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Moving Archives and Choreographic Afterlives: Legacy Practice in American Postmodern Dance

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Abstract

Through an engagement with the work of American postmodern choreographers Anna Halprin, Yvonne Rainer, and Laura Dean, I expose choreographic legacy as an ongoing process of continually rewriting dance history. Halprin, Rainer, and Dean’s models for choreographic transmission draw from the legacy methods of repertoire, reconstruction, and reperformance, while simultaneously proposing a new methodology that intentionally foregrounds the experience of loss and actively exposes historical layering. Anna Halprin’s use of dance scoring in the development and evolution of *Parades and Changes* (1965) presents a model for repurposing existing creative material in the creation of new performance works, a process of choreographic spolia that exposes Halprin’s aesthetic, philosophical, and cultural intentions in each instance of the dance’s reiteration. Similarly working to continuously recontextualize her work, Yvonne Rainer has variously employed and deployed her 1966 work *Trio A* as a choreographic fraction or insertable in her composite works and lecture-demonstrations, creating reflexive juxtapositions that elucidate her career intentions of challenging spectatorship. Rather than carrying her dance works into the future, Laura Dean draws from Tibetan Buddhist philosophy to advance a notion of dance as something to eventually be let go, actively foreclosing the possibility of restaging her work following her choice to authorially disengage from the process of choreographic transmission. Through the creative use of new notational practices, experimental processes for structuring performance, and strategies for archive formation, Halprin, Rainer, and Dean expose how the particularities of the present always inflect and inform the ongoingness of dance practice, thus ever reshaping our experience and embodiment of dance history. In addition to archival research, performance analysis, and
interviews with the three subjects of this study, in this project I engage my own body as an investigative tool, myself participating in the dance work of Halprin and Rainer. I locate my own positionality within the history of these choreographers’ work, recognizing the ways my subjectivity contributes to the articulation and mobilization of choreographic legacy.
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For Kate
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Introduction

Rather than a stable signifier, choreographic legacy is an ongoing, active, and subjective practice of continually mobilizing, reframing, and rearticulating dance history. Through an engagement with the work of American postmodern choreographers Anna Halprin, Yvonne Rainer, and Laura Dean, I analyze processes for choreographic transmission as a lens through which to interrogate the construction and circulation of choreographic legacy. Halprin, Rainer, and Dean’s models for choreographic transmission draw from the legacy methods of repertoire, reconstruction, and reperformance while simultaneously proposing new methodological approaches that actively expose historical layerings and intentionally reveal the intrinsically mediated project of articulating legacy. Legacy is conceptual and therefore always unfixed, upheld by ongoing reassertions that engage recognizable processes of justification to argue and reinforce the rationality of existing belief systems. As recognizable systems of knowledge production, repertoire, reconstruction, and reperformance function through specific discourses of justification that belie particular priorities and rationalize belief structures in dance. Because the telling and writing of history is always already mediated, unavoidably infiltrated by inherent assumptions, biases, and intentions, I locate this project within questions of how we construct and perpetuate historical knowing in dance. Halprin, Rainer, and Dean use experimental processes for structuring performance, unique notational practices, and intentioned strategies for archive formation to expose how the particularities of the present always inflect and inform the ongoingness of dance practice, thus ever reshaping our experience and embodiment of dance history. In their process for choreographic transmission they simultaneously function within and
actively confront processes of justification in dance legacy formation, thus directly challenging the belief systems that shape both dance practice and dance scholarship.

In this project I draw from my research in Halprin, Rainer, and Dean’s official archives to construct a stage history of their performance pieces, which I combine with movement description and visual analysis of their work to articulate ongoing shifts in each choreographer’s intended function and reception of their creative output. This project initially began with my interest in creative applications of dance scoring and movement notation. I was originally drawn to Halprin, Rainer, and Dean based on their process of conveying choreographic ideas through the use of writing, symbology, and diagramming. I began this inquiry through an analysis of their ways for articulating movement structures not just through the body, but also as works on paper. Halprin, Rainer, and Dean have also been primarily involved in the creation and organization of their archives. Important to my archive research is an acute awareness that each collection has been provided by the choreographer themselves during their lifetime, and is thus directly shaped through their own curatorial act of object selection and choice of institutional framing. Each choreographer’s official archive collection is also in the processes of continual expansion, to greater or lesser degrees, with new materials provided in response to their ongoing artistic output and shifting intentions for use of their materials. Halprin, Rainer, and Dean also permit different levels of accessibility to their archives, which functionally determines the nature and scope of engagement in their career history. In examining these collections, their institutional framing, and their perceived functions, I articulate how each choreographer undertakes a process of creating and defining notions of choreographic legacy through material objects, mediating how the viewer is expected, intentioned, or restricted in the use of their archives.¹
Central to my investigation of these three choreographers is an explication of their own beliefs about choreographic transmission and the modes in which they perceive themselves to approach legacy. Thus, my own relationships and ongoing conversations with these choreographers, both in person and by written correspondence, significantly inflect my study of both their artistic output and philosophical positions on dance practice. While I prioritize Halprin, Rainer, and Dean’s personal sense of their own legacy, I recognize that each have and continue to work within networks of artistic collaborators, dance presenters, museum curators, and archivists. I locate this contextual influence within the documentary records of their archive materials, but acknowledge that supplementary interviews with these individuals would provide additional sources of evidence. Such evidence might expose further nuances in Halprin, Rainer, and Dean’s choreographic and documentary practices, or potentially unveil counter narratives that confront aspects of each choreographer’s articulation of their own history.

In this project I also engage my own body as an investigative tool, actively participating in the dance work of both Halprin and Rainer. Partaking in the process of choreographic transmission through a personal embodiment of their dance material, I gain privileged insight into their studio practice and choreographic process. I combine my experience watching and moving with my experience in the archive to articulate Halprin and Rainer’s methods of choreographic transmission as well as their varied aesthetic results. I further locate my own positionality within the history of these choreographers’ work, recognizing how my subjectivity contributes to ways I too am implicated in the articulation and mobilization of Halprin, Rainer, and Dean’s choreographic legacies.

I enter into an explication of Halprin, Rainer, and Dean’s legacy practice through an analysis of how their work is situated both within and beyond scholarly definitions of repertoire,
reconstruction, reperformance. Outlining the studio practices and discourses that have produced these three models, I argue that Halprin, Rainer, and Dean not only expose the multiple assumptions and difficulties of choreographic transmission, but locate within these difficulties new sites of artistic potential. I further argue that Halprin, Rainer, and Dean’s interventions in dance legacy are furthered by their unique approaches to the formation and situating of their archives. Utilizing these archives to track and trace the history of their work over multiple decades, I expose the construction of choreographic legacy as an ongoing and subjective practice into which, I, myself, am implicated through my own subjective process of viewing, writing, and dancing history.

As an alternative to set choreography, Anna Halprin has employed unique methods of dance scoring since the late 1950s. Janice Ross articulates Halprin’s workshop-based approach to creativity as principally pedagogical, situating Halprin’s intervention in dance as an educator. Locating the ways Halprin’s work reflects a clear curatorial and directorial voice, I instead suggest Halprin’s intervention as a redefinition of dance technique. Halprin rejects stylized and idiosyncratic movement systems, instead presenting a model for dance practice that is predicated on a philosophy of kinesthetic awareness and mode of compositional process, which she directly extends into her choreographic practice. Halprin’s compositional process developed over a decade of ongoing interdisciplinary collaborations with San Francisco Dancers’ Workshop and coalesced in the 1965 dance-theatre work Parades and Changes. Her use of dance scoring as a creative model for structured improvisation allows for the ongoing evolution of her movement directives and choreographic situations, a process articulated in Lawrence Halprin’s 1969 monograph The RSVP Cycles. Integrating both new and existing choreographic material into the
cell-block structure designed by her musical collaborator Morton Subotnick, *Parades and Changes* engages a format wherein component parts are variably rearranged and reworked in a process that continually generates new iterations of the piece. Halprin has continued to employ this ongoing workshop-based model of collective creativity throughout her entire career, repeatedly engaging in a process of self-citation that actively recycles her own creative output in the development of new performance material. I name this compositional model choreographic spolia, referencing the architectural process of repurposing materials from previous buildings for new construction projects. Both practical and ideological in purpose, spolia actively rethinks and expands creative possibilities, and Halprin’s model for choreographic process demands the constant alteration of her dances through the retooling and rearranging of its structural blocks. Each new iteration of *Parades and Changes* necessarily develops through the personal responses of those involved and reflects contemporary social contexts, exposing Halprin’s changing goals and interests in dance. Charting the multiple iterations of *Parades and Changes* since 1965, I reveal Halprin’s process of creatively utilizing existing dance scores as structural blocks in the construction of new dances, a process constitutive of a new practice for choreographic legacy.

