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Critic's Choice

Corpus Delicti: Just Desserts

More gross than scary, this Local Infinities show is still perfect for Halloween—or indeed for any time you feel like contemplating the hideous mysteries of the human body. Larry Underwood is the voice of reason as Doctor Tulp, based on a real-life dissector Rembrandt immortalized in a 1632 painting. Meghan Strell is the hysterical Sister Luyt, an amalgam of 17th-century female criminals who keeps interrupting Tulp's lecture with shrill complaints and taunts. Kennedy Greenrod, singing his own Kurt Weillian songs and accompanying himself on accordion, supplies the grim hilarity of the down-to-earth plebeian mind. But in some ways the star is the corpse Underwood created out of ballistic gelatin for the purpose of cutting it apart: unveiled midway through, this glowing phosphorescent figure seems to decay before our eyes. Exhaustively researched, *Corpus Delicti: Just Desserts* is intelligent and intelligently presented, especially by Sage Reed, who designed the clever, elegant set pieces and projections. But performed in what used to be an operating theater using a text largely adapted from Dr. Richard Seltzer's ornately written essays, *Corpus Delicti* sometimes feels a little bloodless. The conceit is that it's a lecture; still, it shouldn't feel edifying. What saves it is the collaborators' delight in their creation and in the byzantine workings of the natural world and the human mind. ▶ Through 11/6: Fri-Sun 8 PM. Also Mon 10/31, 8 PM. University of Illinois Medical Center, Department of Neurosurgery, Neuropsychiatric Institute, 912 S. Wood, 312-528-0077. \$10-\$15. —**Laura Molzahn**

