

Counterpulse Presents Sonsheree Giles and Sebastian Grubb in Fabric Animal

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If nothing else, it's obvious that Sonsheree Giles and Sebastian Grubb have worked together to the point where trust and coordination with one another is instinctive, and, I might add, quite distinctive as demonstrated at Counterpulse June 7 in their hour-long *pas de deux*.

Close to the Market/Turk #31 bus stop is where Counterpulse moved three seasons ago from Mission Street, and its support for the unusual dance adventure continues unabated. In the process, Counterpulse is purchasing its building through the Community Arts Stabilization Trust [CAST] and the Rainin Foundation. In addition to its 25 year existence, starting at 848 Divisadero before moving to Mission Street near Ninth, Counterpulse has hosted the gamut of dance expressions, principally experimental, ethnic, improvisational. In the process, it has revealed just how much of experimentation frequently, if not predominantly, has a healthy measure of classical ballet training tucked into the exponents' muscle memory.

Giles and Grubb solidify their chops in this work titled *Fabric Animal*, not only with Giles' unusual combinations of ribbon, fabric, footwear and headgear, but in placing both artists against several videos of natural landscapes. The longest of these was filmed along a water inlet marked by once used massive rocks and wood, with an expanse of neutral-toned water, the color partially induced by an overcast sky; this occurred mid-way through the work.

The audience was treated to video footage of lengthy bulb green shoots framed on one side by a white curtain appliqued with flowers at the top of spindly stems, a homey accent near which Giles and Grub lay bare footed on the floor encased in army green jersey one piece garments with same-hued head coverings. Their relative stillness with occasional, small adjustments was striking, and was followed by physical connections – touching, lifting, balancing. The control, the sustained tempo of the shifts and postures was riveting. One knew the pair would continue this exploration, but unsure which direction it might move, although it also was quite clear that Giles and Grubb shared infinite respect for one another.

Giles and Grub gradually moved from down stage right to center stage and in so doing shed the olive grunge for shades of white and the lightest pink, continuing the balances, the sustained lifts, the slow winding around each other. They disappeared into a structure mid-stage left while the video footage carried on the balanced explorations in the water-dominated video. Here the work seemed to flag, becoming a private pleasure in a landscape uncondusive to the space or prior movement. Clearly as thoughtful and contemplative as the prior movement, I attributed it as a necessary pause in Giles-Grubb's monumental exercise in sustained, balanced movement.

Two additional segments remained in the performance. One featured the emergence of Giles in lime/mustard cropped unitard, being held aloft in extended stretches, not quite spread eagle fashion while clearly models of control and cooperation between the two artists. Finally finishing ribbons attached to a sweater gave visual underlining to a poetic phrase my mother enjoyed quoting, "Useless each without the other,"

While I am unsure I understand or agree with poetry on the program, I fully subscribe to the classical Greek definition of the artist as someone skilled in a given craft. Giles and Grubb demonstrated those qualifications in spades.

They also underscored generosity of spirit in dedicating the program to the "life, art and legacy of Lisa Bufano." I seriously recommend anyone reading these comments refer to Wikipedia's record of Bufano's life and the printed recollections of Bufano's brother.