

Assessment of the Master's Thesis

Author of thesis: Ekaterina Fonina

Title of thesis: OPAQUE MOTION:

DANCE MOVEMENT AND OPTICAL UNCONSCIOUS

Assessment of the primary advisor Assessment of the opponent Author of the assessment
(first name, last name, workplace):

Tereza Stejskalová, KF FAMU

Evaluation of the content and final form of the thesis (A/excellent – B/very good – C/ good – D/good with objections – E/satisfactory – F/unsatisfactory – not recommended for defence)

Suitability of the selected objective and work approach C.

Relative completeness of the literature used for the selected topic B

Ability to critically evaluate and use professional literature B

Logicity of the thesis structure, connection of its chapters B

Language and stylistic level of the thesis B

Compliance with citation norms (should the text repeatedly contain adopted passages without citing the source, the work cannot be recommended for defence) B

Sufficient extent of image attachments, justifiability and suitability of attachments, graphic layout B

Originality of the thesis, contribution to the development of the field of study B

Overall evaluation of the thesis. B/C

The thesis is an attempt to conceptualize contemporary dance via the notion of opacity and black box, the latter term usually associated with technology. The main argument of the text is that dance is born within a space that is ultimately opaque and unknowable and that this is the basis that contemporary dance is based on. The „black box“ of movement/dance is explored via various theories and perspectives: psychoanalysis, psychology, theories about sleep, history of photography, neuroscience, history of depictions of the human body through different devices, and the history of modern dance and its ways of working with the body. The scope of the author's reading list is impressive and the ambition of the thesis is as well. Yet, I have to admit that I have often lost myself in the text. The long sections about sleep or the history of modern dance are only loosely related to the central „research topic.“ I often had a feeling that the argument of the thesis gets lost in the long descriptions of various cultural developments and phenomena. For what is the black box of dance? Where can it be located? Does it reside in the mind? In the unconscious? Is it „the depth and unpredictability of the thinking and acting processes“ (pg.16)? Is it the interaction of the various external stimuli within the mind (pg. 18)? Does it then reside in the mind or the body or their relation/interaction (pg.32)? How is it related to involuntary movements like tics and various neurological conditions? It is great how many perspectives are employed in the thesis. Yet, it remains unclear how concretely they are connected, how they overlap, etc. The author's research regarding the topic of movement and dance is impressive and something to applaud but in my opinion, the thesis lacks focus. The central concept of the thesis remains quite opaque and a black box in itself.

Question for defense:

Can you elaborate on your use of Benjamin's optical unconscious with regards to the „black box“ of movement? It was not clear to me.