



Storm Møller Madsen

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T4t togetherness in Jules Fischer's performance Vanitas

By Storm Møller Madsen

*To my queer and trans siblings - I hope you make it home.
'Cause you have always known. It hurts to become.
Love, Jules¹*

I saw *Vanitas (the musical)* a few years back. I felt something during that performance that I have no words for, but still know, I have to write about. Wanting to find the words for it – somehow. I know Jules, but not well. I send them the abstract for the proposed article and a few lines about wanting to write about *Vanitas*. I hear back almost immediately. I am nervous about their response. They are excited I want to write about their work, and they like the abstract.

They write: “Of course. It is very meaningful and healing to be read through the t4t lens”. Our t4t practices are healing practices. Their work for me. My work for them. Our own circuit of t4t.

This article started with a feeling, one I could not shake after I saw Jules Fischer's performance, *Vanitas (the musical)*.² *Vanitas* was a performance and total installation of 45 minutes with four performers that took place at The Free Exhibition Building in Copenhagen in June of 2022.³ Jules Fischer is a Danish, non-binary choreographer and visual artist whose work is placed between the fields of visual art and dance. They have excelled in creating large scale

1) From the program of *Vanitas (the musical)*.

2) From now on *Vanitas*.

3) *Vanitas* has also been shown at Arken Museum of Contemporary Art and S.P.I.T. Festival. This article will focus on the performance, I saw live, at The Free Exhibition Building in 2022.

performance installations exploring community and ambivalence while centering queer and trans life both in casting, collaborations and performances.⁴

What I felt in the audience of *Vanitas* was like an echo of a feeling I can have when I am with other trans people.⁵ A sense of belonging, a feeling of a collective, yet dispersed, knowing or experience; of a kinship. As many trans people gathered around *Vanitas* there was a strong feeling of a togetherness in knowing something trans alongside one another. During the performance, I had a clear sense that those of us who were trans experienced the performance differently than the rest of the audience. It was a feeling of being trans among other trans people, experiencing a trans performance for trans people. As I started to work with *Vanitas*, I began to think of what I experienced during the performance as t4t (trans-for-trans) togetherness. And of *Vanitas* as a t4t performance – from trans people for trans people.

T4t

T4t, most basically, means trans-for-trans. The term appeared in early 2000s Craigslist personals, working to both “sequester trans folks from the categories of “m” and “w” [man and woman] and enable some kind of us to find one another for hookups” (Awkward-Rich and Malatino 2022, 2). In contemporary trans culture the term remains in relation to trans intimacy and desire but also to trans separatist social forms, practices of mutual aid and emotional support. As trans porn performer Chloe Corrupt says, “T4t means something a bit more political now. It means looking out for our people first” (J. Hall 2023). In this sense t4t entails a togetherness and community around trans people, but it also indicates that there is an urgent need for caring for one another within this marginalised group.

The history, potentials and pitfalls of t4t has recently received attention through a special issue of *The Transgender Studies Quarterly* where several trans studies scholars from different fields engage with t4t as, among others,

4) See images and read more about *Vanitas* and Jules Fischer’s work at www.julesfischer.com.

5) I employ trans as involving claims of gendered personhood related to corporeality and embodiment. Inclusive of everyone who understand themselves in relation to that word as a descriptor of selfhood or lived experience (Malatino 2022).

a practice and an activist strategy imbedded within desire, hope and survival. But also issues of sameness and risks of ignoring differences within the rubric of t4t and the trans community at large (Awkward-Rich and Malatino 2022b).

