



LA CityBEAT

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Dance + Film = Love

~ By DR. REBECCA EPSTEIN ~

It's nothing less than sublime when two great things get together and gloriously fulfill their potential, peanut-butter-and-jelly-style. Such is the case with the coupling of dance and film. Starting Friday, the nonprofit organization Dance Camera West (DCW) will present an entire month of dance films and related programming with its fifth annual "Dance Camera West Film Festival."

"It's a very exciting medium," says Lynette Kessler, executive and artistic director and cofounder of DCW. "When I try to explain what it is to people, they think they understand. Then they finally see the films, and they tell me, 'I would never have been able to imagine it.'"

Opening night of the festival, at REDCAT in downtown L.A., features screenings of eight films from international artists, followed by a kickoff reception. More than 50 dance flicks will be screened throughout June at REDCAT and at the Hammer Museum in Westwood, where a special live, interactive performance titled "Wear + Tear" will be held in the courtyard June 10.

Though dance film has been developing internationally for 20 years, Kessler says American audiences are only now getting a taste for this innovative genre: DCW is one of the few U.S. organizations dedicated to such screenings. The films selected for the festival include works by

dancers and filmmakers from Sweden, Argentina, and the U.S., who Kessler says are “pushing the medium in new directions.” Some films take place underwater, on sand dunes, or in office buildings. They are, she says, comedic, thoughtful, and sometimes chilling. “It really runs the gamut,” says Kessler, who adds, somewhat curiously, “Every year we see a trend in submissions, and this year we have several bathroom pieces.”

The dance/film marriage is an ideal union, says Kessler, and one that offers an entirely new experience of dance. “Traditionally, we watch dancers on a stage from far away,” she says. “In dance film, there’s more freedom to explore the body and the space around the body. [The audience can] see the dancer up close and personal, and our perception of what the body is and what dance is changes.”

–Krista Walton

“Dance Camera West Film Festival 2006.” June 2-June 30. Opening-night party: Fri. at 8 p.m. at REDCAT, 631 W. Second St., downtown L.A., (213) 237-2800. Redcat.org. \$15. For full schedule of screenings and events, visit Dancecamerawest.org.

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