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Scene Last Night: Venus Williams, Carla Harris, David Michalek

By Amanda Gordon - Jul 9, 2011

Some bankers play tennis. Others get to hang out with [Venus Williams](#).

Wearing a gray cocktail dress and two bangles on her left wrist, Williams doled out life advice Thursday night to 375 [Morgan Stanley \(MS\)](#) employees at their Times Square offices.

“Of course I’m very strong, like a whip, but it’s very important to have strategy,” Williams said in an interview with Carla Harris, a managing director at the firm.

Perseverance is key, according to both women. “Sometimes you feel you’re not supposed to win, and that’s the point where you don’t give up on yourself,” Williams said.

Williams and Harris have both written books about succeeding in business. Williams’s “[Come to Win](#)” features tips from [Jack Welch](#), [Magic Johnson](#) and others. Harris’s book, “[Expect to Win](#),” is her own guide to navigating the corporate ladder based on her 20 years on [Wall Street](#).

Williams, who owns an interior design business, V Starr, and has a clothing line, EleVen, said she’d like to earn an MBA. She noted, however, that being an athlete has at least one advantage over being a businesswoman.

“One of the good things about playing a sport is that it requires a lot of rest so I always have excuses to go to bed early and take naps,” she said, laughing.

Slowing Down

The slow-motion films in “[Portraits in Dramatic Time](#),” an outdoor installation at [Lincoln Center](#), allow viewers to study just about every characteristic of the actors from their wrinkles to their eyebrows to their calf muscles.

So it was uncanny, at the party to celebrate the installation on Wednesday night, to encounter them in real time with cocktails in hand.

There were Jon Morris and Natalie Thomas, on a jumbo screen on the facade of the David H. Koch Theater, battling a wind storm. And there they were on the terrace of [Avery Fisher Hall](#), talking about how the scene came together.

The scene, which runs for 7 minutes, was filmed in 10 seconds and then stretched out.

“You have to hit your physical mark precisely,” Morris said.

“You do start to look at your movement in a different way -- mundane things like putting down a tea bag,” Thomas said.

Later, Morris and Thomas hung over the railing mesmerized by another scene in which they appear.

The actors don't usually get the chance to see their own work in slow motion, and they were clearly fascinated.

Phantom Camera

Others attending the reception included newly minted Guggenheim Fellow Jay Scheib, an associate professor of theater at MIT; New York City Ballet principal dancer Wendy Whelan and New York City Opera general manager [George Steel](#).

The project was not inexpensive. One way it got done was that Vision Research donated the Phantom camera David Michalek used to shoot the scenes. It costs \$140,000 and its uses are generally commercial, not artistic.

“When you see a car crash in a television commercial, that's us,” said Rick Robinson, director of marketing at Vision Research, based in Wayne, [New Jersey](#).

Robinson noted another use of the camera is to analyze problems on assembly lines. The installation is up through July 31 and runs from 8:45 p.m. to 11:45 pm daily.

(Amanda Gordon is a writer and photographer for Muse, the arts and leisure section of Bloomberg News. Any opinions expressed are her own.)

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