



## **Audience manipulation? Subverting the fourth wall in Pina Bausch's *Kontakthof* (1978) and *Nelken* (1982)**

**LUCY WEIR**

*The Scottish Journal of Performance*  
Volume 1, Issue 2; June 2014  
ISSN: 2054-1953 (Print) / ISSN: 2054-1961 (Online)

Publication details: <http://www.scottishjournalofperformance.org>

**To cite this article:** Weir, L., 2014. Audience manipulation? Subverting the fourth wall in Pina Bausch's *Kontakthof* (1978) and *Nelken* (1982). *Scottish Journal of Performance*, 1(2): pp.17–36.

**To link to this article:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.14439/sjop.2014.0102.03>



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. See <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/> for details.

## **Audience manipulation? Subverting the fourth wall in Pina Bausch's *Kontakthof* (1978) and *Nelken* (1982)**

LUCY WEIR

DOI: 10.14439/sjop.2014.0102.03

Publication date: 13 June 2014

*Pina Bausch's Tanztheater breaks everyday behaviour into its most elemental fragments, and fundamental aspects of stage etiquette are constantly challenged, not least the barrier between performer and spectator known as the fourth wall. Accordingly, the hierarchy of the theatre space is thrown into question, and the audience's preconceived notions of boundaries, appropriate behaviour and expectations are left open ended. In the following article, two case study examples of Bausch's works—Kontakthof ('Meeting Place', 1978) and Nelken ('Carnations', 1982)—have been selected in order to demonstrate the range of techniques Bausch employs in manipulating the fourth wall. Both are lengthy in duration and extremely complex, layered works of dance theatre, illustrating Bausch's varied methods of audience manipulation at what I have identified as a 'golden period' in her career. This article explores the process of audience manipulation through Bausch's peripatetic use of the fourth wall, illustrating that, as dance theatre has evolved, the performance event has become increasingly confrontational and direct, engaging with the audience in a more provocative manner, and calling into question the limits of the theatre space.*

*Keywords: dance, Tanztheater, Pina Bausch, fourth wall*

## Introduction

The barrier that separates the audience from performer is a fundamental element of conventional theatrical practice. In the context of much of the avant-garde dance produced throughout the twentieth century, this invisible distinction known as the fourth wall tended to remain unbroken, aiding in the viewer's willing suspension of disbelief; the spectator became a passive observer in this ultimately rather conformist model. However, in the second half of the century, a number of avant-garde theatre makers began to reject the use of this device, with some renouncing the fourth wall entirely. Peter Handke's 1966 work, *Publikumsbeschimpfung* ('Offending the Audience'), is a striking example of completely plotless theatre, in which the performers address the audience directly throughout, continually reminding them that they are not watching a play, and that none of their theatrical expectations will be satisfied.

Confronting the audience is now a standard element of performance vocabulary in contemporary theatre practice; however, in the *Tanztheater* of German choreographer Pina Bausch, while performers regularly transgress the boundary between the stage and the audience with sudden or unexpected gestures, the fourth wall is subsequently reinstated, and the process of removal and reinsertion is repeated throughout her durational works. Bausch's approach is unique in its array of potential meanings; it transgresses the concept of audience immersion, blurring the boundaries of narrative theatre and personal interaction between performer and spectator. This article seeks to create a new framework for understanding the ways in which Bausch's work tests the limits of theatrical space, going beyond the approaches of Bertolt Brecht and Antonin Artaud, and explores the extent to which Bausch's spectator is made an active participant in the spectacle through the shifting of boundaries between fiction and (seeming) reality.

