

the Kitchen

center for video and music

The three dances that Carmen Beuchat showed at the Kitchen involved movement that was simple, closer to everyday activities than dancing; but a clear, efficient way of executing them, plus their neat floor patterns and visibly logical structures make them seem more formal than the works that Roxane performs.

I like the way Beuchat looks. Her body is strong and square. Her face has a prematurely careworn look like the faces of Jeanne Moreau or Giulietta Massina. She performs every movement distinctly with quiet, unchanging attentiveness.

*Dance, by
Deborah Jowitz
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Once, I think, she smiled a little. Her first dance, "I Am Two," begins with her staring into her own palms, like a child pantomiming reading. She walks from place to place and strikes the "reading" pose; a man's warm Spanish voice sings a love song. She crosses and recrosses the room with a series of radial paths: a fancy walk one way, a plain walk back. By fancy walks, I mean perhaps the limps or turns one foot out and one in. During the last section of the dance, she passes through a series of imaginary doors—gravely turning each knob, opening the door, stepping through, and closing it. The variety is surprising: will this door open in or out? Will she cross her right arm over to open a knob that her left hand might more easily reach?

Perhaps the title "Steal With Style" contains a reference to Trisha Brown, with whom Beuchat has performed. Like Brown's accumulating dances, this trio (Beuchat, Irene Soler, Juliet Shen) is made out of single moves that nevertheless flow easily into each other. Each woman builds her own long, repetitive pattern, although they share some elements. The entire dance takes place on, or close by, three folding chairs grouped in the center of the room. After a long time, the sitting, rising, falling, quietly gesturing women begin to look like intermeshing parts of a machine.

Finally, in "Butterfly," Kei Takei executes a calm, bending-twisting-semaphoring dance while standing on a little rectangle of white cloth. A film, reflected from a slanted mirror overhead, makes goldfish flit over the sheet and sometimes over her back. Beuchat moves around her in a square, then enters her domain for a leaning, nudging duet. The two women change places. Bareboned dancing in a bare white gallery. Many shape-changes, few dynamic ones.