



## Weathering

FAYE DRISCOLL

### Victorious Survivors?



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Gezien op 19 mei 2024  
Bozar, Brussel, in het kader van  
Kunstenfestivaldesarts 2024

The ten performers of 'Weathering', by Faye Driscoll, presented in Bozar during the Kunstenfestivaldesarts, are a heaving, sweating, collective sculpture-in motion. All too human, they conjure the sensation of a world spinning into turmoil, but in which some are still keeping their grip.

**20 MEI 2024**

Weathering begins with us, the audience, watching each other enter and take a seat on one of the four sides of the square space. There's a church like calm whilst we wait, we're facing the centre, looking at the square white podium but aware of our many eyes scanning the faces lining the sides. We can almost hear each other breathing: it's a *mise-en-bouche* of what is about to unfold.

The silent waiting is finally broken by soft, multi-harmony, surround-sound singing. The voices are angelic but the words startle: body parts and bodily sensations: skin, trembling, dick, tongue, sweat and shiver...

At last a performer appears and steps up on the podium. We notice it gives a little, it's upholstered, a cushion, your best bed, soft yet supporting. Other performers arrive one by one. Keeping the harmony of voices going, their very different bodies, clad in layers of assorted jumble: cut-down shorts, quilted coats, chic macs, baggy trackies, resist any social or sexual classification or cliché, queer or other. They are just there, as we are too.

Once assembled, there's another protracted wait. A silent stillness that is simultaneously hard to bear and blissful, we feel ourselves breathing together again.

Gradually, by increments, the performers facial expressions alter, eyes lift and look, chins raise and poke, backs arch and stretch. We notice fingers, some manicured others stubby, seek out other fingers. The sculpture of human flesh is sentient.

**On one inexplicable level, I feel it's the saddest thing I have ever seen, a metaphor for a world**

## **in ruins**

What ensues is a progressive stirring: of desire, of sensation, of seeking out the other. An ultra-controlled, slow mo, performance of spontaneity that kaleidoscopes between erotic yearning and fear, between surrender and overpowering. The platform is being slowly pushed and rotated by the technical team or by the performers themselves, and wherever your gaze falls something other is happening: wetness appears in slippery trails along skin or in haze clouds sprayed by the performers to cool each other down. With imperceptible precision, edges of clothing are grasped and stretched, pulled so that garments are drawn off the wearer. Other objects fall from pockets, bags and rucksacks: telephones, wallets, wires, everyday stuff; but the gasps, grunts and murmurs we hear add to the sensation that we are watching something eminently private, a back story that society dictates should be kept from view but that can no longer be contained.

Towards the end, when the performers are all but naked, the platform is spun faster and faster. It's the merry-go-round you dared, or not, to jump on or off as a child. The performers run and slam their bodied onto the soft surface, barely missing collision. There is something both joyous and terrifying in the combination of vulnerability and strength. I hear my neighbour, a young woman, sob. Indeed, this performance hits hard and deep. On one inexplicable level, I feel it's the saddest thing I have ever seen, a metaphor for a world in ruins, a society destined to be thrown off by centrifugal forces created by its own relentless momentum. But then the performers return to applause. This is us, they seem to say, acknowledging the world as it is today as victorious survivors in their unique nakedness.