

## Dance Theater Jail Piece '51802'

Chloe Veltman | SF Weekly Calendar review | September 2007

In her 2005 dance theater piece, *One Window*, creator/choreographer Erika Chong Shuch explored the positive side of confinement – how limitations can often be empowering, freeing even. Her latest, equally charismatic production takes the opposing view of incarceration in examining the ways that being locked up constricts the person behind bars and also effectively imprisons loved ones on the outside. Shuch, who not only creates and directs the multidimensional work but also performs the central role and designs the costumes, tells a story that is as intensely personal as it is universal. This is quite an achievement when you consider the strange and seemingly intractable mix of ideas that make up the show, from sweetly sung old blues and soul songs and shaggy, loose-shouldered dance steps to the avalanche of identical white rag dolls and the metaphor of being stuck at the bottom of a well. Shuch's angst-ridden, autobiographical narrative about her complex and emotionally harrowing relationship with a prison inmate becomes overbearing at times. But the production's quirky-dynamic approach to movement, visual imagery, light, and sound combined with fluid performances from Shuch's four collaborators (Dwayne Calizo, Jennifer Chien, Tommy Shepherd, and Danny Wolohan) keep the work from falling into an abyss of self-loathing.

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