



AKSIOMA
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PRESS RELEASE

Aksioma – Institute for Contemporary Art, Ljubljana, and Bunker Institute kindly invite you to the dance performances by **Nelisiwe Xaba**:

Monday, August 22nd 2011

at 8pm: *Sakhozi Says “NON” to the Venus*

at 9pm: *Plasticization*

www.aksioma.org/nelisiwe_xaba

Festival Mladi levi

Stara mestna elektrarna – Elektro Ljubljana, Slomškova 18, Ljubljana

www.bunker.si



Foto: Suzy Bernstein

Images: http://www.aksioma.org/press/nelisiwe_xaba.zip

The Exotic Will Always Be Defined by the One Who Holds the Power

A dancer and a choreographer Nelisiwe Xaba was born in Soweto, South Africa, she studied at the Johannesburg Dance Foundation and went on to further study dance at Ballet Rambert in London. Before starting to create her own performances, she had danced in South Africa for Pact Dance Company and had also worked with a choreographer Robyn Orlyn.

She created her solo performance entitled *Sakhozi says “NON” to the Venus* inspired by Sarah Baartman (1790-1815), a South African woman from the Khoikhoi tribe, who had been displayed in the 19th century circuses and exhibition shows across London and Paris under the pseudonym Hottentot Venus. Her most intimate bodily parts had been studied by natural scientists and



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biologists during her lifetime and, following her death, parts of her organs as well as her skeleton had been exhibited in the Parisian Musee de l'Homme until 1974. Nelson Mandela requested of France to return her posthumous remains for several years until at long last his request was granted in 2002, which is also when she was finally buried in her home soil more than 200 years after her death. The story of Sarah Baartman stands as a symbol of all the suffering that African women had to endure during the colonialism era and still go on enduring on everyday basis in the present day time.

Nelisiwe melted together her own biography on the one hand and Sarah Baartman's on the other, thus giving birth to an ironic and politically engaged dance solo. It is about a woman and her trip to Europe, where she is allowed to stay only if she becomes a museum artefact for a while. This performance doesn't merely address the issue of exotic voyeurism, but also points out the increase with regard to the present day xenophobia, which can be seen in the president Sarkozy's (Sakhozi) idea to give the Africans some sort of a financial compensation in return for their departure from France.

Her second performance this evening entitled *Plasticization* is a breathtaking and humorous solo, which tackles the subject of the body and the contemporary attitude towards it. It speaks of the body's freedom as well as its entrapment, it speaks of erotica as well as politics. The author changes several identities in the course of the performance by the minimal usage of instruments and says that this performance is essentially about the ambivalent love-hate relationship that we have towards the plastic: it protects us on the one hand, but nature is unable to digest it on the other.

Sakhozi Says "NON" to the Venus (25 minutes)

Director: Toni Morkel

Performer and choreographer: Nelisiwe Xaba

Sound and music: Mocke J Van Veuren

Video: Lukasz Pater

Plasticization (20 minutes)

Choreography and dance: Nelisiwe Xaba

Costume: Strange Love

Music: "Chorus of slave the girls" (A. Borodin), "Jesus, Joy of Man's desiring" (J. S. Bach), "Anvil Chorus" (G. Verdi), "Lacrimosa (Requiem)" (W.A Mozart)

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