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### Theatre review: Controlled Falling Project

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As Fringe performance pieces of sheer spectacle go, a show like Controlled Falling Project comes close to the zenith.

There's very little actual acting on display, mind you, aside from a very loose linking theme about a crackpot professor who's trying out a range of esoteric physical experiments on three young men dressed as if they might inhabit the Victorian era. Instead, these tests involve putting the trio through a stunning array of acrobatic tricks and stunts, a series of set-pieces so skilfully devised and executed that they must surely rank as a short step off impossible to your average audience member.

As David Josephs generic mad professor scratches his head, scrawls chicken-scratch equations and formulae over a gym mat and puzzles with himself over a metronomic automated blackboard contraption, the three gymnasts of Melbourne's ThisSideUp acrobatic circus theatre company James Brown, Christian Schooneveldt-Reid and Casey Douglas pull out the rather fragile-looking pieces of junk and apparatus dotted around the stage and start to make use of them. At first they begin with some simple movement on the mat, although their graceful dancers motions are beautifully controlled and timed. Rolling forward from a standing position, they repeat the movement in reverse, returning to their feet; the effect is robotic, and mindful of a video tape being played and rewound.

As they introduce new pieces of equipment, the stunts become more ambitious. Specially-designed metal-frame chairs are slotted together to create a climbing frame, and a long balance beam is held by two of the performers while another first shins up it vertically and then leaps onto its flat surface and turns tricks. There is a routine with a see-saw, a balancing act on stacks of wooden blocks and a show-stealingly graceful set-piece using a giant hula-hoop.

One of those shows which it might be said truly sums up the Fringe experience for everyone, Controlled Falling Project is unique, inspiring and hard to tear your eyes from for virtually every second of its running time. Whatever you expect from August in Edinburgh, this show comes recommended to anyone who hopes to see a performance thats special.

*Until 31 August (not 18, 24)*