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Powerfully "Embodied" at the GPO

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Embodied at the GPO

Rating: ★★★★★

This year's Dublin Dance Festival kicks off a month ahead of its main schedule with a unique collaborative project commissioned by the newly opened GPO Witness History Centre. Directed by Liz Roche, 'Embodied' at the GPO features six dance solos choreographed and, in most cases, performed by six of the foremost female choreographers based in Ireland today. With the GPO providing history and context as well as location, location, location, 'Embodied' responds by exploring the role of women as initiators both during and since 1916 and sets out to interrogate, and respond to, the male voiced Proclamation of Irish independence.

Under Liz Roche's astute direction 'Embodied' at the GPO's solo pieces are assembled into a cohesive circularity that sets up 'Embodied's' journey and brings it all home.

Beginning with Jessie Keenan's 'Her Supreme Hour' and Liv O'Donoghue's performance art based 'The 27th Manifesto,' both performances are heavily dominated by text as both performers set about reclaiming the female voice from the language of men.

In Sibéal Davitt's excellent 'Fógraím/I Proclaim' text gives way to the dominance of the body as words are deconstructed into the dots and dashes of Morse code. Fusing sean-nós with contemporary dance Davitt lets loose, delivering a raw, rhythmic, primal yet playful performance that is searingly powerful and a sheer joy to behold. The body again dominates in Jasmin Chiodí's delightful 'The endless story of trying to make new out of a single self.' Visually arresting, the Rapunzel like Chiodí's attempts to balance on the barricades again incorporates much from performance art, with words giving way to sound and movement in a performance wonderfully moving in its struggle and simplicity.

Photographer and visual artist Luca Truffarelli's hypnotic video, 'Here and through' gently suggests

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the path of the soul as it endlessly journeys through the past, present and future. This is immediately followed by Junk Ensemble's stunning 'Walking Pale.' Here choreographers Megan and Jessica Kennedy collaborate with the formidable Olwen Fouéré to craft a simple, yet profoundly moving piece. Here the privileged position of the silent spectator is called into question as they look down from above on the warrior like Fouéré, like some gladiatorial Sisyphus trapped in her cage, greasing her shoulders before dragging her spoon laden cloak endlessly through the gravel.

Roche closes 'Embodied's' circle by reintroducing text in Emma O' Kane's wonderfully understated, '160 Voices.' Here women find their voices, along with the rest of humanity, all of whom give voice to their collective hopes, fears, concerns and aspirations which O'Kane compliments with subtle choreographic expressions as body and text become one.

With 'Embodied' the Dublin Dance Festival 2016, has nailed its colours firmly to the mast. As well as successfully marking the recent opening of the GPO Witness History Centre, 'Embodied' declares that this year's Dublin Dance Festival has set its standards extremely high indeed. Powerful, haunting, and jaw droppingly good at times, 'Embodied's' only real failing lies in the shortness of its run. Beg, borrow or steal a ticket. Or pray it comes around again. For this is a production not to be missed.

'Embodied' at the GPO, by Dublin Dance Festival, commissioned by An Post GPO Witness History Centre, runs at the GPO until April 22nd.

For information on performance times and tickets, as well as on future Dublin Dance Festival events, visit [Dublin Dance Festival](#)



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