



Get Involved > Reviews

HYPNOCRAFT presents "Liquid and Still"



Freeform Review:

Rachael Pazdan's HYPNOCRAFT commissions and presents interdisciplinary work, challenging artists to push the boundaries of their art forms and forge new connections. "Liquid + Still," HYPNOCRAFT's latest endeavor, is a collaborative series that brings movement exploration to Greenpoint's Manhattan Inn, a venue traditionally home to musical performances. The inaugural "Liquid + Still" features improvising troupe The Lovelies with live music by Ben Brody, Carson Moody (TIGUE) & Trevor New. Manhattan Inn, known to attract a hip, cultured crowd, proves to be an exciting and relevant space for dance.

Manhattan Inn's gorgeous performance area, located in the back of the bar, is encapsulated by the audience; booths surround an open space in the center. A white grand piano is a radiant centerpiece, and the light of the August evening filters through an ardent chandelier hanging from a skylight above our heads.

In "Liquid + Still," choreographers collaborate with musicians to create an unique live-score. As the audience grows quiet, a mellow hum begins to infiltrate the room, accentuated by the din of cocktail shakers and a low murmur of voices. Slowly dancers emerge from all corners- limbs extend into nooks and crannies and no corner of the space goes unexplored. As fingers brush past our faces, the dancers surprise us with how close they are, breaking down the barrier between audience and performer.

Billowing costumes and the stark reflection of work-lights on exposed brick swirls together to create a hip, tasteful aesthetic. Every part of the room becomes a prop with which to play- the ceilings, the corners where the brick walls meet the ceilings, the cushioned booths, the grand piano.... Sounds echo off the walls, and we feel as if we are inside a snow globe that gets shaken up.

Mini plot lines and bits of character development emerge and disintegrate throughout, and snippets of dialogue tell pieces of a story which we assemble ourselves, infusing our own experiences. Annie Duffy speaks of a struggle to find self definition, something to which we can all relate. The audience grows quiet as she tells her story with both movement and words: "And then one day, you realize that you don't have to change anymore..."

All parties are talented improvisers, playing off of one another to create a captivating dynamic- stories develop and dissolve, we are never stuck on one moment for too long. A memorable duet is between Joanna Futral and and Carson Moody- as they lurch towards each other across the vast grand piano, Futral coyly plucks leaves from a bouquet of flowers on the piano. Towards the end of the piece, all six dancers come to a pause and the audience freezes, trying to decide if they've reached an ending- the entire room holds their breath. The dancers' sensitivity to one another is tangible.

The dancers' vocalizations contribute to the sound scape and the musician's simple movement patterns meld with the audience's

minute pedestrian motions to create a larger score; music and dance seem one and the same.

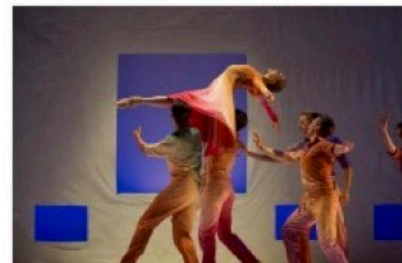
HYPNOCRAFT creates a space where collaborative interaction can happen freely. By integrating movement into a situation traditionally used for music, they work to expose dance to a new audience, making the art form more accessible (and effectively, it would seem- the room was packed!). All in all, "Liquid and Still" 's inugural evening is intriguing and transformative.

To learn more about HYPNOCRAFT and what they do, click [HERE](#)

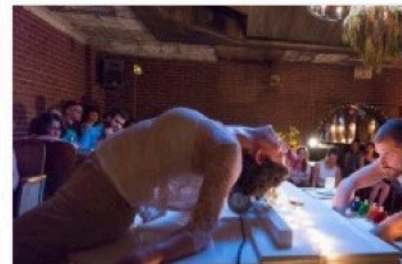
For more on the artistic happenings of Manhattan Inn click [HERE](#)

To check out The Lovelies, click [HERE](#)

Related Reviews



Pacific Northwest Ballet in "Her Door to the



HYPNOCRAFT presents "Liquid and Still"



Advertise With Us

Make an impression - place an ad on The Dance Enthusiast. [Learn more.](#)

Contribute

Your support helps us cover dance in New York City and beyond! [Donate now.](#)

MAGAZINE DANCE®

FORCE
WENDY
yourcareer

When Dance-making Becomes Spacemaking

For young artists, creating residency spaces can be community-building and career-boosting. BY CANDICE THOMPSON

Back in 2002, dancer and choreographer Jonah Bokaer founded an art space in Brooklyn called Chez Bushwick. As Manhattan and Brooklyn were quickly becoming unaffordable, and many studio spaces were closing, Bokaer seized upon "creative placemaking"—the idea that the arts can play an integral role in community-building—before it became a buzzword. "We have been sustaining and maintaining one of the most affordable dance studios in New York State since the very beginning of my career," he says.

