

Kansas City Star. Posted on Sun, Mar. 27, 2011 10:15 PM

Read more: <http://www.kansascity.com/2011/03/27/2756675/we-performance-leaves-individualized.html#ixzz1HvM72NPU>

DANCE REVIEW

'We!' performance leaves individualized impressions

By TIMOTHY FINN

The Kansas City Star



Laura Frank (foreground), with cellist Helen Gillet and choreographer and producer Jane Gotch, are in one section of "WE!," an "integrated art performance" set in a downtown building's vacant office space.

If you asked 10 people who have attended a performance of "We!" to describe their experiences, chances are you'd get 10 very different responses.

"We!" is an installation dance performance staged in an abandoned office space in the sixth floor of the Town Pavilion (formerly occupied by AT&T). It is co-produced and co-directed by jazz musician and horn sculptor Mark Southerland and Jane Gotch, the show's choreographer.

The show comprises several performances and installations, each in a different part of the office space in various states of demolition and construction.

For the audience, "We!" is not a passive experience. Each small group is led by

its guide from one performance or installation to the next. Even within each small group, the experience can be different for everyone.

For the “Hanging Bark” installation, you may be the one chosen to stay behind and remain alone in the room to experience the dance performance by Kalen Compennolle. Or you may be the one chosen to sit at a window and watch remotely, through binoculars, that same performance, broadcast on a screen sitting atop another building south of Town Pavilion. Or maybe you’ll be chosen to sit amid the straw and string installation.

There is plenty to hear and see and interpret: music from jazz pianist Brad Cox and cellist Helen Gillet, who provide the score to the dynamic opening piece, set in an office, where the file folders fly and the filing cabinet drawers are opened and slammed to overt coital rhythms.

And don’t miss the stunning version of Pat Benatar’s “Love is a Battlefield,” sung by Laura Frank, accompanied by Gillet, who, in another number, performs among her audience, so close you can almost feel the music on your skin.

Such juxtapositions are part of this experience — voyeurism vs. intimacy. One moment you may be sitting at a window, wearing headphones and listening to music while watching Tuesday Faust perform in the street below, sometimes interacting with unwary pedestrians. The next you may be sitting shoulder to shoulder next to a dancer in a room so silent you can hear her soft breathing.

No overt narrative emerges from these performances, though there is plenty of room to interpret your own. Instead, this show’s rewards come from its ways of changing and challenging the viewing experience and arousing among its viewers different reactions and feelings: from intimacy and warmth to isolation and discomfort.

‘We!’ performances •7, 7:30 and 8:15 p.m. today

•7, 7:30 and 8:15 p.m. Thursday through Sunday

•All performance are at the Town Pavilion, 1111 Main St.

•Tickets are \$10 for seniors and students, \$15 for everyone else. To buy tickets online, go to BrownPaperTickets.com.

To reach Timothy Finn, call 816-234-4781 or send email to tfinn@kstar.com.