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MOVING REFLECTIONS

More Than Fish Dives: The Art of Partnering Lauren Warnecke's Post-Reflection on 2013 Closing Moving Dialogs at Logan Center for the Arts

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Closing out this season's [Moving Dialogs post-reflections](#), dance writer [Lauren Warnecke](#) offers thoughts on [The Art of Partnering at Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts](#) on Monday, November 18, featuring: national artist & Bay area's [Joe Goode](#) alongside [Ben Wardell & Michel Rodriguez](#), [Julia Rhoads](#), [Rosy Simas with French composer François Richomme & Canadian First Nations dancer Daina Ashbee](#); with surprise guests [DanceWorks Chicago's Angela Dice Nguyen & Liv Schaffer](#) opening the event with an excerpt from [LA-based Casebolt & Smith](#) performance work "[Having Words](#)".

More Than Fish Dives

"Partnering is mostly about ~~creating~~ sharing a safe place to be intimate and vulnerable."

~ [Joe Goode](#), amended by choreographer [Margi Cole](#)

The cold draft in the penthouse of the Logan Center was made up for by the stunning view of a side of the city that I don't often, if ever, visit. In essence, that's what Moving Dialogs is all about. Not that curator & moderator [Baraka de Soleil](#) is anything like [Jean Luc Picard](#), but he has a way of getting you to go (paraphrasing) where you've never gone before. So it was for The Art of Partnering. Many of us were strangers when the evening began, but by the end we recognized that this talk/discussion/performance was a partnership too. It was that safe, vulnerable place that [Joe Goode](#) referred to early on in the evening.

It all started out with the potential to be really awkward – kind of like that [scrawny boy at my dance studio](#). [Baraka](#) asked me to change chairs, guarding some secret that, apparently, would be impacted by my sitting in the chair I had chosen for myself. [DanceWorks Chicago's artistic director Julie Nakagawa](#) introduced herself and asked me to move my backpack for reasons that would reveal themselves. [Vershawn Sanders Ward](#) arrived with twenty or so young [Red Clay](#) dancers in tow, and I'll be honest, I thought this whole thing was going to be really unwieldy.

The big surprise was a smart and sassy handshake dance duo called [Having Words](#) ([Casebolt & Smith's work](#) freshly performed by [DanceWorks Chicago members Angela Dice Nguyen & Liv Schaffer](#)). Used as an ice breaker, the tension eased and sharing the room together seemed possible. In fact, I'm thinking that this dance should be performed at every college freshman orientation (i.e. the awkwardest thing ever). As we navigated a conversation with [Joe](#) I was surprised at how compatible we would become as observers. Cushioned between all those, "and I was like... and everybody was like... you know, like"s were some pretty astute observations of what was happening.

I'm tempted to just say "you had to be there," and leave it at that. Additional contributions from [Ben Wardell & Michel Rodriguez](#) of [The Nexus Project](#), [Rosy Simas](#) with collaborators [François Richomme](#) and [Daina Ashbee](#) and [Lucky Plush's Julia Rhoads](#) touched on a variety of dimensions related to the concept of a partner. Themes of trust, collaboration, and volatility repeatedly surfaced as we navigated a world that I once thought was foreign. I actually think I know more about partnering than I thought I did. As [Ben](#) twirled me around in my promised piggy back ride it occurred to me that partnering is much, much more than fish dives. Writing is a solitary pursuit, but couldn't exist without you, the readers. In a sense, each word is a tiny exchange of trust akin to any act of dancerly partnering. In this space, I find I'm more able to make myself vulnerable and share my weight with you, so to speak. So I guess you are my partner, and I'm yours. Thanks for that.

It's bittersweet to have participated in the final Moving Dialogs of the season. It feels kind of like a feast has been placed on my table and taken away after only a few delicious bites. Series such as this are exactly the sort of thing that confront the collective groan of the dance community to find a way to engage audiences. What might have been a small, elitist conversation between scholars and dancemakers was a really, like, supercool experience for a group of teenagers who aren't apt to forget their evening at the Logan Center. Maybe [Baraka](#) is like [Jean Luc Picard](#), after all.

–Lauren Warnecke