

zactrack enjoys first show in Iceland

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FLÆKT, an intense and highly visual dance performance piece created by artist Juliette Louste, premiered at the Tjarnarbíó Theatre and utilised a zactrack mini automated tracking system for the first time in Iceland to track lighting, audio, and video cues.

Juliette is truly multi-skilled. In addition to being a talented artist and dancer, she is also a lighting designer, lighting, AV and sound technician, a technical director, and a choreographer. The world of independent theatre relies as much on multi-tasking as it does on passion and commitment in producing original, authentic, and thought-provoking art.

A combination of all these disciplines led Juliette and IT specialist and computer programmer Owen Hindley, who worked on the show's technical production, to utilise a zactrack solution, together with the rest of the technical team, including zactrack technician Dariel Garcia.



FLÆKT, which translates to 'unravelling', is a powerful one-person performance related to the challenges of living with psychological issues, among them obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). It is choreographed by Juliette and directed by Kara Hergils.

Juliette, originally from France, but resident in Iceland since 2016, was commissioned to create *FLÆKT* by producers Hans Gruenert and Virginial Wall Gruenert of Viva Holding.

It is a deeply personal and autobiographical work related to a mental health struggle that developed due to hypersensitivity mixed with childhood trauma.



Juliette is familiar with thinking out of the box and being inventive, and knew from the off that *FLÆKT* would be a technically complex show.

With her experience as a lighting designer and vision as a director, she also took the lead on suggesting lighting moods and treatments for the piece. She and Owen collaborated closely with Andreu Fàbregas Granes, the show's lighting designer / operator; sound designer Kristín Waage; composer Íris Hrund Stefánsdóttir; set and costume advisor Rebekka A. Ingimundardóttir, dramaturg Gígja Sara Björnsson, and assistant choreographer Selma Reynisdóttir.

Having previously worked as a representative for zactrack in Iceland, Juliette was convinced that the system would be perfect for assisting the overall show control and smoothing the workflow by

zoning the full stage area, covering some 8.5 metres in width by 10.5 metres in depth.

When the zactrack mini system was made available by Icelandic distributor Exton, Juliette, Owen and Dariel jumped at the chance to integrate it into the show and worked on linking it to the various technical elements involved.

“It is just a fantastically versatile system,” Juliette commented.



The show arc sees her confront and process the obsessions, rituals and consequences associated with OCD by dancing with light, twisting in and out of shadows, manipulating the dark and negative spaces and utilising illuminated and textured fabric that she wraps around herself and moves through the space. Elegance and strength are spliced with bold stage effects like dry ice and fog, which are also lit and projected onto as sound effects fly around the room.

All of this gets the audience enrapt and immersed in the action.

Juliette wore a single zactrack tracker with two more deployed on the two offstage most of three



loudspeakers hanging over the stage.

During the programming of the piece, the team frequently used a fourth tracker for the projector feed to help map the positions of the created projection effects via TouchDesigner.

This helped to map the stage really quickly by triangulating the positional data via PSN. A virtual camera position was parented in TouchDesigner to create the marker and then map 3D objects / lines between that and the other markers.

With everything in the same 3D space, they then just needed to match the virtual camera lens with the projector lens and so some manual adjusting to account for the projector lens shift and the position of the projection surface, i.e. the back fabric.

The projections were used in certain places as a mask to create a black space around Juliette. One particular cue is activated over 10 minutes, during which the audience can see that the projection is moving in relation to her and the two moving speakers, but it is not immediately apparent how and why it is happening. "It's great for creating a bit of mystery and intrigue at this point," she says.

Striking abstract video projections were sometimes beamed onto the floor but mostly onto a large white voile curtain, and the interplay between that helped reinforce the kinetics of the performance.



Sound effects were a raw and visceral part of the performance, and these were tracked around the room and audience through a series of loudspeakers.

In the final scene, twelve lights - 6 x Robe DLS and 6 x Robe DL4S spots - in the overhead rig were hooked into the zactrack mini system.

TouchDesigner captured the raw PSN positional data from zactrack, which after some processing / filtering was sent via OSC to a QLab system used to trigger all the cues - so video and sound cues programmed in TouchDesigner were triggered by QLab, as were lighting cues programmed on a grandMA3 compact console.

“While we got the show up and running, with more time, we could have incorporated many additional zactrack cues as we realised its huge potential and the ideas kept on freely flowing! There are numerous ways we can use zactrack to create magic!” she stated.



Photos by Owen Fiene