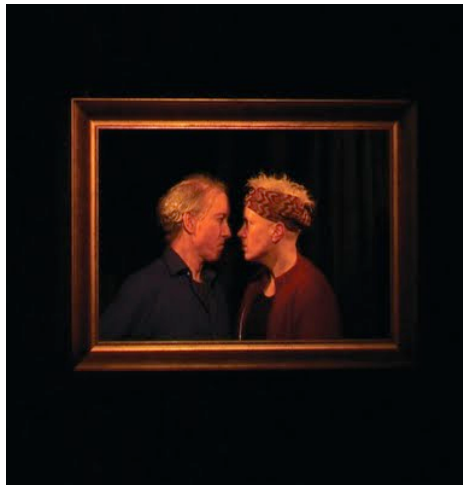


embrace: guilt frame (strange hand)



When performer Peter Snow's hand appears as if it has become disconnected from his body, *embrace: guilt frame* performs the transcendental. This quiet yet luminous show is staged within a gilt-edged frame that could very well be a portrait of a couple hanging above a fireplace in the family home. All the usual emotive states are there: laughter, joy, violence and hatred, resentment, jealousy and sometimes even transient moments of monumental affection, if not true love. And yet *embrace* always strives for something other than the usual rumination upon dysfunctional relationships. Performed in slow-time, it is a Robert Wilson extravaganza reduced to the intimacy of a 2 X 1 metre rectangle; making the portraiture an integral component of this performance. There are actually three performers on stage, but one of these happens to be an gilt-edged frame. Consequently, the mysterious space behind, between and beyond Snow and de Quincy is amplified for an audience prepared to be receptive toward the peculiar, unpredictable and devastating consequences of Nature. You're drawn into this show in the same way a person can be drawn into staring out to sea on a moonless night. The same void that awaits us all once we are done with the petty vanities of our very business-like, postmodern lives.



Snow and De Quincy are transformed; from dysfunctional suburban couple to rodents marking time as each makes an assessment of the primal beast within. They employ photographic techniques to suggest moments of cataclysmic intimacy before the moment is lost and Snow recedes into darkness; while de Quincy arches forward, pushing her head and hand into the illuminated space beyond the shimmering gold frame to confront the audience. It is at once the busting of theatre's fourth wall, a desperate bid for escape, the repositioning of status between two participants in a tempestuous relationship, and two mythical travelers about to discover the absolute terror that characterises deep awareness.

Space and time, those often forgotten fundamental elements of the theatre, are utilised in a deceptively simple fashion to record the journey of a lifetime as it occurs in 40 minutes flat. That old spiritual cosmonaut Andre' Tarkovsky comes to mind. Set in a transitional space between the living and the dead, his film *Mirror* is sometimes more an essay than a performed moment. During *embrace* however, as a receptive member of the audience you yourself feel compelled to forever depart this mortal coil... And then Peter Snow's strange hand enters stage left...



Purveyor of Beckett's cruel joke, or perhaps an unfathomable cosmic presence? Representation of tyrannical masculinity, or an arm ripped from its socket by a feminine presence that can no longer tolerate the bonds of affection. Snow's phantom limb is all this and more, giving *embrace* a narcotic potency. And even though this show's rhythmical structure requires one more epiphany in the transition between its second and third movements, *embrace* is one of those rare performances that should remind audiences and practitioners alike why they were first attracted to the theatre. Staring out across the sea on a moonless night, you will wonder who or what it will be, (if anything at all), that will embrace you in its arms when your time has come, and it is your turn to go...



embrace: GUILT FRAME
Performers: Tess de Quincey & Peter Snow
Original Concept: Tess de Quincey
Set: Russell Emerson & Steve Howarth
Sound: Michael Toisuta
Light: Travis Hodgson
Project Manager: Sam Hawker
La Mama Courthouse, Melb. Dec. 2 -13