

InfiniteBody | Written by Eva Yaa Asantewaa

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Zuștiak: at home in the funhouse



Lindsey Dietz Marchant (left) and Elena Demyanenko of Pavel Zuștiak/Palissimo in Zuștiak's Weddings and Beheadings (Photo: Julie Lemberger for the 92nd Street Y)

You're already a habitant of **Pavel Zuștiak's** Mardi Gras funhouse. By the time his new work--*Weddings and Beheadings*--reveals its solemn, surprise ending, you probably won't need that fact to be made plain. You're human, he's had his eyes on you, and you can feel it.

In this sprawling, 80-minute piece, Zuștiak animates a *yin/yang* of male and female, light and darkness, grace and awkwardness, tenderness and aggression, pleasure and fear, the theatrical and the genuine, the clothed and the unclothed, the corporeal and the ghostly, presence and absence, present and past. The way in which *yin* slips around the base of *yang*, the way they swirl together and lock into one entity, reflects how this dance-theater work presents a startling palette of opposites.

Shifting, evolving images--some very old found portrait photos, shots of the dancers and x-rays--are projected onto a scrim, the backdrop and other surfaces. The performers--when not stark, raving nude, which is often--make numerous

costume and identity changes. **Joe Levasseur's** lighting environment creates alternating and disturbing feelings of intimacy and distance, the mysterious and the mundane. Zuștiak's sound design marches against the ear and nerves. Some action strays into the margins of the stage, and we follow, sneaking peeks there before returning our gaze to the main event.



Sho Ikushima (left) and Jeff Kent Jacobs (Photo: Julie Lemberger for the 92nd Street Y)

Elena Demyanenko, Sho Ikushima, Jeff Kent Jacobs and **Lindsey Dietz Marchant**--an amazing cast--help pull together this jumble of theatrical elements, this ambiguity of mood, motion and meaning. Watch, especially, for smoothly-rendered duets between the men and for the way that Dietz Marchant always appears to be suspended in dark space, even when there's light all around her, straining against balance, active and complex within her waiting.

Zuștiak's other fine collaborators include **Robert Flynt** (projections concept and images); **Keith Skretch** (projections design and animation) and **Nick Vaughn** (set and costumes).