

thINKIngDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



Photo: Darcy Lyons

Cautionary Correlations

by Miryam Coppersmith

Four people in a wary dance—Lyons and Tigers' *Proceed with Caution*—watch each other as they shift places, holding some amorphous, elastic shape (call it “society”) between them. A theory-heavy voice-over calls our attention to the “impersonal trust” that binds society together. One dancer covers his crotch with his hands and scoops up, a visceral moment. The dancers’ movements are luscious, precise, and occasionally explosive. Then, one breaks into a live monologue; more theory about security. My narrative brain grasps for connections...

A shift towards the personal/political tumbles into the all-too relatable. One dancer describes realizing that working in a public school means they will have to put their body on the line to save their students in the event of a shooting. Is today that day? The question is spoken without extraneous emotion, while the projector flashes Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, in hokey chalkboard font. The voice describes the active shooter drill procedure and the dancers assume the braced position. They are dripping with sweat. We feel their flesh and vulnerability. A projected reel of school shootings begins—paragraphs of white text followed by a large photo of the shooter, then his victims. I am exhausted by the long interlude and the use of mass murderers’ faces, [which, by now, we should know not to show.](#)

Another recording recounts the speaker’s experience with sexual assault. The dancer is slammed up against the wall as a voice describes the memory of this same movement bruising her head, then waking up in her dorm room with bite and bruise marks. As a survivor of sexual assault, I wonder why live this experience (and, by association, relive my own experience) during a dance performance? For the broken solidarity that the dancer describes feeling from #metoo? Where do we go from there?

Trust, the piece answers in one final monologue, as the dancers walk towards the audience. We must trust each other and be trustworthy. Shouldn’t the trustworthiness come first in that equation? The loose threads don’t quite come together: the occasional

projected images, the varying sound quality, the recorded and live text, the theory and personal narratives. I am grateful, however, that this company asked these questions together, and shared their explorations with us.

*The writer participated in an audition/workshop with Lyons and Tigers in February that featured some of the material used in *Proceed with Caution*.

Proceed with Caution, Lyons and Tigers, The Iron Factory, Sept. 7-9, <https://fringearts.com/event/proceed-with-caution/>.

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