Societas

New life

Before art galleries and museums first made their appearance, artists were forced to take into account the physical conditions of their works’ setting, making the most of them in order for their works to become more effective. For centuries now, the fundamental relation between a work of art and its physical setting has been lost, this setting being far more stable than a site-specific procedure. Romeo Castellucci, with ‘New Life’, has resumed this age-old practice aimed at taking advantage of the characteristics of a place, even though his art is not an object but a drama. He now proposes an exodus from theatre, the place that more than any other reflects the world, and indicates the moral direction taken by an art that turns to places and the concrete use of its objects. The chosen place is a city parking lot, or in any case a vast area left to itself, unattended, at a time of day when all the cars are at rest, anonymous and identical to one another. The great freedom promised by their mobility is now completely useless. A group of men has chosen this location – anonymous and suspended – as the place in which to begin an existential change, both subtle and domestic. This is a sort of second migration, following the one at the beginning of the quaternary period from the continent of Africa, towards a better life. While the city’s inhabitants sleep, other men are awake: they are opposed to aesthetic slumber, which robs them of an art that is at hand, useful for daily life; they elevate domestic aesthetics, the applied and decorative arts, and turn them into a reserve of defence and subsistence in a land that has become hostile. Together, they are forging an artificial life, the new life of art, in any condition.

*Claudia Castellucci*

*Translated by Brent Waterhouse*