

## Off-Leash Area digs into sight, sightlessness, and art

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Off-Leash Area's *Now Eye See You, Now Eye Don't* marries two ambitions into an uneasy whole. On the one side, there is a send up of the art world, where creators interact with a figurative aviary of dealers and buyers to make a living. On the other is the personal story of the uninsured painter losing his sight.

The two don't always sit together perfectly, but the show is entrancing from the first moments until the end, as the painter, a veritable "flock" of collectors, a team of doctors, and tap dancing bill collectors dance through the main character's plight.

Co-director Paul Herwig stars as the Painter, using his own experiences with vision loss as a springboard. His everyday concerns--creation, making a living--are turned aside when he needs emergency eye surgery. For the uninsured creator, this leads to a mountain of bills, an endless parade of medications, and the disruption of his work.

Though primarily a dance/movement piece, *Now Eye See You, Now Eye Don't* is linked together through a probing and incisive script by Dominic Orlando, who digs not only into the plight of the patient, but has great fun with the art world. Each collector spouts the same phrase to analyze the piece, no matter what is in front of them.

And they really are a flock. Not only is that the description the program, but they move across the stage in a decidedly avian way, eventually only squawking and screeching as they examine the artwork around them. In the other world, the doctors move with some grace, manipulating giant, very scary looking medical devices as they work on a giant model of an eye. It's hard not to wince when the scalpels and other sharp edges come into play.

Rounding out the cast are the top dancers, wearing smart business suits and fake smiles. Called "The Cost of Healthcare," the two are a constant presence during the surgeries, always reminding you that the painter may be getting treatment, but there's a past-due statement waiting for him at home.

*Now Eye See You, Now Eye Don't* runs through May at the Ritz Theatre.