Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Casey Brooks & Gnosis

Sarah Elgart · Wednesday, December 2nd, 2015

Casey Brooks, the NY based filmmaker who's short **Casi** I featured in ***ScreenDance Diaries*** on September 10th of this year (a screen shot from which I have been using as the lead photo for **Dare to Dance in Public Film Festival**) uses dance in nearly all her short films. In the few commercials and several shorts I've watched, she seems to have an incredible eye for and understanding of both dance and even the simplest of pedestrian gestures. Between the editing, framing of shots, lighting, and brilliant props and set ups, she has an innate ability to evolve the simplest of pedestrian gestures into dance, and dance itself into brilliant moments. And her intersections of movement and the camera are beautifully realized when fashion comes into play. Brooks uses fashion as a point of departure to explore the movement and vice versa… And her use of absolute stillness acts as a spectacular counter point and punctuation. She's not afraid of it, and I love that.

A fashion-less dancer explores wall and shadow in Gnosis

Case in point is **Gnosis**, a new short featuring the fashion of Vera Wang, Raf Simmons, and Issey Miyake, produced by Helena Martel Seward with cinematography by Mike Drucker, and editing by Manuel Barenboin. In Brooks' capable hands the minimal imagery, all shot against a white cyclorama to highlight the fashion and the beautiful faces and bodies wearing it, the images and moments of movement gleaned are wholly inventive and singular. And with the apparent improvisation by a stellar cast of beautiful dancers including Ebony Williams, Michelle Dorrance, and other such luminaries each speaking in what looks to be their own movement "voice", **Gnosis** is a real home run.

A singularly unique looking dancer captures a moment by holding still in Gnosis

While this short is for GarageMag.com, Brooks seems to have had some success with her work being featured on Nowness. It's unclear whether **Gnosis** was born of a professional gig but either way I really admire that she seems to create these shorts whether she's paid or not. And while I don't know what – if any – her own personal history with dance is, whether she knows it or not Casey Brooks *is* a choreographer. It's just that in her case the choreography she creates is done behind the camera and in editing, *not* in the dance studio.

Enjoy.

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