thINKingDANCE
Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation

Photo: Ian Douglas

Greg the Creature, the Human

by Nicole Bindler

Lines of chairs are set at 90º angles across from two windowed walls also at 90º angles, creating a square performance space with a city-scape backdrop. There's a cream colored rug on the unfinished wood floor that Greg Holt dive-rolls into and out of with ease.

Several window panels are rotated open, inviting a warm, mid-September breeze and street sounds into thefidget space.

Sunlight streams onto the floor. The El train rumbles by.

Greg articulates the joints of his hands like the wings of a delicate, strange, flightless bird. He leaps boldly through the space, lands onto forearms, and extends his spine for a sinuous descent into the floor.

An ice cream truck sings its electronic-music-box-song outside.

Greg performs 2,000 individual, unrepeated movements for one hour. Without reiteration, there is no reference point, nothing to hold onto as more significant than anything else. The piece spills out into time and space without a hierarchy or center, like an embodied, anarchist manifesto.

Sometimes one movement is one thing, like a flick of his sneakered foot onto his back jeans pocket. Sometimes one movement is many things. He squats with his legs pretzeled and briskly swings his arms back and forth in a humorously impotent attempt at running. Why are some movements a single gesture and others phrases that repeat until he finds an organic completion?

What is one movement anyway? How does he parse that out?

A boy dribbles a basketball on the sidewalk outside for a few minutes.

Each movement of Greg's is not just a bodily gesture, but a spatial pathway with its own idiosyncratic timing and focus. He perches on his toe tips, braces his back against a wall and looks inward. He pulls his ear as he runs in circles. He forms his mouth into an O and looks at the audience daringly. He spends one minute slowly unfurling into a supine twist.

Sometimes the movements are non sequiturs. His attention jumps suddenly from a pony trot to a flutter of his elbows behind his back like a thorny bug.

Sometimes movements bleed into one another. He performs a belly roll that would not have been visible had it not been for the previous activity: a series of wriggles and writhing partially out of his t-shirt.

Sirens blare in the distance. Birds chirp in a tree downstairs.

His attention is crisp and the logic of his articulate body is transparent and confounding. While he conjures up creatures in much of his dancing, this piece is distinctly human. The dance provokes, and is full of conceptual underpinnings and eccentricity. There are no natural cycles or return, only a tumbling into the future with potentially infinite variation.

2,000 Movements, Gregory Holt, thefidget space, September 16-17.

By Nicole Bindler
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