

# ZURICH

## The Hidden Formula

Human bodies appear on a stage, real and naked. Above them, virtual clothes are floating on large screens. The costumes move along with the humans, they seem to belong to them. But they turn out to be detached, empty and only simulated. The androgynous, puppet-like humans, bald and with sunglasses, move up and down, under and over, sometimes hectically like monkeys. Gradually, they go through different stages of development, moving calmly, marching synchronously, dancing at fast pace, flying into the sky and falling down. They learn how to change, to resist, to enter new spheres, but then again, they lock themselves in, and get restricted by cages and rules.

With reference to Plato's Allegory of the Cave, *The Hidden Formula* explores mechanisms of restriction as well as the human willpower to break free. At the same time, there is a close dialogue with the performance *Heavenly Palace*, which will be simultaneously staged at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre by the theatre group Zuni Icosahedron. *Heavenly Palace* refers to the 16th century Chinese novel *Journey to the West*, which embraces comparable elements of imprisonment and liberation.

In a unique, live-transmitted event, the two performances in Zurich and Hong Kong are united and can be seen simultaneously in both cities. The movements of the dancers are tracked by motion capture technology in order to generate projected live visual. At the same time, the recorded motion data is sent across the globe, where it is used to establish a dialogue of the dancers, separated by 9'000 kilometers and 6 hours of time difference.

**Performance venue** Konzertsaal 1, ZHdK

**Dimensions:** The size of the whole space is 168 sq m. Stage 1: 6x6 m (Tracked is 4x4m); Stage 2: 1.1x1.1 m; height of both stages: approx. 0.8 m.

**Motion capture:** The larger stage is tracked by Optitrack cameras (mounted to a rig above). The smaller stage is not tracked.

**Tracked Stage floor:** White dance carpet, otherwise black.

**Dancers** Sophie Bertschy, Alex Ferro and Cary Shiu appear on Stage 1 and are all tracked. The dancers have an androgyne appearance and seem to be naked, tracking markers are glued to their skin. All have bald heads and wear round mirror sunglasses and dance shoes. The two men are quite short. One of them has a very strong, athletic body, the other a rather transparent and slender appearance. Sophie, the female dancer, is quite tall.

Denise Lampart plays the counterpart, she appears on Stage 2 and is not tracked. She wears a white costume by Christa de Courage. Towards the end of the performance she may appear naked, too, colored with white chalk, hair open.

**Virtual Costumes** Whereas the dancers appear to be mostly naked on stage, virtual costumes are projected on the screens and are animated with mocap technology. The design of the costumes expresses cultural characteristics of East and West and involves a high degree of abstraction, through which cultural aspects are transformed into virtual structures and behaviors. As the virtual costume avoids to expose individual physical characteristics of the dancer (face or body texture) the individual identity becomes replaced by generic cultural conditions. This establishes dramaturgic tensions throughout symmetries and distinctions as well as facets of cultural and individual identities can be explored.

The virtual costumes are divided in two sections:

**West** Western philosophy and science are constructed with an analytical and rational approach. The Western representations are constructed by geometric forms tracking the shape of a human body. Associations: robot, mechanic structure, geometric form, artificial Intelligence. Costume forms and names:

- Straightedge - Twin - Wire - Geometry - Align

**East** In Eastern philosophy the human body is perceived as a system that underlines invisible forces of flowing energy which aspire to be kept in balance. The Eastern representations are constructed by soft and flexible form of fabric.

Associations: Chinese calligraphy, Chinese ink painting, Feng Shui, traditional medicine, Buddhism, Tai Chi. Costume Forms and Names:

- Flex Inward - Flex Outward - West - Drift - Bloom

**Objects** In the course of the performance the dancers will work with cubes, consisting of an aluminum framework. One large cube has the dimensions of 1.1x1.1x1.1 m, three small cubes are 0.4x0.4x0.4 m.

**Music** Thierry Le Mai, composer and sound designer. Tracks: Landscapes 1 - 4, Water and Elastique (reworked for the dance performance by Eric Larrieux and Denise Lampart. Soundscape from HK Studio.

**Lighting** Stage 1 and Stage 2 will have individual stage lights. The challenge is to separate them from the light that is spread by the projectors.

Performers  
**Sophie Bertschy**  
**Alex Ferro**  
**Cary Shiu**  
**Denise Lampart**

Choreographer  
**Denise Lampart**

Visual artist  
**Tobias Gremmler**

Music  
**Thierry de Mey**

Digital set artist & chief technician  
**Martin Fröhlich**

Sound design & engineering  
**Eric Larrieux**

MoCap technician  
**Norbert Kottmann**

Unity technician  
**Simon Broggi**

Stage manager  
**Andreas Birkle**

Sound supervisor  
**Olav Lervik**

Lighting technicians  
**Viktoras Zemeckas**  
**Thomas Utzinger**

Rigging technicians  
**Marco Quandt**  
**Matthias Röhm**  
**Hansi Hofmann**

Set technician  
**Hansruedi Näf**

Live multicam production  
**Marc Nathmann**

AV assistant  
**Davide Arizzoli**

Production assistant  
**Kristina Jungic**

Line producers  
**Chantal Haunreiter**  
**Andreas Birkle**

Project steering  
**Hartmut Wickert**

Project lead & executive producer  
**Christian Iseli**