

**pzazz**



**For Blinky  
Palermo**

MARC VANRUNXT &  
GEORGIA VARDAROU /  
KUNST/WERK

Vanrunxt and  
Vardarou return to  
split screen



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In 'For Blinky Palermo', choreographers Marc Vanruxt and Georgia Vardarou return to their *split screen dramaturgy*, a form they explored in 'For Edward Krasinski' fifteen years ago. Paying homage to a different avant-garde painter, the two choreographers develop their own interpretations of the deceptively simple art of the German artist Blinky Palermo. The split stage fractures the gaze, sets adjacent intensities in motion, and asks the viewers to keep negotiating the gap between them. This doubled experience demands constant attention from the viewers, but it also reveals an imbalance that never fully dissolves.

#### **09 DECEMBER 2025**

The promised split screen approach is clear from the very beginning. Much like Blinky Palermo's paintings, the stage is a large canvas divided in half. The left half is bathed in yellow light, the right submerged in a violet-purple hue. A low electronic pulse by Raphael Malfliet and Daniel Vanverre hums through the otherwise empty space. On the yellow side, Júlia Rúbies Subirós, who worked with Georgia Vardarou, soon appears. She is slowly dancing her way onto the stage from the side entrance. She moves forward in short movement sequences that she keeps repeating several times in quiet loops before moving on.

These repetitions crystallise each single gesture as a singular event, detaching them from what happened before, and suspending the progress in an extended moment of anticipation. The gestures follow each other like waves pushing off from the surroundings, as each moment leaks into the next. Her arms open into space as if hugging an intimate friend. Then her hands reach towards the black amplifier beside her, as if she's trying to tune her body to the room's frequency, to the floating particles of micro-sounds that brush over her skin.

On the violet side, Robson Ledesma suddenly rises from a front-row seat and steps into the view with unapologetic verticality. Stripping his long shirt with his back turned to us, he enters the space as a straight, confident figure. Yet this confidence slowly disintegrates as his body imperceptibly distorts. The sharp spotlight from above plays on the straining muscles on his back as they curl and twist with a still brutality.

### **Ledesma dances as if excavating his body, picking it apart before putting it back together again.**

What follows is nearly sculptural: the body twisting into an arch, the spine bending into a curve as the tension of the body rises to intolerable levels. Then a release: the body shoots forward erect again. The purple light eats his contours until he becomes a silhouette, a figure frozen in the moment on the verge of disappearance. If Rúbies Subirós moves like someone listening to the air and watery flows surrounding her, Ledesma dances as if excavating his body, picking

it apart before putting it back together again. His intensity fractures into intermittent, repressed ecstasies.

With the performance(s) approaching the subject from contrasting angles, it is as if Palermo's own oscillation between romanticist expressiveness and materialist literalism is reflected in the dancers. Ledesma tends towards the sublime struggle of the artist; Rúbies Subirós' more subdued movements draw the shapes and angles. Two different logics of attention, side by side. Over the first part of the performance, this contrast is thrilling: her busy and aqueous phrasing beside his angular restraint; watercolours next to textiles floating in the air.

Yet Ledesma's presence becomes increasingly dominating, and the hierarchy between the two becomes unmistakable. This is not intentional; Ledesma's movement vocabulary is never aggressive. But somehow, the dramaturgy feels like it is bending around him as he looms menacingly then spins and twirls vigorously at the centre of the room.

### **Imbalance**

All the while, Rúbies Subirós is moving around the edges several times, leaving the room. Even her most detailed and intense scene, as she combines all her previously looped movements into one long sweeping dance, becomes secondary supplement around the cramped silhouette in the centre of the room. Unfortunately, it feels as if this imbalance becomes the performance's central tension. Even so, there are moments when the piece arrives at certain rebalancing of the power dynamics by merging into similar vocabularies: she mirrors his gestures discreetly from the floor; he adopts sharper, more abrupt lines; and when they both start changing costumes their colours match.

These materials and costumes are a thematic anchor of the work. Palermo often worked with brightly coloured sheets of fabric. The two dancers continuously change outfits, he draped in a succession of long and flowing textiles that play with the lighting and accentuates his swirling physicality; she is swallowed underneath lumps of fabric that make her look like a walking sleeping bag. In other words, the discrepancy between them is palpable even here.

## **The fabric and costumes lay scattered on the floor like the residue of a storm**

Whereas the right side of the screen explores a very coherent, simplistic aesthetic throughout, on the left, the choreography is more diverse. Yet, it is hard to understand where it is heading. After the first long exploration of repeated then flowing movements, Rúbies Subirós suddenly changes tack: she starts dismantling the floor, she uses some of the tape from the floor to fix a pair of shoes with golden heels to the wall, then turns the remaining piece of tape into an arrow on the wall pointing to the stage exit. She leaves for a while. I am a bit lost here. Is this a reference or just an absurdist digression? Soon she re-enters in oversized shirt and trousers in purple-pink and blue colours. Moving casually around the stage space, she transforms it into a field of textures: fabrics are dragged, materials crumpled, a long violet strip pulled across like a synthetic gutting of the floor.

Ledesma dons a silver toga, whirling and shimmering like Loïe Fuller. A strip of spotlights illuminating him from the floor up, sparkles in the fabric, turning him into a vortex. It is undeniably beautiful, the visual climax of the performance. At the end, the diptych collapses into darkness. The fabric and costumes lay

scattered on the floor like the residue of a storm, illuminated by the dying glow of neon-green light at the back of the stage.

These two dancers live in separate worlds, and it is fascinating to see how one concept, and one artist, can inspire such different interpretations. The stage is left strewn with colour and movement, but the threads between their worlds remain loose.