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The Stage

Camille review at Summerhall, Edinburgh – ‘elegant portrait of an artist’s anguish’

Kamila Klamut in Camille at Summerhall,

Edinburgh



by [Stewart Pringle](#) - Aug 9, 2016

Camille Claudel was an artist and sculptor who spent 10 years of her life as the partner of Auguste Rodin, refused the patriarchal conventions of her contemporary France and subsequently spent her final three decades in an asylum.

Polish performer Kamila Klamut has created a suitably dark and tortured tribute to those final years, a work of shadows and anguish, a lament for the domination of women’s bodies and the excision of the unusual, the deviant and the revolutionary.

Claudel describes her own "kidnapping" – facilitated by her brother Paul, who resented his sister's bohemian ways – reflecting on her life before the hospital and raging at her current situation. It's a wild, exhilarating performance from Klamut, accompanied with subtle, shifting live music from multi-instrumentalist Ewa Pasikowska.

It's a work that suffers more than most from the sound-bleed that afflicts Edinburgh venues, because it has been created in such subtle, shifting tones. It's a painterly production, built from strong contrasts of light and shadow, noise and silence.

As it builds to its violent conclusion, period detail is smashed away in an iconoclasm of death metal. It's a song of waste. A lament for wasted, stolen years.

Verdict

Dark and elegant portrait of an artist trapped in a patriarchal nightmare

