

**A Reflection on Begin, Again**  
**by Brooke Rucker**

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I start off this reflection using the words of SMUSH Gallery Curatorial Fellow, Sarah Rose:

*“Sometimes success looks simply like seeing something through from beginning to end. Artistically, that has felt monumental for me over the past two years.”*

There’s no need for me to give an overview of these past two years living in an ongoing pandemic because the reality of it, and the accumulating memories from it, live in our bodies. And we each move forward, whether guided by internal or external rhythms. Many times it’s both. We choose the rhythm we follow.

Choice was a guiding factor in Sarah Rose’s dance performance, *Begin, again*. A rarity in a dance field highly shaped by Western European culture. Performances often require consent.

**The Audience Member Agreement**

I consent to be quiet.

I consent to be still.

I consent to do the things you ask of me.

I consent to be this way for the duration of the time.

*“Sometimes success looks simply like seeing...”*, which Rose allowed the viewers to do by giving us back our autonomy. And yes, giving us back our humanity by casting aside dated manners. Our seeing of the work was in the hands of us viewers. That’s where the success lay.

The witnessing was staged in three separate locations - one residential, one commercial, and one public. To get to each location required a walk through a neighborhood marked by gentrification. I passed a coffee shop, I passed homes, I passed strangers. Each place, each person passed was an addition to the experience. A reminder that the art I was here to see was not - is not - disconnected from the environment.

There was a cast of six paired off, two in each location, moving through looping material and moments of rest. The movement invoked a meditative quality, tapping into the ancient practice of repetition as a means for channeling energy. Lucinda Childs and Steve Reich are two minimalist artists that the dancer’s movement called to my mind. The reminder of how monumental simplicity can be.

For Rose, the act of beginning again was a worthy challenge. Something to be respected and given the same amount of weight as any other challenge we might face. I left the performance with a sense of ease.

I matter.

I have a right through my existence to show up to art and life, no outside contract needed.

Being is enough.

**Performance Information**

Title: *Begin, again*

Curator/Choreographer: Sarah Rose

Dancers/Collaborators: Taylor Ballard, Ciara Byrne, Janet Cesarotti, Helen Greider,  
Kimberly Sausman

Date Run: March 26th and 27th, 2022

Location: SMUSH Gallery, 340 Summit Ave, Jersey City, NJ

*Presented as part of the SMUSH Gallery Curatorial Fellowship in Dance*