



IBT13: In Between Time Festival

Artist : Leen Dewilde - Reckless Sleepers

Title : A String Section

Photo: Delia Spatareanu

Produced by In Between Time in collaboration with Arnolfini, Bristol 14 - 17 February 2013

Review by Maddy Costa ★★★★★

For a festival lasting only four days, In Between Time was overwhelmingly rich in thought and theme. Like a constellation of stars that can be mapped into suggestive shapes, the programme invited audiences to draw connections and patterns from one work to the next. It did that explicitly, with stated inspirations: the moon was key; so was the idea of live art in the public realm, wherein the specific venue could be a bedroom or a clearing in the woods. And it did that subtly: curated by a group of thrillingly smart women, IBT13 presented work after work that interrogated female existence, identity and representation, but never drew attention to this at all.

A work of dazzling maturity: Reckless Sleepers' 'A String Section', performed as part of the festival's opening celebrations. Reduced to a single line, it sounds not only slight but preposterous: four women dressed like musicians in a string quartet sit on kitchen chairs which they gradually destroy using saws.

Yet in that apparently pointless action the performers conjured up the two most tenacious images of womanhood – the domestic goddess and pornography's whores and exposed not only their absurdity but the ease with which women use them as weapons against each other.

There was something almost pornographic about the way the women's bodies wrapped around the chairs, forcing metal into wood – but this was a pornography in which the women are not meat but living animals with a powerful, accusatory gaze. We watched them sweat with effort, thighs quivering as muscles engaged, and saw bodies reclaimed and in control. I saw, too, the birth of my two children: such was the natural force to which they lay claim....