

# AFRONALYSIS

REVIEW: SCHRÖDINGER, CONTACT



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## Schrödinger by Reckless Sleepers

Contact, Manchester [24.05.17]

The cat's name was George.

A black box with the front wall removed. Many openings like a multi-faceted lift the flap book without the colourful folly of childhood. Water, water everywhere but, too many drops to drink. Chalky mountains. Sheets strangling lovers faces. X marks the spot.

In 1998, Reckless Sleepers built a box. It wasn't just any old box. This box was akin to the theorised box created by Schrödinger. Within the box, a cat (George), can be both alive and dead simultaneously yet, we are only able to see one state upon looking in the box. The box creates a paradox. A compelling thought experiment.

Nineteen years later and Reckless Sleepers invite you to explore the box. Watch the chalking of arrows, listen to the simultaneous vocalisations of a letter, ponder every element of the space and then... a man drops through a flap in the ceiling of the box. The cycle repeats with differences that are nuanced yet so repetitive that they could almost be the same. Things fall – whether or not they are apart, together or existing in both states is up to you. Books drop, water is flippantly swished out of wine glasses, pencils are sharpened, apples are eaten, chairs and tables rearranged, bodies lifted and dropped and pulled and pushed. Bodies breathing.

You as the observer are tasked with watching Xs being marked through a physical 'dance' of hands pressed against black chalk stained walls and pondering what this mountain range of movement has to do with a cat. This is not your only task and it is not your task at all. Maybe there are no tasks.

Maybe you are just here to watch. Or maybe you are not here to watch but to be. You're looking into a box for one hour but who's to say that you as the audience who reside in the dark are not George.

Maybe you are George and the frantic capers and building of a triangular pyramid structure to the sound of *Hushabye Mountain* is how you sleep at night. Maybe you don't sleep. Maybe no one sleeps because thoughts keep threading themselves as time ticks and you exist in a space where everything stops and starts simultaneously.

A man drops through a flap in the ceiling of the box. The cycle repeats itself.

A woman drops through a flap in the ceiling of the box. The cycle repeats itself.

A man threatens another man with a hammer each time he removes a hand from the wall.

The cycle repeats itself.

Two men and two women drink with chaotic order to the chanting of numbers.

The cycle repeats itself.

It goes and goes and goes.

Round and rounder.

When pace is lost, they fall from the wagon one by woman.

Until there is stillness.

A book is dropped many times.

And a music box keeps playing *Hushabye Mountain*.

In Schrödinger, Reckless Sleepers have welcomed us to sample the delights of all contrasts without their difference. We are placed in a space in which logic constantly defies itself and forces us to consider whether what we think is happening is what is actually happening at all.

Watching someone draw has never been so compelling that at one point, I acknowledged the rest of the stage and thought 'Oh shit, that man ate an apple and I missed it...why am i concerned about missing a man eating an apple?' I had a weird sense of feeling robbed every time I missed something despite, making decisions about what I was looking at.

Reckless Sleepers bring original physicality and warped compulsive sequences that make you question how much you're being given to see and how much you are choosing to see. Is there any choice in this experience apart from you sitting in your seat: yes and no. Are there an infinite yet finite number of possibilities for each encounter. Every time you see someone drop onto the stage, do they fall? Are you already falling into a space in which everything is nothing and nothing is everything. Yes and no.

Juxtaposition is okay among friends and strangers because maybe we're all the same but different anyway. Verdict: This really was quite extraordinary.

The cogs have not stopped ticking in my head since this encounter and I doubt they will anytime soon. Reckless Sleepers are incredibly talented presenters who are able to give us an experience quite unlike any other. This is definitely one of the most unique things I have ever seen and it almost makes me think that theatre generally has become quite static.

This defied all the rules and I feel privileged to have experienced true artistry on stage.

Schrödinger is brave, mind-boggling and really quite stunning.