

The Noorderzon Festival in Groningen 2016

The group Club Guy & Roni presented *The jungle is our house*, at the Grand Theatre, an excellent multidisciplinary production that combined acting and poetry, dance, video projections and live music. The production tackled the important political problem of immigration. Written and directed by the actress Veerle van Overloop, the production showed the affective relationship between a woman (Veerle van Overloop) and her man (played by the dancer Igor Podsiadly), who are in a camp of illegal migrants in Calais, called the “jungle,” suffering the loss of their child during the migration they were forced to undertake. The set was created by suspended sheets, representing the first dismantling of the camp in March 2016. This precarious and painful environment framed the story of this couple, their joys as well as their sufferings, told mainly by the actress.

While the man folded and took away the blankets, he narrated the story of a man, a friend of his father, who, in contrast with the present forbidden migrations, travelled freely to England, stayed there five years and then came back to Germany, where he finished his studies and obtained a good financial situation; the actress drew a square with a white line on the floor of the stage, making the space of an imaginary house, that became the space where most of the actions were performed. In the second sequence, the movements of the actors rolling on the floor, moving together in difficult positions, created a metaphor of their wracked relationship. The development followed a pattern. The sequences where the actress or the dancer delivered the poetic lines were followed by sequences without words, but with more dance and louder music. The sequence was followed by others of dance movements where the man manipulated the body of the woman. The dance movements also expressed in a metaphorical way the suffering of the couple.

The musician Bert Dockx was also on stage, close to the actors, sometimes playing with delicate rhythms, but more often with electronic and steady music, often close to rock, contributing to the atmosphere of all the sequences. Most of the lighting came from the video images created by Satu Leskinen. The video animation contained many cultural and aesthetic references. In the third sequence, when the actress delivered her lines, the lighting divided the space with colors, into white and red sections reminiscent of abstract painting, and this lighting was again repeated in the following sequences. Apart from this, the video animation utilized hand painting, or purely graphic lines. There are also sequences of real footage, all very effectively chosen. I felt the movement of this production was very quick. It had an accelerated development, but not so much because the development of each element was faster than usual for a given period of time, but because there were many more elements (video animation, music, dance) within this given period of time.