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Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

L's Uncanny

ImpulsTanz Festival, 18.07.2026 [ENA]

Akemi Takeya's L's Uncanny is a riveting, disquieting exploration of transformation as a permanent condition, rather than a single event. The piece unfolds in the "dark zones" of perception—those thresholds where things are no longer what they were, but not yet clearly something else. Takeya inhabits these in-between states with a precision that is as conceptual as it is visceral.

Akemi Takeya is turning hybridity itself into her main choreographic material. The work continues her long-term project of "Lemonism," the performative toolbox through which she re-reads key artistic movements of the twentieth century. Here, the focus is Surrealism: not as art-historical style, but as direct engagement with the unknown fears and desires of the unconscious. Takeya doesn't illustrate Surrealist imagery; instead, she constructs situations in which logic frays, connections slip, and the body becomes the site where unbidden impulses emerge. Gestures break away from everyday sense, faces and postures tilt toward the eerie, and familiar structures in space are subtly twisted until they feel strangely wrong.

L's Uncanny feels like stepping into a "laboratory of automatism." Takeya's score for herself—physical, vocal, and spatial—allows for eruptions that seem to bypass conscious control while still being held within a clear compositional frame. Repeated motifs appear like compulsive tics, then expand into full-bodied phrases; sudden freezes interrupt flows, as if an internal censor had momentarily seized the system. The tension between automatic processes and deliberate shaping is the engine of the piece: you watch a performer constantly negotiating how much to let the unconscious speak, and how much to sculpt its outbursts.

Visually, Takeya's presence is characteristically "schillernd"—a flickering, many-layered persona that refuses to settle into a single identity. Costuming, light and sound all support this mercuriality, offering cues that suggest shifts of role, gender, and psychic state, then undermining them a beat later. Objects or scenographic elements may appear ordinary at first, only to become uncanny through repetition, juxtaposition or unexpected use. The space itself seems to thicken, emptied of narrative but full of potential for something irrational to happen.

What makes L's Uncanny so compelling is Takeya's absolute commitment to risk. She doesn't protect the audience from discomfort; instead, she invites them to share the unease of watching perception slide, of feeling that the familiar has sprouted a hidden second layer. At the same time, there is a dry, almost clinical

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humour in the way she constructs this “laboratory”: the work is serious, but not solemn. Surrealism here is less about grand dream images than about small, precise disturbances in how we expect bodies and meanings to behave.

As a chapter in her ongoing Lemonism, L’s Uncanny deepens Takeya’s proposition that performance can function as an analytic tool for art history—and for our own psychic economies. By letting the unconscious flicker through her body in rigorously shaped ways, she offers a rare, unsettling pleasure: the chance to watch the uncanny not as an effect added from outside, but as something generated live, in front of us, from within the performer’s own shifting lines of being.

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