

Reaching Out & Reaching In

Lara Kramer Premieres of good moral character at the MAI

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Photo Ben Philippi

Concordia grad Lara Kramer works to touch the unspoken parts of our relationships in of good moral character, her latest choreography, which examines the intimacy of domestic relationships with the themes of obsession, instability, isolation and violence at the Montréal Arts Interculturels dance and theatre centre.

“Initially I was thinking, ‘I want to show the series of events that happen at different periods of time in a relationship,’” said Kramer. “[But] I wasn’t married to it being linear when I put those sections together. They became cohesive to a story that I didn’t set out to tell. It became its own life.”

Kramer started developing the piece as a solo nearly a year ago. “I worked in three periods where I was in the studio and then took some time off, and then went back,” she said. “I wanted to let the piece breathe.”

Since receiving her BFA from Concordia in 2008, Kramer has toured Canada and trained internationally.

In creating of good moral character she began working with another dancer, Lael Stellick, and received mentorship from Catherine Tardiff courtesy of Circuit-Est, a Montreal choreography studio founded in 1987.

“Circuit-Est was pretty exciting because they sent an established choreographer to work with me,” said Kramer.

“And I knew at some point I was going to need a strong set of outside eyes looking at my work. [Tardiff] came in at the halfway point. [...] I just wanted her honest reaction to my material—to see if I was conveying what I hoped I was conveying. And if not, then how could I push that further.”

Kramer worked to explore the oppression and isolation that can come out of a conventional home, and she focused on making her movements understood.

“Each section had a specific tone that correlates to a clear intention. [...] I’m motivated in creating work that has a strong narrative that I hope the audience can relate to, and that [they feel] they’re part of the story and not just sitting back,” says Kramer. Working as a choreographer in Montreal has made her feel like a bit of an outsider. She says a lot of shows here are “just going for the rock n’ roll, nudity, shock-value.”

Although she admitted that at first she thought this sort of dance was exciting, now “it feels daunting because I really don’t fit into that,” she confessed.

“And for me, I love going to shows and having work be meaningful or touch me in a profound way. So often there’s more of this entertainment value... It’s making me question my place in the scene because it’s not my values or what motivates me.”

Kramer added that there is room for these types of creations. “Some have real craft and quality, but it can get so insular.

“I think the Montreal dance community is very rich. [But] sometimes it feels like we’re creating work for the same audience, the same critics, the same dance community. So are we making our work accessible?”

Kramer created of good moral character to connect with its audience. She says that some of what she’s showing may make people uncomfortable, but in a piece that truthfully demonstrates the condition of our modern human relationships, the audience should expect no less.

of good moral character / M.A.I. (3680 Jeanne-Mance St.) / Nov. 3 to 6 / \$20.00 regular, \$15.00 students / More info at m-a-i.qc.ca and larakramer.ca
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