Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

# One Flat Thing

Sarah Elgart · Wednesday, May 27th, 2015

I first saw Thierry de Mey's, **One Flat Thing, Reproduced,** years ago at an earlier manifestation of Dance Camera West Film Festival. In viewing the first frames of the film, I remember being so struck that I experienced a kind of gasp of awe that was at once physical and emotional.

The film opens with a male and female crouched and crawling through a sort of rectangular tunnel that – initially unbeknownst to the viewer – has been created entirely by conjoined tables. Finally pausing at a space between them, the camera rises slowly with the dancers as they elevate themselves from their stooped positions to full height, and begin moving strangely if not elegantly, all arms and torso from the waist up, as if through shallow water.

I realize now that these images probably tapped into some primal, early childhood memory I have of creating a whole world for myself under my mother's kitchen table, which I draped with a long white tablecloth. When I emerged from my time beneath it, I came from a magical other reality that made the real world a much more manageable place.

Dancers running with tables in William Forsythe & Thierry de Mey's "One Flat Thing"

The power of **One Flat Thing** is that it succeeds both as a study of bodies simultaneously responding to and creating architecture, and an ode to the sheer magnificence of their physicality progressing through space. William Forsythe's almost entirely non-unison choreography is fiercely intelligent, and for me at least, as satisfying as a great meal. After a few minutes of seeing these two elegant dancers moving in near silence, we see a veritable herd of what appears to be some twenty  dancers running towards camera, each dragging a table behind them. The sound of the tables being pulled mixed with the power of the framing, the beauty of the space with its arched ceiling and light from high windows, and Thom Willem's bold and spare sound score make for a visceral experience. Forsythe uses the tables to transform the dance floor and create a horizon, in which there is an above and below that the dancers move through and respond to.

At some nine plus minutes and without apparent narrative, **One Flat Thing, Reproduced** may try some viewer's patience, but I am always riveted. *Enjoy.*

This entry was posted on Wednesday, May 27th, 2015 at 1:30 pm and is filed under Film, Architecture, Dance, Visual Art
You can follow any responses to this entry through the Comments (RSS) feed. You can leave a

response, or trackback from your own site.