

thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



Photo: Lizzie Baker

Shifting Colors and Disco Balls

by Madeline Shuron

Bright colors pulse in the background, emanating a gooey, paint-like feeling. Dancers shift across a large screen, projected against an opposing, blank wall, a kaleidoscopic lens mediating our view. These same dancers bend lightly through the space onstage, tracing curves and contours of each other with bladed hands. This is *Aura*, Britt Fishel and Artists' most recent work.

As the title suggests, it's a piece about the localized bioenergetic field that surrounds living beings. Fishel and the dancers play with this energy in raw, intense ways, utilizing various movements of the hands as a central motif - rubbing them together to create heat, curling them in fists at the forehead. Each dancer is costumed in pink, red, or purple silk pants with a matching, opalescent button down. The dancers - Teigha Beth Bailey, Erica Densmore, and Lydia Patselas - pin down the intangibility of the self, a shifting being, through focused gestures and sharp phrase work. They melt into and spring out of the marley floor, by means of solo, duet, or trio. It's delicious to watch them move together, lights and colors blurring into one. Towards the end, the dancers utilize the same phrase work in a canon, reminding us that one dancer - one aura - can't exist without the rest. The chemistry between Bailey, Densmore, and Patselas shines in both the fluidity of their work, as well as the supportive gazes they give one another from the sides.

The night's second piece, *Glitter Baby*, choreographed by Tammy Carrasco and the dancers, takes its name from a fantastically surreal monologue Chloe Marie gives towards the final third of the piece:

I found a dozen kittens. I decided the dozen kittens, all orange tabbies, were going to be mine ... I took them to the vet ... When I got to the window the woman at the desk took half of my kittens. She said the other ones were OK ... I began to yell at the woman, demanding to know where my kittens were. She kept saying she didn't know ... I asked the woman again where my kittens were. She said my kittens were turned into eggs. She said I could keep this Glitter Baby.

Who is this “glitter baby”? [The program](#) and description speak to themes of motherhood, echoed through the repeated gesture of rocking a baby: perhaps it's the dancers themselves, fragmented into five; maybe it's the disco ball pinned between Kate Seethaler and Carrasco as they walk about the space.

Much of the dancers' time is spent performing pedestrian movements - walking, sitting, tying shoes - or else spent creating athletic, bouncing gestures that carve across the stage. They watch one another shift through the space with loving glances, witnessing the dynamics of the movement, reveling in the group by periodically merging together as one, tightly rocking back and forth to the sound of crackling ice or rushing wind. At one moment, Piper Rolfes is clinging to Marie, beginning to slowly fall. The rest all rush, gently supporting Rolfes as they continue their glacial descent to the floor. Carrasco and the dancers confront us: what does care look like?

[Split Bill: Aura/Glitter Baby](#), Britt Fishel/Tammy Carrasco, Icebox Project Space, Cannonball Festival, Philly Fringe Festival, Sept. 20-24.

By Madeline Shuron

September 25, 2023