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CYLCH SGWENNWYR WRITERS CIRCLE

Ali A Alizad responding to
Reciprocal Gestures - Florence Peake: Performance
13 June 2026

Everything begins in silence. The performers are seated among the audience members, then they rise and move onto the large theater stage. All of them are dressed in dark, almost sleeveless clothing—women and men of different ages. The performance begins with the murmured repetition of a few words, followed by silence and darkness.

Part One: Ephemeral Beauty

The bodies, suspended in space and time, are constantly separating and coming together. They repeatedly fold into one another and then break apart again. With each blackout, the bodies occupy a new configuration of space, intertwining through hands, legs, and the entirety of their physical forms. The images that emerge evoke the instability of a kind of natural beauty—one that is intensely fragile and transient. It is as if this beauty is not meant to endure.

Part Two: slow dance

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The bodies are seated on chairs, slowly lowering themselves downward and then rising back up again. This section, accompanied by music, is less compelling to me than the first. Overall, I am not sure whether this was merely my personal reaction or whether other audience members felt the same way: nothing in these images seemed to change in the literal sense of the word. Yet that was precisely what I had personally expected—a sense of transformation or development.

Ali A Alizad

Ali is an Iranian multidisciplinary theatre director, lecturer, and researcher with years of experience in performance practice, acting training, and politically engaged theatre. Born in Iran, he directed acclaimed productions of works by Beckett, Pinter, Genet, and Lorca (2007–2022). Following political repression in Iran, he relocated to Wales in 2023, where he has been a CARA (Council for At-Risk Academics) Research Fellow at the University of South Wales, Cardiff (2023–2025), and continues to direct and facilitate theatre with marginalised communities and students. He is currently a PhD by Portfolio candidate at USW, with research focused on psycho-physical acting, Samuel Beckett, and theatre practice.