Heather Kravas: visions of beauty

March 30 – April 2
Running time: 70 minutes

Performance: Andrew Champlin, Michael Helland, John Hoobyar, Michael Ingle, Joey Kipp, Cecilia Lisa Eliceche, Kayvon Pourazar, Saúl Ulerio, Connor Voss
Direction: Heather Kravas
Choreography: Heather Kravas in collaboration with the performers*
Original music: Dana Wachs aka Vorhees
Song: Peter Schilling
Piano: Avi Lasser
Lighting design: Madeline Best
Production: Sara Jinks
Rehearsal Consultant: Rebecca Brooks
Costume Consultation: Frances Kenny and Victoria Simons

*visions of beauty is a reflection and refraction of dances I have made and seen. Besides its links to The Green Surround (2011) it notably refers to Even Steven from the 4-part work xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx — a situation for dancing. (2003), a collaboration with artist Antonija Livingstone. Antonija taught me “tai sa baki” in 2001, the movement you will soon see over and over again which I often call “switchbacks”. I have never stopped switching back, it has been a line or dot in my love affair with minimalism and for that I am deeply grateful. I have also been heavily instructed and inspired by my 4-year-old, Gus Starkie as well the work of visual artist/corner master, Victoria Haven and choreographer DD Dorvillier.
— Heather Kravas

Filming and photography are not permitted during the show.

visions of beauty is commissioned and supported through the OtB Performance Production Program.
visions of beauty is a National Performance Network (NPN) Creation Fund Project co-commissioned by On the Boards in partnership with Performance Space 122 and NPN.
This performance is graciously sponsored by

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visions of beauty is a project of Creative Capital
visions of beauty traces a tenuous relationship between precision and mutability. Imagined as the conceptual twin of The Green Surround (2011), a dance for nine women entrapped in a relentless architecture of desire at the edge of violence, visions of beauty moves beyond these rigorous limits toward a sensate assemblage of intimacy, precarious and provisional. While the coercion of the score and metronome determined the success or failure of the women's movements, in visions of beauty the nine dancers labor to resist mimetic unison even as they proceed through exhaustive repetition. Deeply philosophic, the dance asks how we parse singularity and collectivity through affective composition. How might we be with each other and ourselves? How much distance can intimacy traverse and how much proximity might it allow? These questions are not represented in the work, but engaged as an internecine relationship to structures both choreographic and psychological. The power of the work draws not only on the virtuosity of the dancers but in their willingness to risk presence and being-together over the imperatives of the composition. This trust is indeed what holds the sensuous fabric of the composition, playing with what Joan Copjec might call the “inarticulable” to reveal a searing interiority along the wounded edges of gender, intimacy and dance. As in all of Heather Kravas’s work, visions of beauty subtly undermines the architecture of the theater through interventions in paint, light or rhythmically marked by effects of the theater. Here the curtains conjure a minimalist grid illuminating the shifting trajectories of attraction and velocity. These effects evoke meditations on line as a perceptual aperture into emotion as witnessed in the works of Agnes Martin or cut with the incisive subversion of Félix Gonzales-Torres whose own meditation on beauty shares with Kravas a politics of visibility and beauty invested with loss and possibilities of reparation.

Jenn Joy is a co-founder with Kelly Kivland of collective address, a choreographic research space in Brooklyn. She teaches in the sculpture department at Rhode Island School of Design and was appointed critic in sculpture at Yale School of Art in 2015. Her book, The Choreographic (MIT Press, 2014) will be available for purchase in the O1B lobby.

Program Note by Jenn Joy

Jenn Joy will lead a post-show conversation in the Studio Theater after the Friday performance.
Heather Kravas interviewed by Petra Zanki,
OtB Season Ambassador

“A lot of my work is about figuring out what is most at stake for me in the moment and then illustrating not the work itself but the conditions of making it.”

When Heather said that much of her aesthetics comes from times when she hung at the concerts and in the gritty punk scene in nineties, she got me fully. There is a lot of irrational romanticism in that, but I don’t need much to connect, if the words and ideas, said and unsaid, are right.

Aside irrational romanticism, while thinking about what would be the common thread in Heather’s works, I thought instantly of visual hues of her performances. Seeing it as B/W monochromes, in the aesthetics of punk zines from one side, and minimalist monochromatic canvases on the other, Daniel Zezelj’s comics’ strokes, (as harsh as that, as honest as that), also came to mind.

Both as in a vision, less as in a thought, brightness — the blending of all colors, and dark — in absence of them all, come in flashes at once: the realization that everything that contrasts, clashes to bring harmony. (The tiny flash: notice the letters against this sheet.)

