

January 18, 2012

## Theater

### Review: Untitled Feminist Show

Bare-naked ladies express themselves in Young Jean Lee's new show. *By David Cote*



Who said the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak? Both are pretty damn fierce in director Young Jean Lee's all-female, all-nude dance suite cheekily (but purposefully) called *Untitled Feminist Show*. In a scant (and scantily clad) hour, Lee and her gutsy dancers try on a dizzying variety of modes and masks to shake up gender norms. Most shocking, once you've gotten over giggles or puritanical guilt about staring at six women jumping and bouncing around in their birthday suits, you stop seeing the nudity and start focusing on the individual, her quirks and



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traits. The piece may have no name, but its cast members are anything but faceless archetypes.

In its own sly and deliberately faux-naïf way, Lee's performance piece is deeply interested in issues of sameness and differentiation. You'd have to be stupid (or just misogynistic) to think that because these women are naked, they all look the same. And yet, the provocation of forgoing clothing invites us to view them as females first, people second. That's the tension Lee sets up at the top, and she slowly releases it over an hour of modern dance, pantomime comedy sketches and gibberish singing. No words are spoken in the piece, and that refusal to attach language to objects underscores the director's stated intent to explore fluidity more than fixed identity.

Roles may be fluid, but you end up with a distinct sense of the women, who seem to move blissfully outside ironic quotation marks (aside from the occasional sardonic pink parasol). Amelia Zirin-Brown (a.k.a. Lady Rizzo) enacts a filthy-funny mime involving fellatio and castration; Regina Rocke springs lithely through her dance routines with girlish abandon; shaggy-haired Hilary Clark wields a punklike intensity (especially in ape-shit-krumping mode right in my face); and smirking, waggish Becca Blackwell seems to be starring in her own Broadway musical. They are women; hear the crowd roar.

<http://newyork.timeout.com/arts-culture/theater/2510551/review-untitled-feminist-show>