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# Jumatatu Poe's "Android Tears" at JACK

OCT 16, 2014 by ELENA LIGHT in DANCE

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Jumatatu Poe by Tayarisha Poe

Jumatatu Poe doesn't want to live in New York.

Or so he says. The Philly-based dance artist is

<http://www.culturebot.org/2014/10/22305/jumatatu-poes-android-tears-at-jack/>

Or so he says. The Philly based dance artist is presenting his new solo *Android Tears* at JACK's tin-foil-clad performance space in Brooklyn from Thursday to Saturday. The work investigates the "trickster deity," so Poe's proclaimed dislike of New York City should be taken with a grain of salt—he could be messing with me.

On a parking-challenged Tuesday morning at JACK, I watched Poe style his bleach-tipped hair into twists (it was an incredibly arduous process; after an hour and a half, he'd only made seven twists) while he discussed his recent obsession with the trickster.

Through improvisation, Poe became interested in this idea of "playing a game or lying," which launched him into more intense academic research.

"There's a story in the Bible where Jesus is sleeping on a boat and there's a big storm. Some of the apostles are on the boat, and they're freaking out, asking, 'Why is he sleeping in the back? He should be fixing this—he knows God.' So they wake him up, and he asks, 'Why are you all freaking out?' He finally comes out and says, 'Peace be still.' It's Jesus as the epic trickster, trying to find out who will betray him while he sleeps."

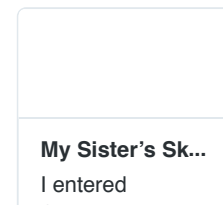
Poe's choice of deity-as-trickster is not without context. The grandson of a pastor, he's fascinated by his spiritual roots, and he essentially grew up "tricking" people through code-switching: his grandparents were deeply

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religious and actively involved in their church, while his parents were intellectuals active in the Pan-Africanist movement, an ideology with a highly academic lexicon. Now, Poe navigates many identities: as a queer black man, a teacher at a private liberal arts college, and a performer and choreographer in both Philadelphia and New York. He admits that to be able to move among all of these identities and their associated vocabularies can be perceived as lacking authenticity.

“I feel like largely people of color or people who are “other,” they’re subject to a certain questioning: ‘Are you just being gay right now, or are you really that feminine?’ I think of that also as a container for meaning. “

As for *Android Tears* itself, Poe didn’t divulge too much. After working with a **J-setting** dancer over the past year, he has included J-setting—a specific “prancing” movement style that began with the dance team at Jackson State University. I also noticed stacked crates and black platform boots—a potentially dangerous combination.

“I’m investigating authenticity,” said Poe. We’ll see if he’s for real.

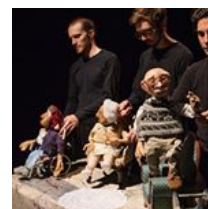
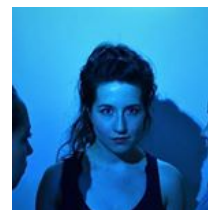
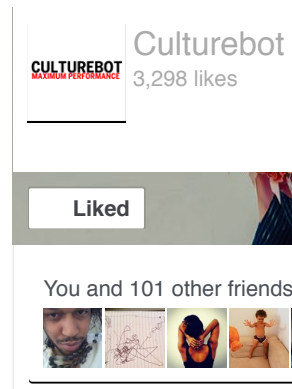
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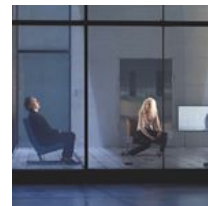
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**J says:** OCT 18, 2014

Waiting for the review! Thanks for the preview.

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