By the time *Parades and Changes* appeared in its first iteration in 1965, Yvonne Rainer’s dances had already increasingly rejected the psychological, atmospheric, and intentionally theatrical. Setting out toward further distilling dance down to its seemingly most objective and neutral form, Rainer embarked on an extended period of solo movement explorations that resulted in the development of her influential dance work *Trio A*. In her own contemporaneous analysis of the piece Rainer notes that *Trio A* deals with a “seeing difficulty,” and previous scholarly inquisitions of this dance have centered on this turn of phrase. In abstracting clues to choreographic references, never repeating gestural detail, and denying any presentational
engagement with the spectator, *Trio A* is framed as perpetually distanced and elusive, with Rainer’s presence deemed intrinsically hard to locate; Rainer’s choreographic labor is articulated as difficult to see. Carrie Lambert-Beatty has notably expanded the notion of *Trio A*’s seeing difficulty, engaging this idea as a critical approach to analyzing Rainer’s work in the larger cultural context of its generation. She notes that Rainer existed in a culture of spectatorship that necessarily encompassed, but also expanded beyond, the realm of art, thus extending *Trio A*’s reflexive interrogation of seeing and watching outside of dance. Utilizing a period eye relevant for the 1960s, Lambert-Beatty exposes how the aesthetics of Rainer’s dance and the specific experience of watching that it proposes allow us to not only discern persistent difficulties in the seeing of art, but locate how a confrontation with such difficulties became the explicit focus of Rainer’s artistic investigations.

Like Halprin, Rainer has presented multiple transmogrifications of *Trio A*. Since its premiere in 1966 Rainer has repeatedly reformatted and repurposed *Trio A* to provide new ways of experiencing the dance on stage and on film. She has intentionally altered the work’s choreography, staged performances of the piece under different titles, and appropriated the dance for use in several of her other major performance works. While Rainer has rescinded her earlier approval for anyone who has learned the dance to teach it, instead implementing strict licensing arrangements, the multiple official iterations of *Trio A* confront issues of choreographic authorship. I propose that what is most difficult to see in *Trio A* is neither the dance nor the dancer, as other scholars suggest. Rather, when *Trio A* is understood as constitutive of its repetitive diversions of form and extensive redeployments throughout Rainer’s career, the “seeing difficulty” becomes the challenge of fully discerning its historical layerings; what cannot be easily encompassed is its ever-expanding multiplicity. In tracking the evolution and
reappearances of Trio A over more than fifty years I expose how Rainer has engaged a plurality of models for choreographic transmission in a process that intentionally confronts historical knowing of her dance. Thus, the seeing difficulty that Trio A poses is a simultaneous revelation and obfuscation of its function as a legacy practice.

Similar to Rainer during her development of Trio A, for nearly two years beginning in 1968 Laura Dean undertook an intensive period of solo exploration during which she generated new compositional strategies that she would continue to engage throughout her career. Dean’s minimalist dances of the early 1970s are the outcome of pattern structuring, working primarily with the multiple ways circles and straight lines can be geometrically arranged and differently investigated. The resultant pieces are intentionally meditative, both for the performers and the audience. Many of Dean’s dances of this period were produced in collaboration with composer Steve Reich, with whom she shared a compositional interest in austere structures, systematized patterning, percussive action, and forceful rhythms.

During her career Dean also produced several commissions for ballet companies that remained in repertoire for many years and licensed reconstructions of works she developed on her own ensemble. Rather than personally restaging her works, Dean often engaged dancers with whom she had worked to set her pieces. Similar to Rainer’s experience with Trio A, Dean began to observe derivations from her choreographic intentions in later performances, leading her to restrict teaching and performance rights. In 2009 Dean firmly announced her decision to stop all future staging projects. Influenced by her study of Tibetan Buddhist philosophy, Dean posits that the act of letting go or destroying an artwork is an integral component of the creative process, a move towards transcendence from a focus on materialism. Asserting choreographic transmission
as a practice that necessarily requires the presence of the creator to assure authorial integrity, Dean rejects the possibility of her dances accurately existing beyond her involvement.

Throughout the early 1970s Dean represented her choreographic structures in minimalist geometric drawings that she included in her program notes, published alongside descriptions of her dances, utilized in print advertisements, and included in gallery exhibitions. Dean’s use of drawing allowed for an expanded visualization of her experimentation with color, symmetry, repetition, pattern, and form. Her multimodal art practice, spanning dance, music, and drawing, collectively reveals Dean’s thought processes and compositional concerns. Dean is explicit in stating that she does not perceive her drawings, even those representational of her choreographic structures, as dance scores, an assertion that distances her drawing practice from Halprin and Rainer, who have both embraced dance scoring in their work. Whereas existing scholarly work on Dean analyzes her dances from a perspective of physical action, notably her insistent use of stylized spinning, I instead situate Dean in the context of visual art, examining her work alongside contemporaneous developments in serial and conceptual art. Through this I foreground Dean’s work with highly schematic structures and process models as primarily an engagement with ideas, allowing for a de-emphasizing or even elimination of the perceptual encounter with the art object. Thus, Dean’s foreclosure on restaging her work de-emphasizes the material necessity of the dancing body, suggesting a choreographic legacy of ideation that is perpetuated exclusively through her archival material.

**Repertoire — Reconstruction — Reperformance**

Repertoire, reconstruction, and reperformance are models for choreographic legacy that utilize recognizable processes of justification to reinforce specific belief systems as inherently
rational and stable. These three terms have been previously theorized in multiple scholarly investigations, and I set out not to construct new definitions, but to outline their epistemological structures, inherent biases, and hazy edges. I argue that the categories proposed by these definitions are less discretely codified than existing literature suggests. Rather than taking the terms repertoire, reconstruction, and reperformance as closed definitions, I set up these concepts as divergent points on a triangular spectrum. Through this I expose how differing practices for engaging with historical dances have and continue to exist, and demonstrate how each practice is always inflected and infiltrated by the others. I posit repertoire, reconstruction, and reperformance as limits and suggest it is impossible for any choreographic process that engages with a preexistent dance to work purely in any of these modes. Instead, dance practice necessarily combines and draws from these different ideological functions of performance in ways that may approach, but never reach, the limit.

In their processes for choreographic transmission, Halprin, Rainer, and Dean utilize methods of repertoire, reconstruction, and reperformance in recognizable ways so as to legibly circulate their work within existing systems of dance presentation. However, they simultaneously
and explicitly rework, move between, and collapse these seemingly separate practices. Through this, each choreographer not only exposes the persistent difficulties of each existing mode of choreographic transmission and directly critiques the assumptions and ideologies it aims to justify, but also locates within these difficulties and assumptions a site of new artistic potential for the creation and circulation of choreographic legacy.

Repertoire is a legacy practice that is inherently tied to corporeal knowledge and embodied memory: dances are passed from body to body, dancer to dancer. Following Diana Taylor, I recognize the repertoire as both a site of knowledge and a mode of cultural transmission, locating how memory exists and is perpetuated through subjective modes of embodiment. In staging dances from repertoire, reference may be made to written notes, video recordings, and other documentary sources, but visual and kinesthetic memory are considered the primary sources of historical knowing. In prioritizing the body, performance, and interactive encounters, the repertoire works against, or apart from, the Western epistemology of knowledge production and preservation as located in written texts. Through the repetitive process of enacted transmission, repertoire leads to formalized, reiterated behavior, wherein memory and knowledge replicate themselves through ritualized performative structures and codes. In dance, the repertoire is a formalized system for choreographic transmission that functions through structures for re-presentation by means of embodied dance practice. This serves to present modes of dance legacy that foreground presence and interaction, locating memory in the ongoingness of lived experience. Halprin, Rainer, and Dean each engage this model in their legacy practices: Parades and Changes foregrounds an extended collaborative workshop process as integral to the realization of its staging, Trio A is replicated through a systematized teaching practice directed
by approved stagers, and Laura Dean’s choice to remove herself from studio situations effectively denies the embodied act of transmission necessary to repertoire.

Repertoire is both individual and institutional: the work of dance exists within the individual performer’s body as well as the collective body of the institution that has evolved to foster the repertory process, generally the dance company or choreographic trust. While choreography in repertoire will exist in different and successive bodies over time, the continuous maintaining of an embodied cultural knowledge strives toward choreographic constancy in dance practice. Dances that circulate in repertoire are justified as stable, and the repertory institution reinforces specific belief systems about the maintenance of dance legacy. Thus, repertoire and the repertory dance institution are mutually constituted entities that are necessarily reliant on each other for recognizable continuation.