Most of my life I have been struggling to understand why would gray zones matter for the beauty. “Not everything is black and white: there are lot of gray zones in between.” You must have heard it too. You must have heard it and stared blank in darkness, kind of getting it, but not agreeing with it, understanding that intensity and beauty gravitate towards extremes. These are the snippets of talk we had in the lobby of On the Boards one Friday morning:

PZ: In the sense of aesthetics, what is it that you look for in your badass uncompromising work?
HK: The work needs to be personal and hinges on a slightly obsessive-compulsive tendency. My task is to use this impulse and occasionally reject it. It is often a struggle with acceptance. In 2000, I made a performance called “self-oblation companion”. I had rented hours of studio time in NYC to make this dance and all I seemed able to do was fall asleep or cry, cry or fall asleep — making stuff and hating all of it. At a point, I realized that the napping and wailing pretty much was the work, so my job then became about creating the conditions where I could share this process with other people. The choreography was about creating the frame more than the material. A lot of my work is about figuring out what is most at stake for me in the moment and then illustrating not the work itself but the conditions of making it.

How do you work, how do you choreograph?
I have no idea how to make dances. I am always amazed how people are moving bodies in space, the way choreographers think about space and kinetic invention. I try to do it sometimes and it always feels inauthentic. Sometimes I think about my dances as sculptures, or even two-dimensionally — dots and lines, like in Bridget Riley paintings. Or even as sound pieces - just rhythms and textures bumping up against one another. I am interested in how things function sonically and sculpturally. Those are the things that I enjoy playing with and learning about. I try to trust that my desire will arrive at something unique.

I can’t figure out right now if this piece is more of a grid, or a spiral, or if it is a relationship between two places.

I noticed that your dance phrase patterns continue until they get exhausted. Do you usually work with dance drones, like music drones?
I like drones. And sometimes I like how a dance can dissolve through exhaustion. This work is not merely pattern based, I want to know how it transforms. The performers are amazing dancers and humans. They have been so generous through a process where I continually ask them not just to learn choreography but to be willing to throw everything away. I want to believe I can make something that isn’t stuck. There is something in the work that tries to challenge definition. But I don’t know if it is a crazy weird quilt or a chain of events or a kind of combination. My last work was a chain of events, and a quartet was like that too, this one is different.

Your work is very funny. Do you know that? I saw your eyelids choreography in dead/disappears, and I couldn’t stop laughing.
There are always a few people that key into that element in my work, and I like that some people relate to it in that way. I just watched a late ’70s Richard Pryor comedy routine that he performed in Long Beach. It was heavy. Everything he was talking about could have happened yesterday. There was so much violence in it and self-deprecation. It was funny and super not funny. That’s usually where comedy exists. I am interested in it and teetering on that edge.

You said your background is in ballet and Grotowski. How do these two connect in your work?
My teacher in Pullman, Washington, was a ballerina studying to become a psychologist who had landed in some alternative theater practices in San Francisco in the ‘70s. The theater exercises teach about going deep into one’s imagination but with a real rigor. The Grotowski exercises lead to improvisation and these experiences were weird but made me feel very alive. It is the relationship to practice that I think was so compelling about ballet. I think the ways ballet is linked to my work now has to do with how I use language. I use it as a kind of building block or sign. Also, it is precise and that mirrors the precision I strive for in my work.
An anger?
Anger, yes. But I am not interested in anxiety and authoritarianism right now. These conditions are too present in our daily lives. We don’t need to go to the theater to experience more anxiety and authority. So right now, I am making the piece without understanding everything about its structures. The performers are really helping me do it and I am letting them help me do it and that feels unique to this piece, though certainly not a unique endeavor. All performances risk “failing” in terms of their reception. Something about visions requires me to make and make and make and then let go completely. Without the letting go it all seems false and makes me sad. So, this time I am risking my control to see if the structures can transform beyond expectations. It is super tricky. Maybe impossible.

And for the end, what specific words come up for you when you think of this work?
These days I often find myself in the position where I don’t know what to say. I guess I don’t have words and I want to honor that space where we can be with each other neither agreeing nor disagreeing but existing in a space that can contain everything.

