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September, 1982

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## JUDSON DANCE THEATER: 1962-1966

The Bennington College Judson Project has organized an exhibit that documents seminal works by artists who participated in Judson Dance Theater in the early 1960s. The exhibit consists in large part of photographs; other items include music scores, choreographic notations, drawings, posters, programs, and a series of videotaped interviews and reconstructions. Artists represented include Trisha Brown, Lucinda Childs, Judith Dunn, David Gordon, Deborah Hay, Fred Herko, Robert Morris, Steve Paxton, Yvonne Rainer, Robert Rauschenberg, and Carol~~lee~~ Schneemann. The photographs, which number about 140, are by Peter Moore, Al Giese, Robert McElroy, Terry Schutte, and others.

In the early 1960s, Judson Memorial Church in Greenwich Village provided a forum for a group of young dancers and artists who ushered in a reign of radical experimentation. "There was new ground to be broken and we were standing on it," recalls Yvonne Rainer, dancer turned filmmaker. Steve Paxton, internationally known as the initiator of contact improvisation, remembers this time as an era of freedom and excitement, as embodied by Simone Forti's challenge, "Let's run and jump and bump in the air and see what happens!"

The original Judson performances grew out of composition classes taught by Robert Dunn, a composer and student of John Cage, and absorbed the influences of Anna Halprin, James Waring, ~~an~~ Cage, and Merce Cunningham. The values handed down from Judson include communality in the work process, a rigorous questioning of established definitions of dance and art, a new democracy between director and performer, and a Cagean sense of the inseparability of art and life. The cross-over between dancers, visual artists, and composers influenced major artists in all areas, whether or not they ~~actually~~ participated in Judson. It is now clear that the contemporary forms of post-modern dance, performance art, and contact improvisation, all had their roots in Judson.

"Judson Dancer Theater: 1962-1966" was conceived by two Bennington College faculty members, ~~the~~ choreographer Wendy Perron and designer Tony Carruthers. Ms. Perron is Project Director and Daniel J. Cameron, who is currently Assistant Director of NUY's Grey Art Gallery, is Co-curator and Coordinator. <sup>Historian and critic</sup> ~~Barbara Moore~~ Sally Banes and researcher Barbara Moore served as ~~research~~ consultants. The 80-page catalog contains an historical essay by Banes and a critical reminiscence by Jill Johnston. It is illustrated with 30 black and white photographs and accompanying commentary by some of the artists.

The exhibit has been widely acclaimed in the American press as a landmark in the history of performance as it relates to other arts. Following are excerpts of reviews:

"Superb photographs"

Deborah Jowitt, The Village Voice

"Enough material for years of study"

Maricia B. Siegel, The Soho News

"The influence of Judson continues to this day for the Judson choreographers were ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~... esthetic adventures ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ who made sometimes gleeful, sometimes messy, but always fundamentally serious investigations into the nature and structure of dance movement."

Jack Anderson, The New York Times

"The events comvered by the exhibition were significant for anyone with a serious interest in dance, since what went on at Judson from 1962 to 1966 marked a turning point in the field. It also marked an important stage in the development of the cultural sensibility of our taime."

Dale Harris, Keynote

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