

WHO cycle United-C

NAKED STUDIES BY UNITED-C: SMALL PIECES OF ART

Review by Ivy Harkes

United-C, the company from Eindhoven, shows in three beautiful solos and a breathtaking final piece the results of its study into the female body.

The young dancers move completely naked along the stage, without shame, sometimes modest, sometimes exuberant. In 'WHO cycle' director Maarten van der Put doesn't show nakedness in order to shock or to make a statement, but in order to show the beauty and purity of the body.

In the semi-darkness a young ballet dancer (Hilde Elbers) starts with the first solo. Slowly the light becomes brighter and with it her body becomes clearer for the audience. Through her movements the anatomy of her body becomes extremely clear. Through the course of the dance she transforms from a ballet dancer into an animal creature. Her movements are supple and graceful along the stage, sometimes slowly and softly, then again fast and wild.

The dancer in the second solo (Marleen Kleinstapel) moves agonisingly slowly and modestly along the stage. With small, subtle movements and unclear expressions she captures the attention of the audience. In the third solo the dancer (Marjolein Vogels) is hidden behind a mattress when she enters the stage. The mattress moves dancing along the floor, without the audience being able to catch a glimpse of the dancer. After a while she does appear. At first still a bit shy, but slowly more and more abundant. She flings the mattress through the space and jumps wildly after it. A beautiful harmony between the fragile body of a young girl and the big bulky mattress.

'WHO cycle' ends with a breathtaking piece in which four dancers (Marleen Kleinstapel, Marjolein Vogels, Diane Gemsch and Charlotte Goesart), covered in olive oil, move naked amongst hundreds of broken beer glasses. The contrast between the slippery bodies and the sharp glass is big. It is unbelievable that the dancers can move through all that glass. Gracefully they glide over the floor and twist through the glasses. The audience sits holding their breath on the edge of their seats. Exciting and beautiful to watch. Prior to 'WHO cycle' United-C created the productions 'Two Times Soft' in which a naked dancer moves through broken beer glasses and 'One Eighty', in which three women dance with three mattresses. For 'WHO cycle' these productions have been re-worked and complimented with two new solos. The performances of 'WHO cycle' are small pieces of art. Confrontational, modest, honest and intruding. United-C has managed to touch the audience.

Seen:

'WHO cycle', United-C

8th August, Theatre on the Parade, Theatre festival Boulevard, 's-Hertogenbosch

For background information and play list: www.festivalboulevard.nl

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<http://www.theatercentraal.nl/weblog/pivot/entry.php?id=3477>