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Choreographer/ Dancer Dorothea Rust and jazz musician Omri Ziegele in 'Where Are You/Where Am I.' (Photo by: URI SCHMID)

## Dancing in two places at once

By ORI J. LENKINSKI

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"If I think about why I do performance, it is because it allows me to research things that have been on my mind, questions I have..."

If you have ever tried to conduct business via Skype, you probably know that a certain element of luck is involved. Some days the application works flawlessly, providing a clear picture and excellent sound, while on others, even a simple "hello" can be impossible. On Friday night, Dorothea Rust and Omri Ziegele took a roll of the dice with Skype, incorporating it as a key element in the

performance *Where Are You/ Where Am I*, which was presented as part of the annual Room Dance Festival at the Teiva Theater in Jaffa. The second attempt at this experiment will take place Thursday, as part of the festival's installment in Jerusalem.

Friday's performance was the first of its kind and, in fact, the first time Rust and Ziegele tried out their score.

"It's something we couldn't rehearse," says Rust over coffee in Jaffa. Rust has been visiting Israel since the 1970s, before she became a performance artist/dancer. Born and raised in Switzerland, Rust found herself in New York City in the '80s.

"I was working with choreographers, taking workshops and mostly getting in touch with postmodern dance," she says. Rust, 62, drinks a short espresso, her cropped hair framing bright eyes.

After nearly a decade in the US, Rust returned to Switzerland, where she studied visual arts in Zurich followed by a master's in cultural/gender studies focusing on the affinity of post-modern dance for performance art.

"I found myself missing a kind of connection between performance and real life, which is why I think I arrived at performance art from dance," explains Rust.

Rust last visited Israel in 2013, to perform as part of the ZAZ Festival, curated by Tamar Raban. Upon receiving the invitation to return for Room Dance, Rust reached out to Ziegele, a jazz musician, to devise a performative intervention made specifically for the event. Ziegele hails from Israel but has spent the majority of his life in Switzerland.

"We discovered a very specific and extinct dialect of Yiddish that was spoken in two distinct villages in Switzerland, where Jews were allowed to live in the 18th and 19th centuries. I think that in Switzerland, we have an affinity for languages, and this one had a very distinct sound to it. It brought up ideas of being in a place and belonging to it or to another place. How do you fit in? What does being in a place mean?"

Together, Rust and Ziegele wrote a script for the performance, which would inhabit two spaces, the Teiva in Israel and the Kunstraum Walcheturm in Zurich.

"There is a third player in the performance, which is the technology. It won't be high-end technology. It will have the touch of media but I think that it's interesting to work with this kind of low-budget feel. We are very much at its mercy and at the mercy of the connection that will be established in the

moment,” says Rust.

This kind of risk-taking falls perfectly in line with Rust’s overall mission to blur the lines between performance and life. Whereas many artists prefer to know each step and sound in advance, Rust strives to leave a lot of leeway for authentic reaction to unfolding situations.

“If I think about why I do performance, it is because it allows me to research things that have been on my mind, questions I have... I learn something in each performance, each one shows me something I didn’t know before.”

Where Are You/Where Am I will be presented on December 28 at the Leo Model Hall in Jerusalem.

For more information, visit [www.roomdancesfestival.com](http://www.roomdancesfestival.com).