

10, 11, 12, 13 November 2007

Starting: 21:00

Flock & Meat

2 dance projects, 2 concepts using dance as the expressive medium

**Flock** character No. 2 / the stargazer

The Flock and its characters is an artistic record of what is going on around us and what we pretend to be every day. It explores our fear of saying no to the idea of the flock and crowd; the sense of being trapped, being swallowed whole by any stimulus presented to us; the insecurity of intensifying our feelings, by first destroying the image of the ideas we are required to support.

Concept / Staging / Choreography: Georgia Petralli

Performance: Georgia Petralli

Music: Victoria Tsakou

Music processing - programming: Tasos Ifantis

Operator: Victoria Tretsiak, Dimitris Panagiotakis, Zenia Drosou, Georgia Petralli

Video Art: Victoria Tretsiak

Photos: Zenia Drosou

Make-up: Teri Tsaka

Text: Georgia Petralli

## SCENARIO – THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN IDEA

My inspiration for this work came from the personal story of a friend of mine, who was being filmed (without her knowledge) in her own home, as well as from the philosophy of Gurdjieff's "Enneagram" characters. I began to touch upon the phenomenon of Big Brother via a different route. I tried to investigate it as a more general concept: a devious practice that can break into the most inexpressibly innocent, private moments. Observing these routine moments, I became ever more conscious of how we are trapped in a frightening reality where, at any moment, one look from the judges can "read" the truth distorting it to its own advantage. This is not simply about one camera which follows us continuously, but about a social motif which we ourselves create, full of scant curiosity, allusions, comparisons, critical aspects, distorted ways of analysing characters and private moments.

I have created seven types of person – seven basic characters – who give names to the scenes and structure to the script. These seven characters are nothing more than the masks we wear daily in our social and interpersonal relationships. Everybody has elements of all these characters, but for the most part, and according to the phase of life we are in, only one or two of them predominate.

The concept of Big Brother is derived from the need of every character to play a role which, in the final analysis, is not his decision at all. Big Brother is presented as a momentary flash of images between the various dance scenes. Big Brother's eye is everywhere. The situation is driven by emotional-phantoms, but we do not see the faces of the dancer-actors in full (except for the protagonist), only images of their sensory organs (eyes, ears, mouths, noses, hands, feet).

Emotions cut off from the whole picture operate as 'hostile potions' and harsh critics. The characters are trapped by a social structure, very cleverly restricted by everyday moments of surveillance and pretence, and they themselves enter into a process of self-other-pretence, they either have anything else to say or dare not support a different reality and the journey this would require and entail.

1<sup>st</sup> character: the simpleton. This is the character who takes everyday stimuli more superficially and for whom events operate as images surrounding a glass reality. It is the character of appearances, camouflage, social status, media and fashion. It is the character who is driven by "a lightness of heart", having created a beautiful world of her own, full of confetti and scents, and who avoids being ruined by reality or the sadness that this can cause. By making direct comparisons the blonde wig supports the role and the costume; a roll of material, is a beautiful camouflage-cocoon for the dancer.

2<sup>nd</sup> character: the stargazer. The eternal romantic and star gazer. The character who dreams, contemplates, and fantasises, but who can very easily become lost in another unrealistic world of his own. It is easy for him to retreat from people and reality and to end up fluctuating between dream and reality, ground and sky. He wears a mask of sleep and moves spellbound by the dream. His steps are light, simple flights across the ground and he is at the beck and call of a dream of a different reality, in which he exists guided by this emotion. The hands clench and loosen; are raised and dropped. He is an elf trapped in a striped costume, like a prisoner's uniform, spellbound by a different rhythm, and refuses to open his eyes to see and to feel pain.

3<sup>rd</sup> character: the conformist. A character with the aspects of a public servant. Full of hidden emotions and dreams which he doesn't dare express. Hidden ideas, unspoken words, well-developed situations, supposedly even surfaces, ostracised truths. A wild beast in a cage. A dance which doesn't take up space. He moves in a costume which seems to be comfortable, but which is accompanied by a noose: a noose-scarf tightly bound with deeply-anchored ideologies of the past, with feelings and desires which are covered up in the name of a more

comfortable life; of a conjectural but necessary reality; of a forced regime and of the fear which this serves.

4<sup>th</sup> character: the diplomat. A human chameleon. The type of person who has been taught how to pull the strings well, to manipulate and be manipulated via “scheming” and distorted situations. The “manipulator”, a surgeon with sometimes golden and sometimes silver gloves. His moves may be the same as the previous character’s, but they appear different. They smack of pomposity and vigour. They stink of control. This character’s fear, which seems to define his system, is not possessed by anyone else except the system itself and his own weakness continues to maintain a great falsehood which is continuously trying to feed off the dark truths of his own life.

5<sup>th</sup> character: the hysteric. “Against the grain”, the character who is not afraid to shout out the truth... a “town crier”. A person who refuses to live within lies and shadows. He is searching for the light. A rebel, but one who may lose control through his anger and clip his wings. His anger, not being able to destroy the walls of injustice, turns back on himself. It works impulsively and he often stumbles on this emotion himself, falling to the ground and not being able to get up. This character’s fear is of becoming tied to the system. However, he becomes quaint, having developed a predictable motif of opposition which is nothing more than a game of action-reaction which defines and pursues the system itself.

6<sup>th</sup> character: the demented. The character who society and the masses shun, who decides, or is forced, to withdraw from communal activities and to create an unknown path of his own. He crosses the ‘thin line’ and finds himself on the opposite side, either through courage or fear. This is when the unfulfilled, impulsive, restless moments of madness or horror at life ignore artificiality and social pretence. ‘Need’ and ‘want’ become a great invitation to an inconsistent monologue. Images of absurdity immersed in Dadaistic sentiments. His fears are everything and nothing. His weaknesses are both inside and outside. The system is the same, distorted by another absurd logic or by a logical absurdity.

7<sup>th</sup> character: the hoper. The character who brings hope. The good fairy, the reformer-magician. A symbol of talent, of uniqueness. The hope which keeps us alive and which leaps out at unspeakable moments and reminds us what life is. The part which shouts freely and tastes joy. The self-excommunication of the system as a system and the birth of a shared selfless idea. Real love. Rebirth.

Within all these, the eye of Big Brother is nothing more than an everyday critic; the glass idol who reminds us day in day out of the servitude which we choose for ourselves, cultivating a fear for us to dream of, to concentrate on and to love. The critical eye can be a camera which follows you, a boss who reprimands you, a news story which terrifies you, a satellite which “scans” you, a snooping neighbour, your lover criticising you. Goldfish trapped in a bowl, languidly energetic, emotionally inactive, ready to devour every lying hope which the “deified” hand throws at them. No-one has understood how this two-dimensional glass reality began or where it came from. It is a way of life which always seems to have existed; an absence of personal focus, of civil (unobtrusive) imagination and genuine progress, in the name of a reality from which we ourselves drink the essence.

“FLOCK” and its characters are an artistic record of what is happening around us and of the parts we play on a daily basis. Our fear of saying no to the herd and the flock. The trap with which we crudely devour whatever stimulus is presented to us. The insecurity with which we sharpen our senses, first of all destroying the image of the ideas we are required to uphold.