Bios

HEATHER KRAVAS is a choreographer and performing artist. Since 1995, she has investigated choreographic, improvisational and collaborative practices in contemporary dance to explore the limits of choreography as a form and her abilities as an artist. Combining recognizable traditions, pedestrian tasks and image-guided kinesthetics, she works to discover the underlying historic and social structures of dancing forms to examine the form itself. She is a 2016 Creative Capital Artist and the recipient of a 2015 Doris Duke Impact Award and 2014 Foundation for Contemporary Arts Award. From 2001-2008 Kravas choreographed in collaboration with Canadian/European artist Antonija Livingstone and improvised extensively with cellist Okkyung Lee as the nono twins from 1999-2004. She has worked as an interpreter and rehearsal assistant for DD Dorvillier’s human future dance corps since 2001 and additionally has performed for Marina Abramovic, Jennifer Allen, Amy Cox, Dayna Hanson, Amii LeGendre, Yvonne Meier and the Seattle repertory company D-9.

Her choreography has been presented at venues including American Realness, Chez Bushwick, The Chocolate Factory, Dance Theater Workshop, Danspace Project @ St.Mark’s Church, Fusebox Festival, The Kitchen, Movement Research @ Judson Church, On the Boards, Performance Space 122 and Tonic as well as internationally, most recently at the Onassis Cultural Center in Athens. Kravas grew up in Pullman, Washington, where, under the tutelage of Deirdre Wilson, she studied classical ballet and the experimental teachings of Grotowski.

MADELINE BEST designs lighting and video and is the production manager at The Chocolate Factory Theater. Best graduated from Bennington College, grew up in Durham NC and currently lives in Long Island City, Queens. This spring’s design projects include work with the artists Paulina Olowska, Andrea Kleine, Anna Azrieli, Ursula Eagly, Heather Kravas, Katie Workum and Aki Sasamoto.

ANDREW CHAMPLIN is a dance artist based in New York City. Originally from Portland, Oregon, Andrew is thrilled to be performing on the west coast for the first time in a decade. After classical training at Oregon Ballet Theatre and the School of American Ballet, Andrew studied dance and sociology at the New School University where he earned his Bachelor of Arts degree and currently teaches at Eugene Lang College as adjunct faculty. Andrew has had the extreme pleasure of collaborating with artists Miguel Gutierrez, Pam

Thursday: Raise a Glass...

We’ll celebrate opening night with a toast in the lobby. Stick around after Thursday’s opening night performance and raise a glass with the artists.
and Kayvon were introduced briefly in 2011—maybe they met there. John were both at one of the first auditions and Joey recently recalled how they Michael's roommate at the time. John friend Christina, who happened to be Goucher College and stayed with his came to visit NYC as a senior at met Michael Ingle in 2011 when he.

**MICHAEL HELLAND** is a Bessie Award-winning, Brussels-based dance artist appearing in the works of Maria Hassabi, Cecilia Lisa Eliceche, Tino Sehgal, and Daniel Linehan. Previous projects include performances and exhibitions with Xavier Le Roy, Katy Pyle, Alexandra Bachzetsis, Eleanor Bauer, Faye Driscoll, Marina Abramović, robbinschilds, Big Art Group, and RoseAnne Spradlin, among others.

Helland's choreographic installations and events for the stage have been presented across New York, Belgium, France, and Switzerland. He was awarded a 2017 research grant from the Flemish Authorities of Belgium for his current project *RECESS: the Ritual Experience Concept Event Spa Show*. Helland holds degrees in Dance and in Experience Concept Event Spa Show.

**MICHAEL INGLE** is an artist and performer based in New York City. Their work has been presented by Aunts, One Arm Red, Rooftop Dance (now ROVE), Triskelion Arts, Movement Research, The Tank NYC and others in New York and nationally.

As a performer, Ingle has worked with Hilary Easton + Company, Daria Fain/Commons Choir, Laura Peterson Choreography, Deganit Shemy & Company, Anna Sperber|Dance Projects and Makiko Tamura/small apple co., amongst others. Ingle has worked with Tere O'Connor Dance for the past six years, performing in the works *Cover Boy* (2011), *poem* (2012), *BLEED* (2013), *Goodbye Studies* (2015) and *undersweet* (2016). This is their first project with Heather Kravas.

**JOEY KIPP** was born in Brazil and raised in California. He received a BA in both Dance and Biology from Marymount Manhattan College and trained with both the Cunningham and Taylor School. He has performed works by Merce Cunningham, Robert Battle, Ann Liv Young, Biba Bell, Stacy Grossfield, Larissa-Velez Jackson, miguel guiterrez, luciana achugar, James McGinn, Scott Wise, and Celia Rowlson-Ha. Companies: Sean Curran Company, Jody Oberfelder Dance Projects, and Catapult Entertainment. Theater: Merry Go Round Playhouse's production of *Damn Yankees*, Willis in *54 the Musical*, and *Damascus Square the Musical*. Joey also starred as Rob Pilatus in the Milli Vanilli Opera WOW, White Denims's music video *HA HA HA YEAH*, danced on ABC's *Manhattan Love Story*, Netflix's *The Get Down*, and is a choreographer and dancer for the band TOUCH/FEEL. Thank you Faith, Trudi, Heather Kravas, Michael Helland, Jen Kjos, Maria, my birth mom, and most of all Mom. Joey dedicates this performance to Pam Ward and all of the mothers who have helped him be here. “I dance with and for you through time and space.”