The institutionalized oversight of repertoire, founded on an authorizing and restricting of who can embody it and where it can be enacted, functionally serves as a gatekeeping mechanism intended to preserve its system of belief as rational and stable. While repertoire is intrinsically participatory, access is delimited by legal and financial structures that serve to protect it. As Lizzie Leopold notes, such practices of authorizing and restricting the repertoire, articulated through licensing agreements, connects the repertoire to processes of economic valuation, thereby producing and reifying a choreographic commodity object. This commoditization of dance is intrinsically connected to processes of canonization, which serves to further justify repertoire’s ideological rationale in the formation and maintenance of choreographic legacy. Drawing from Yvonne Hardt, I follow that repertoire signifies “that which is institutionalized and has been granted the possibility to continue living on stage or to be perpetuated in dance class.”² Canonicity is both produced and perpetuated through the institutionalized practice of
repeatedly presenting a collection of dance works that are continuously reasserted as important or influential. Through this, projects of choreographic legacy are continuously reinforced and reconstituted within repertoire by a reassertion of impact. For Halprin and Rainer, the continued redeployments of *Parades and Changes* and *Trio A* as repertory works serves to produce and reinforce a belief in their significance to dance history as part of a process of constructing choreographic legacy. In this project I specifically recognize *Parades and Changes* and *Trio A* as canonized dance, arguing that the continuous reappearances of these choreographic works on stage and in discourse actively produces their canonicity. I suggest that this is intentional on the parts of both Halprin and Rainer, as the situatedness of these works within the canon allows for an expanded opportunity to articulate choreographic legacy. In my own choice to write on these dances, I also recognize how I serve to perpetuate and reinforce this process of canonization.

The legibility of the repertoire as such is necessarily located in the experience of spectatorship. Tracy Davis posits repertoire as confirmed and perpetuated through spectatorship, with processes of “reiteration, revision, citation, and incorporation” used to construct theatrical recognisability among audiences. Repertoire exists through cultural legibility, which must be maintained by a process of ongoing, persistent circulation. Davis connects her theorization of repertoire to Joseph Roach’s notion of surrogation in cultural memory, wherein actual or perceived vacancies of memory are reconstituted through substitution, the creative integration or combination of the imagined, which is enacted in performance. If too much time passes between enactments of the repertoire, meaning can become lost, opening repertoire to a position of becoming “permanently illegible through disuse or unrecognizable through extensive combination.”³ Because repertoire is embodied and at risk of progressive disappearance, it
demands a persistent recognisability to combat assertions of deterioration, loss, and inaccuracy. Repertoire therefore relies on a “semiotic of showing and a phenomenology of experiencing,” circulating within discourses of sustained intelligibility. Repertoire reconstitutes itself through an assertion of durable meaning, utilizing repetitive acts of rearticulation to uphold both the claim and cultivated recognition of constancy. In dance, repertoire must be exercised, shown through the body, physically rearticulated. It is through this constancy of doing and dissemination that the choreographic work cultivates and trades in recognisability.

Connecting Taylor, Leopold, Hardt, Davis, and Roach, I move to demonstrate how repertoire functions through a mediated corporeal textuality. Dances may be embodied by different performers and resituated into different historical moments, but in each instance a rearticulation and reassertion of choreographic constancy justifies the belief that repertoire functions as a rational and stable articulation of choreographic legacy. Through an engagement with discourses and practices for repertoire, Halprin, Rainer, and Dean circulate their work within recognizable systems of choreographic transmission. This produces a legibility of their dances, thus allowing them to expose both the processes and outcomes of choreographic transmission in ways that reflexively confront ideological beliefs that shape the experience choreographic legacy.

Whereas repertoire foregrounds a process of kinesthetic transmission, reconstruction prioritizes transmission through the archive. Giving emphasis to a greater range of documentary sources, the accuracy of embodied memory is taken in relation to primary archival evidence, including such objects as photographs, choreographic notebooks, notated dance scores, narratives from spectators, academic scholarship, and press clippings. Reconstructions like Millicent Hodson and Kenneth Archer’s 1987 production of Vaslav Nijinsky’s lost 1913 ballet
"Le Sacre du printemps (The Rite of Spring)" exemplify this process, as their process prioritized rehearsal notes, audience sketches, and annotated piano scores of Stravinsky’s music as primary evidence from which to recuperate the choreography for the Joffrey Ballet. The epistemology of reconstruction posits that choreography need not be embodied to be faithfully preserved, instead utilizing documentation in a process of justification that reinforces the belief that such materials are inherently rational and stable. Noting this articulated opposition between body and document, I follow Diana Taylor’s assertion that the archive is constituted of objects that are posited as resistant to change; the mythology of the archive is that it exceeds the live and thereby represents a stable signifier. Following this assertion, the researcher may repeatedly return to the archive, where knowledge persists, as a means toward reaffirming veracity of fact.

Taylor suggests that the archive and repertoire exceed the limitations of one another, thereby locating a distinction, and thus a disconnection, between the repertoire as transitory and the archive as permanent. However, I posit both as similar systems of justification that approach the same intention and, in practice, mutually support rather than confront one another. In dance, within both repertoire and reconstruction there remains an explicit goal of accessing the past as it once was and presenting choreography in as close to its initial appearance as possible. I further argue that the archive and the repertoire are similar in structure in that both are constitutive of physical place and a performative act. The archive and the repertory dance company are both institutionalized locations of knowledge that necessitate the constant act of justification to reassert and maintain legibility. The distinction between archive and repertoire is neither unmediated nor wholly extricable from one another. Within theatre dance the blurring of this supposed distinction is apparent, as both bodily action and documentary sources are collectively utilized in the act of staging set dances.
In my study I situate Labanotation as existing as close to the limit of reconstruction as possible. In the 1920s German modern dance educator and movement theorist Rudolf Laban began designing a scientific model for dance notation to assist with the preservation and dissemination of choreographic work. His codified system, Labanotation, was developed with the ambition of applying to all movement capacities of the human body, thus making it applicable to the documentation of any choreographic work. However, the successful staging of a choreographic work from a Labanotation score acknowledgedly requires a notator who possesses an understanding of the work’s genre, as well as the specific choreographer’s intended movement quality or style. Although Labanotation recognizes that there are movement qualities, tones, and modes of expressiveness that are necessarily encompassed within choreography, yet are not fully recordable in the system, it situates primary emphasis on the arrangement of set movements in defining an individual choreographic work; in Labanotation the underlying and unchanging progression of corporeal structures is the primary designation of a dance. Labanotation posits choreography as stable and knowable, and it is this notion of choreography that was forwarded by a generation of Labanotators working in New York as Halprin, Rainer, and Dean begin presenting their experimental choreographic work.

In the United States the use of Labanotation is primarily promoted by the Dance Notation Bureau in New York, and by the 1960s Labanotation was significantly established in the city. Founded in 1940 by Helen Priest Rogers, Eve Gentry, Janey Price, and Ann Hutchinson, the DNB had existed for over 20 years by the time Halprin, Rainer, and Dean first undertook their new processes of communicating dance on paper. In 1942 the DNB produced the first complete Labanotation score written wholly in the United States, Billy The Kid (1938) by Eugene Loring, who requested the score to help establish his ownership of the work’s choreography. Six years
later, in 1948 Ballet Society, under the direction of George Balanchine, commissioned the DNB to record four of Balanchine's ballets. In 1950 Hanya Holm’s dances for the Broadway musical *Kiss Me Kate* (1948) were Labanotated, and the successful 1952 registration of her choreography with the United States Copyright Office through the submission of a Labanotation score signaled a “growing acknowledgement that dance could indeed be ‘fixed’ in a tangible form.”

Employing permanent notators on staff and working with the city’s most established dance companies, the DNB was highly productive and influential in the 1960s and 1970s.

Halprin, Rainer, and Dean each have their own distinct experiences and encounters with Labanotation, allowing them to locate specific ways in which they reject the system’s functions and premises. Halprin did not train in nor has she used Labanotation in her work, but Lawrence Halprin’s book *The RSVP Cycles* discusses various movement notation systems, and Labanotation is clearly articulated alongside an explication of the Halprins’ jointly-defined working process with dance scoring. For Halprin, Labanotation [enables] choreographers to transmit the dance movement they have preconceived to another dancer or choreographer. These scores control the future since they deal with an accepted and known set of gestures and movements which they describe with precision. The purpose is not compositional but controlling.