Fifteen years later, the challenges for choreographers in expensive urban centers continue unabated, and Bokaer has found his original mission magnified. While Chez Bushwick remains a haven for the next generation, there is also a growing number of young dancemakers who have been inspired to create their own residencies, communities and, ultimately, opportunities.

Residencies, Scaled Down

The Lovelies, a New York City-based group of dancers and musicians, created the performance series Slice & Dice with studio space sponsored by the Joffrey Ballet School. Though the space isn't their own, they're still able to give presenting choreographers 10 hours of free rehearsal time and foster a community where artists and audiences can share and reflect on the work.

WHY CREATE RESIDENCIES?

Though residencies can vary widely, one goal is common: the desire to create community. When Pepper Fajans founded Brooklyn Studios for Dance, he wanted a place where dance professionals, amateurs, artists, audience members and neighbors could mix seamlessly. The result is a rehearsal, performance and class space run out of the Cadman Congregational Church in Brooklyn. In Los Angeles, dancer and choreographer Bordenave was unable to find a welcoming dance hub he craved, so he opened No)one. Art House in Los Angeles is another example of it becoming a place where people of color can be inspired by a variety of dance styles, music, film and

CLAIM YOUR SPACE

No matter your working model, developing a strong network and resources are key to getting a foot on the ground. For Fajans, the year-long path to opening Brooklyn Studios began when he was introduced to a board of trustees. Fajans offered to be the caretaker of the building in need of repairs. In return, Fajans has acquired a room to run classes and rehearsals, and to host performances.

Bordenave originally began his company No)one and initial program in donated spaces. But he always relies on freebies, he warns, as negotiations can be tricky, and sometimes the stipulations change. He is eventually able to afford his space, set up with a stylist and a photographer.

To ease the burden of maintaining space, residencies can take advantage of



community. Brooklyn Studios for Dance offers discounts to artists who help out. Arts On Site, a Manhattan space run by Chelsea Ainsworth, regularly puts out calls for volunteers.

BOOST YOUR CAREER

A thriving residency program has obvious benefits for the dance community it fosters—but it can transform the artistic career of its members, too. Bordenave's program has helped

Residencies, Scaled Down

The Lovelies, a New York City-based group of dancers and musicians, created the performance series Slice & Dice with studio space sponsored by the Joffrey Ballet School. Though the space isn't their own, they're still able to give presenting choreographers 10 hours of free rehearsal time and foster a community where artists and audiences can share and reflect on the work.

{ Dd } Preview: A Slice & Dice Round Table with The Lovelies

by CANDICE THOMPSON on Feb 17, 2017 • 2:17 pm

No Comments



This Sunday, the split bill series [Slice & Dice](#) returns to offer NYC audiences “long form dances, deep dialogue, and drinks” with Pamela Vail and [The Lovelies](#). Over the past two years of producing this series, the five women who make up [The Lovelies](#), along with the [Joffrey Ballet School](#) and [Fractured Atlas](#), have supported the work of (Alex)andra Taylor Dance, [The Architects](#), [Donnell Oakley Dances](#), and [Alex Springer & Xan Burley](#). { Dd } had a round table with four of these socially conscious and entrepreneurial women in advance of this weekend's performance to talk about the nature of their collaborations, both in the moment of improvisation as a dance company and as producers and curators seeking to foster responses to art on a local and global scale.

{ DIYdancer }, Candice Thompson: What brought the five of you together?



Keeley Walsh:

I was inspired to start a compositional improv group after I attended MICI, Movement Intensive in Compositional Improvisation, 3.5 years ago. It is led by The Architects: Pamela Vail, Lisa Gonzales, Katherine Ferrier, Jennifer Kayle as well as Kathy Couch, their lighting designer. I was

so moved by the freedom that happens when one practices the form of improvisation. There magic of 25 people, who just met each other the day before collaborating in the moment, with a live musician, to make a 25 minute dance, with an ending agreed upon in the moment, was just bonkers to me. Then we did it over and over again; completely fresh and new every time. When I got back to NYC, I asked my nearest and dearest, who I had already been working with, if they would consider such an endeavor. Most of them replied with something like, " I don't know exactly what this means, but I'm in!"

