



© Herman Sorgeloos

## DOLORES BOUCKAERT & CHARLOTTE VANDEN EYNDE DECEPTIVE BODIES

Actress/visual artist Dolores Bouckaert and dancer/choreographer Charlotte Vanden Eynde are both fascinated by the body. In *Deceptive Bodies* they focus on the representation of the theatrical body and the (mis)perception of it.

Throughout history, the female body has been especially subjected to a controlled gaze. Vanden Eynde and Bouckaert immersed themselves in the phenomenon of hysteria, focussing in particular on how hysterics turned into actresses of their own illness at the end of the 19th century. The inexplicable physical symptoms of these women were often highly aesthetic and theatrical. In the name of scientific research their bodies became a form of art in front of an audience or a camera. But how sincere was the language of their bodies? And to what extent were the doctors manipulating the patients, and vice versa?

Bouckaert and Vanden Eynde transpose the issue of veracity and manipulation to the context of theatre. What happens to us when we are on stage? What transformation takes place there? How deceptive is the theatrical body we show? How 'real' can the body be, always wavering as it is between surrender and control, both subject to and guilty of diverse forms of manipulation and interpretation?

In *Deceptive Bodies* Vanden Eynde and Bouckaert closely observe their own and each other's body. In an accumulation of physical manipulations and transformations, a highly personal iconography is being displayed. Exposing themselves in a series of still poses, they unmask stereotypical body images from the past and the present. *Deceptive Bodies* is an intimate duet, powerfully dramatic and visual.

*Deceptive Bodies* is also presented in a museum version. Without stage and lighting, the separate scenes are performed in specific spots of the museum, in dialogue with the architecture and the exhibited art works. The public is being taken on an intimate trip across the museum, watching the theater scenes turn into visual installations.



© Rik Vannevel

'In *Deceptive Bodies* the bold duo investigates the perception of the body. Like two living dolls they examine each other, test each others physical limits and ride each other like little parade horses on wooden pallets. What seems to be an innocent game, soon becomes a manipulative and sensual power duel. Vanden Eynde and Bouckaert try to get through to each others real core, but watching them in their revealing dresses, it makes you realize that the scene is never neutral, but always the result of a projection. (...) With their sober approach Vanden Eynde and Bouckaert criticize touchingly the pressure of the gaze on women. The theatricality of their intimate poses seems to be not only a theatrical law, but a law of our society in which we all - willy-nilly - play a role.'

\*\*\* De Standaard (Charlotte De Somviele)

**I FELT A CLEAVING IN MY MIND-  
AS IF MY BRAIN HAD SPLIT-  
I TRIED TO MATCH IT-SEAM BY SEAM-  
BUT COULD NOT MAKE IT FIT.**