## Reading Bausch's methods

Bausch's inclination to turn the house lights on the audience was an early manifestation of her subversive approach to the fourth wall, a device she used for the first time in her controversial work, *Blaubart* (1977). *Blaubart*, alongside the *Macbeth-Project* which premièred a year later, were landmark productions in the development of her new creative process<sup>1</sup>; in this fragmentary method, Bausch began to think in terms of questions rather than simply choreographing movements. *Blaubart* embodies many of the defining elements of Bausch's approach to theatre, merging dance and elements of traditional drama with pantomime and even opera. The action is constantly interrupted by a cassette player recording; indeed, the soundtrack (a copy of Bartók's opera referenced in the title) determines the course of the action, almost like an elaborate game of musical chairs. Bausch's *Blaubart* breaks from recognisable narrative structures, taking place in an alternative realm where time can be stopped and started, replayed or looped. This production was a dramatic break from Bausch's previous works, such as *Orpheus und Eurydike* and *Das Frühlingsopfer* ('The Rite of Spring') (both 1975), which were structured and choreographed according to recognisable narrative patterns.

Rather than immersing themselves in identifiable characters, Bausch's performers consistently blur the boundary between themselves and their stage personae. That the dancers regularly refer to one another by their own names on stage represents an expression of this character conflation—thus, the distinction between artist and artistic persona is blurred. This device contravenes not only the rules of classical ballet, but largely of dance as a theatrical form. There are, of course, much earlier modern dance exceptions to this tenet, including Mary Wigman's *Totenmal* ('Call of the Dead') (1930) and Martha Graham's *Deaths and Entrances* (1943), as well as postmodern examples including Anna Teresa de Keersmaecker's *Elena's Aria*

(1984), all of which experimented with the use of spoken word. However, Bausch's use of the device transcends more common applications of voice in dance performance; Bausch's dancers go a step further when they directly address the audience. Still more unsettling are the moments in which the performers simply make eye contact with the spectators, drawing them, not necessarily willingly, into the alternative world that they inhabit. This device is effectively employed in *Two Cigarettes in the Dark* (1985), where, after declaring the respective 'prices' for different parts of their bodies, two female dancers stare directly into the eyes of nearby audience members for several minutes in complete silence. The connection is finally disrupted when one of the women shrugs, smiling, to announce that the intermission has already begun. This simple action is deeply unnerving, leading the spectator to question their role as passive observer of an action that is designed to occur within the boundaries of the stage.

David Price (1990, p.322) has observed that there is a weakness in critical writing on Bausch's work in its reliance upon Brechtian terminology; he argues that, because of the reliance on viewing her work through this framework, there is no viable vocabulary with which to analyse her pieces, but that:

What distinguishes Bausch, however, is her development of an art form based upon a binary opposition that does not reproduce an either/or dichotomy; instead, Bausch's productions are both dance and theater. Hers is an art form that rejects a totalizing Wagnerian vision in favor of a dialectical theatricality.

Bausch's *Tanztheater* is a conflation of modern dance and avant-garde theatre practice; the relationship between performer and spectator is constantly shifting, clear narratives are put in place and quickly discarded, and

choreography is broken down into incessantly repetitive abstractions of everyday movement. Bausch formulated a new language of dance theatre, a methodology that transcends Brechtian concepts of performance. In a similar vein to Price's observation, we may consider Gabrielle Cody's (1998, p.119) comment that:

[Bausch's] tanztheater plays require a multilingual spectatorship, an alternate willingness to see and hear, which is why attempts to encompass her work are inevitably refracted through the graffiti of this century's most radical theories of performance: Artaud's cruelty, Brecht's alienation, Grotowski's confrontation, and Schechner's environmental theatre.

Elizabeth Wright (1988) has constructed an interpretation of Bausch's work in relation to the legacy of Brechtian theatre, applying a range of associated theories, including the alienation effect, to her creative method. However, in this article I have consciously avoided reading Bausch through such established theatrical convention. It is my contention that Bausch's *Tanztheater* cannot fit neatly into an Artaudian or Brechtian conception of theatre; rather, her particular method stands independently. The majority of Bausch's extensive oeuvre inhabits a distinctive and personal vision of theatre, one that, when first presented to the public, was unique in the context of twentieth-century dance.