T4t is a form of separatism. It is about trans people looking for and out for trans people. In their research on separatist practices in BiPOC artists collectives in the Nordic countries, cultural studies scholars Anna Meera Gaonkar and Cecilie Ullerup Schmidt examine what politics of emotion circulate within separatist communities. Separatism is a political strategy and not an ideology for definitive or permanent separation; it is about “[a] group deliberately choosing to emphasise a common marker of ascribed difference that makes its members feel minoritised in society” (Gaonkar and Schmidt 2024, 94–95, my translation). What brings and binds the members of a separatist grouping together is their shared affective experiences – the affective implications of being marginalised.⁶ Separatist organising is often associated with a fight for rights; separatism in the form of a *means* – an aim of increased inclusion, visibility, or representation. I am, though, more interested in how separatism can also be understood as a goal in and of itself – an aim of “just” being separate together. This brings me closer to the potential of what happens when trans people, through their togetherness, form spaces experienced as “breathing spaces, shields, or armies” (Gaonkar and Schmidt 2024, 99 - my translation).

In his book *Side Affects* (2022), trans studies scholar Hil Malatino beautifully explains t4t as, simultaneously, a necessary place to escape cisgender interpellation and a transphobic reality, and as spaces of trans communal love, care, and healing, echoing the potential of the separatist space as a shield and breathing space. Malatino writes:

t4t emerges from a recognition that trans subjects, too, might benefit from a severing of ties to cissexist modes of interpellating trans bodies (as failures, fakes, inorganic, inauthentic) and, moreover, that such strategic separatism might be one of the most direct routes toward cultivating self-love, self-regard, and self-care (...) The hope is that, in community with one another,

6) I do not categorically distinguish between affect and emotion, but, drawing on queer feminist theory, understand both as socially constructed, contributing to the formation of groups and individuals (Ahmed 2014).

insulated – however temporarily – from cissexist modes of perception, some significant healing might be possible. (Malatino 2022, 45)

T4t is strongly connected to a politics of care, healing, and resilience. In a world that seems continuously occupied with eradicating or limiting trans life and makes the possibilities for imagining and practicing trans living constricted, especially for black, indigenous, and POC trans communities, t4t has expanded from a method of calling in a sexual partner online to a call for community, a political statement, a healing practice and a way for trans people to exist, think and come together outside of cisnormative perceptions of transness.

Trans representation and trans affective togetherness

Before I get into the analysis of *Vanitas*, I want to address the dynamics of trans representation and affective circulation in cultural production focused on trans life. This is important, as what I experienced during Jules Fischer's performance significantly stands in opposition to a feeling I know too well; that of being trans in the audience of a performance as an object of a trans story addressing a cisgender audience. These experiences are, I believe, the result of well-meaning artists that bring trans narratives on stage to represent trans and gender non-conforming people and enhance understanding and empathy for a diverse spectrum of gendered life. These performances on trans life, though, are made to appeal to cisgender audiences – or at least do not actively disturb or trouble how easily cisgender affect circulates in the performance space – most simply because cisgender audiences are used to being addressed by what they see.

In the introduction to the important anthology on trans cultural production and visibility, *Trap Door* (2017), the editors, trans activist and filmmaker Tourmaline, trans studies scholar Eric A. Stanley and art historian Johanna Burton, critically engage with the potentials but also disheartening pitfalls of representation when it comes to cultural production on trans life and trans visibility. On one hand representation, through cultural production, “offers – or, more accurately, (...) is frequently offered to us as – the primary path through which trans people might have access to livable lives.” (Tour-

maline, Stanley, and Burton 2017, xv). Yet, on the other hand, the editors address the critical simultaneity of increasing trans visibility and increasing anti-trans violence (especially for trans women of colour) and the limiting imagining of transness in trans representation often made for the purpose of consumption and education of a cisgender audience.

Media and communication studies scholar Lucy Miller argues that artworks focusing on trans life often adopt and reinforce cisnormative views of transness. Being cisgender is the point of identification and transness thus must be explained and often serves an educational purpose for the cisgender audience. When the trans narrative appeals to a cisgender audience, transness and trans life comes to exist through its relation to cisgender normativity, limiting the understanding of what it means to be trans and supporting a cisnormative ideology (Miller 2017). Transness comes into being by the eliciting of particular emotional responses from the cisgender audience. This positions trans life within a binary and cisnormative discourse of trans affect; between dysphoric, unhappy pre-transition and happy post-transition (Crawford 2015). A reproduction and circulation of affect related to Raymond Williams' structures of feelings as transnormative structures of feeling (Williams 1977, 128; Malatino 2022, 8). Shared affective circulation in trans representation too often becomes on the cisgender audience premises, limiting not only how transness can be understood, but also how we, who are trans, can experience and imagine ourselves.

