

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Shunpo

Sarah Elgart · Wednesday, July 29th, 2015

What if we could escape the humdrum routine of our every day world...? Wish ourselves anywhere and be there within a matter of seconds like *Beam me up Scotty* in **Star Trek**?

There is a relatively new trend in dance films wherein a piece of choreography, often times with a single performer, is seen organically evolving from one moment to the next in dance, but with the location itself constantly changing. Mitchell Rose did this beautifully and to great effect in his dance short **Globe Trot** in which both the people and the locations are constantly new – in this particular case we watch as the film literally “trots” across the globe in time and physical space – but in which the choreography is sequentially continuous. In other words, a piece of movement might begin in one place with one dancer, yet resolve with a different dancer in another location altogether.



A dancer finds herself on a staircase in Shunpo

The beautiful dance short **Shunpo** utilizes this same concept. In the beginning we see a woman feeling stifled and confined within her small office. Suddenly she is pushing against the walls, leaning over the railing of a multi-storied Parisian rooftop, traversing an outdoor staircase, falling into a swimming pool, or standing on the vast open planes of a windy salt flat, with her movement evolving sequentially, as she is taken from one place to another. The framing for each shot is beautiful and the editing is seamless... Surfaces change and a wall becomes a floor yet we don't quite know how each change occurs or how we get from one place to the next. The movement is lovely and strong yet relatively simple, and each location is clearly selected for its graphic potential and beauty.



A moment from Shunpo

What I love in this short is that – unlike many others referred to – the dancer herself seems to realize that she is moving through time and space, and seems also to wonder at her power to make this happen. As such **Shunpo**, directed by Steve Briand works as a beautiful parable and reminder of our power to do just that. After all, sometimes prison is only in the mind and the power to escape physical confines is within our grasp mentally, like the writer and sufferer of “locked in syndrome” in the heartbreaking true story **The Diving Bell and the Butterfly**. His perfect recall of events and sensations transports him to the point that he is wholly immersed, and yet he never leaves his hospital bed.



Sky and salt flats in Shunpo

Luckily, in film, nearly anything one can imagine is possible, and the medium itself has a kind of magical power to transport the viewer. Perhaps it can also serve to remind us that we have more power to do just this – on our own, sitting in one place, without any artificial or external tool – than we often care to admit to ourselves.

Enjoy.

[embedvideo id="fMDDaqv1dxk" website="youtube"]

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