



SKINs

The Annex Theater

March 3 - 13, 2005

Thursday – Saturday 7:30 pm

Sunday - 2:30 and 7:30 pm

Box office [212.475.7710](tel:212.475.7710)

Inspired by the landscape of the Southwest, by the desert and by the Sea of Cortez, *Skins* is a conceptual performance piece which explores the sensual and intellectual dimensions of poetry and visual art—stretching boundaries of perception—by combining them with the terrains of stage, music, movement and voice.

Skins is a theatre of visual/aural/kinesthetic images in that it balances elements of visual arts, dance/movement, acting/voice, and music (live and recorded). In so doing it explores multiple levels of meanings within the text in multiple ways. As such, the performance of *Skins* becomes, for the spectator, an experience inciting multiple levels of sensory experience.

Unlike traditional theatre, *Skins* has no specific character roles, or linear plot developments. It is not based on interpersonal conflict, but is rather about creating moods, memories, and ideas. Adapted into performance from a collection of poetry, *Skins* ties together common themes and motifs about body perceptions and human relationships with the earth. The poetry is about the recognition of collective social images: images of the self and the location of imposed ideas. One of these themes concerns the shaping, constraining, and dressing of our “selves” by cultural, social and developmental patterns. Another theme considers differences between genuine desires and collective expectations. The driving force behind *Skins* is not simply a visualization of the poet/artist’s work, but rather a dramatization of the intent. The result of this imagistic exploration is a performance work that pushes the boundaries of traditional theatrical representation, the kind of work that is not often produced in small communities, like Durango, Colorado, where the *Skins* performance work was created.

The interdisciplinary and cross-cultural aspects of *Skins* compels the involvement of performers/voices from multiple cultures. Native American voices from the Southwest Colorado Ute, Navajo and Hopi communities combined with performers/voices from other international communities strengthens the idea of the “self” as a universal power and expectation as a universal concern.

The body/earth images in *Skins* are profound. The directorial vision of *Skins* involves utilizing the metaphors of body as landscape and landscape as body to explore ideas of the self and society. Juxtaposed with metaphors of the earth the recurring mother alleviates the constraints of material possession and releases a true inner person. The individuals find a way to transformation out of the boundaries of societal image. They find a way out of their *Skins*.

Elizabeth Ingraham is a sculptor and poet whose work gives form and voice to lived experience. The *Skins* project comes from her poetry, which in turn both inspired and continues to inform a series of life-size, fully dimensional female “skins” sculptures that will be on display in the Annex lobby during the run of *Skins*. Her work has been described as “startling, funny and unsettling, fueled by a subversive imagination and keen intelligence” In 2003, she was the first recipient of the prestigious Thatcher Hoffman Smith Award for Creativity. This biennial prize recognizes “a visionary creative work in progress which demonstrates the power of original thought and expression to enrich the world.” In 2002, she received the Nebraska Arts Council’s Distinguished Achievement Fellowship in Sculpture, its highest honor. Elizabeth is an Associate Professor of Art & Art History at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. Prior to her training in sculpture, she was an activist lawyer for Native American groups in Alaska and a participant in the radical social change resulting from the federal settlement of their aboriginal land claims.



Kathryn Moller (adaptor/director/choreographer) is influenced by multi-disciplinary studies and collaborative possibilities among art, music, dance and theatre. Additionally, non-western performance forms greatly inform her work and teaching. She is Professor of Theatre, Dance, and Women's Studies at Fort Lewis College (www.fortlewis.edu) in Durango, Colorado, and has been involved in dance, theatre, music, and performance art projects since 1974. In May 2004, Kathryn directed the collaborative performance art piece *Through The Fire*, at the Lincoln Correctional Facility in Lincoln, Illinois, for the female inmates. Some of her honors include Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival Association awards for Best Direction, Best in Puppetry and Best Choreography for the 2002 production of *The Air Inside the Rose*; The National Opera Conference highest honors for her Noh adaptation of *At The Hawk's Well* by W.B. Yeats; American College Dance Festival awards for choreography.

The original adaptation of *Skins* "touches feelings far below the surface—reaching matters of the heart and psyche, exploring socialization, oppression and individuation." (Stephanie Speer, Durango Herald). While more recently the press said that *Skins* was "a hybrid theater piece that stands at the intersection of body art, identity politics and 20th century feminism." (Judith Reynolds, Durango Herald).

Musical composer Yukio Tsuji originally from Tokyo, has been performing on stage since he was eight years old. As a composer and a performer his music has been heard around the world in theaters, films and dance companies. He has been the principle composer for Kei Takei's Moving Earth dance company since 1986, and he won three grants from "Meet the Composers".

Yukio composed and performed the title music of the movie *Year of the Dragon* and co-arranged and performed for the Broadway production *M. Butterfly*. He can be heard on Ryuichi Sakamoto's CD *Neo Gio*, just one of his many U.S. and international recordings. He has performed for many jazz festivals around the world with Jason Hwang's "Far Eastside Band" including Lincoln Center's JVC Kool Jazz Festival. In 2001, Yukio co-arranged and performed for the world premier of *Tantalus* directed by Sir Peter Hall and produced by Royal Shakespeare Company and Denver Center. He also composed and performed in Al Pacino's production *Salome* and *Oedipus* directed by Estelle Parsons.

Basically *Skins* is about power. It is about finding a real power within ourselves, our lives past and future, and within the flesh of our own bodies.

The woman with the silver hair
is sweeping sand toward the sea
smoothing the edges of the desert
tending it She stops her sweeping
She leads me to a wall of rock
I press my body against the rock
I am so dry the rock feels moist
The rock is absorbent
My body draws water from the rock
My body leaves an imprint
my breasts my hands my mouth
I taste the rock the rock breathes
Where my mouth is
the stone is red

Your tongue is the key, she says.

