

thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



Photo: Pip Fort

Mirror! Light! Action!

by Emilee Lord

I entered the space with the piece already happening in a sense. There was a tall ladder with some clothes hanging over it, a sheet hung on the back wall, an extension cord reaching through the space, a wall of what looked like drawings hanging from clothespins, and a mirror in the corner. Behind the mirror and wrapped around it so that arms and legs were visible, was Holly Sass, one of the co-creators and performers of [BREAKTIME](#), a project they describe as “a site-fluid reservoir for bad ideas.” They began to move but stayed behind the mirror. The start was sudden and I wished for a slower attention grab, something to let me settle into the installation quality of the set and feel more curious about the hidden person.

Jonathan Matthews-Guzmán entered and stalked the space before stopping in front of the mirror. As a duet emerged, I found myself unpacking the idea of reflected identity. Is there something selfish about desire? Is what is mirrored back to us from someone our larger crush? With this initial duet finished, the lights went out and we watched in near darkness as Matthews-Guzmán set up an old overhead projector. The specificity of this object was delightfully ignored at first as it was carried around and used to illuminate the space like a flashlight.

It was a physical theater style of movement with bursts, hesitations, and falls in an almost constant chase and capture - either with bodies or light. The body language while using the projector rested delightfully somewhere between DJ and puppet master. The choreography was built in layers of reactions that appeared anticipated and at times lost its authenticity. From what I gather, BREAKTIME embraces all their ideas, saying yes to whatever comes up. I love this bravery and commitment to practice though I find that without an editing process, at some point the work can get cluttered.

The piece unfolded as an awkward, playful, flirtation where objects and light became performers as well. The projector was used to interact with each other as a kind of intermediary force. And what is the purpose of using light and projections to dance with someone?

Does it become an extension of the one using the projection? Is it artifice for a silly joke? What can light do? How can we not take all this too seriously? In the end I was watching something pretty wacky and also loving: two characters at play.

We Must Already Be Dead, [BREAKTIME](#), MAAS Studio Building, Fringe Festival, Philadelphia, Sept. 9-10.

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