

THE KITCHEN

CENTER FOR
VIDEO, MUSIC,
DANCE AND
PERFORMANCE

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Dance/Tobi Tobias

GOOD DEALS

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THE VISUALS IN THE KITCHEN'S **Graffiti Rock** show were spray-paint works by those subversive artists who got their start on subway cars. In the last decade, it seems, the best of them have turned pro; Twyla Tharp just had them on Broadway, improvising scenery for her *Deuce Coupe*. Now another form of street art by adolescents, a dance style called breaking, is going indoors, and legit.

Imagine this: While D.J. Spy plays fragments of recorded rock music and a rapper, Fab 5 Freddy, chants a go-to-it spiel, two teams of five face off on opposite sides of a small platform. The Swift Kids Crew are junior-high-schoolers; the Rock Steady Crew are bigger and older. They are all male, black or Hispanic, costumed in the youth-culture uniform of jeans, sweats, and Adidas. They have names like Lil' Crazy Legs, Take One, Frosty Freeze. One by one they try to outdo each other—to make the rival bunch look bad.

They saunter on, jiggling their legs to loosen up those wicked feet. Quick as a flash they squat down and, with a one-armed support, throw their legs out sideways, the feet chattering all the time. Then they twist onto their backs, coiling the spine and spinning on it, crossing their legs and hugging them in. Or they spin on their shoulders, spin on their heads, legs shooting straight for the sky. For a climax they pivot on one hand, pivot on an elbow, body midair, lined up with the floor. The finish is a quick back flip to the feet, a backward arch into a bridge, or a crashing fall to pretend-death.

As in any group of folk dancers, a few of the breakers have already personalized the style. The one with the string-bean legs, for instance, tops his routine with village-idiot grimaces; another slows the stuff down and does it lazily. Again as with folk dancing, breaking is probably more fun to do than it is to watch. Coming out of the show, two of Paul Taylor's dancers swung into a creditable, if vertical, imitation of what they'd seen. "Gee," one said, legs gyrating; "it makes me feel like dancing." Feet kicking, his friend shot back, "You gotta be baaad."

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