

thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



Photo: Kaitlin Chow

Circuitflow

by Kat J. Sullivan

Note: *Project Trans(m)it: Phase One*, the evening-length show containing the works of Lora Allen, Megan Mizanty, and Becca Weber,* is part of a longer collaboration between the three artists to culminate at a performance in the 2016 Edinburgh Fringe Festival. More information about their ongoing processes can be found at: <http://mizanty101.wix.com/projecttransmit>

The lights are high and the music is low as I ascend the sea foam-colored steps of The Iron Factory. The white house lights throw every gnarled nook-and-cranny into hyper-relief, contrasting the dark, reverberating chords played live on piano by Paul Caraccioulo. Ashley Lippolis lies on her back, vulnerable, and breathing in a deep rhythm that parallels the soundscape. Changing with each inhale and exhale, she rests forehead in palm, clutches her shoulder, occasionally turns onto her side and back again. I see regret. I see her in the throes of, “Oh God, what have I done?” A door creaks on its old metal hinges and CrystalNicole pads softly into the space, joining Lippolis on the floor. Lora Allen’s *Convex* begins in earnest.

Allen’s choreography has no edges. The piece is like one long sweep or arc. That is not to say that *Convex* is monotone: there is turbulence, there are hiccups (intentional, I trust). Rather than one extended note, many notes blend seamlessly. I see this most in moments of “stillness.” Towards the end, both dancers sit cross-legged, turned away from the audience, their breath synchronous, each inhale symmetrical with its exhale. More than a pause, a calm before another hurtling, it feels like a coagulation—like time is thickening and they are pushing uphill, only to burst out across the peak into full-throttle with even more drive. Lippolis and CrystalNicole flow with intense specificity: one must catch the other’s head in a cradle just so as she flings herself backward. They achieve a reckless quality that is somehow still exact, that coalesces in exactly the place they need to be in each time.

Megan Mizanty’s solo, *Cell Scores*, follows directly after *Convex*. The lights abruptly open on Mizanty, clad in plum lingerie, serenely surveying the crowd. With a gasp for air, her cheeks bulge and she dives down into a forward fold, creasing herself like origami. She is

unhurried, showing the effort it takes to touch the ground, rise onto her toes, ever so slowly roll over the tops of her feet and shins as she lowers down to knees. Midway through the work, Mizanty vocally duets a simple series of held notes with her pre-recorded self. I feel oddly comforted by the tune, yet I sense hesitation from Mizanty. I cannot deny the vulnerability of this solo that remains so close to the audience; still, I am unsure whom the lullaby is intended to soothe.

Intermission ensues and we are instructed to abandon our chairs in favor of “walking about the space to see the following piece at different angles.” Predictably, no one moves much at all during the course of Becca Weber’s *Waterbody*, myself included. In my defense, the wall opposite me is rigged with a fantastic line of blue lights that ripple across the bodies of CrystalNicole, Caroline O’Brien, and Nick Picknally. Their slithering forms writhe with reptilian, aquatic power. Despite the pop quality of the music, I immediately associate a sort of primordial innateness, something ancient and familiar. The “flow” of *Waterbody* is more of a surge: the movement sweeps, gushes, cascades. Each time CrystalNicole, O’Brien, or Picknally come up for air with a mighty gulp, it is a little shock to remember that they are human.

*Becca Weber is a writer, editor, and member of the Communications Team and Editorial Board for thinkInDANCE.

Project Trans(m)it: Phase One, Lora Allen, Megan Mizanty, Becca Weber, The Iron Factory, October 15-16.

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