

# The Third Space



**Space and Spatiality in the work  
of Krisztina de Châtel**

09.09.2018 — 14.10.2018



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Welcome to the second edition of the Dutch Dance Festival dansMuseum hosted at Bureau Europa platform for architecture and design, and welcome to The Third Space, a new exhibition exploring space and spatiality in the work of the grand dame of Dutch modern dance Krisztina de Châtel.

For over forty years de Châtel has been a pioneer in the field, creating innovative multidisciplinary works at the intersection of architecture and dance. We are proud to present to you a selection of these historic works, off stage, outside of the theater, through the lens of spatial theory. In this exhibition, we invite you to think about these iconic works once again, but from a new perspective. We are also proud to present the debut of a new installation by de Châtel, which she has created especially for this exhibition.


The Dutch Dance Festival dansmuseum began in 2017 with the goal of creating a space where Dutch dance heritage could be preserved and presented, and could serve as a source to inspire innovation for both artist and public alike. For five weeks, The Third Space, with its series of additional events and talks, hopes to inspire you with new ways to think about dance, space and the body. So put your inhibitions aside and follow the 'beginner's guide to Thirdspace'. Think, move and interact with the works, allowing yourself to experience different ways of seeing, letting space open in your mind.

We hope you enjoy,

Ronald Wintjens  
Director Dutch Dance Festival



Saskia van Stein  
Director Bureau Europa



# The Third Space

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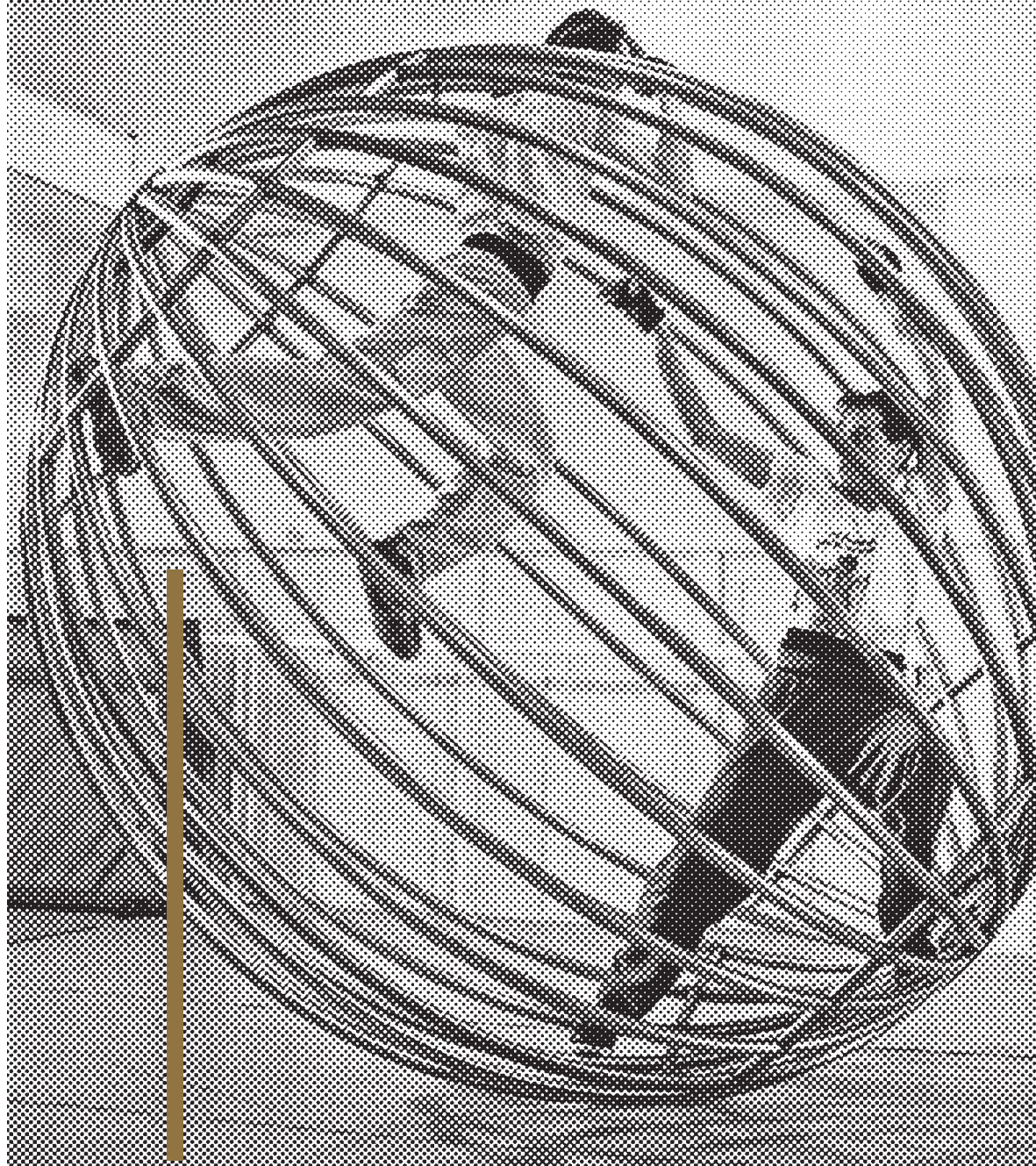
## *Space and Spatiality in the work of Krisztina de Châtel*

Hungarian-born choreographer Krisztina de Châtel has long been recognised for her work exploring the interrelationship between space and the body. As a result, the spaces where her dances take place are often as significant as the dances themselves. By reconsidering seven of her most emblematic works through the lens of spatial theory, specifically the work of postmodern geographer Edward Soja, *The Third Space* aims to provide new insights into de Châtel's unique artistic vision and choreographic oeuvre. With the addition of a new installation by de Châtel, created especially for this exhibition, *The Third Space* also aims to inspire new ways of thinking about the relationship between space and the body by proposing an alternative framework for its consideration.

*The Third Space* is initiated by the Dutch Dance Festival dansMuseum in collaboration with Bureau Europa platform for architecture and design, Stichting De Châtel sur place, Maastricht University Masters' programme Arts and Heritage, and the Maastricht Centre for Arts and Culture, Conservation and Heritage (MACCH).



