

April 26, 1981

Wendy Perron
Bennington College
Bennington, Vermont

Dear Wendy,

I have gone over the 186 prints you returned to us last week, and want to register my concern about a trend in the selection of photographs that bothers me.

Some of Peter's finest pictures cover small performance gems by dancers and/or choreographers little known to the public. Even more to the point, these performers have not necessarily fit into the trendy definitions that people have applied to Judson work in the past 12 years. But they were very much a part of Judson, and it was my belief from our earlier discussions that this exhibition was going to avoid the rewriting of history that has taken place. However, every single one of the pictures of this type was returned to us, and I know that replacements by other photographers don't exist. Without mentioning names here, I can give you a specific instance. Concert #13, A Collaborative Event, was an extraordinary evening that took place at the peak of Judson activity, Nov. 1963. And Peter has so many wonderful pictures from that concert that we had a difficult time choosing which ones to send you. We ended up limiting ourselves to mostly just one picture from each piece, and our only regret was the 2 or 3 pieces for which he had no images, primarily because they took place while he was changing film in the camera. Thus we sent you 18 prints, an unusually large number for one concert. Of these, you have retained only 5 prints, representing only 3 pieces! There is absolutely no way to represent the spirit of that evening without showing the maximum number of works. The thread for the whole evening was a series of object/sculptures that were to be ^{used by} each choreographer as part of their piece. The fact that each person approached this problem in a unique way is central to the Judson approach and debunks the idea of a single aesthetic.

Another concern of mine is the distorted image of individual pieces that can be given by a single image. It is in the nature of still photography that this can happen, and in most cases, where a piece sustains one mood, it does relatively little harm. However, there are other pieces, where the mood shifts drastically, for which the most dramatic pictures tend to be the most appealing, but which may actually represent only a single moment in the piece. If the other pictures look static in comparison, maybe that's the point? I am less clear here as to whether you may have other photographers' photos of the same pieces to remedy this, but it was a noticeable aspect of your selection from Peter's material.

I mean these remarks in the most constructive way, Wendy, and hope that they are taken in that spirit. This is the first serious overall study of this material and, as such, will be very important. The resources are so rich that it would be tragic to see large segments of material discarded apriori.

Sincerely,

Barbara

Barbara
MOORE