

thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



Photo: Dudu Quintanilha

Embody

by Kat J. Sullivan

First, her body as specter.

Florencia Vecino stands blurred, the spotlight so dim that her form swims in and out of my overcompensating pupils. I think her eyes might be open. No, closed. Behind me, a curtain blocks off the rows beyond the fifth, fading the makeshift black box into inky nothingness.

It is so quiet.

Her arms, impermanent like holograms, are rising in front of her at an almost imperceptible pace. She uploads.

Though cloaked by the darkness, to her right sits DJ Mauro Ap behind a laptop. After several minutes, a soft transition emerges from “non-musical static” to gentle, yet steady beats. Vecino still erect, her hazy arms at chest height now.

The thrumming builds into great rhythmic full-body swallows, arms reaching higher, the negative space mixing with her skin, crackling and teeming as the precipice—

She and the music and lights drop.

Then, her body as symmetry.

New: two concentric spotlights. The high-contrast, dagger-shaped shadows darting across her body make Vecino look oddly two dimensional; she undulates her spine but I only see her rib cage enlarge and contract.

Her arms: two concentric limbs. With shoulders hunched and fists balled, they form the most perfect line exactly parallel to the floor. Her triceps, turned upwards, glow like moons.

Her hips flit between turning in and out, hands smacking her thighs.

She is holding everything with her presence.

It explodes—

Upstage, light from a source on the ground ruptures the darkness, carving a rectangular path for Vecino and eclipsing her from my vision. My eyes water. The waxing curl of light on her profile is gradually walking towards us.

Then, her body as subtlety.

Her embodied commitment is exquisite. Not quite pausing, yet not smoothly combing through each movement, Vecino lives the thousands of tiny existences of each gesture.

She crosses the floor like a gawky Pac-Man: dashing back and forth on the balls of her feet, her shoulders initiating the descending crouch of her body until she bounces on her heels, her knuckles dragging along the ground. It's something like the evolution of humankind; no, devolution. The lighting here is dim again.

Then, her body as statue. She disrobes her sports bra and gym shorts, leaving her sneakers. She poses on the floor, legs cocked like a mermaid and licking her own hand. *Then, her body as sport.* Jogging the whole of it, halting upstage to unleash a harpy's scream. *Then, her body as sex.* She gyrates her pelvis, her asscheeks catching the shine of a spotlight as they swerve. Turning coyly to us, she gives herself a small smack. *Then, her body as sublimity.* She marks her torso in two with a line. *Then, her body as sequence.* Firing through gestures like bullets. Honoring each by seeing it through to the end. Then we go home.

Maneries, Luis Garay, FringeArts, April 14th – 16th, 2016. <http://fringearts.com/event/maneries-2016-04-16/>

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April 27, 2016