

INTERVIEW – « Myself » Performance - Skopje, Northern Macedonia – May 13, 2025

<https://trn.mk/jean-marc-matos-tanczot-kako-di%20alog-na-tehnologi%20ata-i-teloto/>

Jean-Marc Matos: Dance as a Dialogue Between Technology and the Body

My approach is a fusion of physical exploration and digital experimentation. I experience movement as a medium for research – a way of asking questions about identity, time, and presence, especially in relation to technology. In works like *Myself* and *Immortal(s)*, I explore fragmented, multiplied identities within digital environments. Movement becomes a dialogue between the human and the machine, the organic and the algorithmic. I often work with sensors, artificial intelligence, or generative visualizations that respond in real time, so meaning is never fixed – it evolves through interaction, repetition, and even failure.

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The French Institute in Skopje and the TANC-FEST Festival, for the closing of its 21st edition, presented the innovative and interactive dance performance **“MYSELVES”**, by the French group **K. DANSE**. The event, which took place on Tuesday at the Macedonian National Theatre, was a true celebration for dance lovers.

This remarkable performance is a **dialogue between the dancer and her multiple identities**, embodied through a unified visual and sonic experience. The choreographic creation intertwines contemporary dance and digital art, showcasing the interaction between the performer and her many selves through various transformations. With the use of body and optical sensors, the dancer takes us into a unique artistic experience where projection surfaces become portals to the invisible, and the performer's virtual identities emerge and fade.

In an exclusive interview for *Trn*, Jean-Marc Matos, the choreographer of the piece, reveals his approach to dance, his connection to social, political, and environmental issues, and the responsibility of contemporary dance to engage with today's global challenges.

Trn: How would you describe your approach to creating movement and meaning through dance?

Jean-Marc: My approach is a fusion of physical exploration and digital experimentation. I see movement as a medium for inquiry – a way to question

identity, time, and presence, particularly in relation to technology. In pieces like *Myself* and *Immortal(s)*, I explore fragmented, multiplied identities within digital environments. Movement becomes a dialogue between the human and the machinic, the organic and the algorithmic. I frequently work with sensors, AI, or generative systems that react in real time, so meaning is never static — it develops through interaction, repetition, and even failure.

Trn: How do social, political, or environmental issues influence your artistic choices?

Jean-Marc: These issues are central to my work. I'm interested in how bodies are shaped — and often constrained — by technological infrastructures, social codes, and ecological crises. Pieces like *F_AI_L* and *RCO* directly confront these forces, raising questions about systems of control, automation, and collapse. I use choreography as a tool for physically expressing resistance, complexity, and nuance. Whether through audience participation or interactive systems, I strive to create spaces where power can be felt, questioned, or reimagined.

Trn: Do you believe contemporary dance has a responsibility to address current global challenges?

Jean-Marc: Not as an obligation, but as an opportunity. Dance can reach places that words and images cannot. It reveals how systems feel in the body. In works like *Eternity* and *F-Z 25*, I explore how we relate to time, mortality, and acceleration in a world driven by data and digital permanence. These are deeply contemporary concerns, and dance offers a way to slow down, to question the pace of change, and to reconnect with the materiality of human existence. Sometimes, simply slowing down or creating space for presence is a quiet act of resistance.

Trn: What moment would you consider a turning point in your career?

Jean-Marc: Creating *Myself*, and then *F_AI_L*, were key moments. It was the first time I truly gave agency to a pre-AI or AI system within a choreographic process — not just as tools, but as co-performers. These systems responded in real time to motion data, sometimes in unexpected ways, leading to a generative process where control and error coexisted. It taught me to embrace instability and to see uncertainty as a space for innovation — something I continue to carry into all my work.

Trn: What advice would you give to young choreographers and dancers entering the field today?

Jean-Marc: Think beyond the stage. Explore code, sensors, archives, rituals, software, networks. Dance isn't just about the body, it's about relationships — between bodies, technologies, ideas, and audiences. Work collaboratively. Learn to communicate

across disciplines. And don't be afraid to let your work ask questions you don't yet have answers to. That's where the most alive and meaningful creations are born.

Trn: How do you feel about being in Skopje? Is this your first time performing for a Macedonian audience?

Jean-Marc: Yes, this is my first visit to Skopje and I'm very excited to share our work with a Macedonian audience. We're presenting a piece that stages a dialogue between a dancer and her multiple "selves" — a visual and sonic digital creature emerging from her psyche, interpreted through optical and bodily sensors. I'm curious to see how this will resonate here. I'm also eager to learn more about how artists in Skopje work with contemporary dance and hybrid forms.

I see this as the beginning of a broader dialogue. I believe it's through encounters like these that the most exciting ideas are born, and I hope this visit will pave the way for future collaborations and exchanges.
