

thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



Photo: Poison Apple Initiative

Stuck in Purgatory

by Whitney Weinstein

As a writer and artist, I constantly ask myself to identify my audience. Sometimes I adjust work based on my anticipated audience. Other times I choose a specific perspective aimed towards a particular crowd. Recently I've experienced work that focuses on making art accessible to everyone.

Some performances, though, continue to target specific populations. Ballet will always be full of tradition. Burlesque tends to attract more liberal minds. Bastion Carboni of [Poison Apple Initiative](#) is exploring his own niche.

In *A Vacation*, Colton (Carboni) is introduced through a selfie video documenting the start of his vacation to [purgatory](#). Moving forward, each one-man scene—representing a series of video blogs—features a live Colton, in front of a projected image, who speaks with animated energy and mimes interactions with imaginary characters.

After the show, I hopped down an internet rabbit hole to find that Carboni is building quite a reputation for himself in the queer community and has created a few original productions since moving to Philadelphia. Observing audience members during the show, I noticed two specific reactions: laughter and cheers from those who presumably understood, and stares of confusion or disgust from stiffened, uncomfortable bodies. I was closer to the latter.

At times my interest was captured with commentary of larger existential issues, but the majority of it left me feeling lost, as I watched this mishmash of thoughts manifest. My guest for the performance was much more versed in the vlogging world, nudging me towards subjects like [Logan Paul](#), [FunForLouis](#), and [Otto Warmbier](#). Without his abbreviated expertise, I would have felt simply incompetent.

In the end, Colton the vlogger is kicked out of purgatory, but doesn't seem to mind. Colton (and Carboni) both seemingly lack serious

regard for imposed judgment from the world. He reminds us multiple times that “impact is more important than intention.” I am not entirely clear on his intention, except that perhaps he is attempting a vlogger parody. I watched him pretend to eat someone with chopsticks and a blade, discuss suicide prevention, doubt that the human race is complex enough to have an intelligent interest in [No Exit](#), and casually reflect on his adventures while wearing a fuzzy, green martian hat.

Yet, I’m not sure that I had enough knowledge of the content’s context to feel impacted. I was abandoned in a spectator’s purgatory, held in limbo for walking into a show where I felt poorly prepared, standing on the outside of an inside joke.

But who am I to impose judgment where I lack understanding? Carboni is unusually creative and innovative. For me, I’ll follow him lightly, knowing that I may never fully understand the world where his art lives.

Poison Apple Initiative, *A Vacation*, Franky Bradley’s, September 9-10, 12, 15

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