



Center for Remembering & Sharing

A Community Space
for Healing, Arts & Culture

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Review of “Ethereal”

Choreography by Nana Miki

Performance by Nana Miki, with on-stage assistance by Masumi Kishimoto

Live Music by MEGu and Makia

Date of Performance: Friday, Oct 18, 2019

Venue: Shapeshifter Lab, Brooklyn, NY

In the evening-length dance “Ethereal,” choreographer Nana Miki seeks to convey through dance what it’s like to live with longing for the intangible, seeking some kind of invisible, spiritual connection while believing that such connections are fleeting and few. While her subject may be romantic or mystical, her physical language and imagery are for the most part remarkably subdued, controlled, retrospect. The resulting dissonance creates a sense of unease in the audience.

Yet, the control and steadiness of Ms. Miki’s dancing push back against that unease. She enters, walking slowly across the stage, a long fabric tied around her neck trailing behind. There is a stateliness to the entrance that calls to mind a bridal procession and yet the fabric’s positioning around her neck suggests danger and captivity. Eventually, Miki begins to gather up the trailing fabric and dance with it, her burden transforming into a partner or tool of her own choosing.

Eventually, she leaves it behind, but soon after, another dancer, Masumi Kishimoto, appears and crosses the stage with a series of ropes, boundaries which Miki must navigate. The ropes threaten to entangle her but also allow her another opportunity to play, creating a give and take and sense of connection with Kishimoto, if only at a distance and only for awhile: Kishimoto finally pulls away and exits with the ropes, leaving Miki to ruminate on the experience, which leads to a section of more ebullient dancing in projections of celestial light, as if only fully experiencing the magic of the relationship afterward, when alone. This section gives way to a tender and sensual dance on the floor to a delicate piano accompaniment that conveys the awe-inspiring quietude of watching the sun rise. Perhaps, Miki is saying that we make the ethereal present insofar as we can imagine it, long for it, work for it, express it by using the body to be free of the body.

— Christopher Pelham
Director, CRS (Center for Remembering & Sharing)
November 25, 2019