

thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



Photo: Johanna Austin

finding your dick!

by desire amaiya

kaijo caggins (they/he) undresses themselves in their dance theater solo *fem baby*. they begin draped in layers of clothing, hugging the floor, black doc martens creaking with each shift. there is a knotted ball of yarn on the floor, strung across stage right, as caggins lies center stage. City Girls plays over the speakers, "i don't work jobs, bitch, i am a job." these lyrics foreshadow the center of caggins' work, that engaging in sexuality can become a job. caggins crawls backward, rolling at a glacial pace. once they come back to their stomach, they hold eye contact with each member of the audience, one by one. i feel myself pulled into this tumbling, becoming part of the piece.

the soundscore mimics nature sounds with glass clinking sporadically. caggins pulls themselves up from the ground, having discarded some of their clothes, littering them around the stage. caggins moves in and out of the floor, groaning with an open mouth, molding the space with reaching gestures and an open chest. there's a feeling of suspension; i get the sense he's being pulled in different directions, exhausted from the choices that lie in front of him: femininity/submission/masculinity/domination. there's a moment of stillness before they're up, grabbing a microphone, now directly addressing the audience.

caggins greets the audience. "hi," sweetly, softly. "you're also performing." then, "who's been fucked recently?" reluctant hands are raised, and caggins laughs, formally inviting us into their world. the piece feels more down-to-earth as we are exposed to caggins' easy presence and warm humor. they ponder aimlessly around the stage, as if on a phone call with a friend. after he runs around the space, caggins then asks, meekly, to help them find something they lost. "my dick!" a member of the audience reaches beneath their chair, like the Oprah show, and pulls out a silicone, pink, floppy dildo. caggins dances a duet with the dildo, and i'm thinking of consent.

"can i fuck you?" there's hesitation in the stillness, and i sense their exhaustion again. engaging sexuality is a choice that brings up too many other questions for it to be stress-free. fixation and avoidance simultaneously color these sexual encounters. fixation wins.

caggins breaks from this duet as a video begins to play: internet culture and Black memes edited over footage of caggins moving in a bathroom and studio space. they seem to be merging with and going against the film, sometimes speaking (or yelling) in tandem. they are in their own world of slow, grounded movements: wiggles, inversions, cat, cow, meowing occasionally, and a final shaking foot raised above a lying caggins.

they rise, grab the microphone and inquire mischievously, "did you cum?"

[fem baby](#), kaijo caggins, Icebox Project Space, Cannonball Festival, Philly Fringe Festival, Sept. 4, 12, 18.

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