

Consciousness Razing

By Sally Banes

Mogul's *Design for Living*, Barbara Margolies' *Littic Barbara*, and Martha Rosler's sketch for a performance about Yom Kippur and the Yom Kippur war of 1973 worked not because of their subject matter but because all three women are wonderful performers. You'd be entranced by their presence no matter what they were doing. But here their styles of being present—so different from one another—make their polemical messages vivid.

Susan Mogul makes a salad that gradually takes over the stage. She talks non-stop, impervious to the antics of Jerri Allyn, who rushes around her setting the scene, hanging strips of wallpaper, tying aprons on Mogul and taking them off, bringing out another table when the vegetables begin to fall off the first one, pouring out glasses of club soda, tacking vegetables to the wall, holding up small frames to turn objects and actions into Works of Art. In a Jewish *balabusteh's* sprightly accents, but peppered with a regard for fresh vegetables only a Californian could muster, Mogul rips through heads of iceberg lettuce, slices cucumbers, halves lemons, chops red cabbage, rattling on about the way iceberg waters down dressing, how she went out to buy clothes for this occasion and ended up dressed in a giant napkin (a white paper jumpsuit), what sucking lemons does to your teeth. Meanwhile Allyn keeps bringing out color-coordinated decor as each new bag of vegetables reveals green, yellow, red. Mogul's timing, her expressive face and gestures, her single-minded concentration on her task despite Allyn's mad obstacle course, and her final plight—tacked to the wall herself by the apron strings—all added up to a comic brilliance that was intellectually refreshing and visually appealing.