

Donna Jackson
**Car Maintenance,
Explosives and Love**

Pleasance Two, Edinburgh

As Australian lesbian physical theatre storytellers go, Donna Jackson packs as good a theatrical punch as any, as well as packing her show full to overflowing with charm, wit and charisma. *Car Maintenance, Explosives and Love*, directed by Andrea Lemon, works over the idea that 'cars are easier to deal with than people'. Jackson employs the metaphoric symbolism of the automobile to drive a narrative of love, identity, workshop gymnastics and sensual mechanics from its angle-grinding opening (the shower of sparks just saved from the new circus cliché of Archaos) to its literally explosive climax.

Here, the car as masculine signifier is reclaimed and reworked as lesbian signifier. It becomes a personality litmus test, a class statement, a lover, a refuge, a friend. Intertwined with this principal layer is a narrative of a failing relationship, through which Jackson skilfully deconstructs the butch (lesbian) stereotype; overturning conventional representation with a beautiful vulnerability as both a character and performer. How refreshing to see a wise and wilful politics at the heart of a 'physical theatre' production, when so much of the work that is banded together under this shifty term manages to evade any kind of engagement with questions of representation or of performance (as) politics.

All in all, a delightful show, which effortlessly and intelligently combines gymnastics and text, storytelling and mechanics, in a funny, tender and touching combination presented by a charismatic and talented performer.

David Harradine