

# The Kitchen Center for Video and Music

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**Sheryl Sutton**, performing *Paces* at The Kitchen February 9 and 10, was accompanied by two musicians. The title of the piece has several meanings: Sutton showed us the paces people go through to make a dance, a song or a comedy routine; some of the movement material was pacing across the floor; and also, one paces oneself in different ways for rehearsal, daily life and the performance itself.

Sutton started out by doing small continuous movements while standing in one spot, mostly turning wrists, feet and torso on an axis. Out of this constant flow, a gesture would suddenly emerge and flow away. Her attention was completely inner-directed. In the next movement section, she circled her arms and traced waves with her hands, her torso turning back and forth, and her legs and feet shifting slightly to maintain balance. Though she gazed at the audience intently, her facial expression was totally neutral.

Then a section followed where she paced back and forth, acting out different demeanors. She took tiny steps while her head bobbed constantly. Finally, with a focus darting everywhere—glancing sharply here and there while her hands enacted a contrapuntal attack—she jumped repeatedly.

Next Sutton took us through a similar development with a song. First she began with wordless tones and shrieks; they ultimately took shape as a blues version of *Mary Had a Little Lamb*. In the final part of the performance, Sutton gently satirized a stand-up comic, telling us about her life, her piano lessons, her adolescent obsession with appearances; intermittently, she schizophrenically interrupted herself with a different narrative. The first story had all the trappings of nervous autobiographical revelation, while the second was an act.

Throughout the performance, Sutton's way of relating to the audience was predicated on a demure but hypnotic withdrawal. The performance space resembled an intimate chamber and Sutton, the mesmerist, could take control, soak up our attention, and make magic by the slightest cool gesture.