Objets chorégraphiques* ne sont pas conçus comme des œuvres visuelles. En fait, les institutions dédiées aux arts visuels – le territoire des musées dans mon cas –, sont arrivées à la conclusion que la chorégraphie est capable de véhiculer des idées artistiques conceptuelles, et qu'à ce titre elle mérite un espace discursif. Ce sont ces institutions qui en sont venues à considérer la chorégraphie comme une marchandise de valeur, et non l'inverse : je ne me suis pas subitement mis à faire des œuvres d'art. Mon but était simplement de mettre en place des stratégies chorégraphiques dans un environnement autre que la scène.

***Black Flags* est une chorégraphie exécutée par deux robots. Comment cette idée vous est-elle venue ? Considérez-vous les danseurs comme des “mécaniques” ?**

En réalité, ces robots sont des machines habituellement utilisées dans un milieu industriel, mais ici, on les éloigne de leur fonction productive en les plaçant dans un contexte poétique. Lorsque la mission qu'ils effectuent dans le cadre de l'exposition s'achève, ils disparaissent et retournent à l'anonymat, à leur rôle de main-d'œuvre industrielle... Je trouve cela assez touchant.

**Faut-il y voir une métaphore du travail du danseur ?**

En un sens, les robots, avec leur force surhumaine, peuvent donner lieu à un certain type de spectacle. Dans *Black Flags*, la question qui est posée est plutôt celle de l'échelle : ce que la pièce met en lumière, c'est une augmentation de l'échelle de certaines activités qui, à l'origine, sont humaines. Ainsi les

drapeaux que cette œuvre utilise sont une version grand format de ceux que les supporters de football brandissent dans les stades.

**C'est une idée fascinante – en particulier à la lumière du mouvement #takeaknee [qui consiste à mettre un genou à terre pendant l'hymne américain], lancé par le footballeur américain Colin Kaepernick pour protester contre le racisme et la discrimination.**

L'évocation dans les médias de ce mouvement au sein de la NFL [Ligue nationale de football américain] m'a procuré un plaisir indescriptible. L'onde de choc a été inouïe. En tout cas, le fait d'agiter ces drapeaux est devenu incontournable dans les grandes manifestations sportives – et c'est très difficile à faire. Les robots permettent de transposer cette pratique à un niveau que les fans de sport n'auraient jamais imaginé, même dans leurs rêves les plus fous ! Plus sérieusement, je ne pense pas que les supporters soient réellement notre cible. Cela dit, si certains fans de sport font le rapprochement entre *Black Flags* et ce qui se passe dans les stades, c'est très bien aussi.

**En Europe tout au moins, il est possible de trouver des amateurs de foot qui fréquentent aussi les spectacles de danse.**

Dans ce cas, la couleur et le titre de l'œuvre risquent de les entraîner en dehors du cadre strictement sportif. Mais d'autres associations sont évidemment possibles. En réalité, il ne s'agit pas de décréter que le sujet de cette œuvre est ceci ou cela, parce qu'en fait on a plutôt affaire à une abstraction. Je souhaitais créer une installation d'une grande pureté, et plutôt que de travailler avec un corps, j'ai voulu élaborer cette œuvre en partant d'une ligne qui se transforme en plan puis en volume. En opposant une résistance aux drapeaux, c'est l'air qui produit les plans sculpturaux. En définitive, le mouvement des machines construit un duo avec les courants d'air environnants.

**Quel est le sens de votre vidéo *Alignigung* [qui entrelace étroitement deux corps pour former des “puzzles optiques”] ?**

*Alignigung* est la combinaison de deux mots : *align*, “aligner” en anglais, et *Einigung*, qui signifie “accord”, “unification” en allemand. Mais le verbe *align* est aussi homophone de l'allemand *allein*, qui signifie “seul”. Le résultat de ce tissage entre les deux termes pourrait signifier “s'aligner en accord avec soi-même et l'autre, solitairement”.

