

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Sharon Eyal & Dior

Sarah Elgart · Wednesday, December 16th, 2020

As an art form, dance has been marginalized for years. Unless it's part of a Broadway musical, dance usually enjoys only limited runs, and continues to be underfunded and undervalued in general. And although so often part of what makes a film great, dance has never enjoyed a regular or recurring nominating category as part of the Academy Awards (the wonderful choreographer Michael Kidd was once awarded an Academy Honorary Award in 1997 "in recognition of his services to the art of dance in the art of the screen"). It is only relatively recently that dance has begun to be served up as a main dish for film, television, music and fashion.

In the MTV days when I was busy creating my own stage work as well as choreographing for music videos, films, etc., I was ritually vilified for engaging in commercial projects by venues like the *LA Times* who said things like (my) "*growing success in commercial music-video choreography has paralleled the coarsening of her powers as an artist*" and that I was fast becoming "*the resident windbag of Los Angeles.*" Happily, these days it's much more acceptable and frequent for contemporary choreographers to blur the boundaries between the commercial and the artistic (think Damien Jalet doing Thom Yorke's "Anima," Wayne McGregor doing Radiohead's "Lotus Flower," Karole Armitage doing runway fashion shows for Marc Jacobs or, back in the day, music videos for Madonna).



So when the new commercial marketing the Dior 2021 Cruise Campaign, directed by Fabien Baron, caught my eye, I watched it to only to discover that former Bat Sheva dancer Sharon Eyal, who has her own acclaimed company LEV, had choreographed it and I was thrilled. It is beautifully shot (by Benoit Delhomme), and interestingly merges — in concept at least — the "pizzica tarantata," a folk ritual in which a spider's bite engenders a song and dance of healing. Some of the movement suggests gestural aspects of traditional Spanish Flamenco mixed with contemporary dance. What works less well for me is the merging of the models and dancers. Although beautiful and wearing gorgeous outfits in stunning locations, the models are filmed in color and clearly flawless while Eyal's company is contrasted — albeit intentionally — dancing dusty and barefoot in the dirt in (mostly) black and white. Somehow the two don't quite mesh and it feels, well, *slightly* marginalizing.



What does make me happy is mostly that different forms of dance are merging, that dance is being used for fashion, and that leading edge choreographers are involved, getting paid and being valued

for their involvement, without (I hope) major repercussions. And in either case merging folklore, dance, fashion, and storytelling, is always interesting to me.

Enjoy and Happy Holidays!!!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U6Mh0UKh920>

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