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Dance Umbrella: Toilet Tango

Baker Street, London

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The French have a phrase for window-shopping - faire du lèche-vitrine - which translates as "licking the window". In a slightly different context, the windows of the Bathstore on Baker Street got very steamed up this weekend as Rodrigo Pardo converted its showroom into a temporary stage for his Toilet Tango. The showroom is just one metre square, most of which is occupied by bathroom fittings, yet into this space Pardo crams an intense little drama about a man dreaming of tangoing with his ideal woman. As he practises his solitary dance moves, apparently oblivious to the street outside, parallels with Fokine's Spectre de la Rose suggest themselves. The difference is that when his dream partner, Cristina Cortés, appears, she doesn't leap onto the stage as Nijinsky did in 1911 - she poses on the edge of the bath, glittering dramatically in sequins.

Pardo swings her into a passionate duet, but the tiny space forces the couple to improvise wildly, straddling the sink and balancing on the toilet. The inevitable moments of comedy are neatly handled, Cortés's stiletto heel grinding into the toilet's flush button, but she and Pardo also deliver some impressive tango, made all the more mesmerising by the fact that we are only inches away. It's the close quarters, however, that also make this performance wickedly disconcerting. Watching the dancers pressed up against the window, we are not only permitted an unusual intimacy, we're also made to feel like voyeurs.

I wasn't convinced by the ending, as Pardo balances himself upside-down in the toilet, leaving Cortés to slip away. Otherwise, Toilet Tango is

a gem of street theatre. Wittily imagined, impeccably performed and just 10 minutes long, it not only draws the crowds, it keeps them.

⬤ The Dance Umbrella festival continues until November 8. danceumbrella.co.uk

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