

THE KITCHEN

VIDEO

MUSIC

DANCE

PERFORMANCE

FILM

512 West 19th St. (Btwn 10th & 11th Aves) New York, NY 10011

Reservations: 255-5793

Through voices, Houston-Jones's live or on tape, the reading of Trinket Monsod or Antaney Bowman, we begin to acquire the fragments of a story: devastated streets, a girl holding out her hand for money on a street-corner beside the body of her mother, the heat, a childhood memory of a hospital, of a gang attack, a riot at a restaurant, the "I" of the story hiding in the walk-in meat refrigerator with a busboy, strawberries being pushed into mouths, sex among the carcasses and the sounds of gunfire. Alienation, rage, fear.

Monsod and Bowman are ambiguous figures. She perhaps stands for the raped country, for the beggar girl with hand out. When she dances, alone or at the same time as Houston-Jones, her style is very different—wide to his narrow, soft to his forceful, oblique to his direct; she's always twisting, spiraling, feinting at shadows behind her; she too slaps and pats her body, but softly. Bowman describes a corpse in terrible detail. He and Houston-Jones repeatedly charge each other on a diagonal, their meeting clutch escalating into exhausted violence.

Bowman and Monsod are not tightly woven into the structure of the piece, and that is a flaw. But the relation of text to movement is strong, the vocal devices revealing (one voice shadowing another, for instance), and the material gripping. ■

In *Prologue to the End of Everything*, Ishmael Houston-Jones again presents the public with harshly private images, yet despite the precise verbal descriptions of death and dying or a sex partner's anus, the overall impression is one of mystery and nightmarish horror in which the violence and the excitement of sex merges with that of guerrilla warfare and hints of the casual cruelty of men toward men toward animals.

The setting seems to be a Latin American country in turmoil. Everything contributes to the sense of siege: movement, text, slides, performance energy; the sculptures by Impala that resemble huge wrapped hunks of meat hanging from the Kitchen ceiling; the dark lighting by Michael Stiller; the clamorous, at times ear-splitting music by Chris Cochrane, with sections by Zeena Parkins and Doug Seidel; the initial slides by Robert Flynt that show men floating, eyes closed, and a later sequence with two men who could be making love, who could be drowned bodies floating near each other.

Houston-Jones is the hero-dreamer-voyager. He sets the tone with a hair-raising solo, hits his shirt over and over against the floor, dances forward and back in a channel of light—punching the air, punishing the floor with his boots, slapping his face, curling his body in as if to cover as much exposed surface as possible.



Ishmael Houston Jones in *Prologue to the End of Everything*

The End of Everything

BY DEBORAH JOWITT

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