The Oxford Handbook *of* SCREENDANCE STUDIES

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Edited by

DOUGLAS ROSENBERG

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This book is dedicated to the memory of Sally Gross: artist, teacher, friend.

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PREFACE

DOUGLAS ROSENBERG

THE *Oxford Handbook of Screendance Studies* would not have been possible without the efforts of an extended, intergenerational, and global family of similarly inclined thinkers and makers. I am grateful to all of you.

Until recently, imagining a future for screendance was purely aspirational. Imagining a future in which there would be international festivals dedicated to the form, and literature to contextualize its practice and its relationship to other fields of inquiry, was a kind of fantastic dreaming. When I began teaching courses in "video dance" at The American Dance Festival in 1986, I had already been making work that combined media and dance for some time, often in collaboration with choreographers who were gracious enough to let me experiment with the form and content of their work. However, there was little evidence to suggest that there might be a community of like-minded colleagues beyond the small cohort I knew through a loose network in San Francisco and New York or from the catalogs of a few festivals or other exhibitions that I would come across now and then. In those early classes at The American Dance Festival, I had dozens of students who were a generous audience for my nascent and evolving ideas about dance and the screen; they filled the space with energy and with an openness to the ideas I was only just working out—ideas about an imagined history of the relationship between dance and the screen and a future in which the boundaries between the two would be porous and malleable, synthesized into some new hybrid form. In that new space, the aspirational space, neither dance nor media would be in service to the other. Certainly documentation and documentary would still exist to meet the needs of historicization and archiving, but this new space would supersede that model. It would be the offspring of experimental film, video art (Figure P.1), narrative fiction, performance art, dance (Figure P.2), feminism, and all of the practices and theories that had generated the complex and intertwined discourses of the twentieth century; it would vault us into the twenty-first.

The points of tangency that would form the basic map of screendance were always there. Connecting them was the task. How might one create a nexus between Dada, Maya Deren, and Merce Cunningham? Or, between Eadweard Muybridge, Yvonne Ranier, and Bruce Nauman? Or, between feminist theory, the visual arts, and film history? How might such connections form a narrative that would support both the

FIG. P.1 Documentation of *Suitable For Framing*, choreography and performance by June Watanabe, visual design/video installation by Douglas Rosenberg, performed by June Watanabe and Sharon Kinney, 1987.

FIG. P.2 Frame captures from the screendance *Periphery*, performed by Li Chiao-Ping, directed by Douglas Rosenberg, 2000.

making and theorizing of an art form that was yet to be articulated? Such rhetorical questions have occupied the thinking of the thirty-six authors in this book (and myself) for some time, and the results of such pondering have yielded a broad and provocative set of results. This book maps a terrain out of which is evolving one of the most thrilling dialogs in contemporary art.

This book would not have been possible without two propitious meetings. The first was with Oxford University Press Editor Norm Hirschy (who was the editor for both my previous book and this one as well) in 2009 at the Society of Dance History Scholars (SDHS) conference "Topographies, Site, Bodies, Technologies," at Stanford University. I was introduced to Norm by the dance scholar Ann Cooper Albright. Norm asked if I would be interested in editing a screendance reader for Oxford University Press. I already had a book in the works, but was thrilled by the idea; after finishing *Screendance: Inscribing the Ephemeral Image* under Norm's guidance, now, these many years later, *The Oxford Handbook of Screendance Studies* is a reality. The second important meeting was between me and Nathan Jandl, at the time a PhD candidate in the English Department at University of Wisconsin-Madison. Nathan is an immensely talented, thoughtful writer and scholar who has been my editorial assistant through two books and four issues of *The International Journal of Screendance*, as well as numerous articles, chapters, and conference papers. I am exceedingly lucky to have had the benefit of his rigorous eye, keen intellect, and impossibly diligent work ethic since the beginning of this journey. I owe much to his graciousness and patient assistance.

I wish to acknowledge the members of the Screendance Network, an international group of scholars and practitioners, founded in 2009 with a three-year Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) research grant with the mission of advancing the interdisciplinary theoretical and practice-based discourse of screendance. The members include Claudia Kappenberg (University of Brighton, United Kingdom), Sarah Whatley (Coventry University, United Kingdom), Ann Cooper Albright (Oberlin College, Ohio, United States), Harmony Bench (Ohio State University, United States), Simon Ellis (Roehampton University, United Kingdom), Marisa Zanotti (Chichester University, United Kingdom), and Chirstinn Whyte (writer and filmmaker, United Kingdom). I must also note the contributions of Katrina McPherson and Simon Fildes, whose advocacy for the field cannot be understated.

I have been lucky to have had opportunities to present papers and lectures at numerous festivals and symposia around the world. To the curators and presenters who hosted me, I owe great thanks. My research would not have been possible without support from a number of sources; particularly, my work on this book was made possible by a Kellett Mid-Career Award from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

I must also acknowledge the assistance of Jerri Hurlbutt, who helped with a number of editorial tasks. Finally, I must mention the authors in this book. They are, collectively, some of the most rigorous thinkers I have ever worked with. They are all deeply passionate about their scholarship and about screendance. Together, in these pages, they frame a discourse that greatly extends the possibilities of screendance. It is my hope that *The Oxford Handbook of Screendance Studies* will become a valued resource for all those interested in a truly interdisciplinary art form.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Ann Cooper Albright is Professor of Dance, and Chair of the Department of Dance at Oberlin College. Combining her interests in dancing and cultural theory, she is involved in teaching a variety of dance, performance studies, and gender studies courses that seek to engage students in both practices and theories of the body. She is the author of *Engaging Bodies: The Politics and Poetics of Corporeality* (Middleton, CT: Wesleyan, 2013); *Modern Gestures: Abraham Walkowitz Draws Isadora Duncan Dancing* (Wesleyan, 2010); *Traces of Light: Absence and Presence in the Work of Loïe Fuller* (Wesleyan, 2007); *Choreographing Difference: The Body and Identity in Contemporary Dance* (Wesleyan, 1997); and co-editor of *Moving History/Dancing Cultures: A Dance History Reader* (Wesleyan, 2001) and *Taken by Surprise: A Dance Improvisation Reader* (Wesleyan, 2003). The book *Encounters with Contact: Dancing Contact Improvisation in College* (2010) is the product of one of her adventures in writing and dancing and dancing and writing with others. Ann is founder and director of "Girls and Boys in Motion," an award winning afterschool program at Langston Middle School, now in its tenth year, and co-director of *Accelerated Motion: Towards a New Dance Literacy*, a National Endowment for the Arts–funded digital collection of materials about dance. Currently, Ann is working on an interdisciplinary book entitled *Gravity Matters: Finding Ground in an Unstable World*.

Sima Belmar received her PhD in Performance Studies from the University of California, Berkeley in 2015 and her MFA in Dance from the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee in 2003. Her writing has been published in *The Journal of Dance and Somatic Practices, TDR, Dance Magazine,* and *The San Francisco Bay Guardian.* She is currently a lecturer in the Department of Gender and Women's Studies and the Department of Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. Her research specialties include dance in popular film and television, US dance-theater, somatic theory and practice, and embodied identity politics.

Melissa Blanco Borelli is Senior Lecturer, Dance, in the Drama and Theatre Department at Royal Holloway, University of London. She is the editor of *The Oxford Handbook of Dance and the Popular Screen* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) and *She Is Cuba: A Genealogy of the* Mulata *Body* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, November 2015). Other publications include chapters in *Black Performance Theory* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014) and *Žižek and Performance* (London: Palgrave, 2014), and articles in *Women and Performance: a journal of feminist theory, International Journal of Screendance,* and the *International Journal of Performance Arts and Digital Media.* She established the first joint honors program in Drama and Dance at Royal Holloway; a single honors program in Dance is scheduled to begin in Autumn 2016.

Naomi Bragin works at the intersection of dance and critical black theory, drawing on her background as a club, street, and stage dancer; cultural worker; and dance educator. As former artistic director of Oakland-based DREAM Dance Company, her work was nominated for the Bay Area's Isadora Duncan Dance Award for Best Choreography. Her current project, *Black Power of Hip Hop Dance: On Kinesthetic Politics*, is an ethno-history and aesthetic philosophy of black street dance in 1960s to 1970s California. She currently holds a UC President's Postdoctoral Fellowship at University of California, Riverside and is Assistant Professor of Performance Studies at University of Washington, Bothell. See www.naomibragin.com.

Erin Brannigan is Senior Lecturer in Dance at the University of New South Wales and works in the fields of dance and film as an academic and curator. Erin writes on dance for the Australian arts journal, *RealTime*, and her recent publications are *Moving Across Disciplines: Dance in the Twenty-first Century* (Sydney: Currency House, 2010) and *Dancefilm: Choreography and the Moving Image* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). *Bodies of Thought: 12 Australian Choreographers,* co-edited with Virginia Baxter, is forthcoming with Wakefield Press (South Australia, 2016). She has published articles in *Senses of Cinema, Writings on Dance, Brolga*, and *International Journal of Performance Arts and Digital Media.* She was the founding director of ReelDance (since 1999) and has curated dance screen programs and exhibitions for Sydney Festival 2008, Melbourne International Arts Festival 2003, and international dance screen festivals.

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Pallabi Chakravorty is Associate Professor in the Department of Music and Dance at Swarthmore College. She is a scholar of visual anthropology, performance, and culture. Trained in Kathak dance by respected gurus in Kolkata, Pallabi upholds the integration of theory and practice in her research, teaching, and artistic works. She is the author-editor of four books and proceedings and of several journal articles and book chapters, most notably *Bells of Change: Kathak Dance, Women, and Modernity in India* (Kolkata, India: Seagull, 2008). Her current research focuses on Indian dance and media, especially dance reality shows, Bombay film dance, and the Bollywoodization of Indian culture. Pallabi is the founder and artistic director of Courtyard Dancers (courtyarddancers.org), a nonprofit based in Philadelphia.

Roger Copeland is Professor of Theater and Dance at Oberlin College. His essays about dance, theater, and film have appeared in a wide variety of publications, including *The New York Times, Film Comment, The New Republic, The Village Voice, Dance Theatre Journal, Dance Magazine*, and *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism.* His books include the widely used anthology *What Is Dance? Readings in Theory and Criticism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1983) and *Merce Cunningham: The Modernizing of Modern Dance* (London: Routledge, 2004). He has also contributed essays and chapters to numerous anthologies, including *Dance and Politics, Conversations with Susan Sontag, The Routledge Dance Studies Reader,* and *The American National Biography.*

Andrea Davidson is a former soloist and principal dancer with major North American and European dance companies. She holds an MA in Screendance and a DEA and PhD in Interactive Studies from Université Paris VIII where she taught courses on screendance and dance and new media from 2000 to 2009. Author of the book *Bains Numériques #1: Danse et nouvelles technologies* (Enghien-les-Bains: Centre des arts, 2007) and numerous articles on the subject of dance and new media, she currently teaches at the University of Chichester, UK. An award-winning choreographer-videographer and multimedia artist, Ms. Davidson's works have been presented in festivals, exhibitions and art institutions around the world. She is a recipient of the UNESCO Grand Prix International Videodanse; the Prix Beaumarchais de l'Écriture Multimédia, France; and the Special Jury Prize of the Festival Napolidanza Il Coreografo Elettronico. Following the creation of a dozen choreographies for the stage and screen between 1989 and 1995, explorations with interactive video led to the creation of the interactive CD-rom and installation *La morsure* (1998–2001). Other works include *Paysages Humains* (2001), an interactive scenography created for the theater company Faim de Siècle; the interdisciplinary performance *Maâlem Expérience* (2001–2002) and interactive installation *DiaPH* (2002), created with Moroccan Gnawa master Mahmoud Ghania; the interactive installation *Double Jeu* (2004) with the Académie de Cirque Fratellini, Paris; the multimedia scenography *D'anna-chronique . . . pavlova moi* (2005) and installation *Anaphorique(s)* (2006) with Spanish choreographer Anna Ventura; videoclips, websites, and DVDs for musicians in Paris (2006–2010); *Paroles trouvées* (2007), a spatialized audio, videochoreographic, optical installation with French composer Dominique Besson; the interactive, telematic dance performance *Inter_views* (2009) with Jem Kelly; and the screendances *Scènes Saint-Denis* and *Paroles trouvées* (2009).

Esha Niyogi De is the author of *Empire, Media, and the Autonomous Woman: A Feminist Critique of Postcolonial Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press India) and the co-author of *Trans-Status Subjects: Gender in the Globalization of South and Southeast Asia* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press). Her articles have appeared in such leading journals as *Screen* and *Diacritics*, and in other scholarly venues in the United States, Europe, India, Bangladesh, and Australia. Her new book in progress—tentatively titled *Women's Transborder Cinema: Filmmaking and Femininities across South Asia*—is based on research she recently undertook in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh with support from a Fulbright Multicountry Scholarship. She teaches at UCLA.

Priscilla Guy is a Canadian artist and scholar holding a Masters in Dance from York University, with a thesis focusing on screendance. She founded Mandoline Hybride in 2007, a Montreal-based company that creates interdisciplinary works ranging from screendance to site-specific performances and choreography for the stage. Her work has been presented in Canada, the United States, Spain, and France, as well as at several international screendance festivals. Priscilla is co-founder of Regards Hybrides, a Quebec French platform dedicated to the articulation and development of screendance, through which she writes essays, reviews, and portraits and organizes screenings and professional workshops (see www.mandolinehybride.com and| www.regardshybrides.com).

Marisa C. Hayes is a screendance artist and scholar based in France. She is the founding codirector of the International Video Dance Festival of Burgundy, and codirects Body Cinéma, a company working at the crossroads of performance and new media. Her writing on screendance has been published by Intellect Press, the Society of Dance History Scholars, and a variety of French film and dance research journals. Her own works of screendance have been presented internationally in over twenty countries and have received awards from the New York Dance Films Association and Pentacle Movement Media.

Frances Hubbard is an AHRC-funded PhD student and associate tutor in the Department of Media, Film, and Music at the University of Sussex, UK. Her work explores the corporeal ties between dance, film, and audience through the sensuous, kinesthetic experience and analysis of screen dance. However, since the senses have been trained according to regulatory controls, due attention is also given to the ideology of representation and to the links between embodiment, identities, meanings, and broader relations of inequality.

Naomi Jackson is Associate Professor in the School of Film, Dance, and Theatre, at Arizona State University. She received her PhD in Performance Studies from New York University and MA in Dance Studies from the University of Surrey (United Kingdom). Jackson has edited *Dance, Human Rights, and Social Justice: Dignity in Motion* (with Toni Shapiro-Phim; Scarecrow Press, Lanham, MD: 2008) and is the author of *Converging Movements: Modern Dance and Jewish Culture at the 92nd Street Y* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan, 2002). She has served on the boards of the Society of Dance History Scholars and the Congress on Research in Dance, and is currently working on a book on dance and ethics.

Jessica Jacobson-Konefall is a third-year PhD candidate in Cultural Studies at Queen's University at Kingston, Canada. Her research focuses on how indigenous new media art shapes and defies notions of identity and community in Canadian cities. Jessica teaches undergraduate courses in the English Department at the University of Winnipeg. She has numerous peer-reviewed publications, and she archives and curates at Urban Shaman Contemporary Aboriginal Art Gallery in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Her archival and curatorial work with Gallery Director Daina Warren (Montana Cree) will

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Adanna Kai Jones received her BFA in Dance from Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University and her PhD in Critical Dance Studies from the University of California, Riverside (UCR). With the support of a UCR Dissertation Research Grant, she conducted ethnographic research in 2012 on various Caribbean carnivals throughout the United States and the Caribbean, in Los Angeles, New York City, Barbados, and Trinidad. Her research and dissertation focus on the ways *winin'* (a rolling hip dance) and Caribbean carnivals participate in maintaining a sense of Caribbean identity within the United States.

Rachel Joseph is an Assistant Professor of Theatre at Trinity University. She earned her PhD in Drama from Stanford. Her current book project, *Screened Stages: Representations of Theatre Within Cinema*, analyzes filmic representations of stages, theatre, theatricality, and performance as they have occurred throughout the history of cinema. Her chapter on Charles Chaplin is in *Refocusing Chaplin: A Screen Icon through Critical Lenses* from Scarecrow Press. Her essay ' "Max Fischer Presents": Wes Anderson and the Theatricality of Mourning' is in *The Films of Wes Anderson: Critical Essays on an Indiewood Icon* from Palgrave Macmillan. Her essays have been published in *Performance Research; Octopus: A Visual Studies Journal;* and *The Journal of American Drama and Theatre.*

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Claudia Kappenberg is a performance and media artist and course leader for the MA Performance and Visual Practices program at the University of Brighton, United Kingdom. Ms. Kappenberg leads the international AHRC Screendance Network and is co-founder and editor of *The International Journal of Screendance*. She is a founder-member of the *White Market* performance project and co-curated the London *What IF Festival* in 2010. Her writing has been published in *The International Journal of Performance Arts and Digital Media* and *Anarchic Dance* (London: Routledge, 2006). Her performance projects comprise single-screen work as well as screen-based installations and live site-specific events and have been shown across Europe, the United States, and the Middle East (see www.ckappenberg.info).

Michael Jay McClure, PhD, is an associate professor teaching the history and theory of contemporary art in the Department of Art History at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. This essay is part of a developing manuscript titled *Notes on an Exhibition: Contemporary Art and Its Instructions.*

Sebastián Melo, born in Santiago, Chile, in 1976, has directed and produced art video and documentary films since 2005. His first project, *From Afar,* was awarded the Grand Prix at the Santiago International Documentary Film Festival (FIDOCS). Based in London since 2010, he was awarded the Goldsmiths International Postgraduate Scholarship to pursue an MA in Digital Media, Technology, and Cultural Form. He has worked in collaboration with Nicolas Salazar-Sutil in performance and video projects commissioned by the MOVE Media Lab: *Flatland* (2012), *Labanimations* (2012), and *Mindbeats* (2012). Their latest work, *Structured Light* (2013), formed part of the Bienal de Video y Nuevos Medios at the National Museum of Arts (MNBA). He recently formed Chaka Studio and is committed to developing r&d on interactive documentaries as part of REACT Future Documentary, an AHRC-funded program.

Mirella Misi, researcher, choreographer, and visual artist, investigates the integration of live performance and computer graphics. She is founder and coordinator of Slash Art Technology Research Laboratory (Amsterdam, Holanda), vice-leader of *Electric—Cyberdance* Research Group (UFBA/Brazil), and member of Artech International Association. Misi has a PhD in Performing Arts with specialization in the field of Digital and Interactive Art (Federal University of Bahia, Brazil/The Hague University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands). Her MA, PhD, and postdoctoral studies were sponsored by CAPES Brazil (Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel).

Tracie Bettina Mitchell is a dance and film artist, academic professional, and producer. Her artwork tours globally and is highly celebrated. In 2001 she was a recipient of the prestigious Australia Council for the Arts Fellowship. She was director of Australia's leading international dance screen organization ReelDance Inc. (2008–2010). Her PhD thesis (2014), "Moving Pictures: Dance Screen Making as a Choreographic Process," investigates the creation of dance screen work that is driven by dance. Tracie created and teaches undergraduate and masters dance screen courses at Melbourne University, Victorian College of the Arts.

Ann Murphy is Assistant Professor and Chair of the Dance Department at Mills College in Oakland, California, where she has been on the faculty since 2007. She is co-editor and contributor with Molissa Fenley to *Rhythm Field: The Dance of Molissa Fenley* (Kolkata, India: Seagull, 2015). She also contributed to the monograph *Nework of Pointes,* under the auspices of the Society of Dance History Scholars. As a dance critic and writer, her work has appeared in the *New York Times,* the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *San Jose Mercury*, and the *Oakland Tribune*, among other outlets, and she founded the long-lived Bay Area monthly publication, *In Dance*.

