

# THIS WEEK IN NEW YORK

THE INSIDER'S GUIDE TO THE CITY SINCE 2001

## MARIA HASSABI: Solo



Maria Hassabi is performing SOLO as part of Crossing the Line festival (photo by Paula Court)

Crossing the Line 2009  
Performance Space 122  
150 First Ave. between Ninth & Tenth Aves.  
Sept. 29 - Oct. 4, \$20, 7:30  
[www.ps122.org](http://www.ps122.org)  
[www.mariahassabi.org](http://www.mariahassabi.org)

This week, Maria Hassabi premiered the first part of what she calls "a dance diptych," the fifty-minute SOLO, in P.S. 122's intimate first-floor theater. As the audience enters the space, the Cyprus-born, New York-based dancer and choreographer is already on the floor, half covered by a Persian carpet. As ambient city noises (courtesy of sound designer James Lo) slowly filter in — cars honking, people shuffling off to work, snatches of conversations — Hassabi begins to interact with the carpet, sprawling over and under it, balancing precipitously on it, and picking it up and throwing it back on the floor. She turns the object into a weapon, a prayer mat, a high wire, a piece of furniture, clothing, and even a lover, very rarely breaking contact. At one point she contorts her athletic body — a character unto itself, the sinews in her feet, the muscles in her shoulder, the veins in her arm performing their own marvelous dance — as if she is trapped, the four corners of the carpet calling to mind the brick walls of the apartment she seems unable to leave.

As day turns to night, Hassabi's relationship with the carpet gets more emotional — in fact, she never breaks into the barest hint of a smile, remaining serious throughout. While one sometimes looks in vain for narrative elements of the ironically titled SOLO — it's really a very different kind of pas de deux — it's a thrill watching what Hassabi the dancer is capable of. SOLO is part of the French Institute Alliance Française's Crossing the Line festival; the second section, SOLOSHOW, runs November 12-15 at P.S. 122 as part of Performa 09.