



Three times a year
January/May/September
Volume 31 forthcoming
125 pp per issue
7 x 10 illustrated
Founded: 1976
ISSN 1520-281X
E-ISSN 1537-9477

PAJ

A Journal of Performance and Art

January 2003, Vol. 25, No. 1 (PAJ 73), Pages 7-20

Posted Online March 13, 2006.

(doi:10.1162/152028103321658274)

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Memories of the Future Technology and the Body in dumb type's *memorandum*
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In lieu of an abstract, this is the article's first page. See the link to the full PDF below.

MEMORIES OF THE FUTURE
Technology and the Body in
dumb type's *memorandum*

Woodrow Hood and Cynthia Gendrich

*High-speed visuals stir up perceptions, electronic noise jostles the viscera,
silhouetted figures race through the brain.*
—review of *memorandum* in *Dance Art* (Spring 2001)

Conceptual and collage art has rarely had such a powerful performance proponent as Kyoto's dumb type. Their recent US tour of *memorandum* demonstrates that, after seventeen years together, their creativity is at its zenith. Invoking the theme of memory, dumb type takes various musings and meditations on the topic to some startling, sensual, and deliciously bizarre places. *memorandum* explores how personal choices and perspectives have an immense impact on whether memory serves us with its transformative power, or whether it traps us in a macabre landscape.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF dumb type

Only in the last few years has dumb type emerged as one of Japan's best exports, performing at theatre festivals in Europe and Asia, and—more recently—coming to the United States for brief tours. Known for their high energy, high-tech productions, the name of the Kyoto collective comes from the group's desire to transcend the cultural borders of language and create image-and-sound-driven performance. The scant use of spoken language leads to a nearly “dumb” performance.¹

Founded in 1984, dumb type has always sought to interweave many artistic practices into one. Created by frustrated art students who were not allowed to work outside their disciplines, the original members of the collective came from diverse backgrounds: sound, dance, theatre, communications, and architecture. As the group structured itself, Teiji Furuhashi emerged as the artistic director. Under Furuhashi's stewardship, dumb type grew from performances and gallery installations of the 1980s to their now-trademark multi-media, multi-layered performance pieces. With a central group tenet of seeking universality in their artistic voice, dumb type early on sought performance venues outside of their homeland. Choreographer/dancer Takai Kawagushi notes that their work is “global, it's not limited to something that's Japanese.”²