



# David Velasco

DAVID VELASCO IS EDITOR OF ARTFORUM.COM AND A REGULAR CONTRIBUTOR TO ARTFORUM. HE IS CURRENTLY WORKING ON HIS FIRST NOVEL.

**1** **"American Realness"** (Abrons Arts Center, New York, January 8–10, 2010) All the legendary children of the New York dance world served up over one crash-course weekend intensive: Miguel Gutierrez, Jack Ferver, Trajal Harrell, and don't forget Ann Liv Young, whose fraught

"Sherry" performances were utterly nonpareil.

**2** **Alexei Ratmansky, *Namouna, a Grand Divertissement*** (David H. Koch Theater at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, April 29, 2010) I'm not sure who Namouna is, but this chimerical work, performed

by the New York City Ballet, hallucinates someone sultry and witty who hasn't given up on cigarettes. Doesn't much like sex, because it musses her makeup. Is content with the trivial. And I don't care what Alastair Macaulay says, Ratmansky should keep those silly hats.

**3** **Trisha Brown at forty** For her company's ruby anniversary, Brown gave New York audiences the best gift possible: a slew of piquant performances and reenactments at Dia: Beacon, the Baryshnikov Arts Center, and the Whitney Museum of American Art. Shouldn't we have gotten her something?

**4** **Mike Kelley, *Day Is Done Judson Church Dance*** (Performa 09, Judson Memorial Church, New York, November 17–19, 2009) This piece only confirmed for me that Kelley was sent here to save us all from our own miserable banalities.

**5** **Tere O'Connor, *Wrought Iron Fog*** (Dance Theater Workshop, New York, November 10–14, 2009) After the terrific *whoosh* of his last work, *Rammed Earth*, O'Connor brought it back to the proscenium and went all long division, like penitence in process.

**6** **Tacita Dean, *Craneway Event*** (Danspace Project, New York, November 5–7, 2009) and **Charles Atlas, "A Video Tribute to Merce Cunningham"** (Baryshnikov Arts Center, New York, October 20, 2009) Do you miss Cunningham? Well, now you don't have to: Thanks to Dean's lush, deadpan documentation of rehearsals for his *Craneway Event* and Atlas's astute, Boswellian record keeping, we can all bed down with the man's perfect legacy.

**7** **Anna Halprin, Morton Subotnick, and Anne Collod, *parades & changes, replays*** (Dance Theater Workshop, November 18–21, 2009) Don't now on, whenever a dancer gets naked onstage, you can remember to blame Anna Halprin, who gave everyone license to disrobe with *parades & changes* in 1965. Anne Collod's update, done in consultation with Halprin and Subotnick, made clear all the other reasons the work remains so memorable.



**1** Miguel Gutierrez, *Last Meadow*, 2009. Dress rehearsal, Abrons Arts Center, New York, January 7, 2010. Miguel Gutierrez, Tarek Halaby. From "American Realness." Photo: Ian Douglas. **2** Alexei Ratmansky, *Namouna, a Grand Divertissement*, 2009. Performance view, David H. Koch Theater at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, New York, April 29, 2010. Photo: Paul Kolnik. **5** Tere O'Connor, *Wrought Iron Fog*, 2009. Performance view, Dance Theater Workshop, New York, November 9, 2009. Erin Gerken, Heather Olson, Daniel Clifton. Photo: Yi-Chun Wu. **7** Anna Halprin, Morton Subotnick, and Anne Collod, *parades & changes, replays*, 2009. Performance view, Dance Theater Workshop, New York, November 18, 2009. Boaz K. Barkan, Vera Mantero, Anne Collod, Nuno Bizarro. Photo: Yi-Chun Wu.

**8** **Ishmael Houston-Jones, Chris Cochrane, and Dennis Cooper, *THEM*** (Performance Space 122, New York, October 21–30, 2010) From now on, whenever a dancer wrestles with a dead goat onstage, you can remember to blame Ishmael Houston-Jones, who gave everyone license to wrestle with a dead goat with *THEM* in 1986. Unabashedly gay and gritty, this cathartic restaging gave everyone something to talk about.

**9** **Xavier Le Roy lecture at CUNY Graduate Center** (Martin E. Segal Theatre Center, New York, May 7, 2010) I can't believe that

this was the first time Le Roy, French "conceptual choreographer" extraordinaire, lectured in New York. Are we that provincial?

**10** **David Wampach, *Bascule*** (Center for Performance Research, New York, October 15–16, 2010) If it weren't for the compulsive charisma of dancers Michelle Boulé and Liz Santoro, I might have beat my head against a wall. But there they were, making me watch them do the same thing over and over again. Change. Again. Etc. There's a fine line between insipid and inspired, but this one made the list, so Wampach obviously played it well, right? □