**AVI LASSER** is an Audio Director, Composer, Music Producer, & Pianist. He is the founder and studio director of Hevanti Productions LLC. He also currently serves as the Audio Director & Composer for Wolfbat Studios, an animation studio in LA. Since moving to Seattle he has grown Hevanti Productions into a successful post-production house. His studio is located in Queen Anne. He has worked with such brands as The Second City, Pennsylvania Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Smart Technologies, Schell Games, Alaska Airlines and many more. Avi is inspired by creating a compelling audio and music world that speaks to the audience, and customers, of his clients.

In addition to his writing work, Avi is a regular accompanist for the Pacific Northwest Ballet and a company pianist for Spectrum Dance Theatre. His work with dance began as a ballet accompanist at the Pennsylvania Ballet. Current commissions include an original electronic score for Ballet Arkansas and two full symphonic works for the Pacific Northwest Ballet as the Guest Composer for the 2017 Next Step Concert Series.

Originally from Boston Massachusetts, Avi graduated with a Bachelors Degree in Music with a double major in piano performance and music theory from McGill University in Montreal, Quebec. He also holds a M.M. in Composition for Film and Videogames from the Pacific Northwest Film Scoring Program.

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to Brussels to attend the Training and Research cycles at PARTS and was an exchange student at Movement Research in NY. She worked as a freelancer with Eleanor Bauer, Heather Kravas, Claire Croize, Etienne Guillotèau, DD Dorvillier and is assistant to ballet master Janet Panetta. She is greatly influenced by the work of Leandro Nerefuh who she has the great pleasure of collaborating closely with. Cecilia is fascinated by the endless potential of the body and movement and conceives dance as a site to experiment and rethink notions of democracy, community and the political as well as defying colonialism. Among her works are Unison, Cow’s Theory, Orpheus, and The Dance Concerts and Touching sessions. For Cow’s Theory she won the second prize in the Prix Jardin Europe “for its intense physical investigation of dynamics and social relationships”. Currently she’s an artist in residence in WP Zimmer, and is pursuing a Master in Choreography in AHK (Amsterdam). She is a guest researcher at UC Berkeley, pursuing her investigations on postcoloniality, feminism and the black radical tradition with professor Nadia Ellis. She’s passionately committed to anti-capitalist, anti-patriarchy, anti-colonial, anti-racist, ecological activism.

KAYVON POURAZAR is an Iranian immigrant and spent his formative years in Iran, Turkey and England. He was separated from his parents and left to fend for himself as a young teen due to immigration red tape. Truth be told, he wouldn’t have been permitted to pursue a life as a dance artist if his parents were still raising him. Kayvon immigrated to the US in 1995. He graduated with a BFA in Dance from SUNY Purchase in May 2000 and has resided in New York City ever since. Kayvon has performed in the works of Juliana May, Juliette Mapp, Yasuko Yokoshi, Donna Uchizono, Gwen Welliver, Beth Gill, RoseAnne Spradlin, K.J. Holmes, John Jasperse, Levi Gonzalez, Doug Varone, Wil Swanson, Gabriel Masson, Jennifer Monson, Jodi Melnick and in The Metropolitan Opera productions of Les Troyens and Le Sacre du Printemps. Kayvon doesn’t make his own work very often but the work he has made has been shown in New York City at The Kitchen (Dance & Process), P.S. 122 (Hothouse), The Cunningham Studios, Roulette (DanceRoulette), Center for Performance Research, Catch, AUNTS, Dixon Place, Sacramento State University and the University of Vermont. In 2010 he received a New York Dance & Performance “Bessie” Award for Performance. He has served as Adjunct Faculty at The New School and Bennington College. He teaches regularly for Movement Research and as has taught as guest artist for Tsekh Russia and the Universities of Nebraska, Vermont, Maryland and Sacramento State. Kayvon is thrilled to be a part of this work by Heather and to work alongside such tremendous humans.

