

Modern man moves

by Laura Navndrup Black

Unable to connect or move on, modern man is locked in a perpetual orbit of banalities. Edhem Jesenković presents a timely portrayal of the adult male in 'MEN – Mental Experiment of Narrow Minded Men.'

A landscape of stereotypy

They can hold their breath for a long time, these four men. Longer than me. I know, because I tried to keep up as I watched the video of their bearded faces being dunked under water, one after the other. A self-inflicted endurance test with no discernible aim. Perhaps they want to impress each other. Perhaps they want to impress me. Perhaps they want to survive. Perhaps they want to feel alive.

Inside the theatre we meet him in person. There he is, the white male, the norm, struggling to find his identity in a deep landscape of stereotypy. DJ on stage, stadium lights, smoky nightclub vibe. Four big boxes that line up to become a giant dream of a kitchen island, any man's dream of steel lined domestic dominance. Modern man chases himself around this kitchen island wearing a uniform of relaxed casual in urban grey.

Just a tad desperate

Man positions himself. He seeks attention, but doesn't know what to do with it. "Acting is a survival mechanism" says the voice in a deep thick American accent, accompanying the never-ending pulsating soundtrack. Man hits the floor with his fists. He opens his arms to the side. Here I am, look at me. He slaps himself, but not too hard. He is desperate, but not enough to take action.

We get a peak into a private moment. There he is. Man. In his big white Y-fronts with his black cotton-rich ankle socks on, dreaming of companionship behind his fashionable moustache. He briefly flirts with his feminine side, but the soft, articulated hands and arms soon give way to the pull of the strong, grounded legs, moving swiftly underneath, pulling him in this direction and that and to and from the floor. These men can move. They seduce us with their swift, nimble bodies, their strength, their trickery. Modern man is beautiful and able-bodied.

Yet modern man looks for direction, for something to hold on to. And then, he finds a partner, a perfect copy of himself. We hear the couples breathe as they embrace and dance together, affectionate, playful couples moving around in a circle, disappearing, then reappearing, supporting the weight of each others bodies, taking turns leading each other.

Modern man, you are us

Man moves the boxes around, re-arranges and finds new uses for them. He manipulates them, exposes their transparent side. They light up. He tries to hide behind them, between them, underneath them. But we see you. Modern man, you cannot hide, you are the face of the world, we flew the image of you into space in 1972 to greet the extraterrestrials, third choice following the monkey and that dog that never made it back. You are supposed to represent us all, and here you are, moving boxes, and moving your body around, repeating yourself again and again in ever new constellations.

One thing leads to another. Everything is open-ended, there is no conclusion. What we are left with is a sense of sameness. Of wanting to go somewhere, of really trying, but never really ever arriving. If this is status quo for modern man, then let's hope he finds a way out of this conundrum.

<i>Koreografi:</i>	<i>Edhem Jesenković</i>
<i>Sted:</i>	<i>Dansehallerne (forpremiere)</i>
<i>Dansere:</i>	<i>Asher Lev, Alexander Bourdat, Raphaël Eder-Kastling & Thomas Holm Radil</i>
<i>Musik:</i>	<i>Surdej Music Production (Håvard Pedersen & Edhem Jesenković)</i>
<i>Live musik:</i>	<i>Håvard Pedersen/Edhem Jesenković</i>
<i>Scenografi:</i>	<i>Scenetek (Martin Sidelmann & Søren Jensen)</i>