# de réalités physiques que vous n'aviez jamais perçues.”

La version live que j'avais vue était si directe, si crue : nous étions placés tout contre les interprètes, contre leur peau. Et on ressentait l'extrême pesanteur des corps due à la force de gravité. L'effet est très différent en vidéo. Dans la vidéo, les associations possibles sont davantage à mettre en relation avec l'histoire de l'art. En réalité, je fais surtout référence au peintre Tiepolo, qui était parvenu à "suspendre" la force de la gravité. Pour une précédente pièce intitulée *Hypothetical Stream* [1996], j'avais travaillé à partir de dessins de Tiepolo, que j'avais utilisés comme d'hypothétiques arrêts sur image pour une série de mouvements : les danseurs devaient trouver les liens entre ces différents mouvements, savoir comment passer d'un enchevêtrement à l'autre.

Dans l'œuvre interactive *Towards the Diagnostic Gaze*, le visiteur doit tenir un plumeau et tenter de le garder parfaitement immobile, ce qui est absolument impossible. Outre l'idée de la propreté, faut-il y voir une allusion à la vie ou à la mort d'un oiseau ?

Cela parlerait plutôt de la vie ou de la mort d'une personne. Les oiseaux peuvent abandonner leurs plumes sans y laisser la vie. La pièce fonctionne comme une loupe, un amplificateur. Nous avons demandé à un tailleur de pierres de graver les mots : "*Hold the object absolutely still*" [*Maintenir l'objet absolument immobile*] dans l'une des polices de caractères proposées habituellement pour les pierres tombales, et c'est devenu la notice d'instructions de l'œuvre. Si vous prenez le plumeau dans votre main, vous vous rendez compte qu'il tremble beaucoup. Vous reculez d'un pas et vous vous demandez : "*C'est normal ou c'est moi ?*" Les gens mettent alors en œuvre différentes stratégies pour voir si le tremblement peut être atténué, mais c'est impossible.

Évoquons à présent *Nowhere and Everywhere at the Same Time*, cette installation qui invite le spectateur à évoluer dans une forêt de pendules aux mouvements imprévisibles. En 2005, vous aviez présenté une version de cette pièce à New York dans le Meatpacking District. À l'époque, était-elle déjà qualifiée d'"*objet chorégraphique*" ou cette terminologie n'est-elle apparue que plus tard ? Il me semble qu'elle était déjà qualifiée comme cela à l'époque.

À travers cet espace, tentiez-vous également d'éveiller les sens du public ? D'un côté, j'espérais que la pièce pourrait

fournir une sorte de cadre, de structure interne à l'architecture du lieu, de l'autre, elle fonctionnait comme une partition acoustique.

Qu'entendez-vous par là ?

Dès que les pendules se mettent en mouvement, ils établissent simultanément une relation à la structure du bâtiment et une relation entre eux. J'avais travaillé avec Brock Labrenz, qui est à la fois danseur et astrophysicien, sur les types de données qu'il nous serait possible d'extraire des événements provoqués par cette installation. L'approche était très systématisée. Brock a littéralement mis en chorégraphie les analyses qu'il avait élaborées à partir des phénomènes physiques liés à cet espace. Il agissait en scientifique. Par la suite, le mouvement des pendules a été automatisé, mais dans la première version, Brock était la seule personne à pouvoir les faire bouger.

Les pendules présentés à Paris sont-ils automatisés ?

Il y a environ six cents pendules suspendus à vingt chariots mobiles installés au plafond. La chorégraphie des chariots s'organise grâce à un contrepoint extrêmement complexe. Les spectateurs ne suivent qu'une seule instruction : n'avoir aucun contact avec les pendules. Ils sont donc obligés de se livrer à une danse de l'évitement pour le moins intéressante. L'ensemble est aussi – et avant tout – composé à partir d'un point de vue musical, mais le résultat aboutit à un contrepoint kinesthésique. D'un certain point de vue, le calage et la coordination des chariots ressemble à la production d'un ensemble instrumental.

Avez-vous opté pour un traitement sonore spécifique ?

Les pendules font du bruit, et cela produit un rythme. Dans une précédente version (celle de Francfort), il n'y en avait que 60, tous commandés individuellement, ce qui nous avait permis de composer une partition acoustique. Les pendules émettaient un son, une sorte de "pffuit", et à chaque fois qu'une valve se fermait, on entendait ce son. On avait donc composé une véritable partition sonore, dont le résultat servait à orchestrer l'interaction avec les visiteurs.

*Nowhere and Everywhere at the Same Time* n°2 de William Forsythe, du 1<sup>er</sup> au 31 décembre à la Grande Halle de la Villette, Paris XIX<sup>e</sup>.

