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Review: Framed by the De Quincey Co.

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By Erica J. Brennan

As we enter the Lennox Theatre at Riverside Theatres, Parramatta, the audience is greeted with, not a stage, but rather an unassuming black wall. It's only adornment a heavy picture frame set right in the middle of it. The poster promised a meeting of live performance and installation art among other things and indeed for just under an hour we were treated to a beautifully sustained image of what seemed to be a moving painting.

Two [women](#), Victoria Hunt and Tess de Quincey, move at micro-speed through subtle and spectacular images of the human emotional landscape. Their heads and torso hemmed in by the picture frame, nothing else is visible and nothing else becomes visible. The literal framing of these women focuses the audience intensely on their faces and the exquisite ability of both performers to pass through silent expressions of emotion; screams, laughter, horror, love, suspicion and more. Complex and rich facial expression, body positions and moments of tension were held with compelling and transcending grace and you could not help but be in awe. I found myself slipping in and out of deep focus and contemplation but it felt okay, like the slipping was part of the performance as a whole.

Sitting in the dark of the theatre I felt safe enough to let my face and body respond to this. I could also hear other audience members responding in kind, they would chuckle as grotesque grimaces were pulled and I could certainly feel a collective slump in people shoulders as Tess de Quincey moved through a harrowing expression of world weary grief. I almost wish I brought a painting pallet – and could paint well enough to do the images justice.

As the piece drew to a close – We knew it was coming due to a beautifully jarring score by Michael as it wound down to singular plucking sounds- I found myself able to frame each emotion, name and understand each one that passed. But more than that I stopped trying to fit these passing images into a story or narrative and just let them pass through. It was strangely comforting to watch. It felt somewhat like it was a communal meditation on emotion, a witnessing of it without feeling it. A beautifully executed piece by two performers of superb skill. Don't miss it if you are looking for something a bit different and would love a chance to quiet the mind and let some beauty in.

Framed is performing until Saturday. [Click here](#) for booking details.



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