

Virgin Territory review at the Place, London – ‘bold and honest dance theatre’

The Stage, 3 November 2016, Rachel Elderkin

It's concerning that, in a world where sexualised images are part of our culture, adults have little control over what their children see. It's an issue Vincent Dance Theatre explores in its new work *Virgin Territory* and director Charlotte Vincent does not shy away from this uncomfortable reality.

An obsession with image runs through the work, particularly the idea of young girls striving to attain an idealised, overtly sexual version of womanhood. The performers, both children and adult, parade around a rectangle of green plastic grass, balloons strategically placed to evoke curvaceous female forms and bulky, muscular male shapes. As with much of the piece, the humour of these images hides something the darker. This is particularly true of the young girls, as they pose and preen.

Vincent's determination to treat adults and children alike is meant to make its audience uncomfortable, yet it also offers a perspective that couldn't be achieved with adult performers alone. As one young girl poses with her phone, taking selfies, a man whispers words that present a disquieting, very adult perception of the information she is sharing.

Virgin Territory is a work of a candid, uncompromising nature but it is the reality of the scenarios Vincent addresses that makes them so powerful. Her strong cast perform with an engaging honesty – there is an openness between the adults and young people that should be more prevalent in society.