

## Press Clippings from Past Work

“[No Permanent Answers](#) consist of two unique contemporary dance performances choreographed by Angela Blumberg and Tracey Norman. This [Toronto Fringe Festival](#) dance production boasts some of the finest contemporary dancers in Toronto. The strength and maturity of the dancers was apparent as they danced their hearts out on the [Randolph Theatre](#) stage.

I did, however, love Angela Blumberg’s *Five Souls* dance piece. The distorted movements were captivating and certainly unique. Irvin Chow’s presence on stage was electrifying! I followed him on his gruelling journey to find his inner soul. His full commitment to his performance was a standout and I am a fan of his work.

**Ashima Suri, Mooney on Theatre, July 2013**

“Angela Blumberg and Tracey Norman never fail to leave a great impression. Individually both their choreographic styles are beautifully physical and subtly compelling. The cast for *no permanent answers* is another group of highly talented performers.”

**-Emma Letki, Mooney on Theatre, July 2013**

“[No Permanent Answers](#),” by choreographers **Angela Blumberg** and **Tracey Norman** of the company **Human Atoms**, uses an interdisciplinary approach to trace the way our lives can be intertwined by seemingly unrelated events. There is a lot of dance at the festival this year, but this is sure to be one of the best.”

**-Mark Mann, Blouin ArtInfo, July 2013**

“Conversely, some dance artists in this year’s Fringe are not confining themselves to movement. [Angela Blumberg](#), who’s joining forces with fellow choreographer [Tracey Norman](#) for a shared program called *no permanent answers*, is taking advantage of the Fringe to try something new.

“The majority of Fringe-goers are theatre-oriented people,” says Blumberg. “Therefore, I decided to stretch my choreographic approach, to move away from abstract dance and instead combine dance, spoken word (in the form of narrated voice) and music. I hope that by offering multiple entry points my work will speak to a wider audience.”

Blumberg also believes regular Fringe theatre artists, particularly of the solo show/personal narrative kind, have learned that it’s not easy to hold an audience’s attention for an hour without injecting some variety. “It helps to be more versatile, to draw from a wider palette,” says Blumberg.”

**-Michael Crabb, The Toronto Star, June 2013**

### **Review of Blumberg/Norman Double Bill - by Mark Mann**

Each of us has a little watcher in our heads, a hovering creature that’s as big in our brains as we are on the planet: small, but somehow taking all the space. Yesterday I took mine to see the Blumberg/Norman Double Bill at The Citadel on Parliament Street (May 1-3). These two choreographers deal in awareness, and watching this show was a bit like looking out at the horizon and remembering that it’s a lie: there’s way more out there. We just can’t see it, because we’re not that tall.

Angela Blumberg opens the program with “Shadow,” a duet between self (Carmen Kraus) and self (a shrouded Blumberg). The work begins with a graceful little animation about how we take our inside-people everywhere: when we’re staring at a computer screen, or working out at the gym, or getting our teeth cleaned, or watching a dance performance. They simply have to cope, watching us live our lives.

In “Shadow,” the protagonist’s uneasy truce with her inner-other breaks down in an art gallery. They argue. It’s visceral, but in typically playful fashion, Blumberg presents a dynamic that is as funny as it is urgent. Here that familiar struggle — conscious/unconscious, you/you — falls into a feedback loop that oscillates between tragedy and comedy. The pitch she finds is both jolting and tender.

The note of querulous play continues to ring through Blumberg’s second work on the program, “What Remains,” a piece for three dancers. Again, the ego drives the action, this time between people, rather than within them. The characters arrive on set adorned with exotic accouterments (provided by the Paperhouse Studio), but their equality is untenable. As one dancer strips the others of their decorations, I felt totally caught by that violence, and subject to it: I was ashamed of their loss.

“If ballets are the “operas” of the dance world, then German-Canadian choreographer and dancer Angela Blumberg’s choreographies are fine chamber works. While ballets use vibrant sets to lock in a narrative and tell a story, Blumberg’s dance pieces inhabit a realm of poised abstraction, using minimal props and sets.”

**-Tyler Verluis, ludwig van Toronto, 2016**

“This show is a success. Blumberg’s choreography does a superb job of illustrating the idea of evolution, of transitioning from one kind of being to another. This choreography was implemented successfully by the show’s dancers, both of whom demonstrated an amazing mastery of their bodies in the motion of the dance.”

**-Randy McDonald, Mooney on Theatre, 2016**

### **DaCo: Dance Collaboration Lab 2023**

A Review by Virag Takacs

Last Saturday *DaCo: Dance Collaboration Lab* hosted its second annual performance event featuring four works-in-progress that have been created during the DaCo residency program. Developed by Angela Blumberg, founder of Angela Blumberg Dance Academy, DaCo is a 2-week, educational residency program meant to provide aspiring contemporary choreographers with space, mentorship and resources to take an idea and turn it into something tangible that they can be proud of. At the end of the residency the audience is invited to view the works-in-progress and allows the creators of these works to look at their pieces in a new light as they are performed.

