



Next Reflex Dance Collective

Next Reflex Dance Collective is an award-winning modern dance company based in Northern Virginia. It was founded by Roxann Morgan Rowley and Erika Surma in 2007 and has been presented throughout the region by multiple venues and festivals including the John F. Kennedy Center, The DC Dance Festival, The Charlotte Dance Festival, The DUMBO Dance Festival, The Cool NY Dance Festival, The Goose Route Dance Festival, The Howard Community Festival, Mason/Rhynes Productions “Late Night Series”, The Carter Barron Amphitheater, The Workhouse Arts Center, Dance Place, The Harman Center for the Arts, The 2010 Metro DC Dance Awards, and The National Theater. NRDC’s programs include en Route! A Touring Dance Project, A Late Night Series, and an Artist-in-residency program.

NRDC has received support from the Puffin Foundation, the Arts Council of the Valley, the DC Commission for the Arts and Humanities, the Virginia Commission for the Arts, and the Arts Council of Fairfax County. In 2009, NRDC was the proud recipient of the Metro DC Dance Awards’ “Founders Award” for innovation in dance and was a finalist in multiple award categories. NRDC has formerly been in residence at American Dance Institute and The Workhouse Arts Center.





Artistic Director

Roxann Morgan Rowley is the artistic director for Next Reflex Dance Collective. Since 2006 she has been producing dance work in the DC Metro Region. Her work has been showcased in productions at Dance Place and Joy of Motion, Dancing Across the Virginias, the Charlotte Dance Festival, The Goose Route Dance Festival, White Wave CoolNYC Festival, The Velocity DC Dance Festival, John F. Kennedy Center, and the Harman Shakespeare Theater. She has choreographed for The American Century Theater. Her work has also been presented at James Madison University, George Mason University, and The University of Mary Washington.

An artist and performer, she has had the opportunity to work artists and companies including MansurDance, Clancy Works, Steven Mazolla, Daniel Burkholder and the Playground, Dakshina Dance Company, Anomosmotion, Peter DiMuro, Jane Jerardi and Jane Franklin Dance Company. Ms. Morgan Rowley holds an MFA from George Mason University and a BA from George Washington University studying under national and international faculty members.

Outside of NRDC Ms. Morgan Rowley has taught for James Madison University and Fairfax County Public Schools Institute for the Arts and Joy of Motion. Currently Ms. Morgan Rowley teaches for University of Mary Washington, George Mason University and Northern VA Community College.

Press Quotes

“The goal of the dance, according to Rowley, is to encourage audience members to become engaged with the arts and to find their own ways to support and use art to create change.” *The Free Lance - Star*

“Clean Sweep” Kogard Gallery in Washington DC

“The two dancers from the Next Reflex Dance Collective...sometimes grabbed wrists and pulled, and other times they were separated by the mini gulf of water between them. Throughout this section, one felt a palpable dramatic tension.” ~*Carmel Morgan, Critical Dance*

“...“Places in Space” together read like succinct messages jotted on the backs of postcards depicting vacations in bucolic and exotic locales.” ~*Lisa Traiger, Danceviewtimes*

“...a technical exploration of the dynamic of speed, impact and close interaction. ...made me think of hot sunlight and daring athletics.” ~*Jeff Hoodock, Daily News Record, Harrisonburg, VA*

“Trickle was a nice change of mood, evoking a sensuous, otherworldly minimalism. Roxann Morgan, performing her own work, rendered the act of bathing in a simple metal tub as a slow, troubled physical meditation. Dressed in a sheer shift over unobtrusive tights, the dancer managed to focus our attention sharply onto various parts of her body.” ~*Jeff Hoodock, Daily News Record, Harrisonburg, VA*





Press

Kogod Courtyard, National Portrait Gallery/Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC
17 June 2014

Carmel Morgan
Dance Performance Group, Next Reflex Dance Collective, MOVEIUS Contemporary Ballet

Remember the government shutdown last fall? If you don't live in Washington, DC, and you're not a federal employee, then your memory of that event may have already faded. But since I was out of work for a rather lengthy period during this congressional standoff in the nation's capital, I remember it well. I also remember the impact of

not being able to enjoy the Smithsonian museums and the Library of Congress during this time. How awful to be barred from your job and simultaneously unable to visit these truly wonderful venues despite the extra free time. I missed at least one Asian film I'd wanted to see at the Freer Gallery of Art, and I also missed a concert by the fabulous Audra McDonald at the Library of Congress. I was extremely disappointed.

