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The Centre for Contemporary Arts at Crewe

Negative Space 10th Feb by Elliot Garlick

Before writing this, I asked my flatmates what ‘Negative Space’ meant to them.

Two of them stared at me blankly.

One of them thought it was a computer game.

For anyone who might not know what it means, ‘Negative Space’ is the area surrounding an object. It’s not what’s there that’s important, but rather what’s missing.

And that is exactly what we are given by ‘Negative Space’, the latest project from the internationally acclaimed theatrical group Reckless Sleepers. Directed and performed by Mole Wetherell, who formed the company in 1989, the show also boasts deep ties with MMU, starring two graduates and two lecturers.

It begins. The stage is a blank canvas, occupied only by two chairs, one man and one woman desperately setting the stage.

But it grows.

And it Grows.

Until it becomes something so fantastical that you barely believe it’s happening. It’s a love story. It’s a slapstick comedy. It’s a slasher, an action, a melodrama and not a single word is spoken throughout. Soon all these different stories are spiralling around each other before they start smashing towards the project’s conclusion and it is Intense.

But the beautiful thing about this piece, and that which makes it hard to review, is the fact that it means something completely different to everyone that watches it.

We observe as laws are made and broken. People appear from hatches in the floor and we’re never quite sure whether the stage is upside-down. Relationships are forged only to crumble into dust and all through the use of a silent stage and clever choreography. Ultimately, it teaches a lesson in destruction. We learn that destruction is not bad. It’s not evil. It can be fun and cathartic. Destruction tears down the walls around us, offering new perspective.

This show makes confetti of convention, and it does so purely through the use of negative space.