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All The Sex I've Ever Had: A Review

By Khristián Méndez Aguirre, Guest Blogger



Through brilliant craft, sharp-bright realities, and the promises imagined by intimacy Mammalian Diving Reflex pushes you gently, but firmly, to a place just a little beyond what you thought you could handle.

When MDR titled their piece “All The Sex I’ve Ever Had”, they did mean *all* of it. Awkward sex. Break-up sex. Make-up sex. Sex with yourself. Sex you didn’t know you wanted. Sex that took from you. Sex that gave you. Sex that made you. Sex that destroyed you. Sex that you didn’t think you could handle. Sex you didn’t even know was happening until it was over. Sex with objects. Sex that resulted in thefts. Sex without genital stimulation. Non-consensual sex. Since its 2010 premiere, *All The Sex I’ve Ever Had*, has been performed in 13 cities with an all-locally-based cast. Its 14th rendition delivers the same punch it seems to carry across nations, cultures and age groups. Six Austin-based seniors are here to share intimate details about their sex lives with an audience of 100 or so festivalgoers who, when prompted, are equally ready to share.

Running for a total of 90 minutes, the performance-and-party is orchestrated by decade working its way from the birthdate of the eldest senior to the present year. “I statement” interventions are interspersed with dance break-outs by the seniors and the production team, as well as just a touch of audience interaction.

We listen to Westen Borghesi’s voice as a metronome the years in our countdown to the present, and the voices from the seniors are cushioned and interspersed with cuts from popular music of each decade. All of this is cradled James Mapes’ environment design and technical direction which both celebrates the joy and makes firm space for the awkward and uncomfortable.

With vicious curiosity and stark openness, Eva Verity, Tina Fance and the rest of the production team microphones audience members willing to share bits of their stories with the rest of the room. No point is trying to be made. No pretense beyond the vulnerable act of sharing your sex life with complete strangers (and whoever you go to the show with.)

Mammalian Diving Reflex deserves a recognition that hasn’t been invented yet. They stand unparalleled as a company that makes work that overwhelms you with information without disarming you; that teases you into places you didn’t know were uncomfortable without hurting you; and that inspires you to take a damn-hard look at how hard it is to be a human. And this final realization, mind you, isn’t covered in sap or steeped in existentialism—its elegant, fun, and a little too sharp to handle on your own.