*Choreographic Objects* de William Forsythe, jusqu'au 22 décembre, Gagosian Paris-Le Bourget, [www.gagosian.com](http://www.gagosian.com)

## English text

"I was keen on empowering women, and I wanted to change the perception that people had of the brand from 'look at me' to 'listen to me.' When I started designing for the brand, I wanted things to be a little bit more sophisticated."

I was keen on empowering women, and I wanted to change the perception that people had of the brand from "look at me" to "listen to me." That was very important to me. When I started designing for Versace, I wanted things to be a little bit more sophisticated, with fewer colours and fewer prints. And I wanted to shift the focus to day-wear because, let's face it, most people spend most of their life wearing clothes during the day. Versace had always been known for cocktail dresses and celebrities, so it was an about-face for the brand that wasn't as easy as you might think.

**Was it your idea to reunite some of the world's most iconic supermodels at the last show?**

Yes. You wouldn't believe what a logistical nightmare it was! [Laughs.] Millennials, whether it be my children or their friends, don't know anything about the 90s, so I thought it might be a nice idea to show them just how beautiful and professional the supermodels were, and what extraordinary personalities they have.

**How much was Gianni responsible for the supermodel craze?**

He played a decisive role in their success because he was the first designer to put them on the runway. In those days, there were two types of model: print models and runway models. Linda Evangelista, Cindy Crawford and all the girls that Avedon shot for our campaigns

would never do the shows because they were considered to be print models. But when Gianni saw the pictures, he asked, "Why don't we put these girls on the runway?" And I said, "Okay, let's try it!" It was a little tricky at first, because they didn't know how to walk a catwalk like the runway girls, but they had such strong personalities that Gianni immediately fell in love with them.

**Which was your favourite? Mine was Linda.**

Linda was super professional. She never made a mistake, neither in a picture nor on the runway. She certainly knew how to prepare herself: she could spend three hours before a shoot checking out her facial expressions in the mirror, finding the perfect way to arch an eyebrow. The professionalism of those girls was incredible.

**How do you manage to remain so glamorous at all times?**

Am I?

**Glamorous is rather an understatement: you're the eighth wonder of the world, right up there with the Hanging Gardens of Babylon.**

You're so generous! But let me ask you: why *shouldn't* a woman be glamorous? I don't see why wearing flat shoes, no make-up and unkempt hair makes you more intelligent.

**Which of your accomplishments are you most proud of?**

I know I've made a few mistakes along the way – after all, nobody's perfect – but I'm proud to have steered Versace through the winds of change over the last 20 years without the brand losing any of its relevance.

**You stun on red carpets – what's your secret to always looking so picture perfect?**

I've been working with supermodels most of my life, which has allowed me to pick up a few tricks of the trade along the way. I learnt, for instance, that good lighting is absolutely key to flattering a woman's beauty. Basically, on red carpets, the idea is to keep moving until the lighting is just right. So I've learnt how to recognize exactly when to stop.

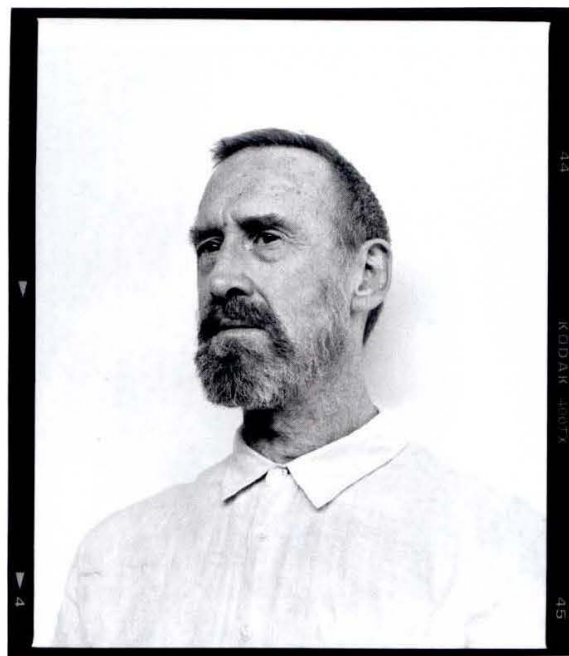
**In years to come, how would you like to be remembered?**

I'd rather people forgot about me.

