

# MAKING MEN

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A film, a debate, a live dance piece



## ■ Summary



### WHAT

#### **A dance film**

Making Men is an original film by film-maker Antoine Panier and choreographer Harold George. The first part of this project was filmed in Harare, Zimbabwe in July and August 2017.

The film reflects on the theme of masculinity through a series of dances that represent various stages in the lives of a group of men as they develop their identity. "One is not born a man, one becomes a man". (Erasmus)

#### **A live dance piece**

Making Men is a dance piece: the choreography of the film is further developed and adapted for a stage performance.

#### **A debate**

Making Men is an exposé on masculinity: at each performance a guest speaker shares his or her thought-provoking views on the theme.

▲ For more information and a preview of work in progress go to:  
[www.duniadance.net/en/making-men](http://www.duniadance.net/en/making-men)

### WHO

#### **Dunia Dance Theatre**

An Afro-contemporary dance company, based in Brussels, Belgium, since 2001 and recognised by the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles.  
[www.duniadance.net](http://www.duniadance.net)

#### **Mijim**

A Brussels-based film production company with experience dating back to 2000.

#### **Afrikera Arts Trust**

A professional dance training programme based in Harare, Zimbabwe.

## SEVERAL OPTIONS

- Film + performance + debate
- Film + performance
- Film + debate
- Performance + debate
- ...

### CONTACT

#### **Dunia Dance Theatre**

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## MAKING MEN

# Object & background

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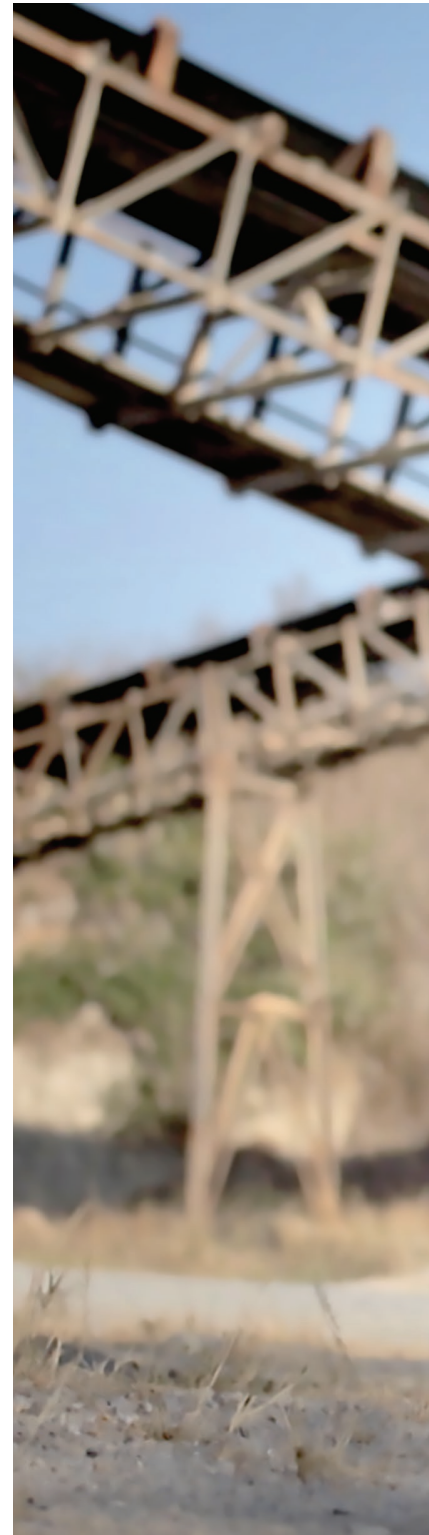
### WHAT IS MASCULINITY ?

“One is not born a man, one becomes a man”. As these famous words, popularised by the likes of Simone de Beauvoir, seem to be taken for granted today, it is perhaps useful to examine the kind of man one becomes in modern society. The archetypal male, unchallenged and accepted for centuries now appears to be questioned. If we become who we are, then choice is the first necessary step to freedom. Are we free to become the man we choose to be or are we free to be the man that we are in our deepest, most intimate selves?

When we think of masculinity, most often the following words tend to crop up: physical strength, silent stoicism, daring, bravery. The expression ‘a real man’ has traditionally referred to men who display these characteristics. However, the time-honoured view of life has been disrupted by major changes since the 60s, such as female emancipation, LGBT rights and the increasing secularisation of society. These changes are even more apparent during the current socio-economic crisis, exacerbated by terrorist attacks the world over. Men, who have long held social sway, must henceforth share or give up their power.

In the light of all these upheavals, have they been able to adapt in a positive manner?

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July 2017

Shooting the film in Harare, Zimbabwe.



July 2017

Shooting the film in Harare, Zimbabwe.



## WHY MASCULINITY?

According to the British MP Diane Abbot there is a 'crisis in masculinity'. She refers to figures that are similar across the world: even though men on average are roughly 50% of the population they commit about 80% of all acts of violence and this figure goes up to 90% when it comes to murder and war. Many theories attempt to explain this phenomenon, but we have chosen to examine the idea that male socialisation predisposes men to violence, above all towards themselves.

