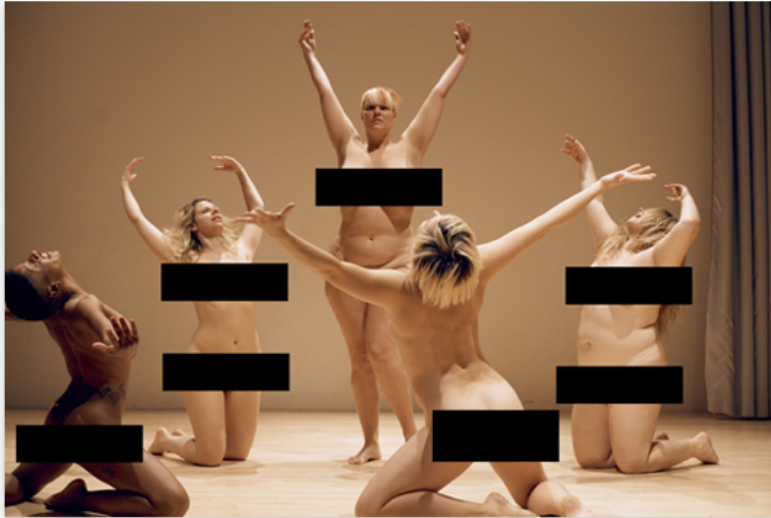


# PAPER

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## Nude! Women! Live! In Young Jean Lee's Singing and Dancing Feminist Frolic

BY TOM MURRIN



Playwright/director **Young Jean Lee** has earned her now-global reputation by making plays that change the way people look at things, that change the way people think of theater, and by coming up with something new every time. Her latest, *Untitled Feminist Show*, in collaboration with six women, downtown dancers and performers (including World Famous \*BOB\* and Lady Rizo), and featuring the choreography of Faye Driscoll and Morgan Gould, certainly fits into her mold. The piece is being presented as part of P.S. 122's Coil Festival. I spoke with the 2011 Guggenheim Fellow.

**Hi Young Jean. How did this come about?**

I wanted to make a show that inspired people. I wanted to make a feminist show. The cast and I had all these conversations about feminism, and we did a public presentation, and we talked to the public about feminism and feminist art. And, of the things that kept coming up, one of the most immediately relevant issues was the notion of gender fluidity, and fluidity of identity -- that is, whatever identity you chose is not dictated by your sexual organs. Then the rest of the process came to be: me trying to imagine what it would look like if a bunch of people with female bodies could be completely fluid in their identities. Because,

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we, a lot of times, unconsciously believe, in certain ways, that that's how people behave -- because of their bodies. In this show we're presenting an idea of what it would be like if people with female bodies could be completely fluid in their identities, and could just be what they wanted at any given moment.

In our world, people are not admired for being fluid, they're admired for being one thing. For example, if you are the thing you're supposed to be, you get rewarded. If you're female, and look a certain way, you get rewarded. And you're admired. But I wanted to present people who don't fit that idealized version of what a woman is supposed to be; but to make them (the women performers) seem so amazing that people would want to do that.

## **So what exactly is the show about?**

It's about gender, and making that option seem more appealing and inviting, instead of the idealized version.

## **Tell me what we're going to see.**

The performers are completely nude, with no hairstyling or makeup. There are no words in the play. It's all singing and dancing, and they tell stories without words. Because they're switching from one thing to another, it's disorienting and exciting. Everything keeps changing. You can never keep track because it doesn't stay in one place, because it's about transformation.

There are hip-hop dance numbers, followed by the singing of a song in Welsh. There's this beautiful number with pink parasols. By the way, that's un-ironic; it's just a beautiful number. There's a heavy metal number, an elaborate fairy tale pantomime, and there's a big fight sequence. And that's all I'm going to tell you.

*Baryshnikov Arts Center* at the Jerome Robbins Theater, 450 W. 37<sup>th</sup> St., (212) 352-3101. Jan. 12-28. Jan. 12, 8:30 p.m.; Jan. 13-15, 18-21, 24-28, 8 p.m. \$25, \$20 for students and seniors.

[http://www.papermag.com/2012/01/live\\_nude\\_women\\_in\\_young\\_jean.php](http://www.papermag.com/2012/01/live_nude_women_in_young_jean.php)