Ana Olenina is Assistant Professor of Film Studies at the University of North Carolina-Wilmington, where she teaches courses on Russian film history, international silent cinema, and film theory. Though her main research focus is the Soviet avant-garde, her broader interests lie at the juncture of early film history and media theory, with an emphasis on historical configurations of sensory experience, emotional response,

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Sita Popat is Professor of Performance and Technology at the University of Leeds, UK. She came into academia through dance, and her research focuses on the body and digital media. She is the author of *Invisible Connections: Dance, Choreography and Internet Communities* (London: Routledge, 2006) and co-editor of *Performance Perspectives: A Critical Introduction* (London: Palgrave, 2011). She is Associate Editor of the *International Journal of Performance Arts and Digital Media.* In her spare time, she enjoys playing World of Warcraft with her sons.

Jenelle Porter is Mannion Family Senior Curator at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston. Porter has written essays for several catalogues and journals, as well as books on artists Christina Ramberg, Trisha Donnelly, Charline von Heyl, Mary Reid Kelley, Stephen Prina, Matthew Ritchie, Arlene Shechet, and Uri Tzaig.

Izabella Pruska-Oldenhof is an award-winning experimental filmmaker and Assistant Professor at the School of Image Arts, Ryerson University in Toronto. As an artist and scholar, her research interests extend to several areas: feminine aesthetics; body art; history and theory of avant-garde art and cinema; psychoanalytic and phenomenological perspectives on embodiment; and Marshall McLuhan's theories on media and the arts.

Douglas Rosenberg has been making screendance and dance documentaries for over twenty-five years. His work for the screen has been continuously curated into significant exhibition venues in the field, both nationally and internationally, and he has been recognized with numerous awards, grants, and fellowships, including the James D. Phelan Art Award in Video, an Emmy Nomination for his *Five Dance Films About Place,* and an Isadora Duncan Award. As a scholar, Professor Rosenberg has brought attention to the field of screendance and been active in shaping the discourse of the field through his published writing, the organization of conferences, the founding of the long-standing ADF International Screendance Festival, and through being a founding editor of *The International Journal of Screendance*. His first book, published by Oxford University Press, *Screendance: Inscribing the Ephemeral Image* (2012), situates

screendance in the wider discourse of the visual arts, performance, and film studies. Rosenberg is Professor of Art at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Chair of the Art Department.

Selby Wynn Schwartz, a recent Visiting Scholar in Performance Studies at NYU, teaches writing at Stanford. She was the dramaturge for Monique Jenkinson's *Instrument* (2012), and is now working with Amie Dowling and Katie Faulkner on new performance projects. Her articles have appeared in *PAJ, Dance Research Journal, Women and Performance, Transgender Studies Quarterly, Critical Dance, In Dance*, *Dance International,* and *Conversations Across the Field of Dance Studies*. In 2011, she was awarded the Society of Dance History Scholars' Lippincott Award for the best English-language article in dance studies; she is currently finishing a book on drag and dance.

Jürgen Simpson is a composer, performer, and lecturer, and is the director of the Digital Media and Arts Research Centre (DMARC), University of Limerick, Ireland. He has composed extensively for dance and collaborated in this capacity with choreographer John Scott and Shobana Jeyasingh, composer Michael Nyman, and, most significantly, seven screendance works with film director Mary Wycherley. His six scores for film director Clare Langan include *Metamorphosis*, which received the principal award at the 2007 Oberhausen International Film Festival. His operatic works include *Thwaite* (2003) with librettist Simon Doyle, which received the Genesis Opera Project's top award. He has created numerous works for gallery spaces and in 2008 created an installation with architects O'Donnell & Tuomey and digital artist Nicholas Ward for the 2008 Venice Architectural Biennale. He was a member of the band The Jimmy Cake from 2000 to 2008 and recorded and produced their third album, *Spectre & Crown*. His work has been supported by RTÉ, The Arts Council of Ireland, Culture Ireland, The British Council, The Arts Council of Northern Ireland, and the Canada Council for the Arts. He is the cofounder of Ireland's Light Moves Festival of Screendance.

Nicolás Salazar Sutil is a Chilean performance and cultural theorist/practitioner, trained in Laban movement analysis and the Laban-Malgrem system of character analysis (Drama Centre London). He is the cofounder and artistic director of the C8 digital dance-theatre collaborative. Since 2011 Salazar Sutil has been a director of Performance Studies international (PSi), Chair of the Independent Scholar Committee of PSi, and a member of PSi's international Committee. He is the co-founder of MoVe (Movement Visualisation in e-Cultures), a network for independent research in interdisciplinary methodologies using graphic movement analysis and new media. He has directed and assisted a number of productions, workshops, and laboratories in schools and universities in the United Kingdom and in Latin America. He received the 1994 Academic Excellence scholarship from the Universidad de Chile, and the 1995 Instituto Chileno-Norteamericano award for his adaptation of Arthur Kopit's play *Wings* in Santiago de Chile. He is currently a Lecturer in Dance and Digital Arts at the University of Surrey, Guildford, UK.

Susana Temperley is a Specialist in Art Criticism, with a Licentiate Degree in Social Communication from the University of Buenos Aires, and she is a professor in the transdepartmental branch of Art Criticism at the National University Institute of Arts. She has given seminars and published articles on videodance, dance criticism, and semiotics in both national and international press media. Since 2007 she has organized the International Symposium on Videodance within the frame of the Videodance Festival of Buenos Aires. At present she is working on her PhD thesis, "La danza y sus bordes. Un estudio sistémico de la Danza—Teatro y de la danza en interacción con la tecnología y la vida cotidiana."

Alanna Thain is Associate Professor of World Cinemas and Cultural Studies at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. She codirects the Moving Image Research Laboratory, devoted to studying relations between bodies and moving image media. Her research connects affect, media, and the body, focusing on contemporary cinema, animation, and screendance. Her book, *Bodies in Time: Suspense, Affect, Cinema* is forthcoming from the University of Minnesota Press. Having written about Marie Chouinard, Dave St-Pierre, Jan Fabre, David Lynch, and William Kentridge, as well as questions of time, embodiment, and cinema, she is currently completing two book projects, on Canadian animator Norman McLaren, and on "anarchival cinemas," exploring dance and performance in postcinematic production.

Pia Tikka, PhD, filmmaker-researcher, has directed the feature films *Daughters of Yemanjá* (1996) and *Sand Bride* (1998), and worked in a range of international film productions. Her enactive cinema project *Obsession* (2005) received a Möbius Prix Nordic award for interactive storytelling. She is co-author of the interactive film-game *The Third Woman* (2009). After the publication of her book *Enactive Cinema: Simulatorium Eisensteinense* (Saarbrücken, Germany: Lambert Academic, 2008), she has elaborated further the concept of "enactive media." Currently, Pia Tikka leads her research group NeuroCine at Aalto University (Finland), which combines filmmaking practice with the methods of neuroimaging in order to study the neural basis of cinematic imagination.

Kim Vincs is Director of the Deakin Motion Lab, Deakin University's motion capture studio and performance technology research center, which she established in 2006. She has been a choreographer for over twenty years, and has focused on interactive dance technology for the last ten. Recent works include *The Crack Up*, which premiered at the Merlyn Theatre, Coopers Malthouse, in October 2014, and *Multiverse*, with Garry Stewart and Australian Dance Theatre. Kim has five Australian Research Council projects in dance, technology and science, and numerous industry collaborations in motion capture, movement analysis, and digital art. She has commercial motion capture credits for computer games, television commercials, and film, including the Cannes Silver Lion winning *Nocturnal Migration*.

Sophie Walon trained as a ballet dancer at Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional de Paris before deciding to move to academia. After graduating with a multidisciplinary

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Chirstinn Whyte completed a PhD in 2008 at Middlesex University, London, researching choreographic practice for the screen. Her work, created in partnership with digital artist Jake Messenger, has been shown at screendance and short film festivals worldwide, and her writing has been featured in publications including *RealTime, Dance Theatre Journal, Film International*, and *Filmwaves*.

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INTRODUCTION

DOUGLAS ROSENBERG

THE *Oxford Handbook of Screendance Studies* focuses on an area of scholarship that is situated at the intersections of performance, media, film, and dance studies, where it resonates with other contemporary approaches to articulating creative mediated performance for the screen. Situated on or with any kind of screen, *screendance* may invoke or perform any style or manifesto of dance. Indeed, screendance merges the languages of dance and media and produces hybrid aggregates of form and meaning: more than a delivery system for dance, screendance is also more than a simple recapitulation of preexisting cinematic or televisual tropes. The ecology of screendance is thus complex and full of numerous micro-ecologies, and while still in the process of defining itself, it has already generated a new and challenging literature; the resulting works are pushing at the boundaries of identifiable and traditionally wrought disciplines and their histories, often entangling those knowledges into complicated constative proposals. Similar to the way that scholars, practitioners, and curators engaged with video art in its early days, from the late 1960s through the 1970s, so too do scholars now enter the dialogs and practices of screendance through a vast network of tributaries, including the theory, history, and practice of dance; feminist theory; anthropology; queer theory; film studies; performance studies; and the visual arts.

The *Oxford Handbook of Screendance Studies* is a collection of critical, historical, and theoretical texts on screendance: a scholarly index that collectively explores an artform that has become increasingly critical to conversations beyond its previous borders. Although this volume purports to have a single focus, it in fact comprises a compendium of knowledge production that derives from a myriad of contemporary generative methods and organizational systems. Furthermore, while the *Handbook* is split into three distinct subcategories—Theories, Histories, and Practices—I would stress that such categorization is both porous and flexible. The parsing of chapters into categories is intended to create a field guide that maps as many recognizable traits of the species of screendance as possible, while assuming that others will be missed and others still have yet to be identified. The structure of this collection thus contributes to the

general culture of screendance in a way that promotes interdisciplinary dialog, in order to explore continually evolving hybrids of theory and practice.

While there have been important and ongoing developments in the relationship of dance to the screen since the earliest days of photographic representation, it is not until the latter part of the twentieth century that it became apparent that there was an identifiable collective body of work that might be organized by its formal characteristics into something that could be called screendance. It is since the start of the new millennium that screendance has secured its place in the larger art world through festivals, museum and gallery exhibitions, and a significant body of scholarly research, and it has become an international movement populated by artists who bring their unique geographical voice to this hybrid of dance and the moving image. As the practice has expanded globally, there has been an ever-increasing current of writing from established scholars as well as graduate students, PhD candidates, and practicing artists (sometimes one and the same) about works whose method of circulation and endpoint is the screen. The earliest modern pioneers of the field (Maya Deren, Amy Greenfield, Yvonne Rainer, and others) were proponents of a creative and simultaneously analytical style that provides a model for a contemporary approach to writing that is simultaneously historical, practical, and theoretical. As an example, while speaking about her transition from live dance to film in a 1976 interview with Lyn Blumenthal, Rainer noted that

> Film just seemed to be more pliable and less static [than dance]. Cutting could be fast, could be slow, could be static. And you could get instant transformations of the field—close-up, wide shot, all these variation . . . this became clear to me when feminist film theory began to be articulated—the implications of the look as duplicated and multiplied in the spectator's look. All of these interfacings of the gaze were contained in cinema.[1]

In this quote Rainer articulates a working model for this book and further, for the field of screendance: the voice of the artist simultaneously framing her practice in theoretical and historical spaces.

The landscape of screendance has undergone significant shifts since the earliest days of the historicization of the field. Partially due to new areas of scholarly inquiry, screendance has also become much more visible, an increased cultural presence that is in part due to the digital evolution and to new technologies of representation and circulation. As screens in the digital age have significantly diminished their physical mass, screendance makers have become able to consider the screen not as an object, but rather a mobile portal, unencumbered by the mass of the apparatus. The screen has expanded—or shrunk—into a site-specific space with an infinite horizon, a landscape of potential that has converted the body to a reference point, a theory, a visual metaphor, or even an absent space of contemplation. In this new ecology of the screen, the material of film and video has become absorbed into the material of digital culture. Out of the days of videotape, cathode-ray tubes, and the closed loop of broadcast television,

we now find all the desires of contemporary art and culture—mobility, accessibility, spectacle, trans-disciplinarity—fully present in screendance.

In this milieu, works for the screen may rely on the strategies of live or *off*-screen dance as methods for the creation of screen-specific projects. The juxtaposition of live and mediated dance performance may therefore swerve into the territories of documentary or experimental filmmaking, video art, and other recognizably coded screen genres. Indeed, despite the methodological expansiveness of screendance, there is also a significant adherence to what we can now refer to as "traditional" methodologies, whereby choreography is brought into the space of the screen as purely aesthetic interpretations of movement in presentational space. Such is the gravitational pull of the screen: it is arguably a *tabula rasa*, disembodied as it has become from tubes, encasements, cords, or most tethers to the physical world. It is a void that has become increasingly alluring to makers of dance and to makers of screenic work that see bodies in motion, or perhaps simply motion itself, as the kinetic equivalent of language, or further still as "content."

Film, photography, video, and other image-making technologies leave traces of their own iterations, as well as evidence of experiments, inquisitive pondering, and sometimes failed theses. As scholars gather such traces together under the organizing structure of screendance, we can begin to see patterns, collective thinking, and propositions about how dancing bodies conform themselves to mediation. However, since the earliest collaborative efforts of artists concerned with the optics of movement, there have been traces of critical response that have surfaced outside the discourse of screendance. We find such traces, for instance, in writing about the photographic studies of Eadweard Muybridge; in Rene Clair's *Entr'acte*; in the kinetically charged painting of the Cubists; in the chronometric images of the French photographer Étienne-Jules Marey; and later in the experimental films of Norman McLaren, Shirley Clarke, Maya Deren, Amy Greenfield, and others.[2] In critiques of such works, the mention of dance per se or of bodies engaged in dance-like activities, not to mention their screenic representation, is often tangential to the central function or focus of the writing. It is an afterimage of the work, something that resonates, but in the distance, outside the frame of the generally mono-disciplinary theorizing around the cultural production of film, photography, or painting.

In contrast, the writing in this volume is both multidisciplinary and purposeful in its commitment to the very *idea* of screendance as an organizing principle and as a generative method for framing contemporary discussions about the body on screen. The authors in this volume have the benefit of history: that is, the distance between a present in which scholarship has been given the freedom to roam through porous and malleable boundaries, and a past that has generously provided archives, traces, manifestos, indices, and a rich visual and material culture that the authors herein ponder through a myriad of lenses. And not unlike a recognizable leitmotif of modernism itself—one in which practitioners themselves have used writing as an activist platform by which to shape their own field—many of the authors in this volume are also practitioners. In fact, the idea of practice-led research is palpable if not explicit in the

following pages. It is palpable not in the sense that the chapters are written as reportage of personal engagements with media or technologies of representation, but rather with this tacit assumption: that all have had an engagement with screenic representation in a way that is quite unlike the historical models of arms-length distancing of critical commentators from actual artistic mediums and everyday creative practice. In other words, the authors in this volume not only theorize about screendance, but are engaged with the tools of production (digital image capturing devices, the Internet, cameras, data streaming, movement in general), often as a creative practice, or if not, as a regular enterprise—a social practice or a practice of everyday life.

While a number of single-authored books and collections share as their focus various genres and scholarly approaches to the relationship between dance and media, the publication of *The Oxford Handbook of Screendance Studies* marks an intentional institutional recognition of a nascent yet truly vibrant area of scholarship. Indeed, the practice of screendance has been present in university curricula for more than two decades now, yet the literature and scholarship that might contextualize and organize a theoretical framework for the field has been evolving more slowly. This volume is intended to illuminate the critical thinking surrounding the practice. The authors collected here are an intergenerational, cross-disciplinary group with research specialties that cover a breathtaking landscape of modalities and methods of thinking about the subject of screendance. Additionally, they write from a diverse and inclusive geographical span, thus voicing global perspectives about the field. To reiterate, the intent of this grouping is not to ossify thinking about the field, its histories or practices, but rather to promote even more oscillations and tremors.

Histories

Screendance has been situated by various scholars as emanating from one of three historical tributaries of creative practice: the visual or plastic arts,[3] film and cinema,[4] and, of course, dance itself.[5] Sophisticated and convincing arguments can be made for the primacy of any of these tributaries, and arguably all three have some accuracy. However, regardless of which point of origin one adheres to, or wherever one places screendance within such histories, they are all, within the context of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, framed by the narratives of modernism. Artists in the age of modernism have inhabited the spaces of painting, photography, film, dance, language, music, and sculpture, as well as the interstices between each. In those spaces, artists proffered cultural objects as a reflection of and as commentary on the modern era. Sifting through or indexing of the detritus and/or artifacts of modernism therefore reveals a cacophony of styles and disciplinary overlaps. Contrary to any attempt to chart a path of purity throughout the history of one disciplinary practice, modernism is replete with appropriation, indiscriminate formal couplings, and a general messiness that is often at odds with the historical rhetoric of the era. If the prevailing thesis of modernism relies on a

temporal/formal mode of identification,[6] that mode is quickly derailed by any number of exceptions to the rules of canonical inclusion, and moreover, modernist narratives of visual culture have relied on singularly recognizable genres of creative practice while eliding the presence of others.

Dance is one such practice that has a considerable shadow life—namely, its history and representation in the optical media of photography and the moving image. This ghost index has endured throughout the visualization of the modern era despite often hiding in plain sight. That is to say, the visual traces of dance, lacking the temporal values of live performance, are generally secondary to its makers' intent. And although *The Oxford Handbook of Screendance Studies* makes a case for a subculture of modernism that does in fact take the screen as its end point, dance has not historically or generally been intended as a performance for screen. Yet the screen has often proven to be a particularly apt site for dance, even more so in this contemporary moment.

The intertwined but differently rooted twin narratives of screendance are populated, on one branch, by generally mainstream films that have taken dance as their source material. These are often Hollywood (and Bollywood) entertainments in which dance is embedded in the narrative arc of the films—such as the work of Busby Berkeley, Gene Kelly's *Singin' in the Rain*, and the numerous contributions of Shirley Temple. The genre of the musical represented by such works has been resurrected in films like *Saturday Night Fever*, in the work of choreographer Bob Fosse, and in the 2002 film adaptation of the musical *Chicago*.[7] All of these films are distinguished by high entertainment values and the use of dance in service to a narrative arc.

Further back in this lineage are the silent films of Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, Harold Lloyd, and others who often used movement to pierce or upset a narrative arc, or as a moment of comic relief. Ironically, however, these earlier silent films share more in common with screendance's *second* branch, a branch populated by auteurs, amateurs, and outsiders whose work bears a significantly different inscription. Such figures include Rene Clair, Maya Deren, Ed Emschwiller, Shirley Clark, Elaine Summers, and others, all of whom are citizens of modernism—experimentalists, activists, and nonconformists—and whose work articulates individual manifestos for screendance. These artists have collectively helped to create a digressive map of the field over the span of more than a century. The makers in this genealogical strand of screendance generally jettison narrative in favor of a poetics of the body: for them, the body in motion is valorized for its humanist signifiers and movement is the *lingua franca* of the screen image. Repetition, sequencing, reimagining, and the recorporealizing of bodies[8] in the context of choreographic sensibility is the project of their interrogations.

Both branches reflect the inheritance of their respective genealogies; the first significantly resonates with the theory and practice of film as both an art form of the *fin de siècle* and its subsequent manifestations as re-envisioned by Hollywood. The second branch reflects the imprint and influence of the visual arts and the avant-garde from the earliest days of modernism through the digital age. Surely there are overlaps and contested territories in this analysis. However, these genealogies are now populated by artists and theorists who labor over such differences and the rationales that support

them. They quote and appropriate across genres, critique the dominant and often hege-monic normative structures of the forms they choose to frame, and with their work reify subgenres of the field.

