

## Thomas Hauert

After training at the academy in Rotterdam, the Swiss dancer and choreographer Thomas Hauert moved to Brussels in 1991 to work in Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker's company Rosas. He then collaborated with Gonnie Heggen, David Zambrano and Pierre Droulers. After the creation of the solo *Hobokendans* (1997), he founded his company ZOO through which he initiated *Cows in Space* (1998), a piece for five dancers which was consequently awarded two prizes at the Rencontres chorégraphiques of Seine-Saint-Denis. "A first choreography, offered in all coolness, and I'm already under its spell. (...) With *Cows in Space*, Thomas Hauert and his fresh new company ZOO have shown (...) that abstract dance can be a wonderful celebration and can convey formidable emotions." (Le Temps, 1998)

Since then, Thomas Hauert has created more than 15 performances with ZOO among them *Jetzt* (2000), *Do You Believe in Gravity? Do You Trust the Pilot?* (2001), *Verosimile* (2002), *modify* (2004, ), *Walking Oscar* (2006), *Accords* (2008), *You've Changed* (2010), *From B to B* (a duet in collaboration with the Catalan choreographer Angels Margarit, 2011) and *Like me more like me* (a duet in collaboration with the American performer Scott Heron). In 2012, he has also created the solo for young audiences *Danse étoffée sur musique déguisée* on music by John Cage performed live. *MONO*, a group creation for 8 dancers and 1, has been premiered in November 2013. *(sweet) (bitter)* the new solo of Thomas Hauert has been premiered in April 2015 and the collective creation *The Measure of Disorder* with seven creators of Barcelona has just been presented during the GREC Festival.

The work of Thomas Hauert and ZOO first develops from research on movement, with a particular interest in improvisation-based processes exploring the tension between freedom and constraint, individuals and the group, order and disorder, form and formlessness. Over the years the structure of the company has remained very stable, with several of the original dancers still currently involved. This longevity affords a depth to the choreographer's research that one rarely encounters in the field of contemporary dance today.

Thomas Hauert is widely recognized for his original contributions to choreography: "His proliferative inventiveness does more than just exercise the imagination: it uncovers a new movement vocabulary, upsets the syntax, refines unpublished grammar rules in order to achieve singularly vivid language," writes Rosita Boisseau in *Le Monde*. From Paris to Seoul, from Helsinki to Rio, his performances have been staged in over 200 different venues in 29 countries. Moreover, in recognition of his work, the company has been awarded several prizes including the Swiss Dance and Choreography Prize given to *modify* in 2005 and the Prize for current dance work given to *From B to B* at the Swiss Dance Awards 2013. *Accords* also earned Thomas Hauert and ZOO the distinction of being respectively chosen choreographer and company of the year in 2009 by the critic Katja Werner with the comment: "Thomas Hauert's company ZOO, a group of responsible individuals, a community that practices the most intelligent, the most sensitive, the most spiritual, the most surprising, the bravest, the most virtuosic and the most political dance form I've seen in a very long time." In 2010, the Belgian director Thierry De Mey created a film co-produced by European cultural television channel Arte, based on the ZOO's work *Accords*, set to Ravel's *La Valse*.

Thomas Hauert regularly participates in improvisation events around the world. Notably, he was invited by Sasha Waltz in the framework of "Vif du Sujet" in Avignon in 2000, by David Zambrano in the series "David Zambrano Invites...", by Gonnie Heggen, Frans Poelstra and Robert Steijn for the "Tarzan" project, and by Jennifer Monson and Zeena Parkins as part of Movement Research Fall Festival in 2008. He also improvises with musicians like Chris Corsano and Barry Guy.

The relation with music, from pop to contemporary and from jazz to baroque, plays a major part in Thomas Hauert's work. In 2012, he was for example invited by Ircam in Paris to lead a project on the relation between improvised dance and electronic musical composition in the context of the festival-academy ManiFeste.

In addition to his work for ZOO, Thomas was also commissioned to create *Hà Mais* (2002) with a group of Mozambican dancers, *Milky Way* (2000), *Lobster Caravan* (2004), *12/8* (2007) and *Regarding The area Between the inseparable* (in collaboration with the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels, 2010) with students from Brussels' PARTS academy, as well as *Fold and Twine* (2006) at the Laban School in London. In Fall 2010, he has created a new work for the Zurich Ballet, *Il Giornale della necropoli* based on the composition of the same

name by Salvatore Sciarrino, with a set by Belgian artist Michaël Borremans. In Spring 2013 he was commissioned by Toronto Dance Company, in Canada, to create the piece *Pond Skaters* (for which he was nominated as best choreographer of the year at the Dora Awards). And in 2014, he created the piece *Notturmo* for the British company of disabled and non-disabled dancers Candoco Dance Company.

Complimenting his performance work, Hauert has developed an internationally recognized teaching method. As a teacher, he has an ongoing collaboration with the P.A.R.T.S. academy in Brussels and regularly gives workshops worldwide. In 2012-13, he was the Valeska-Gert-guest professor for dance and performance at the Institute for Theater Studies of the Freie Universität Berlin. In 2013 has also been appointed academic director of the new bachelor degree in contemporary dance opened within the theatre academy La Manufacture the Lausanne (Switzerland's first dance school at university level).

In 2012, he was invited to participate in the project "Motion Bank" initiated by The Forsythe Company to stimulate research into choreographic practice. A multi-disciplinary team of the Ohio State University (USA) worked with him to create "on-line digital scores" which document and analyse specific aspects of his work. The results have been released in Nov 2013 and are visible on the [www.motionbank.org](http://www.motionbank.org).

ZOO is resident artist at Charleroi Danses.