Halprin’s use of dance scoring actively rejects the fixity of set choreography, and Labanotation is defined as a system to which Halprin was very intentionally working against. Her dance scores are explicitly creative, foregrounding the opportunity to explore new artistic possibilities within set frameworks, and the movement that results from a performance of her scores is never meant to be exactly repeated.

Unlike Halprin, both Rainer and Dean have had their dances recorded in Labanotation. While Rainer never studied Labanotation, two of her works are notated: *Trio A* from *The Mind is a Muscle* (1966) and *Chair Pillow* from *Continuous Project-Altered Daily* (1969). *Chair Pillow*
was notated soon after its premiere, by Barbara Katz in 1970, while the Labanotation score for *Trio A* was produced much later in Rainer’s career, by Melanie Clarke and Joukje Kolff in 2003. Rainer experiences the Labanotation version of *Trio A* as a precarious document, noting that while the score preserves her dance in a precise manner, it does not encompass the expanded information that is imparted during the teaching process by an approved transmitter, information that she locates as integral to understanding the work’s conceptual logic and intended intervention in dance theory.

Dean studied Labanotation at the High School of Performing Arts in New York, working for two semesters with Ann Hutchinson while a sophomore. Then, as a senior she danced in a Doris Humphrey work reconstructed by Lucy Venable from Labanotation. She recalls that with her knowledge of the system she could partially read the score, which Venable spread out across the floor in the studio. Later in her career Dean had five of her dances recorded in Labanotation: *Tympani* (1980), *Fire* (1982), *Force Field* (1986), *Light Field* (1993), and *Structure* (1993), all produced by notator Leslie Rotman. The experience of seeing one of her dances reconstructed from the score has allowed Dean to recognize certain aspects of performance that Labanotation does not record, leading her to reject the use of the system. The five Labanotation scores of Dean’s works are still housed at the DNB, but are restricted from all use.

Standing in opposition to repertoire and reconstruction, reperformance is a legacy practice that seeks a creative and critical engagement with an existent dance, acknowledges difference, explicitly reveals chronological distance, and implies change. Reperformance denotes the admitted act of subjectively interpreting the past, and the new performance events that result from this practice work to highlight the ruptures, inconsistencies, and loss of historical knowledge that occurs over time. These ruptures are seen not as failures of historical accuracy,
but as sites of new artistic potential. Reperformance thereby functions through an overt framing device, wherein the performer situates themselves in relation to the historical material with which they are engaging. Within reperformance, not only is the dance recontextualized into a new historical moment, but artistic intention shifts from a premise of presenting the past as it once was to the creative possibility of theatrical generativity.

In contemporary scholarship there is a multiplicity of terms that point to this same practice, with ‘reenactment’ one that is notably recurring in literature on the topic. Acknowledging the relative interchangeability of reperformance and reenactment from a theoretical perspective, I intentionally choose reperformance to signal my study’s focus on choreography as a theatrical form that circulates in the more narrowed space of art. Mark Franko, who instead selects the term reenactment, locates this choreographic strategy as a distinctly contemporary modality. While he admits the tenuousness of marking the moment of reenactment’s first emergence on the dance stage, he nevertheless begins his framing of the topic in 1988 with Susanne Linke’s production of Dore Hoyer’s *Afectos Humanos* (1962). Franko notes that with Linke’s performance of Hoyer’s work “the concern was no longer to demonstrate how the dance could be redone by simulating the original dance and the dancer’s appearance; the emphasis was rather on what it was like to do it again.”6 I challenge Franko’s periodization by showing how in Halprin and Rainer’s work of the mid-1960s, a focus on the contemporary now of each performance event and the subjective experience of doing were pressing concerns and new artistic strategies in their creative reworkings of *Parades and Changes* and *Trio A* respectively. Thus, in my explication of Halprin and Rainer’s stage history, I expose strategies that comprise reperformance as a choreographic modality were being engaged at least two decades earlier than Linke’s production.
Locating the temporal entrance of reperformance on the concert stage proves difficult precisely because reperformance as a practice is characterized by an explicit engagement with temporality. Rebecca Schneider highlights this through her notion of syncopated time, which suggests that reperformance is an instance in which the rhythmic flow of time is disturbed or interrupted. For Schneider, reperformance problematizes the linearity of time, as performers actively engage with an ‘other’ time and try to bring that time into the present as a means of developing new understandings of both the past and the present. I connect this concept of syncopated time to Tracy Davis’s notion of performative time, which posits that theatre allows for the experience of nonlinearity, but necessarily utilizes recognizable acts of citationality as a crucially dependent way for the spectator to understand a work’s historical locatedness. Reperformance is only recognizable as such because of its specific and explicit use of historical citation, and it is the active interplay between citation and new authorship wherein reperformance functions as a creative compositional act.

While the historical returns of *Parades and Changes* and *Trio A* utilize citationality and highlight new authorial intervention, they cannot be conceived exclusively as reperformance because these dances in their originality were developed to demand the presentation of difference. Each is conceived in such a way that a major facet of the work is an explicit engagement with the difference that is intrinsic to each moment of recontextualization. These choreographers have actively worked to unsettle notions of an original by immediately and already situating the dance in a process of choreographic change.

In their processes for choreographic transmission, Halprin, Rainer, and Dean utilize methods of repertoire, reconstruction, and reperformance to move beyond formal concerns with movement to challenge the ways in which choreography is rationalized as stable and knowable.
The workshop-based evolutions of *Parades and Changes*, multiple repurposings and redeployments of *Trio A*, and de-emphasizing of the dancing body in Laura Dean’s minimalist compositions each utilize the formal qualities of movement as tools to analyze and expose how repertoire, reconstruction, and reperformance function as processes of justification in the production of historical knowing in dance. Implicit in each choreographer’s practice is an active exploration of the relationships between the body and documentary object, performer and spectator, and past and present.

I argue that Halprin, Rainer, and Dean’s practices for choreographic legacy continue the postmodern ideal. In post-WWII America, the postmodern moment in dance evolved around a general distrust of the grand theories and ideologies of ballet and modern dance. Dance artists aligned with postmodernism enacted a critique of the assumptions of choreographic practice, designing dances that sought to deconstruct notions of art by seeking out new creative models and visual forms. For these artists, choreography became a form of protest, not only in response to the political climate of the 1960s and 1970s, but against established modes of cultural production, preservation, and valuation in art. I deploy the term postmodern not to describe a unifying aesthetic style or shared concern for the formal elements of movement, but rather to locate a mode of reflexive compositional structuring explicitly concerned with rejecting the master narratives central to repertoire and reconstruction that have served to give these cultural practices legitimation and authority. These three choreographers take a skeptical attitude to existing models of choreographic transmission, engaging an artistic intention that confronts the production of discourse central to the construction and reification of choreographic legacy.

The choreographic works of Halprin, Rainer, and Dean may have been initially conceived through a self-reflexive examination of movement’s formal qualities. However, the ways they
have approached choreographic transmission directly challenges the principles, processes, and systems for defining choreographic legacy. Halprin, Rainer, and Dean move beyond a formal concern with movement to address concerns of the ways in which choreography is rationalized as stable and knowable. The ongoing evolutions of *Parades and Changes*, multiple transmogrifications of *Trio A*, and de-emphasizing of the dancing body in Laura Dean’s conceptual systems each utilize the formal qualities of movement as tools to analyze and expose how repertoire, reconstruction, and reperformance function as processes of justification in the production of historical knowing in dance.

What I posit to be “the postmodern mode of choreographic transmission” is a practice that systematically dismantles and collapses the dialectics of choreographic transmission: memory vs. archive and historicity vs. creativity. Halprin, Rainer, and Dean work within discourses and practices of legibility to expose the seeing difficulties produced by different modes of choreographic transmission, which they engage as the location of new artistic potential in the creation and circulation of choreographic legacy. Their working models expose that every process for choreographic transmission always necessarily represents a layering of practices drawn from repertoire, reconstruction, and reperformance. Rather than attempting to mask or deny the intrinsically unfixed and interconnected influences of each of these modes, Halprin, Rainer, and Dean actively expose the ways in which they simultaneously layer and integrate multiple practices for choreographic transmission. Throughout their careers these choreographers have also constantly resituated their practice of choreographic transmission, differently combining and prioritizing certain modes, as a way to differently examine the construction and reception of choreographic legacy.
Archive Formation as Legacy Practice

My research on Halprin, Rainer, and Dean began in their official archive collections: the Anna Halprin Papers at the San Francisco Museum of Performance + Design, Yvonne Rainer Papers at the Getty Research Institute, and Laura Dean Papers at the American Dance Festival Archives at Duke University. These three archive collections contain the materials that each choreographer produced, retained, and maintained throughout their career. I approach these archives not merely as a repository of documents containing insights and clues to each choreographer’s history, but as the result of a curatorial act by the choreographer themself that is intrinsically representative of and in part constitutive of their legacy practice. These archives are not the product of ongoing institutional collecting by the museums or their curators. Rather, Halprin, Rainer, and Dean each transferred their own personal collection of materials to these archives in their later careers: Halprin beginning in 1994, Rainer in 2006, and Dean in 2008. The archives thus reveal not only how Halprin, Rainer, and Dean each sought to document their choreographic output and performance history throughout their career, but the collections also expose each choreographer’s beliefs about which types of objects are intended for preservation and what information is illustrative of their artistic work or personal history. The location, institutional frame, organizational structure, comprehensiveness, and accessibility of these archives reflect each choreographer’s understanding of their own artistic interventions and influences. Halprin, Rainer, and Dean’s collections are intentionally curated, and their mediation exposes specific aims for (as well as anxieties about) the construction and perception of choreographic legacy.