Throughout recent art history (especially in the twentieth century) numerous works of art across divergent media suggest and imply a methodology of screendance, as if makers were considering all the essentials of screendance—kineticism, the body, "cho-reography," performance, presence, and other modes of perceiving movement—but lacking a context for discussion of the work *as* screendance. For instance, as I have argued elsewhere, the photographs (and in some cases films) of Étienne-Jules Marey and Eadweard Muybridge could very well be included in the rhetoric of dance for the screen. Many of the Cubist and Futurist canvases and even a painting such as Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase* (inspired as it was by the work of Muybridge) could be considered as a study for screenic dance.[9]

Following this line of thinking, as early as 1922, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy (the artist and photographer associated with the Bauhaus) exhorted "artists to rethink their use of technology to create, rather than capture, new sounds and visions."[10] This is a notable and rarely cited prescription. It points toward a technologically mediated experience that is more than mimetic. It describes a space that was subsequently populated by art-ists such as the composer John Cage, video artist Nam Jun Paik, multimedia performer Laurie Anderson, and others for whom technology was a means by which to create temporal, durational, immersive multisensory hybrids. For dance and its relationship to mediation, Moholy-Nagy's exhortation leads to an aesthetic of screen performance in which the screen may be considered as a creative space rather than simply an archi-val one.

As a more extended example, we might consider the dances (and their ephemera) produced by Oscar Schlemmer at the Bauhaus beginning in 1922. Schlemmer was a choreographer, painter, sculptor, designer, and "Master of Form" at the Bauhaus Theater Workshop in Germany who found in dance a method for demonstrating his ideas about form, technology, and the modern era. Schlemmer's dances, created in col-laboration with visual artists, including the architect Walter Gropius, were intended to reinforce the Bauhaus Manifesto, which distinctly called for a merging of all art forms into a *Gesamkunstwerk,* or "total work of art." This merging of forms, which de-hierarchized or democratized visual culture and the work of art, has slowly eroded ideas of artistic purity across all disciplines since the earliest days of the Bauhaus. In 1922, for instance, Schlemmer created his *Triadic Ballet*, a "dance" in which the dancers' movement was mostly predetermined by the significant limitations of the "costumes," perhaps more accurately described as wearable sculptures. In the historic photographic stills of the performance we see "dancers" wearing architecturally severe costumes—angular and gestural, seemingly circus-like in some cases, and bloatedly anthropomor-phic in others. The dancers seem to be encumbered and kinetically hobbled by their costumes. The choreography of *Triadic Ballet* is determined to a large degree by such restrictions; it is flat, angular, and doll-like. While Schlemmer's Bauhaus dances most certainly occurred under the auspices of modernism, then, they do not adhere, in the

end, to the purist ideology of the dominant mode of later modernism.[11] The Bauhaus conformed multiple media to its own ideology, resulting in the kind of interdisciplinarity that we see as a benchmark of screendance.

The Bauhaus was at its height in the era when many artists in Europe, such as Oskar Fischinger and Viking Eggeling, were experimenting with film as a creative medium. Though film was not a major focus of the Bauhaus, its presence was clearly felt. Its principals, particularly Lazlo Moholy-Nagy, were certainly aware of the potential of film, though perhaps lacking in technical training for the medium. As Gregory Zinman points out, "Film's technological nature lent itself to the humanist machine aesthetic Moholy-Nagy was developing."[12] Experimenting with film and kinetic sculpture, Moholy-Nagy had particular admiration for the cine-experiments of Hans Richter, Viking Eggeling, and others who used kineticism as a motivating factor in their work; he concluded "that kineticism should be the goal of the moving picture."[13] He also made numerous other statements about film and its value to the ideals of the Bauhaus as well, noting that for use in the theater, "Films can also be projected onto various surfaces . . ." and "Nothing stands in the way of making use of complex APPARATUS such as film."[14]

The Bauhaus also left a trove of visual ephemera, including still photographic images. Such discrete, performative images certainly set the stage for the use of moving pictures as a method of realizing their theatrical ambitions, creating an aesthetic set of possibilities for future screendance practitioners, even without leaving behind actual examples *of* screendance. In other writings, Maholey-Nagy refers to "the thousand-eyed NEW DIRECTOR, equipped with all the modern means of understanding and communication,"[15] and perhaps more presciently notes that his stages should be constructed in such a way as to mimic cinema, "in order to bring certain action movements on stage into prominence, as in film 'close-ups.'"[16] While these proscriptions were largely hypothetical, they suggest that the space of theater and kinetic performance could be translated or remediated to the space of cinema. The dances of Oscar Schlemmer were, therefore, a product of such a remediation.

Schlemmer's work, largely known through still photographs, was reconstructed for film by Debra McCall in 1982. The filmed versions have an aura of originality and lead the viewer to assume they are the original, the screendance version of Schlemmer's imagination, or perhaps lost films from Schlemmer's own lifetime. As *New York Times* dance critic Jack Anderson writes, "Schlemmer's dances were dances that only a painter could have choreographed."[17] Such a statement points to the undeniably hybrid nature of Schlemmer's proto-screendance. Though not intended for film, Schlemmer's "dances" were camera-ready, precinematic and awaiting the enlivening effect of moving image technologies for half a century. The reverberations of Schlemmer's dances and the way in which they collapsed disciplinary boundaries led to the kind of stacking of disparate practices into a single temporal envelope that has come to be associated with postmodernism in general and also, ultimately, with a practice and methodology such as screendance. The Schlemmer dances are inscribed on screen as reconstructions of live work and have become the only image that fully represents his work; the

films supersede the original and make the lingering traces of the dances cinematic (or *experienced* as cinematic). And while the filmed versions of the Bauhaus dances are literally reconstructions, the process of cinematic reification is a significant model or methodology even today. The use of screenic space as a staging site for the translation of "live" dance into its mediated referent gestures to a continued desire to re-purpose the "original" into yet another "authentic" work of art.

THEORIES

Hidden within both strands of the intertwined narrative articulated above are implicit manifestos for screendance. Indeed, throughout the histories of modernism, manifestos have driven progressive ideologies across all disciplines. Each movement in every field, whether it be Dada, film (the Soviet school, Vertov's Kinok Manifesto, Dogme 95), surrealism, abstract expressionism, minimalism, or in music, serialism, is predicated on the annihilation of the previous movement—indeed its complete erasure and replacement by the new. In this avant-garde model, theory outpaces practice in that new theories or manifestos are often (as in the case of my suggestions about the "screendances" of the Bauhaus) hypotheticals, suggestive of what a new art might look like or how it might function. Such theoretical propositions are often aspirational, requiring some sort of artist/audience to latch on and transform ideas into action.

For example, the publication of Amy Greenfield and Elaine Summers's *Filmdance* catalog in 1983 (on the occasion of their curated exhibition in New York of the same name) initiated a sense of a collective consciousness of a particular history and a timeline for dance-specific screenic work. While individual artists such as Maya Deren and critics such as Sidney Peterson had written and published critical writing about dance on screen, the exhibition and catalog for *Filmdance* created a self-reflective moment for artists working at the intersection of dance and the moving image. This moment has proven to be particularly valuable to subsequent generations of artists and those concerned with theorizing and historicizing screendance. Through screenings and printed matter, *Filmdance* bracketed a body of film whose focus was dance set within a temporal frame (1890s–1983), a body of experiential and analytical texts, and a bibliography and references for other seminal texts dating back to the mid-twentieth century. The aggregate effect was the creation of a significant, galvanizing cultural reference point that holds its ground in the mirror of history. It is not a stretch to say that without this document, the subsequent activity in the field would have moved forward only at a distinct disadvantage and without a landmark or horizon line by which to triangulate its movements.

Yet the *Filmdance* catalog itself was not without equally important precedents. In 1970, Gene Youngblood's seminal text, *Expanded Cinema*, suggested that cinema had metastasized beyond its borders and that such borders had become both artificial and

increasingly porous. Adopting the term "intermedia," he noted that not only had technology reshaped the formal characteristics of cinema—how it was made and its material culture—but that the internal structures of cinema had also undergone significant revisions. Youngblood offered a number of close readings, among them of *Fuses* by Carolee Schneeman, a collaged and hand-painted 16mm film in which he pointed out the deconstruction of linear time: the way the film was cut without regard to narrativity, and the structuralist methods by which Schneeman and her partner James Tenney created impossible bodies out of the marriage of image and edit. Youngblood also noted the kineticism of *Fuses* as a byproduct of such interventions. Throughout the book, Youngblood laid the conceptual foundation for the kind of purposeful slippages and incursions across multiple media and disciplines that ultimately helped to generate similar shifts in other areas of practice. Simultaneously, across the arts, similar conceptual ruptures were taking place.

As cinema found itself "expanded" across the pages of Youngblood's book, so too did dance in the wake of such collaborative initiatives as the Judson Dance Theater, and later in postmodern dance. As artists from multiple and disparate practices began to collaborate with dance artists, and dance turned its eye toward the contemporary art of the moment, the boundaries that had insured that individual disciplines and areas of practice remained autonomous began to dissolve. What followed was a radical reformation of not only the art world—signified by the birth of body art, land art, video art, installation art, and more—but also a recasting of dance as a part of the wider art world, a part of the expanded consciousness of art practice per se. This was perhaps most visually personified in the transition of the choreographer Yvonne Rainer to filmmaker Yvonne Rainer. Rainer expanded dance into cinema with early films such as *Hand Movie*, a five-minute black-and-white 8mm film (shot by William Davis) made in 1966 (Figure 0.1).

Hand Movie suggests that the isolated movements and articulations of her own hand on screen may be considered as a site-specific dance for the camera. *Hand Movie* foreshadows Richard Serra's 1968 film *Hand Catching Lead* (16mm, three minutes, black and white), in which the sculptor's hand is seen in close-up, severed from the body, attempting again and again to catch the slivers of lead sheet falling from just out of the top of the frame (Figure 0.2). As he manages to catch some of the lead and other attempts fail, the hand in the frame becomes blackened, marked by its momentary interaction with the falling lead and thus fixing a cinematic trace of a kinetic yet minimal event. In each of these boundary crossings, the screen is the point of reception for the viewer, the point of encounter, and the record of the activity.

The third work of note in this pivotal moment of expansion in both dance and art was Bruce Nauman's *Walking in an Exaggerated Manner around the Perimeter of a Square*, 1967–1968 (Figure 0.3).

Nauman's slow-motion, hyperaccentuated walk following a taped square on the floor of his studio was choreographed by Meredith Monk and is significant in a number of ways. First, it is a visual artist's *idea of dance* made into visual culture of dance. It
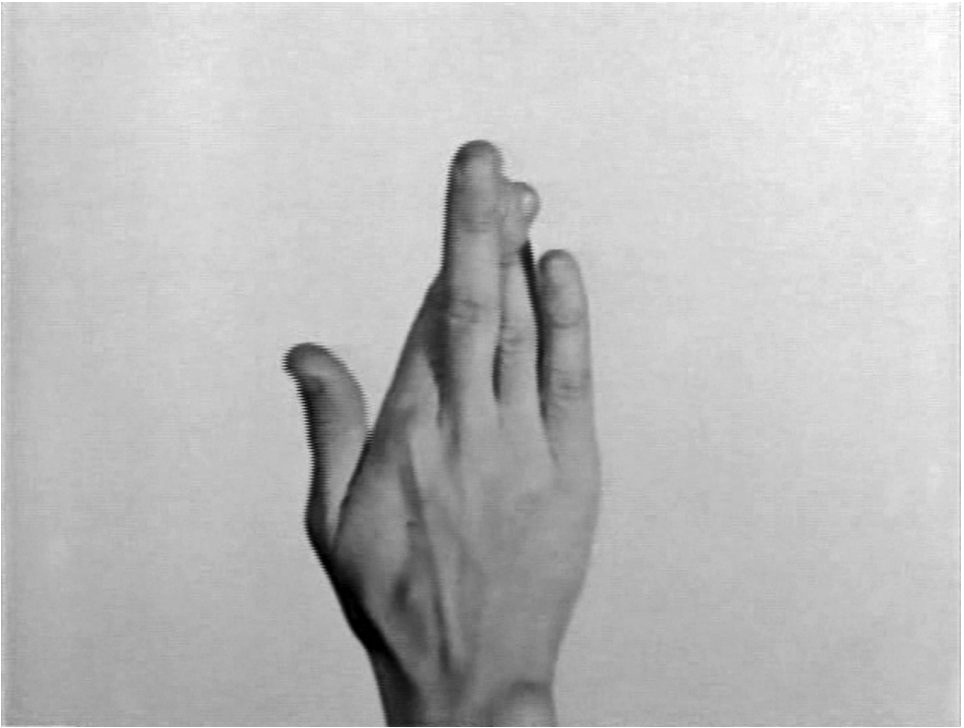
FIG. 0.1 Yvonne Rainer, *Hand Movie* (film still), 1966.
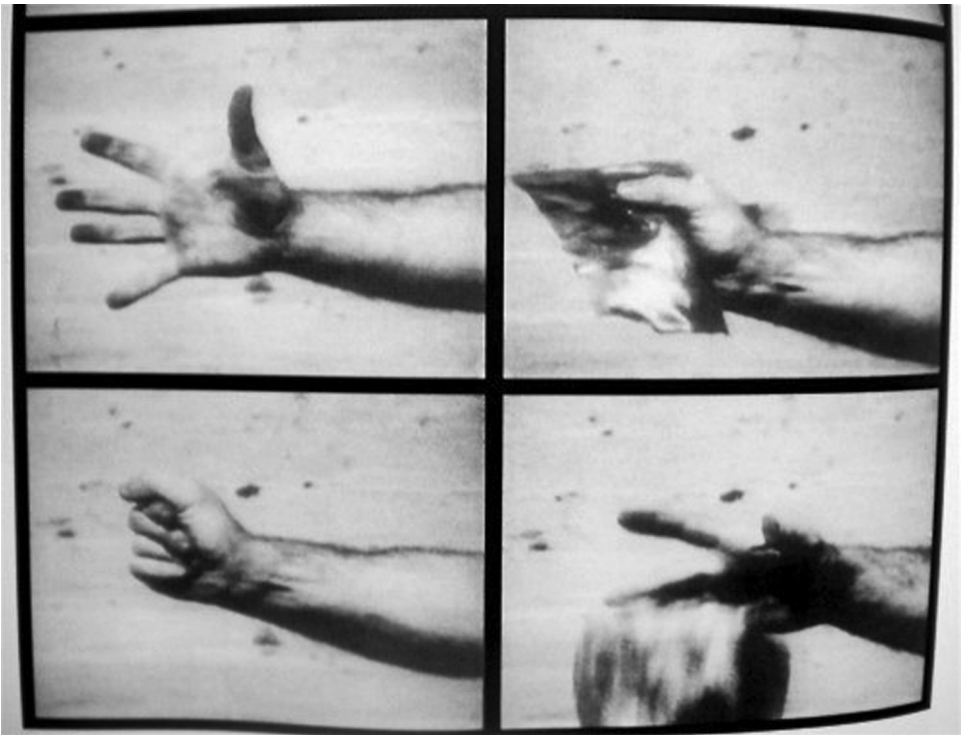
FIG. 0.2 Richard Serra, *Hand Catching Lead* (film still), 1968.
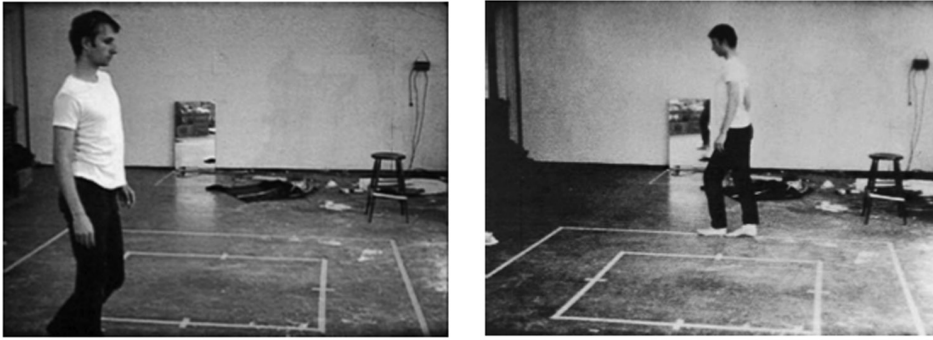
FIG. 0.3 Bruce Nauman, *Walking in an Exaggerated Manner around the Perimeter of a Square* (film still), 1967–1968.

inhabits ideas that flowed from the Judson Group, but filters them through the nascent aesthetics of body and performance art, even sculpture. The work was subsequently exhibited on a video monitor atop a pedestal, looping endlessly. The viewer experienced this project as an object which alluded to both sculpture and dance simultaneously. Each of the three works mentioned above offers a distinct aesthetic statement about the possibilities of movement; a relationship to cinema that foreshadows a wave of dance made for the screen which continues to the present.

In its contemporary form, dance has become an intermedia practice. Any historical overview of dance through the present era would arguably be compelled to address the ever-increasing presence of media and its use by choreographers both as a scenic device and also as a primary site of expression. The relationship of dance to mediation or to various cinematic tropes and strategies begins, literally, at the beginning—at the genesis of photographic representation in the mid-nineteenth century—and continues on through each and every technological development from still photography to film, video, digital media, and its subsequent permutations. Dance has, since the earliest technologies of image capture, been a constant point of focus. The persistent gaze toward dancing bodies continues and deepens as film and analog technologies give way to the electronic landscape of video and the transition to digital technologies. There is dance that we *only* know through its photographic traces: remnants and shards of celluloid or ghosted electronic documents, barely there yet hauntingly compelling. These are documents of dance that have quite possibly outlived their intended functionality and now exist as a kind of archival memory, an aesthetic of absence. But there is also, of course, dance that is intended to be *only knowable* through its screenic self in which the trace is intentional—it is the thing it is meant to be and not a byproduct of another process or gesture. In the first iteration, documentation, it is a functional use of media; in the second, it is a site-specific proposal whose end point is the screen and a creative intermedia hybrid of dance and the moving image. In both cases, and for the purposes of this book, it is dance in relational proximity to its own mediated representation that is of interest.

Practices

Screendance is a practice that relies on the technologies of mass communication; it is image-based, part of contemporary visual culture, and creates its own contemporaneous archive as new work is produced in the digital age. As such, the practice of screendance can be read as an aggregate of surface qualities, cinematic techniques, choreographic gestures, references, allusions, and tropes. Meaning is made by the gestalt of all of the properties in the visual and aural field, beyond simply the dancing framed on screen. The technologies of representation are not transparent; they are fraught with their own histories and add layers of meaning to the moving image. The dancing bodies that we encounter on screen are, in practice, bound by and tethered to all things screenic, to the method of presentation and delivery, and to all the politics and critical components of the discourses that frame such screenic bodies.

But what constitutes a "screendance practice" in the current era? Issues of mobility, access, a consideration for a working life that is ethical and or sustainable, that is democratic and inclusive—such concerns have entered the territory of "practice" in general. Historically, an artist produced objects or performances for a public, and that public, along with the critical community, received such creative gestures and spoke back to the artist either as consumer or critic. While such a definition of "practice" may still exist in screendance—situated as it is at the edges of contemporary art culture, and generally without MFA-level or PhD degree–granting programs to support it—today's practitioners have been able to fabricate discreet and personal versions of "practice." This sometimes includes teaching or writing in their version, dancing in companies, or working as choreographers and self-skilling in media production. In other cases it may include curating or mixing disciplines together with service in the form of community-based or activist work. A screendance practice is perhaps least knowable by its formal characteristics and some of its participants may simply pass through the field coming from or going to another disparate area of practice. Some may be media professionals whose relationship to dance begins with documentation, software, or Web-related technical support. For a significant number of artists, screendance *in practice* is a small part of a larger engagement with the arts. For some, a relationship with screendance per se only occurs when a project seems to situate itself within an exhibition opportunity or funding stream or simply out of an interest in the field.