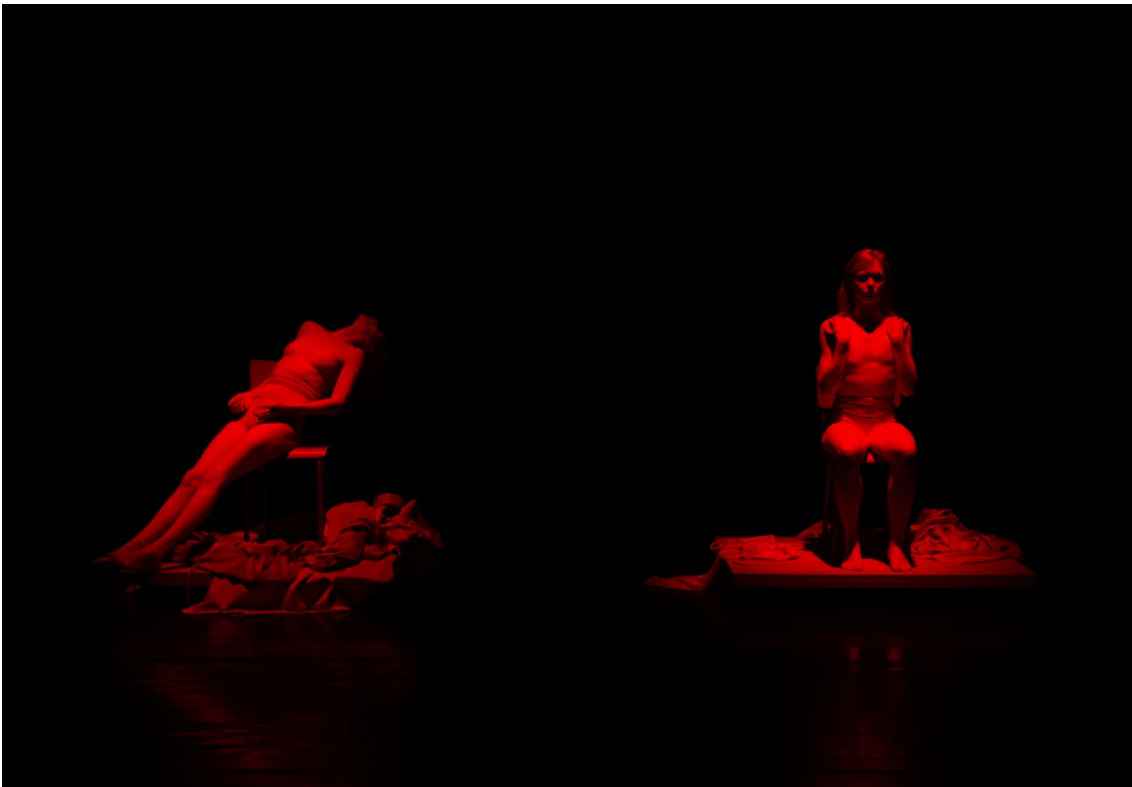
EMILY DICKINSON

**Charlotte:** 'Corporality always forms the basis of movement in my work, the singularity of my own body being the main object of research. I keep on looking at it from all sides and I let it be transformed by movement over and over again, without ever fully getting a hold on it. The body's singularity plays an important role in Dolores's work too, although in a very different way. She transforms her body by means of theatrical interventions, both formal and dramatic, and thereby tries to transcend precisely the reality of her body. This is certainly one of the reasons why we are so fascinated by each other's work and way of performing. We would love to be like the other for a moment.'

**Dolores:** 'I see my work as one big exploration into human communication. A quest for which I assume various roles and make use of different media that guide and influence one another. I look at others, I look at myself, I let others look at themselves or I ask them to look at me. This generally happens in the context of a duo and I like the extreme intimacy that this implies. You can never get very far ...

I think I understand Charlotte like I understand animals: without words. She is able to address her most profane fears, the fragility within herself, and bring it to the surface and turn it into a particularly physical statement which for me is about survival. It is there, in that breeding ground, that I find myself.'





# DOES THE BODY LIE?

by Michael Bellon in AGENDA/Brussel Deze Week, March 2014

Between International Women's Day and Equal Pay Day, the Kaaitheater is presenting the second edition of Wowmen! a festival that looks at gender, society, and art via an exhibition, films, debates, research, and performance. One of the performances is entitled

## **Deceptive Bodies.**

In *Deceptive Bodies*, the choreographer Charlotte Vanden Eynde investigates to what extent a body is sincere or deceptive in the way it behaves or "communicates" with another person. She does so in cooperation with the actress Dolores Bouckaert.

**Charlotte Vanden Eynde:** "Dolores comes from the theatre, I come from dance. I asked her to work with me because of my fascination with her theatricality and the way she stands on a stage. That theatricality was something I myself had never sought in the past. I was more concerned to strip the body onstage of theatricality, in order to present it entirely naked – as "itself" – and to communicate with the body instead of with the face and all sorts of disguises. This time I wanted a confrontation with someone who works in a different way. There was a similarity between Dolores and myself that I find difficult to explain, but that has to do with the fact that she exposes a substantial part of herself."

## **The two of you drew inspiration from the phenomenon of female hysteria, which used to be seen as a mental illness.**

**Charlotte Vanden Eynde:** As we talked and read, we came across that subject, because theatricality plays a role in it too. What are called hysterical moods were presented before an audience by doctors in the nineteenth century, photographed, and described in books in an almost artistic way. For a long time, people looked for a purely physical cause – as with epilepsy – but eventually they recognised the psychological background of the physical phenomena, which made the victims manipulable. Because they were being watched, women even encouraged and imitated each other. They were actually looking for attention, but went so far that sometimes genuine paralysis occurred. The question raised by that phenomenon of hysteria – whether what the body does is genuine or not, whether it says something about the person in question or is artificial and acted – corresponded with what Dolores and I wanted to investigate.

