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Dance Review | CYP17

Inside One Man's World, Confusion and Physicality



Tom Brazil

Kenneth Flak performing in "CYP17," a solo dance by the Canadian choreographer André Gingras at Danspace Project.

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At the beginning of the oddly titled "CYP17," a solo by the Canadian choreographer André Gingras, a man (the superb Kenneth Flak) sits on a chair in the middle of a brilliant, all-white space. Wearing only shiny white briefs, he watches, puzzled and frustrated, as his limbs lash and jerk away from him, independent of his volition and knowledge, in a kind of Tourette's Syndrome.

That's just the start of "CYP17," which provided a captivating 40 minutes at [Danspace Project](#) on Thursday night. During the rest of the solo, he tries desperately to eat a bone — thrown to him by a man in white protective clothing — clacking his teeth as he tries to insert it into various body parts. The same man throws him the body parts of a cloth mannequin, which he assembles, first correctly, then incorrectly. Between these activities, Mr. Flak babbles urgently about [C.I.A.](#) conspiracies, cloning and aliens inhabiting human bodies.

He also jumps, rolls, jerks, somersaults, back flips and throws himself repeatedly to the ground in movement that isn't ostensibly dance, but nonetheless coheres into a distinct vocabulary occasionally hinting at break dance and martial arts.

At intervals, giant multiple images of Mr. Flak walking and abruptly crouching are projected on the white walls that enclose the stage space, accompanied by loud Berber songs. The video component (by Fabio Iaquone), like the images of Mr. Flak unable to control the movements of his own body, or uncertain how to put together one made of cloth and stuffing, combine to convey powerfully a frightening sense that this is a world in which ego boundaries have been dissolved. The man onstage is unsure of the difference between what is internal and external to himself, and what is human. ("My mother came to visit," he says. "I knew she was an imposter.")

It's not often that a dance lives up to its ambitious program notes ("the freak show of the future"), but Mr. Gingras has created a bizarre, funny, often disturbing piece that does just that, and he does it mostly through movement. Here is a world that couldn't be evoked by anything other than the physical detail of Mr. Flak's extraordinary dance.

"CYP17" will be performed again tonight at Danspace Project, St. Mark's Church, 131 East 10th Street, East Village; danspaceproject.org or (212) 674-8112.