Joanna Futral: When Keeley first brought up MICI, Movement Intensive in Compositional Improvisation, and The Architects, I was a little confused and unsure. I thought, "A group that only performs improv?"

Katie Vason: I had done improvisation before but was unfamiliar with the specifics of compositional improvisation and the endless possibilities of working with a group in this way.

JF: Agreed. I knew improv was important to me and I wanted to be a part of a group that was doing it. But I had no idea The Lovelies would turn into this wonderful place where we could grow and challenge our art and what art as a business looks like.

Lena Lauer: I had not known Joanna or Katie all that well previously to starting this weekly improvisation practice with these women, but through this form we have grown individually and we have built a company. I now have four best friends and feel tethered to my life's work; bound to hold and revere it and them.

CT: What are the challenges when collaborating (in and out of the moment) in a group this large?

LL: We tackle differences of opinion in aesthetics, social, global and artistic relevance, with ensemble decision-making. Taking on risks and facing and embracing challenges have helped to define who we are as The Lovelies, namely strong and unapologetic women who are humans and artists.

KW: The challenges of collaborating with 5 dancers and 1 or more musicians are always changing. As soon as we have reconciled one way to handle a situation or proceed in a new direction, something shifts and another frontier has to be explored and negotiated whether it be delegating admin tasks or deciding on costumes. We often say it's a lot like a democracy. We have actually had to vote a few times when not everyone has been in agreement.



KV: Holding space for differing opinions is not only important in collaboration, it's a skill we have to navigate both in and outside of the work. Each of us having a voice in this group is extremely important. While it might not be efficient, we are learning to navigate as we go and is a skill that is so needed in the world right now!

JF: It's true, negotiation is not an efficient task, but it's effective and we're stronger for it. You are forced to ask yourself what's important, what's worth standing up for, what worth letting go of, what to prioritize, what means something to you... not easy, but always worth it. And, in my mind, we're always moving towards a more desired outcome.

CT: How did you choose to present Pamela Vail for this incarnation of Slice & Dice?

JF: Pamela Vail is a co-founding member of The Architects and a wonderful mentor to The Lovelies.

KW: I think I can say for everyone that we are so thrilled she is actually setting a piece on us! Some of us are terrified to have to learn and memorize set choreography, which we never do as The Lovelies.

CT: Do you think curating and producing offers something creative to The Lovelies, beyond the rare occasion when a work is set on you?

LL: Our curatorial process from the outside is relatively informal. Once we have been in touch with the artists, have set some dates for space usage/rehearsals/show time, it's pretty amazing to also offer so much more: huddled over veggies (or cookies!) and chatting before the show, a professional video of their work (most of the time, we're working out how to budget this responsibly) which is usually so hard for artists to find the funds for, a thoughtful talk-back so they are walking away with more to contemplate when they return to the studio, a chance post-discussion to meet everyone who came to watch, as well as half of the proceeds from the door. It's really satisfying to be building something that can provide so much more than just a performance opportunity.

KV: Presenting the work of others has been such an honor in creating community and opening up dialogue about the work and the world at large. Having the opportunity to present longer form/longer work in progress in an informal setting creates room for risks, feedback and conversation that might not otherwise be accessible.

JF: When we first thought about Slice & Dice, we wanted to challenge ourselves and our community with intention. We wanted to have richer conversations, ask stronger questions, and keep curiosity alive. So along with the performance aspect, we thought of this "break bread style" meet up that happens in various ways with each group we present. We're also starting to develop a more global and social scope to Slice & Dice, so for this particular show, we will be donating 50% of our revenue to the Black Lives Matter organization.

The show was culminated with The Lovelies standing in a powerful diagonal downstage, audibly suggesting to each other what movements their great finale could be remembered by. Even though the strong and technically trained dancers were more than capable of the grand dance moves they were teasing the audience with, the stage suddenly went black without these movements ever coming to life. No death drops or flips took place at the end, yet this finale was memorable in a way that gave meaning beyond movement. This moment allowed the audience to be intimately aware of the humbleness of a performer, letting the audience connect with a dancer's perspective on dance itself. It inspires the question; what really defines a good dance? The Lovelies evince that it goes well beyond typical steps.

I was able to speak with company member, Joanna Futral to explain more about the nature and process of their work.

Why does your company choose to focus on improvisation? "The beauty of the work is that no two pieces are ever the same. The Lovelies practice a technique called Compositional Improvisation. It works to heighten awareness and use all aspects of space & time to recognize form as it emerges and make a piece as an ensemble. No structure or otherwise previously agreed-upon content is determined in advance except usually the duration of the work and in this case, 30 minutes. We are literally making decisions in the moment, composing and building a dance together."

