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\$5 beyond the greater New York

## WEEKEND Arts FINE ARTS LEISURE

### The New York Times



NATASHA PAPADOPOULOU

**MARIA HASSABI** For many Americans the word "dancer" has implications that go beyond the artistic. As the choreographer Maria Hassabi pointed out recently, "You meet some people and say, 'I'm a dancer,' and they say, 'Oh, you must be so flexible,' and there's always a sexual connotation there."

In "Gloria," which opens Wednesday at Performance Space 122, Ms. Hassabi, above, plays with and ultimately pushes beyond those sexual implications. A formal, strongly female duet for herself and the wondrous Hristoula Harakas, this evening-length piece, which Ms. Hassabi describes as "live sculpture," often has the two women taking poses that some might find provocative, such as spreading their legs wide. But the dancers hold these positions for so long that the sexual layers peel away. Created separately, the solos inhabit the same space but are not linked other than through the connections view-

ers make, Ms. Hassabi said. When "you're walking behind two people" on the street, she explained, they might not be together "but you see them in one frame in front of you; you make relationships."

Still, she said, the piece feels lonely and disconnected; the sound score, developed by the musician Jody Elf, consists largely of random street noises inadvertently captured by Ms. Hassabi as she recorded herself alone in a hot studio in downtown Athens. The two women never touch, or work in tandem. Luckily the P.S. 122 theater is small, so you don't have to make too many tough choices about which of these captivating performers you want to watch at any given moment. (Wednesday through Nov. 10 at 8 p.m., with an additional show next Friday at 10 p.m., 150 First Avenue, at Ninth Street, East Village, 212-352-3101, [ps122.org](http://ps122.org); \$20; \$15 for students and 65+.)

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