

RAWdance is an award-winning contemporary dance company known for transforming theaters and public spaces through a mix of performance, curation, and collaboration. Founded in 2004 by Co-Artistic Directors Ryan T. Smith and Wendy Rein, in 2018 the company expanded to include a third artistic voice and leader, Associate Artistic Director Katerina Wong. RAWdance's nuanced, movement-driven dances pose questions ranging from the broadly social to the intimately personal. The company has been honored with an SF Bay Guardian GOLDIE Award for its contribution to San Francisco arts, a CHIME mentorship award, and was nominated for an Izzie award for Ensemble Performance. Its projects have received support from the NEA, SF Arts Commission, and more.

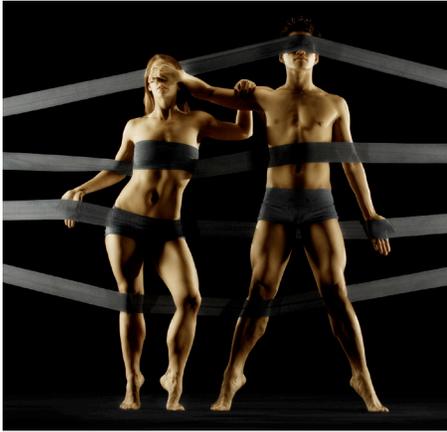
RAWdance has earned a reputation for its crafted, architectural movement style and visually striking performances. Though inspiration changes with every piece, at its core, RAWdance's work centers around human interactions – our needs, desires, connections, and conflicts – and reveals our basest and most beautiful instincts. Development of new work has been supported through residencies at the NCCAkron, Marble House Project, Ucross, Djerassi, Zaccho Dance Theatre, CounterPulse, Jon Sims Center, ODC Theater, and more. RAWdance is currently a resident company at both ODC and DZINE Gallery.

The company has performed through commissions, presentations, and festivals in China and Singapore, as well as across the U.S. Smith and Rein have been commissioned to teach/set work at schools such as Brown University, Webster University, Williams College, and University of Akron, as well as professional companies ZiRu Dance and MADCO. Combined, RAWdance's short dance films *since you went* and *Battle* have been screened in over 20 festivals throughout Asia, Europe, and the Americas.

In addition to theatrical performances, RAWdance presents work in nontraditional venues throughout SF, bringing dance directly into the public sphere in an effort to increase access to the art. The company has performed in art galleries, UN Plaza, Orson Restaurant, Union Square, City Hall, Yerba Buena Gardens, the Westfield mall, and more. In 2010, RAWdance was honored as a finalist in *SF Weekly's* Masterminds Awards for its innovative approach to alternative spaces. Smith and Rein began curating the site-specific Yerba Buena Gardens ChoreoFest in 2017.

Furthering efforts to inspire dialogue and engage the community, in 2007 the company launched the biannual CONCEPT series, an informal and intimate salon of contemporary dance. Named the "Best Way To Sample SF's Contemporary Dance Scene" by *SF Weekly*, the series has presented works by 106 of the Bay Area's talented choreographers to date.





Heather Desaulniers, Critical Dance

"experimental work done brilliantly...visionary dance at its best"

John Wilkins, KQED Arts

"You have to watch, and you want to watch, and you have no idea what's going to happen. It's exhilarating and exhausting. But that's the price of real art."

Allan Ulrich, SF Chronicle

"This is a genuine partnership, one of the more thrilling in Bay Area dance. Smith and Rein seem to understand each other's physical limitations and sensibilities. When they're together, the room seems suffused with an aura of trust you find infrequently on the dance floor."

Rita Felciano, SF Bay Guardian

"clear edged, cool choreography"

Rachel Howard, SF Chronicle

"impressive and often searing"

Heather Desaulniers, Critical Dance

"Every once in a while, you encounter a contemporary dance company that is extraordinarily special. One that stands out. A group that combines choreographic excellence, innovative structures, groundbreaking concepts and impeccable performances. RAWdance is one of these rare treasures."

Kristen Philipkoski, San Francisco Magazine

"mesmerizing, venue-bending productions"

Heather Desaulniers, Critical Dance

"If you have the opportunity to see RAWdance, take it – they have well-crafted, unique choreography, an excellent sense of humor and technically superior dancers."

Reyhan Harmanci, SF Weekly

"edgy, sexy inventive fare designed to speak to audiences"

Rita Felciano, SF Bay Guardian

"RAWdance's Wendy Rein and Ryan T. Smith are high-stakes gamblers."

Heather Desaulniers, Critical Dance

"RAWdance's Two by 24: Love on Loop had it all: an immersive experience, with deep narrative continuity, supported by sound technique and ground-breaking choreography. Artistic Directors Wendy Rein and Ryan T. Smith truly are site-specific royalty."

Rhonda Shrader, Dogmom's Dish

"Haunting yet hopeful, [RAWdance's After 5:00] is the most moving, honest and indeed 'raw' piece I've seen in ages."



“intelligent and convincing choreography”

– Rita Felciano, Dance View Times

Brilliant Alarm

Commissioned by Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in 2017, *Brilliant Alarm* was RAWdance’s response to: “Why Citizenship?”, the underlying question behind YBCA’s inaugural Transform Fest. With an eye to recurring cycles in history – reverence for intellectual prowess followed by a blinding fear of intellectual thought – the piece asks: “when we’re trapped in the cycle, what does it mean to be an informed and engaged citizen?” Drawing on global politics from WWII, the Spanish Civil War, the Chinese Cultural Revolution, and more, *Brilliant Alarm* was originally presented in the round in YBCA’s flexible Forum space.

RAWdance is currently revisiting and revising the work for the company’s 15th Anniversary season, also taking place at YBCA’s Forum January 24-26, 2019. Comprised of five performers and several hundred blue-toned hardcover books, this iteration will be viewed from two sides. With a pulsing score by sound artist Surabhi Saraf, the reimagined version includes set design by Chad Owens and lighting by Allen Willner.

“What looked like half a library of books gave the ensemble props which could be read, stacked, thrown, redistributed, hogged and used as stepping stones. They gave the show its grand opening in a serpentine set up that, with the touch of a finger, made you an instant believer in the proverbial domino effect. The dancers later repeated that serial fall – with less fun.

With ‘Brilliant’ RAWdance gave itself another fine vehicle for intelligent and convincing choreography.”

– Rita Felciano, Dance View Times





“an epic production that is greater than the sum of its parts”

– Claudia Bauer, Dance Tabs

Double Exposure

rawdance-doublex.org

Double Exposure offers a snapshot of the current American contemporary dance landscape in a single evening-length work. This project breaks the rules of traditional creative roles, with 16 choreographers and two dancers. Performed in its entirety by RAWdance’s Smith and Rein, it is comprised of 13 duets created by some of today’s most intriguing dance artists making work along the West Coast.

Choreographers include Joe Goode (SF), Ann Carlson (LA), Shinichi and Dana Iova-Koga (Oakland), KT Nelson (SF), David Roussève (LA), Kate Wallich (Seattle), casebolt and smith (LA), Amy Seiwert (SF), Amy O’Neal (LA), Tahni Holt (Portland), Holly Johnston (Long Beach), and Monique Jenkinson/Fauxnique (SF), as well as RAWdance’s Rein and Smith. Artists were chosen to honor the widely diverse backgrounds, cultures, points of view, and styles of moving that make up the field.

Drawing on their nearly two-decade long history as dance partners, Rein and Smith themselves act as a through-line for the performance, redefining their roles every few minutes.

Nominated for an Izzie Award for Ensemble Performance, the 70-minute piece premiered at ODC Theater in 2016. ODC presented a reprised version in 2017. Excerpts have been performed at Jacobs’ Pillow (2016) and the Joyce Theater’s American Dance Platform (2017).

“RAWdance’s stunning dances are like drifting through a waking dream – everything is clear but maddeningly elusive.” – John Wilkins, KQED Arts

RAWdance performance



Turing's Apple

“Impressive and often searing...
a deeply satisfying bite”

– Rachel Howard, SF Chronicle

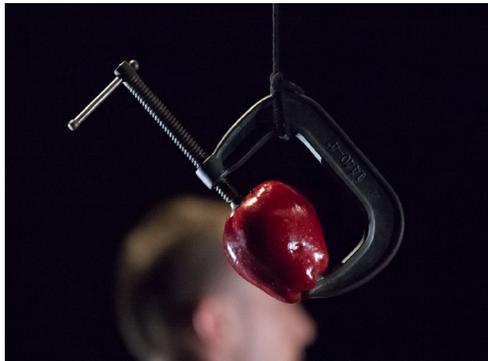
Best known for being “Britain’s greatest code breaker” during WWII, Alan Turing’s work with patterns covered a vast array of fields. His intellectual heroics, however, proved no match for the narrow-minded politics of his time. Convicted as a homosexual, Turing allegedly committed suicide by eating a poisoned apple.

Turing’s Apple, created as the centerpiece of RAWdance’s 10th anniversary season, is a work for six dancers inspired by Turing’s dramatic life and groundbreaking intellectual contributions. The piece developed through a collaboration with acclaimed NYC-based composer Richard Einhorn (known for “Voices of Light”), who shares a passion with RAWdance’s Directors for exploring both rigorous patterning and intense emotion in his work. The 28-minute *Turing’s Apple* weaves these two elements together seamlessly to create a dark, kaleidoscopic journey.

Einhorn’s driving classical score is balanced by Sean Riley’s scenic design, consisting of matrices of apples stretching towards a vanishing point. Additional collaborators on the project include lighting designer David Szlasa; costume designer Mary Domenico; and consultant Tim Roughgarden, associate professor in Computer Science at Stanford.

“The word ‘apple’ conjures up many sunny images... But there’s that other apple – from the Garden of Eden – that continues to mess with our psyches. RAWdance founders Ryan T. Smith and Wendy Rein get to the core of that more sinister fruit in Turing’s Apple.”

– Andrea Pflaumer, The Examiner





Mine

“Muscular, precise, and tense with a controlled energy that detonates in vicious rushes...”

– Irene Hsiao, SF Weekly

Mine was born during a residency in Ucross, Wyoming, where the expansive hills, never-ending barbed wire fences, and hints of the Old West left an indelible imprint on Smith and Rein. A series of imagistic, abstracted fragments, the work was inspired by the palpable clash between the vastness of the landscape and the myriad protective markings, both human and animal, that spliced each claimed territory.

Scenic designer Sean Riley frames the stage with a series of ropes suspended from the ceiling, pulled downward with rusty metal counterweights. Two islands set onstage thrust similar structures upward. An original score by Joel St. Julien emphasizes a rough, mechanical drive behind the work’s animalistic movement. *Mine* also features lighting by Jim French and costumes by Mary Domenico.

“RAWdance packed enough movement material into its new Mine to tempt lesser choreographers to dilute it into a much longer work than this quintet’s 55 minutes... [It is] an intricately structured, excellently performed essay on some of our less noble instincts.”

– Rita Felciano, SF Bay Guardian

“RAWdance’s newest evening-length production, Mine, is one deliciously unpredictable tour de force... everything about the fifty-minute work is utterly primal, to the point of animalistic. The very essence of human nature, instinct and emotion is under a honest microscope.”

– Heather Desaulniers, Critical Dance





After 5:00

“A tempestuous duet... passionate and volatile...”

– Heather Desaulniers, Critical Dance

The company's signature duet, *After 5:00* has been performed in Singapore, China, and throughout the United States. Artistic Directors Smith and Rein created the seeds for the piece during a House Special residency at ODC Theater in 2007, experimenting with a dark emotional center and the daring, athletic partnering that is a trademark of the company's work. The resulting material was stripped and refined over the course of the next two years, evolving into a triptych of two contrasting solos followed by a duet.

Within RAWdance's abstract and formalist canon of work, *After 5:00* is one of the company's most narrative pieces. Set against three tracks of moody piano music, the full version is 15 minutes long. The third duet section may also be excerpted for a 7-minute version.

“A tempestuous duet... passionate and volatile... I love many things about this company, but one of their most important choreographic achievements is that the narrative is constant... and remains true through every movement variation.”

– Heather Desaulniers, Critical Dance

“Their interactions overflowed with the most improbable lifts, suspensions, throws and precarious holds... a beautiful working out of the tensions created by kinetic bonds.”

– Rita Felciano, Dance View



TEACHING AND COMMISSIONS

RAWdance is available to create new work for intermediate to advanced dancers, and to teach classes and workshops to students of all levels.

Founders Smith and Rein have been commissioned to set new and repertory works on professional companies and students. Schools have included Webster University, Williams College, Brown University, Marin School of the Arts, and ODC School, among others. Professional engagements include Dance St. Louis, which commissioned Rein and Smith to create a new work for St. Louis-based MADCO for New Dance Horizons 2017. As part of the program, Associate Artistic Director Wong took part in a multi-week teaching residency in St. Louis public schools. RAWdance repertory has also been taught to company Ziru Dance for touring performances in China.

All three RAWdance Artistic Directors regularly teach workshops and master classes in technique, partnering, and composition.

Sample teaching formats include:

Technique and Repertory

The company leads a rigorous standing technique class, working on proper form and strength as well as nuances particular to the company's style, such as a high center of gravity, full spine articulation, and emphasis on breath. Exercises may lead up to repertory phrasework or current material. May be tailored to any level of experience.

Dynamic Duos

"An intensive exploration of vibrant dueting." Through a variety of partnering exercises, dancers learn to build trust and develop performance chemistry, demonstrate responsiveness to each other, and find a rigorous collaborative voice for creation and performance. Techniques for sharing space are explored alongside more traditional aspects of sharing weight and partnering. RAWdance has adapted this format for all levels and durations, from a 30-minute absolute beginner class (as part of YBCA's Bay Area Now Festival) to a full weekend workshop for professional dancers.

Formalizing Creativity

For this composition workshop, exercises are chosen to spark discussions about intention, choreographic structures, and the audience's relationship to the work. The company offers techniques to create vocabulary and stimulate the creative process. Throughout the workshop, methods are shared to shed physical patterns and allow the body to find its own voice. May be tailored to any level of experience.

A public celebration of love and equality in combination with partnering technique



Two by 24: Love on Loop

Two by 24 provides the ideal opportunity for engagement with university students and/or with local companies. Created in response to the Prop 8 discussion in California, RAWdance took to San Francisco's UN Plaza with 12 couples — 24 dancers in all — for an 8-hour reminder that underneath all the legal jargon and political posturing in the ongoing battle over intimacy and marriage, lies a story of two people in love.

Two by 24 may be mounted as a full performance, or used as part of a curriculum looking at the intersection of art and politics or site-specific work. Though it was created for 24 dancers, it can be performed by any number of pairs, is adaptable for varying skill levels, and can be taught as a 14 or 20 minute version. In 2015, the work was performed by students throughout the Williams College campus. In 2018, San Francisco's Grace Cathedral commissioned the revival of the work.

RAPT Productions created a standalone 15-minute film from the live performance footage which is also available for viewing and classroom discussion. Composer Dan Wool created the sound score.

"Two by 24: Love on Loop clearly outlines the struggle for marriage equality and the bizarre intersection of human emotion and political agenda. But much more simply, Wendy Rein and Ryan T. Smith's new piece is a beautiful comment on the gift of love. Two adults in love with each other should be celebrated, cherished, supported and have equal rights. Period."
 – Heather Desaulniers, Critical Dance





Architecturally inspired
site-specific dance for a large
ensemble

Requiem

Performed one year following the tragic events at Pulse, Orlando, *Requiem* was created as an offering to the 49 human beings whose lives were cut short by hatred and ignorance, and to the many countless more whose safe spaces continue to be corrupted by violence. A site-specific work, taking advantage of the architectural structure of San Francisco's Jessie Square, *Requiem* can be adapted for a wide array of sites on campuses or other public spaces.

Performed by a cast of 16 dancers, with an original score by Joel St. Julien, *Requiem* is 20 minutes long. The work was supported by the Yerba Buena Gardens Festival, and kicked off their inaugural ChoreoFest in June 2017.

"A response, a tribute and also an example of the inherent healing power within dance – if you have a chance to see this work, take it."
– Heather Desaulniers, Critical Dance

San Francisco & Bay Area Round Up

ODC Theater presents RAWdance – Double Exposure

ODC Theater, San Francisco

by Heather Desaulniers
Critical Dance, July 2016

Every once in a while, you encounter a contemporary dance company that is extraordinarily special. One that stands out. A group that combines choreographic excellence, innovative structures, groundbreaking concepts and impeccable performances. RAWdance is one of these rare treasures. Co-Artistic Directors Ryan T. Smith and Wendy Rein are pioneering artists who continually astound with their talent, wit, intelligence and authenticity.

RAWdance's newest project, Double Exposure, adds yet another creative triumph to their already impressive oeuvre, one that turns to curation, process and form. A collection of thirteen duets, made by sixteen West Coast-based choreographers and danced by Smith and Rein, Double Exposure is an archive of today's contemporary dance community. It is a testament to the breadth and diversity of choreographic practice. And it is stunning collage of physicality, combined into a single evening-length work.

Double Exposure's duets were performed in series, one right after the other, with the name of the choreographer illuminated on the back wall. In between each two-four minute variation, a brief pause allowed the dancers to change costumes or sometimes re-arrange the stage space (a stunning display of organizational logistics in its own right). These interludes never felt like a stop in the action, rather, an extension of the dance itself. Many of the breaks included video or live talking by Smith and Rein. A breaking of the fourth wall to share charming facts about each other, their thoughts about this particular piece of work and in one case, a karaoke mash-up.

Double Exposure opened with Smith and Rein's own duet. On two chairs, facing each other, they explored different points of contact: forearm grasping forearm, palms cradling the head and feet pushing against the torso. Joe Goode's mix of text, mirroring, movement scoring and vocals added a dose of realism and humor to the stage. And it also introduced the first instances of that direct and personal conversation between the performer and the viewer (which, as previously mentioned, would recur throughout the work). KT Nelson's offering was a pas

de deux in the true sense of the term. A 'dance of two', Smith and Rein never once touched during this highly technical sequence, and yet the continuity and connection of their pairing was overwhelming. Next came a sexy, smoldering statement from Amy O'Neal – a craving pulse rippling through torsos, spines and even the wrists.

Dramatic and clever use of costuming and props informed Monique Jenkinson/Fauxnique's contribution – a duet that revealed the space between constraint and possibility, using a broad range of movement (from classical ballet all the way to pedestrianism). Holly Johnston brought a narratively-charged piece to the table. Though I'm not completely sure of the exact message at play, the extremely athletic choreography had a sense of urgency and alarm, appropriately underscored by storm-like sounds. Slow, small, contorted movements took focus in Shinichi and Dana Iova-Koga's duet – fingers reacting to the air, toes articulating one by one. While this style of movement isn't my personal favorite, the contrast between it and the previous excerpt certainly made for an interesting visual. Tahni Holt's work was all about struggle with Smith and Rein engaged in a wrestling match, fighting for control and power. Kate Wallich took on form and structure with circuits, repetitive patterns, directional changes and unpredictable lifts. And the turning/spinning segment center stage was a highlight of the entire evening, reminiscent of a record player.

“stunning collage of physicality, combined into a single evening-length work”

David Roussève crafted a unison movement phrase for Smith and Rein, one that would morph and evolve over its duration. With decision-making and text prompts, the phrase was repeated multiple times with higher intensity and at faster speed. What started as lyrical quickly became a swirling tornado of energy and emotion. Clarity and intention ran steadily through casebolt and Smith's choreography. This was apparent not only in the specificity of each motion's beginning and ending point, but also in the journey from one place to another. Ann Carlson provided the most character-driven chapter of Double Exposure. Smith and Rein seemed to be portraying different stages of life – as infants, children, adolescents and adults. A late eighties prom vibe emerged for the final duet, by Amy Seiwert. With such a recognizable scene also come assumptions of what movement might unfold. Seiwert challenged that notion by creating a very contemporary duet in this nostalgic place. There was an egalitarianism surrounding the container, and a delightful unexpectedness in the experience.

Any discussion of RAWdance's Double Exposure cannot conclude without mentioning Smith and Rein's radiant performance. The pair moved through thirteen varied duets with such grace, confidence, rigor and strength – all in, all the time. Phenomenal dancers; gifted communicators; accomplished artists. Double Exposure is a definitive tour de force.

RAWdance's 'Mine' Perfects the Art of Slippery Dancing

by John Wilkins

KQED Arts, December 2015

The shock of RAWdance's Mine is that it demands so much of us. In less than an hour, choreographers Wendy Rein and Ryan T. Smith plunge us into a world of military precision punctuated by dancing so slippery in meaning that it feels like a new vocabulary. As I was watching — and I rarely do this — I started taking notes because there was something about the choreography that made me want to put words to the unusually striking moves. I found myself naming the dozen or so sections of the piece to try to catch the spirit of these strange new dances: “Bird-caging,” “The Toe Touch Slip,” “Wall Slam Jam,” “Wide Mouth Screaming,” “Unexpected Rope Work,” “Chariot Bitch,” and my favorite, “The Upset Shake.” You won't see these in the clubs anytime soon.

Mine begins with five dancers walking on stage—one by one over about 10 minutes—and standing in a line. They each enter so quietly and assuredly that it seems they appear out of nowhere. What at first appears to be a series of warm-ups quickly turns sinister, as you realize this is a group that will never be whole or truly function. A dancer holds another's leg, and then that leg slips away. It's a simple gesture, but it feels wrong — not to the piece, but to way we normally perceive the world. That leg shouldn't shoot away; that connection should stay. One fascinating aspect of Mine is how well the dancers move together, and yet convey a sense of alienation from each other that feels final and absolute.

“It's as if the central metaphor, “mine,” signaling both ownership and burrowing underground, is gradually exploding in front of you.”

There's no story to Mine and yet it has a tremendous amount of narrative momentum. It's as if the central metaphor, “mine,” signaling both ownership and

burrowing underground, is gradually exploding in front of you. What starts as a crack in an ordered world, something close to a military gymnasium, opens up to experiences that both terrify and entice the participants. When the dancers start to play with ropes, you aren't sure whether they'll use them for skipping or for strangling each other. And they don't seem to know either. You have to watch, and you want to watch, and you have no idea what's going to happen. It's exhilarating and exhausting. But that's the price of real art.

RAWdance's Mine runs through December 13, 2015 at the Joe Goode Annex in San Francisco. For tickets and information visit www.rawdance.org.

“You have to watch, and you want to watch, and you have no idea what's going to happen. It's exhilarating and exhausting. But that's the price of real art.”

rawdance.org

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RAWdance contact



Burn In

“There’s enough fire and algebra in *Burn In* to warrant many viewings.”

– Rachel Howard, SF Chronicle

A moody and mesmerizing trio for two men and one woman, *Burn In* offers a study in contrasts, both visual and emotional. A minimalist ring of lights forms the only set, containing the three ricocheting dancers, and accenting the work’s rich play in atmosphere, texture, and tempo. Drawing imagery from Rorschach ink blots and the stark, half-lit world of film noir, this 20-minute work features an original, contemporary score by SF-based composer Joel St. Julien that sets the dance squarely in the present.

RAWdance presented an early draft of the work at its 2012 season at ODC Theater. The full premiere was presented as part of RAWdance’s 10th anniversary season at Z Space in 2014.

“Burn In unfolded like a triad of physicality... simultaneously introducing the contradiction between perception and reality.”

– Heather Desaulniers, Critical Dance

“The premiere of... Burn In captured the couple at their best in a low-down exchange in which every shift of weight, every daring lift, every displaced limb seemed both carefully wrought and another chapter in an ongoing relationship. The pair suggests a narrative every time they move together, and the last section, focusing on Rein’s eloquent back, is a theatrical stunner.”

– Allan Ulrich, SF Chronicle



'Turing's Apple' RAWdance review: a deeply satisfying bite

by Rachel Howard
SF Chronicle, July 27, 2014

Wendy Rein and Ryan T. Smith, co-directors of RAWdance, seem to understand what Jorge Luis Borges meant when he said, "Art is fire plus algebra." In all their work, feeling takes shape via intelligent patterning. And in their company's 10th anniversary at Z Space this past weekend, obsession with patterning was not just their working method, but also their subject matter, in the impressive and often searing *Turing's Apple*.

Alan Turing, the British cryptologist who anticipated the modern computer with his hypothetical Turing Machine, and who broke the Nazis' coded messages during World War II, was tried for homosexuality in 1952 and condemned to chemical castration. He allegedly killed himself by eating a poisoned apple. In RAWdance's collaboration with composer Richard Einhorn (known for "Voices of Light"), a red apple is held between the mouths of Smith and Chad Dawson, in one of the most tender, sexy and finely textured gay duets I have yet seen.

The many apple mythologies overlaid do not always clearly connect in the emotional trajectory of Turing as played by Smith. Are those the three fates holding three apples in the beginning? Does the witch from "Snow White" (besides reflecting Turing's documented fascination with the Disney movie) represent the evil wishes of a destructive societal code?

But the biographical investigation has brought forth a strikingly unified effort in Einhorn's driving score, with its three entwining voices of violin, piano and bass, and Sean Riley's ingenious set design, in which rows of apples seem to stretch toward a vanishing point. A four-woman ensemble, costumed in Mary Domenico's lightly period-suggestive dresses, seems to portray Turing's life of the mind, often dancing in a clockwork three-part canon. At the end, they pelt the equation-filled chalkboard with apples - suggesting the chaos that Turing's passions inflict on his carefully ordered inner life?

Perhaps the success of *Turing's Apple* holds lessons for the two guest choreographers on this program. Both Project B. and Gretchen Garnett and Dancers featured technically strong, committed dancers. But the blandness of the musical selections rendered the works, a swirling ensemble piece and an intimate trio, ultimately forgettable.

"...a red apple is held between the mouths of Smith and Chad Dawson, in one of the most tender, sexy and finely textured gay duets I have yet seen..."

Not so for RAWdance's second premiere, *Burn In*, reworked from 2012 with a new commissioned score by Joel St. Julien. A gripping slow-motion duet between Smith and Rein led to noir-tinged chases (replete with deconstructed trench-coat costumes and street-like lighting) as sensuous Victor Talledos joined the drama. A leap-frogging line of undulating arms and splayed legs evoked the shifting splatters of Rorschach inkblots, reprised with mounting intensity as Rein popped, supine, from the floor, and then from Smith's arms.

There's enough fire and algebra in *Burn In* to warrant many viewings. Fortunately, RAWdance will perform it again at both Bay Area Now 7 and the Yerba Buena Gardens Festival over the coming months.

To have and to hold

RAWdance digs deep with intricate, excellently performed 'Mine'

by Rita Felciano

San Francisco Bay Guardian, December 10, 2013

RAWdance packed enough movement material into its new *Mine* to tempt lesser choreographers to dilute it into a much longer work than this quintet's 55 minutes. But that's not who Wendy Rein and Ryan T. Smith are. Here joined by Kerry Demme, Aaron Perlstein, and Laura Sharp, the duo created choreography pared down to its essence where every head turn, every lurch, every stabbing leg counts. The work has nothing to do with excavating minerals; it has everything to do with possession — what we have or want control over, be it property, physical space, or other people.

Pre-performance images suggested a bunch of people tied up in hanging ropes. Thankfully, none of that materialized. Instead of ropes — they did enter as one of very few props — scenic designer Sean Riley used strands of string for what looked like a three dimensional map in which multiple roads coalesced into a single point. They reminded me a little of those air routes maps you look at in in-flight magazines when you have run out of other things to do. Hanging from the Joe Goode Annex's high ceiling, Riley's rope sculpture was airy and light, yet thanks to the weights attached had a downward pull.

Mine turned out to be an intricately structured, excellently performed essay on some of our less noble instincts. Slowly, it began to appear that the idea of "mine" dehumanizes us instead of enriching us. The work started on a pure dance level with images gradually emerging to become more explicit, until a final one was so literal that I wasn't sure whether it had not gone over the top.

As the audience walked in, Perlstein found a spot for himself. Ever so slowly the other dancers joined him in a pedestrian lineup that quickly scattered into similar but individual expressions. But common moves began to look less innocent as people moved into each other's space. Did Sharp stumble over a prone Perlstein or did she kick him because he was in her way?

A push-up position for two became one for four until the dancers waddled along like some multi-limbed creature. Sinewy and so tightly focused on each other that they looked like one evolving organism, Rein and Smith in a duet looked both delicate and unbreakable. Yet they also had the shifting wariness of boxers about them.

Anxiousness and indifference seeped into *Mine* like dripping fog. At one point the dancers pounced to the floor and recovered, opening their arms and looking upward as if expecting some relief. At another, like soldiers going to battle, they walked bent over but fiercely yanked their knees to their chests as if to protect them. Holding flashlights in the dark, the men impassively observed the women writhing in some kind of agony. Then it was their turn to watch Perlstein's simple touch trying to calm a fiercely shaking Smith; it elicited rage. This was one of the few spots in *Mine* when you could sense a gesture emanating from personal motivation. Perlstein, previously, had shaped a piece of rope into a circle around Smith's solo. I couldn't decide whether he was trying to expand or limit a space for the dance.

When three wire baskets descended from the ceiling to encase dancers' heads, I thought of those dreadful headgears that slaves were forced to wear. Here they turned the dancers into automatons, who on each quarter turn executed identical patterns of small steps. Joel St. Julien's score — excellent throughout — began to sound as if coming from below water.

"Mine turned out to be an intricately structured, excellently performed essay on some of our less noble instincts."

In *Mine*'s fiercest section, dancers hurled themselves against the theater's wall, where they stayed as if glued until an intruder yanked or scraped them off, forcing him or herself into the space. It was brutal because it looked so impersonal; it seemed just something that was. Sort of like Lord of the Flies for grown-ups.

But perhaps my favorite moment was also one of its simplest. [Demme] danced a limb-slashing solo center space. Her colleagues watched from the corner of the square. Slowly, almost ceremoniously they moved in, shrinking [Demme]'s space with every step they took. You could just feel the air constricting around her.

So what about that last image? It did involve a rope; it also reminded me of a Roman chariot.