

Windigo



Lara Kramer Danse. YIRRAMBOI Festival. Upstairs Studio, Dancehouse, 150 Princes Street, North Carlton. 10-12 May, 2019

Indigenous performer, choreographer and multidisciplinary artist Lara Kramer creates a highly visceral text that is intentionally provocative. This show embraces the political potential of theatre and its ability to raise consciousness. *Windigo's* apocalyptic atmosphere is unapologetically portrayed as a direct result of colonial culture and the subsequent dispossession it has caused.

The performance exudes anger, frustration and indignation. The performers turn their backs on the audience in an act of defiance and the inertia of the personas who inhabit the space becomes increasingly tense and oppressive. Performers Peter James and Jassem Hindi convey a vagrant-like existence which is highlighted as they tear into their environment in a destructive and unnerving manner. Their gaze is rarely raised to look towards the audience or even each other. Faint whispers in the opening sequence suggest a determined resistance designed to exclude the outside world.

This piece undoubtedly conveys the sentiments that characterise the daily lives of many oppressed Indigenous populations worldwide and the unabashed indifference to the audience is a powerful statement. This is reiterated when the action is briefly transformed into frenzied and bizarre movement or estranged interaction with props. The soundtrack is dominated by eerie quiet sounds which are contrasted with both a child's innocent voice and references to violence that especially Indigenous women have been subjected to. The effect of the performance is simultaneously disturbing and challenging and deliberately eludes any sense of pleasure.

Patricia Di Risio

Photographer: Frederick Chais