Being mindful of how representation can and is being used to restrict trans flourishing and becoming I return to Tourmaline, Stanley and Burton, who insist nonetheless on affording critical attention to representation's formative and transformative power with a call to collectively work to bring "new visual grammars into existence (while remembering and unearthing suppressing ones)" (Tourmaline, Stanley, and Burton 2017, xviii). I believe this imagining of new grammars as well as remembering and unearthing suppressing ones is part of the work done in *Vanitas* through negotiating the unified audience experience and centering a knowing trans togetherness.

T4t methodology

Through this article I want to analyse the audience experience and affective togetherness in *Vanitas*. In doing so, I wish to propose a switch in focus from *how* we, the supposed general audience, can feel with the performing subjects and co-create a shared affective space in the performance situation, to *who* can feel with and share feelings with; and more importantly with what consequences, potential and on whose terms. As such I pick up where other performance studies scholars have left off in arguing for the transformative potential of the performance situation as a place for community formation through affective togetherness (Fischer-Lichte 2008). But I also depart from the notion of a unified audience community as I am interested in the ways, I believe, Jules Fischer's performance troubles a unified (cis)affective experience in performance to make other (trans)affective spaces possible.

I employ a t4t methodology as a way of foregrounding the relations established between the performance and the trans person that encounters them. T4t is a suggestion of reading the work in terms of who they are made for – a question of directionality by which the *for* takes the form of a *for you*. It is a methodological proposal through which I can read the directionality of the artwork as t4t performative gestures; from (someone's) trans becoming to (someone's) trans becoming. As I analyse the affective and embodied potential of the performance, my own experience and affective response to it, as a transperson, becomes a part of the material I analyse. As such I analytically move between levels of personal and affective experience and a reflective and analytical level. The transness and trans togetherness I find in the performance is fundamentally connected to my own trans experience – what I analyse is formed by the encounter with me and shape my transness in return.⁷

I am invested in paying attention to and analysing the trans audience experience, the relation between performers and audiences, and the potential of a t4t togetherness manifesting outside of cisnormative perceptions of transness: How does trans togetherness manifest – between the performers and between the performers and the audience – how does it feel and what does it do? In

7) For the analysis of *Vanitas*, the data I have used is video as well as visual documentation from the performance. I saw the performance live in 2022, in the t4t methodology, the data I analyse also includes my own experience.

this reading, more than creating a unified or “universal” affective potential in *Vanitas*, it becomes possible to suggest Fischer’s performance as one of non-shared, even divided, affective spaces and multifaceted trans affects and experiences. And to analyse the trans becomings the performance makes possible in the formation of a temporary t4t togetherness.

Last, but not least, I employ a t4t methodology, along the lines of trans studies scholar Nico Miskow Friborg, to open up the art works I engage with, and position my own academic work, as practices of t4t solidarity that emerge from and seek to contribute to our ongoing collective struggles for trans liberation (Friborg 2023, 67).

Vanitas

Vanitas is a collage of many forms: Music, live singing, repeating sequences of everyday gestures, poetry and movie quote recitation, touching, humming, synchronised choreography, and stillness. It is a collaboration between choreographer Jules Fischer and composer Mathilde Böcher, with costumes by Camilla Lind. The choreography is made in collaboration with the four performers Kai Merke, Andreas Haglund, Julienne Doko, and Ani Bigum Kampe.

When I saw *Vanitas* at The Free Exhibition Building in Copenhagen in the summer of 2022 it was just days after the Oslo Pride shooting in 2022 where two members of the LGBTQIA+ community had been shot and multiple people hurt. As we, members of this community, gathered around *Vanitas*, we were all increasingly aware of the growing precarity of our lives and community. I felt a sigh of relief to be in the room with so many others who similarly needed, just then, to feel a sense of togetherness.