Photo: Ben van Duin, *Concave*



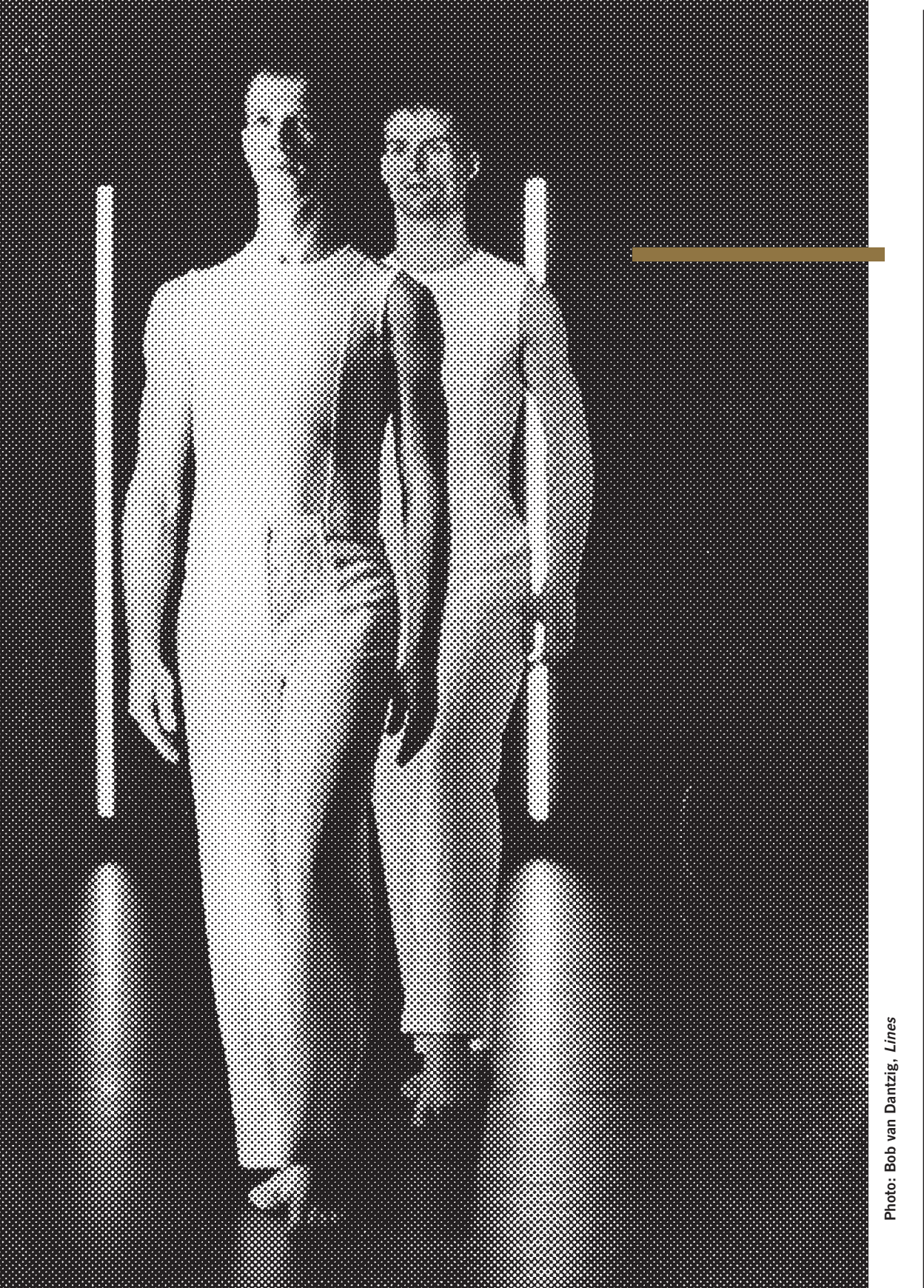


Photo: Bob van Dantzig, *Lines*

# Krisztina de Châtel

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Photo: Rineke Dijkstra

With over seventy choreographies to her name, Krisztina de Châtel has undoubtedly made a significant contribution to dance in the Netherlands, solidifying her place within the canon of Dutch dance. She began her career as a student of Kurt Jooss at the Folkwang Hochschule in Essen, and later studied with Koert Stuyf and Ellen Edinoff at the Foundation for Contemporary Dance in Amsterdam. Her first choreography, *Voltage Control*, premiered in 1977, and one year later her eponymous dance company, Dansgroep Krisztina de Châtel, was founded.

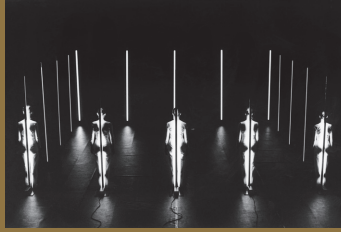
Repetition, pattern, perseverance and strength are words often used to describe her choreographies and they continue to distinguish her work to this day. Throughout her career, she has maintained a curious, adventurous spirit, regularly seeking out projects that challenge existing methodologies and approaches. She has created works for both dancers and non-dancers, for traditional theatre venues, site-specific locations, film and museums. She has been an ardent supporter of talent, and since 2009 regularly awards scholarships to dancers and provides financial and artistic support to innovative choreographic projects through her Imperium Foundation.

De Châtel has been the recipient of the Sonja Gaskell Prize (1987), the Association of Dutch Theatre Directors (VSCD) Choreography Prize (1998), the Dutch Dance Festival Oeuvre Prize (2000), the Critics' Prize from the Association of Dutch Theatre Critics (2002), the Frans Banninck Cocq Medal (2008), and the VSCD *Gouden Zwaan* (2008). In addition, she has been an Artist in Residence at the Academy of Architecture (AvB) in Amsterdam and a guest lecturer at both the AvB and the Gerrit Rietveld Academie (2007-8). In 2001, de Châtel was made a Knight of the Order of the Dutch Lion.