Thankfully, some events were rescheduled once the shutdown ended. I did get to have my night with Audra McDonald in February, and it was worth the wait. And on a Tuesday evening in June, well after the shutdown, I got to see a site specific dance performance that had been another shutdown casualty. "Clean Sweep," a collaboration by three local dance companies (Dance Performance Group – Artistic Director Nancy Havlik, Next Reflex Dance Collective – Artistic Directors Roxann Morgan Rowley and Erika Schonemann Surma, and MOVEIUS Contemporary Ballet – Artistic Director Diana Movius), was originally scheduled to appear at the Kogod Courtyard, which joins the Smithsonian American Art Museum and the National Portrait Gallery, as part of DC's annual fall dance festival, Velocity DC. Unfortunately, in light of the government shutdown, the Kogod Courtyard performance had to be cancelled.

Conde Naste Traveler named the Kogod Courtyard as one of seven architectural wonders. The courtyard is covered in undulating glass and steel, so it's protected from the elements, and yet you can see the sky, whatever weather it brings. Light spills in from above. Smooth water flows in two long, narrow rectangles on the slate gray hard surface of the courtyard, while huge marble planters serve as seating and a home to lush green vegetation. Red umbrellas and a small cafe occupy one corner. Small metal tables are strewn about. It's a great place to meet friends, chat, relax. The acoustics are amazing as well.

As it turns out, late spring may have been a better time for "Clean Sweep." I think splashing in water is more inviting in June than October, given the warmer temperatures. Although the Kogod Courtyard has no rules against walking through its shallow patches of flowing water, most museum patrons avoid it. Occasionally, children frolic there. During "Clean Sweep," the dancers frolicked in the water (they all wore some kind of shoe). I can't say that was a surprise.

In the beginning, the three collaborating groups walked together through the water, moving gently as they propelled forward. Members of each group wore a different color – Dance Performance Group in jade green, Next Reflex Dance Collective in crimson red, and MOVEIUS Contemporary Ballet in a pretty pool blue. As I admit I hoped would happen, the first group to take their solo turn, the contact improvisation-inspired Dance Performance Group, rolled in, slid across, and smacked the wet surface, showing what fun adults at play can have. All of the dance groups, in fact, used the water as their stage, although the dancers from MOVEIUS Contemporary Ballet may have come out slightly less wet than the rest.

The three dance companies brought unique movement styles to the space, in addition to their unique colors. Dance Performance Group and violinist David Shulman conjured a pleasing atmosphere of discovery and abandon. The music and movement melded in a such a way that the performance felt natural. The dancers reached, arched, and tumbled like particles in a slow boil. The two dancers from the Next Reflect Dance Collective, Tina Fratello and Chris Richardson, presented a more tightly choreographed work. In their duet, accompanied my musicians Nate Masters and John White, they sometimes grabbed wrists and pulled, and other times they were separated by the mini gulf of water between them. Throughout this section, one felt a palpable dramatic tension. Only the dancers from MOVEIUS Contemporary Ballet danced to recorded music. I'd have preferred live music, since the courtyard's acoustics are so divine, and I'd have preferred anything other than Arvo Part, simply because it seems everyone is dancing to Arvo Part lately. Nonetheless, the music and movement paired well together, even if the water didn't feel quite as integral to the dancing as it did during the performances of the other groups.

One of the things I like best about free dance performances in public spaces is watching audience reactions. Sure, there are always dance fans clustered around, and friends and family, but a free dance performance in a public space usually also attracts random curious folks who just happen upon the event. That was definitely the case on this Tuesday evening at 5:30 pm. People mingled, talked quietly, even walked about to get different views. When the dancing began, once rowdy kids sat still, enrapt. The more casual atmosphere made the dancing particularly welcoming for people who may not have ever seen contemporary dance up close and personal. It seemed that everyone present was intrigued. I loved looking up and spying people staring down into the courtyard from one of the museum's long windows, amazed by the treat of seeing dance take place beneath them.