Halprin intentionally chose the San Francisco Museum of Performance + Design as the official repository of her archive. While other dance archives have collections on Halprin,
primarily the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center and the ADF Archives at Duke, they are comparatively miniscule in comparison to MP+D’s collection, which spans over 70 linear feet (NYPL has 1.42 linear feet and ADF 1.33). The collection is comprised of Halprin’s career ephemera, publication drafts, choreographic notebooks, personal journals, dance scores, image collections (inclusive of prints, negatives, and slides), videos, audio cassettes, music scores, promotional materials, news clippings, teaching materials, student projects, workshop participant questionnaires, personal correspondence, calendars, production ledgers, institutional records, and government funding reports. Reflecting her desire to keep this work as a cohesive collection, rather than selling and distributing her materials among multiple institutions, Halprin has steadily transferred her personal archive from her home in Kentfield to MP+D since 1994.

Halprin believes that her archive belongs in a permanent home in San Francisco, a mindset that foregrounds and reinforces her own locatedness in the city. The selection of MP+D as the site of her archive serves to intrinsically connect Halprin’s career work to notions of place, promoting an assertion of her legacy as a major artistic influence in San Francisco since 1945. Interpreting Halprin’s career output as reflective and representative of San Francisco, the archive serves to preserve and promote Halprin as a figure who overtly shaped the city, culturally as well as physically, through her significant impact on the urban renewal landscape designs and city planning of her husband, Lawrence Halprin. Therefore, the extractability of Halprin’s corpus of work from the city where it was generated is refuted, implying that such a move would do disservice to both Halprin’s collection and to the city, as the two are experienced and presented as mutually constitutive. Halprin uses the process of archive formation to construct a choreographic legacy that reinforces her ongoing impact and influence on the culture of San Francisco.
Francisco. This positioning serves to connect Halprin to popular perceptions of San Francisco as the vanguard of post-war counterculture and the site of radical experiments in reshaping notions of community, thus framing Halprin’s legacy as a leading artist and intellectual in the city’s mythology.

Halprin’s 1955 rejection of the New York modern dance scene and the extremely infrequent touring of her work to the east coast throughout her career is experienced by Halprin as a significant reason she hasn’t gained the artistic recognition she feels her work has deserved, or she notes that such recognition has come significantly later in her career than her New York based contemporaries. Entrenching her archive in San Francisco can be interpreted as a further rejection of New York, a refusal to let retrospective ascriptions of value be used to pull her archive to that city’s larger collecting institutions, such as NYPL. During her career Halprin has created multiple works and public programs intended to engage, support, and nurture the people of San Francisco through practices of ongoing community engagement. In a preview article describing her community-participatory Citydance, Halprin invites the city to share in a year-long series of workshops that will shape the work, calling her piece “a gift to the people of San Francisco.” Forty years later, Halprin’s archive can be interpreted as yet another gift to San Francisco, the city that she has experienced as a supportive and enriching community throughout her development as an artist. Halprin’s archive produces an assertion of her work as a being with and being for the people of San Francisco, reinforcing her legacy as a community leader and pedagogue as well as an artist.

Halprin’s multi-decade approach to the creation of her official archive in San Francisco exposes her extended process of defining and situating her own work, actively considering notions of legacy through the framing and discourse surrounding her creative output. Halprin’s
donations to MP+D are ongoing, and the collection continues to steadily expand as Halprin uncovers further documents in her home and progressively selects items to gift to the archive. Boxes of items for transfer are regularly readied and passed off when Halprin attends an event at the museum or when staff visit her home. Spending time with Halprin as part of my research and working with her in preparation for an exhibition on her scores at MP+D, we routinely talked about the ongoing transfer of her vast collection of materials. Halprin has saved multiple copies of many documents and she would often pull items out of drawers in her office and ask me “Have you seen this? Do you have one of these?” to ascertain if she had already donated a copy to the museum or if the object was uniquely singular. Other times, when discussing certain scores that she had unrolled on her long office table, she would chime in “You can’t have this one yet,” both in jest and complete seriousness, reasserting her process of managing when, or if, each and any item would be gifted to the archive.

Halprin’s choice of MP+D as the institutional location for her archive and her process for the archive’s formation reveals a curatorial intervention that functions as a practice for choreographic legacy. Halprin’s archive is open to the public, with only a few restrictions on use due to the fragility of selected items in need of conservation. Additionally, significant portions of the image collection, as well several scores and ephemera, have been digitized and made available online as part of the museum’s Anna Halprin Digital Archive. The openness Halprin affords her archive positions the collection as an accessible public resource for both historical insight and future creativity. Halprin’s continuous process of selecting and gifting materials to the museum’s collection, a curatorial project that has spanned nearly 25 years, aligns with her choreographic mindset. Both processes reflect an ongoing creative practice that seek to utilize existing material to further circulate her ideas while reframing and reshaping the reception of her
choreographic output. This exposes her evolving intentions in dance and her intentioned construction of choreographic legacy.

Similar to Halprin’s archive at MP+D, Rainer’s collection at the Getty Research Institute is expansive in scope, encompassing a breadth of both personal and professional materials spanning over 140 linear feet and arranged into ten series: notebooks, appointment and address books; correspondence; works; professional and exhibition files; programs and reviews; topical research files; photography; audiovisual materials; oversize materials; and writings about Rainer. The collection contains photographic material dating as early as 1933, the year before Rainer’s birth, and represents her diverse interdisciplinary career since the 1950s. Where Halprin selected an institutional home for her archive that asserts notions of localism and reinforces her framing as an influential figure in performance and design, the institutional repository of Rainer’s archive suggests a decidedly different framing of her legacy. Although the J. Paul Getty Museum has occasionally presented performance events, including Rainer’s dance works, The Getty Research Institute in not a performing arts institution. Rather, the GRI’s mission is “dedicated to furthering knowledge and advancing understanding of the visual arts and their various histories.” The inclusion of Rainer’s archive at the GRI positions her legacy as intrinsically connected to the visual arts, implicating Rainer’s artistic and creative intervention beyond dance.

The transfer of Rainer’s archive to a visual arts institution rather than a performing arts museum is not wholly unprecedented upon examining how Rainer has worked professionally and situated her own artistic output throughout her career. Rainer has taught at the Whitney Museum of American Art's Independent Study Program since 1974, the year she transitioned away from choreography to filmmaking. Rainer also joined the Department of Art at the University of California, Irvine in 2005, the year before her archive was accessioned by the GRI. Rainer’s
work has been actively collected by museums internationally, and museum curators have organized several single-artist retrospectives of her work. These exhibitions have not only positioned Rainer’s choreographic output in dialogue with contemporaneous developments in the visual arts, but explicitly situate her work, and Rainer herself, squarely within the visual arts. While Rainer has never sold the copyrights to her dances or authorized any long-term licensing agreements, she has sold copies of her dance films to museum collections, notably the 1978 Sally Banes film of *Trio A*. While first sold as a 16mm film, since 2005 a digital transfer has been available through Video Data Bank, allowing expanded availability to museum collecting and exhibition. Integrated into museum galleries, the film of Rainer dancing *Trio A* is presented alongside other works of minimal art, furthering a framing of Rainer within a visual art context.

The accession of Rainer’s archive by the GRI continues a positioning of Rainer’s career influence within the visual arts. Where Halprin’s archive forwards a notion of legacy connected to her physical locatedness in San Francisco, Rainer’s archive promotes a legacy of disciplinary locatedness. Through this curatorial choice for the institutional frame of her archive collection, Rainer directly highlights her artistic output across genre and in multiple media. This influences and reinforces the construction of Rainer’s choreographic legacy as an artistic intervention in modern art.