*"like the film Fight Club - the first rule of being a man in modern Britain is that you're not allowed to talk about it".* Diane Abbot

According to Canadian author Michael Kaufman, in the patriarchal system that dominates most of the world, the male child must always repress his 'femininity' or anything resembling his mother to affirm his masculinity. The feminine is seen to contradict the masculine and therefore must be denied. This leads to a defensiveness arising from the refusal of femininity and all things feminine. As a result, later in life, he hates women as they represent what he hates in himself. Among the results of this process is violence in general and violence against women in particular.

July 2017

Shooting the film in Harare, Zimbabwe.



## INTENTION

We have noted that in order to fully express themselves, artists (especially dancers) must come to terms with their own ambiguity and coalesce their male and female energies. We want to use dance to probe the emotions released by exploring this theme.

Our aim is to deeply touch the spectator so that he or she then goes on to question masculinity in society.

*“If we can feel the unease and distress ourselves we will begin to think seriously about this issue.”*

In this project we look at this theme through the bodies of black male dancers. Black men have often been perceived as exaggerated representations of certain male stereotypical characteristics, such as possessing great physical strength and prowess.

## QUESTIONS

Can the failure to fit the stereotype lead young men to the unease and violence we witness today?

Does a man solely exist in terms of his relationship with his society?

Is society alone responsible for the pressure some men feel?

How do vulnerability and frailty fit into that picture? Like those who choose to see him that way, is the man himself uncomfortable when shown in any other light?

Making Men would like to contribute to the debate that will help us all rethink masculinity and as such help those who already have doubts not to repress, ignore or reject their own sensitivity, sensuality or femininity; and help us not to condemn those who do make a choice to live out these aspects of themselves. We also hope to lighten the burden of those who feel great pressure to fall in line with a stereotype that does not suit them.

Can a man live a full life outside of the confines of the model imposed by society?

Are there other definitions of masculinity that do not lead to violence against others and against oneself?

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## MAKING MEN

### Artistic approach

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The work focusses on a group of individuals in the process of becoming men. Are they free to choose to do so in any way they deem appropriate, or are they forced into a mould? They proceed unquestioningly, as is expected, into manhood through various stages of their lives, adopting the clearly coded characteristics allowed by society.

However, a feeling of unease, in the very depths of their being, oppresses them. It's as if they have donned ill-fitting garments made for someone else. They feel uncertainty and something else, harder to define...

They attempt to understand, question and express their doubts. They try to break free of invisible chains, to find their true selves. The choreography seeks to highlight the limits of the male stereotype for those who want to experience the full range of human emotions.

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July 2017

Shooting the film in Harare, Zimbabwe.





## THE FILM

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Shot in the breathtaking landscape of Zimbabwe, the film features special camera work that intensifies emotions inspired by the movement.

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July 2017

Shooting the film in Harare, Zimbabwe.



Making Men focusses on 4 main scenes: in the first we encounter the carefree fluidity of youthful bodies, as yet unfettered by society's dictats. The adult male dancers seek to recall sensations of freeness or to rekindle a physical connection with nature. Movements are rhythmical but flowing, endlessly spiralling, evoking the elements of wind and water.

The choreography then goes on to explore masculinity initiation rituals. The grounded energy of earth can be felt in the fast paced, trance-like repetitive movement. The transformative element of fire can be seen in this rite of passage, the birthing of men.

In the next scene we observe the interaction between the male initiates, who strive to correspond to society's expectations of manhood. The choreography is based on contact improvisation and looks at group behaviour, peer influence and pressure but we also see doubt and sensitivity and cracks in the mask that reveal an underlying unease.

The last scene looks at the inner turmoil of one who is unable to fit into the imposed model. Doubt, tension, frustration, but also reluctance, fear and letting go; all these states are physically expressed in an intense and captivating duo.



## THE DANCE PIECE

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The afro-contemporary dance piece builds on the film's choreography, against a backdrop of specially designed video scenery that the dancers sometimes interact with.

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July 2017

Shooting the film in Harare, Zimbabwe.



## THE DEBATE

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At each performance a guest shares thought-provoking views on the theme.

These can take the form of:

- Poetry / Slam / Storytelling
  - A short exposé (like TEDx)
  - An interactive debate
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## TEAM

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Concept & direction

**Harold George & Antoine Panier**

Artistic coaching

**Vincent Kuentz**

Dance

**Harold George, Jipé Lukusa-Kankonda,  
Tinashe Jeri, Tatenda Chabarwa,  
Peter Lenso, Carlton Zhanelo**

## PERFORMANCE DATES

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**15 February 2019**

Centre Culturel Ottignies LLN

**23 & 24 February 2019**

Espace Bernier, Centre Culturel de Waterloo

**28 February & 1 March 2109**

Espace Magh, Bruxelles

## PARTNERS

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**Afrikera Arts Trust** (Harare, Zimbabwe)

**Centre Culturel d'Ottignies**

**Mijim** (film production company)

Many thanks to:

Philippe Jacquet - Yantra Académie de Danse, Thierry Delvigne, -  
Ecole de Danse Menuet, Vincent Espejel - Usine, Justine Fort - Centre  
de Danse La Papeterie for reheasal space.

Soukaina ML EDOM for her invaluable support.

▲ For more information and to view the teaser:  
[www.duniadance.net](http://www.duniadance.net)

## WORKSHOPS

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**1<sup>st</sup> January to 14<sup>th</sup> February 2019**

Espace Bernier, Centre Culturel de Waterloo





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