Maybe the most striking thing to me, other than audience reactions, was noting how the ballet dancers stood out. Their thin bodies struck gorgeous poses and created lovely lines, but there was something robotic about their stiff spines and their manner of execution. In my eyes, at least, the dancers of Dance Performance Group and Next Reflex Dance Collective moved with less hesitation and greater sensitivity. Their movement appeared more continuous and connected, while the ballerinas looked more halting. On the one hand, I appreciate the beautiful technique of ballet dancers, but on the other hand, I also appreciate the freedom and raw emotion that dancers from other backgrounds more typically display. The collaboration was an interesting one, full of rich contrasts. I'm betting the audience learned a lot about their own tastes in dance by watching.

Picture Postcards

“Places in Space” Next Reflex Dance Collective Dance Place, Washington, D.C. June 19, 2011

By Lisa Traiger

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The eleven works curated into the dance evening “Places in Space” together read like succinct messages jotted on the backs of postcards depicting vacations in bucolic and exotic locales. Washington, D.C.'s Next Reflex Dance Collective founder/directors Erika Surma and Roxanne Morgan Rowley drew inspiration from outdoor locations, both near and far, and sought ways to viscerally connect with those places choreographically in their evening of mixed works. The pieces created a journey, from “Underneath,” a mesmerizing hand-fashioned installation/performance by dancer/choreographer Sharon Mansur and visual artist Ronit Eisenbach, to the rising and falling suggestive of tidal waters in Dahlia Nayar’s restful trio “aqua alta,” to Surma’s larger group in “Boundary,” hinting at rustling wind, rolling hills and steadfast marble monuments.

Last summer Next Reflex exhibited an interest in space-altering dance when for “Electro Shutdown & The Pea” the company reconfigured Dance Place’s black box theater into a pulsing disco, where lingerie-clad and wigged women strutted, flaunted and reveled in their embodied sexuality. This year’s reconsideration of Dance Place’s space took a tamer tone. Four pre-performance works included “Toilet Tub Tango,” danced on marley on the cement outside the theater, then inside Briana Carper used the bench and video in the main lobby for “Ether,” which felt constricted to the horizontality of the location.

It was Mansur’s and Eisenbach’s “Underneath” that accomplished what site-specific work should: alter a space or one’s experience of that space. In the small side gallery, Mansur strung twine from wall to wall, measuring, cutting, knotting off pieces to create a crazy-quilt loom of string in the confined all-white space, which led to a white curtained passage into the theater. Patrons were forced to stoop beneath the spidery web of twine to pass through white drapery before entering a new world. Mansur in crafting this tangled web, to which later she strung white gravel stones tied with blue strings, remained unruffled, quietly contemplative of her task-oriented performance.

Entering the theater, Tina Fratello’s installation, “Stay/Waiting,” offered a jolt after the serene calm of Mansur’s room-sized art project-cum-performance. Following an S-shaped swath of plywood, the audience meandered the stage passing three women situated in rocking chairs mesmerized as they stared into the gray-blue snow of spent television sets. Later the three writhed, pounded and banged those old-technology TV sets, their cloth coats swinging. The piece does what strong choreography should: creates a world and draws viewers into this lonely, desolate place where silence, blank picture tubes and longing have usurped the lives of these three.

Nayar’s spare trio “aqua alta” worked due to the simplicity and clarity of its structure. Three white planks of sailcloth hung above the stage, while the dancers — Emily Oleson, Adriane Fang and Nicole McClam — huddled on the floor, rolled and recovered, rose and fell slowly, their movement gestures growing stronger, denser, more muscular, until finally each in turn lifted a stiffened arm, suggesting a sailboat’s bare mast. Then the moving landscape subsided to stillness.

