

thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



Photo: Aëla Labbé

Dear Bára,

by Megan Bridge

On a recent trip to Copenhagen I had the great fortune to witness Brussels-based, Iceland-born choreographer Bára Sigfúsdóttir's solo work, *The Lover—Adaptation on Location*. It was one of the best things I have seen in a long, long time. My response poured out in the form of a love letter.

Dear Bára,

It's been several weeks since we met, and still I can't stop thinking of you.

I see you in my mind, lying on your side, a lock of hair draped over your face. You are so still, just a few feet from me. Your patient, insistent breath moves the lock of hair, ever-so-slightly. You give this moment your full attention. Likely unplanned, it holds as much weight as anything in your dance. You make room for this moment. Your attention makes me make room for it. I feel held by your attention. I am transfixed by the beauty of your breath. [My mind turns and faces my breath.](#)

I see you in my mind, crossing the open space of the upstairs atrium at [Dansehallerne](#), maybe like a ship might cross the seas between us. Copenhagen. Philadelphia. Reykjavík. Brussels. Again, patient. You are walking slowly, your arms stretched overhead like beacons, like thick antennae, like eyes on stalks. Or like sails that catch the air of the room, catch the wonder of the watching eyes around you.

I see you in my mind, your back rounded as you crawl slowly. With each shift in any direction you articulate your spine, a movement which sequences through your body with such precision: a reticulate pattern emerges with finer and finer detail on each repetition. And there is a lot of repetition.

I experience your dance as a series of deeply investigated states—collections of material that you move through, staying with one until it has been examined from every possible angle, like turning a faceted gem, and sometimes smashing it open to reveal a hidden treasure inside. Some collections of movement are messy piles, ecstatic in their not-knowing; others are reserved. There is plenty of stillness. Each state is as important, as fully examined and embodied, as the others. Yours is a deeply thinking body, your movement—a form of thought. The choreography is led by the gradual, continuous asking of the question, “What can a body do? And now? And now?” Your dance invites me to meet it from wherever I am: and I am sleepy. Which feels delicious. My perception of your dance is enhanced by my dropping out, and back in again. Each time, the questions are renewed: What if every moment is inhabited to its full potential of presence, of attention? What is the quality, the tone-feeling, of inhabiting the material of my own body? And now? And now?

You are welcoming. The choreographic materials of your dance are intimacy, generosity, hospitality. You riff on the quality of touch, the energy in fingertips, and the absolute singing, shouting, vibrating sense of attention in each cell. Each cell—standing at attention.

[Inviting being seen.](#)

I see you. You are on your knees. You see us; you are present, patient, welcoming. Your mouth slowly opens. I'm like...ohhhhhhhh whaaaaaaat yeesssssss thiiiiisssssssss!!!! Slowly. Your tongue emerges from your mouth (this is happening this is happening), your tongue leads your face into a gently unfolding choreography that involves your eyes, your gaze, then leads your body: you pitch forward onto hands and knees.

Bára. Lover. I am smitten. I acknowledge that our affair is entirely one-sided. But I do hope we can see each other again.

With gratitude,

Megan

Bára Sigfúsdóttir, *The Lover—Adaptation on Location*, [Ice Hot Nordic Dance Platform](#), Copenhagen, Denmark, December 3, 2016.

By Megan Bridge
December 20, 2016