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## (1) Lines

Premiere 15 November 1979,  
Toneelschuur, Haarlem  
Choreography Krisztina de Châtel  
Dance Marijke Huybregts, Toska ten  
Kate, Sjoukje Osinga, Petra Rhijsburger,  
José Way  
Music Philip Glass, *Music with  
Changing Parts*  
Stage design Jan van Munster  
Lighting William Heyltjes  
Costumes Marianne Strategier  
Photography Bob van Dantzig



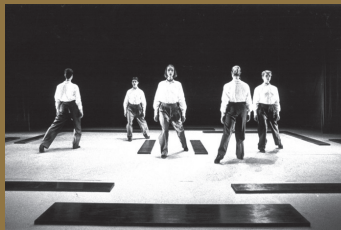
*Lines* was de Châtel's first ensemble work and laid the groundwork for her ongoing exploration of the postmodern relationship between body and space. Though puzzling for audiences at the time ('Beautiful but boring' wrote *de Volkskrant*)<sup>2</sup>, it has since earned admiration as the benchmark of her choreographic oeuvre.

De Châtel collaborated on *Lines* with visual artist Jan van Munster, who created a square of sixteen neon tubes painted almost entirely in black. This painting technique, which van Munster had explored in his earlier works, forced the light to 'explode' through a narrow portion of the tubes, illuminating the square's interior. Inside the square, five dancers dressed in white navigated a web of abstract coordinates, echoing Oscar Schlemmer's concept of *Tänzer Mensch*.

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## (2) Thron

Premiere 26 February 1984, Shaffy  
Theater, Amsterdam  
Choreography Krisztina de Châtel  
Dance Cathy Dekker, Marijke Huybregts,  
Yvonne van Laake, Josje Neuman,  
Lilian Vos  
Music Patricio Wang  
Stage design V A Wölfel  
Lighting Johan Vonk  
Costumes V A Wölfel  
Photography Bob van Dantzig



Now considered a masterpiece of her oeuvre, *Thron* exemplified de Châtel's unrelenting commitment to choreographic minimalism. The performance space was designed by German visual artist VA Wölfel, who created a symmetrical labyrinth of long wooden floor planks, which determined the movement of the five female dancers dressed in men's trousers, shirtsleeves and black shoes.

Challenging in its time, (one critic described the work as 'aesthetic brutality'<sup>3</sup>) *Thron* was restaged in 2017 and has since been overwhelmingly celebrated by both the press and the public. Most recently, the five dancers in this new production have been nominated together for a VSCD Zwaan for the most impressive dance performance of the 2017/18 season.








# A beginner's guide to Thirdspace

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In this exhibition, we propose Edward Soja's concept of Thirdspace as a way to reconsider seven selected works of Krisztina de Châtel. To do that, however, it is first useful to have a better understanding of what Thirdspace is, and to begin to think from a so-called Thirdspace perspective.


In his book *Thirdspace*, Soja writes:



*My objective in Thirdspace can be simply stated. It is to encourage you to think differently about the meanings and significance of space and those related concepts that compose and comprise the inherent spatiality of human life.<sup>1</sup>*

According to Soja, Thirdspace is a conceptual reimagining of space that includes a Firstspace, Secondspace and Thirdspace and requires expanding one's conventional understanding of space and spatiality. What follows is an explanation of each space, as well as practical examples taken from the seven exhibited de Châtel works.

Simply stated, **Firstspace** is objective space. It is an understanding of space that can be mapped, measured and materialised. For example, in de Châtel's choreography *Lines* (1), Firstspace can be understood as the sixteen neon tubes that are arranged in a square.



In *Thron* (2), Firstspace can be understood as the fourteen rectangular panels positioned on the floor. But what about the choreography itself? De Châtel's choreography describes specific patterns in space, and those patterns can be traced and materialised by dancers. Therefore, when thinking from a Thirdspace perspective, De Châtel's choreography might also be understood as an example of Firstspace.

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### (3) Vide

Première 24 januari 1997,  
Toneelschuur, Haarlem  
Choreography Krisztina de Châtel  
Dance Ann Van den Broek,  
Jack Gallagher, Heike Kreutzer,  
Massimo Molinari, Troy-Paris Mundy,  
Natascha Siegertsz  
Music Kevin Volans, *Dancers on a  
Plane: 5th String Quartet*  
Video Henk van Dijk  
Stage design Albert Jan van der Stel  
Lighting Michiel van Blokland  
Costumes Albert Jan van der Stel  
Photography Ben van Duin



*Vide (Empty)* extended de Châtel's relationship between body and space to include cinematic space, and formed the basis for her later explorations of film and other virtual realities (*Lara, Lara and Friends, LinkAge*). The stage design included three video screens designed by Albert Jan van der Stel with projected images shot by cinematographer Henk van Dijk. In the film, the dancers run, twist, jump and turn in a typical Dutch landscape, expanding the audience's perception of theatrical space and the interrelationship between the real and the imaged.

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### (4) Cirklo

Première 22 mei 2008, Sloterpas,  
Amsterdam  
Choreography Krisztina de Châtel  
Dance Daniel Costa, David Essing,  
Corneliu Ganea, Francesca Monti,  
Sita Ostheimer, Joe Stöber, Davide  
Cocchiara, Dorry Aben, Derwisjen  
Oruç Sürücü, Tahsin Sürücü  
Twirler Sabina Hoogendijk  
Music David Dramm  
Musici Anne La Berge, Naomi Sato,  
Pete Saunders, Christiaan Saris, Bart  
de Vrees, Behsat Uvez, Mehmet Uludag  
Lighting Pelle Herfst, Tom Verheijen  
Costumes AZIZ  
Photography Leo van Velzen



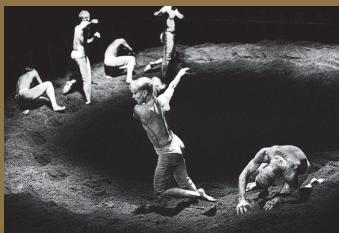
Like many of the works in this exhibition, *Cirklo* (Esperanto for circle) strikes a balance between opposing polarities. Although it features whirling dervishes, a twirling majorette, electronic Sufi music and Turkish poetry, the choreography was actually inspired by the circular location for which it was created, a Spiegelent on the Sloterpas in West Amsterdam.

With music by composer and songwriter David Dramm, *Cirklo* was a thrilling mix of movement and sound that initiated a contemporary dialogue between different cultures through de Châtel's signature use of form and repetition.