### ***Tanztheater* and manipulation**

A significant proportion of critical writing on *Tanztheater* has attempted to define Bausch's primary motivation. Writers such as Marianne Goldberg (1989) have focused heavily on issues of gender and violence in her choreography, while Heidi Gilpin (1997) has explored issues

relating to cultural identity and the legacy of fascism in Bausch's work. In her obituary for the choreographer, Susan Manning (2010) details her shifting understanding of Bausch's relationship to the German postwar experience, asserting that the company's extensive touring schedule impacted enormously on the development of modern dance both in Europe and in the United States. Manning (2010, p.11) goes so far as to call her, 'one of, if not *the* most influential choreographer of late-20th-century globalization'. There is no single factor that can be said to motivate the diverse range of works in Bausch's legacy. In the works chosen as case studies for this discussion, the line between humour and tragedy or violence is often very thin, and the dancers transgress the audience's expectations not only of appropriate comic or dramatic performance, but also of the physical boundaries of the stage itself.

*Tanztheater* is a highly individualistic format, and the creation of these large-scale works required a level of trust between Bausch as choreographer and her cast. Compared to the workings of a traditional dance company, the relationship between Bausch and the dancers was very intimate, almost familial in nature. In her creative processes, Bausch required a demanding degree of engagement and personal sacrifice from her dancers, delving into their childhood memories and personal histories to compose her works. This was an intricate and deeply personal method, one in which the dancers acted as co-creators of the company's entire repertoire.

Bausch referred to ordinary, routine occurrences as constant motifs. The conventions of classical ballet are frequently revisited and given the same treatment, signalling a form of artistic protest against classical dance. The ballet class itself falls into the category of the more general 'everyday' experience that Bausch distorted; after all, for professional dancers, the ballet class is an

indispensable daily ritual. Consider, for instance, the infamous pointe shoe sequence in her 1986 work, *Viktor*: a dancer enters the stage holding a package of meat, a stool, and a pair of satin pointe shoes. She barks at the audience, 'das ist Kalbfleisch!' ['this is veal!'], before stuffing her shoes with slices of meat. The woman proceeds to dance *en pointe* for a full seven minutes, her heavy breathing audible even over the deafening classical soundtrack<sup>2</sup>. A significant marker of the everyday ballet routine—in this case, the pointe shoe—is made ludicrous by the deconstruction of its use. Instead of traditional lambswool padding, here the dancer wraps her feet in bloody veal steaks, an overt allusion to the pain and disfigurement a classical dancer must suffer for the beauty of her art. At the same time, the audience is tacitly involved in the act; addressed directly by the dancer, the spectator is forced to reconsider any preconceived notions regarding the illusionism of classical ballet.

The following case studies—*Kontakthof* ('Meeting Place') (1978) and *Nelken* ('Carnations') (1982)—have been selected in order to show the range of techniques Bausch employs in manipulating the fourth wall. Both are lengthy in duration and are complex, layered works of dance theatre, which demonstrate Bausch's varied methods of audience manipulation during what I consider the 'golden period' of her career, something Kate Elswit (2013, p.217) calls 'vintage Bausch'. Elswit takes issue with the strong bias exhibited by many critics towards her earlier work, some citing her later pieces as indicative of a 'mellowing' technical approach. I contest this, however; by the late 1970s Bausch had established a new and distinctive approach to dance, and the works selected for discussion in this paper are emblematic of the maturation of her genre-defying style.



### Case study I: *Kontakthof* (1978)

The stage design of *Kontakthof* reflects the style of an old-fashioned dance hall, and a sense of faded grandeur permeates the piece<sup>3</sup>. The dancers are clad in similarly outdated eveningwear, though this choice of apparel is not unusual for Bausch; throughout her work, Bausch's dancers are often costumed as if attending a formal event, and she once stated, 'I never create pieces for leotards' (quoted in Servos, 2008, p.238). The setting of *Kontakthof* is slightly melancholic; the stage space is almost like a box containing snapshots of times past, with the cast endlessly playing out the same cycles of childish games and spiteful relationships. The title of the work, which can be translated simply as 'meeting place,' could even refer to the negotiation 'salon' of a brothel, with a warped intimacy reflected in the performers' flirtatious interactions with one another; the dancers enact a very public and at times uncomfortable quest for intimate contact. Royd Climenhaga (2009, p.66) argues that the theme of prostitution implied by the title is a metaphor for 'the prostitution of dancers on the stage', observing that the title was only chosen halfway through the choreographic development of the work. Hedwig Müller and Norbert Servos (1979, p.69) state that this piece continues the 'stylistic development' of Bausch's method initiated in the *Macbeth-Project*, although they note that, in this work, 'the reality of the production of theatre activity is explored more starkly here; it becomes the defining theme of the piece'.

