

thINKIngDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



Photo: Melissa Simpson

Consenting to Play

by Nadia Ureña

There is a table in the center of the open installation when I walk in and on it are beads, ribbons, and string. These are materials intended to construct friendship bracelets - these signal to the artists which audience members would be open to being included to any participation. I am lousy at knots so my bracelet shatters as the dancers invite us to pull our own trigger and it feels ironically metaphoric. Still my consented role is understood as Loren Groenendaal, one of the four performers, immediately pulls me onstage for a show opening contact improv duet. It is a quiet duet for us at first, our arms pushing and pulling each other away and towards and we wrestle with our comfort, opening and moving in silence. Slowly we find a flow and suddenly we are running. Soon the three other performers invite more viewers into the space; immediately making the room, the city, and the playground warm and inviting.

We Pull The Trigger, by Adam Kerbel and Performa, is a 55 minute playground that blurs the lines between audience and performance. The binary of performer to audience feels unrepresentative as I was moving and active as much as the artists who rehearsed and collaborated on this project. Consequently I feel remiss to continue this language and will instead opt to refer to us all as *the rehearsed and the invited* for the rest of this.

The piece felt accessible; though I had no idea what would happen when the rehearsed would invite me to play yet I also always knew what options I had and where I could go. The *rehearsed* danced together and apart throughout the space and the *invited* were able to sit, stand, and lay wherever preferred. The *rehearsed* handed us flashlights while the *invited* chose what to shine a light on. There was a moment towards the end of our play where all of the *consenting invited* stood in a single line parallel across the entire space. We, with hands clasped, played with pushing and pulling and eventually managed play of our own without direct guidance of the rehearsed.

We Pull The Trigger does not promise identical looking shows; instead its use of improvisation and play invites us to create, observe,

and interact despite not always knowing. Process rather than production. Wouldn't you like to play?

[We Pull The Trigger](#), Adam Kerbel + Performa, Asian Arts Initiative Third Floor, September 6-18.

Image Description: *Three dancers in dynamic positions pose against a stark white background. On the left Annie Peterson wears a red bandana and a red pinnie is hunched over looking down. In the center a Vitche-Boul Ra dons a colorfully patterned shirt, has one arm akimbo and the other reaches out towards the lens. On the right Zeze Schorsch in a red tie dye tee with a black vest overlain leans back and looks towards the other dancers.*

By Nadia Urefia

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