

RENAE SHADLER, ROLAND WALTER
TEXT 41



RENAE SHADLER
(CHOREOGRAFIE)



ROLAND WALTER

What do you think about different bodies?

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Choreographer and dancer Renae Shadler and dancer Roland Walter talked after the premiere of their new dance duet SKIN.

Renae: What first sparked your interest in dance?

Roland: I was fascinated by what you can do with your body. You can express things that you can't say with words.

Renae: What is your condition and how do you use it in dancing?

Roland: When I was born, there was a lack of oxygen. That was the cause of my spastic paralysis. It means I can move everything, but uncontrollably. This provides a beautiful complement to other bodies on stage.

What do you think about different bodies?

Renae: My work is rooted in post-humanist discourse and advocates for the diversity of human and non-human bodies.

This can be through work with neurodiverse human bodies or in terms of “more-than-human”¹ bodies, as in my solo RESTORE. Here I explored how I could move with the dormant volcano Snæfellsjökull as a dance partner.

For SKIN, I wanted to create a world with you where we were both individuals and simultaneously supporting each other as two interdependent bodies, neither of us considered “more or less capable.”

In my choreographies I often talk about 'world-making', which means creating imaginative spaces on stage where you can explore the issues of the real world through a creative distance.

I see this process as contributing to a more layered and empathetic society.

Roland: I am grateful for the experience with you in SKIN, although it often pushed me to my limits.

What do you think about the connection between people and the environment?

Renae: They are inextricably linked. I grew up in Australia with a strong Indigenous influence and was taught from a young age “we are land and land is us”². For me, this is crucial to understanding the changes this world is going through and our position as humans in this world.

Roland: Yes. As a dancer, I want people to understand that being perfect is not what matters. I think dance represents the versatility of the world.

What do you, dear reader, think about different bodies? Please let us know.

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¹ Erin Manning, 'Always More Than One: Individuation's Dance', Duke University Press, 2013.

² Peggy Rockman, a Warlpiri-speaking Indigenous artist from Lajamanu, Australia's Western Desert region, in conversation with Renae Shadler in Western Australia, 1996.