From the very beginning of *Kontakthof*, the fourth wall is broken down as the dancers consciously display themselves one body part at a time to the audience; they present themselves as if standing in front of an audition panel. According to Climenhaga (2009), Bausch devised the sequence by asking her dancers to present the parts of their bodies they most disliked; hair is scraped back from their faces, and each individual stands facing the audience with teeth bared in an emotionless grimace. It is a particularly

unusual opening scene, with the dancers appearing expressionless and listless. Recalling his first experience of watching *Kontakthof*, Climenhaga (2009, p.69) claimed that the eye contact between dancer and spectator was extremely unsettling: 'that direct gaze was exposing, and exposure always feels self-consciously personal'. However, the direct relationship between audience and performer is not maintained consistently; Bausch's dancers alternate between interacting with their audience and retreating into their own self-contained world on stage. At one point, a screen is lowered and the company assemble to watch a short documentary film. Their backs are to the audience, and the spectator is placed in the unusual position of observing the objects of their gaze now in the role of spectators themselves.

The physical structure of *Kontakthof* is built upon small gestures of self-consciousness that escalate into more aggressive movements, as awkward shuffling and tweaking give way to pinching and slapping. The dancers critique one another, playing out impressions of a rehearsal throughout the performance itself, distorting the boundaries between what could be considered 'real' (the rehearsal process) versus 'unreal' (the choreographed performance event). The male / female courtship ritual is played out almost painfully; a woman bites her partner's ear; a man grabs a woman's hand and roughly yanks her fingers backwards; another pulls the hair from his partner's head while their fellow performers limply applaud. While a couple appear locked in a seemingly loving embrace, a glance at their feet reveals that the woman is grinding the high heel of her shoe into her partner's foot. This childish cruelty is what Norbert Servos (2008, p.69) called 'affectionate violence and violent affection', while Cody (1998, p.122) notes:

Bausch openly confronts the complicated motivations of our desire as spectators and explores the genesis of performative acts by

examining the power relations underlying representation. A woman in *Kontakthof* asks a male member of the audience for a quarter in order to ride the electric hobby horse on the side of the stage; this brief negotiation and her subsequent performance of sexualized passivity in which she blankly gazes at the audience as she rocks to the horse's artificial cadence expose the tacit rules of a representational economy which regards femininity as a compulsory public service.

The boundaries between the performance space and the audience are inconsistently maintained throughout this work. In the example cited above, the dancer speaks directly to the audience, requesting a favour, but in the short sequences of cruelty and spitefulness, the audience is excluded and once more relegated to passive observer. At one point, two dancers prance gaily in the background while a man attempts to conceal his partner's limp, seemingly lifeless body. Nonetheless, he, along with the grinning women behind him, play to the crowd with exaggerated comic gestures. The spectator becomes an accomplice to the action, as the performers directly address the audience, often making and maintaining eye contact with individual viewers.

This complicity, as well as the increasingly aggressive search for intimacy (the *Kontakt* of the title), reaches its conclusion with the piece's controversial closing sequence. A woman stands centre stage, surrounded by male dancers who tenderly stroke her. What begin as gestures of consolation become increasingly heavy-handed, until gentleness gives way to outright physical abuse. Meryl Tankard (quoted in Jennings, 2010), a former company member who performed this role, admitted that she often spontaneously wept during this part of the piece, and that, 'it felt like being raped'. Throughout this sequence, the woman gazes out at the audience, once again breaking the fourth wall to unsettling effect, as the passive spectators become

complicit in the action; through their inactivity, they ‘allow’ the men’s abuse to continue for a duration of more than seven minutes, after which the performers exit, leaving the stage in darkness. The audience is left in the dark to reflect on their collective permissiveness, as an accusatory air hangs over the now empty stage.

