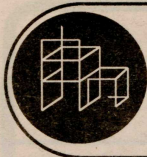


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art+Design

Total Ass

A performance by Erin Stanley and Corin Sworn

Music by Tyler Brett
October 14

the anticipation of meaning within performance art, it is an act shared by a participatory audience that in the end communicates hilarity and an odd but valuable form of compassion and community.

Séamus Kealy

As one of the first performances in the LIVE Project, *Total Ass* was a clever and wonderful surprise from two young artists. As I entered, a clunky, mildly disturbing piano music track began and a two-assed donkey costume, inhabited by both artists, stomped along the floor which was patterned with cream pies. As they meandered through the space in the donkey costume, with apparent difficulty navigating, their enormous stuffed feet crashed down upon pies and they often had to re-orient themselves using walls and corners. What made the performance even more enjoyable and engrossing was the conversation the artists had within the costume. Playing off one another, one as the more convinced performer and one as the more doubtful performer, their inane and self-critical conversation within the ass costume had the audience in continual laughter. After ten minutes of this, an evacuation of the costume commenced. The stomach opened and out came one of the artists, as if she were the disemboweled innards of the beast. The second artist, continuing her uncertainty about confronting the crowd, remained within the costume as it collapsed around her like a deflated corpse. The outer artist, Corin Sworn I believe, pleasantly handed members of the audience the pies which were eventually thrown at Erin Stanley as she tried to skulk out of the gallery within the costume.

This reflective engagement of the audience with the performers brought into question what the performers were setting out to accomplish. Involving the audience in the hurling of pies at the ass not only refers to a history of modern comedic representation and its subtle resistance to authority, but acknowledges the audience's pivotal and crucial role in the construction of the performance. Although *Total Ass* eschews narrative in its self-conscious, unscripted parody of