

# Fortuitous Grace

**Original title:**

*Fast ein Wunder - Reenacting Gertrud Kraus*

*An intimate choreographic ode*

Compagnie Ode et encore ● Loulou Omer

## PRESENTATION OF THE PIECE

**“Fortuitous Grace” - [Original title, in German : *Fast ein Wunder - Reenacting Gertrud Kraus*] - 2019**

**An intimate choreographic ode - All audiences - Duration : 15 min.**

**Choreography, text, music :** Loulou Omer

**Artistic collaboration :** Goran Rebić

**Performance :** Loulou Omer

**Image and video :** Goran Rebić

**Light and technical design :** Dulci Jan

**Production/Touring :** Regarding Art-Verein für poly-artistische Kunst / Cie Ode et encore

**A choreographic and poly-artistic piece.**

**Commissioned by** Andrea Amort / *Verein Lebendiges Tanz-Archiv Wien* as part of the exhibition “Alles tanzt. Kosmos Wiener Tanz Moderne”

**Production:** Regarding Art - Verein für poly-artistische Kunst

**Coproduction and Support:** Theatermuseum Wien | MUK – Universität für Musik und Kunst der Stadt Wien / Verein Lebendiges Tanz-Archiv Wien | Vienna International Dance Festival ImpulsTanz 2021

Thank you to Andrea Amort, Tal Omer et Nataša Mirković



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*It is the touch of the buried mystery that would pre-determine the course of a life. It is the desire to revive what is no longer, to communicate with the absent, the kingdom of oblivion. It is the attempt to trace an evanescent past, a hidden origin, a lost treasure. It is a dialogue with the enigma of who we are - it is our relationship to history, to heritage, to memory.*

*Above all, it is a tribute to a woman whose life, passion and work have contributed to who I am and to my happiness. It is a tribute to my mother, who transmitted it to me, in her work and her motherhood towards me.*

*With this piece, I want to celebrate all mothers, not just biological mothers, but all those who lived, worked and gave, and then disappeared from the narrative of history.*

Loulou Omer

**Fortuitous Grace** - original title "Fast ein Wunder - Reenacting Gertrud Kraus" - is a tribute to Gertrud Kraus, one of the eminent choreographers of Expressionism and the Viennese Avant-Gardes of the interwar period . The singularity lies in particular in the fact that she touches my family history, but whose impact on the path of my life had escaped me.

"Fast ein Wunder" (Eng. title "Fortuitous Grace") was commissioned by curator Andrea Amort/Verein Lebendiges Tanz-Archiv Wien [AT], also co-produced by the University of Music and the Arts of the City of Vienna (MUK), with the support of the Vienna International Festival ImPulstanz 2021. Fast ein Wunder - Reenacting Gertrud Kraus, created in 2019 with the artistic collaboration of Goran Rebic, is a piece about Gertrud Kraus and her work confronting the question of memory, oblivion, chance and fate.

**Fortuitous Grace** is an intimate choreographic ode which is the fruit of a ghost-dialogue between Loulou Omer and Gertrud Kraus. A ghost-dialogue because the interlocutor is no longer alive and her work has left few traces. It is listening to an absence. It is the desire to summon this absence, to reconstitute a past, re-enact a life, a work, a story. It is the will to create a memory from an oblivion.

## ARTISTIC STATEMENT

*In 1935, due to the threat of National Socialism, Gertrud Kraus immigrated to Israel, where she became one of the founders of Israeli Modern Dance. Coincidentally, my mother, as a child, lived on the same street in Tel Aviv where Kraus' dance studio is located. Attracted by the sounds of the piano that flood the street, she stands at the window overlooking the basement studio, and watches with emotion what is happening inside. Enchantment and disappointment, because her family is too poor to offer her this kind of happiness. Yet one day, Gertrud Kraus invites her to come in and take part in the lessons. She then spends several years dancing with Kraus and enjoys a rich musical education. Kraus being a pianist graduated from the Vienna Conservatory of Music, she works her choreographies in a very musical way. It is therefore obvious for her to also transmit her musical culture. As a young woman, my mother will be part of the "Gertrud Kraus Dance Company". She then opened her own dance school, where I made my debut at 3 years old."*

© From my personal archive, my mother dancing with Gertrud Kraus



Re-enacting - re-constituting, is it bringing the past to life, making it present, giving it substance? Or would it be the making of the only image, like a facade behind which hides emptiness, absence, death, like the imprint of something that is no longer? And if it is the only imprint, would it not be precisely the very nature of memory? Memory as an imprint of a past event in our mind. And memory, would it not be a living thing, present and shareable?