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### (5) Föld

Première 24 juni 1985, Amstelkerk,  
Amsterdam  
Choreography Krisztina de Châtel  
Dance Juliette van Ingen, Marijke  
Huybregts, Josje Neuman, Dries van  
der Post, Robert Salden, Lilian Vos  
Music Philip Glass, *Another Look at  
Harmony, Part 4*  
Dirigent Henk van der Meulen  
Musicians Rokus van de Heuvel  
(organ), vocal ensemble Tamam  
Stage design Conrad van de Ven  
Lighting Jilles Jongkind  
Costumes Linda Bogers  
Photography Jaap Pieper



Eschewing the pure aestheticism of her earlier works, *Föld* (Hungarian for earth) was, as critic Isabella Lanz noted, 'much more than a mathematical play of lines'.<sup>4</sup> The visceral choreography for six dancers was intense and dramatic and introduced a new phase in de Châtel's work, placing more emphasis on the intervention of space, visual art and dance.

The performance space was designed by visual artist Conrad van de Ven, and its iconic circle of black earth and peat dust has since become emblematic of de Châtel's early works. Inspired by the cupola of the Amstelkerk in Amsterdam, where the work premiered, Van de Ven's design literally intervened with de Châtel's choreography.

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**Secondspace** is subjective space. It is an understanding of space drawn from personal memory and symbolic association. In de Châtel's choreography *Vide* (3), if Firstspace can be understood as the three video projections of an exterior landscape, then Secondspace might be interpreted as the imagined freedom of the projected landscapes. For some though, the landscapes represent restriction because they are only an illusion. This would not be wrong. As Secondspace is subjective, it is a personal interpretation and does not need to be the same for everyone.

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Now, pushing the limits of our spatial imagination, let us think about *Cirklo* (4), or more specifically David Dramm's music for *Cirklo*. Like choreography, musical compositions map aural patterns, and those patterns are traced and materialised by musicians. Because of that, the compositions are made concrete, they are objective. Therefore, when thinking from a Thirdspace perspective, music too could be understood as an example of Firstspace. In *Cirklo*, Secondspace might then be interpreted as sunset in the Near East, candlelight, cotton robes and incense. But remember, as with all Secondspaces, because each listener will have different associations with the music, each listener may also have a different understanding of the music as Secondspace.

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Finally, **Thirdspace** is both the combination and *extension* of Firstspace and Secondspace. It is a personal interpretation of space that is informed by both your objective and subjective perspectives. As an example, let us consider de Châtel's choreography *Föld* (5). Firstspace is undoubtedly the ring of chest-high earth and peat dust. As we have seen, it could also be understood as the choreography for the five dancers, as well as Phillip Glass' music. Secondspace might then be interpreted as a natural barrier or prison wall, the choreography as a tribe, an army, or the first inhabitants of undiscovered land, the music a driving force or unrelenting master. Now, going one step further, Thirdspace might be interpreted as the space of man's struggle against the natural world, as the rise and fall of a new civilisation, or as the collision of sacred and profane in the never-ending cycle of life and death. As with (and because of) Secondspace, Thirdspace is open to personal interpretation and might be different for everyone.

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## (6) Paletta

Première 22 oktober 1992, LAK Theater, Leiden

Choreography Krisztina de Châtel  
Dance Pieter-Paul Blok, Ann Van den Broek, Cathy Dekker, Gilles den Hartog, Jakob Nissen, Michael Strecker, Paula Vasconcelos  
Music Steve Reich, *Music for Mallet Instruments, Voices and Organ*  
Stage design Peter Vermeulen  
Lighting Peter Romkema  
Costumes Rien Bekkers  
Photography Ben van Duin



*Paletta* continued de Châtel's ongoing exploration of the body in relation to physical obstacles. Often spoken about as a companion piece to *Concave* (7), *Paletta* effectually combined the struggle of spatial restriction with de Châtel's characteristic compositional minimalism. The result was a dramatic choreography that exemplifies her mastery over form and content.

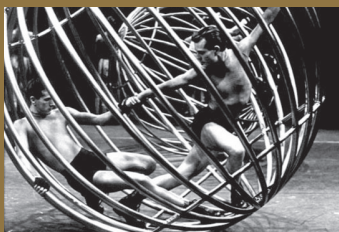
The stage space was designed by visual artist Peter Vermeulen and included three Plexiglas cylinders that both restrict and shelter the three female dancers inside. Their unison movements, which are themselves restricted by the limits of their glass tombs, offer a stark contrast to the four men moving openly though the space with almost military precision.

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## (7) Concave

Première 23 april 1993, Toneelschuur, Haarlem

Choreography Krisztina de Châtel  
Dance Pieter-Paul Blok, Ann Van den Broek, Cathy Dekker, Oerm Matern, Michael Strecker, Paula Vasconcelos  
Music collage of Le Mystère des Voix Bulgares and Japanese percussion  
Stage design Peter Vermeulen  
Lighting Peter Romkema  
Costumes Rien Bekkers  
Photography Ben van Duin



*Concave* was first performed in a double-bill programme with *Paletta* (6), and was literally both its choreographic companion and counterpoint. Whereas in *Paletta* three women were trapped in Plexiglas cylinders while the men moved openly in space, this visually arresting work had three men trapped in metal orbs while the women moved openly in space.

The two large cage-like sculptures in *Concave* were designed by visual artist Peter Vermeulen, and demanded that dancers use their arms and legs to initiate movement. However, despite the strength this required, the movement of the orbs was ultimately random and aimless, offering a stark contrast to the precise movements of the three women moving serenely through the space.

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- 2: Witman, 1998.
  - 3: Lanz, 2001: 25.
  - 4: Lanz, 2001: 40.

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References:  
- Isabella Lanz, 'A tightrope walker between extremes', in: J Algra et al. *Dwars Door Ruimte* (Amsterdam: ITF Books, 2001), pp. 127  
- Bob Witman, 'Krisztina de Châtel', *Volksrant*, 9 January 1998, [www.volksrant.nl](http://www.volksrant.nl).

