

Collaborative Legacy of Merce Cunningham

Schedule of Events:

With the exception of the UApresents Merce Cunningham Dance Company performance at Centennial Hall, all events are free and open to the public. See venue addresses below.

Monday, February 14th

The Collaborative Legacy of Merce Cunningham Exhibition Opening
Sundt Gallery [CALA], 5pm; talk by curator Beth Weinstein, 6pm

Monday, March 7th

Film Screening, Merce Cunningham Dance Co. Films
Melange, *Beach Birds for Camera*, and *Merce by Merce by Paik*
CCP, 6pm, followed by a Q+A

Wednesday, March 9th

Performance of John Cage's "Where Are We Going and What are we Doing"
Performed by Charles Alexander, Renee Angle, Laynie Browne, and Tenney Nathanson
Sundt Gallery [CALA], Poetry writing workshop 5:00 - 6:30pm, performance, 7pm

Thursday, March 10th

Dance Performance, Mixed program
Sundt Gallery [CALA] 6pm

Friday, March 11th

Film Screening: Experiments in Art and Technology's *9 Evenings: Theater and Engineering*
Q+A with special guest and film producer Julie Martin [E.A.T.] and Laura Kuhn [John Cage Trust]
MOCA, 6pm

Saturday, March 12th

Roundtable, *The Collaborative Legacy*
Moderated by MOCA Exec. Director Anne-Marie Russell
Panelists: MDCDC's Trevor Carlson and David Vaughan, Beth Weinstein and other UA faculty, and special guests Paul Kaiser [OpenEnded Group], Laura Kuhn [John Cage Trust], and Julie Martin [E.A.T.]
MOCA, 3pm

UApresents Event:

Saturday, March 12, 2011

Merce Cunningham Dance Company Legacy Tour Performance
Crises [1960], *XOVER* [2007] and *BIPED* [1999]
Centennial Hall, 8 pm performance, followed by a Q + A

Tickets available at the Centennial Hall Box Office: call 520.621.3341 or visit www.uapresents.org

Venues:

Sundt Gallery, College of Arch. + Landscape Arch. [CALA], 1040 N. Olive Rd	520.621.6751
Center for Creative Photography [CCP], 1050 North Olive Rd, Tucson, AZ	
MOCA Tucson [MOCA], 265 S. Church Ave, Tucson, AZ	520.624.5019
Centennial Hall [UApresents], 1020 E. University Blvd, Tucson, AZ	520.621.3341

Merce Cunningham / John Cage / Robert Rauschenberg
David Tudor / Andy Warhol / Jasper Johns / Marcel Duchamp
David Behrman / Andrew Culver / OpenEnded Group
Charles Atlas / Benedetta Tagliabue / E.A.T. / Billy Klüver
Elliot Caplan / Nam June Paik / Lucinda Childs / Frank Gehry
John Adams / Elisa Monte / Tod Williams + Billie Tsien
Glenn Branca / Nacho Duato / Jaafar Chalabi
Nikolaus Hirsch / William Forsythe / Frédéric Flamand
Ai Weiwei / Dominique Perrault / Doug Nielsen / Beth Weinstein

March 10, 2011: Dance

The University of Arizona is proud to present the exhibition—*the Collaborative Legacy of Merce Cunningham*—documenting seven multi-disciplinary works from the Merce Cunningham Dance Company [MCDC] as well as selected works resulting from collaborations between other choreographers and architects. The exhibition features reproductions of music and dance notations, drawings, sketches, and photographs documenting the collaborative process and the performed works. The exhibition and related programming has been designed to complement the MCDC Legacy Tour performance presented by UApresents at UA's Centennial Hall on March 12, 2011.

The Merce Cunningham Dance Company, created in 1953, is one of the most influential contemporary dance companies in the world. Since Cunningham's death in 2009, the Company has embarked on a final, two-year celebratory world tour after which the Company will permanently disband. Merce Cunningham left behind a legacy of cross-disciplinary collaborations in all of the arts as well as a culture of creative research informed by such diverse interests as zen philosophy, environmental aesthetics, chance and indeterminacy, and digital technology.

This exhibition and related programming, which will include film screenings, curator talks and performances, will give scholars, students and the general public opportunities to discuss, debate and celebrate Cunningham's legacy during the month leading up to the MCDC's performance on the UA campus.

