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ARTFORUM

“While Bodies Get Mirrored: An Exhibition About Movement, Formalism and Space”

MIGROS MUSEUM FÜR GEGENWARTSKUNST Limmatstrasse 270 March
6–May 30



View of “While Bodies Get Mirrored: An Exhibition About Movement, Formalism and Space,” 2010.

The term *performative* has become weirdly pervasive lately, as has the elasticity of its meanings (in both the spectacle-on-stage sense and J. L. Austin’s or Judith Butler’s usage). Formalist objects, abstract photographs, and innumerable installations are wrapped in its bendy, rubber-band embrace, often to numbing effect—thus the relief provided by Migros’s incisive group show, whose many dance-y, movement-based works in various media provide truth in advertising, for once. The exhibition’s title conjures Joan Jonas’s seminal “Mirror” dances from the 1960s onward, but it is her contemporaries—Trisha Brown, Lucinda Childs, and collaborators like Robert Rauschenberg—who are represented here, in the addictive photographs and films of Babette Mangolte, adroit chronicler of the ’70s New York dance and performance scene.

The more recent works evince the fact that this era’s influence is hard to shake. See, for instance, the hypnotic video projection by Delia Gonzalez, in which a young dancer, her skin lit crimson, dances delicately about a black room in a black tutu, or Paulina Olowska’s series of twenty-six cards depicting the artist

lithely performing the letters of the alphabet. Rather than reading as derivative homage, however, such work mostly feels persuasive and new. Martin Soto Climent's gorgeous quartet of suspended silver blinds swirl over the floor *Swan Lake*-style, while Anna Molska's curious video features two ripped young men in skimpy bondage gear enacting a strange duet. The exhibition's movement between video projections and installations (with some tepid paintings thrown in) makes it feel at times like a peep show—black-curtained rooms, bulb-framed stages, right down to the physical curiosity and erotic menace one expects. If William Forsythe's installation—mirrors strewn over a large red carpet like a corps de ballet of gleaming knives—begins with Jonas, where it ends is somewhere far, far away.

— *Quinn Latimer*