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INTERVIEWS (EN/TEXTS/INTERVIEWS/N)

BIBI HA BIBI: AFTER A SKYPE CONVERSATION WITH HENRIQUE FURTADO

Portuguese dancer, performer and choreographer Henrique Furtado lives and works between Portugal and France. Engineer in Energy and Environment, he followed his artistic training in several French institutions (INSA Lyon, Extensions programme in Toulouse in 2012-2014, Prototype II – Royaumont abbey). After graduating in June 2014, he stayed in France for some years, working as a performer.

He recently did a collaboration with Aloun Marchal, "Bibi ha bibi". which is mainly a work in the intersection of dance and voice. "Bibi ha bibi" is a duet of throat vocal practices (specially Inuit chants), build in top of games that develop over time. It makes us think of masculine rituals but Furtado states that vocal and physical games are ambiguous enough to escape masculinity clichets and mingle references from childhood games, playfulness, competition, friendship among men, tenderness among men.

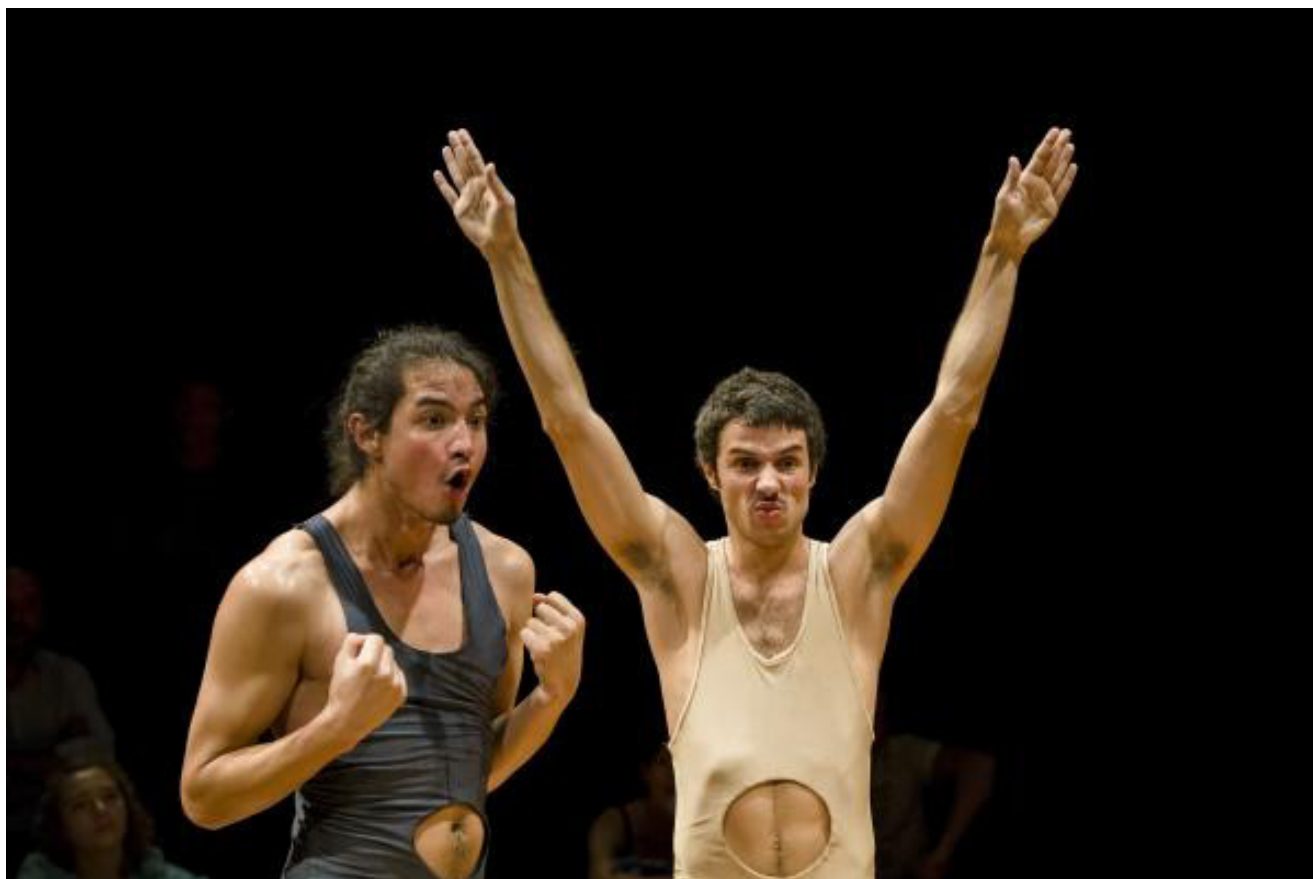
The project started after Furtado and Marchal did a workshop together with an Inuit singer (Marie Pascal Dubé), when they were part of a research group with choreographers and composers that were researching the vocal presence in dance (this workshop was part of the research). Later, when both artists decided to work together, the Inuit practices showed up in studio, among other things that they had to peel off and to develop.

In the beginning of the process, Furtado and Marchal were faithful to the general principles of Inuit chants: mimetic qualities, repetition, the possibility to develop something new departing from looped events. After, they decided to find strategies to reinvent the protocols of work, to invent new games and ways of working. For instance, they looked for sources of inspiration in minimalist music, belly dance, wrestling, and they

decided to work with other sources of vocal/throat music besides the Inuit chants (for instance, Mongolian chants). The only thing they tried to keep from beginning to the end of piece is a face-to-face encounter (there is a singular moment where they split in space but it is an exception in the piece).

Masculinity become evident after a while, specially because they were two men dancing together on stage. They couldn't ignore this fact. The most interesting aspect of this coincidence, according to Furtado, is that Inuit chants were traditionally sang by women. But the work also strives for other dimensions. Often, games are really just games, or put forward other messages. In some moments, humour is self-evident or sometimes both dancers hug each other and touch. One can say there are many types of masculinity or that it develops through out the piece. To Henrique Furtado this is a strong key of the piece - the impossibility to tell "who" they are or "what" are they representing on stage.

"Originally, Inuit chants don't implicate the body physically, the work is mainly vocal. 'Bibi ha bibi' explores a physical dimension of these chants and pays attention to its dramatical and humorist qualities. Masculinity came right after these qualities", said to us Furtado in a interview just before presenting "Bibi ha Bibi" at Festival Temps D'Images in Lisbon in October 2017. If one could say that the appropriation of Inuit cultural tradition can be a delicate aspect to the work, Furtado also told us that spectators tend to link the aesthetics of physical games and vocal sounds to the animal world, and that they point out resemblances with birds, dinosaurs, or even aliens. This element - the animality - is perhaps important to be aware, other than to be blocked with masculine clichets and cultural appropriation. "Bibi ha bibi" was recently presented at CDC Toulouse in the beginning of February.



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