

thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



Photo: Will Drinker

The Madonna Resilient

by Kat Sullivan

Author's note: Phrases in italics were paraphrased from a text written for Explicit Female by Zornitsa Stoyanova (who is also a writer for thINKing DANCE).

Zornitsa Stoyanova is naked, has been naked since the beginning of the dance, as she walks upstage. There are two canvas curtains blocking the room next to fidget's theater space; she knots them aside on two exposed shelves. The music dawns like an idea. Beyond a surveying (perhaps awestruck) Stoyanova: a mountain of Mylar rests, backlit and magnificent as the remains of a moon landing.

It is the most sensual dance.

Stoyanova is pulling on flesh-colored tights over her legs and her head, blurring the lines of her pubic hair and breasts. After wading into the pool of Mylar with tender ease, she grabs several handfuls and stuffs them madly under her "skin." The first few, balled up and packed together, form pregnant-looking polyps on her arms and legs. Others hang off of her body like layers of tulle or scales. Stoyanova looks like a neo-metal monster and a futuristic Renaissance queen at the same time.

It keeps going and going and she has more to shove inside.

Hours of making itself, hours of laborious caring.

Then, she moves. Emerging from the backlit room, crawling slowly on her hands and knees at first, the Mylar rustles in protest. Stoyanova is great: massive and awe-inspiring and regal and heaving. As she leaves the room, she arranges her body into various birthing positions, though her before-body is consumed under her metallic chrysalis. Her pass gradual and composed, then curving

around to face upstage. Stoyanova molts like a phoenix, leaving scraps of the tinsel-like Mylar in her wake. As she sheds, I catch glimpses of her before-body - a flash of a nipple here, a left hipbone there.

In this moment, I see it fracture.

She kills her before-body and reemerges, split.

Stoyanova breaks; she hoists her still-voluminous Mylar gown and flounces over to the mic on the opposite side of the stage, beaming at us, the spectators. She coos that she wants to teach us a few dance moves usually ascribed to women (though she encourages those of us that don't identify as female bodies to participate anyway and see what they discover). The first: shifting back and forth between the feet. It starts small in the way one absentmindedly sways while waiting in line but quickly becomes about accentuating the hips, the birthing pelvis, the ass.

She procreates a mind of its own in her image.

Next: the ribs (read: tits). She demonstrates by swirling her ribs around on her spine's axis, explaining that this spotlighted her chest even more when she was breast-feeding. Shards of Mylar continue to fall, Stoyanova occasionally snatching some out of the way to better display herself in the movement.

And as she does that, she understands the durability of her before-body.

All the while, she preemptively apologizes over and over for her "baggage."

Her now-body.

And now the climax: Stoyanova slides out of the last traces of Mylar that are still smashed in the skin-Nylons. The polyps, now separate from their host, form odd little embryonic cocoons that she tenderly places in a nest of Mylar downstage. She is naked again, having carried, cast off, born and been reborn. Madonna's pop rock pounds through the speakers. Casually at first, Stoyanova dances through the explicitly feminine movements, her face stoic and even a bit contemptful. She is gyrating and arching her back and intensifying and intensifying. She falls and is lost in the clouds of Mylar before recovering with a sheepish smile and getting right back into it, now with more fervor. She gestures down her face with a coquettish look tainted with anxiety to impress. Falling again. Her fists bumping the air as her breasts thwack against her skin when they rebound. Falling. Her grin that fades back into distressed focus almost immediately. She shifts and gyrates and falls and pounds and shakes and is something new yet also everything before again and again and again.

She survives.

Explicit Female, Zornitsa Stoyanova, , April 28-30. <http://www.thefidget.org/events/explicit-female/>

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