

InfiniteBody

art and creative consciousness by Eva Yaa Asantewaa

Friday, October 10, 2014

Yanira Castro makes a spectacle of ourselves



I won't reveal too much about ***Court/Garden***, the dance installation given its world premiere last night at [Danspace Project](#) by [Yanira Castro's a canary torsi](#). If you go, you should come upon it fresh. I will advise, though, wearing a pair of shoes you don't mind standing in for a while, and when coat check attendants ask you to give up your bag and jacket, do comply. It will just make things easier.

Castro and her teeming band of collaborators--a mile-long list of them, including a dramaturg, a crown-builder and a perfumer--have gone all out here in an elaborate mash-up of Sun King spectacle with modern technology in which audience members are not only part of the mix but the whole point of it. We go from being treated like catered-to spectators in Louis XIV's court--like

17th Century celebrity figures attending the hot event of the day--to a condition that feels far more democratic if borderline chaotic. Throughout, Castro maintains an interesting tension between high expectations and low-level means of delivery, between firm control of things and awkward execution, between glittering artifice and banal transparency, between seductive beauty and those things that make you seriously question what you find beautiful, why you do and who the hell you think you are to judge.

Costuming ranges from fabulous, if disturbing, to shabby-fabulous. And there's a fantastic segment in which the especially well-cast **Luke Miller** gazes out on all he surveys, his privileged and waspish tongue enhanced by electronic distortions.

True to its time-traveling nature, *Court/Garden* also has an online presence, created by Web designer **Helen Gaffigan**, but I will allow you to discover that in your own time.

Castro gives her primary performers collaborative credit as choreographers: **Simon Courchel**, **Tess Dworman**, Luke Miller, **Pamela Vail**, **Darrin Wright**, **Kimberly Young**. Music is by **Stephan Moore**, costume design by **Miodrag Guberinic**, lighting/installation by **Kathy Couch**, and video by **Peter Richards**. See the program notes for full details about Castro's entire production team.

Court/Garden continues through Saturday evening with performances at 8pm. Arrive early to check your belongings. Seating is limited, and there will be no late admission. For tickets, click [here](#).

Costume detail from *Court/Garden*

Photo: Miodrag Guberinic and Jose Espallat