As with other art forms, each work of screendance might be considered a thesis—a proposal that sets in motion a series of visual hypotheticals. In practice, such artist-driven hypotheses historically have functioned as salvos across the bow of prevailing discourses and/or ideologies. Works of art have been used to disorient and provoke the status quo, to advocate for specific causes, to redirect collective energies toward social change and new understandings of culture through creative self-expression. Often, this path is littered with failure, full of projects or visions that, built on overly ambitious desires, collapse under their own weight, creating what Nathan Jandl has called

"a pedagogy of failure"[18]: a kind of failing forward that empowers the next wave of the avant-garde. There is a strand of contemporary art practice referred to as "experimental." While less frequently used to describe screendance, the implication of the term experimental is that while the work may not achieve its stated goal, it throws itself into the abyss as a sacrifice—a part of a larger communal surge toward the creation of new models of understanding, of meaning-making, and of paradigmatic re-envisioning. Such attempts at defining new boundaries of expression are marked by risk, a sense of danger, and the unknown, and are often publicly received with skepticism and even rejection. Those that value experimentation frequently find themselves at odds with a field as it achieves more mainstream success. However, through various strategies, a community of practice may create spaces in which a number of conversations about a form may simultaneously take place.

One such strategy among global screendance communities is critical activism; artists are engaged not only in making screendance work, but in distributing, programming, and analyzing it. The importance of such collaborative advocacy resonates throughout this book. Makers of screendance also choreograph; direct films; write conference papers, essays, and books; curate festivals; distribute work via the Web; and teach courses and workshops in screendance at institutions of higher education and elsewhere. Therefore, while possible, it is no longer practical to separate various methodologies into unyielding and distinct areas of specialization. Under this new paradigm, theory and practice are conflated and reconstituted into a new model. And while this commingling of academically defined areas of knowledge production certainly does take place in other creative disciplines, in the contemporary era, screendance is fully born out of this crucible and sustained by it.

In articulating a field of inquiry we often tend to ask, "what if?" We take an intellectual or kinetic leap into the void and follow the logical progress of answers to our hypothesis. It is a kind of creative improvisation that flips embodied gesture and intellectual gesture. The gesture of supposition is performative; it requires a full-body investment and a re-enactment in which we, the readers, are forced to reimagine ourselves in the mode of the supposition, as that person in that culture having that experience and translating it all to our own present, undoing it and reconstructing the possibilities as we suppose they may have been. It is in this kind of embodied supposition that theory and practice are synthesized. To suppose is to envision, to embody, to visualize, and to verbalize. To suppose is also to conceptualize and to theorize, to historicize. So, for instance, what if x is *all* dance and what if y is *all* screens? Suppose this is true. Further suppose that x + y = screendance and that in order to *be* screendance in this equation both x and y must be present. That simple equation might then serve as the control for this book. In each chapter the reader will find both x and y. The reader will find dance, (x), perhaps from India or the streets of Oakland, California. She may find dance from YouTube or from a 1930s musical. In each chapter the reader will find y (screens). Such screens may be in the form of gossamer or silica, they may be in a fine movie palace, they may be the bodies of performers, or in the most common form of digital gadgets

and devices. Thus this x + y equation will be the rhetorical mantra in the subsequent pages and it is my hope that out of such an agreement on the part of both the authors in this volume and the readers of it, new knowledge will transpire in both theory and practice as well as in the understanding of the complex terrain of screendance.

The Texts

Texts, like gestures, often seem familiar, recalling a particular sensation or articulating a fleeting observation. They are a kind of sense-memory. Many of the texts in this volume initiate their theses with a moment of familiarity—a Hollywood film, a well-known theory, an issue of cultural import, and so on. However, they all then share a common gesture: they suture those familiar moments to the practice of screendance and open a dialog that often destabilizes our previous understanding of various cultural tropes and productions. YouTube, Busby Berkeley, televisual music performance, Loïe Fuller, and a host of similar subjects are framed in terms of various theoretical propositions and "screened" on the pages in this book. Here, I am purposely suggesting that knowledge in the condition of scholarship is always screened and rescreened, a process that allows for some particulars (traces of knowledge, sensations of experience) to pass through and others not. A page is a screen in the same way that the membrane or material used to capture reflected or projected light and bounce it back to the viewer is also a screen. Screens are viewable spaces, and in these pages both practice-led research and research-led practice project new forms of knowledge onto the page.

Returning to my earlier example of the twinned narratives of screendance, there is a third branch that leads us to the present and beyond. This branch is one in which the historical past of screendance, which to some extent has been more or less binary, morphs into something rhizomatic—a space rather than a practice, both relational and locative, with global and regional signatures. In this iteration, the Internet and the Web play an increasing role that holds forth alongside more traditional methods of production and circulation. This mirrors related developments generally in a postconceptual and postmaterial art world and specifically in dance, which increasingly finds itself more a part of than apart from the art world proper.[19] By the mid-1960s contemporary art had begun its gradual process of dematerialization, a process which was subsequently cataloged by Lucy Lippard. Her observations in *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966–72*[20] note the dissolution of esthetic boundaries, a shift to conceptualism, and the elevated value of process as the art world moved toward new models of both practice and theory. Lippard's point about the move toward "art as idea and art as action" in 1967 to 1968 gestures toward some of the historical roots of screendance; the idea that art would be malleable and even transient is a prerequisite for screen-based performance.

What has made screendance a vital site of discourse in the newest millennium is precisely its malleability: in its end and in its beginning, it is a blank screen. It is

simultaneously a space of possibility and a site of contention, of protest and of belonging. It is a space of difference, without concrete schools of practice or movements, without a particular creation myth or singular narrative, but with numerous identifiable versions of each. It is a rhizomatic practice in the truest sense, in the sense of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*:

> As a model for culture, the rhizome resists the organizational structure of the root-tree system which charts causality along chronological lines and looks for the original source of "things" and looks toward the pinnacle or conclusion of those "things." A rhizome, on the other hand, is characterized by "ceaselessly established [*sic*] connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles." Rather than narrativize history and culture, the rhizome presents history and culture as a map or wide array of attractions and influences with no specific origin or genesis, for a "rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo*." The planar movement of the rhizome resists chronology and organization, instead favoring a nomadic system of growth and propagation.[21]

If we accept such a definition, the project of mapping screendance would seem to be an impossibility. And in a sense I've approached the process of editing *The Oxford Handbook of Screendance Studies* with that knowledge: that the mapping as it exists in the following pages will be, by its very nature, *amendable*. That is to say that the discourse that flows from the chapters and theses in this handbook (the relational meta-conversations and competing proposals) must necessarily be factored into the overall narratives of screendance as the authors of the following chapters have factored in previous scholarship and practice. That may seem to be stating the obvious; however, any curation or edited collection creates a skewed vision of the evolution of its own field. It creates an artificial punctuation in an otherwise kinesthetic and mobile landscape. And yet, as David Heckman writes:

> In this model, culture spreads like the surface of a body of water, spreading toward available spaces or trickling downwards toward new spaces through fissures and gaps, eroding what is in its way. The surface can be interrupted and moved, but these disturbances leave no trace, as the water is charged with pressure and potential to always seek its equilibrium, and thereby establish smooth space.[22]

The rhizomatic model that Deleuze and Guattari enunciate through the metaphor above has a different cultural embodiment as well, one which does leave traces and ghost-images. In this manifestation, such undertakings are equally inscription and erasure: for instance, the newest version of a text overwrites the previous even while registering it. The interruptions in the surface of the field restate previous interruptions, often slightly altered either in their geography or intent while still possessing a similar pattern, resembling the previous iteration while enfolding its traces in the current or contemporary version. The texts in this volume are intended as a kind of punctuation; they are gestures that gather what we collectively know about screendance at this

moment and emphatically state it. *The Oxford Handbook of Screendance Studies* is a signpost, a marker, and a momentary stopping point that will allow this scholarship to settle; to become generative; to spark response, debate, and even more scholarship. It is a kind of provocation and also a measure of the way in which screendance has established itself as an object of contemplation.

While dance and its relationship to the screen are most certainly rooted in the practices flowing from modern culture and modernism itself, *the Oxford Handbook of Screendance Studies* locates screendance as a contemporary condition of postmodernism, an organizing principle that allows for both a look back and a look forward as each author chooses. Furthermore—as is the nature of the polyvocality that this book espouses—this principle also allows authors to reject postmodern models if they choose to and move on to newer, more salient discussions that may provide more appropriate frames of reference and discourse. For example, a number of chapters in this volume address the histories and overlaps of mediated dance and live dance, dance and the Web, or dance and commercials. In each case, the authors cast an eye toward authorial intentionality, considering both the production and circulation of such hybrids, and also the intended audience or discourse. This is very new scholarship, combining practices of film studies, media and performance studies, and numerous other approaches to reading the moving image.

The chapters in this book are grouped into the contextualizing frameworks of Histories, Theories, and Practices. While this is a practical solution to the problem of choreographing the reader's experience, similar to the way in which one might unbraid a rope, it is also useful as a tactic for separating the writing into individual strands. The chapters are each differently scaled: some are in the wide view, some in extreme close-up; some offer a general overview and others a specific reading of one film or a cultural cinematic phenomena. Beginning with the texts in the section *Histories*, such sequencing starts to place the reader in a narrative arc of screendance. The observations and theses of individual authors are situated temporally, geographically, and ethnographically. These histories of screendance are interstitial; they radiate from points of tangency in the overlaps of dance and its re-mediation, and the chapters in this section track bodies in motion from their earliest representation on screens of all kinds. Dance appears as both still images and in motion, rendered through the optics and technological apparatuses of individual historical eras through the present digital age. Histories are told not in a chronological sweep but rather as related by content, approach, technological evolution, and the evolution of the form across disciplinary boundaries.

The next grouping, *Theories*, places screendance firmly in the contemporary landscape of performance studies and current discourses on gender, embodiment, audience studies, aesthetics, and other tendencies of new scholarship. Some authors reach back into earlier periods of cultural production and look at the projects of those eras again with a contemporary lens, while others gaze directly at the present, interrogating issues of race and fetishism in their analysis of screendancing. The theories put forth in these chapters embody a wide range of voices and consider dance, screens, and their intersection in the parlance of contemporary, polyvocal scholarship.

The final group of texts, under the heading of *Practices*, brings the reader a number of close readings of an eccentric group of screenic work in which dancing bodies perform identity, where editors and cinematographers construct impossible performances, and where YouTube and other portals offer infinite possibilities for dispersing digital dance. These chapters frame a number of methodologies and strategies in which technologies of representation, playback, and digital distribution are brought into relation with the practice of dance in its myriad forms.

Taken together, these three groupings present a global overview of screendance; more than an imagined community, screendance herein is a kind of tribal gathering, with the past, present, and future forming a vital and vibrant field of creative production. Screendance is in the midst of a period of self-determinism and further self-analysis. It is a field of inquiry that has been writing its own history almost since its inception, largely through practice, though with an increasingly significant body of relevant theoretical texts as well. The texts that follow make it clear that the practice of screendance and its scholarship is coalescing into one of the most decidedly posthistorical and post-disciplinary movements of the twenty-first century.

Notes

1. Yvonne Rainer, *A Woman Who . . . Essays, Interviews, Scripts* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 69.
2. On Eadweard Muybridge, see Rebecca Solnit, *River of Shadows: Eadweard Muybridge and the Technological Wild West* (New York: Penguin, 2004). On René Clair, see Claudia Kappenberg, this volume. On Shirley Clark and other experimental American filmmakers, see the *History of the American Cinema* series (Berkeley: University of California Press); for experimental film of the 1950s in particular, see Peter Lev, *The Fifties: Transforming the Screen, 1950–1959* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003). For a discussion of film and its relationship to Cubism see R. Bruce Elder, *The Films of Stan Brakhage in the American Tradition of Ezra Pound, Gertrude Stein, and Charles Olson* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2011).
3. See Douglas Rosenberg, *Screendance: Inscribing the Ephemeral Image* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).
4. See Erin Brannigan, *Dancefilm: Choreography and the Moving Image* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).
5. See Sherril Dodds, *Dance on Screen: Genres and Media from Hollywood to Experimental Art* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).
6. In his 1960 essay "Modernist Painting," the critic Clement Greenberg wrote: "The essence of Modernism lies, as I see it, in the use of the characteristic methods of a discipline to criticize the discipline itself, not in order to subvert it but in order to entrench it more firmly in its area of competence." See Clement Greenberg, *The Collected Essays and Criticism. Vol. 4, Modernism with a Vengeance, 1957–1969*, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 85.
7. In "Empire, Vision, and the Dancing Touch: Gendered Moving Arts on Postcolonial Indian Screens," in this volume, the scholar Esha Niyogi De casts a critical eye on

mainstream Bollywood film, filling in our lack of knowledge concerning the contribution of Bollywood to the culture of screendance.

8. Recorporealization occurs when "The raw data of the dancing body is stitched together in the editing process of either film or video, resulting in an *impossible* body." See Rosenberg, *Screendance*, 10, as well as the chapter entitled "Recorporealization and the Mediated Body," 53–72.

9. See Douglas Rosenberg, "Mediated Bodies," in *Screendance*, 33–52.

10. Gregory Zinman, "Painting With Light: The Bauhaus Influence on the Cinematic Avant-Garde," *Museum of the Moving Image: Moving Image Source, Co-Presented with Reverse Shot*, November 19, 2009, http://www.movingimagesource.us/articles/painting-with-light-20091119.

11. Such ideas about artistic purity are attributed to the critic Clement Greenberg (cited above) and specifically speak to painting and sculpture but adhere to art in general across all media.

12. Zinman, "Painting With Light," n.p.

13. *Ibid.*

14. Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, "Theater, Circus, Variety," in Oskar Schlemmer, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, and Farkas Molnar, *The Theater of the Bauhaus*, by Oskar Schlemmer, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, and Farkas Molnar, ed. Walter Gropius, trans. Arthur S. Wensinger (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1961), 67.

15. *Ibid.*, 68.

16. *Ibid.*

17. Jack Anderson, "Dance: Bauhaus Design by Oskar Schlemmer," *New York Times*, January 22, 1984, http://www.nytimes.com/1984/01/22/arts/dance-bauhaus-design-by-oskar-schlemmer.html.

18. Nathan Jandl, "Review: Ted Leeson, *The Habit of Rivers*," *The Believer* 12, no. 2 (February 2014). http://www.believermag.com/issues/201402/?read=review_leeson.

19. See Johannes Birringer, "Dancing In the Museum," *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art* 33, no. 3 (September 2011): 43–52, as well as Birringer's blog entry, "Critical Correspondence," *Movement Research*, January 8, 2015, http://www.movementresearch.org/criticalcorrespondence/blog/?p=8048. Birringer makes a case for dance in the museum by reviewing two curated shows that focus on dance and its ephemera. The online project by *Movement Research* is an open conversation about the relationship of the museum to dance and its commodification.

20. Lucy Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 43.

21. David Heckman, "Gotta Catch 'Em All: Capitalism, the War Machine, and the Pokemon Trainer," *Rhizomes* 5 (Fall 2002), www.rhizomes.net/issue5/poke/pokemon.html. My "*sic*" indicates Heckman's misquotation of the tense in Deleuze and Guattari's original.

22. Heckman, "Gotta Catch 'Em All," n.p.

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Media

Fuses. Directed by Carolee Schneeman. 16mm film, eighteen minutes. 1965.

Hand Movie. Directed by Yvonne Rainer. Shot by William Davis. 8mm, five minutes, transferred to DVD. Chicago: Video Data Bank. 1966.

Hand Catching Lead. Directed by Richard Serra. 16mm film on video, three minutes, black and white. 1968.

Walking in an Exaggerated Manner around the Perimeter of a Square. Directed by Bruce Nauman. Choreographed by Meredith Monk. 1967–1968.

PART I

HISTORIES

DANCE WITH CAMERA

A Curator's POV

JENELLE PORTER

DANCE with Camera was a thematic exhibition that took place at the Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, in 2009. The exhibition was one of the first in what has been, over the four years since, a flood of art exhibitions that focus on or include live and filmed dance in museums and galleries, including *Move. Choreographing You: Art and Dance Since the 1960s* at the Hayward Gallery, London, in 2010; *On Line: Drawing Through the Twentieth Century* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 2010; *Dance/Draw* at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, in 2011; and the *2012 Biennial*, Whitney Museum of American Art. While these exhibitions did not specifically focus on the relationship between dance and the camera lens as *Dance with Camera* did, many included important moving image works by filmmakers, dancers, and artists, alongside live dance performed in galleries by the likes of Trisha Brown, Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, Trajal Harrell, Xavier Le Roy, Ralph Lemon, and Sarah Michelson, among others. In sum, these exhibitions signaled a now much lauded shift in the situation of dance and mainstream contemporary art.

Dance with Camera featured artworks in film, video, and photography that exemplify the many ways that dance has compelled artists and filmmakers to record bodies moving in space and time.[1] (An extensive, accompanying film series augmented these themes on the big screen.) Spanning six decades, these works proposed a rich history of pairing dance and the camera, and reflect an expansive range of approaches. In these works, choreography is designed for the lens, with movements prescribed by the camera's frame. The camera allows close-ups that bring us in proximity to the dance, a proximity impossible in traditional dance venues. Photographic series freeze time while also expanding the notion of dance as a time-based medium. Editing techniques compress time and space, conjure dances impossible in real time, and even transform relatively static performers (and nondancers) into dancers. The camera is not merely a recording device, but serves as stage and audience simultaneously. Against the backdrop of the histories of cinema, postmodern dance, and performance art, *Dance with Camera*

addressed the myriad ways visual artists use dance as a subject, or mode, to explore broader themes of collaboration, narrative, structure, metaphor, and abstraction.

This chapter is an edited and revised version of my essay for the *Dance with Camera* exhibition catalogue. For the purposes of this volume I have focused on works by visual artists and those who consider their work in dialogue with the theories and concepts governing modern and contemporary art histories, leaving for other experts works by self-defined filmmakers and dancers. In other words, the purpose of this chapter is to introduce significant artworks to a dance and screendance audience.

Backdrop: Judson Dance Theater, Happenings, and Notation

Dance has strong ties to developments in the visual arts, especially those in the mid-twentieth century, when conversations among artists and creators working in a reinvigorated postwar culture initiated seismic shifts. Of particular significance to the current discussion are the associations between dancers, filmmakers, musicians, and visual artists that flourished in the early 1960s at the Judson Dance Theater in Greenwich Village. The interdisciplinary practices that emerged at Judson and beyond were an extension of the collaborative work of composer John Cage and choreographer Merce Cunningham, both of whom made use of chance procedures and indeterminism in their works. Their influential methodologies demolished creative traditions and hierarchies.

Musician Robert Dunn and artist Allan Kaprow had been students in Cage's New School class "Composition in Experimental Music." Under his influence, Dunn and Kaprow instigated revolutions in art and dance, and in late 1960, Dunn taught a dance class that spawned the Judson Dance Theater. Dunn was neither a dancer nor a choreographer, but he had studied music and dance, and at Cage's invitation he taught a composition class at the Merce Cunningham studio. The class, which Dunn styled after Cage's, culminated in *A Concert of Dance* at Judson Memorial Church in 1962, an event that marked the formation of the Judson Dance Theater and included choreographies by Steve Paxton, Yvonne Rainer, Deborah Hay, Fred Herko, Judith and Robert Dunn, David Gordon, and others.[2] Judson became a catalyst for the underground, and the collective was described by dance critic Jill Johnston as "anti-spectacle, anti-entertainment, anti-star image, anti-proscenium frontality, anti-expression or narrative, anti-dance movement itself traditionally understood—here was a dissenting canon as insurrectional as the revolution in dance ushered in by the barefoot, ballet-hating Isadora Duncan in the late nineteenth-century."[3] Dancers, artists, musicians, filmmakers—everyone was there, even Andy Warhol, who was led to Judson because of Robert Rauschenberg's involvement.[4] At the time, Rauschenberg

was the Merce Cunningham Dance Company's resident stage designer and also performed at Judson.