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As you can see, Thirdspace proposes a radically open way of thinking about space and spatiality. It allows different ways of looking at and interpreting space, and is open to almost infinite variations. According to Soja, all spaces, both real and imagined, can potentially be understood as Thirdspaces. The ability for any given space to be a Thirdspace is determined only by the limits of your critical imagination.

Now try for yourself. Consider the final two selected choreographies *Paletta* (6) and *Concave* (7). Try thinking about them as Firstspace, Secondspace, and finally Thirdspace. And remember, there is no right or wrong, Thirdspace is personal interpretation. Then go back and reconsider the first five works once again before exploring de Châtel's new installation. Try thinking about all of these spaces from a Thirdspace perspective. You might be surprised at what you discover.

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1: Soja, 1996: 1.

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References:  
- Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and other real-and-imagined places* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1996).

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# Bodies that shape space

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## *The work of Krisztina de Châtel*

tekst: Jan Flaming

The philosopher who has influenced Krisztina de Châtel more than any other, whose ideas de Châtel almost *lives*, is of course Nietzsche. If the philosopher with the hammer was a dancing thinker, then the choreographer of the 'paddle wheel' is a thinking dancer. In Nietzsche, movement is brought into thought; for de Châtel, thought is effortlessly absorbed into movement. Dance is an interplay of movement, bodies and space. The movements reveal a superior control and shaping of bodies together with an explosive creative force: the struggle between the Apollonian and the Dionysian. In this struggle, de Châtel shows us a Nietzschean view of mankind, a view of man as a creative being that shapes the world and space. As part of this, we recognise an eternal game or conflict between being confined by boundaries and the drive for absolute freedom to transcend those boundaries.

If we interpret her work philosophically, however, we see more than this interplay of forces. Just as de Châtel demonstrates a movement or position to her dancers in a rehearsal space, she is also demonstrating something to us, her viewers. She lets us see and experience what philosophers have tried to say with many words. This is – obviously – especially true for corporality and spatiality. For de Châtel, the total embrace of one's own spatiality, the realisation of one's own corporality, being a whole body, is a condition for being truly present in a space. Her dancers demonstrate how we – humans – are bodies in space, how we fundamentally move – as Maurice Merleau-Ponty would say – from an embodied understanding of space.

The French philosopher introduced this 'embodied understanding' as a criticism of the body-hostile views of his more traditional colleagues who only focused on a *reasonable* understanding, and saw the body as a (un)

handy instrument at best. On the other hand, Merleau-Ponty argued that we – as the body that we are – always occupy a space. We do not enter a space, we are always already in it. As a body, we conceive of space, experience space and have an awareness of space. The body thus understands space and space means something to the body that we are. The relationship between us (as a body) and space, but also the objects in space, is usually obvious. We walk, sit, stand; we take a cup off the table, stir in a saucepan or kick a ball. These are familiar movements which our body has learned through practice, upon the world's invitation. We raise ourselves up as toddlers, learn to walk, clamber up stairs. As bodies, we attune ourselves to a world, while that world also invites us to perform certain movements and acts. The staircase seems to be asking to be climbed up, the ball seems to demand that we throw or kick it. But what happens is not predetermined.



Photo: Ben van Duin, *Paletta*

In *Paletta*, three women are trapped in tall transparent cylinders, while the men move around outside. It is the extreme confinement of the cylinders that gives the women an unprecedented scope of movement, while the 'free' men are caught up in a rigid pattern. The dancers explore and exploit every inch of space in the cylinders, while the space outside dictates a fixed pattern. We see and experience, as the philosopher would say, the 'horizon of possible actions' ourselves. In her research into space – the cylinder in *Paletta* – de Châtel gives new meaning to that space.

In *Föld*, the dancers are surrounded by a circular earthen bank ('Föld' is Hungarian for earth), which at first appears to be a safe enclosure within which man slowly seems to grow aware of space, of the body and of fellow human beings. Then the bank changes from a protection into a boundary. The dancers take on the earth. In a true struggle for life, they fight their way 'out', after which the earthen bank is no longer a bank. *Föld* allows for many interpretations. The dancers' struggle as an allegory for mankind's struggle against nature is the most obvious. But we can also interpret *Föld* as the opposite, as a physical ('natural') revolt against a manmade fence; against the solidified power of a construed space.

According to the French philosopher Henri Lefebvre, we must first see the spaces in which we live, in our cities, villages and holiday homes as follows: as the material, concrete space (*espace perçu*) that holds us in its grip as a historic and social product. We naturally choose the shortest route over the highway; as expected, we rest in the shelter of our bedroom and all sit neatly in a row at the theatre. However, we do not only literally produce

these spaces. We also construe representations of space (*espace conçu*), certain notions about space that are mainly intended to make that space more manageable. What standards should a housing estate meet? Which requirements should the houses we live in satisfy? We also let ourselves be guided by representations. As a result, space is socially produced in at least two ways – the urban planner Edward Soja calls these two aspects of space ‘Firstspace’ and ‘Secondspace’. There is, however, a third aspect of social space as a social product: the lived space (*espace vécu*), or the space for representations, the way in which we, determined by dominant representations, live in space and ascribe meaning to space – denoted by Soja as ‘Thirdspace’.

Lefebvre writes that in order to be able to understand the three types of social space, it can be useful to explore the role of the body. He asks: Can the body, with its capacity to act and its energy, create space? He answers: Certainly, each body *is* space and *has* its space, it produces itself in space and also produces space. If we look at *Föld* from this perspective, we can see the piece as the overthrowing, the bulldozing of a restrictive meaning of space. And, by the way, this collective resistance of bodies to being trapped never stops. This struggle is perpetrated into infinity. Whatever the resistance has yielded, we keep searching for freedom, over and over.

Like Soja, Lefebvre points out that the triadic approach to (social) space as a (social) product explicitly offers a perspective on the production (by artists) of a new imagination of space, on the construction of another significant space. Through the movement of the dancers’ bodies, Krisztina de Châtel’s work shows us, the spectators, the role of bodies in the production of space, and offers us a certain imagination of the human being in space: despite the restrictions that space imposes upon us, we can nonetheless shape and make that space ourselves.

Désanne van Brederode writes that control and conquest of space is the essence of de Châtel’s work. In the book *Dans! Denk!*, Krisztina de Châtel says of her own work: ‘Space is defining, the objects and the light in it, the sound, the rhythm. That would have little value if the dancers did not throw themselves into it with their whole presence, to conquer space from an inner tension.’

