



the DANCE  
insider

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## **Letter from New York, 11-1: Not so silly rabbit Kim Reproduces Downtown**

**By Maura Nguyen Donohue**

NEW YORK -- There's this funny thing about Sam Kim. She works explicitly from her self-defined grounding as an outsider. But, in practice (or in application) her work reads as deeply integral to the conversations around dance in this moment. Sometimes I find it impenetrable, which is why I consistently return for more. Kim's recent "Dumb dumb bunny," seen last week at the Kitchen, struck me as fiercely entrenched inside today's community of dance makers in New York. Her work is challenging, culturally referential and symbolically provocative. Her large cast of twelve dancers is highly skilled and includes several of crosstown's usual suspects. I would say Sam Kim resides profoundly inside the dance world.

Kim takes her movement vocabulary from zombie movies and fashion poseurs. The work is ripe with gyrating hips in tight blue jeans, and staggering bodies sludging forward with outstretched arms. Liz Santoro shakes, strikes the exaggerated postures of a fashion mannequin and grabs her butt like a pro. I may be approaching groupie status (let's say I'm an enthusiast) but having watched Santoro in Ann Liv Young and Jillian Pena's work, I find myself increasingly satisfied by her ability to endow her pungent onstage sexuality with a brutal physicality and unrelenting presence. Her treatment of a solo for thrusting chest and rapid pelvic circles devolves its original, clichéd interpretation into pure movement research.

Mimi Lien's three-tiered scaffolding offers multiple stages for evocations of rock concert hyperbole and structural fallibility. One particularly effective sequence with Milka Djordjevich repeatedly tumbling and crashing into bars on the scaffolding shakes the platforms forcefully enough to bring a sense of urgency to the image of the dancer's continuously crumpling body draped across the larger metal frame. This sense of urgency returns several times through the course of the work despite some extended, intentionally unintentional sequences.

Michael Helland and Miriam Wolf sustain a tight duet virtuosic in its unrepentant intensity and incessant effort. The two cling to each other and repel like neodymium supermagnets; the force of their repeated couplings is exhaustive. At times it seems they might shatter from the impact but instead they shake, gasp, grunt and concede like human bodies, like beings who tenaciously refuse

The title is presented in a black rectangular box. The word 'the' is in a lowercase, serif font, positioned vertically on the left side. The word 'DANCE' is in a large, uppercase, serif font, centered horizontally. Below 'DANCE', the word 'insider' is written in a lowercase, serif font, with wide letter spacing, centered horizontally.

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to disappear no matter how deeply they dig into one another... who tenaciously refuse to disappear no matter how deeply they dig into one another... no matter how deeply they dig in... no matter how deep... no matter... until they no longer matter... until they no longer are... until they are... and then, they continue the duet even longer.

Kim's willingness to let this duet continue for a determinedly lengthy period works focally and viscerally. Much of the beginning of the work gets lost in posturing, music, scaffolding and flashing lights. While this does set us up well for silence and subtlety, the work could have withstood a stronger dramaturgical or editorial hand to avoid moments that tipped beyond intentional unintentionality and bordered on self-indulgence.