

Contemporary Dance Series

"SOJIKU – Subjective take on Japanese phenomena and culture"

Series The four-part contemporary dance series titled "SOJIKU – Subjective take on Japanese phenomena and culture" by freelance choreographer Niina Airaksinen from Turku Finland explores Japanese phenomena, aesthetics and mentality through dance. Rather than being an authentic copy of the foreign world, the SOJIKU-series is a subjective collage of impressions gathered by an outsider. The series also includes lectures on Japanese culture: scents, architecture, tea, kimonos and the Japanese woman.

"SOJIKU – Subjective take on Japanese phenomena and culture"

I 2009 Solo work | Mokugo – Loaded Silence | Jyväskylä City Theatre, "Time of Dance" –festival

II 2010 Group work | Sansui – Flowing Stone | Manilla Theatre, Turku | March 11th

III 2010 Dance for camera | Video work and photography series, in Japan

IV 2011 Turku 2011 European Capital of Culture –program:

A collaborative evening together with a return visit performance from Japan: Finnish and Japanese performers presenting their visions of each other

Synopsis Strong contrasts and the importance of details are some of the themes in Niina Airaksinen's dance piece. The movement binds together the accurate precision of high-technology, the fierce grounded power of samurais, the delicate sensuality of geishas. The music combines traditional Japanese music, European symphonic tones and synthetic sounds. The lights are clear and geometric. The costumes are abstract versions of traditional Japanese costume.

Part II: "Sansui – Flowing Stone"

The term 'Sansui', which means scenery or garden, is formed of the words mountain and water. These basic elements have a contrasting nature – a heavy, static mass versus a flowing elasticity. They complement each other and create a dynamic harmony. This strong contrast is a central theme of Japanese culture. In aesthetics it is highlighted at one extreme by a stark minimalism, a clarity of form and geometry, and at the other extreme, by elaborate decorative details and a surge of brilliant colours. In architecture and street culture, extreme phenomena break the enforced norms. In their way of living the Japanese display a sensitive decorum but also a bold, defiant strength.

Unlike us 'children of the light' in the West, the Japanese love the soft aesthetics of the dim, where the object may be defined in a more beautiful and touching manner than under the the full blast of an all-exposing, informative light. What then exists in the borderline between light and shade? Where does the border run? And if we move to side of shade, how far do you have to move the object from the cascading light, before it is completely swallowed by darkness?

Finland – Japan

Despite geographical distance between Japan and Finland, there are striking similarities between our cultures. There is a kindred spirit; a common sense of wistfulness and a longing for the peace and harmony of nature. The cultures are united by a strong work ethic and a penchant for technology. The simultaneous familiarity and foreignness is compelling. Niina Airaksinen examines the distinguishing features of Japanese culture from the outsider's perspective. The Sansui work is a collage that has emerged through the subjective filter of Airaksinen's interpretation, rather than a faithful reproduction of the original.

Work group

Choreography, photos & graphic design, production, web-design

Niina Airaksinen

Mentors Jouni Elomaa (japanologist), Riitta Salastie (architect)

Dance Jonna Aaltonen, Maria Nurmela, Elsa Heikkilä

Lights Antti Helminen

Music Joona Lukala

Costumes Marjo Haapasalo

Make-up Kirre Koivunen

Informing, marketing

Kirre Koivunen, Laura Taberman / Cultural Youth Centre

Supporters Turku2011 Foundation, Finnish Cultural Foundation,

Regional Dance Center of Western Finland, Kone Foundation / Saari Residence,

South-West Finland Culture Fund, The Sun Ballet

Performances of Sansui at **Manilla Theater:**

Aurinkobaletti, Itäinen Rantakatu 64, Turku, Finland

Thu March 11th 2010 at 7 pm (premiere)

Sat March 13th at 4 pm

Fri March 19th at 7 pm

Sat March 20th at 4 pm

Sun March 21st at 4 pm

Wed March 24th at 7 pm

Duration: 50 min

Tickets: 15 / 10 €

Regional Dance Centre of Western Finland | tel: +358 2 231 4212 | info@l-tanssi.fi

Packages: 42 / 30 € | performance, lecture, suhsi, champagne, tee, yokan-sweets and origami

Lectures on Japanese themes one hour before the performances: 8 / 6 €

13.3. **Japanese Scents:** Sami Hilvo, Managing Director, Lisn, Helsinki

19.3. **Aesthetics of Japanese Architecture:** Riitta Salastie, Architect (SAFA), PhD Engineering

20.3. **Chadō – The Way of Tea:** Jouni Elomaa, Lecturer (MA), University of Stockholm, accredited Chadō-instructor

21.3. **Kimono:** Silja Keva, designer, Master of Science (Politics), Centre for East Asian Studies at the University of Turku (CEAS)

24.3. **Japanese Woman:** Annamari Konttinen, Sociologist (Mphil), Centre for East Asia Studies at the University of Turku (CEAS)

Critics of the first part of the SOJIKU-series “Mokugo – Loaded silence”

Helsinki Times / Jussi Tossavainen:

The compact and intense performance is attributable to the choreography.

There are no superfluous moments, instead everything looks carefully thought out and polished, which is a rarity in itself. Antti Helminen’s lights are stunning.

Liikekieli.com / Maija-Liisa Westman:

Her depth of perception was apparent in the Loaded Silence, and Airaksinen’s developed choreography made a lasting impression on the audience.

Information and contact:

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Facebook: SOJIKU