SAÚL ULERIO is New York based choreographer-performer. Since Ulerio’s relocation to New York City from the Dominican Republic his choreographic work has been seen at New York Live Arts, Dance New Amsterdam, Danspace Project’s Draftwork and Food For Thought, Dixon Place, BAAD!, Teatro lati and through the CATCH performance series. Ulerio has performed in the works of Antonio Ramos, Daria Fain, RoseAnne Spradlin, Rebecca Lazier, Kota Yamazaki and Tami Stronach, amongst other. Ulerio was a 2011-2012 New York Live Arts Fresh Tracks Artist and a 2012-2014 Movement Research Artist in Residence.

CONNOR VOSS is a director, organizer, and therapist. They are the National Secretary for the Uhuru Solidarity Movement under the leadership of the African People’s Socialist Party. They are currently working towards a certification in the Feldenkrais Method, the release of their new EP Challenge Tempo, and white reparations to all African, Indigenous, and other colonized people of the world. They performed recently in the works of RoseAnne Spradlin, Juliana May, Mina Nishimura, Neil Greenberg, Anna Azrieli, Miguel Gutierrez, and PearsonWidrig DanceTheater. They created costumes for Spradlin, Azrieli, Gutierrez, and PWDT. Their work has been commissioned by the St. Petersburg Open Look Festival, CPR, BKSD (in collaboration with Rachel Berman) LaMaMa’s Squirts Festival and Gibney Dance (both in collaboration with Morgan Wallace). They enjoy most reading Octavia Butler, having different types of sex with different kinds of people, and forwarding the revolution. They cherish their chosen family, genetic kin, comrades, dance buddies, and YOU.

DANA WACHS is a Brooklyn based composer, musician, and audio engineer. She studied cello and electric bass from an early age. At nineteen, she joined the Holy Rollers (Dischord) and dove deep into a world of touring and live sound. Audio engineering would define the following twenty years of her life while working at Greene Street Recording NYC and touring the world with St. Vincent, Grizzly Bear, and many others. In 2009, she debuted her solo compositions as Vorhees at Death By Audio on the evening of Alice Coltrane’s passing, a continuing musical influence. From that performance, Dana continued to work on her own music, releasing her debut 7” The Orchard (Peoples Club, 2012), composing for modern dance, film, and commissioned performances (including Rural Violence II and III by Creative Independent founder Brandon Stosuy and presented by Matthew Barney), and recordings for fashion designer Rachel Comey. Live performances during this time included support for Cat Power, Matmos, and Dum Dum Girls, invitations to perform at Basilica Soundscape 2013 and Iceland Airwaves 2014. Her methods have always relied on improvisation, whether in studio or on stage, forsaking formal education for a natural and visceral response to what inspires her. visions of beauty is her third collaboration with Heather Kravas, for whom she previously composed and performed live the scores for A Green Surround and a quartet.
Thank you Lane Czaplinski and Vallejo Gantner for inviting me to create this work and for your ongoing support of my dance-making. It is meaningful to be given the opportunity to risk what is dear, and rare to be extended an opportunity to test one’s abilities.

To On the Boards! Lane, Mark, Rich, Julien, Jessica, Betsey, Cierra, Charles, Clare, Beth, Sara Ann, Jayme and Erica — this is an amazing place, thank you for hosting us.

Andrew, Cecilia, Connor, Joey, John, Kayvon, Michael H, Michael I & Saul — words are inadequate. Your generosity, bravery, intelligence and brilliance are what this dance is. I wish we could work on this work, and the unworking of this work, forever.

Thank you Sheilagh Hallagan for your encouragement and the photograph which bears our title, visions of beauty.

Thanks for the conversation Neil Greenberg & Petra Zanki.

Thank you Renee Erickson! And Ani Johnson, Sheila

— Heather Kravas

Jason, Gus and Valentina Starkie you are everything to me. Thank you for your dancing and love and for letting and helping me make dances. And To Big Gus and Connie Kravas and Khristina Kravas and Carlos DeVicenzo and Dave Lipe and Vic Haven...my family, love forever.

Thank you Lewadowski, Janet Panetta, Katy Pyle and Cynthia Rojas.

Thank you for your help in figuring out the nature of this work: Elby Brosch, Shane Donohue, Jody Kuehner, Justin Lynch, Fausto Rivera, Antony Shipman, Lauren Slone.

Sean Elwood and Shawn Sides, my Creative Capital advisors, thank you for encouraging me to do all of the crap I suck at.

Thanks CC and NPN and Doris Duke, without your generous support this would have been a solo.

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Program
Louis Andriessen, Workers Union (1975)
James Tenney, Swell Piece No. 2 (1965-1971)
Frederic Rzewski, Coming Together (1971)

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THE INSTITUTE OF MEMORY (TIMe)
THU – SAT | APR 20 – 22 | 8PM
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