

## Film Sparks Dance, Coast to Coast

Seattle and Brooklyn Choreographers Draw Inspiration from the Screen for TBA Performances

By REBECCA RAGAIN

During the question-and-answer sessions following dance performances, audience members often ask choreographers, "Where do you find your inspiration?"

In the case of two dance performances debuting at this year's Time-Based Art Festival, part of that answer is film.

Brooklyn-based dance artist Miguel Gutierrez drew inspiration from James Dean's films *East of Eden*, *Rebel Without a Cause*, and *Giant* to create *Last Meadow*, which premieres at TBA September 4.

*Just Out* caught up with Gutierrez as he took a break from shopping for wigs for *Last Meadow*. "The costuming is very specific," Gutierrez says, since 70 percent of the material of *Last Meadow* comes from the trio of Dean films.

It started on a trip to France. Gutierrez borrowed a Dean movie and ended up watching the special features. The wardrobe tests were like "really beautiful, exciting little dances...[Dean] was so demanding and weird and androgynous and sexy," says Gutierrez.

There's much more to Gutierrez's interest in Dean. As an icon, Dean represented concepts that Gutierrez wanted to explore: mythology, fathers and sons, and collapsing empires.

"I decided to sort of say he's like America—this impossible figure," says Gutierrez, who makes his thoughtful comments at what seems like 200 words per minute. "He's too big for anyone to actually understand, and he's kind of dead in the water."

Gutierrez performs in *Last Meadow* with two other dancers—Michelle Boulé and Tarek Halaby—who have long worked with his group, Miguel Gutierrez and the Powerful People.

For this project, Gutierrez also brought onboard TBA favorite Neal Medlyn as sound designer. Primarily a solo performer, Medlyn gave this new opportunity his full attention. Gutierrez says that working with Medlyn was "a frickin' magical situation" with exciting results: "I love what he's done, adore it—I think he's nailed it."

Amy O'Neal is another choreographer whose newest work was inspired by film footage. Over the past few years, O'Neal, who lives in Seattle, has traveled extensively for various artistic projects. She filmed different moments and scenarios along the way, ending up with hours of footage, some of which she incorporated into a duet for herself and long-time collaborator Ellie Sandstrom.

O'Neal brought in a video editor and two composers with whom she'd never worked. The resulting piece, *too*, is essentially two works under one name. The portion set to Ivory Smith's music is a collage of mostly rural, daytime vignettes. Ollie Glatzer's compositions accompany video scenes featuring a karaoke party at a Japanese love hotel.

O'Neal has plenty of experience juxtaposing film and dance. The combination has always been a key part of locust, a collaboration that O'Neal founded in 2000 with composer/musician Zeke Keeble. locust's projects include five full-length works—such as *mockumentary*, featuring zombies—as well as shorter projects, like *crushed*, to be performed at TBA September 7-8.

Whereas *too*—O'Neal's first project under the name AMYO/tinyrage—grew out of film footage, locust's *crushed* actually lessens the emphasis on video, compared to the group's other recent work. Keeble performs all of the music for *crushed* live, as five dancers explore the idea of being blind-sided.

"It's 45 minutes—a short punch in the face—and the most straightforward and stripped-down technical show we've done in a while," says O'Neal. "The movement and the music is really the focus and heart of this work."

TBA's dance offerings also include work by guests from Europe. Raimund Hoghe, a German-born choreographer who specializes in reinterpreting classic dances, is bringing his *Boléro Variations* for its U.S. premiere. Meg Stewart, a New Yorker who relocated to Brussels, then Berlin, has collaborated with Austrian choreographer Philipp Gehmacher to create *Maybe Forever*.

TBA's guest artistic director, Cathy Edwards, has followed Stewart since first seeing her perform in 1994. On TBA's blog, Edwards describes *Maybe Forever* as "gentle but disillusioning, simultaneously touching and uncomfortable, created by one of this generation's most accomplished dance artists."

*For details on all TBA:09 performances, locations and pricing, visit  
[www.pica.org/tba](http://www.pica.org/tba).*