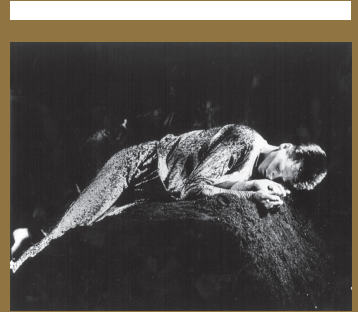


Photo: Jaap Pieper, *Föld*

#### References:

- Désanne van Brederode, *Dans! Denk! Leven en werk van Krisztina de Châtel* (Amsterdam and Antwerpen: Querido, 2017).
- Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception* (Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1945).
- Henri Lefebvre, *La production de l'espace* (Paris: Anthropos, 1974).

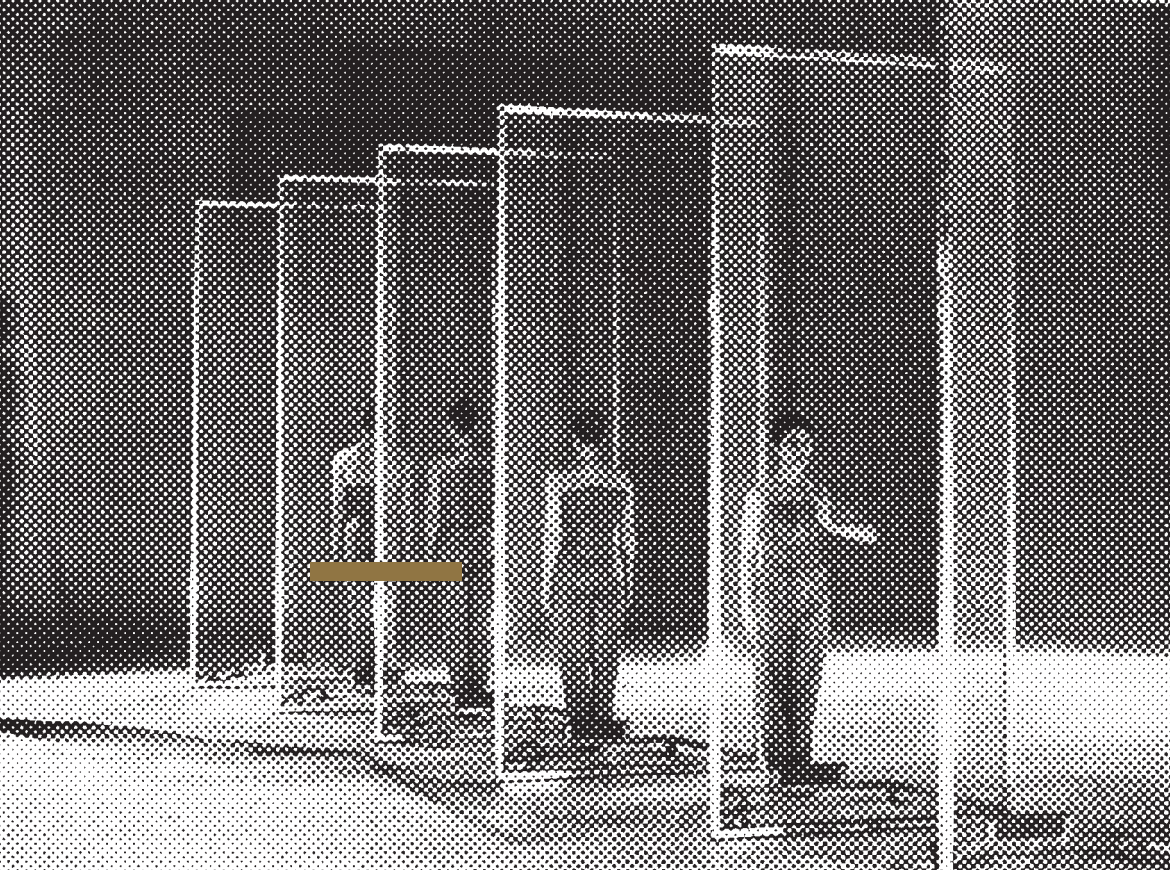
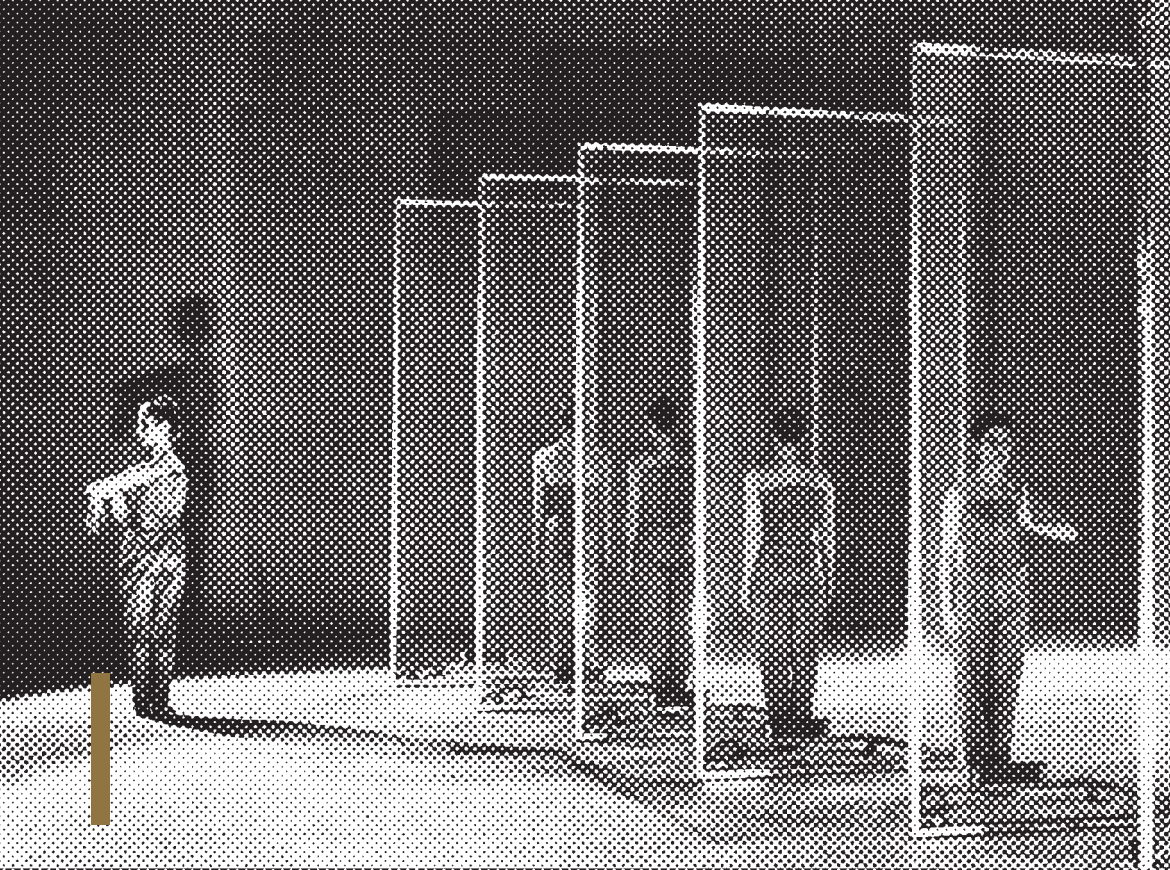


