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## Review: Blueprint

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Where better to stage a visionary installation than Cape Town's very own City Hall? This exquisite building with its variety of spaces and detailed embellishments adds a certain gravitas, edged by an eerie and mysterious atmosphere. In these historic rooms, *Blueprint* creates an artistic experience for its audience members, literally keeping them on their toes, by making them a mobile part of the performance. The audience moves around the building into different rooms where various

installations take place, breaking down the typical performer/audience barrier.

A breathtaking image greets each viewer when entering the first room for the opening scene. An abstract structure – a twisted coil made from electrical PVC piping – dominates the space as if a giant slinky has been stretched out to cover a large part of the colossal floor. With the audience placed around the structure, two dancers emerge from opposite ends of the room mirroring each other's movement and slowly moving inside the industrial-looking coil. Contemporary dance choreographer, Louise Coetzer, has focused on linear positions of bodies in this piece, echoing the lines and dimensions seen on a technical drawing (the *blueprint* of the title). The movement, although surprisingly conversational, has a machine-like precision and although eye contact and focus are strong, the dancers' expressions are deadpan, as if devoid of human emotion. During the duet the dancers create flat and distinct lines that are particularly interesting to view through the energetic loops of the warped coil.

The audience is then split into two groups and ushered to different ends of the building for the next installation. In one, a trio of dancers lies motionless on the floor around metal box structures. Only once the viewers have taken their seats does the scene start, with the lighting cleverly projecting shadows around the white walls of the room. Working at a distinctly faster pace, shot through with a sense of urgency, the contact work between the three dancers is flawless. Skillful lifts and partner work is effortless and the choreography reflects signature motifs seen in the previous scene keeping the choreographic style constant.

Pausing only to replenish wine glasses, the audience groups move on. In a smaller, more intimate room, in which scaffolding reiterates the industrial atmosphere. a duet is performed around white screens and blue lighting while numbers are projected onto the screens.

The audience groups are reunited and enter the final room where smoke lingers in the air making the vision almost hazy. One simple spotlight from the corner illuminates the dancers as they perform in complete silence. Without warning, music – or rather a cluster of harsh noise – suddenly erupts from the speakers, scratching unmercifully at the audience's eardrums. Unnerved by this invasion, the audience is then hypnotised as – in the highlight of the whole installation – lights beam down onto each individual dancer.

*Blueprint* is an impressive collective from the ingenious vision of project manger Oscar O'Ryan, with some particularly striking and innovative ideas from lighting designer Fabian Humphreys. All elements of *Blueprint* merge to result in an unforgettable experience. Long may Darkroom Contemporary continue to push the creative boundaries of the dance realm.

*Darkroom Contemporary's Blueprint runs at the City Hall from 28 July to 2 August 2014.*

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