

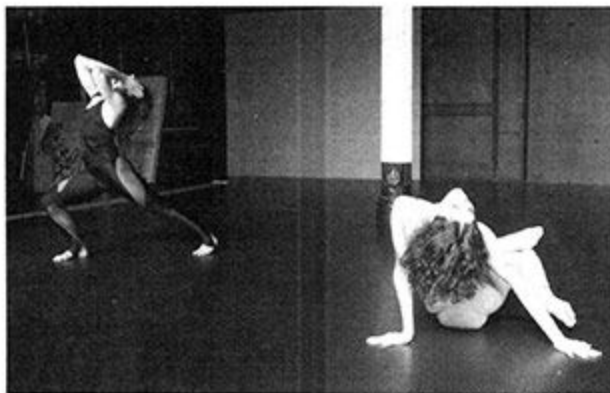
# The New York Times

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NEW YORK, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2007

\$5 beyond the greater New York

## Dance in Review



MICHELLE V. AGINS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Hristoula Harakas, left, and Maria Hassabi in "Gloria."

### Gloria

Performance Space 122  
150 First Avenue, at Ninth  
Street  
East Village  
(212) 352-3101  
Through tonight

In Maria Hassabi's "Gloria," Ms. Hassabi and Hristoula Harakas move expressionlessly and separately for nearly an hour through a series of isolated poses. The noise of traffic in downtown Athens resounds. Occasionally a little music seeps in, as if a radio were picking up a random frequency.

Ms. Hassabi's piece, which opened on Wednesday night at Performance Space 122, is all her own. But it's also the latest of a number of provocative, intelligent works that have recently emerged from contemporary dance in which the boundaries between dance, artwork, installation and performance are subtly blurred. (Tere O'Connor's "Rammed Earth" and Sam Kim's "dumb dumb bunny" come to mind. And the Performa 07 festival, concerned with just such boundary blurring and with few commissions from choreographers, might want to take note.)

Like these other pieces, "Gloria," seen on Thursday night, is more interested in the cumulative impact of movement than in the exploration of movement for

its own sake. And like many other current works, it appropriates the vocabularies of popular culture — fashion, the club scene, exercise — along with the affectless, withdrawn mien that provides socially suitable accompaniment to those domains.

The choreographer, in bright pink leggings and top, is alone at first on the bare, brightly lit stage, holding each position — sometimes slumped, sometimes stretched out in dancery fashion — as if posing for the camera. Then Ms. Harakas enters, wearing black (the costumes, simple but stylishly cut, are by ThreeAsFour, and begins a sequence quite different in effect.

Ms. Hassabi appears mentally absent from her own body as it incarnates facsimiles of posture and attitude from everyday life: the fashion model pretending to do a yoga pose; the actress (or pornographic star) faking desire. But Ms. Harakas, an exceptionally fine dancer, is utterly present, both mysterious and compelling, as every sculptural position suggests unverifiable meaning.

The contrast is fascinating, and the effect of switching glances from one dancer to another as each inhabits a different side of the bare space is much like early photographic studies of movement sequences. Toward the end, both performers simply walk off, and the lights dim, as swelling music overtakes the traffic sounds. The quality of this darkening light (by Joe Levasseur) is as beautiful as a painting, but the effect — the music, the spatial emptiness — is pure theater.

ROSALYN SULCAS