

## **The Fatness of Being**

*by Josephine Dorado, performance artist, New York City*

It's gut-wrenchingly passionate---reveling in the hole of life, or the whole of life: the fatness of being. Pavel Zuštiak's show *Itch in the Stitch* explores the boundaries of self-image, gluttony, and obsession.

Pushing the envelope past the obvious stereotypes, Zuštiak surreptitiously moves across the stage clad in a fat suit...the folds in the fat suit rippling along with the movement and somehow nefariously fascinating as well.

Even the bulging fat suit can't hide the beauty of his movement, though. Zuštiak's character takes us on a journey, past the superficiality of a skin that he eventually sheds, down to his inner core, from which intimate discoveries are made and innovative movement springs.

The journey starts off silently, with Zuštiak strapped to a stool, and eventually becomes an amalgamation of seamlessly integrated media and movement. Video work by Nectarios Leonidas projects hauntingly compelling images while Zuštiak alternates between states of disquieting stillness and agitation. A voice filters down through the speakers, reminding the character of his search:

"My life is written on the backs of sleeves..."

"My life is written in ticket stubs and burned out Metro Cards..."

"My life is written on the backs of coffee cups..."

Subjects such as obesity and compulsion are hardly easy to swallow, and have been cause for questioning self, society, and soul. But Zuštiak tackles it with as much gusto as his obsessive character would, managing to plow through a plate of apples and spitting out chunks of unsettling revelations.

As Kim Simpson's text suggests... "It's not as easy as a song, or as pretty as a picture," but the pilgrimage is well worth it.