

## It's written on their bodies

### DANCE REVIEW

### NERVE 9

De Quincey Co, Arts House at North Melbourne Town Hall, until Friday. Running time: 50 minutes  
**Chloe Smethurst** Reviewer

NERVE 9 is a collaboration between a group of artists, most of whom are women. They include choreographer and performer Tess de Quincey, poet Amanda Stewart, new-media and sound artist Debra Petrovitch and digital-media artist Francesca da Rimini.

Mysterious and dark, with strong feminine undercurrents, the work references feminist philosopher Julia Kristeva's writing on the body and language. Language surrounds the solo performer, in projected text, spoken words and amplified voices.

At times, de Quincey appears bullied by it, pushed by the syllables; at others, she simply co-exists with the text, obscured by illuminated characters.

Contrasting with the constructed communications, de Quincey uses her body as a more primal communication tool, with her own language of hand signals, facial expressions and bodily tension.

The messages are mostly indecipherable, yet, by the climax, the work goes beyond the realm of the literal into the secret centre of being. Ultimately, Nerve 9 transcends language to present a vision of the subconscious, pre-language experiences of women.

De Quincey is an intense performer and her embodiment of the work is fierce. The power of her physicality is such that she can echo the effect of an expansive sound composition with only the slightest movement in her wrist and elbow.

Her grotesque facial expressions are as carefully designed as the minute movements of her hands and feet.

The diverse parts of the work are seamlessly integrated. It's like a digital tapestry.

A maturity is evident in the performance and the crafting of all the elements.

Both de Quincey and Petrovitch have been awarded fellowships from the Australia Council, an indication of the standards achieved in their remarkable artistic practices.