

Modern Dance Fan Club: Funsch Dance Experience in "EPOCH"

By Jill Randall

Preface:

I have come to believe that all modern dance choreographers need a fan club. Regulars. T-shirts. Stickers on laptops. Longtime supporters. Folks who *show up* in a variety of ways for the artist and for the art.

I have been a member of the Christy Funsch fan club probably for 8 or so years now. I know her work as a fellow Bay Area artist. I have been moved by her in-person performances over the years. (Remember the bricks section in her evening length duet with Nol Simonse?) I also have loved her writing contributions on this site over the years. Check out Christy's [artist profile](#) and also her [shelter-in-place dance dictionary](#).

October 2, 2021, the [Funsch Dance Experience](#) offered a 12-hour durational experience at the ODC Theater in San Francisco. Due to my schedule for the day, I opted to get a streaming ticket and to pop in and out of the event 6 times. In total, I watched about 70 minutes of the 12 hours.

In conjunction with Christy's experimental performance format, today I offer an experimental dance reflection, primarily in poetic form. Far from a "dance review," this piece humbly aims to document and share back my audience member and fan experience. Please join me in re-envisioning and reshaping dance writing in response to performance. (Read more here in the February 2020 article, [Creating a New Model and Landscape for Dance Criticism and Dance Reflection: Honoring Artists' Voices and Offering Multiple Viewpoints](#).)

My basic notes are in black ink, and my poems/responses are in purple.

10am, first livestream viewing

Start of the event

I tune in at the very beginning, with curtain speeches and land acknowledgements. I have not showered yet; I settle into the leather chair by the front window in the living room. My 16 year old son is still sound asleep in the other room.

I am drawn to write in phrases and to form poetry. Sitting here alone, no fellow audience members are bothered by my writing while the show happens.

Here is my response to the opening duet with zoe huey and Erik Lee.

2 dancers
Top of head
Co-existing?
Today's improv?
Set material?

zoe looks at Erik -
Morning contact

Pensive
Stretched time

zoe's turn first
Erik waiting, watching

Sound score like sand blowing on a long stretch
Low - going - flowing

zoe so clear -
Clarity
Invoking, stating
Erik witnesses, is asked to wait

A transfer of energy

Erik sparked to join

Thinking about agency versus reactivity

Calm
Clarity

Choreographic question:
Why 2 dancers at once?
Feels like separate solos

Commitment to slow, continuous movement

At 10:18am, 3 dancers come on stage in unison.

zoe windmilling, churning
Repetition in upstage left

Contrasts, composition
5 on stage

10:20am, 2 audience members in the theater enter and cross the space to find seats. The formality is broken. I feel a bit more at ease.

10:23am - a unison duet

Oh, seeking unison
in this post-pandemic
emergence

Togetherness
You, in my periphery

10:25am I add into the Chat on the screen.

Lots of joy watching first thing today.

How would I describe the movement?

- Primarily stationary
- Slower, continuous
- Broad circles
- Crouching
- Heartbeating/pulsing gestures
- Lunges
- 2 arms dancing

At home, I turn off the screen. My son is still asleep. I step into the open space in the dining room. I stand up and repeat in my own body 5 movements I just saw. I am compelled to feel + embody them myself, to join in. I give myself permission to join in.

P.S. From viewing #1

Thank you Christy, dancers, and musicians. Those 30 minutes took me to another place, and shifted me out of this morning's anxiety.

My heart feels open again. My chest is broad, wide.

Transitioning back into this morning and today's list of tasks + needs.

12pm (viewing #2 of the livestream)

5 dancers

Sitting, lying

Witnessing

Durational

AND with masks -

I am impressed.

Patience AND endurance.

Curly haired dancer -

I want to learn your name.

Slow, continuous, measured

The tension of

Agency + being acted upon

at once?

I looked away for a moment and now you are upright.

Patience

Witnessing others

Allowing yourself

To move

In *this* tempo

In *this* path

I see zoe's visible

Exhale

The weight

The heavy lift

What do we carry?

Bird sounds + song

In the soundscore

Thank you

(I associate this sound with calm)

4 dancers are now

On backs and side

Rest, recuperation, resignation?

A few jumps, prances

Arms swinging

Hug yourself

Legs lifting to side - bent knee

Existing in a sparse landscape

Tempo picks up

More urgency

More wind

I get up on my feet again and embody a few of the moves myself. Giving myself permission to experience the work in a new way and respond in a new way.

2:17pm (viewing #3)

Chinchin Hsu dancing

I want to join into

This twisting

Slapping

Lifting phrase

Repeated

The energy of today

Then -

A quiet balance!

Hope

Shift the energy

Chinchin's solo embodies my day

Thank you for this gift

Circling

Hair released, down

Stirring this shit around

Then -

Arms up

Eyes up

Heart looking up -

5:34pm viewing #4 of livestream

Unmasked

5 dancers -

Different cast than this morning

Solo endeavor

Versus group

A diagonal line of dancers

Some stillness, some movement

A solo amongst the group

When are we “together?”
When are we alone,
 Separate,
 Apart?

Facing back
Hiding?
Turned away?
Separating ourselves?

Lights fade

Viewing #5

I take one more quick peek in between personal and professional events this evening. I didn't note the time, but I estimate it was around 6pm?

Still - in my work outfit - I stand up and try on a few more moves...

9:12pm viewing #6 of livestream

Endurance!

Jumping, bouncing
Still going

Yet also catching a
First glimpse of some of the dancers

Paddle turns
Long arms
Bouncing
Slow churn

Co-existence.

9:14pm

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