As I enter the dim lit room in the basement of The Free Exhibition Building, and walk downward and across a large scaffold, the four performers are positioned towards the back concrete wall. They barely move, like a still life painting, they appear stiff and lifeless, but intensely present at the same time. They take the audience in with gazes soft and inviting. Earthy scents fill the space. The audience spread underneath, on top, or on the stairs of the scaffold. So slowly I can almost not detect the change, the performers’ faces transform in loops of expressions: Flickering eyes, open mouth, smiles. Soon



Julienne Doko, Ani Bigum Kampe, Kai Merke, and Andreas Haglund in *Vanitas*. Photograph by Art in a Day, 2022.

faster. More insisting. A voice says, “Don’t be afraid”. The performers leave the space and re-enter from the top of the scaffold to the repeating sound of “open your eyes”; a track soon replaced by the performers singing “open your eyes” repeatedly.

There is something at stake in how we, as audiences, meet the performers. We enter a world that already exists. The performers are inviting, yet distanced. Setting the tone for how they are met, on what premises we, as audiences, are encountering them. It is their space we enter. It is their community we meet. There is an invitation to witness but with direction of how to perceive; “Don’t be afraid”, “open your eyes”. Like an encouragement to dare to see the world anew.

Embodied work

Throughout the performance the performers repeat short segments of movements. No section of movement seems to end before the next one begins. The performers explore their own movements. Practice moving. At times there is a certain tension in their movements as if they are trying to break out of them or break through them: fully embody or shake them off. Vanitas; a world of change and bodies in flux.

As trans or gender non-confirming people we know gender is work. Work that every day is done as we either succeed, fail, or refuse to perform normative (white) maleness or femaleness. Whether we fail or pass is based on the recognition from others. It can sometimes feel like we do not own our bodies or ourselves – we are determined by the encounters we have with others and forces we do not control. Hil Malatino writes in *Trans Care* (2020) how we, as trans people, exists in, at best, an ambivalent, at worst, toxic relation to the gender (normative) conditions through which we become: “we labor under conditions we don’t choose, conditions that many of us actively want to destroy” (Malatino 2020, 38). We practice and try to find our way through the gendered norms our bodies are constantly held up against and which many of us wish to disturb or even abolish. What is at stake though is our safety and selfhood, given through recognition; and the risk of losing it.

In *Vanitas* the performers move together and alone. They mirror each other's movements or exhaust a movement and then move on. They slow down, meet each other in intimate moments; caressing or hugging. They touch themselves and each other; cuddle, stroke one another. They look; witnessing each other. Finding their way through their own and each other's bodies. *Vanitas* is a space for practicing embodiment and togetherness. There is a searching for a way of being, being together and learning (to be) alongside one another. Reminiscent of a t4t space as a space for learning together "what we want to become, what we desire, how we want to live in these so often fraught body-minds" (Awkward-Rich and Malatino 2022a, 7). A collective ambivalent labouring of trans embodiment. Needing one another to move closer to ourselves.

There is a strong sense of just being in the space. A timelessness and a sense of passing time. A dramaturgy neither carried forward by progress in a storyline nor halted by nothing happening; but a being in the time we have together. A sense of getting by. I am reminded of how Malatino describes t4t as a blueprint for trans people to be in and survive what he calls the interregnum; the space often defining transness in popular discourse and many of our lives: Between an (unwanted) starting place and the promise of a changed body. By focusing on being (together) in the interregnum Malatino side-steps the future-oriented narrative that reduces trans experiences and affects to being stretched out between a moving away from a past and towards a promised future – a cruel optimistic future which orients transness towards a cisnormative promise of happy embodiment (Berlant 2011). Malatino argues that what he calls "a t4t praxis of love" offers a proposal "for getting by in the interregnum, which may end up being the only time we have" (Malatino 2022, 49). I understand my experience of *Vanitas* along the lines of Malatino's t4t praxis of love as a performative manifestation of a being together in the interregnum. An honouring of the space, time and affects spend in the in-between – in the hours, days, months and years spent waiting, dreaming, doubting, trying and practicing becoming who we hope or long to be. A t4t space which offers to hold and honour the multiplicities of trans affect, togetherness, and becomings in the in-between where many of us reside; hope, doubt, shame, practice, playfulness, imitation, envy, frustration, joy. In this

space there is room for other structures of feeling than the ones possible when our transness is braced against cisnormativity – room for the multiplicity of affectivity and becomings being trans entails.