In 1959, Kaprow staged *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* at the Reuben Gallery in New York. Not only was it the first use of the word "Happening" to designate an artwork, but it also launched an art movement described as "theater by artists."[5] Kaprow sought to create "total art" environments from everyday materials and with directed audience participation. Other artists followed suit, including Claes Oldenburg (who, with friends, established a gallery space in Judson Memorial Church in 1959). Anything could happen at a Happening. And from this point, art was transformed. Although some practitioners of Happenings followed an anything-goes approach, Kaprow's events were precisely orchestrated. His written script for *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* was influenced, in part, by Rudolf Laban's system of notation for recording dance.

A dancer and choreographer, Laban (1879–1958) was instrumental in creating and promoting modern dance in Europe. In the 1920s, he devised a written method called Labanotation, with which one could record how a body moves in time and space. Such recordings, for Laban, would place dance alongside the other arts, for, he proposed, without a record, an activity as ephemeral as dance could never be properly historicized or evaluated.[6] Labanotation has four basic categories—body, effort, shape, and space—which are marked on a vertical staff (its closest cousin is written music) that divides the body into left and right sides.[7] There are methods for notating the direction of the movement, the part of the body doing the movement, the energy level (high, low), and the length of time. It is a remarkable visual symbol system that translates dance into its component parts, reducing it to a pictorial form: to the untrained eye, Labanotations appear as unusually compelling drawings composed of lines and symbols. Although Labanotation is one of the most widely used systems of human movement analysis, it is quite specialized and little known outside dance circles. Film, video, and, most recently, motion capture have superseded Labanotation as highly effective recording devices.[8]

The works represented in *Dance with Camera* explored a range of dance imagery that, for the purposes of structuring this chapter, I've organized using Laban's four movement categories. "Body," the first category, refers to the structural and physical characteristics of the moving body. "Effort" is a subtle system for describing the characteristics of movement with regard to inner intention. "Shape" connotes the ways the body changes its form during movement. Finally, "Space" involves the body's movement within an environment, and the patterns and pathways created in space.[9] Within these four categories can be located analogous uses of camera and editing: for example, body can be considered in relation to a distant, fixed camera on a performer; effort can be seen in the use of close-ups; shape might be characterized by the play between a panning lens and a fixed one; and space can be created with a range of editing techniques. Although dance as an activity and as a subject was critical to this exhibition, *Dance with Camera* focused on artworks in which the dance and the camera are inextricably intertwined. In other words, without the camera there would be no dance.

Body

Maya Deren described *A Study in Choreography for Camera* (Figure 1.1) as "a dance so related to camera and cutting that it cannot be 'performed' as a unit anywhere but in this particular film."[10] In the three-minute silent film, the camera and the dancer perform a pas de deux in which the movement is continuous through time and space. The camera rotates on a central point, spotting dancer Talley Beatty three times as it scans the forest environment. Beatty's twisting body is barely discernible in the dense stand of trees. The film cuts to his leg entering a small living room. Cuts move him from room to room, and finally to a large sculpture-filled courtyard. In an affecting and picturesque phrase, Beatty, his head shown in close-up, spins in front of a four-headed circular Buddha. A series of suspended leaps, which cohere into one great leap, deposits Beatty outdoors, where he lands, feet planted in second position *plié*, on the brow of a hill. Deren recognized the natural alliance of dance and film: "I feel strongly that film is related more closely to dance than to any other form because, like dance, it is conveyed in time."[11]

In Shirley Clarke's *Dance in the Sun* (1953), Daniel Nagrin performs his 1950 stage piece of the same name (Figure 1.2). The dance was filmed both on a beach and on a stage, and the two takes are cut together to maintain the continuity of the dance performance. The film begins with Nagrin greeting his piano accompanist as he enters a rehearsal hall. Nagrin moves toward the camera, fixed at stage audience level, and there is a jump cut to him running down a dune onto a beach. This cut serves to slip us into Nagrin's unconscious, where he conjures a visual image that generates the choreography. Jump cuts seamlessly move the dance back and forth, emphasizing the rhythm and the time and space between the two locations.
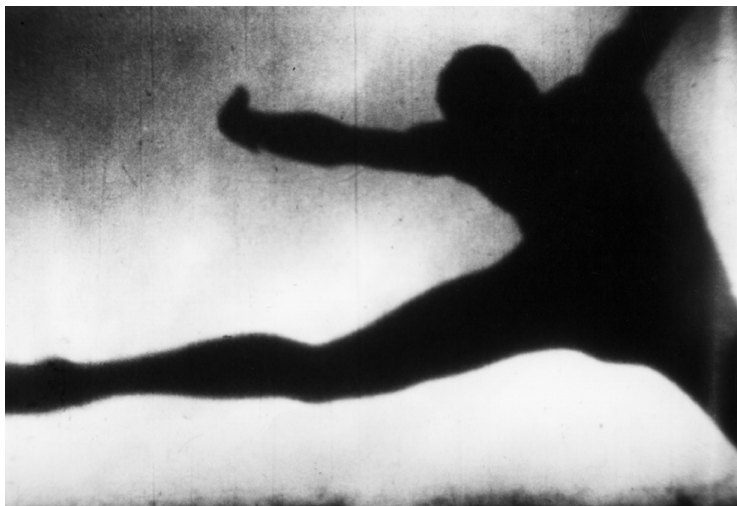

FIG. 1.1 Maya Deren, *A Study in Choreography for Camera* (film still), 1945.

FIG. 1.2 Shirley Clarke, *Dance in the Sun* (film still), 1953. Courtesy of Wendy Clarke.

Clarke's editing style echoes Deren's use of jump cuts in *A Study* (though, it should be noted, Clarke did not see Deren's film until after her own film was complete). But there is a significant difference: Deren's film represents a ritual or dream state, whereas *Dance in the Sun* examines "the strange phenomenon of 'time' that exists between each cut."[12] Although Clarke considered *Dance in the Sun* a preliminary attempt at creating dance for the camera, it is nevertheless a stunning marriage of dance and editing. Of her editing style, Clarke once noted: "Just as dance exists not in the positions the dancer takes but in the movement between the positions, so kinetic film is the movement within and between the shots."[13]

Kelly Nipper's *interval* (2000) (Figure 1.3) translates Clarke's words into a photographic illustration of the movement between positions. While facing front from behind a wood screen, Nipper's dancer performs for the photographic camera a sequence of balletic poses. First, she stands with her arms overhead, and then with arms at her sides. The climactic moment in the third photograph is created by a shift of her body, now at the center of the photograph and bifurcated by a screen. The final pose repeats the first except the dancer now faces the back wall. Is the dancer in *interval* performing a series of still poses or the moments of stillness within a dance?

The four large photographs comprising *interval* are hung sequentially on a wall. The width between the installed photographs is equal to the width of the frames, and evokes Eadweard Muybridge's late-nineteenth-century motion studies. Nipper's serial motif holds much in common with the moments frozen by Muybridge's battery of cameras, as does her use of a gridded screen behind which the dancer poses. However, the interval between Nipper's photographs is so long that we can't *see* sequential motion as we can in Muybridge's images. But perhaps our photographically savvy minds can easily fill in, if we so choose, all the movements necessary to get from one pose to the next.

FIG. 1.3 Kelley Nipper, *interval*, 2000. Framed chromographic process color print. Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago.

If Nipper's *interval* is the embodiment of the stilled film, Oliver Herring's work is the video counterpart. In Herring's videos, people with little to no dance skill move with the staccato rhythm of a dancer in a flip book. "Think Bob Fosse," Herring may request during filming, and then, paradoxically, "nobody move," as performers struggle to hold their positions.[14] The two participants in *Dance 1* (2002) are an unlikely duo in both physical stature and skill. The woman is buxom and wears a plain, khaki-colored dress and Birkenstock sandals. The man is tall and lithe, clad only in maroon gym shorts and basketball sneakers. Their sequences of still poses performed in unison are choreographed by edits. Up-tempo melodic music provides the soundtrack, heightening the comedic effect of the performers' ungainly efforts. The performers are sincere in their intent to execute the choreographies, and though the movements captured on film betray their kooky spontaneity, these charming dances would not exist without the camera—or the editing software deployed when shooting is completed.

Natalie Bookchin's *Mass Ornament* (2009) appropriates hundreds of YouTube clips of dancers performing for the camera, alone in their homes. They dance for the camera, generating a fixed-view, unedited, haphazardly concocted dance video. The clips are masterfully knitted to create a single-channel video installation that appears as a lineup of moving bodies—a chorus line. The stage these dancers share is purely metaphorical: dancers separated by physical space and time are brought together by the artist's skillful searching, selecting, and editing. Bookchin's Busby Berkeley–esque pattern of dancers moving in unison explores a natural human desire to chronicle our lives—and, pervasive in today's world, to post it on the Internet. The chronicling is not new, but the sharing through streaming clips is a recent phenomenon made possible by user-generated video-sharing sites, as well as the undeniable influence of music videos.

FIG. 1.4 Jim Self and Frank Moore, *Beehive* (video shot), 1985. Courtesy of Jim Self.

The exuberant visual style of music videos is reflected in painter Frank Moore and dancer Jim Self's collaboration, *Beehive* (1985), a slapstick bee ballet[15] (Figure 1.4). The culminating pas de deux, which climaxes in a rather lascivious mating dance, is at once elegant and comical. Editing plays a critical role. Movement is often accelerated to create a jittery beelike activity. Animation techniques set the bees in motion over images of floating flowers, and camera angles emulate the directionless world of the hive. Moore and Self contributed equally to every aspect of *Beehive*, from the choreography and costuming to sets, lighting, and editing. Moore's surrealist-influenced narrative painting style shines here in the vertigo-inducing sets, wonderfully elaborate furry costumes, and quirky visual flourishes. Self's and worker bee Teri Weksler's balletic interpretations of bee life transport the viewer into the hive.

Artist and filmmaker Charles Atlas is unquestionably one of the foremost makers of video dance. His pioneering collaborative videos with Merce Cunningham are a genre unto themselves. Cunningham, always a trailblazer throughout his long career, was one of the first choreographers to consider how dance could, and should, be made for the camera lens. From 1971 to 1983, at the dawn of video art and production, Atlas and Cunningham made about ten videos, all choreographies conceived for the camera.[16] Their working method involved precisely choreographed camera movements and edit points—for example, in *Fractions I* (1977), a video that showcases multiple timing cues. Four stationary cameras aimed at the corners of the studio record the dancers. Television monitors are part of the set—sometimes a single monitor, sometimes two stacked vertically, and sometimes four in a square—and display live feeds from the four cameras. The monitors replicate the field effect characteristic of Cunningham's live stage works—in which the dance is happening all over the stage (or even separate stages) with no one focal point—by transmitting images of dancers from other

areas of the studio. At times, the monitor displays the very same dancer who is dancing in the background, which creates a doubling effect, a pas de deux made possible only by the camera. Other times, the monitor conveys a detail or a close-up of the dancers in the distance. Indeed, in contrast to the camera's somewhat dictatorial eye, *Fractions I* allows the viewer to determine the viewpoint: on the monitors or on the "real" dancers. Further complicating the shifts between foreground (monitor) and background (dancer) are technical transitions from black-and-white, with those flat grays characteristic of early videotape, to color. The monitors remain monotonously black-and-white.[17]

Cunningham's works were defined by collaborations. Often the elements of music, costume, lighting, and scenography would come together with the dancing at the moment of first performance. Dancer Flora Wiegmann's video *Adaptive Lines* (2007) proposes a sequential type of collaboration. The title is borrowed from artist Vito Acconci's 1971 text outlining modes of performance and adheres to his prescription for a linear series of additions of material and energy, or more specifically, a series of collaborative, structured progressions. Wiegmann choreographed a solo dance for an outdoor location and then invited her collaborators to choose the site, the soundtrack, and the costume, adapting her choreography to each addition in sequence. All of these elements were combined to create the final performance: Wiegmann danced in costume, with soundtrack, and on location, for filmmaker Margo Victor. Victor's deft editing transforms Wiegmann's dance, much slower and more complex in its original form, into a hyperkinetic series of shapes and lines and balances.

Effort

"Hire a dancer." So begins many of Bruce Nauman's written instructions for his performances of the late 1960s. It is important to note that, for the most part, said dancers were never directed to dance in conventional ways. Rather Nauman's instructions ran to physically demanding tasks, such as walking in a crouched position around an empty gallery for thirty minutes. Nauman hired himself as a dancer for a series of durational performances made in the late 1960s. Having no occasion to execute what were intended as live performances, he performed them in his studio for his 16mm film camera.[18] *Dance or Exercise on the Perimeter of a Square* (1967–1968) is one such work. As the film begins, a barefoot Nauman stands with his back to the camera on a white square taped out on the floor. He begins to move to the beat of a metronome, alternately touching each foot to the nearest corner. This action is repeated on each side of the square. Different beats are created between the metronome, the sound of a film projector (the film is currently exhibited as a DVD with the sound of a film projector layered in), and the tattoo of Nauman's feet hitting the floor.

In 1968, Nauman (then living in California) spent time on the east coast, where he came in contact, directly and indirectly, with developments in dance and music. The

influence of Warhol's single-take films can be seen in Nauman's use of the deadpan and the monotonous and in his appreciation of film's capacity to depict, and occupy, real time. His task-based movement reflects his exposure to Judson Dance Theater, where new methods of dance often involved repetitive gestures, performing tasks, and everyday movement. A 1978 film document of Yvonne Rainer's seminal *Trio A* (1966) offers an intriguing formal comparison with the aesthetic of Nauman's studio films. In *Trio A*, Rainer maintains an even energy "tone," just as Nauman does in his film. Nauman considered his work of this time in relation to dance:

> So the films and some of the pieces that I did after that for videotapes were specifically about doing exercises in balance. I thought of them as dance problems without being a dancer, being interested in the kinds of tension that arise when you try to balance and can't. Or do something for a long time and get tired.[19]

There is an absurdity to the seemingly pointless task Nauman performs. One might consider *Dance* boring, or at minimum, a rote exercise for the camera. But, as Nauman indicates in the above quote, dance is a useful device with which not only to make a work of art, but to explore the limits of physical and mental endurance. As *Dance* demonstrates, even the most pedestrian of movements can be profound.

Like Nauman, Eleanor Antin performs for the camera to create *Caught in the Act* (1973) (Figure 1.5). A series of photographs of a perfectly posed ballerina hang adjacent to a video of the photo shoot. The thirty-minute video is a backstage pass of sorts to how artifice is concocted. After a lengthy title sequence, the video fades in to Antin in leotard, tights, and toe shoes warming up at the "*barre*"—a wheeled scaffold. Positioning herself in front of the seamless, she begins to pose for a photographer. He crouches in

FIG. 1.5 Eleanor Antin, *Caught in the Act* (video shot), 1973. Courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix (EIA), New York.

the foreground, his back to us. She looks past the photographer, into a mirror, to check her poses. She talks to the photographer, coaching herself through the poses, stating what she will try, laughing at the absurdity of her act. She directs him to capture the decisive moment by saying "Go." The ballerina in *Caught in the Act* knows how to pose for the ideal photograph—a dream version of a very different reality, an untruth or a white lie, or perhaps more correctly, the truth of 1/125 of a second.

The photographic instant defines a work by artist Christopher Williams. During the performance of traditional Balinese dance, phrase intervals are marked by holding the pose, a very photographic contrivance. Williams clicks the shutter during these pauses, thereby refreezing a still moment, calcifying it, to create the black-and-white photographic diptych *From left to right: Mita Wimboprasetyo, Wuri Wimboprasetyo, Sandra Kosasih, Nancy Allard performing an excerpt from Janger. (Someone is coming from the East, her costume shines, ornamented with flowers, her waist is slender, her forehead beautiful, whoever sees her falls in love and is filled with joy.) Japanese American Cultural and Community Center, Cultural Room, Los Angeles, California, October 8, 2002 (NR. 1, 2)* (2003). Four Balinese dancers wearing elaborate costumes perform within the confines of a small room. The photographs appear identical, but there are subtle differences. They document the progression of one dance phrase to the next. While the two dancers on the left remain in the same pose, the two dancers on the right shift slightly from one photograph to the next. The title indicates that two of the dancers have the same last name: in fact, they are twins. They are photographic; they duplicate themselves, thereby providing front and back views of the same pose, an uncanny three-dimensionality, and one entirely still.

In Tacita Dean's portrait film *Merce (Manchester)* (2007), Merce Cunningham performs John Cage's *4′33″* (1952), one of the most famous music compositions of the twentieth century. It is legendary, of course, for its silence: the musicians performing the work play nothing. The "music" is the ambient sound of the room during the four minutes and thirty-three seconds of the performance. Dean, with no specific agenda in mind except to make a work about silence, invited Cunningham to perform *4′33″*. When she arrived at his Westbeth studio with her film cameras, Dean did not know what Cunningham planned to do. The chance operations so critical to Cage's and Cunningham's oeuvres were employed, as was Dean's own reliance on such principles. "I was told that he was going to 'hold his position,' but I didn't know what that meant. But what he did was just so brilliant. While you're watching it you think about everything—about the room he's in, about old age, of course, about him, about him and John Cage, and about silence."[20] There were no rehearsals. The camera rolled, and Cunningham performed.[21]

Dressed in black shoes and pants and a lavender shirt, Cunningham sits in a chair. He is still in a manner not unlike the impossibly held poses of his distinctive choreography. He changes his position in each of the three movements that make up *4′33″*. His body faces the camera, positioned at a 45-degree angle to the mirrored back wall of the rehearsal studio. Reflected in the mirror is another performer, Trevor Carlson, whose matching clothing signals that this is a duet. With stopwatch in hand, Carlson counts

down the fingers on his hand three times, marking the movements of the composition and the ending. After each movement, Cunningham moves into another position. Carlson counts down the end. *Merce (Manchester)* is projected in the gallery so that the performer is life-size, and though the film plays through a looping device, it has a distinct beginning and end. During that time, we are awed by the very fact of the dancer's stillness; that stillness is as demanding as movement.

At the opposite extreme is the ecstatic movement that characterizes Joachim Koester's film *Tarantism* (2007) Figure 1.6). The title refers to a so-called dancing plague, or choreomania: "mass, frenzied dancing" that saw various permutations throughout Europe beginning in the thirteenth century (Saint Vitus' dance, for example). In southern Italy, it was called tarantism, a "dance" thought to cure the venomous, but not deadly, bite of the wolf spider, or tarantula.[22] *Tarantism* is structured in choreographed sections: solos by the dancers shot with a stationary camera; several panning shots that include all the dancers; a straight-on shot in which the camera moves backward through the lined-up dancers, creating layers of movement among them; and a stage-level panning shot of dancing legs and prostrate, flailing bodies. Carefully designed, choreographed camera movements explore the range of ways that dance can be captured on film.