These are the questions that led me to "grope" with my whole body in the photographic imprints of the dancer Gertrude Kraus, in particular in my personal archives, to make myself an imprint, to invest myself in a gestural corporeality, restraint, measured movements, stopped, and questioning the nature of this present time, performative of re-enactment, of its vitality, and of its relationship to me.

It is a back and forth between a "body-imprint" and a vibrating body - a presence in search of its landmarks, its history, its form and its movement - a body always in a state of becoming.

It is the desire to capture this elusive time that made me place the two scenic objects, a table and a piano, as far apart as possible - almost at the edge of the stage, leaving a great void between them. The present at the front and the past at the back, and between the two is what I reincarnate. A simple table, which I find every time in the theatre, on the spot, a table which belongs to here and now, where I am, where I work, where I ask my questions and tell my story to the public. The piano belongs to the past, to the heritage that I was offered without knowing it, to my personal, intimate history, to the unconscious perhaps. It is in the space that separates them, without objects or landmarks, neither present nor past, in this void, that my mother's song finds me.



## Artistic Process of the Compagnie Ode et encore

### “CHOREOGRAPHY OF A SOUND POETRY” - A poly-artistic practice / Dance – Music – Poetry

**Choreography of a Sound Poetry** is an interdisciplinary approach that I have been practising and developing for several years in the fields of dance, music and poetry. **It's a poly-artistic approach.** I understand it as a sensitivity and artistic practice that I use in multiple aesthetic and expressive forms. Very different, even distant artistic qualities are revealed that can be combined in the same form.

I borrow this term from various modern and contemporary artistic movements and artists, such as William Kentridge, with whom I feel close. His poly-artistic approach unfolds an astonishing variety of forms of expression, from which a particularly coherent and unique universe emerges. It exudes a great freedom, a creative freedom that, in my opinion, is applicable to all freedoms, especially political freedom - also an important aspect, albeit much more implicit, in my work.

By adopting this term for myself, I pay homage to the idea of freedom as fundamentally constitutive of art and human beings. This idea of freedom is both the engine of my artistic gesture and claim, source and goal, subject and object at the same time. I plant them at the core of my artistic approach, which is my way of being in the world, my being.

Alongside this work of experimenting and creating in each of these disciplines, my artistic approach explores their relationships - their tensions, their influences and mutual transformations - up to their merging into one entity, one space, one event, one body, here and now, to a coherence in an apparent heterogeneity.

What connects us all is the back and forth between the familiar and the strange when encountering the world, the back and forth between understanding and misunderstanding, between security and discomfort. For me it touches on what was called in ancient Greece: cosmos and chaos. In the work I try not to feel safe, not to relax in the face of familiar forms that have become hollow in a world of constant movement.

I value both heritage and tradition, cultural assets – thoughts, techniques, rules – tradition, memory, continuity and repetition. All the things that make us who we are. I am fascinated by the tension between these two poles, the familiar and the unknown, harmony and dissonance, cosmos and chaos, a vital tension that accompanies and nourishes my work - how to carry past and future into the present.

I attach great importance to the practice in daily work. It is the permanent repetition of the selected and transmitted forms that generates and sustains my inner movement. The resulting insight, like my stepping stone into the unknown, is always in search of “new information to change the world”.

**The body, its presence, its organic existence** - which was born, lives and will die - and the "I", carrier of its story, interacts with music and words that inhabit and transform it. It, the "I", produces and perceives them. Object and subject merge, they become one.

My physicality carries a different story, it speaks its own language with its own vocabulary and syntax. It is then as if the body were speaking from another level of consciousness: its language is itself, performatively.

