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Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



Artwork: Lindsay Browning

Reflection in Resin: an Interview with Lindsay Browning

by Kalila Kingsford Smith

Lindsay Browning is a performing dance-theater artist based in Philadelphia. She has collaborated with [Group Motion Multimedia Dance Theater](#), Scrap Performance Group, [Susan Rethorst](#), and others. In addition to her work as a performing artist, Lindsay has also developed a presence in the Philadelphia community as a [visual artist in the mediums of photography and fine art](#). Her resin artwork is currently on view at the Dupree Gallery.

I sat down with Lindsay as she was preparing for her gallery opening on May 4th to discuss ways in which her work as a visual artist intersects with her work as a dancer.*

Kalila Kingsford Smith: I am interested in dancers who are also doing visual art, because I'm seeing a number of examples of those intersections in Philadelphia. In your work, how do you see these practices cross over or remain separate?

Lindsay Browning: As a performing artist, the end result is a physical expression coming from my physical body. With [my resin artwork], the end result is a physical expression outside of my physical body. However, the process is the same. As dancers, we are in the studio, we are making work and hardly anybody sees it. In my case, no one sees me in the space for hundreds of hours over the years. They just see the end product. In that way, it's exactly the same: process and production. I am not just Lindsay, a performing artist, and this is my visual art, but rather, I am Lindsay, a performing artist, and my artwork is an expression of movement. Essentially, it feels like I am still dancing through these movements.

KKS: Can you describe how movement comes into play in terms of your artistic process?

LB: Most of my process as a dancer and dance maker has been about self-investigation and the offering of improvised movement. When I look at these paintings, I think this is either an actual representation of a dancer in spiral, or this is a representation of one cell in their body while they are spiraling. One of the works is called

Beautiful DNA. [Perhaps it is about something in a dancer's] DNA that has given them the predisposition to coordination.

A lot of dancers see body parts in [my works], which is super fascinating. It unlocks the door in my mind that goes, "Everyone is going to be able to check in where they are in their mind and in their process." If they are not a dancer or if they are not somatic or if they are not anatomically aware, they're probably not going to see the same things. If they've never been onstage or have never felt the whirlwind of [Mary Wigman](#), then they may not be able to connect [to it] in the same way.

KKS: What do you feel influenced by in your art?

LB: I have always been attracted to minimalism in movement, therefore I'm very attracted to minimalism in resin art which is, by the way, very challenging [to achieve] in resin art. In my oil painting, for example, you can use four small tubes of oil paint in one painting. In resin, you use three drops in the resin and it bleeds. The potential to control it is very challenging, but I love it.

KKS: In making these works, do you move the canvas around?

LB: Traditionally, no. Many resin artists do that. Many resin artists pour the colors and then turn the canvas, or you will see them have a turntable and pour paint from the top to make beautiful spiral shapes. For me, I would prefer to have something built that is perfectly centered because my nemesis is not being able to have a level playing field. Somehow it is never perfectly level. I could work on it for two hours to prepare it and still, when I pour the resin, it is not perfectly level, so the images will start to move. I don't want this because when I paint, that's exactly how I want it to be. But it shifts and that is life, and I have to deal with that sometimes.

KKS: You mentioned that dancers are seeing body parts in your work, which to me points to a specific audience. Who do you imagine seeing this work?

LB: You will never be able to reach everyone. There will be people who don't get you or don't respect you, and that's fine. Let it be. I want to get to the people who enjoy interpretation of artwork. I want to get to the people who recognize that there is value in this, even if you don't like the images. There is great rehearsal of this work; this is not the first time that I have made any of these pieces.

I've heard from so many people how important it is to understand the artist. That is fine with me. I am not interested in disappearing behind the artwork, although I am interested in it doing its performance. I have already massaged its entire body this whole time. I'm the one behind the scenes doing the body work, so it is going to be nice to sit back and let it, a huge part of myself, perform while I just watch. That's so exciting, isn't it? I just want to sit back and watch it perform for people. It's a partner. I've stood in front of the crowd and now I get to stand back.

KKS: Recently in Philadelphia, there has been a lot of dancing inside gallery spaces. Do you have the desire to perform alongside your visual art?

LB: I will not be performing alongside my artwork [at this time]. There's a part of me that thinks, "I need to perform." I keep coming back to it because I want to dance. There is some aspect in the entirety of it all that needs to be an expression of movement from me. But I don't [yet] know how I want to do that.

KKS: You touched on this a little bit, but you seem to enjoy that the resin is reflective, so people will see themselves.

LB: Yeah, I like that. What kept me going in the beginning when I was throwing paint on canvases [and pressing them together] was the moment where these celestial shapes looked like they were looking at one another. They looked the same but if you looked close they were not the same. We rub off on each other in such a magnificent way but also in such a powerful way that we have to peel off some layers sometimes to separate ourselves from the artwork. So what I like about the reflection [in the resin] is that we are not pressed against it but you are there. You're in it.

*Lindsay and I are both adjunct instructors at Drexel University.

[Here Together Art 2019](#), Dupree Gallery, May 4-June 8; closing reception June 8

Gallery is open on Saturdays from 5-9pm and by appointment, dupreegallery@gmail.com

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