## Portrait

### WILLIAM FORSYTHE

**A globally renowned choreographer, William Forsythe has seen his dance pieces performed on every major stage in the world. Gagosian Paris-Le Bourget and the Grande Halle de la Villette are currently showing his *Choreographic Objects*, which invite the viewer to experience a different aspect of his work with the human body.**



Interview by Ariel Osterweis, portrait by Éric Nehr

**NUMÉRO:** I wanted to ask you about the context of Paris, specifically, and what it means to you to be presenting your work at Gagosian Paris-Le Bourget.

**WILLIAM FORSYTHE:** There's a certain perception that my work had been suspended from all market forces. But in fact I've been selling theatre tickets for a long time, and this is another context. It's all art. Some artists call themselves choreographers. It's not like I suddenly started making big capital-A art with

the *Choreographic Objects*. Indeed, there was never any attempt to put them into a retail context. You know *Absolutely Fabulous*, right? At one point a gallerist is giving Edina shit, and she says something like, "Drop the attitude, darling. You only work in a shop."

**So, what is the relationship between "retail," as you put it, and your *Choreographic Objects*? The *Choreographic Objects* were never outside of a market. There had**

always been an admission charge to see them in a majority of circumstances. They were produced by museums or festivals and admission was charged. So the possibility of acquiring the objects permanently was never ever on the table.

### Is it on the table now?

It has become on the table, as of the show at the Museum für Moderne Kunst in Frankfurt-am-Main. They had commissioned a new version of *Nowhere and Everywhere*, a different, mechanized version, and we made a unique version for them and they acquired that work and two others. That was the first time I had actually sold something in over 20 years.

### In acquiring the work, did they acquire any actual objects, such as the pendulums?

Yes they acquired works – the films, the objects themselves. They bought them.

### Was there a score involved?

There's a score, but it's built into the computer that runs the objects.

### Is Gagolian acquiring anything?

Gagolian doesn't acquire – they consign. Galleries consign works for sale. They can choose one work, they can choose your entire oeuvre. Right now we're working on this particular group of objects that would perhaps be more institutional acquisitions rather than private, as they're quite large. You need very large spaces in order to have them operate.

### How do the spaces at the Gagolian where you're showing the *Choreographic Objects* exist in relationship to the proscenium for you?

Gagolian has an airplane hangar! I'm making an assumption, but there are not so many galleries that could supply that amount of space, and therefore the synergy between the Gagolian and myself is excellent because they have extraordinary spaces.

### Do you see your *Choreographic Objects* as an extension of your stage work?

Not at all. They are entirely theoretical. Ideally they isolate particular somatic instances and are designed simply to illuminate them for a non-professional layperson. There is

no dance expertise required whatsoever. They are little instruments of knowledge that help you see something that you had probably ignored or never paid attention to.

### They would seem to demand more of an active participation from the audience, spatially and kinetically.

They do. Many of them are not designed just to be looked at. In the case of two of the works at the Gagolian show, you can just look at them. But a majority of the works aren't only visual objects, they also require that you endure the work's demands and engage with the actual physical object.

### So this goes beyond 1960s Minimalist sculpture.

I think it might be difficult for people to parse this difference. The objects were never designed as works of visual art. What is happening is that the visual arts – the domain of museums, in my case – has decided that choreography is a valuable context for conceptual-art ideas and that it deserves a discursive space. They are convinced that choreography is a valuable commodity in that case. It's not the other way around. It's not that I am suddenly making "artworks." I was trying to exercise choreographic strategies in a non-theatrical environment.

### *Black Flags* is performed by two industrial robots. How did that idea come about?

These robots are really just hulking armatures that are used in manufacturing. They're given a pause and taken out of their industrial work and are put in this other, more poetic, context. When their exhibition task is over, they disappear anonymously back to the workforce. I find it kind of touching. The original idea was an old one from the early 90s. Back then, we had made a 3D calligraphy in the air using satin ribbons and a fly-fishing rod in the piece *As a Garden in this Setting* [1993]. When we started to prototype, it turned out that the robots, of course, couldn't sense timing feedback from the ribbon, which a human can. And the process of applying the choreography to the robot was not possible with motion capture. But the flags, which are fabricated by the same people who make them for soccer-stadium demonstrations, had the right heft in relationship to the

robots' strength. So a new set of aerodynamic motion vocabulary had to be developed.

