

Review/Interview – Reckless Sleepers/Mole Wetherell

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This is the first show I've been to see that had me itching to pick up a hammer and smash everything around me into a thousand pieces.



Negative Space presents a sister work and inversion of Reckless Sleepers' critically acclaimed Schrödinger (which incidentally made me want to down pints of water and draw all over my bedroom walls in chalk). Instead of performers dropping from ceilings, they're constantly emerging from underground. Or throwing themselves head first through a giant sheet of plasterboard.

The white box set is gradually destroyed by the performers: using their bodies, saws and hammers to crumble and shape it into something new. However, unlike watching a group of particularly angry builders renovate a conservatory, there is a constant sense of competition. Performers constantly watch each other to anticipate their opponent's next move, which could be taking a hammer to the nearest wall, desperately scrambling to sit on the nearest chair, or gently producing a single flower. I spent the first ten minutes trying to work out who was going to "win" this never-ending game before accepting that the performers probably didn't know either. Surrendering to the destruction allowed me to root for all the performers, as everyone took a physical beating throughout the piece. A red smear appear on the white plasterboard at one point: leading to a post-show debate about whether it was blood or a paint scratch from a hammer. I'm still not sure.

In an earlier interview, Mole Wetherell told me that theatre was something he makes with his friends. I hope that someday I find friends that I trust enough to run towards me at full speed, wielding a hammer the size of my face. Until then, I'm perfectly happy to live out these fantasies by watching Reckless Sleepers take such risks for me.

Eleanor Gribbin