The close-in camera and very black surroundings create a claustrophobic environment, a world to which the dancers are confined. They enter and exit their solos from left to right, and one can sense a lineup happening with the other dancers waiting in the wings. The conceit of mania is broken in one shot when we see all the dancers stop, exhausted, as if someone offstage has just yelled "Cut." But tarantism rituals often lasted for days, and the dancers in this looped film dance on endlessly. Though *Tarantism* is silent, it is presented in the gallery with a film projector and looping device. The

FIG. 1.6 Joachim Koester, *Tarantism*, 2007 (film still). Courtesy of the artist and Green Naftali, New York, and Galleri Nicolai Wallner, Copenhagen.

clickety-clack of the projector becomes the soundtrack, one not far removed from the percussion of the tambourines played for the long-ago sufferers.

SHAPE

While Maya Deren's marrying of dance and camera has already been noted several times as an important influence, some works in *Dance with Camera* adopt the visual style of music videos, particularly their fast-paced editing. But an early work in the exhibition—Bruce Conner's *BREAKAWAY* (1966)—is considered the precursor of the modern music video. Created fifteen years before MTV's 1981 debut, *BREAKAWAY* stars Antonia Christina Basilotta, also known as the choreographer and pop star Toni Basil. The Motown-esque song "Breakaway" is hers, the refrain a declaration of a woman's plans for independence."[23] Departing from his characteristic use of found film, Conner filmed *BREAKAWAY* using a 16mm handheld camera. The cuts are fast-paced, so much so that Basil is often a blur of movement. Hers is a dance made not in real time, but in edit time. *BREAKAWAY* is interspersed with punch-outs and flashes of black or white leader, flames, and fadeouts. A rhythm other than that imposed by the music is created by such visual tempos, resulting in a layering of beats: of the song, the varying film speeds, the repetition of imagery (and outfit), and the editing. But these formative beats cannot hold the body in a shape. Basil's white shape against the black background is often a white blur—it is spectral, not unlike early photographs of dancers blurred by motion. Cuts between full-body shots and close-ups dissolve space and time, as well as the body. However, this dissolution is reversed. After the film ends, it begins again, in reverse. Music and image play backward, returning Basil to her whole shape. This filmic device has a corollary in dance, which is called doing a dance "in retrograde": the entire dance—the sequence and the motions themselves—is reversed.[24]

Although dance and music are natural partners, it is the visual styling of music videos—after all, videos are essentially short experimental films—rather than the style of the dancing (or how it is filmed) that is significant to *Dance with Camera*. The impact of music videos on visual culture is pervasive, and much like the influence of film (and in turn MTV's influence on film), you know it's there but it's difficult to pinpoint. There is no way, nor a reason, to deny that the visual vocabulary of the music video—quick cuts, juxtaposition, montage—invades contemporary art. Even contemporary dance admits to transferring the quick cuts and montage effects onto live dance. MTV has trained our eyes to see faster and our brains to think faster—in three-minute intervals. However, I believe the accelerated visual mode of the music video has a corollary in ballet. According to dance writer and advocate Lincoln Kirstein: "The effect of the well-executed pirouette is to present the dancer's body in its full plasticity, front and back superimposed on one another, almost as in a double-exposure. An audience necessarily remains stationary in its seat. If the seats could be imagined to revolve rapidly to enable

spectators to see back and front in a single frontal position, there might be no reason for pirouettes."[25] Film and video, in a sense, allow the seats to revolve.

Elad Lassry's film, *Untitled* (2007), is a sort of double pas de deux, one between the dancers in his film, and another between two key dance events of the 1950s: the performance of Balanchine's ballet *Agon* by the New York City Ballet in 1957 (which featured dancers Diana Adams and Arthur Mitchell) and the publication of modern dance pioneer Doris Humphrey's *The Art of Making Dances* in 1959, a bible for modern choreographers. Here the last minute of the pas de deux from *Agon* is performed for Lassry's camera by New York City Ballet dancers Megan LeCrone and Ask La Cour. (The placement of the camera was dictated by a diagram in *The Art of Making Dances* which plots the stage's six "weak" and seven "strong" areas.[26]) The dancers perform in a rehearsal studio, their bodies framed by three horizontal *barres*. They perform the same phrase seven times for the seven camera angles. Sometimes the camera is quite close and the movement becomes an abstraction, an effect heightened by the setting against the horizontal *barre*. When the camera is farther away, it is possible to see more of the dance. The seven takes are bookended by individual portraits of the dancers, which Lassry calls homages to Warhol's screen tests. Indeed, the entire film might be considered a screen test, one for the dancing body.[27]

William Forsythe's transcendent short film *Solo* (1997) begins at Forysthe's feet, which flex and rock in preparation and then accelerate into rapid footwork.[28] The camera sweeps up the body and frames Forsythe from the chest up, like a portrait bust. The camera moves back down the body to the feet, which leap vertically out of frame. The next sequence utilizes a long shot to film Forsythe's entire body as he travels across the dark and light spaces of the spotlit stage. Some overhead shots are interspersed with quick cutting, but in most of the remaining sections, Forsythe is filmed frontally, in full figure, with very few cuts. The formality of the camera angles contrasts stunningly with the intensely kinetic dance. Forsythe repeatedly winds and unwinds with tremendous twisting and torquing of the body. Forsythe's movement is so fast—almost too fast to see—that we may wish our eyes were a camera able to see fast enough to grasp the rich detail of *Solo*.

"I now think that for a dancer to commit to eternity the way you moved on a particular day is risky."[29] These words—written by photographer, cinematographer, and filmmaker Babette Mangolte—are a poignant reminder of what the camera is capable of, for better or worse. Mangolte was one of the foremost documentarians of postmodern dance and performance in New York City, beginning in the 1970s. "When I first saw *Water Motor*, I was spellbound," Mangolte said of Trisha Brown's 3 ½-minute solo of 1978.[30] Mangolte filmed *Watermotor* from center stage, with one camera, in a single take. Camera movement is limited to panning and reframing the dancer for a consistent positioning. Mangolte's inspiration to work with such formal considerations came from Fred Astaire's insistence—at the time, a groundbreaking development—that his dancing body be fully framed, and that the dance be presented in its entirety.[31]

Brown's fast-paced *Water Motor* is a tour de force of stylized pedestrian and evocative movement (one can "see" images—for example, an umpire dusting off home plate);

striking and contradictory shifts of weight and balance; and shapes, points, and lines drawn in space. Half the time she is off the ground, performing with such fluidity that gestures seem to emanate from Brown's unconscious—until your mind registers the degree of control in each razor-sharp phrase. The film is silent, adding to the drama of the mesmerizing performance. *Watermotor* seems to end with a fade-out. Then the film fades in and there is Brown again, performing in slow motion. The effect of such a remarkable change of film pacing is transformative. Suddenly we can see more of the complexities of the dance. It is not so much a revealing as a revelation. Mangolte's decision to shoot in slow motion that day was spontaneous, but it came from her desire to see more, to see in a way only the camera can. Without its second half, *Watermotor* is an exceedingly good document. But it is the thrilling revelation that comes through in 48 frames per second that makes Mangolte's *Watermotor* so profound.

The hand is one of a dancer's most expressive tools. Hands manifest mental states: nervous, relaxed, tense, excited. Filmmaker and choreographer Yvonne Rainer's first film was called *Hand Movie* (1966), and it is just that. Shot by William Davis on 16mm black-and-white film against a white background, *Hand Movie* is a five-minute solo for the hand. The hand floats away from the body that controls it, almost disembodied were it not for the absolute consciousness it depicts. The palm faces the camera, then turns away. Fingers move in numerous ways, and yet none of the gestures are recognizable as anything resembling a sign. The thumb is frequently a voyeur of an unusual *pas de quatre* among the remaining digits. Rainer wrote that dance is hard to see, and indeed, she used photographic methods in her dance work, as did many others.

Rainer and her Judson contemporaries provided a vital bridge to other arts. Every type of creative practitioner was involved with Judson, and Judson performers were interested in everything—notably, as pertinent to *Dance with Camera*, photography, film, and television. Rainer wrote that dance is hard to see, and indeed, she used photographic methods in her dance work, as did many others. Carrie Lambert-Beatty, writing about *Trio A*, notes that its

> meaning and historical significance come not solely from its relation to previous dance, but also from its entwinement with the visual art of its time—particularly minimalism—and the technologies of representation—photography, film, and television—by which it was surrounded. Start with the photographs and the focus shifts: from a dance's relation to dance as an art form, to the relation between a dance and its images. Or better, to the relation between bodies and pictures, in the context of a changing culture of mediation.[32]

Adapting photographic strategies to dance enhanced a quality of vision: one could *see more* because the dance was excruciatingly slow, so slow it was almost still—a still photograph.

> On the one hand, these long, slow exposures simply relished in displaying the human body in motion. On the other, they did so using a technique related to what Walter Benjamin famously called "unconscious optics"—the aspects of the world

revealed when technologies of vision such as close-up photography or slow-motion film exceed perception rooted in the body and in time's normal flow—suggesting, again, how perception was artificially prodded or jump-started in much of the dance work presented at Judson church in the early 1960s.[33]

SPACE

The often charged spaces in which dance is set are critical to several works in *Dance with Camera*. Like Maya Deren on the East Coast, Sidney Peterson was influenced by European surrealist films of the 1920s and 1930s, and, like her, he was instrumental in developing an avant-garde cinema. His films portray dream states inflected by the psychological landscape of the postwar era. Though several of his films have remained influential touchstones, almost nothing has been written about *Clinic of Stumble* (1947), save for what Peterson himself has authored.[34] Even he is vague:

> I am not sure how *Clinic of Stumble* was accomplished except that it began with a charming dance by Marian Van Tuyl and I shot it with Hy Hirsh and there were problems, as always, of translating the optic of theater into that of film. It is all too easy to lose a good dance in a bad film and have nothing. We took a chance with superimposition and were surprised by the resultant affirmation of a picture plane. Picture planes work in the flatland of the screen. If the dancer's conception of space is violated, so be it. A movie must be a movie, must be, must be. Its frame is not a proscenium.[35]

Clinic of Stumble is a short color film composed entirely of layered images: three women dance, ride on old-fashioned children's scooters, and read magazines. The dreamlike spatial environment is achieved by the repetition of at least two superimposed frames, as well as through slow motion. The overall effect is hypnotic and evocative.

Mike Kelley's *A Dance Incorporating Movements Derived from Experiments by Harry F. Harlow and Choreographed in the Manner of Martha Graham* (1999) is the last sequence of an hour-long video made using the props installed in a "test room" environmental installation. The camera position is that of a surveillance camera, above and distant. The film is silent, which further enhances the faraway feeling of the activity occurring in the room, as if viewed through two-way glass. A seamless white backdrop evokes a sense of an endless room bounded only by the frame of the lens. It is a theater, but it is not a stage. Kelley used black-and-white film to reference dancer-choreographer Martha Graham's gorgeously filmed dance works of the late 1950s and early 1960s. The dancers perform Graham-style movement. Kelley's other titular reference is to Harry Harlow, known for his primate experiments of the 1950s and 1960s. For Kelley, the most memorable aspect of these experiments was the image of the strange surrogate monkey mama that Harlow used, which resembled 1940s modernist

sculpture more than anything monkeylike. For Kelley, such psychological testing said more about human behavior than that of animals. "Looking at Harlow's work as a kind of highly melodramatic and psychological theater—as lurid as any Tennessee Williams play—it is not such a great leap to Martha Graham's dance theater work."[36]

Like Kelley's video, Luis Jacob's *A Dance for Those of Us Whose Hearts Have Turned to Ice, Based on the Choreography of Françoise Sullivan and the Sculpture of Barbara Hepworth* (2007) draws from two disparate sources, folding each into an intricately layered and evocative dance film. The descriptive title references Jacob's desire "to use dance-language as a way to summon an internationally recognized or 'universal' abstract artist like Barbara Hepworth, and a regionally recognized or 'marginal' dance artist like Françoise Sullivan."[37] Jacob's work is an homage to the social liberation philosophies of these two contemporaries from the mid-twentieth-century. Sullivan's *Danse dans la neige*, a work performed solely for the camera in the winter of 1948, inspired Jacob's snowy setting. The original film was lost, but photographs survive of a performance that Sullivan described as "just dancing with my feeling of the landscape. I let the rhythms flow. I perceived the space of the day—cut it and shaped it."[38] In Jacob's silent dance film, Keith Cole delivers an emotionally wrought performance. The experience of watching his awkward but sincere dance heightens our empathic reaction. The environment is hostile, and Cole's movement is charged, but there is also humor in the absurdity of what he is doing.

From snow-covered hills to school hallways, *Dance with Camera* includes works in which dance is a tool to inhabit space. Sharon Lockhart's *Goshogaoka* (1998) is set in a multipurpose school gym/theater/assembly hall, tracing a line straight back to the Judson Dance Theater. *Goshogaoka* "studies" the practice drills of a teenage girls' basketball team. Twenty-four girls go about various warm-ups, skill exhibitions, and cooldowns in what appears to be a typical practice session. After some time, one recognizes that the drills are stylized, and in fact dancer Stephen Galloway choreographed them based on the girls' movements during their practices. This procedure, like the setting, again evokes the kind of dependence on, and elevation of, pedestrian movement characteristic of Judson choreographers. Here everyday movement—a basketball practice—becomes dancerly. Furthermore, Judson influences can be found in one particular sequence in which the girls perform ball tricks, a direct reference to Valda Satterfield's fixation on the ball in her hand in Yvonne Rainer's seminal film of 1972, *Lives of Performers*.[39]

Goshogaoka unfolds in six 10-minute sequences, the length of a 16mm film reel. The six sections, or acts, as Lockhart has called them, feature different kinds of movements, all of which define the frame of the camera. The film is highly structured, not only by the precision drills, but by the static camera situated at a considerable distance from a proscenium stage at the back of the gym, creating an intense depth of field. The camera frame is centered left to right. The bottom edge of the stage it faces is centered horizontally, bisecting the image, with shiny gym floor at bottom, red-curtained stage at top. But for all *Goshogaoka's* structuralist leanings, there are moments of awkward grace and chance. Rigid formations fall away as personalities come through.

In 1998, Uri Tzaig created a work titled ∞, a video of a game he created in collaboration with dancers from the Montpellier City Center for Dance in France. The video of the dance/game utilizes two different views: an overhead surveying shot and a close-range one in which the camera follows the ball's movement as it passes from dancer to dancer. The two parts are edited together, one after another, in fifteen-second intervals. The overhead shot is displayed in fast motion with a timer centered at the top of the frame. We can see the general action of the dance/game itself, but the grace of movement is erased by the acceleration. The other sequence uses two angles within it: one eye-level and one tight shot from above. This sequence exists to highlight details of the game, mostly in slow motion (though sometimes in real time or played in reverse), creating a dazzling blur of activity. The soundtrack captures the dancers' breathing and foot sounds as rubber-soled shoes squeak across the floor—an aural document of motion. Projected at a large scale, ∞ is a stunning, kinetic experience.[40]

Color in space is used to great effect in *C.L.U.E., Part 1* (2007), a video by dance duo robbinschilds (Layla Childs and Sonya Robbins) and photographer A. L. Steiner. *C.L.U.E.* is a dance video-cum-road trip, a site-specific dance with countless locations (nature and cityscape) explored through movement by the monochromatically clad duo. The choreography is characterized by touch, by connection: they hold hands, stand together, lean into one another. Movement is choreographed for the landscape and the only way for others to witness the performance is to see it through the camera. Steiner's dazzling camerawork and editing truly capture the road-trip dance experience. *C.L.U.E.* is an exuberant dance video, and it is a long music video. In the slow moments, it is languorous and hypnotic; in the fast ones, it makes one want to jump around the room.

Ann Carlson and Mary Ellen Strom's collaborative video *Sloss, Kerr, Rosenberg & Moore* (2007) examines the body in an interior space. Four men stand foursquare between elevator banks in a lobby. They are dressed in business suits and ties, and the video bears their names. *Sloss, Kerr, Rosenberg & Moore* was created in collaboration with the four men on-screen: real-life litigators. The stylized dance is based on their workaday activities, including the speech and movement found in courtrooms and boardrooms. The fact of four lawyers dancing in a lobby runs counter to conventions of expected behavior, and their freedom in dancing creates a kind of giddiness in us, the spectators. *Sloss, Kerr, Rosenberg & Moore* is a portrait of male subjectivity and masculinity; of work and its physical manifestation on the body. It transforms everyday people into dancers.

WE CAN DANCE IF WE WANT TO

Even Warhol made a dance film. *Paul Swan* (1965) portrays the American dancer of the title performing a series of his own numbers for the camera. Swan was a contemporary of Isadora Duncan and a leader in "aesthetic" modern dance. In his heyday he

was called the "Most Beautiful Man in the World." Warhol met Swan and was intrigued by his in-studio weekly performances for small audiences, described as "public displays in which he unknowingly parodied his past grace."[41] The hour-long screen test captures bits of Swan's dances and recitations, but mostly his extended wardrobe changes performed off camera—and even more embarrassingly, on camera—as Swan repeatedly recommends to the filmmaker that all the downtime be edited out. Clearly, he was caught unawares by Warhol's unflinching camera eye: "With a prescience that anticipates reality television by decades, Warhol allows us to see everything at once: Swan the dancer; Swan's idea of himself; the film as record; the film as art object."[42]

For some of the artists and filmmakers represented here, dance is a flexible tool, and/or subject, for conceptual exploration. But what does it mean to capture one of the most ephemeral of art forms with the camera lens? I have asked this question of *Dance with Camera* from its inception. An examination of the ways artists have considered the relationship of dancer and camera shows us that this question has myriad answers. But we do recognize that dance and the camera are enthusiastic partners. Video, film, and photography should be viewed as arenas in which dance is translated from the three-dimensional, horizontal plane of the stage to the two-dimensional, vertical plane of the projection, monitor, or still photograph.

Why do visual artists engage with dance? In her essay "Dancer and the Dance," Susan Sontag proffers an exceptionally good answer:

> Merce Cunningham and Lincoln Kirstein have both offered as a definition of dance: a spiritual activity in physical form. No art lends itself so aptly as dance does to metaphors borrowed from spiritual life (Grace, elevation . . .). Which means, too, that all discussions of the dance, and of great dancers, including this one, fit dance into some larger rhetoric about human possibility.[43]

Indeed, dance is a mode that allows innumerable areas of thematic exploration, from the abstract to the narrative, from the metaphorical to the didactic. Dance can encompass everything from high emotion to low humor, from the mythical to the conceptual. Dance engenders rich collaborations. Dance reinvigorates the use of the figure in art. Dance transforms our experience of space and time. The *Dance with Camera* exhibition sought to create a generative stage to explore, through the lens of art, the unique capacity of dance to be all things to all people.

NOTES

This text is adapted from the exhibition catalogue essay for *Dance with Camera*.

1. *Dance with Camera*, curated by Jenelle Porter, was on view at the Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, from September 11, 2009 to March 21, 2012. The exhibition traveled to Contemporary Arts Museum Houston (August 7–October 17, 2010) and Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art (January 15–April 30, 2011). The

cinema program was co-hosted by International House Philadelphia, with seven evenings of films, from Hollywood movies to experimental films.

2. Nick Kaye, *Postmodernism and Performance* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 90–91.

3. Jill Johnston, "Baryshnikov Dancing Judson," in *Marmalade Me*, by Jill Johnston (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1998), 262–263.

4. Peter Wollen, *Raiding the Icebox: Reflections on Twentieth-Century Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 160.

5. Henry Geldzahler, "Happenings: Theater by Painters," in *The New American Cinema: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Gregory Battcock (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1967), 76.

6. The Judson community, too, was interested in theories of recording dance. Choreography was seen as physicalized writing, and, more pragmatically, notation offered a tool to translate choreography to others when working quickly and with no rehearsal space. See Sally Banes, "Choreographic Methods of the Judson Dance Theater," in *Writing Dancing in the Age of Postmodernism*, by Sally Banes (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1994), 213.