Ramsey Burt (1995) argues that there are two ways of reading this scene—that the men are at once committing an act of violence, but also clinging to the woman in search of some kind of tenderness themselves. Their gestures begin as gentle reassurances, and eventually became more violent and forceful. It is this interplay of violence and longing that characterises an enormous quotient of Bausch’s oeuvre. Indeed, loneliness and longing feature heavily in the many direct addresses to the audience throughout *Kontakthof*; open pleas seeking to transcend the barriers put in place by the fourth wall. At one point, a dancer (quoted in Servos, 2008, p.68) announces:

I stand on the edge of the piano and threaten to fall, but before I do it, I scream, so that no-one can miss it, then I crawl under the piano and peek out, and do it as if I want to be alone, but actually I want someone to come to me.

Bausch’s inconsistency in maintaining the fourth wall is problematic; without a clear boundary, the audience is left unsure of its role. Performers regularly address the spectator, yet in the uncomfortable and lengthy final scene there is no clear direction for the audience member—whether to stand up and intervene, or to accept that the fourth wall has been put back in place. It is this vacillating attitude to the boundaries between spectator and performer that exemplify Bausch’s technique. In her *Tanztheater*, not even the seasoned theatregoer can be completely confident in the validity of their passive enjoyment of the spectacle.

## Case study II: *Nelken* (1982)

Unlike the austere setting of *Kontakthof*, *Nelken* is a visually arresting work from the outset<sup>4</sup>. The stage is entirely covered in pink and white carnations, and dancers wear brightly coloured dresses or smart suits; later several of the male dancers reappear in silk dresses. A smiling woman, clad only in high-waisted white briefs, crosses the stage carrying an accordion. Contradicting audience expectation, in her various appearances on stage, she never once plays the instrument. The surreal and striking visual impact of a stage bedecked in flowers and the playfulness of the performers creates a dreamlike sensation of innocence, something that is tempered by the presence of police dogs and their minders patrolling the stage, as well as a sinister Master of Ceremonies, who periodically interrupts the dancers to check their passports and papers. A similar figure features in *Kontakthof*, regularly interrupting the action to note the heights and dimensions of the dancers. Everything is measured, noted, filed, every action recorded; in these two works devised in the period of the Cold War, the Master of Ceremonies acts as an allusion to the surveillance states of both the Third Reich and GDR. It is in *Nelken's* alternately ethereal and nightmarish vision of a Garden of Eden that Bausch directly addresses the paranoia of the police state—as Cody (1998, p.116) interprets it, 'barking German [S]hepherds reined-in by ominous guards patrol the false Arden of *Tanzabend Nelken*, recalling images of Nazi Germany'.



Image courtesy of Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch.  
Photograph by Oliver Look.

The eponymous carnations invite a dichotomous response from the audience, being reminiscent of celebratory as well as funerary flower arrangements. The overpowering scent of the flowers is perhaps the first instance of the boundary between audience and performer being transgressed, as there is no way to escape their strong perfume. The use of organic material onstage is an important characteristic of Bausch's work, introduced by her partner and stage designer Rolf Borzik (Bausch, 2007), and used to notable effect in works such as *Frühlingsopfer* (1975, soil), *Arien* ('Arias') (1979, water), and *1980—Ein Stück von Pina Bausch* (1980, turf). Elements of nature and the world outside the theatre are blended into the stage space and become part of the surreal environment of Tanztheater Wuppertal; while many critics have noted the visual spectacle of a stage adorned with flowers, the use of scent as a transgressive device has not yet been explored in detail.