Mansur’s and Eisenbach’s “Underneath” continued following intermission, this time with a rocking chair facing a floor-to-ceiling loom-like hanging of twine. On the program “Underneath” became both commentary and evocation of the other choreography, drawing from concepts of the dances and

their choreographic elements; stones, images of water, earth, hills and mountains coursed through the study, which took Mansur from the loom to the rocker, before entering a blue-lit opening in the curtain as she ultimately exited to worlds unseen.

Other works, particularly Surma's "Boundary" and "24 Hours" and Rowley's "shhh," incorporated much amorphous push-and-pull and weight-sharing contact improvisation as choreography but little that was memorable. The darkly foggy trio "Shadowmark," by Monica Warren, with its quirky birdlike twitches, flexed wrists and beating arms, recalled prehistoric birds in what looked like feathers on Rebecca DeLapp's costumes. Janet Blair performed the piercing oboe solo, "Piri," by Isang Yun.

The evening closed with Rowley's "edge," featuring Sandra Atkinson and Fratello accompanied by cello and strings by Zoe Keating and One Cello x 16: Natoma. Clad in slips, the two amply endowed women carried stones in their skirts, which they scattered and formed into an open-ended outline of a box on the floor. The workmanlike nature of the piece, and the sense of isolation as these two women scurry and gather, again suggested a need for human connection. Instead, the piece returned to the desolation of the opener "Stay/Waiting" -- the task of laying out the stones disintegrating into chaos, the rocks flying and scattering across the stage, the women ultimately unhinged.

Dance and Live Music Take Center Stage at Workhouse Winter Music and Dance Festival' from Next Reflex Dance Collective.

By David Siegel - The Connection

Workhouse Arts Center presents Next Reflex Dance Collective's "Winter Music and Dance Festival" at Workhouse Arts Center, W-3 Theater, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Performance on Feb. 8, 2020 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets: \$10 youth, \$15 Student/ Senior/Military, \$25 Adult. For tickets visit www.workhousearts.org or call 703-584-2900. For general information about the Next Reflex Dance Collective visit www.nextreflex.org

A night of live collaborative performance with distinct creations is in store for audiences at the "Winter Music and Dance Festival" produced by Next Reflex Dance Collective. The Festival will bring together diverse musicians and artists at the Workhouse Arts Center. Next Reflex Dance Collective is the Workhouse Artist-in-Residence. "We are committed to creating new work which challenges ideas and broadens perceptions, while also encouraging experimentation at the highest level," said Roxann Morgan Rowley, artistic director, Next Reflex. For those less familiar with Next Reflex Dance Collective (NRDC), the Collective's mission is to capture an audience's interest by creating art collaboratively with artists of all disciplines and to support the creation of experimental dance work.

"I'm excited to say that this is the third year for the event and as always there are new faces that bring new musical and dance perspectives," noted Morgan Rowley.

"Next Reflex Dance Collective, one of our Artist-in-Residence, has been a remarkable partner," said Ava Spece, President and Executive Director, Workhouse Arts Center. "We have been very impressed with their presentations of inventive new works, incubated in our studio spaces on campus, followed by well-attended premieres on Workhouse stages."

The "Winter Music and Dance Festival" will include the premiere of Morgan Rowley "The Painting," a solo inspired by the painting "Christina's World" by Andrew Wyeth as a woman is own thoughts. Is she feeling the weight of being physically abandoned? Nate Masters will perform live musical accompaniment.



Next Reflex Dance Collective will perform "INTimate Window," a series of short dance vignettes with live music. The vignettes provide glimpses of lives lead behind closed doors. The musical composition and performance is by Mark Snyder. "A Journey Through" is another new dance work by

Morgan Rowley. It explores personal journeys with musical composition and performance by Nate Masters. With music by Drake Dragon, Morgan Rowley's short dance film "Glimpse" will be screened.

Kristin Hatelburg, Tori Utenburger and District Tap will also share their unique choreography styles and perspectives. The music underpinning their dance works are expected to run the gamut from alternative rock to roots music and more.

"We are devoted to being a part of our dance community's growth through the inclusion of various artists in specific performance and outreach programs," added Morgan Rowley.