**So how did you finally come up with a performance?**

**Vanden Eynde:** We started from scratch. We asked each other to sit on a chair and do something, and then asked ourselves what it was, what it said about ourselves, and whether and what we wanted to communicate with it. We looked at each other and at ourselves. We tried to completely switch off our self-awareness or, on the contrary, not at all – which, of course, is almost impossible. Our research turned into an investigation of what is “genuine” in theatre and dance. Is it possible to communicate honestly? Is it possible to feel something intensely again and again?

**What does the result look like on stage?**

**Vanden Eynde:** It has become a very physical performance. It was our intention to do something that was genuinely by both of us, in which our two worlds met up, in a quite pure, minimal way. Dolores and I do have two different “lines” in the show. You can still see who is who, but we have also learned a lot from each other and frequently move unexpectedly into each other’s territory.



© Rik Vannevel

# BIOGRAPHY

## DOLORES BOUCKAERT

°1976, lives and works in Ghent.

Director, author, visual artist, actress and performer Dolores Bouckaert graduated in 2000 as visual artist and actor, and was invited as an actor by Victoria (Campo). She performed in *Kung Fu* (Felix Van Groeningen, Pol Heyvaert), *Maria-Dolores* (Wayn Traub), *Gij zult gezond worden* (Hans Bryssinck). But soon she started her own projects for theater, film, installations and literature. In recent years she often works in duo with other artists (with Elke Boon, Bernard Van Eeghem, Griet Dobbels, Hans Bryssinck and Charlotte Vanden Eynde). Those duo projects were each time connected with solo projects.

A constant in her work is her pursuit of an attempt to intimacy. Being together, but also revolting against it. How our body gives shape to all of those feelings. She registers, shows images as if they temporarily have been charged. Her own body appears to be her main instrument and her research project. Bouckaert's project have repeatedly been presented in Belgium and abroad.

In 2013, together with Griet Dobbels, she published *Mind the Gap*, an artist book for Museum Dhondt Dhaenens (Deurle). Also a more recent solo exhibition *Private Public Life* (in CC Hasselt and Gallery Jan Dhaese) was followed by a publication. Dolores started a more profound research on the meaning and the language of the physical, a very complex context. She created together with Charlotte Vanden Eynde the performance *Deceptive Bodies* and is preparing her film debut *Sleeping Muzes*, an experimental film in which she'll combine fiction and documentary and will treat her performances, dance performances and plastic art.

Dolores received an artist grant and had a three months stay at the Cité Internationale des Arts (Paris), resulting in the exhibition *Studio 8113, La Reine Elizabeth* (De Witte Muur, Sphinx (Ghent)). In this exhibition she shows a series of works (videos, photos and drawings), unveiling a first impression of her stay. In 2017 she'll have a solo show in Gallery Jan Dhaese and the performance *Wings of Desire* at the Cité Internationale des Arts (Paris).

Dolores Bouckaert is artist in residence (2016-2020) at Vrijstaat O/De Werf, (Ostend/Bruges). In the frame of this collaboration she'll realize and curate several projects.

In 2017 *Galop*, her first dance solo, will premiere, in collaboration with Marc Vanrunxt.

# BIOGRAPHY

## CHARLOTTE VANDEN EYNDE

°1975, lives and works in Ghent.

Charlotte Vanden Eynde is a dancer and choreographer. In 1999, she graduated from P.A.R.T.S. (Brussels), the international school for contemporary dance headed by Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker. Since 1997 she has been creating highly personal choreographies and performances, focusing on the body with a strong sculptural and imaginative sensibility.

Her work initially revolved around vulnerability, intimacy and femininity, with the choreographies *Benenbreken* (1997), *Zij Ogen* (1998) and *Vrouwenvouwen* (1999). In the duo *Lijfstof* (2000, with Ugo Dehaes), she explored the body as object/matter, coming close to the visual arts. The sculptural stillness of her work evolved even further in the duo *MAP ME* (2003, SACD Dance Creation Award), video images being projected on the body, turning the body literally into a canvas.

