

Get stuffed

The third instalment of the four-part dance project entitled **Taxidermie**, staged by French contemporary dance company Project in Situ, hones in on research conducted in Maputo this year. The project, which looks at four cities, namely Mexico City, Montreal, Maputo and Marseilles, is concerned with existential and creative dilemmas within the context of the urban environment.

Based on choreographic, visual and anthropological research, *Taxidermie* hones in on the instinctive body movements and the "recycling of gestures" that occurs as a result of the blurring of public and private spaces that in the intimate "human messiness" that is the city. Earlier this year, French, Mozambican, Zimbabwean and South African artists converged on Maputo in search of "traces of memory and forms of forgetfulness, revealing bodies impregnated with those

urban, intimate and collective" memories. It is these physical ambiguities that are at the heart of the team's choreographic research, states the press release. In the context of Maputo's still scarred cityscape, which is in the process of regeneration, one would imagine the "gestures" to be extreme, but not quite, says anthropologist and director of the project Martial Chazallon. "The city has been through a lot of changes economically and environmentally, but we were more interested in places of individual and collective memory, such as industrial sites, ruins and traffic congested spaces — how we relate uniquely and individually to spaces that we enter everyday. And it's different in each individual environment. It's subtly different in Johannesburg and in Mexico City."

Befitting the taxidermy theme, where "the skin is given shape through structures", research in Maputo included a trip to the city's natural history museum in order to "view the city before humans were present". As for what audiences can expect from such laborious research, Chazallon promises a "very poetic and intimate" experience. The action, he says, happens very close to you and that's at the core of the project. — *Kwanele Sosibo*



Taxidermy is used as a metaphor for urban claustrophobia in *Taxidermie*

At the Wits Theatre until October 25