

# Here and elsewhere, dance as an answer to the obstacles of reality

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[Stages](#) Karine Ponties presents “Le Sourire des égarés” at festival Pays de Danses. Four explorers outplay their inadequacy to the world. Critique.

The paths etched by a festival program are strange, sometimes. On Thursday and Friday evening, Théâtre de Liège regulars and Pays de Danses festival-goers mingled to discover, one after the other, Karine Ponties’s new piece – a performance supported by Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles – and "De-Apart-Hate" by South African choreographer and dancer Mamela Nyamza. Hard to do more diverse. And yet... If theoretically disconcerting, the evening stirred echoes.

At work, now for a long time, on the perpetual metamorphosis of bodies, Karine Ponties has created over 40 pieces with her company Dame de Pic. [Solo "Hero%"](#) (2015) already illustrated the postulate on which the choreographer bases this piece: *"We must be out of balance to understand the world."*



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### **A matrix-like space**

Are the beings that she brings on stage in "Le Sourire des égarés" made of flesh or straw, are they fearless warriors or castaways without landmarks? There are four of them, they appear out of nowhere, they crawl, slide, bend. A small community evolves in this matrix-like place, on this stone- and moss-colored ground, between wall punctuated by oblong shapes, half cocoons, half stained glass. We follow the apparently random paths of one of them, the obsessive zigzags of another, the worried immobility of a third, whose face is hidden under a mask... All of this in a sound (David Monceau) and visual (Wilfrid Roche Maëstroni and Marie Gourdain's set, Guillaume Toussaint Fromentin's lighting design) universe that, somehow, is not unlike Josef Nadj's aesthetics.

With their contortions, their absurd manipulations, their impossible figures, their improbable weight distributions, the quatuor (Ares D'Angelo, Eric Domeneghetty, Florencia Demestri, Vilma Pitrinaite) question with the choreographer the sometimes convoluted ways in which we outplay our inadequacy to the world. These four "Wanderers" claim ownership over the unbalance, that could have constricted them, to answer to chaos. And what is the problem if meaning escapes them, maybe it is even better if meanings clash, if aliveness rubs against artifice, if reason capitulates at times; it's the alive that wins, the vibrant, the messy, the unresolved that Karine Ponties is not done reconciling us with, redefining, with each piece, the language of a body conscious of its flaws and full of humor.