

Immersive, comfortable, and exciting, "Watching Brief": a must see

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If sitting in a dark theater to passively enjoy a show is your idea of a Friday night date night, then Meglouise Dance is about to turn your world upside down.

Watching Brief, a performance by Meglouise has arrived.

As dancers stand *behind* the attendees talking casually about the things they're noticing, audience is made to wonder if it is part of the performance to overhear these conversations. This wonderment develops further when dancers begin to invite audience members to take part in the action itself. This proposal would usually scare the pants off of many shy viewers but the incredibly un-judgmental air that the performers take on makes this something that seems comfortable and contained. An incubated comfort level takes shape, allowing patrons choices within the performance without putting them on the spot like they might feel in a comedy club setting. With multiple focal points and many low-pressure situations happening all at once, the viewer has license to watch whichever activity they like while transitions happen seamlessly. Dancers move together as well as with audience members in a non-committal, non-awkward way, making it easy for someone with absolutely no dance experience to experience curiosity, instead of fear when approached by a performer. Breaking the fourth wall immediately as people enter the space, performers give gentle and specific instructions, often framed as questions in order for each individual to feel as if they have their own choice in the experience and are not being put on the spot.

If this loose structured, participatory approach has scared you away, fear no more! For Meglouise implements just enough of the expected to make traditional audience go-ers (those who anticipate sitting in the seat, unnoticed) feel the worth of their ticket. Just as you find yourself wondering if the price of your ticket paid for a casual, yet smart conversation in a room full of friends or a night of dance and performance, your worries are put to rest when Meglouise dancers execute choreographed phrases in unison, giving those tired of participating a moment to simply watch and observe, albeit, probably not from the comfort of a plush, dark, folding theater seat.

New and exciting ways of viewing a dance performance are implemented in the duration of the piece. Using real breath, making no effort at a contrived "performance quality" with deep sighs, squeaks on the floor, casual adjustments of clothing and visual focus allows the audience to see truly that the performers are, above anything else, humans in the space. Sharing space with such a well adjusted, comfortable performer allows the audience member to explore the performance from all angles, even to ask questions when they may become confused about something, making this piece of modern dance accessible to absolutely anyone.

Sharing a moment with performers during a performance is truly a gift. *Watching Brief* gives and gives and gives this gift throughout.

Meglouise Dance is pushing boundaries in their upcoming show at Links Hall. *Watching Brief* takes place May 17-19 at 7:00 p.m. each night at the new Links Hall (3111 N. Western Ave). Tickets can be purchased [here](#).