

press quotes

THE BEGINNING OR THE END

"[In 'The Beginning or the End'] Arsem... presented a restrained performance evoking a hazy dream-world of deathly images."

-Elizabeth Pinkus, **The Boston Phoenix**

"To stand before death without flinching requires an almost inconceivable understanding of the power of acceptance. Arsem challenges the audience to analyze their own conceptions of death, and thereby find their own strength in both life and death."

-Craig Quintero, **The Tufts Daily**

"There is, without a doubt, a path through her many beautiful and startling images, connecting hair to blood and chocolate cake, consumption to love, birth to bleached bone. Something archaic lives below the surface here: deep, primal, and very, very female - and very worth seeing if you get the chance."

-Scott Stroot, **Art New England** (Boston)

"The atmosphere of this work is characterized by intensity and concentration. Each activity appears like a complex, necessary, mysterious and strangely significant household chore, performed with both intention and indifference. Like a nurse, a cook or an undertaker, the performer does whatever needs to be done, whether it serves the needs of life or of death....Arsem's performance is very much in the spirit of what Victor Turner calls 'liminal rituals:' rituals which provide a stage for unique transitional experiences. In the case of Arsem's performance, the focus of the ritual is the transition between life and death. The objects used, the actions performed, and the manner of their performance seem to aim at dissolution of boundaries, boundaries between various life forms, between life, sleep, and death, between acceptance and rage, kindness and indifference, freedom and boundedness, attentiveness and automatism, intensity and madness, between young and old, and last but not least, between performance and daily existence."

-Malgosia Askanas, **P-form: a journal of interdisciplinary and performance art** (Chicago)