

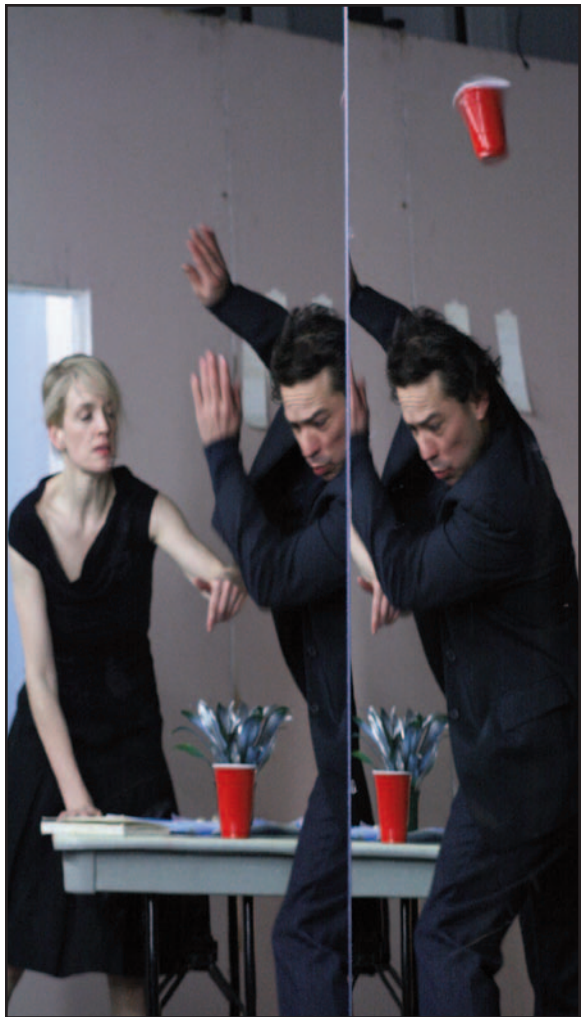
THIS PLACE IS A DESERT

conceived and directed by Jay Scheib *with performances by* **Sarita Choudhury, Caleb Hammond, Thomas Keating, * Aimee Phelan-Deconinck, * Jorge Rubio, * Eric Dean Scott, * Tanya Selvaratnam, and April Sweeney, * scenic and lighting design by **Peter Ksander** - sound and video design **Jay Scheib**, additional video design **Leah Gelpe** - costumes by **Dana Botez-Ban** - camera operator **Karl Allen** - stage managed by - assistant director **Kenneth Roraback****

"She wants to disappear into the landscape but settles for an affair. It doesn't help. She feels worse. This play is about wanting to feel worse—a motion-portrait of human loves and human emotion increasingly diminished."

This Place is a Desert, began as a studio project in collaboration with the Kretakor ensemble in Budapest. A production-prototype was made in residence at Massachusetts Institute of Technology under the sponsorship of MIT Dramashop, with generous support from the MIT Wade Fund Award, MIT Music and Theater Arts, and MIT Council for the Arts. In October of 2005 *This Place is a Desert* was given an open studio showing at MIT and previewed to much critical acclaim in the PRELUDE FESTIVAL, New York City. World Premier: March 22, 2007 ICA Boston

New York Premier: January 9, 2008, New York Public Theater, Under the Radar



From the Press Release: Inspired by the work of Italian modernist filmmaker Michelangelo Antonioni, Jay Scheib creates theater for a generation raised in the language of cinema. The audience views this portrait of human love gone increasingly wrong in fragments—through windows, reflected in mirrors, and through partially-drawn curtains. The action is projected live onto a wide screen above the stage architecture. A lone cinematographer moves through the set providing a sensually charged, live cinema study of four lovers destroying each other in an attempt to defy their impenetrable loneliness. Said Scheib, “The goal of situating the action within these partial-view rooms is, on

one hand, a practical consideration—we use cameras to see up close, to see around corners, and to mediate our experience of Reality amplifying an erotics of the partial view. With the camera we differentiate between Reality and Realistic. I am using an Italian filmmaker to understand something unique about American life. Either we are ugly people and we deserve the world that we live in, or something is wrong in us, and the world in which we live is merely symptomatic of a deeper anxiety. *This Place is a Desert* is a motion-portrait, it’s a tool for understanding Reality—and this reality, thanks to technology, is always partially seen and partially screened...”



Luckily, the American avant-garde set had a piece in the festival as well, and it was a jaw-dropping doozy. Jay Scheib’s “This Place is a Desert,” (...) The title “Under the Radar” may imply undiscovered potential. But in the case of Mr. Scheib, we are actually seeing an already major talent coming triumphantly into its own.

Helen Shaw - New York Sun

...a tale of relationships gone bad, framed by Scheib’s twisted, pop-culture savvy sense of humor.

Geoff Edgers - The Boston Globe

Taking a cue from the work of Italian director Michelangelo Antonioni, Scheib conjures a life’s worth of tragedy and comedy, and relates them in the most fascinating way possible.

The Mass Media

