

DANCE | DANCE REVIEW

# Getting From Here to There, but Not in a Straight Line

‘A to B via C,’ an Alexandra Bachzetsis Dance Theater Work

By SIOBHAN BURKE JAN. 12, 2015

The title of Alexandra Bachzetsis’s “A to B via C” suggests a series of scrambled steps, a beginning and an end linked by a roundabout middle. On Sunday at the Swiss Institute, in its United States premiere, this coolly disarming work revealed many such convoluted structures, favoring switchbacks, detours and double exposures over any linear route.

Ms. Bachzetsis, a choreographer based in Switzerland, is interested in all kinds of gestures — colloquial, codified, pop cultural — and the collisions among them. “A to B via C,” part of Performance Space 122’s Coil Festival, shuffles through references to aerobics routines, music videos, sports, ballet class, physical therapy and the Velázquez painting “Venus at Her Mirror.” It ultimately invites us to ask: If the body can express itself in so many ways, what good are words? Just how necessary or arbitrary is the alphabet?

Designed for various spaces — a theater, a gallery, the Internet — “A to B via C,” in this iteration, occupies a white cube dotted with black equipment. Ms. Bachzetsis and her marvelous dancers, Anne Pajunen and Gabriel Schenker, introduce some color as they arrive in Cosima Gadiant’s workout-ready costumes: pink sweatshirts, tan leggings, white sneakers. Those layers will eventually come off to reveal bodysuits silk-screened with anatomy-textbook renderings of the musculoskeletal system, insides turned out.

The piece begins with a kind of call-and-response tutorial issued by the cherubic Ms. Pajunen as a manic exercise guru. Standing behind a camera, her exaggerated expressions projected onto a small flat screen, she promises to deliver time-honored wisdom “used to give any woman a strong and beautiful dancer’s physique.” Ms. Bachzetsis and Mr. Schenker, at side-by-side microphones, echo her, until the order somehow reverses, and she is echoing

them. Scripts in hand, they discard a page after each militant line, scattering the written word at our feet.

Later, it's Mr. Schenker who seems enamored of his dancer's physique. Reclining on a yoga mat in the manner of Venus, he gazes into the screen, which Ms. Pajunen, nude and kneeling at his side, balances on her thigh. It's Ms. Bachzetsis's image that gazes back, mouthing, like him, the numbers one through eight.

"A to B via C" contains flashing symbols (letters, numerals) and similarly warped reflections, including a ballet combination done forward and backward to intermittently rewinding music. (Tobias Koch and Dan Solbach designed the sound.) The whole never crystallizes as pleasingly as its parts, but Ms. Bachzetsis seems more concerned with C than with B, with journey over destination.

"A to B via C" repeats on Wednesday at the Swiss Institute, 18 Wooster Street, near Grand Street, SoHo; 212-352-3101, [ps122.org](http://ps122.org).

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