

An Inclusive Site for Dancers and Dance Audiences

MODERN/CONTEMPORARY DANCE (USA & CANADA), REVIEWS

By Cecly Placenti

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Micheline Heal's "Firewalls" reminds me of cells dividing, birthing new life, perhaps on an alien planet, perhaps in a microcosm in our world. In computing, a firewall is a network security system that controls the incoming and outgoing network traffic based on an applied rule set. It establishes a barrier between a trusted, secure internal network and another that is assumed not to be secure and trusted.

In [an] insect-like way, the dancers in "Firewalls" boldly yet cautiously test an invisible barrier, controlled by their boundaries but ever searching for new points of contact. Heal [and her dancers crafted] a stunning piece of kinesthetic architecture with moving geometric shapes and gorgeous original partnering as bodies melt organically into each other, into the floor and walls, into and through lifts and supports, coming seamlessly out of melding forms. Dressed in black unitards against a white wall, which also serves as a partner of sorts for



Photo by Elizabeth McGuire

the dancers and sometimes another appendage they used for balance, the performers seem to be searching a new environment, their bodies stretching and tumbling over the ground, reaching up the wall in feats of gymnastic strength that are smooth, organic and beautiful. The dancers seem always to be searching for a way over, around or through a barrier, but not finding it. In a gorgeous duet between Heal and Owen Taylor, both committed, captivating, very expressive performers, Heal is able to climb higher and twist herself further, ever searching and trusting in some new world she can't quite see. Their tactile, sensitive hands and feet explore the space and gently touch each other in partnering that was sensual without being romantic.

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