

## **REVIEW: Fuzión Dance Artists bring art to life, life to art**

Posted By Carrie Seidman On June 4, 2011 (9:49 am) In [Arts](#), [Blog](#), [Dance](#), [Featured](#), [Section](#)

A concert by Fuzión Dance Artists is predictably an unpredictable affair; the element of surprise is part of the anticipation. But you can usually count on something weirdly wonderful that will elicit a reaction deeper than mere visual pleasure.



“Dancing Through the Eyes of Women,” four new works by the contemporary dance company, each based on a piece by one of four visual artists – Ofra Friedman, Scylla Liscombe, Beverly A. Smith and Pamela Sumner – was a good example.

How often do you find these things at a traditional dance concert?

A theater-in-the-round setting. Dancers balancing atop a table. Sculptural art hanging from the ceiling, occasionally set into motion with a movement. A musical score made up of strange, breathy noises, a live oboe solo and audience members humming. And – for those of you who, having read that, are thinking this is all too esoteric for you – also a post-concert Q & A with the artists who inspired the choreography.

It all made for another unusual and mostly successful feather in Fuzión’s cap. Though technical issues hampered the show from reaching its full potential, this multi-disciplinary, collaborative approach – which the company’s founder and director, Leymis Bolaños Wilmott, has previously explored, though never so explicitly – was definitely on the right track. One can only imagine what might have transpired with a budget to match the ambition.

Other than a brief solo by Bolaños Wilmott, moving in and around Sumner’s gently-flowing cloth pieces in gallery two, the concert was presented in gallery three, or, as I like to call it, the sunken living room. I intentionally chose one of the chairs not at the traditional “front” of the

stage and was sometimes inches from the dancer's flying limbs. I found the only thing I missed was a direct frontal view of the art projected on a backdrop.

Unfortunately, that backdrop looked to be not much more than two relatively small hanging sheets, which gave an amateurish air not in keeping with the rest of the show.



But set aside that and a few other technical glitches – was that track of original music by Chris Mitchell for “In the Beginning,” based on the Liscombe painting really supposed to have that scratchy feedback? – and you could actually imagine the artists' works were jumping off the walls and ceilings and coming to life.

My favorite piece of the evening was “In Flight,” choreographed by Bolaños Wilmott, inspired by wire mesh sculptures of bodies by Friedman and daringly danced mostly upon a barely 3'x 3' table top two feet off the ground by Angela Rauter and Marlee Weinberg. As the sculptures dangled and danced above, the dancers mimicked their intertwinings below to a violin and cello duet by Zoltan Kodaly.

The centerpiece, “Exhale” – a synthesis of Sumner's Asian-inspired hanging cloth works, an original score by the avante garde composer Francis Schwartz and Bolaños Wilmott's choreography for the full company – was true to its title. At times I found myself matching my own exhales to the dancer's actions and, as was the composer's intention, many audience members contributed to the constant hum of breathy sounds and mutterings.



Choreographer Leymis Bolanos Wilmott, composer Francis Schwartz and visual artist Pamela Sumner. / Photo by Dan Wagner, Herald-Tribune

“Moving Palette,” a tribute to Smith’s painting “Acceptance,” was a similar swirl of color and movement as the dancers expertly twirled, twisted and tossed bright silk scarves.

For me, the best parts of rehearsal director Alyson Dolan’s “In the Beginning” were the beginning – when the painting it was based on appeared bit by bit, layer by layer, on the projected screen, as if it were watching it taking shape – and the end, in which the petite Dolan turned the tables and effortlessly lifted her partner, the very tall and elegant Jahrel Thompson.

You know you’ve enjoyed something – or at least that it has prodded your intellect – when, as soon as it’s over, you immediately want to see it again. That’s exactly how I felt at the conclusion of Fuzión’s most recent experiment in collaboration.

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