The Collaborative Legacy of Merce Cunningham Exhibition

February 14, 2011 - March 22, 2011

Exhibition is free and open to the public weekdays 8am - 8pm

Sundt Gallery, College of Architecture + Landscape Architecture [CALA]

1040 N. Olive Road, Tucson, Arizona

520.621.6751

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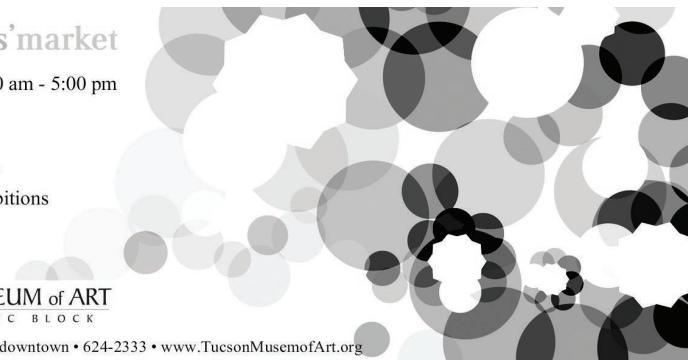
springartisans' market

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to the market and exhibitions

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Collaborative Legacy of Merce Cunningham

Thursday, March 10th

Performed in the Sundt Gallery @ 6pm:

Space Time and Dance (Room for four) 2

Merce Cunningham Biography 3

followed by, in the garden,
Time-space 4

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2 SPACE, TIME, and DANCE (room for 4)⁺

Choreography: Douglas Nielsen and the dancers

Sound: Merce Cunningham lecture "Space, Time, and Dance" and

"Biped: Music for the dance by Merce Cunningham," by Gavin Bryars

Dancers: Michael Clement, Benny Fung, Erik Ostrand, Clayton J. Velasquez

Live Sound: Mark Miceli and Dan Howarth

Chairs: Annabell's Antiques

On 12 July, 1958, Merce Cunningham wrote a note to Robert Rauschenberg as a directive to Rauschenberg's role as costume and prop designer for *Antic Meet* (1958):

I have a chair strapped on back, which is like a large mosquito that won't go away...maybe chair is like a leech, like chairs are. This can be actual chair or made-up one, in any event it should be light weight, indeed (also thought of using crutch here).¹

A note on process: Often in choreography class, when someone makes a solo that is barely interesting, I say "strap a chair on your back, like Merce did." That is not to say what Merce did in 1958 would not have been interesting without the chair, but it certainly added to the peculiarity of what he prepared physically.

Dancing to Merce Cunningham's lecture "Space, Time, and Dance," lends itself to multiple juxtapositions between movement and words. Some of it is chance, and some of it is predetermined. Using Merce Cunningham's lecture for inspiration, the dancers and I listened to the recording just once, and took abbreviated notes. Afterwards, we made phrases of movement vocabulary based on those notes. The sequence was set, and the time frame established (8 minutes). Outside of the chair, this dance has no intention to appropriate what Merce did in *Antic Meet* (1958). It can be performed in any venue with no designated front.

- Douglas Nielsen

⁺ Doug's choreography class will also perform a chance composition of solos they have created inspired by images currently on exhibit (FACE TO FACE) at the Center for Creative Photography.

1. Vaughan, David, and Melissa Harris. *Merce Cunningham: Fifty Years*. New York: Aperture, 1997. p.105

Project Credits

Curator, Exhibition Graphic Designer: Beth Weinstein

Project Assistant: Annie Kurtin

Research Assistant: Lara Lafontain

Spatial Design + Installation: Beth Weinstein (project direction); UA Architecture

Student Design Team: Sulaiman Alothman, Kori Camacho, Alan Escarcega,

Michael Farley, Jesus Alan Figueroa, Jongwoo Kim, Corey Kingston,

Crista Mapes, Lara Lafontain, Alicia Perez, Shaun Poon, Mat Propst

Poetry-Content Consultants: Laynie Browne and Charles Alexander

Graphic Design Consultant: Ellen McMahon

Exhibition Media: Jamison Crabtree

Acknowledgements⁷

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I would also like to acknowledge the support and encouragement of friends and family on the west side of the island next to the Hudson, and on the 'right' sides of the Seine, the Santa Cruz and the Potomac: thank you. - Beth Weinstein

Project Support

The University of Arizona

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School of Architecture

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	<p>BRIAN STOKES MITCHELL: In Concert MARCH 5 8pm</p> <p>Center Stage Series Sponsors: Marsha & Gary Tankenoff • Event Sponsor: Shirley Estes</p>		<p>MERCE CUNNINGHAM DANCE COMPANY: The Legacy Tour MARCH 12 8pm</p> <p>Dance Series Sponsors: Stephen Golden & Susan Tarrence • Event Sponsors: John E. Wahl & Mary Lou Forier</p>
	<p>KRONOS QUARTET APRIL 3 7pm</p> <p>Classical Series Sponsors: Ginnie & Bob McKay • Event Sponsors: Kai Family Foundation • John & Jihong Kai</p>		<p>MARTHA GRAHAM DANCE COMPANY APRIL 16 8pm</p> <p>Dance Series Sponsors: Stephen Golden & Susan Tarrence • Event Sponsors: Ginnie & Bob McKay • Panorama Sponsor: Dr. Mary Jo Ghory</p>

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Merce Cunningham 3

Merce Cunningham was born on April 16, 1919 in Centralia, Washington. At the age of twenty he began his professional modern dance career with a six-year tenure in the Martha Graham Dance Company as a soloist. He first performed his own choreography in 1944. Exploring his new and groundbreaking ideas in the realm of dance and choreography, he formed the Merce Cunningham Dance Company in 1953 while at Black Mountain College.