7. Some of these categories were developed by Laban's followers in order to further refine his system.

8. Always at the forefront of technological innovation, Merce Cunningham was one of the first choreographers to use a computer program called LifeForms, in 1989, developed by the Dance and Science departments of Simon Fraser University in British Columbia. LifeForms allows a choreographer to sketch ideas in space and time, on the computer. Cunningham in turn worked with the creators of LifeForms to adapt its system. Just as Cunningham's use of film and video effected transformations in his choreography, so too did his use of the computer.

9. Vera Maletic, "Formation of Laban's Movement and Dance Notation Principles," in *Body—Space—Expression: The Development of Rudolf Laban's Movement and Dance Concepts, Approaches to Semiotics*, by Valerie Maletic (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1987), 113–138.

10. Maya Deren, "Film in Progress. Thematic Statement," *Film Culture* 39 (Winter 1965): 11.

11. Maya Deren, quoted in *Dance Perspectives* 30 (Summer 1967): 10.

12. "Shirley Clarke Interviewed by Gretchen Berg," *Dance Perspectives* 30 (Summer 1967): 54.

13. *Ibid.*

14. Elisabeth Kley, "Everyday Miracles: The Videos of Oliver Herring," *Performing Arts Journal* 25, no. 2 (May 2003): 78.

15. *Beehive* was also a work for stage with several iterations created between 1983 and 1991.

16. The approximate number reflects that other videos were made but never released or finished.

17. One of the essential elements of the Atlas/Cunningham collaborations is the pragmatics in play: *Fractions I* was made in color and black-and-white because the company owned three black-and-white cameras and one color. They used every piece of equipment they had.

18. André Lepecki. *Dance*. Cambridge, MN: MIT Press, 2012, 3, 215.

19. Bruce Nauman, quoted in Willoughby Sharp, "Bruce Nauman," *Avalanche* 2 (Winter 1971): 142.

20. Robert Ayers, "Interview with Tacita Dean," June 19, 2008. *Blouinartinfo*. http://www.artinfo.com/news/story/27914/tacita-dean/.

21. Dean had set out to make one film, but after six takes, she determined to make one work composed of these six performances. *Merce Cunningham performs STILLNESS (in three*

movements) to John Cage's composition 4'33" with Trevor Carlson, New York City, 28 April 2007 (six performances, six films) was installed in 2008 at Dia: Beacon, New York. *Dance with Camera* features a one-screen version of Dean's larger work.

22. The convulsive, uncoordinated movements of tarantism evolved into the stylized tarantella, a whirling couple dance accompanied by percussive tambourine music.

23. "Breakaway" was written by Ed Cobb.

24. I am indebted to Carrie Lambert-Beatty for pointing me to this concept. See *Being Watched: Yvonne Rainer and the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008), 73.

25. Lincoln Kirstein, from *Three Pamphlets Collected* (New York: Dance Horizons, 1967), quoted in Roger Copeland, *Merce Cunningham: The Modernizing of Modern Dance* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 118.

26. Humphrey made an early dance record film called *Air for G String* (1934).

27. In the years since this essay was written, Lassry has made a number of additional works about dance, including live performances.

28. Considering the subject of my essay, I will note that I first encountered Forsythe's *Solo* in the 1997 Whitney Biennial where it was included not in the film theater program but projected in a dedicated gallery.

29. Babette Mangolte, "On the Making of *Water Motor*, a dance by Trisha Brown, filmed by Babette Mangolte," www.babettemangolte.org/maps2.html.

30. Quoted in Amy Greenfield, *Filmdance: 1890s–1983* (New York, 1983), 30.

31. Mangolte, "On the Making of *Water Motor*," www.babettemangolte.com/maps2.html.

32. Greenfield, *Filmdance*, 131.

33. *Ibid.*, 61.

34. Although Peterson's work figures prominently in P. Adams Sitney's influential book *Visionary Film* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), there is no mention of his dance-related films.

35. Sidney Peterson in Greenfield, *Filmdance: 1890s–1983*, 31.

36. Mike Kelley, *Minor Histories: Statements, Conversations Proposals*, ed. John C. Welchman (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), 129.

37. Allan Antliff, "Anarchy at Documenta: An Interview with Luis Jacob," *C Magazine* (Fall 2007): n.p.

38. Robert Enright, "A Woman for All Seasons: An Interview with Françoise Sullivan," *Border Crossings* 27, no. 2 (June 2008): 48–61.

39. Ivone Margulies, "At the Edge of My Seat: *Teatro Amazonas*," in *Sharon Lockhart: Teatro Amazonas*, in *Sharon Lockhart: Teatro Amazonas*, eds. Timothy Martin and Karel Schampers (Rotterdam: NAJ Publishers, 1999), 101.

40. Text largely adapted from Jenelle Porter, *Uri Tzaig: Duel* (New York: Artists Space, 2000).

41. Janis Londraville and Richard Londraville, *The Most Beautiful Man in the World: Paul Swan, from Wilde to Warhol* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 3.

42. *Ibid.*, 11.

43. Susan Sontag, "Dancer and the Dance," in *Reading Dance*, ed. Richard Gottlieb (New York: Pantheon, 2008), 338.

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Media

∞. Directed by Uri Tzaig. Color video, sound, 20 minutes. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Erna Hecey, Brussels. Created in conjunction with Montpellier City Center for Dance, France. 1998.

A Dance for Those of Us Whose Hearts Have Turned to Ice, Based on the Choreography of Francoise Sullivan and the Sculpture of Barbara Hepworth. Directed by Luis Jacob. Two T-shirts in custom-built case, and color video, sound, 8:35 minutes. Birch Libralato: Toronto. 2007.

A Dance Incorporating Movements Derived from Experiments by Harry F. Harlow and Choreographed in the Manner of Martha Graham. Directed by Mike Kelley. Black-and-white video, silent, 8:32 minutes. 1999.

Adaptive Lines. Directed by Flora Wiegmann. 16mm film transferred to video, color with sound, 3 minutes. 2007.

Beehive. Directed by Frank Moore and Jim Self. Video, color, sound, 15 minutes. 1985.

BREAKAWAY. Directed by Bruce Conner. Black-and-white film, sound, 5 minutes (transferred to DVD). 1966.

Caught in the Act. Directed by Eleanor Antin. Black-and-white video, sound, 36 minutes. 1973.

C.L.U.E. Part I. Directed by robbinschilds + A.L. Steiner. Digital video, color, sound, 10:50 minutes. New York. 2007

Dance 1. Directed by Oliver Herring. Color video, 2:48 minutes. 2002.

Dance in the Sun. Directed by Shirley Clarke. 16mm color film, sound, 6 minutes. 1953.

Dance or Exercise on the Perimeter of a Square (1967-68). Directed by Bruce Nauman. 16mm film, black and white, sound, 10 minutes. 1967–1968.

Fractions I. Directed by Charles Atlas. Black-and-white and color video, sound, 33 minutes. 1977.

Goshogaoka. Directed by Sharon Lockhart. 16mm color film, sound, 63 minutes. 1998.

Hand Movie. Directed by Yvonne Rainer. 8mm black-and-white film (transferred to DVD), silent, 5 minutes. 1966.

Mass Ornament. Directed by Natalie Bookchin. HD video projection with 5.1 Surround Sound, color, 7:20 minutes. 2009.

Merce (Manchester) Directed by Tacita Dean. 16mm color film installation, sound, 5:27 minutes. 2007.

Nine Variations on a Dance Theme. Directed by Hilary Harris. 16mm black-and-white film, sound, 13 minutes. 1966.

Paul Swan. Directed by Andy Warhol. 16mm color film, sound, 66 minutes. 1965.

Sloss, Kerr, Rosenberg & Moore. Directed by Ann Carlson and Mary Ellen Strom. Single-channel color video, sound, 4:30 minutes. 2007.

Solo. Directed by Thomas Lovell Balogh. Featuring William Forsythe. Camera by Jess Hall. Black-and-white video, sound, 7 minutes. 1997.

Study in Choreography for Camera. Directed by Maya Deren. Black-and-white film, silent, 2:12 minutes. 1945.

Tarantism. Directed by Joachim Koester. 16mm black-and-white film, silent, 6:31 minutes. 2007.

Transport. Directed by Amy Greenfield. 16mm color film, sound, 6 minutes. 1971.

Untitled (Agon). Directed by Elad Lassry. 16mm color film, silent, 13 minutes. 2007.

Water Motor. Directed by Babette Mangolte. 16mm black-and-white film, silent, 7:55 minutes. 1978.

LOÏE FULLER'S SERPENTINES AND POETICS OF SELF-ABNEGATION IN THE ERA OF ELECTROTECHNICS

IZABELLA PRUSKA-OLDENHOF

WHEN looking at the abundance of artifacts and texts on Loïe Fuller, one might be struck by the simultaneous presence and absence of *the* Loïe Fuller. The artifacts (there are many and in various media), do not represent the same woman. The visual representations of Fuller through artist renditions (in lithographs by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, drawings of James Abbott McNeill Whistler, posters by Jules Chéret) and in numerous Art Nouveau designs (from car grills to home décor) depict her as a sylph, whereas the photographic representations bring her back from the celestial atmosphere into her earthly, carnal being as an ordinary woman. This inconsistency is further reinforced by texts documenting her struggle to claim the title of the inventor of *Serpentine Dance*, while being shadowed by her numerous imitators. M. Griffith captures this in her article on Fuller in *Strand Magazine*, "a host of imitators has arisen, some of whom, not content with pirating her dances, have tried to copy her dresses and even to use her name."[1] However, Fuller did not appear to be agitated by her imitators. In the *New York Times* she states her view of them clearly: "There are 500 people—little misses—who can twirl a few yards of muslin, and bob in and out of the focus of a limelight but twirling a few yards of muslin and playing at touch with the limelight . . . do not make a skirt dancer."[2] And when asked about being the inventor of this dance, she proclaimed: "I have only revived a forgotten art, for I have been able to trace some of my dances back to four thousand years ago: to the time when Miriam and the women of Israel—filled with religious fervor and rapture—celebrated their release from Egyptian captivity with timbrels and with dances."[3] How can Fuller's dance be at once deemed innovative and

a revival of a "forgotten art"? And, what is the significance of these conflicting perspectives, as well as of Fuller's plural (and often incompatible) identities?

In the new dynamic world of electromagnetic waves and fields, connecting distant places and people through the invisible web of networks, we can no longer think in terms of disconnected or fragmented areas of disciplinary specialty and of people as specialists. Marshall McLuhan noted: "In our electronic age the specialist and pyramidal forms of structure, which achieved vogue in the sixteenth century and later, are not any longer practical. . . . The 'simultaneous field' of electric information structures, today reconstitutes the conditions and need for dialogue and participation, rather than specialism and private initiative in all levels of social experience."[4] Thus the collapse of divisions between disciplines into a field, where they are interconnected, renders a new world of possibilities, and therefore a new form of social experience. It also paves way for more fluid identities; or, as McLuhan often noted, in the electronic age of "total human interdependence" people put on masks to act out various roles rather than remain individuated/private specialists.[5] In the electronic age, the artist also assumes many roles (e.g., of the scientist-inventor, the scholar, the audience) and is not solely responsible for completing the artwork. Instead, the audience contributes to its completion by adding something—their sense of the work. In this dynamic overturning of roles, the artist assumes the role of the audience, who in the process of making artwork and after its completion is but a spectator to its unfolding.

Loïe Fuller's light performance and her mutable personas reflected the crisis of the subject position (of identity), namely the notion that the subject is not fixed or stable (remaining individuated) but, rather, is always in flux (assuming plural identities). This concept of the subject began to take shape over one century ago, appearing in the texts of the French poet, Arthur Rimbaud, and coincided with our entry into the "electric galaxy."[6]

Arthur Rimbaud's *"Je est un autre"*

> Right now, I'm depraving myself as much as I can. Why? I want to be a poet, and I am working at making myself a *visionary*. . . . The problem is to attain the unknown by disorganizing *all the senses*. The suffering is immense, but you have to be strong, and have to be born a poet. And I have realized that I am a poet. It's not my doing at all. It's wrong to say: I think. Better to say: I am thought. Pardon the pun. [7]

Ideas conveyed in this short excerpt from a letter, written in 1871 by Arthur Rimbaud (1854–1891) to Georges Izambard, have been instrumental in shaping aesthetic practices of artists and art movements at the turn of last century and well into the twentieth century, from symbolism and surrealism to "happenings" and performance art. Its effect, one could argue, has carried over to the early twenty-first century new media

and installation art. In other words, all those aesthetic practices that eschew the control of the author/artist over the work have taken, either knowingly or not, something from this letter: those that relinquish this control in favor of something "other" stepping into the aesthetic process, either chance or automatic techniques, and thus staving off the censorship of consciousness; and those that reverse the power relation between the audience and the author of the work, rendering meaning making an open-ended process. And how was this transformation, this aesthetic revolution accomplished? As Rimbaud suggested, by progressively "disorganizing *all the senses*," which include not only the five bodily senses but also sense as meaning.

Rimbaud was responding to the nineteenth-century cultural environment, which was in thrusts of transition from the mechanical age to the era of electric technology. This technological transformation had an even more profound effect, the scope of which McLuhan had likened to the introduction of Gutenberg's printing press in fifteenth century. It put into question our previous understanding of world and universe as stable clockwork and solid entities by introducing dynamic principles, which govern the theory of electromagnetism, thereby shattering our worldview along with our place in it. This transformation also called for a revolution of consciousness, along with the re-evaluation of what is the self. Rimbaud heralded this transformation in his letters, known as the "Letters of the Seer/Visionary (*Les Lettres du Voyant*)." This is why the symbolists and the twentieth-century avant-garde turned to his writings as a source of inspiration and direction in traversing this newly transformed world with their art:

> For *I* is an *other*. . . . That is quite clear to me: I am a spectator at the flowering of my thought: I watch it, I listen to it: I draw a bow across a string: a symphony stirs in the depths, or surges onto the stage.
>
> . . .
>
> I say you have to be a visionary, make yourself a visionary.
>
> A Poet makes himself a visionary through a long, boundless, and systematized *disorganization of all the senses*. . . . Unspeakable torment, where he will need the greatest faith, a superhuman strength, where he becomes among all men the great invalid, the great criminal, the great accursed—and the Supreme Scientist! For he attains the *unknown!*[8]

Rimbaud's letters to his teacher (Georges Izambard) and to his friend and fellow poet (Paul Demeny) describe an artist of a different sensibility. This is why he insists on the disorganization of the senses. The senses have to be organized differently, they have to become less fixed and isolated from one another for the new art (language) to ensue. "This language will be of the soul, for the soul, and will include everything: perfumes, sounds, colors, thought grappling with thought."[9] The subject position has to also become less stable and individuated, and more fluid and vast: for "*I* is an *other*." Furthermore, the role of the new poet (artist), according to Rimbaud, would be to "make precise the quantity of the unknown arising in his time in the universal soul: he would provide more than the formula of his thought, the record *of his path to Progress!*

Enormity becoming norm, absorbed into everything, he would truly become a *multiplier of progress!*"[10] The new era of electricity resonates through Rimbaud's prose in this passage, in particular the fascination at the turn of last century with the unknown (the invisible forces of the electromagnetic waves, which permeate everything and magically connect everything). "Enormity becoming norm," speaks to the actual perception of the world shrinking, the effect of new communication technologies, first ushered in by the Industrial Revolution and mechanical technologies in the form of railway and steamship travel, and later through electric technology in the form of telegraphy and the introduction of the World's Fair or Universal Exposition (first held in London, United Kingdom in 1851). This new poet, according to Rimbaud, does not go against the universal "*Progress*" of humanity but contributes to it, by leaving material record of his aesthetic progress (process), which is in tune with the universal "*Progress*." As such, he becomes the "*multiplier*" of (technological) progress by making art, which like its artist, is in tune with the new environment. Rimbaud articulated this in language and Loïe Fuller (1869–1928) embodied this in her *Serpentine Dance* and its later, more complex iterations. In his letter to Paul Demeny, Rimbaud had envisioned Fuller (the poet of light, as some have called her):

> Poetry will no longer give rhythm to action; it *will be in advance*.
>   And there will be poets like this! When the eternal slavery of Women is destroyed, when she lives for herself and through herself, when man—up till now abominable—will have set her free, she will be a poet as well! Woman will discover the unknown![11]

La Loïe Fuller

Loïe Fuller's spectacular *Serpentine Dance*, possible only with the newly popularized form of incandescent electric light, took Paris of the 1890s by storm and revolutionized both traditional dance choreography and theatrical stage design. She lured her mesmerized audiences into the undulating chimera of visions and sensations of her dance. "The possibilities of color in motion, of glowing, undulating excitement was the magic that Loïe created in her manipulation of turbulent yards of shimmering fabric,"[12] Margaret Haile Harris states in her book on Fuller, in which she likens her to a magician. And it was this magic that permitted Fuller to shatter the boundaries between the artist and the spectator (the self and the other, to echo Rimbaud). This was accomplished aesthetically through ceaseless transformation of forms in her dance, which eschewed being reduced to fixed representations, for the dynamism of her performance propelled them to continuously flee toward abstraction, thereby putting new demands on spectators to fill in the missing links: to complete the work. She inspired numerous poets and artists, for some rousing the need to reconsider their own aesthetic approach and for others she became "the creation of the fantasies."[13] Her dance was depicted

in art objects and poems "more often than any other woman of her time," and "she served as a symbol of the Symbolist movement . . .she became the personification of Art Nouveau."[14] But who was this woman, and why might she be of interest to us today?

Loïe Fuller was born as Marie Louise Fuller in January 1862 in Fullersburg near Chicago, Illinois, a daughter of Reuben Fuller and Delilah Eaton. Her family moved to Chicago when Fuller was two and opened a boardinghouse. Her father was "a first-rate fiddler and graceful dancer" and her mother encouraged Fuller's theatrical career, both as a faithful companion and a watchful parent. Fuller had two brothers, one younger and one older. As Elizabeth Coffman points out, in 1896 when Loïe Fuller was offered a chance to make a film with Thomas Edison she claimed that she sent her sister instead, when in fact she never had a sister.[15] Fuller possessed natural ability to act, which she rarely left on stage; instead she lived through its manifestations in her dance as well as in her personal life. She was mainly an actress, who performed on vaudeville stage in various plays and in between the dance numbers of the skirt dancers. Fuller was not formally trained in dance and her contribution to dance has been recognized as a dance innovation.[16] She was the first to introduce an hybrid-media approach to dance—combining colored electric light, costume, sound, movement, and stage design into a complexly choreographed whole—thus paving the way for twentieth-century dancers, who in the second half of that century began exploring the possibilities of hybrid-media performances through collaborations with artists in other disciplines, and even scientists and engineers.[17]

Richard and Marcia Current point out that Loïe Fuller was "something of a paradox" in part because the posters and the art objects depicting her dance as a "tall and lovely sylph" and a graceful dancer were at odds with her living body.[18] She experienced years of struggle in vaudeville theatres, first as an actress and later as a dancer, where she endured humiliation inflicted by managers who laughed in her face when she asked to perform as a dancer.[19] These life experiences, very likely, made an impact on her, for her performances can be interpreted as a challenge to any fixed or stable forms of representation, which also extend to the physical appearance of female bodies and especially of female performers, by ceaselessly threatening these forms with dissolution into abstraction through the dynamism of her performances. She became a force that broke all the visibly and the invisibly lived boundaries: those that separated classes, by bringing her audiences to a hybrid of vaudeville spectacle and theater of the highbrow; and those that separated art into disciplines and art from other disciplines, by moving freely between them while appropriating "the metaphors and methods of both high art and science."[20] According to Tom Gunning, the hypnotic quality of Fuller's dance, its rapid movements and bursts of colored light, fascinated the public, and instead of being "a barrier to reception, its abstraction possessed an immediate sensual attraction that cut across classes and required no previous training or initiation to appreciate."[21] Therefore it would seem that rather than resisting the disparity between her real-life appearance and its representations, this paradox of *the* Loïe Fuller fuelled her plural identities and was mirrored in her performances, in the polysemic potency of ceaselessly changing and evocative forms. More importantly, this expanded form of dance paved way for a

new type of experience—an experience of immersion, fit for the times of burgeoning electromagnetic technology—making it undesirable to fix, grasp, or attempt to represent her as *the* Loïe, but always as someone-something else: the nymph, the lily, the butterfly, the snake . . . the imitator.

