

THE KITCHEN

VIDEO

MUSIC

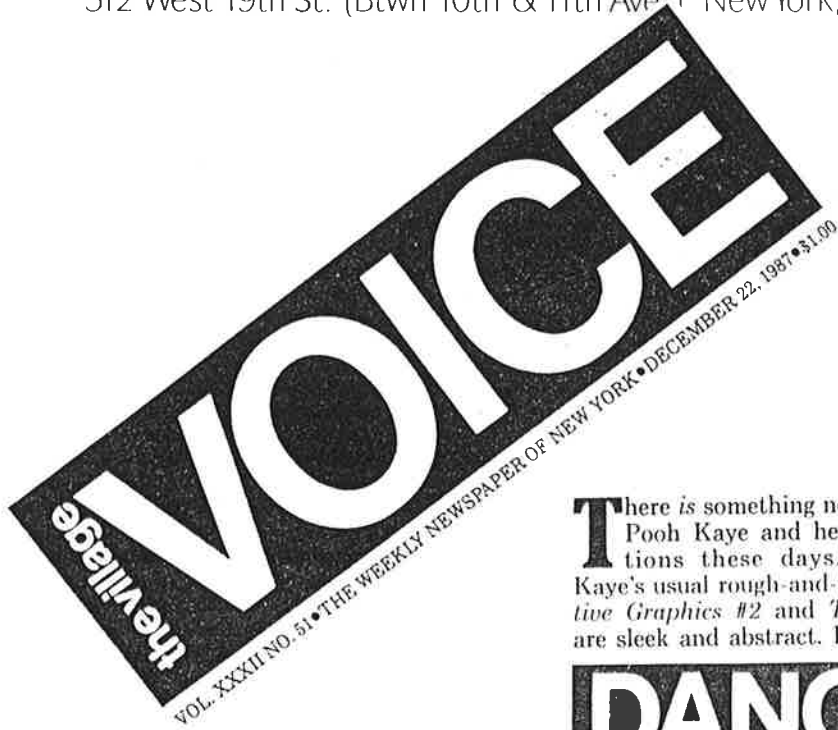
DANCE

PERFORMANCE

FILM

512 West 19th St. (Btwn 10th & 11th Ave.) New York, NY 10011

Reservations: 255-5793



pooh kaye: eccentric motions

There is something new going on with Pooh Kaye and her Eccentric Motions these days. Compared to Kaye's usual rough-and-tumble stuff, *Active Graphics #2* and *Tangled Graphics* are sleek and abstract. Instead of a wry,

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but earnest view of playing-around-in-the-jungle-whenever-it-may-be, Kaye applies polish to her vigorous athletic style and subjects the movement to careful patterning. Clearly making a dance instead of a rite or a game.

Kaye choreographed *Active Graphics #2* in collaboration with Robin Simmonds, Lee Katz, and Ginger Gillespie. At the Kitchen, Jody Oberfelder replaced Gillespie. Wearing black unitards that reach to the knee, with thin shoulder straps and a few silvery sewn-on patches (costumes by Antoine Laval and Kaye), the three work almost exclusively on a smallish floor diagonally striped in black and white. In this fancy pedestrian crossing (by Laval), each has a solo, then all dance together, rearranging the components of the floor at various times.

Fundamentally this is an all-fours dance. The women stay low to the ground—somersaulting, diving, bouncing from hand to hand to foot, springing into handstands and one-handed cartwheels that never stretch out in the air and often end in surprising ways. Kaye allows her dancers more finesse than usual—their toes are pointed, their positions shapely as they tumble through the air—without relinquishing the image of natural gymnastic impetus. And the three decidedly come across as virtuosos—powerful, polished, exulting in their skill.

Tangled Graphics features Katz, Simmonds, Felice Wolfzahn, and Chisa Hidaka. It, too, is performed to a witty, yet abrasive electronic score by Pat Irwin. The costumes, by Simmonds, are trim,

black-and-white bodysuits, with extra pieces stuck on like irregular dorsal fins. Katz and Simmonds begin in a rectangle of light (lighting by Jan Kroeze), striking assorted poses as carefully designed as those in Nijinsky's *Afternoon of a Faun* (the costumes help this thought along). But most of the quartet is a demanding, high-energy dance—with the acrobatics of *Active Graphics #2* repeated and expanded so the dancers cover space and stretch up and vault onto the bodies of others. There's counterpoint, unison, and a lot of duetting. The pairwork has a friendly, competitive look, but it's also businesslike—with a little less of that playfulness that is sometimes charming in Kaye's work and sometimes bothersomely self-conscious.

She herself is still playing the wild kid. For *The River Sticks* (1983), the stage is filled with structures made of sticks (design by Catherine Kernan). Some form precarious low tunnels, others tall tepees. It's her playground, and, of course, she eventually demolishes it. One second, she can race through the narrowest of openings; the next minute everything collapses on her. I'm reminded of what William Butler Yeats's father wrote to his son concerning a performance by Isadora Duncan: "Several people said: Is it not like watching a kitten playing for itself? We watched her as if we were each of us hidden in ambush. I don't wonder that New York at first rejected her—she stood still, she lay down, she walked about, she danced, she leapt, she disappeared and reappeared..." I think that Kaye is striving to create that illusion of privacy, as if she were playing games by herself. But the "self" she has chosen is part primate, part child. She sniffs and licks the boards, rubs their dirt onto her face, tries to balance them in barely possible ways, to turn them into skis. The wood is unpredictable, and I enjoy watching her really cope with it; but inevitably some of her difficulties, her grunts and giggles, seem manufactured. Watching this and the boisterous clowning of *Ferocious Blows*, I decide it's good she's moving into new territory.