



Anya Tchoupakov "Peek in on a Performance through the Window of a Closed Gallery." *VICE*, 26 July 2017, https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/zmvdb9/peek-performance-through-closed-turn-gallery-window.

Peek in on a Performance Through the Window of a Closed Gallery



PHOTOS BY JENNY GORMA

Walking down the streets of New York City, it's not uncommon to come upon an artistic "happening." If you were near 1st Street in the East Village earlier this week, you would have seen just such a thing. A group of people crowded around a tiny white-box gallery, watching dancers inside in near silence. The dancers hardly seemed to notice.

The setting is TURN Gallery, and it's been the scene of many shows that intentionally play with the small space. Owner and curator Annika Peterson has previously curated huge sculptures and cleverly utilized the hallway space leading to the back garden, but one thing she had yet to explore was dance. "I really wanted to bring movement into the gallery and to push the boundaries of the space. There is a long history between art and dance. I think it's a great conversation, and there needs to be more of it," she tells *Creators*. The problem was finding an artist whose work would create a logical opportunity for dance.

Rachel Eulena Williams's *Coco Currents* turned out to be just the show. Utilizing rope and bright colors for her sculptural paintings, her work screams movement and vitality. "In my work I transform cotton rope into my own desired expressive mark makings and find beautiful similarities in performance and movement," Williams tells *Creators*. "I do find inspiration in dance, movement, and the magic that happens when the body is transformed into a tool for abstract expression." It was the perfect opportunity to blend the art forms—dance is as visual as painting, after all.

Peterson commissioned dancer and choreographer Megan Marcano to create something in conversation with *Coco Currents*. Together with dancers Tania Mendoza and Maximillion Canion, she put herself in dialogue with the painted sculptures through movement. "I imagined as if the dancers and I were one of Rachel's actual creations. Our movements then became nothing short of the same push and pull effort it took to create the pieces," she says.

But this was no ordinary dance performance: while Megan and her dancers were indoors, the audience stayed outside, watching through the big window and glass door. There was no music outside, and the experience became deeply voyeuristic. The piece begins with Marcano alone, where she speaks—sometimes literally—with the pieces, explores the limits of the window frame, and fully explores the space. It is hers, and any attention to her audience is practically non-existent. Her costume (by designer Richard Ruiz) alternates between cryptic and vulnerable, simultaneously shackling and revealing. When Mendoza enters the "stage," the two women dance together, but it still feels isolated—like a psyche dancing inside itself. Canion enters subtly, and different members notice him at different times. He is much taller than the other dancers, and thus brings a whole new dimension to the space.

At one point, the dancers open the door and people trickle in, unsure whether the performance is over or not. The show continues, and it turns out unheard music has been playing this whole time. Though the dancers now move in unison, it's unclear whether the separation between us has been broken simply because we entered the room. People are hesitant to come too close. We are still voyeurs, just looking a little closer this time.