Like *Kontakthof*, *Nelken* is a work rich in contrast, depicting the search for love in an often hostile, divided world. Lighter moments are juxtaposed with the menacing guard dogs, the Gestapo or Stasi-like Master of Ceremonies, and the actions of the dancers themselves, who, throughout, break the sanctity of the fourth wall to address, confront, or plead with the audience. At one point, dancers leave the stage and wander into the audience, asking individual spectators for a moment of their time, as if, Servos (2008, p.98) states, 'to discuss something personal or to exchange secret intimacies'.

Throughout its two-hour duration, *Nelken* oscillates between humour and menace. One reviewer (Grieman, 2000, p.417) has commented, 'while the humour undercut the foreboding atmosphere, in Bausch's work, freedom and play are never far from the spectre of state control'. Power play is a significant theme, and while the imagery of violence is not overtly explicit in this piece, it materialises in



the increasing force necessary for creating the boundaries of power and control. This implication of violence or cruelty helps to shatter the barrier that separates performers and audience; again, Bausch is inconsistent in her use of the fourth wall as a device, leaving the audience uncertain of how real the violence being played out onstage might be.

In a startling sequence, four stunt men (their professional skills unknown to the audience) scale the back wall of the stage before leaping off from a great height, watched by a dancer who tries in vain to draw her companions' attention to a possible disaster unfolding. When she is ignored by the other members of the company, she turns to the audience, seemingly hysterical and begging for help. Here, the stunt men not only put themselves quite genuinely at risk of physical injury, but also shake the audience from their passive enjoyment of the performance. In doing so, the men also startle the ever-present dogs at the corners of the stage; as Phillippa Wehle (1984, p.417) indicates, 'the guard dogs will not let the performers cross the line between fiction and life, nor will the Master of Ceremonies'. Throughout this work, the dancers continually commit minor acts of masochism: a woman tickles a man's feet until he is nearly hysterical; another frantically chops up an enormous pile of onions that he subsequently rubs into his own eyes. Again, the powerful scent of the onions transgresses the fourth wall, entering into the realm of the spectator. Servos (2008) compares this to the theatrical technique of using onions to generate false tears; thus, this small but unpleasant gesture represents another facet of Bausch's tendency to open up the mechanical elements of theatre, asking the audience to decide what is 'real' and what is merely performed. Anita Finkel (1991, p.4) observes that:

Bausch will not allow us to deny nature, and we respond with anger. There are those who stay completely away from Bausch's theater because the spectacle of real flesh is too painful to bear,

and they're right to absent themselves—once inside, Bausch's sense of the body as vulnerable is inescapable.

One well-known scene from *Nelken* explores the issue of audience expectation, relating to Bausch's favoured theme of the ballet class. Longstanding company member Dominique Mercy, dressed in a pink silk slip, performs an increasingly complex sequence of ballet steps, directly addressing the audience to ask repeatedly, 'What else do you want?' He offers a range of challenging ballet exercises, though grows progressively angrier with the audience for 'wanting more'. Mercy's engagement with the audience becomes increasingly aggressive; thus, while he is seemingly being forced to perform, he takes out his anger on the audience for the expectations placed on dancers. The small cruelties associated with the dance world are revisited here, as in Bausch's other works, including the pointe sequence in *Viktor* mentioned earlier, and *Bandoneon* (1980), in which one dancer recalls a ballet teacher holding a cigarette lighter under her knee to force her extension higher. In *Nelken*, however, these cruelties become the audience's responsibility, as Mercy confronts the spectator with his frustration as a dancer who seemingly cannot live up to expectations. A similar theme is at play in Jérôme Bel's *Véronique Doisneau* (2004), in which the eponymous Paris Opera Ballet dancer discusses her career as a performer who was, in her own words, 'never a star'. As in Bausch's dramaturgy, there is a knowingness that underlies the performance; these particular memories are not selected at random, but emerge from a process of questioning and a longer period of structuring and reworking. Indeed, this process represents Bausch's unique and highly influential choreographic technique—there is nothing spontaneous in her dancers' movements or words, but the careful stage management of the working process is never immediately apparent to her audience.



