



View of animatronic dinosaur in Japanther's rock opera Japanther in (3-D), 2007. Photo Paula Court.

Japanther occasionally barked orders into their telephones—"walk counterclockwise," "sit down and shut up"—and onlookers respectfully obeyed. A short sequence of documentary films was screened on two opposite walls, including, among other things, images of industrial waste left by China's recent building frenzy, followed by the instruction, "Consume less, don't feed the beasts."

If there were a single message, it would be that anger, enthusiasm and confusion can coincide in a way that moves and excites to action. However, at the chaotic intersection of all collaborating parties, the performance just missed coherence.

—Stephanie Gonzalez-Turner

TM Sisters, *Things Will End Before They Start*, at Artists Space

A projection of two giant hands reached down toward Tasha and Monica López de Victoria, crouched in the fetal position on the floor of Artists Space, pulled them upright and pushed them into a street strung with telephone wires now visible on the wall behind them. Outfitted in matching dresses, they frantically ran in place as the scene rushed past them, pumping their arms and occasionally spinning around in circles or crashing into each other. A single star, pulsating blue and yellow, tumbled around above their heads.

The TM Sisters, raised and educated in Miami (each has a BFA), make low-fi digital videos with catchy, electro-pop soundtracks and perform silently in front of them. Their artists statement discusses their DIY work ethic ('zines, handmade clothing, etc.) and being home-schooled by their father, a pastor-turned-psychotherapist. Spirituality and salvation are recurring and obvious themes, especially in this video, the apocalyptically titled *Things Will End Before They Start*.

Telephone wires faded away and Tasha and Monica raised their arms, conjuring up a swarm of blue diamonds that floats into a halo around their bodies. Back to back they linked arms, and a climactic disco-party scene followed. Cutouts of people danced awkwardly behind them as the sisters mimicked the jerky moves of their stop-motion animated companions. Soon everyone else faded away, and Tasha and Monica were struck by a cartoon lightning bolt. They fell hard to the ground and froze.

Then the TM Sisters were reborn, their

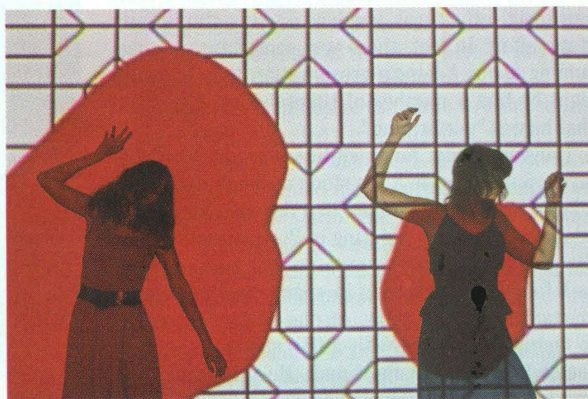
backs pressed flat against a projected black-and-white geometric tile pattern. Deep red splotches radiated out from the sisters' chests and slowly filled the entire wall; a zigzagging electrical charge connected their hearts. The red stain split down the middle and pulled aside like a curtain, revealing jumpy landscape scenes of sped-up sunrises and sunsets. The seven-minute-long video ended with the TM Sisters floating through a colorfully striped sky, simultaneously reaching for something and being pulled upwards by a force beyond the frame. The wall went black and there were only stars; the last one got bigger, exploded and multiplied.

—L.A.M.

Aïda Ruilova, *The Silver Globe*, at the Kitchen

Three performers, a dancer (Caitlin Cook), a drummer (Ian Vanek, of Japanther) and Dan Seward (identified in program notes as an underachieving *poète maudit* appearing here in "his first paid performance"), came together at the Kitchen for Aïda Ruilova's *The Silver Globe*, which also involved a video projection. The work's title comes from Polish director Andrzej Zulawski's unfinished science fiction film, deemed by some a lost classic; stylishly impoverished black-and-white footage apparently borrowed from the film (on which production was stopped in 1978) was among the material projected during the performance, which opened, ominously, with a hurtling, interminable filmed descent down what looked like a chute to a sewer. Indeed the spirit of the underground seemed a kind of ever-receding goal in this short (roughly 40-minute) and disjointed work, which never quite mustered the energy promised by its intended invocation of punk (again, see program notes).

Cook is a strong dancer and she moved commandingly among the few props: a short set of steps, a round platform possibly meant to evoke the remnants of a crashed spaceship and a folding screen from which dangled, like an anthropophagus's trophies, three flesh-colored foam heads tied to the ends of thick ropes; inevitably, they were swung into action toward the end. And Vanek is a powerful drummer, who provided the performance with its only moments of excitement. But Seward, who occasionally sang (chanted?), seems to have been included mostly for his looks—long, long hair; slouching posture; unconcealed paunch—and for the élan with which, at the end, he dropped his



TM Sisters: *Things Will End Before They Start*, 2007, video and live performance. Photo Paula Court.