There is a knowingness between the performers in *Vanitas* as they return to or depart from one another. Observe each other move or sing. Mirroring and touching each other, being together. A temporary t4t space, I recognise in *Vanitas*, where we, as trans people, are together in embodied practicing and becoming. Where I affectively feel (with) others through our shared experiences and knowledges of being trans. A t4t space which centers a trans affective experience and togetherness. A sense of collective intimacy. Being alone together and together alone. But also, a sense of alongsidedness, not an idealised community or unity.

Together alongside

There is an ambivalence towards unified expression in the way we, as audiences, experience *Vanitas*. The performance is not centralised in its expression; several meetings and moments happen simultaneously. The performers move around, on top, under and alongside the scaffold. I see some moments up close, some at a distance, others I might only hear, or sense, is happening. I can see the other members of the audience and their physical presence becomes a part of the performance tableau. Intimate moments are created between the performers and members of the audience through eye contact or physical closeness; then dissolved. Almost like encounters on a dancefloor or at a party.

Halfway through *Vanitas* three performers gather and perform the only set of synchronised movements in the performance. One performer starts, another joins, a third descends from the scaffold to join. While they move, the fourth performer puts on a motorcycle helmet dressed as a disco ball; spins around so the lights reflect in small dots across the room: a dance floor manifests. On the concrete floor the three performers do a movement sequence consisting of swaying movements, an extrovert soft reaching out, a more introvert self-caressing. They repeat. Their bodies move alongside one another or diagonally towards each other to create waves across the room. In ebbs and flows they arrive and depart from one another. Never touching or



Kai Merke and Andreas Haglund in *Vanitas*.
Photograph by Art in a Day, 2022.

looking at each other. Their moving together feels tender and soft. No sense of a comparison or competition between them or their abilities to perform the movements. There is an innate knowing of each other's bodies as effortless movements become invitations for others to join, stay in and leave when they want – to continue their own bodily practicing. An embodied togetherness to tab into. A collective doing of a well-known embodied pattern. Not of sameness or unity though; the movements are not synchronised with intentions of forming a singular body or hide differences in movement patterns or bodies. As the swaying, reaching and caressing travels across the differently racialised bodies, differently gendered bodies, the embodied collective appears in all its differentiation unsettling a sameness in the embodied togetherness. As the performers embody the same movements it becomes clear how differently the movements take shape as they travel across bodies. An ambivalence towards sameness and an attention to how their performing bodies are differently perceived and recognised.

In *Vanitas* a togetherness is formed around the practicing of embodiment alongside other's practicing and becoming. But also, through a shared, ambivalent affective relation we as trans people often have towards our own embodied practicing – collectively and alone. An ambivalence towards the gendered norms we unwillingly risk reproducing and a collectivity that risks erasing the differences and dissonance within our communities. Amidst this space of embodied and communal ambivalence lies a tension in what is at stake in performing and being recognised through the ability to repeat of (gender)normative culture: an ability that can mean the difference between inclusion and dismissal – even death.

