

### **Dancing with the Ibsenian dough**

Choreographer Henriette Pedersen creates, in company with dancers Beata Kretovicova and Erlend Samnøen, an animated chamber play with their Ibsenian *Edna and Bob*, centred on a mass of dough and a drawer full of lady stockings...

Based on Ibsen's *When we dead awaken. A dramatic monologue of three acts* (1899), *Edna and Bob*, as realized by Kretovicova and Samnøen, appear as animated models of "Sculptor Rubek" and his eternal muse "Irene", the main characters of what came to be the last drama from Ibsen's pen. This drama portrays the Artist with capitol A, and the Model with capitol M, who inspires the artist to create his masterpiece of art. The art piece that made him world-famous, rich - and jaded. He is left by his muse, but meets her again later in life, when he has formed himself into the disillusioned man who now feels caught in his self-initiated marriage of consolation. The drama depicts Ibsenian male- and female figures who, each on their side of the artist give their lives to serve the Man, the Woman, and, or the Art. From the two female figures (the consolation wife and the muse), one of them is set free through the fall of the man/artist, while the other one took her death over him long ago, through her role as the *untouchable* source of inspiration for the man she loved. The *untouchable* although makes a return from the 'dead' to revenge her once so youthful soul, and it all evolves around the themes of lost life and the conflict between the creator and the created, desire and submission, in one and the same process.

*Edna and Bob* captures these themes from Ibsen's drama through heavily loaded symbolics mixed into a lighter, playful choreography. *Edna* is the one who's doing the job - the one who builds up both the sexual and dramaturgic tension in the couple's play. While *Bob* nonchalantly (or nervously?) relaxes in his sun chair (symbolic of cheap success?), *Edna* comes dragging with a heavy washing tub. The tub with the grand dough. The dough that she kneads all her soul and energy into before she in vain attempts to attract *Bob's* attention. The stockings she keeps putting on turns into a striking metaphor both of

female sensuality and the artist's blindness of reality – overruled by his own artistic vision.

At moments *Bob* appears to be yielding for his suppressed desire towards *Edna*, but ends his 'life' in the dough dust, while *Edna* sits tied up by her own stockings under the weight of a hardly powerful 'masterpiece': *Bob's* (through straining efforts) dough filled stockings, which through their figurative power becomes a deformed, lifeless recreation of *Edna's* own sensual, well-shaped 'lifework'.

Why seek to copy, capture in art, what's already right in front of you in its already lifeful, and desirable nature? This playful choreography triggers this question with associations to a spectre of critical-humorous perspectives on art-, sex-, and life roles in dialogue with, or as echoes of, Ibsen's text - and simultaneously lets the grand dough create more of a farcical comedy than dramatic tragedy for the silentfilmish *Edna and Bob*.

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