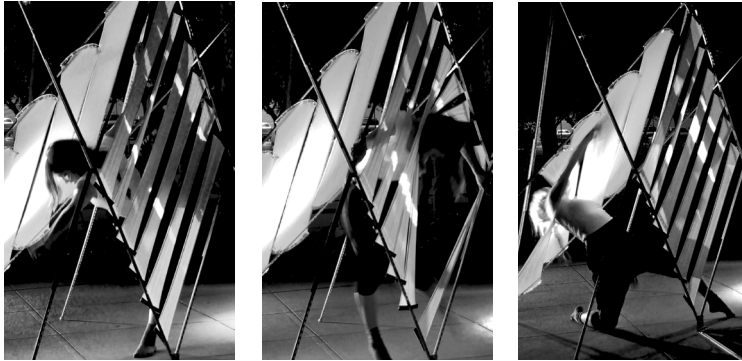
Throughout his seventy year career Cunningham worked in collaboration with visual artists, composers, designers and film makers; the most influential of these collaborations was with his life partner, poet and composer John Cage. This relationship fostered Cunningham's lifelong passion for exploration and innovation, most notable being the conclusion that the music and dance should be created independently of each other, related only by time and space. Cage and Cunningham also worked with chance procedures, embracing indeterminacy, fostering the independence of all elements of the performance, and allowing dance itself to be the pure subject of Cunningham's dances.

Choreographing more than 150 dances and over 800 *Events* over the course of his career, Cunningham emerged a leader in applying new technologies to the arts, exploring film, motion capture technology, and webcasting through "Mondays with Merce."

Merce Cunningham passed away on July 26, 2009, at the age of 90.

Sources + Further Reading:

<http://www.merce.org/about/MCDcbio.php>
Vaughan, David, and Melissa Harris. *Merce Cunningham: Fifty Years*. New York: Aperture, 1997.
Brown, Carolyn. *Chance and Circumstance: Twenty Years with Cage and Cunningham*. New York: Knopf, 2007.
Kostelanetz, Richard, and Jack Anderson. *Merce Cunningham: Dancing in Space and Time*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1992.
Cunningham, Merce, Meredith Monk, and Bill T. Jones. *Art performs life: Merce Cunningham, Meredith Monk, Bill T. Jones*. Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1998.
Cunningham, Merce, and Jacqueline Lesschaeve. *The Dancer and the Dance*. New York: M. Boyars, 1985.
Copeland, Roger. *Merce Cunningham: the Modernizing of Modern Dance*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
Tomkins, Calvin. *The Bride and the Bachelors: Five Masters of the Avant Garde*. Harmondsworth, Eng: Penguin Books, 1976.



4 TIME-SPACE

A Collaboration in Dance and Architecture
 Rehearsal Directors: Amanda Engelhardt, David Maurice
 Set Design: Nick Johnson
 Dance/Improvisation: Phylcia Roybal, Kacie Boblitt
 Music: Ø-Helium, Ø-Atomic, Ø-S-Bahn, Joe-Claptrap

Why we collaborate:

TIME: The dancer in space introduces the consideration of time- time at the scale not of the cosmos but of the human-the movement of the body in space. This reveals a quality that traditional, static proportions and measures can never achieve. It places in the hands of the architect a new material- the fourth dimension-no longer simply a reaction to the regularity of time, but time as an integral and spontaneous player in the conception and creation of space, whose properties and definitions are as malleable as the space itself.

SPACE: The dancer, trained in the manipulation of the body through time and space, explores all the potential orientations and interactions between the two. This process of discovery in turn reveals certain experiential qualities of inhabiting a space that would otherwise remain unseen. Although the extremes of potential will perhaps never be physically manifest, the range of conceivable movements and interactions nevertheless exerts its force on the mental and ephemeral sensation of space. The possible relationships between space and the body become part of the spatial experience whether or not they are employed. The body is pushed and pulled by the possibilities of its movement in space. Being able to see these possibilities through the dancer-the explorer of space-time-provides another important layer of understanding in the phenomenology of built space.

"Could the dancer's body be like a number? And his nakedness be what is called, in calculus, the unknown quantity? The unknown masterpiece. The unknown quantity can assume all values. It is the possible. Now, the dancer's body can assume, can suddenly take on, all shapes... The body of the dancer is the body of the possible, blank, naked, nonexistent... It becomes, then, capable of every meaning, every sign, every designation...to show what all is possible, all temporal possibility through rhythm, all possible absence and presence in space."
 Michel Serres, Genesis



Initial interactions between the dancers and the set

"From the moment you consider man in motion-the choreographic dimension, and not simply the geographic and scenographic dimensions, but choreographic: the gesture of the body in space- the question of time is raised...It is not a question of the Vitruvian man or Le Corbusier's Modulor...it's about the ergonomics of the space-time of being...the 'energetic being,' no longer an ergonomic being."
 Paul Virilio, "After Architecture: A Conversation"

