

Petra Kolářová

Étienne Decroux (1898-1991) : "The Portrait of a Mime as a Sculptor"
The Portrayal of a Body at the Intersection of Scenic and Fine Arts

Summary :

The thesis main subject is Etienne Decroux, the father of corporeal mime. The main objective is to show that Decroux draws on both theatre and sculpture, thus conceiving his art of mime as *the mobile statuary*. On the one hand, he takes up the concept of mask put forward by Jacques Copeau and Edward Gordon Craig's uber-marionnette, transposing both concepts directly to the body. On the other hand, he embodies the pathos formulas observed in the statues. Decroux was heavily inspired by Augustus Rodin's sculptures in order to represent the body on stage. Moreover, Decroux conceives the body as a series of images which unfold before the audience. Working along with Etienne-Bertrand Weill who photographs his shows, he creates a relevant source of iconography of the mime that unveils the movement of the body in images. Finally, for Decroux, the body is a sculpting material. By identifying himself with the mythical sculptors, he brings forward the creative aspect of his art. Just as Pygmalion, he enlivens the body of his students and, as Prometheus, he transforms the society through his political art. The mobile statuary is then a key concept in the corporeal mime that goes from the conception of the movement on stage to the ideal and the universal in man.

Keywords

Etienne Decroux, mime, movement, sculpture, mask, uber-marionnette, photography, Auguste Rodin, Edward Gordon Craig