Whereas Halprin and Rainer’s archives contain extensive personal information, including correspondence, journals, and calendars, Laura Dean’s archive is almost exclusively comprised of professional materials. Dean’s collection was gifted to the American Dance Festival Archives at Duke University in 2008, and her archive is primarily constituted of press clippings, performance ephemera, and photographic images, including prints, contact sheets, negatives, and slides. Films of Dean’s works in performance are also accessible, although only few pieces from
her career are represented on video. The majority of the archive’s materials are arranged into 49 binders, each assembled and organized by Dean herself with little intervention from archive staff. This allows for a detailed examination of how Dean has approached her model of archive formation. Dean’s systematized model of arranging her collection follows her choreographic interest in structuring material according to precise systems that expose an organizational logic centered on time structures.

Dean’s binders group her materials in a predominantly chronological ordering, with photographs and print materials collected together by performance work, regardless of when the photographs were produced and materials created. Dean clearly sections her archive, separating each individual calendar year throughout her career and framing each performance work as a subsection in the year it premiered. Title pages visibly mark each section, clarifying the ordering of the archive’s organizational system. Written by hand, Dean’s chronologies and annotations frame each individual binder as well as the collection as a whole, listing the date, location, collaborators, and cast of each dance at its first public performance. Continuing her collection’s chronological focus, interspersed within the binders are materials related to her company’s touring engagements, positioned in the corresponding calendar year. This serves to articulate a linear perspective of Dean’s work, with each piece accurately situated within the structure of her overall career. Dean’s organizational schema also separates the work she created for herself and her company from works commissioned by other dance companies and her choreographic projects with students. Dean’s highly organized model for her archive reflects her choreographic process, which engages precisely defined systems and overtly sustains the conceptual logic of her structural design throughout a piece.
The archive serves to document the history of Dean’s work, with a meticulous emphasis on the original production information for each performance work. Press releases, clippings, performance programs, promotional materials, posters, and flyers give details about Dean’s works in performance and her production history, but little is included beyond what was initially available to the public during her career. Centering specifically on representing her work from the perspective of artistic intention, compositional structures, and a history of spectatorship, Dean’s archive almost wholly omits the administrative functioning of both her company and external artistic projects. This serves to keep Dean’s personal life rather private, obscures her choreographic process, and conceals the business operations of her career. With rare exception, correspondence, personal history, financial records, production contracts, touring negotiations, and documentation related to choreographic commissions are not present in the archive. Dean suggests that during her career she was never preoccupied with constructing an archive, leading her to casually dispose of items and communications once their immediate use-function had passed. However, Dean’s archive exposes a meticulous practice of assembling and maintaining an extensive assortment of ephemera, which collectively articulates a precisely defined chronological and aesthetic history of her works. This shows that Dean made specific choices of what types of materials to maintain, and which to dispose or omit. The annotations Dean includes in her archive also serve Dean’s project of focusing on chronologies and aesthetics, with corrections to inaccuracies in scholarly publications directly addressed and corrected throughout the archive. This exposes Dean’s consistent desire for her works to be correctly catalogued and accurately described without clerical error.

Reflecting on the absences in Dean’s archives allows me to scrutinize the types of information that Dean prioritizes in forming the archive of her career work, as well as the
information she has allowed to either disappear or not be entered into the archive. I question if these absences are truly the effect of Dean’s gradual discarding of material over time, or if they are instead the result of an overt curatorial intervention intended to affect the reception of her career as well as the types of histories that can be written of her work. The material omissions of Dean’s archive limit the types of questions we can successfully investigate, which directly shapes the possibility of future scholarly work. Dean’s collection at ADF is also restricted and its use requires her written permission, a move that forecloses scholarly investigation without garnering clear approvals. This allows Dean to mediate who accesses her collection as well as interrogate the intentions of each researcher before allowing them use of her materials.

In 2000 Dean moved from New York, where she spent the majority of her career, to North Carolina. She maintains a significantly closer involvement in the use of her archives than both Halprin and Rainer, and I argue that the choice to gift her collection to ADF’s archive similarly functions to keeps her materials close; Dean does not release her work far beyond herself, even spatially. Like Dean’s choice to reject the notion that her dances can be reconstructed without her choreographic oversight, she maintains a position of close oversight over interaction with her archive to ensure her creative work and artistic intentions are accurately represented. Like Halprin and Rainer, Dean continues to maintain copyright to all of her performance works. However, Dean has uniquely outlined an eventual transference of ownership. She has communicated that upon her death, written into her will is a gift of her copyrights to ADF, along with clear directives for their use. This act serves to reinforce Dean’s intention for a tightly maintained oversight of her career output. Dean’s process of archive formation and oversight directly shapes interaction with her artistic output, exposing an ongoing practice for mediating the public perception of her work.
Halprin, Rainer, and Dean undertake processes of archive formation that expose specific beliefs about and intended functions of their documentary materials. These archive strategies directly reveal each choreographer’s process of mediating the reception of their creative output, constituting an active legacy practice. Though the intentional selection of their archive’s location, institutional frame, organizational structure, comprehensiveness, and accessibility, Halprin, Rainer, and Dean actively curate their collections. This mediation exposes directed efforts at shaping choreographic legacy.

**Tracing and Tracking Dance**

To recuperate an understanding of the appearance, structure, and reception of past performances, I draw from choreographic notebooks, handwritten movement scores, press reviews, correspondence, printed programs, photographic images, archival video footage, and previous scholarly work. Through a process of descriptive movement analysis, I articulate the artistic directives, aesthetic structures, and compositional systems of these performance works. Situating the creative output of each choreographer chronologically, I organize a stage history of their dances, within which I compare details of individual performance events to locate choreographic reappearances and returns across multiple works. Through a juxtaposition of different performances within their career, I expose the multiple choreographic rearticulations and evolutions in the work of Halprin, Rainer, and Dean. This reveals how each choreographer draws from and utilizes existing methods of repertoire, reconstruction, and reperformance to critically reengage their own creative output. Creating new choreographic practices that draw from each of these existing legacy models rather than adopting a single method, Halprin, Rainer, and Dean actively reframe and resituate the reception of their choreographic work while
exposing and confronting the inherent assumptions of repertoire, reconstruction, and reperformance. Through an active and ongoing engagement with their own performance histories, Halprin, Rainer, and Dean actively reveal new practices for the construction of choreographic legacy.

Through a performance analysis of Halprin’s choreographic output beyond *Parades and Changes*, I locate foundational creative and aesthetic concerns that extend across multiple performance works beginning in 1960. Articulating how and where choreographic fragments, elements of stage design, and physical objects have reappeared in multiple works, I track the ways in which Halprin creatively repurposes and reworks her existing creative material. By examining Halprin’s choreographic output in the 1960s as a series of intrinsically interconnected evolutions resultant from a continuous workshop process, rather than a series of independently conceived choreographic works, I outline a genealogy of performance within Halprin’s early career. I reinforce the notion of Halprin’s workshop process as integral to an understanding of her performance by describing significant changes in the appearance and intention her work resultant from changes in her company of collaborators. While *Parades and Changes* developed through a multi-year experimental process with a relatively consistent company of collaborators, Halprin’s 1965 break with several original members of San Francisco Dancers Workshop and her coalescing of a new company of dancers in 1967, followed by yet another significant company restructuring in 1969, produced immediate and recognizable shifts in the ongoing production of this specific performance work. Through this I expose a process of artistic evolution that reflects Halprin’s intention of using dance to reflect and examine her own social and political situatedness, as well as the interpersonal, emotional, and physical circumstances of her collaborative working process. Extending this analysis to stagings of *Parades and Changes*
in Halprin’s later career, I expose how the compositional process she developed in the early 1960s has directly influenced continued evolutions of the dance. Halprin’s multiple re- engagements with *Parades and Changes* since 2013 simultaneously utilize methods of repertoire, reconstruction, and reperformance to propose a legacy practice of ongoing self-reflection and personal storytelling. Halprin deploys *Parades and Changes* not as a fixed work, but as a model for articulating her beliefs about and demonstrating her process for choreographic legacy.

Similarly, I chart a stage history of Rainer’s performance works in the 1960s and early 1970s, which I connect to an analysis of her later re-engagements with *Trio A* since 1999. Connecting a visual analysis of multiple choreographic works to her personal writings and choreographic notes, I reveal the ways Rainer’s ideas and choreographic material are repetitively re-engaged across multiple performance pieces. Situating these works chronologically, I locate *Trio A* as a “fraction” or “insertable” that was variously and repeatedly integrated into Rainer’s composite performances and lecture-demonstrations until her transition away from choreography to filmmaking in 1974.

