

REVIEW - I IS AN OTHER – 4/5 stars

I is an Other. Choreography: Arno Schuitemaker. Dance: Mitchell-lee van Rooij and Arno Schuitemaker. Music: Wim Selles. Light: Ellen Knops

Seen on 17/4 Chassé Theater, Breda

Tour: <http://www.arnoschuitemaker.com>

Schuitemaker takes the metaphor as his source of inspiration, and demonstrates how there can be a dialogue between two worlds.

Arno Schuitemaker is an aerospace engineer who went on to study choreography, and who as a choreographer, now combines science and dance. Following a successful production inspired by the phenomenon of the mirror neurons (*The Fifteen Project*), his current fascination is with the way in which our brains enable us to think in metaphors. Metaphorical language is revealed as being highly physical – the hours fly by, a leap in time, etc. – and this appealed to the dancer in him. It also led him to brood on the physical sensation of words.

I is an Other is a rational concept that has been overtaken, in every possible direction, by the moving, intuitive body. The situation is typical of Schuitemaker: transparent and intimate. He welcomes the audience and introduces himself as the choreographer, 'the brain'. This is his first time on stage. His partner in crime is Mitchell-lee van Rooij, the dancer. Then he talks about his source of inspiration, the metaphor, and they make a start. In total silence. Standing side by side. Only their heads turn gently with their eyes, as they scan the audience.

Initially, the story about the metaphor has an obstructive effect. An example such as 'man is a wolf' is an image-based comparison, but you have to let go of the habit of thinking in pictures (which comes in handy when you're writing about dance!) as quickly as possible, otherwise you miss the beauty of what is happening. *I is an Other*, the title of which is taken from a book by James Geary, plays with the essence of the metaphor: the linking and interweaving of dimensions. This is a general, perhaps even casual approach to an artwork, but its execution is absolutely stunning. Van Rooij, in the leading role, is confronted with a range of entities: light, sound, text and the choreographer constantly observing.

Roughly speaking, Van Rooij, who sublimely combines virtuosity and veracity, performs two solos. From looking at the audience, his upper body enters, step by step, into a hypnotic vortex, moving from left to right, from top to bottom and back again like the waving crown of a tree or a whirling figure of eight. There are bright red flashes, sharp shadows and a swelling composition by Wim Selles. In the following variation, he and Schuitemaker work through a series of tightly controlled hand gestures to a playful sound poem that they declaim themselves. Here, the arms are the highlights – angry, angular, and rebounding at lightning speed. Like a musical conductor run riot.

The climax, the 'solution', is clever and touching. The choreographer quits his contemplative position and launches his own, totally different body into the fray. Then you see how there can be a dialogue, a shared universe, between two different worlds. Which is exactly what a metaphor does.

Mirjam van der Linden, De Volkskrant