Bus Ride Causes A Scene

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Luis Rodriguez, Kelle Lynch, Lindsey Bauer, Kate Seethaler, and (not visible) Leah Moriarty squeeze onto the D5.

Five modern dancers redefined strap hanging as they turned the aisle of a CT Transit bus into a stage, one that bumped along at 25 miles an hour.

The equestriechorean transformation occurred Saturday afternoon as members of the Elm City Dance Collective performed “Snap,” a satirical and athletic riff on fashion show models promenading, and stumbling, down the runway.

Only in this case, the runway was the main aisle of the D5 Grand Avenue bus leaving BJ’s Plaza at 1:02 p.m.

The collective was one of five performing groups strutting their stuff in the fifth edition of Exact Change, the Arts Council of Greater New Haven’s annual deployment of live performers on local bus routes.
Click here for a snippet of “Snap,” a 13-minute piece featuring movements from ballet positions to the battle poses of capoeira. The group created “Snap” in 2008 and adapted it for its first-ever performance on a moving platform Saturday. (Click here and here for stories of the Coco Caribe dance troupe, the Hillhouse Opera, and other groups who have performed in previous years’ editions of Exact Change.)

Showing plenty of muscle, the dancers feigned toppling off their heels as the D5 rolled along Saturday. They stomped their feet, yelped, and noisily exhaled, making up their own soundtrack as they promenaded among the riders. At first riders responded with gawking dismay. Then they got interested, and started taking pictures.

As the bus turned at Middletown and Quinnipiac Avenues, dancers Kate Seethaler and Luis Rodriguez reduced their faces by half, mimicking models trying to get skinnier right before your very eyes.

Among the spontaneous reviews of riders along the 30-minute trip performance: “This is cool.” “I’m gonna get this on Facebook right now!” “Frickin’ awesome.”
“This is cool,” said Melissa Majkowski (right). Charlie Mathis (left) vowed to join the troupe to make himself young.

“This is better than the Lakers game last night,” Sean Williams declared after he got on the bus at Grand and Blatchley and settled in.

Elm City Dance Collective’s next performance is in two weeks at the Charter Oak Cultural Center in Hartford. The dancers plan to interpret sea life with the help of the New Haven Symphony Orchestra and the Mystic Aquarium; no transfer to a bus has yet been planned.

The other groups performing on other routes during this year’s Exact Change included Verbal Slap, Sherece Sellem, Kings Band of Harmony, and the Salt and Pepper Gospel Choir.