Loïe Fuller's performative being, on the stage (as a multiplying moving light) and in real life (assuming plural identities), also shaped her autobiography *Fifteen Years of a Dancer's Life: With Some Account of Her Distinguished Friends*. This book consists of personal anecdotes about Fuller's experiences with her friends and other noteworthy people in her life, as well as her account of the genesis of her *Serpentine Dance*. In their biography on Fuller, Richard and Marcia Current noted that she had a tendency to make up "fantastic tales" about her life while creating "her own myth,"[22] and her autobiography was the perfect outlet to do that. Fuller's myth-making abilities, which also served to destabilize the self as fixed and immutable, are captured in her accounts of children's responses to her dance.

In the chapter "My Dances and the Children," she provides several accounts of children being disillusioned with her real life appearance, after first seeing her perform on stage. The well-to-do Parisian parents would bring their children backstage after Fuller's performance to meet her in person.[23] To the astonishment of parents, their children—in disbelief that the same lady performed the dances on stage and appears on the posters—would deem her an impostor. One little girl responded: "No, no. That isn't her. I don't want to see her. This one here is a fat lady, and it was a fairy I saw dancing."[24] Another little girl, Princess Marie of Roumania's daughter, exclaimed: "You don't fool me. This woman is telling fibs,"[25] after previously having called her a butterfly and an angel. Fuller "avoid[ed] disillusioning these children."[26] She replied to the first little girl "I hear the fairy whispering in my ear that she would like to dance for you all the time,"[27] thereby acting as a medium between the fairy, butterfly, angel Loïe Fuller and the "fat lady" Loïe Fuller. In this chapter, Fuller moves between at least two subject positions when describing her dances, one being the reflective position on her dances as an art critic, the second responding to her dance through the eyes of a child, and the third being a silent voice of the "ideal" Loïe Fuller, echoing through the other two positions. More significantly, in the first two positions, she sees herself through eyes of the other; watching herself dance, as if uncoupled from her (carnal) self. (One might recall Rimbaud's two letters here, and specifically his emphasis on the disruption to the unity of the self: "I is an other.") The following is an example of the "critic-ideal Loïe" combination: "From the unearthly appearance of my dances, caused by the light and the mingling of color, they ought particularly to appeal to the young, making them believe that the being flitting about there before them among the shadows and flashes of light belongs to the unreal world which holds sway in their lives."[28] The next passage demonstrates the "child's eye-ideal Loïe" combination:

> [The child] must have supposed that she was going to be taken into some celestial
> place. She looked round with restless eyes, surveying the bare walls, the uncarpeted

floor, and seemed to be waiting to see the ceiling or the flooring open suddenly and permit an entrance into Loïe Fuller's kingdom.

Suddenly a folding screen was drawn and a young woman came forward, who looked tired and in whose appearance there was nothing supernatural. With arms outstretched she advanced smiling.[29]

Fuller's prose makes evident that she relished the freedom to move between subject positions, assuming several identities. Just as in her dance performances, she moved between different forms (butterflies, lilies, snakes, etc.), physically transforming her bodily appearance by means of several media (fabric of a dress, color lights, magic lanterns, and sound) integrated into the whole of her movement, in her prose, she moved with language between positions, between the lines, evoking *the* Loïe only momentarily, in passing, in flight, in motion.

The notion of plural meanings, as well as perspectives, was perhaps most evident in Fuller's *Mirror Dance* in the early 1890s.[30] M. Griffith provides the following description of this dance:

> One of the greatest successes has been the "Mirror Dance," in which, by some mysterious arrangement, eight Loïe Fullers appear to be dancing at the same time, and the whole stage is bathed in a flood of glorious tints, in which may be seen aerial forms, in cloudlike vestures, whirling and dancing as if they were the fabled victims of the Tarantula.[31]

The multiplication of Fuller was accomplished by having four mirrors placed directly behind her on stage in a semicircular arrangement. When lights illumined her from above, also from behind, her figure was reflected in the mirrors and, thus, multiplied. These reflections had a less substantial quality and therefore appeared as aerial and cloudlike forms. However, what is most significant about these mirror reflections is that through this semicircular arrangement, they did not provide the same vantage point of Fuller, but rather a synthetic view of eight different vantage points (spanning from her left side, to her back, to her right side), which were additionally combined with audience's individual vantage points of her dancing figure, all together in one space. This arrangement is reminiscent of a filmstrip or an animated film sequence, a visionary way to (indirectly) connect performance with the film medium (then a novel technology) while anticipating the multiscreen expanded cinema of the future. It also anticipated two other significant discoveries in the twentieth century, one in the area of aesthetics and the other in science: Pablo Picasso's cubist compositions (*Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, commonly identified as the first, dating from 1907), which collapse several perspectives in one composition by relying on mobile vantage points and, therefore, eschew notions of fixed perspective that dominated visual composition since the Renaissance until the nineteenth century; and Albert Einstein's theory of special relativity, which he first defined in his 1905 paper "On the Electrodynamics of Moving Bodies." Moreover, Griffith's description of the reflected dancing figures, "as if they were

the fabled victims of the Tarantula," suggests self-abnegation through possession or being taken over by something other (for those performing the Tarantella dance, it was the venomous bite of the spider; for Fuller, Rimbaud, and artists living at the transition into electric age, it was the otherness from within, the unconscious, and the otherness from without, the new electromagnetic environment). *Mirror Dance*, therefore, articulated the negation of a unified self (hence, self-abnegation and self-dispersal), which figured centrally in Fuller's aesthetic and was equally mirrored in Fuller's life through her numerous imitators and aesthetic representations of her, as well as her fluid transitions between several personas. This dance, therefore, anticipated plural identities and perspectives as characteristic of experience in the electronically interconnected world.

The Electric Galaxy

The 1900 World Exhibition in Paris signaled the entry into the new electric age.[32] The wonder and excitement brought with the new electromagnetic technology was captured in this exhibition. Just eleven years prior, the 1889 Exhibition celebrated the achievements of science and industry with the iron and glass Gallery of Machines and the Eiffel Tower.[33] In the 1900 Exhibition, the Palace of Electricity and the Château d'Eau were the focus of the exhibition (and were built over the Gallery of the Machines, literally covering it), thus signaling the eclipse of the old mechanical age by the new electric age.[34] Already at the dawn of the Enlightenment, the ground was being sown for the entry of the electric age, with various theoretical and laboratory experiments.[35] However, it did not gain significant momentum until the nineteenth century, and especially its second half, when several key inventions, along with James Clerk Maxwell's development of mathematical formulas and theories on electromagnetism, published in *A Treatise on Electricity and Magnetism* in 1873, set the process in full motion.

In *The Science of Culture and the Phenomenology of Styles*, Renato Barilli notes that the second half of the 1800s was marked by two key innovations connected to electro-technics. The first was the invention of the dynamo by the Italian physicist Antonio Pacinotti in 1860. Barilli states:

> The era of electromechanics begins at that moment, and we can consider it to be a kind of happy compromise between the two levels. The driving role played by the "machine age" at the center of the production and locomotion does not diminish. Work, which is performed by the muscles of animals and humans in antiquity and during the Middle Ages, is still carried out by inert mechanisms, but the energy that moves them is no longer heat (steam or the combustion of organic substances, such as coal and other hydrocarbons); it is "white" electrical energy.[36]

This hybrid of machine and electrical technology was essential in producing excitement and a sense of wonder in the public at the 1900 Exhibition, especially during the nightly spectacles at Château d'Eau of illuminated (by colored electric light) fountains dancing

to the symphonies of notable composers.[37] The second innovation took place in 1866; the first transoceanic telegraph cables were laid between Europe and North America. "From that moment forward," Barilli writes, "telegraphic communication connects the two continents in fractions of a second, since electromagnetic waves move at the highest speed possible in the physical world, almost 300,000 km per second (like light, a phenomenon that falls within the sphere of electromagnetism)."[38] This invention was also captured at the 1900 Exhibition. It figured centrally in the fresco by Eugène Cormon, titled *Electricity*, in the Salle de Fêtes, which shows two women sitting at a telegraph table, encoding and decoding messages at the transmitting machine, and another woman (a telephone operator) standing by the switchboard. This fresco also includes a man operating a dynamo, a couple in a car, and two incandescent lamps suspended from street lampposts. What is significant about this fresco's composition is that the light emitted by these two incandescent lamps concentrates near the center of the fresco—obliterating shapes with its luminosity—and cascades over the human figures in the painting, which are composed around its edges. This shift in focus from the human subject to technology, in particular the electric light, which is fluid and not easily contained, as central to this composition—and literally at its center—also signaled significant shifts within the human subject: human beings were no longer at the center of the world, and subjectivity itself was no longer stable or given, but in flux and fluid. Rimbaud's visionary texts called attention to these shifts when he declared "I is an other," and Fuller embodied them in her performances and in her fluid transitions between different personas.

The importance of electromagnetic technology would have in twentieth-century life was already anticipated in the structure of the 1900 Exhibition, which accorded the Palace of Electricity the central role; it was the main source of electric power and thus brought to life—through electric light and power—the entire exhibition:

> In the Palace of Electricity, indeed, is manufactured all the energy necessary for the lighting of the Exhibition and the operation of its various parts. . . . A single touch of the finger on a switch and the magic fluid pours forth: everything is immediately illuminated, everything moves. . . . Everywhere the soul of the Palace of Electricity brings Light and Life.[39]

This description speaks prophetically of things to come by relying on organicist and animist metaphors for electricity, namely by referring to all exhibition pavilions, which are connected by electricity, as working together as a single whole organism, and which with the single flip of a switch is brought to life. Thus, electricity connects light (technology) and life (nature).

There is further significance to the organicist metaphors for technology that were expressed in the 1900 Exhibition, which has bearing on the interpretation of Fuller's performances. The numerous water fountains and waterfalls (powered by electricity) that constituted Château d'Eau were the actual façade of the Palace of Electricity. This juxtaposition is significant, for it brings together nature and technology (water and electricity), the organic flows and waves inherent in the natural world (water)

and the flows of electric currents and electromagnetic waves in the world of technology, which essentially overlap with one another. Thus the nightly presentations of these water fountains—illuminated by colored electric light and choreographed with music—manifested the shift in focus to the new understanding of energy and waves, and reality in general. Deborah Silverman notes that the centrality of electricity in the 1900 Exhibition "implied certain perceptions about the instability and fluidity of the world, a theme related to the vitalist organicism of the fair. The electrical underpinnings of the exhibition—a form of magic or energy that could not be seen or rendered tangible—nourished a sense of seething, unbounded, and immaterial power."[40] The notions of fluidity and unbound energy not only fed into the new conception of the world—a world no longer possible to contain within the clockwork conception of the universe or possible to behold in a unified perspective—but also of the modern subject, as not fixed but in a ceaseless process of becoming, propelled by the energies of the unconscious drives. There was, however, another aspect to this energy: the return of the organic forms through the new electric technology, or the revival of biomorphic forms in the new electromorphic forms, and light led the way in this new revolution of consciousness.

Renato Barilli posits that biomorphic and electromorphic forms exhibit similarities.[41] This is because both belong to the world of organic structures; however, each manifests itself to human senses in a different way. In the first, organic forms are visible to the human eye; in the second, organic forms are invisible to the naked human eye and require tools (technology) to identify them. The presence of both the biomorphic and electromorphic forms in Fuller's performances, one flowing into the other, would then suggest that her performances seamlessly integrated the world of nature (in the fleeting evocations of plants, animals, and natural phenomena) with the new world of electromagnetic technology (in the spirals, serpentines, and waves rendered through her undulating movements). For many, Fuller remains the embodiment of Art Nouveau, but one might wonder why no connection has been identified between the forms produced through movement in her dance, the sinuous lines and undulations, with the electromorphic forms. Instead, electricity is often mentioned as a device used to either illuminate or to create special effects (tricks) in her dance, rather than as being embodied in the actual form and content of her dance, and, as previously noted, in her self-abnegation and plural identifications.[42] More importantly, the seamless integration of biomorphic and electromorphic forms in Fuller's performances foreshadowed the revival of the connecting and integrating qualities, which are common to all organic structures, but in a new iteration, as an electromagnetic field that would take yet another century to fully envelop the entire planet in its net. McLuhan offered the following account of this revival:

> Electricity has wrapped the planet in a single cohesive field or membrane that is organic rather than mechanical in nature. The population of the world has imploded, as have the models of perception and learning. All men are now involved in one another physically and psychically as happens when they occupy a very small

village. And as global villagers, all men must now accommodate their perceptions and judgments to the complex interdependence understood and manipulated by villagers. Habits and attitudes natural to centuries of expansion now yield with equal naturalness to the intense pressures of an electronically unified world.[43]

This passage, which might be clear to the twenty-first century reader living in the West and for whom the Internet has become the lived reality of daily activity, puzzled many in the twentieth century, who were living in the early stages of the world's transition into the global village. One needs some distance (of time) to gain better perspective on the situation, to gain the "rear-view perspective," which, Marshall McLuhan often noted, was the usual perspective on new technology; it had to become commonplace and old for its effects to become manifest to people. To see if this "rear-view perspective" was common to all people, we have to turn to McLuhan.

ART AS ANTI-ENVIRONMENT AND ARTISTS AS THE HISTORIANS OF THE FUTURE

Marshall McLuhan called attention in his texts to the cultural and social effects of the dynamics between arts and technology, especially at points of major technological transformations. He saw artists as those who lead people through their art into awareness of the environments in which they live and which people create for themselves through technology. McLuhan came to this idea by studying the works of artists and poets, such as Stéphane Mallarmé, Arthur Rimbaud, James Joyce, Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, and John Cage. In his address at Vision 65, McLuhan stated:

> . . . [T]he role of art in the past has been not so much the making of environments as making of counterenvironments, or antienvironments. Flaubert, a hundred years ago, said: "Style is a way of seeing." Ever since that time the painters and artists have been quite conscious of their jobs as teaching people how to perceive the world they live in. . . . The training of perception upon the otherwise unheeded environment became the basis of experimentation in what is called modern art and poetry.[44]

In this passage, McLuhan suggests that the form and not so much the content of the artwork undergoes significant changes, although the transformation of the form also affects the content. This concept relates to one of McLuhan's most famous ideas, "the medium is the message," which he introduced in *Understanding Media* in 1964, and this passage provides further elaboration upon it by turning to the arts as the realm of sensory and media explorations. In *Understanding Media*, McLuhan introduces the idea that media are extensions of our senses and limbs (e.g., eyeglasses are extensions of our eyes [vision]; bicycles and cars are extensions of our legs [kinesis]; and the

telephone is an extension of our ears [hearing]). However, the electronic technology no longer extends our senses or limbs, but rather the nervous system itself. We can think of the Internet as a vast network of electric (neural) connections (a brain), which move information from one area (of the body) to another, thus connecting and interconnecting the whole (body) world. Therefore in this new world of electromagnetic waves and electronic technology, artists become of tremendous significance, for their works manifest these new changes through the new forms they assume, and many artists also become directly involved in exploring these new technologies in their art; Fuller is indeed such an artist.

The introduction of electric technology in the West signaled a turning point in Western arts. This turning point, according to McLuhan, was abstraction, which was how artists dealt with adjusting their art and perceptive faculties of the people to this change. "Syncopation," McLuhan notes,

> in the early phases of jazz simply meant pulling out the visual connections, pulling out the continuity. And in Picasso or any other abstract artist, the technique is simply to pull out the visual connections. That's what abstract means. *Abstractus*. It means the pulling-out. You pull out something. What you pull out in abstract art and in jazz and in symbolism is the connection.[45]

The effect of abstraction (in visual or auditory compositions) is that it immediately engages the audience in finding the "missing link," the "connection." In so doing, the audience participates in the completion of the work by adding something, their own sense of the work. Abstraction in art, like the unstable or fluid identities of the subject, fed into the new conception of the universe; the world of waves and flux, in which nothing is solid or fixed, but it is always in movement. And just as the painters were training viewers' eyes through their abstract painting to look at this new world in the newly adjusted way, so was Fuller, but by training all the senses simultaneously.

McLuhan noted that artists could be seen as outsiders, as those living in a different temporal dimension or at different speed than the society:

> The poets and the artists are usually fifty years ahead of the physical scientists in devising models of perception. The job of the artist is to devise means of perceiving that are relevant to the situation in which you exist. This is the gap between biology and technology which [Albert T.] Simeons pointed out as a kind of traumatic and dangerous gap indeed.[46]

Artists are, therefore, the first to perceive changes in the environment wrought by new technology. Moreover, this unique ability, which McLuhan identified in artists, to live thoroughly in the present while anticipating the future through their art, also implies another function of artists in society, as "the historians of the future." In the electronic age of sped up communication (collapsing spatial and temporal dimensions) and with the ever-increasing speed of transformations in technology (giving way to quicker recognition of new patterns wrought by technology), the new experience involves the

simultaneous apprehension of the past, present, and the future. This constitutes the new reality (the new experience of existence) that only those attuned to the present (artists) can apprehend and render palpable to others. McLuhan notes that "the artist senses at once the creative possibilities in new media even when they are alien to his own medium. . . . The artist is the historian of the future because he uses the unnoticed possibilities of the present."[47] Thus, by sensing the new (future) "creative possibilities in new media," artists deploy them in their art in the present, often combining or hybridizing the old with the new media, as Fuller did in her performances by bringing the new possibilities of electric technology into dance, while extending its chief characteristics (of simultaneity and fluidity) into her life. Therefore, the function of the artist in our society is that of "the historian of the future."

In providing this broader definition of the function of artist in the electric age, McLuhan opened another perspective on Fuller's reply to Griffith when asked about being the originator of the *Serpentine Dance*: "I have only revived a forgotten art." What is significant in Fuller's reply is not only that she functions as a historian of the future (through her fluid identifications and self-abnegation) but also that her dance manifests the revival of forms (characteristic of those created through movements of veils in dance dating to earliest human interpretations of the natural and spiritual worlds through dance) in the new dynamic field of undulating electromagnetic waves, characteristic of the electric environments. Perhaps this is why today there is much interest in the works by artists from the turn of last century (like Fuller), which point not only to what was then but, more importantly, to where we are now.

Conclusion

Major technological transitions summon artists not only to revisit the history and the roots of their art forms but also to advance new ways of experiencing their art by means of hybrid forms. Fuller's performances were hybrids of media and disciplines. They were as much the product of the newly discovered electric incandescent light as the birth of cinema (its essential qualities of light and kinesis). Most significantly, her performances were expressions of an artist living in a new era of electricity, an era that shifted focus from an optical perspective and a stable clockwork view of the universe to electromagnetic fields and the universe as flux and energy.

Perhaps Fuller's *Serpentine Dance* was not truly her own invention but rather built upon the existing tradition of skirt dances and, as she has pointed out, the long lineage of ancient performances by women. However, what makes her *Serpentine Dance* and it variations revolutionary and still pertinent to us today is that she was able to connect the past (the previous traditions of skirt and veil dancing by women) with the present (then recent inventions in the electromagnetic technology) into an elaborately choreographed whole. Her performances also brought together the biomorphic and the electromorphic forms into an environment of her making (an anti-environment), which mirrored the