### Is that at all a metaphor for the dancer's labour? Many talk about the idea that a dancer bears the "gift" of talent and their labour is treated differently by choreographers and themselves as something destined for a higher power or that is somehow set aside.

This reminds me of a conversation I was having with Susan Foster this weekend. In a certain sense, the robots, with their superhuman strength, can allow for a certain magnificent scale of spectacle. I basically amplified what were originally human activities since the flags are large versions of the flags that are waved at soccer games.

### That's fascinating, especially right now with Colin Kaepernick and the #takeaknee in American football.

I was reading about the NFL's kneeling movement with unbelievable delight, swearing, "Yeah! Fuck yeah!!" The backlash was extraordinary. Anyway, the waving of these very large flags has become part of these sports demonstrations, and it's physically very difficult. There's a very limited repertory of movements that a human can do with them, due to the sheer physics of the event. So the robots can take it to another level, one the sports fan could only dream of. I don't think we have that particular target audience, but if by some chance sports fans made that connection, it would be great.

### Well in Europe you might get a soccer-going, dance-going audience.

They might get side-tracked by the title and the colour. There are obviously other associations available, and you don't want to limit it. You don't want to say, "It's about..." because for me it's an abstraction. I tried only to make a musical counterpoint. I wanted to make a pristine, flawless contrapuntal event. I work with a line that becomes a surface that becomes volumetric; it actually uses the force of air to create the billowing sculptural effects. The flags are basically having this duet with the air currents that they disturb.

### Moving onto *Alignment*...

It's two words, a combination of the English word "align" and the German

word *Einigung*, which means "agreement." It's a portmanteau word that produces a "threaded" result which includes a pun – "align" sounds like the German *allein*, "alone" – and which could mean "aligning in agreement with oneself and another, on one's own."

### What's the relationship between the live version I saw at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the video version?

The original version was live, within the context of a staged work, and then there was a filmed version of that at the Museum für Moderne Kunst, which went into their collection. Then with other performers with more "flex" facility, like Rauf Rauf "RubberLegz" Yasit and Riley Watts, we were able to compose an even more intense optical confusion or conundrum.

### It's interesting how the effect is so different on video. The live version is so raw: we were right up against the performers' skin, and it was so grounded by gravity. In the video, there's something different going on.

The associations in the video version are more art historical. I'm basically referencing Tiepolo, who suspended gravity in his works. In an earlier piece, called *Hypothetical Stream* [1997] – in which I worked with Tiepolo sketches as hypothetical freeze frames for a series of motions – the dancers had to figure out what the connections were between them. They had to hypothetically move from one entanglement to another.

### Could you say something about *Toward a Diagnostic Gaze*? The feather duster is evocative of so many things, from cleanliness to the question of a dead or live bird...

It's all about a dead or live person, much less a bird. This work is something that acts as a magnifier. We went to a gravestone engraver in Frankfurt, and chose a local stone and had engraved on it the words "Hold the object absolutely still," which became the instructions for the piece. When you pick up the feather duster, you realize it's absolutely quaking. You pull back and think, "Is it me, or is this normal?" People tend to engage in strategies to see if this quaking is something that can be subdued. And it can't.



## English text

That would make me nervous about wondering whether or not it's my own nervousness that's causing the quaking.

Here we go! That's where the hypochondriac kicks in! In *The New York Times*, there's a whole blog called *Well*. There's *Web MD*, there's every opportunity for self-diagnosis and the idea that we could obviate pain and suffering and prolong life with quality, etc. In a certain sense I'm playing into the current Zeitgeist too, assuming that we have technologies that circumvent facets of our mortal existence. Whereas in fact you're shaking because you are mortal, and if you weren't, you'd be dead. That's the alternative. You actually get to see your nervous system. When I say these things are "instruments of self-knowledge," you walk away knowing something about yourself, about your body. It's interesting to watch people do this in groups because people are waiting to try it, often in museums, and one of the first strategies they adopt is to use their breath – either holding it, exhaling or calming it. And there's always some moment where the whole group tries to breathe together or help the person calm down.

In a strange way, it's bringing about empathy. Absolutely. Perfectly expressed!

I'd love to ask you about *Nowhere and Everywhere at the Same Time*. I was at Creative Time's Meatpacking District version of the installation. Wasn't that a great building?

