


GOINGS ON

# SOUTH AFRICA MIRRORS THE AMERICAN WEST IN “DARK NOON”

*Also: Cynthia Erivo sings Sondheim, “The Bikeriders” reviewed, the still-lives of Laura Letinsky, and more.*

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## Helen Shaw

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**Walking to St. Ann's Warehouse**—a pretty brick industrial warehouse conversion in the Dumbo neighborhood—can show you Brooklyn at its most romantic: first, you'll see sunshine slanting onto cobblestone streets, then Brooklyn Bridge Park's soft paths, then the East River, with Lower Manhattan shimmering beyond. Inside the theatre, though, you'll find the country at her blood-soaked worst. A shock of the awful is the key to the horror-movie-style excitement of **“Dark Noon,”** a brutally clownish retelling of European settlers' push into the American West which St. Ann's artistic director, Susan Feldman, first saw at the Edinburgh Fringe. A troupe of seven South African actors, many wearing slapped-on whiteface and yellow mop wigs, exhort the audience



"leaning over blue," 2023. Photograph by Laura Letinsky / Courtesy Yancey Richardson

The Chicago-based photographer **Laura Letinsky** continues a career-spanning investigation of the tabletop still-life, a genre as old as photography itself (and centuries older in painting) but long out of fashion. No matter. Letinsky nods to its conventions—allegorical domesticity, elegant disarray—by undermining them. Working mostly in la Maison Dora Maar in the South of France, she lets

the light of Provence bleach her prints to abstraction. What remains are after-dinner jumbles of dirty plates, crumpled napkins, and wilted flowers, with the tabletops teetering and all but dissolved in a white-on-white aura that never strains to be painterly. The party's over, yet Letinsky sees not chaos but promise—and a genuine sense of renewal among the ruins.—Vince Aletti (*Yancey Richardson; through July 3.*)

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## Dance

Under the leadership of Michael Novak, the **Paul Taylor Dance Company** is trying new things, including shows at the intimate Joyce. Two alternating programs create wildly contradictory impressions of Taylor. On one end lies the cheerful classicism of "Airs," set to Handel, and on the other the cynicism and savagery of "Big Bertha," a theatrical miniature in which a seemingly happy family turns out to be rotten at the core. But other facets of the dancemaker also reveal themselves, in the avant-garde irresolution of "Post Meridian," with color-block costumes by Alex Katz, and in the ritualistic drama of "Runes," which evokes Taylor's time as a dancer for Martha Graham.—Marina Harss (*Joyce Theatre; June 25-30.*)

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## Movies