



Olson stars in "Dark Horse/Black Forest" in a bathroom at the Gershwin Hotel.

Photo: Julieta Cerevantes

Romances stalled in hotel john

Yanira Castro's intimate dance performance recaptures life's most private stolen moments

The average dance goer, folded into a seat some distance from a stage, can drift and daydream, or even nap. But sign up for Yanira Castro's "Dark Horse/Black Forest," on view in a rust-colored bathroom in the arts-friendly Gershwin Hotel, and you stand.

At "Dark Horse," the performers conduct their tempestuous relationship mere inches from your nose — and your feet. Flat screens mounted above a toilet stall document another encounter in one of the hotel's suites. It's claustrophobic, and it's warm. A score of fluorescent tubes and mirrors multiply images of the performers, the seven spectators and the screens. You're trapped, and you're fully alert.

Heather Olson and Joseph Poulson, beautiful specimens both, perform the 40-minute piece through June 14. They seem unable to share their feelings, even in these close quarters. They tremble and sob. She dunks her head in a tub of water. He feeds her a cherry off a luscious-looking cake. Finally they embrace in a tangled duet, strip to their skivvies, squat and stretch. Then they leave us alone in the can.

For the past two weekends of the run, the same work will be performed by Luke Miller and Darrin Wright, who happen to be a couple in real life. Their version turns up the heat substantially; when Miller yells "Get out!" at the spectators in the bathroom, they actually leave, finding themselves in a corridor where the desperate Wright speaks his agony into the tape recorder. Back inside, the guys smear themselves with the cake.

Castro here challenges all your assumptions about performance, and forces you to wake up. Gamble on it.

'Dark Horse/Black Forest'

Through June 28

Gershwin Hotel

7 E. 27th St.

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