She returned to pure movement in *Beginnings/Endings* (2005), a group piece for six dancers, and pursued this development in the dance solo's *I'm Sorry It's (Not) A Story* (2009) and *Shapeless* (2011), in a search for freedom and personal expression within the formality of dance. Various improvisations on location contributed to this process: a dance in a living room (Salon Bombardon 2011), a duet with pianist Christian Mendoza on the beach of Ostend (Dansand! 2012 / TAZ 2013) and an improvisation with bass player Nicolas Rombouts (KultuurKaffee / M-Museum, 2015).

Her last piece *Deceptive Bodies* (2014, with Dolores Bouckaert) explores the deceptiveness of the theatrical body, inspired by the iconography of hysteria, and returns to the sculptural and still quality of her earlier works. This piece also exists in a museum version, integrated in the exhibition spaces (MDD / Mu.ZEE, TAZ 2015).

Her work has been shown in Belgium and abroad, from the Kunstenfestivaldesarts in Brussels to the DTW in New York.

Between 2004-2010 she made several video installations (Beursschouwburg, MDD, Watou), always starting from the expressive possibilities of the body.

Besides her own work as a choreographer, Charlotte Vanden Eynde works in dance, theatre and film as a dancer and actress. She has collaborated several times with theatre makers Jan Decorte (2001-2003) and De Roovers (2010-2012) and danced in choreographies by Marc Vanrunxt (*Most Recent*, 2002) and Ugo Dehaes (*DMNT*, 2015). Her title role in the film *Meisje* (2002) by Dorothee van den Berghe was highly acclaimed (Best Actress Award, Amiens 2002).

As a movement coach/dramaturge she gives advice to (young) artists, and she conducts workshops focusing on authentic movement and the sculptural qualities of the body.



# CREDITS

**Concept & performance:** Charlotte Vanden Eynde & Dolores Bouckaert **Costumes:** An Breugelmans **Assistance costumes:** Eefje Wijnings **Lighting:** Marc Dewit  
**Realization set design:** Lander Thys **Outside-eye:** Maya Wilsens **Advice:** Marc Vanrunxt **Production:** Margarita Production / Hiros **Co-production:** Kaaitheater, BUDA **In collaboration with:** CAMPO, Vooruit, wpZimmer, STUK **Thanks to:** Museum dr. Guislain **With the support of:** Vlaamse Overheid **Music:** 'Lamento della ninfa' Monteverdi / Roberta Mameli & La Venexiana (arr. for jazz ensemble)

**Duration:** 70'

**Teaser:** <https://vimeo.com/89292995>

**Captation:** <https://vimeo.com/118335166> (pw= unlock)

# ON TOUR

12 > 14.03.2014	Kaaistudio's, Brussels (BE) - <b>Première</b> -
20 > 21.03.2014	CAMPO, Ghent (BE)
28.03.2014	Kunstencentrum België, Hasselt (BE)
03.04.2014	CC Berchem, Berchem (BE)
16.10.2014	STUK, Leuven (BE)
11.01.2015	MDD, Deurle (BE) - <b>Museum Version</b> -
18.04.2015	KC De Werf, Bruges (BE)
03 > 08.08.2015	Theater aan zee, Ostend (BE) - <b>Museum Version</b> -
15.10.2015	CC Strombeek, Strombeek-Bever (BE)
21 > 22.05.2016	SPRING Festival, Utrecht (NL)
24 > 25.11.2016	Zot Geweld / Dwaze Maagd, Mechelen (BE) - <b>Museum Version</b> -
08.12.2016	Zot Geweld / Dwaze Maagd, Mechelen (BE) - <b>Museum Version</b> - - <b>Dance and the museum: Stretching the boundaries</b> -

# CONTACT

**Co-ordinator:** Helga Baert, helga @ hiros.be  
**Business support:** Samn Loncke, sam @ hiros.be  
**Production:** Karen Verlinden, karen @ hiros.be  
**Communication:** Brecht Wille, brecht @ hiros.be

Hiros

Slachthuislaan 29 Boulevard de l'Abattoir - 1000 Bruxelles (BE)

+32 2 410 63 33 - [contact@hiros.be](mailto:contact@hiros.be) - [www.hiros.be](http://www.hiros.be)

Hiros tva. BE0862 325 347 - Mokum tva. BE0895 726 209

**WWW · HIROS · BE**

Hiros is supported by the Flemish Community