

thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



Photo credit: Alexander Diaz

A body/ a response

by Ellen Miller

“What film inspires you?” they asked, and Rainey said, “*I don’t know.*”

So Diaz said, I can make one, a film inspired by your work, your project, this residency you have undertaken, in the city of Philadelphia.

One year you have, and I will distill the direction you have chosen, and interpret it, and respond,

And I, a reviewer, a poet, saw the film, *The Body*, and

to indulge

in the creative response seems the most appropriate response I could give.

Idea taking flight. Instead of,

how does film influence the choreographer,

Rather,

how can dance

itself

And the concepts within, be

embodied

in another medium.

Shot from above, Diaz's body splayed on the forest floor,

"The earth has broken you open."

Red, black, nude,

Symbolism.

The whole film is colored in cool tones,

"that's the reality of my life right now"

Diaz runs through the forest,

backwards,

Audible breath,

heavy.

Your body / my body / the history of the body-ody-ody,

Diaz questions,

"What is my drag? What is my persona?"

Channeling Whitney, *I believe in you and me*, yellow tones infusing the film, lip sync, captions at the bottom, updated lyrics embrace nonbinary identity.

Horror.

How does the word on the screen influence what we see next?

Bathtub.

Red water.

“Does it symbolize suicide?” someone asks.

“If that’s what you see in it...” Diaz responds.

Audience = interpreter. The meaning is ours to make.

“What happens if I stay in this winter too long?” Diaz asks.

I ask myself this same question, often.

CONTRAST

Hold on to one more day!

Lip sync. Fierceness. Determined joy. Fun.

Whitney.

Aretha.

“The divas help me channel what power I actually have. You found that magic within yourself– how do I find that magic within myself?”

I’m not going to repeat the question, but what I will say:

When you have the power to curate and fund the arts, it is your responsibility to educate yourself on your privilege.

It bears repeating.

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Conversation. Reception.

(The conversation was cut off too quickly).

Diaz dances, but also –

“I felt the film dance, not just when you were dancing.”

What next? What now?

“The *building* is the body and the body is the *building*.”

The body of a life.

Diaz will continue to explore. And,

the work is calling for Rainey to dance again.

[Alexander Diaz](#) is a filmmaker and frequent collaborator with [Meredith Rainey](#), a choreographer and the 2023-2024 [Dance Visions Residence Artist](#) at Performance Garage. Rainey will present the work created during his residency from May 16-18, 2024, at Performance Garage.

[DanceFilm & Meredith Rainey present: "The Body" by Alexander Diaz](#), Performance Garage, March 21, 2024.

By Ellen Miller

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