

Wild Women

By Deborah Jowitt

The Salon Project

Marika Blossfeldt, Judy Dworin,
Sally Hess, Valerie Strar
At Dia Center for the Arts
November 19 and 20

Dance

November was a month in which capable women did odd things. The third program of this season's enterprising Salon Project featured four female choreographer-performers in solos that I'm tempted to call "expressionistic"—except that the imprecise use of that term can open a can of worms. These are dances in which emotion or outside forces gnaw women's bodies into strange shapes, even though the women sometimes look almost passive.

Judy Dworin's *Tub* links enigmatic visions of male-female struggle. In a text by Cynthia MacDonald ("Two Brothers in a Field of Absence"), a whispering voice, arising from a collage of sounds (by Jim Penndorf), speaks of field workers making a "green woman" of grain, who is theirs to care for, to lie with, to destroy.

Dworin performs her often quite simple, literal gestures in a glowing, four-legged tub. She can sink into its seductive iridescence and almost disappear, but she has to keep coming up for air. Meanwhile, other words—spoken out loud—ponder the problem with a slightly closer-to-home focus: "He creates me, performs me, deforms me." There are homey details—something about filling her mouth with peanut butter so "her lips clung to her teeth." The final message rings clear as a bell: "What shelters you can turn incendiary in a flash."

If you wonder why I'm spouting text and describing tubs, it's because Dworin herself doesn't add much by way of revelation through movement. She's simply there, a sensitive presence, allowing us to cloak her in the words.