

COLUMN

360 Dance

Reflections on 2014

By Philip Szporer



As Canadian citizens, we are consistently being awakened to new and continued challenges, to important questions of race and ethnicity, migration and social inequities, violence and equality. Artists have the need and the desire to tackle these ideas and carve a space that is full to brimming with reflection and subversion. What follows is a consideration of work that I saw in 2014, listed in no particular order. It is also a message of gratitude to those creators who unflinchingly push forward, break boundaries, develop their vision and create worlds in which we, as audiences, can be inspired and challenged.

Revival

Zab Maboungou, Compagnie Danse Nyata Nyata, Mozongi (February, Société des arts technologiques)

This revival of a seminal work, created in 1997, and commemorating twenty-five years of the founding of the company, was mesmerizing. The title translates as “return” and celebrates memory and the particularity of an individual’s physical presence. The urgent rhythmic dancing and drumming, with its strong Central African base, by the nine-member troupe was unrelenting. As a group, the dancers operate akin to a pack, each gesture delivered with power, the physicality demanding on their bodies. Central to Maboungou’s gift is that she plays with energy, embracing mystery and the unknown. That wisdom transcends space and time, and I felt that immensity of spirit extend to the wider audience with an assured embrace.

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