**This performative writing** does not stabilise around an explicit meaning, a fixed form, it never stops moving. My creative process is allowed to be visible, meaning slips and meanings collide.

**In my writing, the words**, with an already percussive sound and an enigmatic polysemy, refer to the time and rhythm they create themselves. The poem, sung or spoken from a sonorous and extremely physical score, thus superimposes various signs, meanings and meaning.

**The music** unfolds at the intersection of popular traditions, classical and contemporary music in an often minimalist and dissonant approach.

These created elements are deconstructed, transformed through unusual musical twists and transported into the urgency of the present through a pulsating rhythm.

To the **hybridization of art forms** is added a **multilingual script** with its scenographic and musical embodiment: it then creates different levels of accessibility for the public, depending on the foreignness or familiarity of the language, its culture, its history, its sound. It evokes different universes and places them close and in relation to each other. In this way I offer the audience to have their own experience of their inner "landscape". The words are repeated, translated by intertwining the different languages - the original language and its translation, the foreign language or the one understood by the native audience.

Playing with the interchangeability of the translated language depending on the geographical and cultural venue is part of my approach and falls under **the question of translatability** for me.

Driven by restlessness, I venture into diversity - the diversity of forms, disciplines and cultures. I try to touch otherness, my otherness and the other's, to live and deal with confusion or even merging. I look for the disorder, the dissonance, the transcendence of my contours in order to touch the other.

**Choreography of A Sound Poetry is a philosophy, a manifesto and a practice.** It is the starting point that allows the emergence and unfolding of different forms. Each project evolves according to the theme it pursues, its own challenges, its location and its artistic collaborators. A kind of love for being and its mystery, an ode et encore.



## Artistic Team

### THE COMPAGNIE ODE ET ENCORE/REGARDING ART VEREIN

The *Ode et encore / Regarding Art-Verein für poly-artistische Kunst Company* is based in Vienna. Its work increasingly deals with **an aesthetic and linguistic diversity, starting from a transdisciplinary approach**, which is reflected in the artistic process developed by the company, **“Choreography of a Sound Poetry”**.

This practice combines several disciplines that Loulou Omer practices separately - dance, music and writing, particularly poetry - and explores their relationships and interactions by bringing them together in a single form.

**The company's research, writing and artistic work draws inspiration and material** from philosophical, historical and political reflections, thus generating projects that are explicitly or implicitly linked to the “situated place”, its history and identity.

**This increasingly central question of cultural and geographical anchoring** of the individual, his subjectivity, the question of autobiography and self-narrative in regards to the group and history, has awakened the desire and need to cross borders again and extend them to France. A country and a culture that is part of Loulou Omer's personal autobiography. France, her first artistic adoption country, also represents being different from her native Israel and the German-speaking culture in which she has lived for several years and works with a multicultural team of artists.

Due to its diverse and changing identity and its desire to question and highlight border areas at all levels, the company is oriented towards the border region of France, Région Grand Est. With this new orientation, the company intends to implement projects in the Grand Est region. **Beyond the realisation of their artistic work, the development of an artistic education and an exchange in closer relationship with the audience is desired and planned, and this should also be continued and actively developed in Vienna and Austria.**

This development is also part of an **emerging European and international dynamic that the company is developing to present its works and embrace new sustainable partnerships with cultural institutions.**



## LOULOU OMER - ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

### Choreographer, author, musician and composer

Originally from Israel, Loulou Omer is a dancer, choreographer, musician and poet. In Tel Aviv, she takes music and dance lessons as a child with the encouragement of her mother Zipporah Omer, herself being a dancer from an early age with the renowned avant-garde choreographer [Gertrud Kraus](#).

At the age of 20, Loulou Omer joins the Israeli company "[Nir Ben-Gal and Liat Dror Company](#)" for a European tour, then arrives in Paris thanks to a grant from the Institut Français de Tel-Aviv to follow a training workshop with Maguy Marin.