This year, I had the opportunity to attend the DaCo performance event and it was a wonderful experience. Hosted at the Pia Bouman School of Ballet and Creative Movement, the

small theatre gave the evening a feeling of intimacy and connection with the performances and the choreographers from the moment the lights went out for the first feature.

The first performance of the evening, *The Beholder* choreographed by Kayla Jeanson with music composed and performed live by Quinn Jacobs, was inspired by Kayla's own experience in the field of videography and introduced her main character, a simple camera, as an individual. With the camera mounted on her head and connected to a projector showing the audience, in real time, what the camera sees, Kayla beckoned us to view the process of video production as the subject, a dancer, entered the stage. We were able to see how the camera had to move to capture the images showing on the projector; breaking the wall between the raw footage and the "official" product that we are so often used to when looking at videos.

With the camera following the dancer as she performs, we were shown the intricate underlying relationship between the camera and its subject; focusing on how control is passed back and forth through instances where the dancer directs the camera to assume certain angles and positions, while other times the camera moves freely around the dancer. While the audience identified the camera as an individual from the start, it only seemed to realize its own autonomy when it saw itself through a mirror. The dance ended with the camera's subject and Quinn Jacobs walking off the stage leaving only the camera as it made its way to the projector and then repeated its movements from the start of the dance. The camera came to rest on the spot where Quinn Jacobs had been sitting with his guitar, showing the audience that the projector was replaying the recording and no longer showing what the camera saw. This end to the dance showed how once the video has been made and released to the public, we no longer know what happens to the subjects or even the camera.

While the first dance had been reserved Ben King's piece, *Sims On Ice*, was much more active and intense. There was so much energy present from the very beginning, from the costumes to the music. A fast paced performance where the audience got to see Ben's "creatures", as he calls them after the event during the post-show talks, in their own little world. Ben even says that he wasn't much interested in continuity, both emotional and physical, creating the hectic and spontaneous nature of the performance. Inspired by the workshops done during residency, *Sims On Ice* was bursting at the seams with energy and emotion, leaving the audience to fluctuate between amusement and fascination as we followed the story being told.

Last choreographer in residence this year, Alli Carry focused on gender and agency; asking the audience to consider the question "What is it to perform?" Throughout her residency she experimented with masculine and feminine movement as well as how much of each was in a dance. Her piece, *A Subject* with music by Crescenzo DiCecco, utilized these gendered movement ratios to explore femininity and feminine agency. The dancers starting off with wearing masks as they emphasize masculine movements in an almost robotic fashion while the music blares heavy music to accompany it.

With her interest in gender, Alli was greatly inspired by the book "The Second Sex" written by Simone de Beauvoir in 1949. The book is one of the first to address the position of women in society and how they are often considered the 'other'. Alli surprised the audience by quoting parts of the book during her piece. Halfway through, the dancers slowly drop to the floor one-by-one and remove their masks, from there they watch as a single dancer stands and explains thorough movement the words that now get projected on the wall for the audience. It is one of those moments that will forever stay in memory; a single dancer in the spotlight translating words into movement as behind her a projector shows quotes from the book that inspired the dance. Afterwards the dancers move more smoothly and with more freedom similar to the music

that had turned into something light and joyful, reminding the audience that in the beginning the dancers had been playing at being men and didn't have the agency to perform feminine movements.

As a special treat there was a fourth performance to end the night by a past choreographer in residence. Marisa Ricci developed her contemporary dance *Colony Collapse* last year and has since turned the work-in-progress into a complete dance routine and has been invited to perform in Montreal at the Festival Quartiers Danses in a few weeks. On Saturday we only saw a short excerpt from the full version, but even just that small part showed how much the dance had evolved from last year.

Marisa used bee colonies as inspiration for the dance because of the intricate relationships that govern them and how easily the natural balance could be destroyed until the colony inevitably collapses. Dressed to roughly resemble bees, Maria played the part of the queen bee with two other dancers as worker bees. The performance showed the importance of the matriarch and the unique relationships between each character in the dance. However, through greed and disconnection the colony she sets up breaks apart and eventually collapses.

Being able to attend and watch the performances was an incredible experience that I will never forget. Witnessing all the skill and wonder of these dances was a true gift. Each choreographer had clearly worked hard to create something that spoke to the audience. Each and every choreographer can, and should be, proud of what they've created; they all showed great skill and enthusiasm for dance and performance. Under the guidance of Angela and the workshop facilitators, a future is blossoming where aspiring choreographers can share their ideas and create amazing performances like the ones this year. I hope to one day see these performances not just as works-in-progress but as complete works and furthermore I wish every individual who took part in the residency continued luck in developing their ideas.