*Nelken* represents a strange combination of elements: childish playfulness and a humorous exploration of the dance world are overshadowed by a darker edge of authoritarianism, ever present in the recesses of the stage; Luke Jennings (2010) describes it as '[a] flower-strewn battlefield of human misunderstanding'. This contrast is perhaps most conclusively illustrated when one female dancer runs back and forward across the stage, screaming hysterically; her shrieks permeate the accompanying soundtrack, an excerpt from Schubert's String Quartet No. 14, *Der Tod und das Mädchen* ('Death and the Maiden'). This uncomfortable sequence comes to an abrupt halt as another dancer enters the stage to address the audience directly with the line, 'I just wanted to say how wonderful it is that you're all here tonight'. In the laughter that inevitably follows, Bausch transgresses the fourth wall once more. On this occasion, however, in order to thank the audience for its participation, acknowledging the presence of the spectator in a direct manner only infrequently experienced in the contemporary performance context.

## Conclusion

Movements in contemporary dance throughout the twentieth century continually sought to demonstrate the effort involved in its creation, in order to strip away the illusionistic qualities that had become so strongly associated with traditional forms. There is perhaps no more potent symbol of this tendency than Bausch's *Tanztheater*, in which her dreamlike choreographies seek to blur the boundaries between performer and spectator. In Bausch's postmodern dance theatre, while dancers may speak, either to one another or directly to the audience, their voices do not drive the narrative of the performance. Indeed, there is often a tendency to confuse the spectator further through their dialogues, whether they are nonsensical diatribes, requests for help, or amusing or painful anecdotes. Short vignettes,

often nonsensical or bizarre, move out of the stage environment, where they are safely 'contained', and into the audience. The role of the spectator is made active, and the understanding of reality as opposed to theatrical fiction is thrown into a degree of flux. Bausch's use of collage technique is an interesting link to Dadaist tendencies, something that is also evident in her use of non-linear narrative structures and repetition of individual gestures. However, this distinctive form of dance theatre should not be considered 'immersive' performance, in the sense that Gareth White (2012) has discussed; while Tanztheater Wuppertal's shows do invite a level of intimacy between spectator and performer, they nonetheless take place within the setting of a proscenium arch, and there is a tacit understanding that the actions onstage remain theatrical rather than openly and honestly confessional.

Gilpin (1997, p.175) observes that, 'Pina Bausch constructs performances in which the audience is presented with material that *appears* to be "events as they really occur"'. It is this fragile distinction between what appears to be an exploration of authenticity and the everyday, and the underlying truth of its fictionalisation that runs as a constant thread through Bausch's oeuvre. As her deconstructive method of dance theatre has evolved, the performance event has become increasingly confrontational and direct, engaging with the audience in a more challenging, sometimes provocative manner, and calling into question the very limits of the theatre space. This is perhaps the most influential element of Bausch's approach to postmodern performance practice, and her legacy is discernible in the work of artists such as Wim Vandekeybus, Lloyd Newson, and Mark Morris, as well as de Keersmaecker and Bel. Nevertheless, Bausch's (2007, p.10) own view was rather different; in her characteristically modest manner, she simply stated that: 'I never wanted to provoke. Actually, I only tried to speak about us'.

## Notes

1. The full titles of these pieces are *Blaubart: Beim Anhören einer Tonbandaufnahme von Béla Bartóks Oper 'Herzog Blaubarts Burg'* ('Bluebeard: While listening to a tape recording of Béla Bartók's opera "Duke Bluebeard's Castle") and *Er nimmt sie an der Hand und führt sie in das Schloß, die anderen folgen* ('He takes her by the hand and leads her into the castle, the others follow'). The latter is more commonly referred to as the *Macbeth-Project*, as the title refers to a German translation of the stage direction 'Exeunt', from *Macbeth* I.vi.
2. Description derived from a recording of *Viktor* performed in Wuppertal on 10 December 1994, courtesy of the Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch archive. This scene was also used in Wim Wenders' 2011 film, *Pina*, where the sequence was performed outside an industrial estate near Wuppertal.
3. *Kontakthof* has subsequently been reworked with separate casts of teenagers and adults over the age of 65, after the original version was largely consigned to the historical repertoire of the Tanztheater Wuppertal. My analysis of the piece is drawn from a version recorded in Venice on 16 June 1985, held in the Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch archive.
4. This analysis of *Nelken* is based on the 4 October 2008 recording at the Schauspielhaus Wuppertal, courtesy of the Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch archive. Lines quoted from the performance were originally spoken in English.