In 1966, the year of *Trio A*’s premiere, Susan Sontag published an article on happenings that defined the newly coalesced genre as an art of radical juxtaposition, noting how happenings emphasize assemblages of objects and physical actions in ways that presented new possibilities for exploring materiality and spatiality in art. Sally Banes redeployed Sontag’s idea of radical juxtaposition in her description of postmodern dance to articulate how choreographic works by artists affiliated with and adjacent to Judson Dance Theater forwarded a new collage-like choreographic technique that rejected hierarchical logic of perspective, plot, and character development. Describing Rainer’s film works, Shelley Green redirects this phrase yet again to
propose Rainer’s cinematographic model as that of radical juxtaposition, using the term to demonstrate how Rainer’s feature-length works fracture spatiotemporal continuity. I argue that Rainer’s compositional process of fracturing perceptions of space and time was not new to her filmmaking, but rather this process of radical juxtaposition was first explored in dance through *Trio A*, as Rainer repeatedly situated simultaneous and sequential presentations of multiple transmogrifications of the dance in performance. Applying a multiplicity of processes for choreographic transmission, Rainer engaged practices of repertoire, reconstruction, and reperformance to actively produce and deploy a plurality of *Trio A*s that could be variably juxtaposed in processes that radically fractured and ruptured the experience of choreographic continuity. Rainer not only carried this compositional process from her choreographic work into her filmmaking, but deployed it again choreographically upon her return to working in dance in 1999. It is not inconsequential that Rainer initiated her return to dance, after a 25 year absence from both choreographing and performing, through her own performance of *Trio A*, in which she represented both a new transmogrification of the dance and a new juxapositional format: *Trio A Pressured*. Since 1999 Rainer has continued to exert a pressure on *Trio A*, utilizing the dance to expose and explore new processes for choreographic transmission, juxtaposing the different effects and experiences of the dance as transmitted through models of repertoire, reconstruction, and reperformance. Through *Trio A*, Rainer radically juxtaposes the multiplicity of ways choreographic legacy can be constructed and articulated.

Like my analyses of Halprin and Rainer, I utilize a chronology of Dean’s artistic output alongside both movement description and visual analysis to expose Dean’s work in dance, music, and drawing during the 1970s as intrinsically connected aspects of a multi-modal practice. Centering on the explication of pattern, structure, and form as it appears in her work, I
frame Dean’s pieces as the result of serial progressions and structural processes that expose her highly ordered conceptual systems and clearly defined compositional logic. Dean’s rejection of the future staging of her performance works suggests that her dance structures function differently than Halprin and Rainer in that they do not require the body to be communicated or articulated. Because repertoire, reconstruction, and reperformance necessarily involve the subjective interpretation of other dancers, Dean’s directed focus on archival material is intentioned as an immediate engagement with her authorial voice, removing the distancing that is intrinsic in the contemporary restaging of a dance. Thus, Dean’s intervention in dance is an active resituating of choreographic legacy outside and apart from repertoire, reconstruction, and reperformance.

**Participating in Legacy**

While I very much consider myself a dance practitioner, I did not embark on this project with the expectation that my own dancing body would become so integral to my research. Nor did I anticipate the many ways the performance-based inquiry that I integrated into this study would significantly redirect the trajectory of both my dance practice and pedagogical approach. I initially imagined that my experience as a researcher for this project would be that of an observer, working with a distanced, yet informed eye, to analyze the movement of others rather than analyzing my own moving body. However, I made an early realization in my investigation that choreographic legacy is constructed through systematized processes of reiteration and is therefore necessarily participatory. Recognizing this, I allowed myself to partially redirect my inquiry on Halprin, Rainer, and Dean to follow the specific and peculiar ways each of their legacy practices invite and circumscribe participation.
This project is inflected by my own interactions and personal relationships with Halprin, Rainer, and Dean. In addition to undertaking archival research, performance analysis, and personal interviews with the three subjects of this study, I have observed Halprin and Rainer’s choreographic work being staged in rehearsal and myself participated in their creative practice. In writing about Halprin and Rainer’s process for choreographic transmission, I utilize my experience physically engaging in their work to articulate their practice from an embodied as well as historical perspective. Choreographic legacy is an active project, a continuous mobilizing and rearticulating of dance history in which performance is deployed as a mechanism of constructing, communicating, and regulating the production of knowledge. My lived understanding of Halprin and Rainer’s work, experiencing the unique ways in which they direct dancers with intentioned agency, allows me to decipher how identity, authorship, and legacy in dance are circulated through the moving body.

Although I first began observing Halprin’s work in 2008, it was my experience attending a five-day workshop on her dance deck in December 2013 that revealed to me the centrality of her workshop-based approach to art. This clarified that I could not write about the complexity of her creative philosophies from a perspective of archival research and personal interviews, as I had been doing up to that point. I instead recognized a need to relocate to California, where I could participate intensively as a means to fully encounter the extended and multi-faceted creative approaches that are encompassed within the Life/Art Process.

Beginning in September 2015 I spent five months working closely with Halprin in California, an immersive period that included both archival research and oral history interviews, as well as embodied involvement with Halprin’s choreographic practice. I arrived in California to undertake the Tamalpa Institute’s professional training program. Halprin jointly founded
Tamalpa with her daughter, Daria, in 1978 and both served as core faculty in the program during my time in California. Spending most every day at Halprin’s home over a three-month period and working on her outdoor dance deck was an exceptionally impactful experience on my understanding of her choreographic process, pedagogical approach, and creative influences. In addition to the training program, I assisted Halprin’s public classes and joined her performance lab, an ensemble of arts practitioners that meets once weekly to intensify their work with Halprin’s techniques and collectively undertake ongoing scoring work. Through these experiences I closely observed Halprin’s teaching practice, discussed with her how she addresses pedagogical concerns in the studio, and developed a nuanced understanding of the terminology and methodology she brings to her work in dance scoring.

My experience working with Halprin not only elucidated for me her approach to the creation of artistic work and construction of choreographic legacy, but also effected within me profound personal growth. Through Halprin’s kinesthetic and expressive arts therapy approach to performance, I gleaned new information about my body, personal mythology, and artistic sensibilities. Knowing Halprin’s creative process from embodied experience, I returned to her archive with a perspective that allowed me to further interrogate the development of her compositional practice. Applying a description and analysis of how she works in the studio, I foreground the way Halprin utilizes ongoing workshop processes to shape her choreographic work and impart her choreographic legacy.

This period of work with Halprin led to unexpected expansions in both my scholarly pursuits and pedagogical projects. Working with Muriel Maffre at the Museum of Performance + Design, I co-curated a gallery exhibition on Halprin’s career work in dance scoring, *Mapping Dance: The Scores of Anna Halprin.* Integrating public participation into the exhibition, I
collaborated with Halprin on recycling her score for *Sensory Walk* to reflect the unique environmental context of the museum’s location in the Yerba Buena neighborhood, part of San Francisco’s South of Market district. The score connected MP+D to the California Historical Society a few blocks away, where the exhibition *Experiments in Environment: The Halprin Workshops, 1966–1971* was on view concurrently. From either location museum visitors could collect the score for *Sensory Walk*, then follow its guided map through the neighborhood while performing scored tasks for encountering and interacting with the city around them. In 1978 Halprin’s day-long public-participatory event *Citydance* had engaged this same area of the city, guiding participants to sites that would disappear as part of the city’s Yerba Buena Center redevelopment project. This urban renewal initiative would transform 87 acres to reflect a master plan centered on cultural institutions, public recreation, and a convention center. Nearly forty years later, the recycled score for *Sensory Walk* retraced the path of Halprin’s 1978 “Yerba Buena Tour,” moving participants through the redesigned cityscape.

**Anna Halprin. “Yerba Buena Tour.”**
*From Citydance 1978*
SF Museum of Performance + Design

**Anna Halprin and Elliot Gordon Mercer. Sensory Walk.**
*For Mapping Dance: The Scores of Anna Halprin, 2016*
SF Museum of Performance + Design
Drawing from my involvement assisting Halprin in her weekly public classes, in 2017 I applied this experience to my teaching at Northwestern University, where I designed a full studio-based course on Halprin’s approach to dance and creativity. This coming academic year I will be initiating the first university course progression in the Life/Art Process at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs. Through this pedagogical work I will again be collaborating with Halprin, producing a republication of her teaching manual Movement Ritual. Myself participating in Halprin’s intention for choreographic legacy, I join in transmitting her workshop process and compositional models through a combination of studio teaching, scholarship, and public practice.