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Suppose you consider the dance performance as a metaphor for life and the dancer as the example of a human being, then the dancers make us aware of the boundaries of space – of life – and also of the need and the possibility to shift these boundaries. But, of course, this only works if you consider yourself – like Friedrich Nietzsche and Krisztina de Châtel – as an artistic creative being that shapes the world and reality.

With thanks to Mariëtte Bakker.

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# The Thirdspace

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## Perspective


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Space is undoubtedly an indispensable collaborator in the work of Krisztina de Châtel. The seven choreographies presented in this exhibition, *Lines*, *Thron*, *Föld*, *Vide*, *Cirklo*, *Paletta* and *Concave*, are particularly fine examples of this. They are testament to de Châtel's continuous negotiation of spatial extremities, and strike a balance between interior and exterior, between the real and the imagined, between restriction and freedom. But more than that, in the radical restructuring of their oppositional forces these works reveal a third existential dimension, a third space where de Châtel makes sense of, and responds to, some of our most universal postmodern complexities.

The creative recombining of extremities that characterises these seven de Châtel choreographies recalls the work of French sociologist Henri Lefebvre and American geographer Edward Soja, who proposed new methods of knowledge formation based upon a reimagining of social spatiality. This exhibition aims to position those insights in relation to de Châtel's choreographies and to reconsider her work as creative manifestations of Soja's so-called Thirdspace (from which this exhibition borrows its title). However, in order to fully appreciate these seven choreographies as examples of Thirdspace, it is first necessary to think about them from a Thirdspace perspective; or rather, to think about them, as Lefebvre might suggest, as demonstrations of *L'Autre* (The Other).

### *Il y a toujours L'Autre*



Dissatisfied with the conceptual dualism that dominated European philosophy in the mid-twentieth century, Lefebvre repeatedly argued, *Il y a toujours L'Autre* (there is always The Other).<sup>5</sup> He has suggested that, when confronted with two opposing forces, there is always a third alternative, one that is 'not just a simple combination or in-between position'.<sup>6</sup> This critique of prevailing dialectics, and the proposition of an Other alternative, was fundamental for Lefebvre in bridging the realms of spatial theory and spatial practice.

In *The Production of Space* (1974), Lefebvre categorised space into three dimensions: *espace perçu* (otherwise known as perceived space or Spatial Practice), *espace conçu* (conceived space or Representations of Space), and *espace vécu* (lived space or Spaces of Representation). Generally speaking, perceived space can be understood as objective space, conceived space as subjective space, and lived space as a combination of the two; space that is both objective and subjective, both real and imagined. However, Lefebvre also suggested that lived space is more than just a combination of *espace perçu* and *espace conçu*, it is a demonstration of *L'Autre* – a third possibility. In other words, lived space is the simultaneous combination and extension of perceived and conceived space. It is an independent and interdependent *third space*.

Lefebvre's reimagining of space opened up a transdisciplinary critique of knowledge formation that, up to that point, relied primarily on conceptual extremities. As a result, Lefebvre 'asserted the significance of space and spatial knowledge in all realms of critical social theory and philosophy'.<sup>7</sup> It also set the stage for American geographer Edward Soja's further explorations into Thirdspace.

#### Of artists and architects

In his book *Thirdspace* (1996), Soja describes a conceptual triad that generally corresponds to Lefebvre's perceived, conceived and lived spaces. Soja calls these spaces Firstspace, Secondspace and Thirdspace. Like Lefebvre before him, Soja posits that Thirdspace is an Other alternative that is a creative recombination and extension of First- and Secondspace.<sup>8</sup> He describes Thirdspace as the 'process of restructuring two opposing categories to open new alternatives'. It is a process that, much like lived space, can never fully exist independent of its precedents.<sup>9</sup> In writing *Thirdspace*, Soja set out to encourage new ways of thinking about the 'meanings and significance of space', as well as the general 'spatiality of human life'.<sup>10</sup> He writes:

*Whether we are attempting to deal with the increasing intervention of electronic media in our daily routines; seeking ways to act politically to deal with the growing problems of poverty, racism, sexual discrimination, and environmental degradation; or trying to understand the multiplying geopolitical conflicts around the globe...a strategic awareness of this collectively created spatiality and its social consequences has become a vital part of making both theoretical and practical sense of our contemporary life worlds at all scales, from the most intimate to the most global.*<sup>11</sup>

Soja's re-examination of Lefebvre, and particularly Lefebvre's notion of *L'Autre*, amplified both its influence and interpretation. He argued triadic thinking as an essential component in understanding Thirdspace, and more specifically, Thirdspace as a transcending, transdisciplinary space of social and political critique.<sup>12</sup> He suggested that Thirdspace is, just as Lefebvre's lived space, a space of 'all inclusive simultaneities' vitally filled with the 'material spatial practices that concretise the social relations of production, reproduction, exploitation, domination and subjection'.<sup>13</sup> As such, it is a politicised space, a space determined for the struggle, for liberation and emancipation. According to Soja, Thirdspace is the space of artists and architects and all those who actively seek to participate in (re)describing the world in which we live.<sup>14</sup>

**Krisztina de Châtel, Thirdspace and *L'Autre***  
Building on the work of Lefebvre, Soja imagined Thirdspace as a space to creatively challenge the socially constructed spaces of political and social ideology.<sup>15</sup> Few choreographers manifest Soja's notion of Thirdspace as effectively, or as evocatively, as Krisztina de Châtel.

