

Summer Reading Series 2019

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Interview with

Thibault Monnier

- Kaisu Tomperi



How would you introduce yourself to a stranger?

I'm just a simple human being, boring, weird, crazy, conscious; shaped by a thousand cultures and horizons. I'm a mover, a creator, an inspired animal.

What would you add to the previous introduction for a person who already knows all that?

A person who already knows all that might know all the aspects of me, I hide nothing, I was made to share, so I would just say, get in touch with me and you will see HAHA!

What kind of work projects you have ongoing at the moment?

At the moment I am focusing on myself and my own happiness project, that's a very big taboo subject which no one talks about in the art community. I feel sometimes that this cliché of the suffering artist in need to express oneself through his/her art needs to be realised 24/7 and that's just not me.

The past few years have been for me an emotional and physical rollercoaster which is now slowing down before I can depart on another adventure, and it is a time for me to lock myself in my castle (whether it is my mind or my closet sized apartment), for some time. I will come out of it all fresh ready to carry on with my amazing life. At the moment, my projects are a mix of me in my castle, and me going towards what could be future collaborations, I'm a person made of extremes, grasping the essence of those words is very hard yet I am sure it resonates as some kind of answer.

That said, I will give you just a peak into the fact that I am planning my personal training work with my future clients, developing my brand along the way and getting ready to come back to Helsinki in August with an extra tool to my belt as a fitness professional since I just became a gym instructor with the Fysioline Academy of Finland and am currently continuing to become a certified advanced personal trainer. I am yet booking my fall season, so anyone interested... It will be fun!

You will find me performing my own creations in Finland during the season 2019-2020, but to know more you will have to follow up my social media @thibaultmonnier (Instagram) or @thibaultfitmover (facebook).

How is Summer for a dancer workwise?

It depends where you place yourself, and of course, it depends your attitude towards the question. Many will say it sucks. Well, in the nordics, it is time to really turn on patience mode as time slows down and is mostly paced by the summer festivals (which are scarce up north), but in Central Europe, things look a big more jolly, so, it just depends where one gets to work during the summer season. If you don't get to work, well it's time to relax, eventually take classes, visit companies, choreographers... Do something different (side note: it's possible to do that with very little money as well).

That said, most dance companies also have their vacation time in the summer, but this means that many amazing artists are free to finally fly away for some time, I like to discover those to whatever performance I have the time to watch wherever I find myself. For me summer was always a very slow period, I usually don't physically work on dance projects in July, then in august, my creative work resumes.

Do you have a Summer holiday? If not, when do you have your holidays?

Though I do not perform or teach during the summer, it is time for me to plan my future projects, get inspired from various things I do not have time to focus on during the artistic season, go visit my actual family, and my spiritual one. One would say that I get a summer holiday, but well, that's really just a point of view since I stay active the whole time, go visit my friends who work here and there... I actually never take holidays, I don't like it. I do travel a lot for work, and when I do so I make sure to have enough time for myself despite working just to visit and discover, but holidays are not for me, it is a cute social term invented to please the office workers (and I love them - no offense) but artists can't really use that word, we are too passionate about what we do to just hang it by the side of our beds one morning, and come back to it weeks or months later.

How do you keep your body active and the needed physicality during longer breaks?

As I said, I happen to be a personal trainer as well, and I make sure I get in touch with the local gym wherever I go. If I take a break it is mostly in relation to my training schedule, and it might be at most 3 or 4 days. Most times, fitness centres are actually happy to welcome me for free since I don't stay for long and I have many interesting experiences/methods/techniques to share. I work a lot on calisthenics with a movement approach related to flexibility, which is a fitness aspect that very little trainers work, so I make my best to get my crowds interested, and I usually succeed. If I happen to stay in a location for more than 2 weeks then I get my own pass and go train everyday.

Continuous activity or full recovery?

Well, that's a hard question to answer. Many think that recovering means sitting in the sun, or wherever, for hours everyday for a week while binge eating on all the things that were not 'allowed' during the work season. I get that the mind needs a break. In the fitness field, as well as the physiotherapy and medical field, we know that active recovery is the best solution for recovering while taking a break from 'activity'. It can be as simple as doing a sport that isn't performed during the active season and which you find FUN. It does not even need to be in the same fitness field as dance if you are a dancer, it can be related, let's say yoga for

example, which focuses on balance, relaxation, breathing, flexibility... or even something you never have time to do, like swimming, which is light for your body yet allows you to engage with your whole body.

My favorite is hiking, I get the sense of freedom that I rarely get, especially if I discover a new place for the first time. Added to that, my mind gets carried away, and let's say hiking 60km in 3 days (my next trip) remains quite physical, so I get it all in a nutshell making sure I remain balanced and that I do something fun that I love.

Staying active... This concept was really hard to sink in my mind when I was a young dancer, yet now I understand the importance of staying active, while taking it easy of course, for the body and mostly for the mind to stay entertained and yet relax. As you age, staying active is also a way to let your body cool down without putting it in sleep mode, otherwise the start gets more painful every time, and I love my body and wouldn't hurt it a bit. Staying active might even mean doing something that does not even involve physicality as painting, meditating, pottery... Something that allows your body to connect with your mind and stay awake.

Your holiday tips for the Summer 2019?

Stay hydrated, get your light therapy, keep inspired.

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**Blog post by Thibault Monnier published on *Salin poikki* this
Thursday, 4th of July 2019!**

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