As in my first experience on the dance deck with Halprin, a short encounter with Rainer’s work produced a realization of the need to participate, to dance. With Rainer, my interest in the transmission of Trio A first led me to observe one of the dance’s transmitters, Linda K. Johnson, as she worked with AXIS Dance Company in 2014. In our conversations Johnson suggested that one must learn Trio A to fully understand it. Observing the dance in performance or in its final coaching does not reveal the multiple exactitudes and intentions of Rainer’s work, which are instead imparted through the teaching process. This led me to Trio A’s lead transmitter, Pat Catterson, to myself learn the dance later that year, then eventually to Rainer herself in 2016. As with my experience engaging in Halprin’s Life/Art Process, learning Trio A allowed me to return to the archive with new insight, to locate particularities of Rainer’s work and Trio A’s peculiar function in her expansive career output.

Since learning Trio A in 2014 I have worked with Rainer to dance some of its multiple transmogrifications, as well as present and participate in new iterations of the dance, both in live performance and on film. Trio A is a dance that I have repeated dozens of times over multiple
hours in my own independent studio practice. I apply this embodied knowledge of Trio A’s choreographic specificities to my analysis of the dance’s historical reappearances in Rainer’s career, elucidating precise and nuanced variances between different performances since 1966. I also utilize the specific language Rainer engages in the teaching of the dance to locate and describe not only how she approached the creation of the dance, but also how she outlines and manages its ongoing communication. Working within Rainer’s system of authorized Trio A performers, I integrate myself into a network of dance practitioners that give me insight into the way Rainer cultivates legacy through the ongoing production of discourse and embodied acts of transmission.

I have found the process of dancing Trio A to produce a profound shift in my own artistic experience. For me, the piece is so physically rigorous, intellectually rewarding, and personally fulfilling that it has redirected my performance practice toward Rainer’s work. Beyond Trio A, at Catterson’s invitation this year I will be learning more of Rainer’s dances, including the rare piece “Talking Solo” from her first evening-length work, Terrain (1963). Rainer and Catterson are both begrudgingly recognizing their gradual movement toward an eventual retirement, or rather, they are openly divulging modifications in their work focus as they progressively retire from the more physically demanding and teaching-heavy aspects of their careers. As I continue with more projects related to Rainer’s work and intensify my relationship with Catterson, conversations about the futurity of an embodied legacy are becoming more transparent, leading to further invitations for me to participate. I am finding myself increasingly participating as an extension of Rainer’s legacy, weaving together new dance scholarship and performance practice, as Rainer has done throughout her career.
In contrast to my experience with Halprin and Rainer, with Dean there came no invitation to participate corporeally. Dean eluded me for several years, perpetually difficult to locate and having directed her archive to be intentionally inaccessible. It was during my time as a curatorial research assistant at the Dia Art Foundation, where Dean’s company had been in residence in the 1980s and 1990s, was I finally able to connect with her. Only after she hesitantly agreed to a few phone conversations, then several lengthy, uncompromisingly forthright exchanges by written correspondence, did she grant me access to her materials at Duke. Throughout the process of writing this dissertation I have noticed my work increasingly moving toward an engagement with discourses in art history and theory. It is with this interdisciplinary focus that I have sought to rethink the reception of Dean’s choreographic output, allowing me to tackle a question that had previously been elusive in my research: What might a dance legacy look like without the dancing body or its image? Dean’s responses to previous scholarly writing on her work is critical and blunt, laced with corrections that both elucidate and contradict the veracity of information contained in her archive. Whereas Dean was hesitant to share her work with me, I am now hesitant to share mine with her. Not because I doubt my argument and explication, but because I have recognized that in writing on her work I am now effecting a new shift in her legacy.

In this dissertation I not only articulate the beliefs, intentions, and anxieties that influence the legacy practices of Halprin, Rainer, and Dean, but myself become an active part of the understanding and mobilization of their choreographic legacies. Locating my own positionality, both as a scholar and dancer, within the history of Halprin, Rainer, and Dean’s work, I acknowledge the ways my subjectivity contributes to the production of their choreographic legacies. I argue that legacy is not something that is defined by one person, but an ongoing
practice of meaning making that is simultaneously individual, yet necessarily collective. My experience of the legacies of Halprin, Rainer, and Dean is uniquely particular to my own experience engaging in their work. However, I situate my experience in concert with multiple other scholars and dancers who themselves have their own deeply personal experiences with these choreographers. Thus, the production of legacy is influenced by numerous people, each with their own intentions and motivations, collectively creating, mobilizing, and moving meaning in conversation with one another.

By framing repertoire, reconstruction, and reperformance as recognizable systems of knowledge production that justify beliefs about choreographic legacy, I expose how these strategies for choreographic transmission belie particular priorities and belief structures in dance. Through an analysis of Halprin, Rainer, and Dean’s work, I expose how each have and continue to engage a multiplicity of practices for choreographic transmission that actively expose and confront beliefs about the objectivity of choreographic legacy. Through the use of experimental processes for structuring performance, unique notational practices, and intentioned strategies for archive formation, Halprin, Rainer, and Dean present unique models of choreographic legacy that reshape the experience, understanding, and embodiment of dance history.
Choreographic Spolia as Legacy Practice: Anna Halprin’s *Parades and Changes*

In 1955 when Anna Halprin was on the verge of gaining national recognition as a dancer and choreographer she very deliberately turned her back on the New York-based mainstream modern dance and began working solely with improvisation processes in creating dances. Although based in San Francisco, Halprin had been invited by Martha Graham and Baroness Bethesbee de Rothschild to travel to New York and present her solo work in the American Dance Festival series at the ANTA Theatre. It was Halprin’s first performance in New York in nearly a decade. Graham and Rothschild asked Halprin to bring her 1947 work *The Prophetess,* which they had both seen during a visit to California, and Halprin chose to revive another of her earlier dances, *The Lonely Ones* (1943), which she had previously presented in New York at the 92nd St. Y. In her 1955 performance at the ANTA Theatre these two solos were successfully received by both the press and fellow choreographers, but Halprin felt out of place in New York. She observed that Graham, along with choreographers like Doris Humphrey and Hanya Holm, had each designed idiosyncratic dance techniques based on their personalities, thus training dancers in a way she perceived as so imitative that it masked their individuality. Halprin found this approach to dance stale and uninspired, as well as wholly disconnected from her life.

Returning to San Francisco, Halprin severed her working partnership with Welland Lanthrop, a former Graham Dancer, and left the studio at which they were teaching together. Later that year she established the San Francisco Dancer’s Workshop, formally bringing together the group of dancers and artists with whom she had been collaborating over the past decade in San Francisco into an organization that was designed to give her and others the opportunity to delve more into more explorative forms of creativity. Together these artists worked to move
away from the technical constraints of concert dance. In her rehearsals with San Francisco Dancers’ Workshop Halprin set up choreographic situations and improvisation structures in which the group collectively undertook a process of creative questioning and artistic research.

As an alternative to set choreography, Halprin has developed unique methods of dance scoring since the late 1950s. Her scores communicate the essential choreographic structures, environmental plans, and physical instructions for each performance work, yet are also designed in ways that inspire users to apply their own creative sensibilities to embodying and carrying out their directives. In this way, the scores are intended to allow for the invention of new artistic possibilities. Halprin’s dance scores are simultaneously structured and fluid, and the performance works they represent are risky, spontaneous, and constantly evolving. From handwritten text on small index cards to intricately colored drawings on lengthy rolls of butcher paper, the two-dimensional renderings of Halprin’s scores expose the breadth of her investigative process and the scope of her interdisciplinary collaborations.

A decade after Halprin founded SDFW, the workshop practices she developed through her collaborative, interdisciplinary explorations coalesced into the influential dance-theatre work Parades and Changes. Performed in its first iteration in 1965, Parades and Changes represents an accumulation of choreographic ideas and compositional models that Halprin had been developing since the late 1950s. The work was not an entirely new production in itself, but instead combined, reused, reworked, and expanded choreographic elements that had been previously created and repurposed in four earlier works: The Flowerburger (1960), Birds of America or Gardens Without Walls (1960), Esposizione (1963), and Procession (1964).

In the creation and development of her dance works Halprin has repeatedly engaged in a process of self-citation and choreographic spolia. Spolia, the Latin word for 'spoils', is an
architectural process wherein repurposed building stones are integrated into new construction. Both practical and ideological, the practice was widespread in the ancient world as people chose to collect locally available stone that had already been quarried, carved, and used in older, obsolete structures rather than sourcing, cutting, and transporting new material. In her choreographic work Halprin undertakes a similar process of repurposing and recycling her own creative material—her scores—for use as structural blocks in the development of new performance work.

The working process that led to the creation of Parades and Changes exemplifies the RSVP Cycles, a creative methodology for collective art making through performance scoring. