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# Dublin Dance Festival 2015 – Douglas delights Dublin

May 23, 2015

9:25 PM MST



Douglas by Robbie Synge  
Sara Teresa

## Douglas by Robbie Synge

Rating: ★★★★★

As Dublin danced in celebration, now the right to marriage equality is enshrined in the Irish Constitution, dancing of another kind was to be found in the [Samuel Beckett Theatre](#) where Scottish based performer, Robbie Synge, performed his excellent one man show, *Douglas*. Utilising a range of everyday objects, Synge explores and develops relationships with objects based around simple, physical tasks and a conversation of sorts emerges. Simple, but not easy. In *Douglas*, Synge's kinaesthetic choreography reveals the private made public as we are invited to watch the experimental artist's process at work.

In *Douglas*, Synge's objects of choice are four chairs, two weights, a long rope, a roll of black linoleum, one golf ball and a spotlight. Balance is sought between object and performer with both precariously poised just before the tipping point. Sometimes one or the other topples and a domino effect ensues momentarily. Synge regroups, re-examines the relationship and begins

again. Initially alternating between spotlight and stage lights, suggesting the artist at work and at performance, the distinction blurs into a concentrated inter-connectedness between artist and object, performance and experimentation. Even in moments of apparent, frenetic abandon, seen as Synge wildly swings a chair attached to him by rope, there's always a kind of meditative stillness at work. In the penultimate sequence objects and performer seem to merge, as if tangled together by some gravitational force, until Synge, freeing himself, reasserts control before ending with a simple, yet delightfully clever, fade to black.

While not quite slapstick, Synge does bring a playfulness and precision to *Douglas* reminiscent, in places, of silent era comedians like Lloyd, Chaplin and Keaton. This tendency dominates towards the end along with the sense of watching a circus clown routine at times. In *Douglas* there is undoubtedly a degree of what will happen will happen, but this is coupled with the most precise, choreographic focus where little is left to chance. If the point of art is, in part, to make the familiar unfamiliar in order to see it afresh, then *Douglas* succeeds admirably, re-presenting artist, objects, and even [dance](#) itself, in a humorous, engaging and physically demanding performance.

*Douglas* ran at The Samuel Beckett Theatre as part of the [Dublin Dance Festival 2015](#)

For more information go to:

<http://www.dublindancefestival.ie/>



**Chris O'Rourke**

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