

KAAI **THEATER**

Karthik Pandian
& Andros Zins-Browne/The Great Indoors
Atlas Revisited

9>10/02/17 – 20:30 – Kaaistudio's
performance • 60 min. • in English

CREDITS

concept/direction/performed by

Karthik Pandian & Andros Zins-Browne

video editor

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camera

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sound recording

Stephen McLaughlin

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The Great Indoors (Brussels), Hiros (Brussels)

co-production

Kaaithheater (Brussels), EMPAC (Troy, NY), Kunstencentrum BUDA (Kortrijk)

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ATLAS REVISITED

nl/ In 2012 bezochten beeldend kunstenaar Karthik Pandian en choreograaf Andros Zins-Browne de Atlas Film Studios in de woestijn van Ouarzazate (Marokko). Ze castten een groep kamelen en lieten hen dansen tussen de filmdecors van oude Hollywood-producties. Het resultaat was te zien in de video *Atlas/Inserts* (2014).

Met *Atlas Revisited* blikken de kunstenaars terug op deze zoektocht naar een beeld van de vrijheid. Ze stellen hun motivaties in vraag, en kijken ook verder. Ze presenteren gloednieuw videomateriaal, opgenomen voor een *green screen* met dure Amerikaanse kamelen. Was *Atlas/Inserts* eigenlijk in scène gezet door deze kamelen te projecteren op achtergrondbeelden uit Marokko? Pandian en Zins-Browne tonen het maken, ongedaan maken én heropvoeren van een dans over vrijheid – en het bedrog dat vaak nodig is om er beelden van te maken.

- Andros Zins-Browne werd geboren in New York. Hij kwam in Brussel studeren aan PARTS. In 2008 presenteerde hij *Second Life*, zijn eerste avondvullende voorstelling. Daarna volgde nog *Welcome to the Jungle* (2013), *The Lac of Signs* (2014) en *The Middle Ages* (2015). Dit seizoen presenteert hij ook drie avonden *Atlas Insights*.

fr/ En 2012, le plasticien Karthik Pandian et le chorégraphe Andros Zins-Browne ont visité les studios Atlas Film dans le désert de Ouarzazate au Maroc. Ils ont loué un groupe de chameaux qu'ils ont tenté de faire danser entre les décors de films d'anciennes productions hollywoodiennes. On a pu voir le résultat dans la vidéo *Atlas/Inserts* (2014).

Avec *Atlas Revisited*, les artistes portent un regard rétrospectif sur cette quête d'une image de liberté. Ils remettent leur motivation en question, mais tentent de voir plus loin aussi. Ils présentent du matériel vidéo flambant neuf, filmé pour une technique d'incrustation avec des chameaux américains onéreux. La vidéo *Atlas/Inserts* était-elle au fond mise en scène en projetant ces chameaux sur fond d'images du Maroc ? Pandian et Zins-Browne nous montrent la réalisation, l'annulation et la reconstitution d'une danse sur la liberté – et le trucage auquel il faut souvent avoir recours pour créer des images.

- Andros Zins-Browne est né à New York. Il est venu étudier à PARTS, à Bruxelles. En 2008, il a présenté *Second Life*, son premier spectacle de pleine soirée. Ensuite ont suivi *Welcome to the Jungle* (2013), *The Lac of Signs* (2014) et *The Middle Ages* (2015). Cette saison, il présente trois soirs *Atlas Insights*.

en/ In 2012 the visual artist Karthik Pandian and the choreographer Andros Zins-Browne visited the Atlas Film Studios in the Ouarzazate desert (Morocco). They cast a group of camels, which they tried to coax into dancing in amongst the film sets of old Hollywood productions. The result could be seen in the video *Atlas/Inserts* (2014).

With *Atlas Revisited*, the artists take a look back at this quest for an image of freedom, questioning their motives and attempting to probe deeper. They present brand new video material, shot in front of a *green screen* using expensive American camels. Was *Atlas/Inserts* actually staged by projecting these camels onto background images from Morocco? Pandian and Zins-Browne show the making, unmaking and re-staging of a dance about freedom – and the deception that is often required when creating images of it.

- Andros Zins-Browne was born in New York. He came to Brussels to study at PARTS. In 2008 he presented *Second Life*, his first evening-length performance. After this came *Welcome to the Jungle* (2013), *The Lac of Signs* (2014) and *The Middle Ages* (2015). This season, he also presents three evenings of *Atlas Insights*.

KARTHIK PANDIAN AND ANDROS ZINS-BROWNE: THE ATLAS PROJECT

Text by Aruna D'Souza

How is it possible to create an image of freedom? Or, put another way: how do you get a camel to dance?

These are the questions that have driven Atlas, an on-going artistic exploration by visual artist Karthik Pandian and choreographer Andros Zins-Browne. The project has so far taken the form of a video installation (Atlas, Art Basel: Statements, 2012), a single-channel film (Atlas/Inserts, ICA Artists' Film Biennial, 2014), and, most recently, a stage performance (Atlas Revisited, EMPAC, 2016). Each new investigation builds on the last, as the artists examine the material conditions of the media they deploy (film, video, dance, performance, theatre, sculpture, costume, photography, sound).

How could camels, with their stubborn, obdurate, passive, and bestial natures, stand for freedom—how might they represent the ideal post-revolutionary figure, how might they function as political bodies in alliance? Perhaps by getting them to dance. And not just any dance—but more specifically—to perform passages of Merce Cunningham and Charles Atlas' iconic 1982 dance-film, Channels/Inserts.

This quixotic goal took them from Morocco to the US, as they tell it—from a movie set in the middle of the desert to a green screen on a soundstage—and, more importantly, from a determination to achieve their visions as creators (producers of movement and image) to a dawning realization of the ethical, political, and even ontological boundaries they must cross to get there. Camels don't dance without coercion. And whether that coercion is the more nuanced collaboration of choreographer and dancer or the physically uncomfortable solutions the artists and the camel trainers devised, that fact has driven Pandian and Zins-Browne to visit and revisit the scene of this encounter to search and research its consequences.

And it takes the viewer on an equally vexing journey, this time through the thicket—not the boundary, but the miasma—of documentary and fantasy. How much of what we see—when we look at these dancing camels, and by extension when we look at potentially transcendent moments of political liberation—has a foothold in reality, and how much is our fantasy, projected on literal or cultural green screens? Did these camels ever dance? And does it matter—are we hungry for the spectacle in any case and at any cost?

BIOGRAPHIES

American artist **Karthik Pandian** has held solo exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Bétonsalon, Paris; and Midway Contemporary Art, Minneapolis amongst others. His work was featured in the inaugural LA Biennial at the Hammer Museum and La Triennale: Intense Proximity at the Palais de Tokyo as well as in group exhibitions such as *Film as Sculpture* at Wiels Contemporary Art Centre, Brussels and the 4th Marrakech Biennial, *Higher Atlas*.

Andros Zins-Browne (°1981) was trained as a dancer and choreographer, but his work often gravitates towards the visual arts. After his studies at the Brown University, he finished his training and research programme at P.A.R.T.S (Brussels) and Jan van Eyck Academie (Maastricht). Andros makes dance performances and hybrid environments at the intersection between installation, performance and conceptual dance, performed by a mix of professional dancers and amateurs. They explore the way in which the human body, movement and matter can interact until a certain melting point is reached and the diverse media appear to take on each other's properties.