What do you hope an audience experiences while seeing your performances? "Our hope is that an audience member will walk away having seen something in a different light. Constant discovery. Paying Attention. Play. Rigor. Risk taking. Limitless creativity. Mindful negotiation. These are values that The Lovelies share. The piece on Saturday felt real. Like the insides of the workings of the Lovelies were exposed in a bold and honest way."

Why does your company choose to focus on improvisation? "The beauty of the work is that no two pieces are ever the same. The Lovelies practice a technique called Compositional Improvisation. It works to heighten awareness and use all aspects of space & time to recognize form as it emerges and make a piece as an ensemble. No structure or otherwise previously agreed-upon content is determined in advance except usually the duration of the work and in this case, 30 minutes. We are literally making decisions in the moment, composing and building a dance together."

What do you hope an audience experiences while seeing your performances? "Our hope is that an audience member will walk away having seen something in a different light. Constant discovery. Paying Attention. Play. Rigor. Risk taking. Limitless creativity. Mindful negotiation. These are values that The Lovelies share. The piece on Saturday felt real. Like the insides of the workings of the Lovelies were exposed in a bold and honest way."

What is the boldest or most outrageous thing you've done on stage to surprise an audience? "The Lovelies try to take new risks for each performance. I can't think of anything outrageous we've done, as we try our best to follow the material where it takes us and build something together."

Reviewed on January 26th at Triskelion Arts



“Lines in the Sand, TBD” by The Lovelies – brings to light the thrilling bravery of chance dance

FEBRUARY 4, 2019 by [JENNIFER JACKSON](#)



“There’s something about sticky situations...sticking to you and sticking to me..” said one of [The Lovelies](#) dancers as she balanced her body on the small of her duet partner’s back during the build up of an unbounded and flavorful hour of “Lines in the Sand, TBD.” These words, along with other powerful spoken phrases interwoven into The Lovelies staging made this a show that is unquestionably one that sticks in your mind.

Saturday, January 26th of 2019 was the closing performance of Triskelion Arts’ Never Before, Never Again, a festival housing a series of events and performances showcasing improvisational artists in the Brooklyn, NY dance scene. The Lovelies comprised of the first half of the final production to wrap up this three-week improvisational festival.

Some are hesitant to buy tickets to see a work that is improvisational as it doesn’t always have the same respect as some other forms of modern dance, however, as apparent in the quality of their performance, The Lovelies rehearse this skill rigorously in the studio. As it is not something to be considered “easy” or without use of rehearsal space and hours of practice. The moral of improvisational work is to live in the present moment, allowing things to feel as real as possible between both the performers and the audience, and this was a success from The Lovelies.

As improvisation is normally a term associated with theatre or rather the process of choreography as opposed to the product, The Lovelies bring to light the thrilling bravery of chance dance, representing that it is a major part of modern dance today. As one of the highest forms of risk-taking in performance art, this company has mastered the fluidity of making anything that happens on stage have purpose in the moment while constantly remaining in an exploratory state with the use of various elements.

Pushing the boundaries of modern dance performance, The Lovelies, a small but mighty compositional improvisation company based in Brooklyn is a group of artists who move seamlessly from one idea to the next. It is surprising to know that there are no predetermined ideas or structures before they step in front of an audience after witnessing this unfold. Partnered with the contrasting collaboration of two musicians; an electric guitarist and cellist, the ability of this company to develop an idea in the moment and to play off of one another's motifs in complimenting and juxtaposed ways was rather impressive, and certainly captivating.



What was most enjoyable about the style of their performance was the humour and on-stage chemistry between the dancers and the subtle relationship with the live music. While showing explosive, athletic, and elaborate movement, there was also dialogue, singing, and spoken word. At the beginning of the performance, the dancers seemed to be inspired by the music and were following it in some way. Somehow mid-performance, the music began to follow the dancers. This ebbed and flowed throughout the dance in a subtle way as the dancers used words, contact improvisation, stillness, duets, and solo moments to develop their piece.

As the powerful dancers made use of the entire stage space (even the stage curtain) they constantly discovered and developed new motifs in progression. Creating a rich and dynamic background adding to the angst, the musicians improvised as well, while being visible to the audience as a crucial piece to the paragon. The Lovelies were never a slave to the music and often danced independently from it, as it served as both a framework and inspiration, but never an orchestration.