Between 1992 and 1997, she lives between Paris and Brussels and takes further training courses with various choreographers (including Josef Nadj, the Pina Bausch company and Michèle Anne de Mey). It is in Brussels that she devotes herself entirely to her choreographic work, both solo and with other dancers and artists (Compagnie Mossoux-Bonté, Paul Wenninger, etc.).

In 1997, she is awarded with the 1st price of the "Festival des Jeunes Chorégraphes Contemporains de Pantin". She does not return to live in Israel; she settles in Vienna where she pursues her artistic work. Her relocation to Berlin in 2007 and then her return to Vienna in 2016 mark a turning point. During this period, and up until today, she has been incorporating into her choreographic practice other disciplines that she has practised in parallel for several years: writing, singing and musical composition. The Berlin years were particularly devoted to music and writing, especially poetry, which she had been immersed in all her childhood thanks to her father [Ayin Hillel \(Omer\)](#), a celebrated Israeli poet.

Her work increasingly takes a transdisciplinary approach, intertwining dance, music and poetry, and cultivating a multitude of aesthetics and languages. Questions of cultural and geographical rootedness - in relation to the individual, his or her subjectivity, autobiography and self-narration in relation to the group and History - are also taking on a central role. It is this approach, drawn from the experience of the multitude - of arts, cultures and languages - has given rise to a particular working method, a philosophy and a practice: [Choreography of sound poetry](#).

She creates poly-artistic pieces, integrating all these disciplines, notably in "[Fast ein Wunder - Reenacting Gertrud Kraus](#)" (commissioned by Vienna's Theatermuseum, 2019) and presented amongst others at Impulstanz - International Dance Festival Vienna in 2021, as well as "[Hinsichtlich der Frage](#)" (2017) that premiered at Das Off Theater.

Loulou Omer collaborates with other artists, for her own projects or as associate artist. Some of them include visual and multimedia artists Simon Wachsmuth and Isa Rosenberger, percussionist Tobias Steinberger, her husband, film director and screenwriter Goran Rebic, and her sister, author and theatre director Tal Omer.

She is awarded the "2021 Exile Poetry Price" by Austrian association and publishing house Exil. e.V., jointly with the Literaturhaus in Vienna [AT]. In 2023, she is the recipient of a writing grant from the City of Vienna (Austria) for the "[Rhapsodic Writing](#)" project (one-year writing grant). She is currently working on the piece [Curriculum Vitae](#) and on the extended reprise of the play "Fast ein Wunder", [Au hasard la mémoire](#).



## Contact

### Artistic Director :

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## Videos and infos of previous works

**Fast ein Wunder - Reenacting Gertrud Kraus (2019) - 15 min.** <https://vimeo.com/699415934>

### Press on FEW

<https://onlinemerker.com/wien-theatermuseum-eroica-saal-rosalia-chladek-reenacted-part-ii/>

<https://www.tanzschrift.at/buehne/kritisch-gesehen/1366-impulstanz-kosmos-wiener-tanzmoderne>

**The Art Of Memory** - An evening in 3 parts based on two figures of Viennese modern dance, conceived and proposed by Loulou Omer and Simon Wachsmuth: <https://www.odeetencore.org/en/productions/the-art-of-memory>

- **Qing (2017)** screendance installation by S. Wachsmuth in collaboration with L. Omer - 20 min. <https://vimeo.com/704187619>
- **“Fast ein Wunder - Reenacting Gertrud Kraus” (15 min)** or **“Au Hasard la Mémoire” (recreation of Fast ein Wunder) (30 min) (2022)**, choreographic and poly-artistic works by Loulou Omer  
[Sound Excerpt](#) (Au Hasard la Mémoire)
- **Performative exchange/gathering with the audiences - 30 min.**

**Curriculum Vitae** - Excerpts from residencies (*Creation 2024-25*)

<https://vimeo.com/channels/cieodeetencore>

**Rhapsodic Writing** - Writing process around Curriculum Vitae

<https://www.odeetencore.org/en/rhapsodic-writing>

**Hinsichtlich der Frage (2017)**

<https://vimeo.com/701017336>

### Music

<https://www.odeetencore.org/de/musik>