Bodies headed somewhere

Towards the end of the performance Ani Bigum Kampe sings parts of Ocean Vuong's poem "Someday I'll Love".⁸ She sings:

*Here's the room with everyone in it.
Your dead friends passing through you
like wind through a wind chime.
Yes, here's a room
so warm & blood-close
Here's a desk
with the gimp leg & a brick to make it last.
I swear, you will wake –
& mistake these walls
for skin.*

As her voice echoes through the basement of The Free Exhibition Building, the space fills with those we lost. Here; in the room with everyone in it, where dead friends are passing through us. Our transcestors present in the words, in our trans bodies, in the gestures of connection, in the walls becoming skin. Kampe lays on the floor and the remaining three performers form a

8) The song can be found here: <https://vimeo.com/788663231>.

choir singing along while they dress the contours of her body with their own clothes. They sing repeatedly:

*Don't be afraid, don't worry
the most beautiful part of your body is where it's headed.*

*Don't be afraid, don't worry,
the most beautiful part of your body is where it's headed.*

(Vuong 2015)



Julienne Doko, Ani Bigum Kampe, Kai Merke, and Andreas Haglund
in *Vanitas*. Photograph by Michella Bredahl, 2022.

Kampe gets up. A trace of her body remains – resembling the chalk outline marking a crime – honouring, giving a body to, the community members we lost. The performers engage in a collective embrace while the music continues – moving slowly together. A collective mourning over lost friends. They leave the embrace one by one. Returning to their own sequence of movements or sitting quietly observing the others.

The press material for *Vanitas* emphasises themes of change, movement and community of the performance. In the light of the Oslo shooting, the performance took on additional meaning. *Vanitas* became not only a symbol of change or impermanence but of literal death. The societal and political backdrop on which *Vanitas* took place, seeped into the performance space which became a space for mourning, resilience, and survival in the eyes of queer- and transphobic backlash, hate and trans suicidality. Trans togetherness, that spaces of coming together, manifested itself as even more urgent, acutely necessary for those of us left to survive. Gathering to mourn loved ones. Gathering to live. Trans life and togetherness between those extremes.

As *Vanitas* comes to an end, the performers sit calmly immersed with the audience, singing, making eye contact with the audience. Just being together. Intense and tenderly. An honouring of the ways we just gathered. As the performers leave the space, a song echoes in the room repeatedly: “I hope you make it home. I hope you make it home”.⁹

All bodies are headed somewhere. But for some of us, this heading is particularly present. Whether through corporeal transitions, made to move closer to ourselves as trans people, or members of our communities passing as a result of transphobic violence or suicide. It is this heading that lands, and often keeps, us in the interregnum – in the in-between. Bodies heading and bodies in the interregnum can seem like dissimilar embodied temporalities, but in *Vanitas* as well as, I believe, in trans becoming, they are weaved together. Trans becoming shaped by and through change and stagnation. Trans life in between living and dying. Trying to get home to ourselves and make it home safely.

9) From the song “Make it Home” (2020) by Tobe Nwigwe.

Repairing togetherness

There is distinct space in *Vanitas* for those of us with a strong knowingness of heading somewhere. Where trans bodies of the past and the futures are present. What I find important in *Vanitas*, as an expression of trans becoming and t4t togetherness, is that transness is not exposed or explained. The performers do not explain themselves, their body or their story. We do not get to know them or understand them. There is a strategic refusal to make an effort to become subjects within the normative discourses that offers trans people selfhood. A refusal towards recognition on transnormative terms. Instead, *Vanitas* offers a space through movements, expressions, touch, and sounds where transness can be recognised and experienced on its own terms. Performance is fundamentally about appearing for one another, and *Vanitas* troubles the ways trans bodies can appear and exposes the ambivalence, complexity, and togetherness in the ways we work to be recognised how we want. Appear for each other in the forms we chose. And find our ways to these forms alongside one another.