It was amazing! There was just one male dancer performing? Yes, he's a dancer, filmmaker and astrophysicist – Brock Labrenz.

What was hanging from the ceiling?

Plumb lines. The reason I used plumb lines in that particular context was that the building was falling apart, so there was barely a plumb line in that room. This helped create a platonic order. The walls were at slightly weird angles – everything was in decay or in a process of disarray.

They were asking you and other artists to think about the future Highline Park.

Yes. I was also hoping that those perfectly plumb lines would bring the

old building into some kind of a sculptural relief.

Was that an actual meat-packing building that used to house actual flesh? Oh yeah.

But they didn't slaughter the animals there, did they?

No, it got delivered. It wasn't an abattoir.

And what were you trying to alert the audience to in that space?

On the one hand, I was hoping it would provide an internal frame for the surrounding architecture. On the other, it functioned as a score.

Interesting. What do you mean by that?

As soon as you put the pendulums in motion, they developed relationships with the building or toward each other. I worked with Brock on what classes of information he could derive from the events. It was very systematized. He was literally choreographing his analysis of the physics of the space. He was acting in some senses like a scientist.

I'm trying to remember if we were allowed to touch the plumb lines at Creative Time's performance. We didn't say anything. Once it became mechanized in later versions – once the pendulums were mechanically set in motion – I sort of inverted the process. Whereas Brock, in the early iteration, was the only the person who really should have moved the pendulums.

So are the French ones completely mechanized?

Now there are around 600 pendulums, attached to 20 frames that are suspended from the ceiling. The frames are choreographed in a complex counterpoint. I had only one request for the viewers: do not come into any contact with the pendulums. Therefore, they end up doing a rather interesting dance of avoidance. It's interesting that the Grande Halle de La Villette, where the piece is playing now, is part of a former abattoir complex. The work has come home in a way!

William Forsythe, *Nowhere and Everywhere at the Same Time*, Grande Halle de La Villette, 1-31 December, Paris 19th.

William Forsythe, *Choreographic Objects*, Gagosian Paris-Le Bourget, until 23 December, www.gagosian.com

## Art diary

### CHRONICLES OF AN UNDERCOVER REPORTER, FROM AMSTERDAM TO NYC



By Nicolas Trembley, photo by Jessica Craig-Martin

The day before the opening of FIAC, Beatrix Ruf, one of the most international and powerful figures in the art world, announced that she would resign as director of Amsterdam's Stedelijk Museum. Whaaat? Various news articles followed claiming that it was because of a conflict of interest due to her undisclosed involvement with an art-advisory company, but also because of details she omitted to disclose following the donation of 600 works to the museum by the collector Thomas Borgmann. It is, of course, forbidden to work as an art adviser if you're the director of a museum. But none of this has so far been proved. Ruf is one of the most talented professionals in the world of contemporary art, to which she has devoted her entire life. It was the Dutch popular press that began leaking information that apparently came from within the museum. Whatever it is that's been going on, Jan Willem Sieburgh has been named interim director.

In the wake of the Weinstein affair, accusations are being made left right and centre and one could only wonder when they would start to come out in the art world. Are there artists who abuse their assistants, gallerists who harass their interns, or museum directors who slap the buttocks of their curators? In the end it was from the milieu of art criticism that the first revelations came,

with accusations against Knight Landesman, one of the historic directors of the magazine *Artforum*. He's accused of sexual harassment by a former colleague at the paper who's suing him for \$500,000. Those who don't know him personally may well have seen him at any of the world's numerous art fairs, which he attends in orange or yellow suits with matching socks and ties. At first the magazine's directors defended their colleague, before being massacred by hashtags on social media and in the end not only apologizing but also announcing Landesman's resignation. He's now undergoing therapy. The entire editorial staff signed an open letter expressing their disagreement with the board, which had initially defended Knight by saying that the complainant was merely an attention seeker. Chief editor Michelle Kuo decided to resign rather than field the attacks against the magazine, as the hashtag #boycottartforum began to appear everywhere, and certain gallerists, such as Lisa Spellman, or art advisers, such as Todd Levin, called for a moratorium on advertising in the magazine until the historic management has been cleaned out and/or put in place an adequate behavioural charter. David Velasco, previously in charge of the magazine's website, has now become editor in chief. We're happy for him and wish him good luck in handling the situation.