As exemplified in this exhibition, the seven selected de Châtel choreographies exist between spatial extremities. In the negotiation of those extremities, a third alternative dimension is revealed. By reconsidering these spaces from a Thirdspace perspective, as examples of Thirdspace, we can begin to understand them as the radical spaces of sociopolitical resistance that they are. We can reconsider them as spaces from which issues such as gender, religion, immigration and racism are creatively challenged and reconceptualised *through* their spatiality. As examples of Thirdspace, these seven iconic de Châtel choreographies remind us that, as we try to make sense of, and respond to, the complexities of the postmodern world, there are always more than just two possibilities, more than just the subject and the object. There is, as Lefebvre has suggested, *toujours L'Autre*.

5: Lefebvre, 1980: 143; Soja, 1996: 31. The term Other is capitalised here to stress its importance.

6: Soja, 1996: 60.

7: *Ibid.*, 47.

8: Soja refers to this as 'Thirding-as-Othering'.

9: Soja, 1996: 5.

10: *Ibid.*, Introduction.

11: *Ibid.*

12: *Ibid.*, 61.

13: *Ibid.*, 68.

14: *Ibid.*, 67.

15: *Ibid.*, 14.

#### References:

- Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and other real-and-imagined places* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1996).
- Henri Lefebvre, *La présence et l'absence: Contribution à la théorie des représentations* (Paris: Casterman, 1980).
- Henri Lefebvre, *La production de l'espace* (Paris: Anthropos, 1974).



Photo: Ben van Duin

# Colofon

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*The Third Space* is initiated by the Dutch Dance Festival dansMuseum in collaboration with Bureau Europa platform for architecture and design, Stichting De Châtel sur place, Maastricht University Masters' programme Arts and Heritage, and the Maastricht Centre for Arts and Culture, Conservation and Heritage (MACCH).

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Krisztina de Châtel

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**Assistant curator:**

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**Project manager:**

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**Installation Design:**

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**Photo Credits:**

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# Dutch Dance Festival dansMuseum

The Dutch Dance Festival dansMuseum is a cultural heritage project initiated by the festival to help preserve and promote dance in the Netherlands. Its mission is to actively encourage research and scholarship on Dutch dance through its exhibitions, collections and educational programming, and to raise awareness about dance as a valued form of intangible cultural heritage.



Photo: Deen van Meer, Light





## *Bureau Europa*

As a presentation platform and network organisation, Bureau Europa presents exhibitions, lectures, workshops, city tours and other discourse-based activities in the field of architecture, urbanism and design. From a societal perspective, Bureau Europa aims to advance knowledge production and talent development and operate within the realm of cultural significance.

## *De Châtel sur place*

De Châtel sur place is Krisztina de Châtel's new foundation for the creation of innovative artistic projects on location. Though space and surroundings have always played an important role in Krisztina's work, De Châtel sur place places particular emphasis on supporting confrontations between man and nature, man and machine, between art and society and between dance and visual art, outside of traditional dance and theatre venues.

## *Maastricht University Master Arts and Heritage*

The Master's programme Arts and Heritage: Policy, Management and Education examines the concepts of heritage and art as expressions of past and present culture. The scientific and social significance of art, culture and heritage are explored and students acquire in-depth knowledge and understanding of the theory and practice of cultural policy, cultural education and the management and marketing of arts and heritage.

## *Maastricht Centre for Arts and Culture, Conservation and Heritage*

The Maastricht Centre for Arts and Culture, Conservation and Heritage (MACCH) is an interdisciplinary research centre that brings together economic, legal, (art-) historical, philosophical, sociological and practical expertise to the context of arts and heritage. In response to the demands of the increasingly complex challenges facing the fields of arts and heritage today, MACCH initiates collaborative research projects with researchers, professionals and students from diverse backgrounds.

# Additional programmes

## Exploring Space

Guided movement tour with Francesca Monti, former dancer of Krisztina de Châtel. Presented in collaboration with De Châtel sur place. (EN/NL)

Date: 19 September and 3 October, 19:00, Location: Bureau Europa

## The Thirdspace Perspective: Expanding the Critical Imagination

Closed tour for students of University Maastricht. (EN)

Date: 20 and 21 September, Location: Bureau Europa

## Space and Spatiality

Tour focused on space and human spatiality from the perspective of architecture and in relation to the work of Krisztina de Châtel. Presented in collaboration with Bureau Europa. (NL)

Date: 21 September, 20:00, Location: Bureau Europa

## The body-space dialogue: In conversation with Krisztina de Châtel

Interview with the grande dame of Dutch modern dance, Krisztina de Châtel. (NL)

Date: 28 September, 20:00, Location: Bureau Europa

## De Châtel @ Docfest

The documentary film *A Frenzied Control / Life and Dance of Krisztina de Châtel* and the short dance film *Flight* presented during the documentary film festival Docfest.

Date: 29 September, 17:30, Location: Lumière Cinema

## (Un)building Archives

Roundtable discussion about archival practices within the dance sector in collaboration with the Maastricht University Masters' programme Arts and Heritage, and the Maastricht Centre for Arts and Culture, Conservation and Heritage (MACCH). (EN)

Date: 13 October, 10:30, Location: Bureau Europa

## Natafelen op Zondag

Finale of the Dutch Dance Festival and finissage of *The Third Space*. Moderator Hadassah de Boer looks back at the festival and five weeks of the dansMuseum. (NL)

Date: 14 October, 17:00, Location: Bureau Europa

Programme subject to change.

For more information visit [www.nederlandsedansdagen.nl](http://www.nederlandsedansdagen.nl)





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