In Gordon Hall's short but impactful text, "Party Friends"(2015), they write about the damaging objectification that many of us, as trans people, live with every day. One that determines what we are and how we can become. Hall thinks through ways of counteracting "the shattering effects of discriminatory objectification not by striving to convince the public that 'yes we actually are subjects'" (G. Hall 2015, 154) – risking to reproduce transnormative structures of recognition founded on cisnormative perception of transness. Instead Hall proposed what they call "reparative mutual objectification" (G. Hall 2015, 155) as a way to counter the damaging objectification with an even more powerful kind of objectification: "I wanted to treat each other like objects in profound affirmation, to learn to see each other, to look at one another as bodies and say YES" (G. Hall 2015, 154 – original emphasis). According to Hall, to counter the damaging objectification of trans people we can, and do, "make spaces in which we invite each other to be subjects – to get to know each other, to develop intimacy, to hear each other" (G. Hall 2015, 154). But for Hall, the repairing potential of coming together lies in the presence of people we do not know, or do not know well: "If I am to be recognised, it needs to be not just by my close friends and lovers, but by some sort of public. The

room has to be full of people and they can't all be in my close circle. This is the invaluable role of 'party friends'" (G. Hall 2015, 155). For Hall, the party friends are those we never get to know but who affirms us –objectifying without destroying – it is, as I read it, a description of a temporary t4t togetherness. A space collectively produced by the co-presence of trans people looking out for one another – even if we do not, or ever will, know each other. It is not about an intimate knowing of one another(s transness), but about a space we need, in which trans experience and affective togetherness can circulate through a shared knowing something trans together alongside one another. A breathing space. A shield. An army. In our daily life it might be a nod, or a smile, a gesture, a gathering of bodies we do not know in a performance that makes our lives feel more possible. That affirms us without destroying us.

Vanitas centers trans experience in important ways. Rather than exposing or explaining transness for the cisgender audience, Fischer's performance offers a knowing trans togetherness, allowing those of us who are trans to experience and understand the performance in different ways than those who are not trans. What happens in *Vanitas* is a t4t togetherness imbedded in what trans literature scholar Mons Bissenbakker has called "a knowing kinship" with a transgender perspective; meaning that those of us who are trans can experience the art work in different ways than those who are not (Bissenbakker 2024).

On the scaffolds, at the aestheticised construction site, *Vanitas* offered a being together alongside one another. Feeling and being together; moving towards one another. Intimate moments between people and bodies that recognise and know (of) each other. Witnessing, caring, caressing, surviving in the shadow of both our precarity and hope – but also our dying trans and gender nonconforming community. As the performers in *Vanitas* invitingly meet the audience's gaze, as they gather around the audience, as they share their space of mourning, practice, and togetherness, it is not a t4t togetherness closed in upon itself, it is an invitation – for all audiences. Not by explanation, but by being together – to witness, support, and recognise the multiplicities of trans experience, affects, becomings, and life – differently and alongside one another.

Ending remarks – t4t work

Vanitas is about trans togetherness. A togetherness that takes the form of a witnessing, a collective practicing, a hug, a mourning, and a will to survive. *Vanitas* has a significant potential as t4t work – a performance that centers and supports the experience of its trans audiences offering an in-between space filled with trans embodied becomings and a knowing trans togetherness. A separate and separating space of shared affective experiences and a knowing kinship of being (marginalised) trans.

Vanitas makes trans existence in the performance space more independent from cisnormative perception. This does not mean that cisgender people cannot experience the work in a meaningful way, but that *Vanitas* honours a trans knowing and allows transness and trans togetherness to appear multifaceted and ambivalent. Fischer does not explain what transness is, they do not outwardly center transness, they do not resolve what transness can be, but they manifest a space I, as a trans person, recognise as significant to my own collective and embodied knowing and becoming. A shift from a reproduction of transnormative structures of feelings to an opening of more ambivalent, open-ended trans structure of feelings to circulate and manifest a healing t4t togetherness.

As trans people our bodies are headed somewhere, and this becoming simultaneously happens in solitude and togetherness. As the queer- and transphobic world lingers behind *Vanitas*, the urgency of needing one another is acutely brought to the front. We practice, mirror, touch, mourn, move, witness, struggle, and try to make it home – together or alongside one another. *Vanitas* offers spaces where we can notice, feel, and experience a temporary and ambivalent t4t togetherness shaped around the multiplicity of ways we, together, alongside one another, move closer to each other and ourselves in an effort to survive, heal and even thrive.

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