

One privilege I have is that people often invite me to art stuff and occasionally I am able to attend. Yesterday at DanceXchange a duo called [Timber and Battery](#) shared a work they have in progress called *This*. Avid followers of this blog will know that I [have reservations](#) about the 'WiP' concept but this was fun and very much resembled a finished performance.

*This* is currently a 30-40 minutes long structured improvisation in which two performers explore the fabric and function of two fold-away tables. A time-lapse video (posted above) gives you some sense of what happens but also completely misrepresents the piece.

As audience members we are free to explore, to watch from a distance or come close and inspect how the mass produced objects have gained individuality through use. The performers help us study each table's detail, the rivets, the hinges, the caps, coated metal and polymer. We have demonstrated to us each table's geometry, its balance points, movements, squeaks and judders. We watch with concern as the material limits of each table are tested in ways the designers and manufacturers can never have imagined them being tested.

This stripped-down, performance style with its limited vocabulary of isolated words "this", "that", "here" is direct and engaging, bringing to mind the playful work of one of my performance heroes [Gary Stevens](#). With the occasional lull I enjoyed *This* very much.

Afterwards there was a bit of a chat with the artist for which four of us audience stayed to contribute our observations. If *This* comes near you I'd urge you to see it and tell me what you think.

- James Yarker, Stan's Café Theatre, April 2018. First posted @ <http://www.stanscafe.co.uk/?p=4476>