## References

- Bausch, P., 2007. *What moves me* (commemorative lecture on receipt of the Kyoto Prize in Arts and Philosophy). [http://emuseum.kyotoprize.org/sites/default/files/PinaBausch\\_doc\\_lct\\_e.pdf](http://emuseum.kyotoprize.org/sites/default/files/PinaBausch_doc_lct_e.pdf).
- Burt, R., 1995. *The male dancer: bodies, spectacle, sexualities*. London: Routledge. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4324/9780203359761>.
- Climenhaga, R., 2009. *Pina Bausch*. London: Routledge. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4324/9780203098950>.
- Cody, G., 1998. Woman, man, dog, tree: two decades of intimate and monumental bodies in Pina Bausch's tanztheater. *TDR: The Drama*

*Review*, 42(2), pp.115–131.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1162/dram.1998.42.2.115>.

Elswit, K., 2013. Ten evenings with Pina: Bausch's 'late' style and the cultural politics of coproduction. *Theatre Journal*, 65(2), pp.215–233.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/tj.2013.0056>.

Finkel, A., 1991. Gunsmoke. *The New Dance Review*, 4(2), pp.3–10.

Gilpin, H., 1997. Amputation, dismembered identities, and the rhythms of elimination: reading Pina Bausch. In: K. Jankowsky & C. Love, eds. *Other Germanies: questioning identity in women's literature and art*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press. pp.165–190.

Goldberg, M., 1989. Artifice and authenticity: gender scenarios in Pina Bausch's dance theatre. *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory*, 4(2), pp.104–117.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07407708908571132>.

Grieman, P., 2000. Performance review: 'Nelken'. *Theatre Journal*, 52(3), pp.416–418. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/tj.2000.0083>.

Handke, P., 1971. *Offending the audience*. Translated from German by M. Roloff. London: Methuen.

Jennings, L., 2010. Dance review: Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch. *The Guardian*. [online] 28 March. Available at:  
<http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2010/mar/28/tanztheater-wuppertal-pina-bausch> [Accessed 13 January 2014].

Manning, S., 2010. Pina Bausch: 1940-2009. *TDR: The Drama Review*, 54(1), pp.10–13. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1162/dram.2010.54.1.10>.

Müller, H. and Servos, N., eds., 1979. *Pina Bausch: Wuppertaler tanztheater: von Frühlingsopfer bis Kontakthof*. Cologne: Ballett-Bühnen Verlag.

Price, D., 1990. The politics of the body: Pina Bausch's 'Tanztheater'. *Theatre Journal*, 42(3), pp.322–331.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3208078>.

Servos, N., 2008. *Pina Bausch: dance theatre*. Translated from German by S. Morris. Munich: K. Kieser.

Wehle, P., 1984. *Nelken* by Pina Bausch: Avignon Festival, 30 July 1983.

*Theatre Journal*, 36(2), pp.241–243.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3206995>.

White, G., 2012. On immersive theatre. *Theatre Research International*, 37(3), pp.221–235.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/s0307883312000880>.

Wright, E., 1988. *Postmodern Brecht: a re-presentation*. London: Routledge.

## About the author

DR LUCY WEIR obtained her PhD in history of art and theatre studies from the University of Glasgow. Specialising in modern dance and performance studies, her research interests include experimental theatre practices, Viennese Actionism, and Japanese postwar performance. Lucy regularly gives public talks on the history of art and dance, and lectures on a variety of subject areas within art history and dance studies at the University of Glasgow and the Glasgow School of Art.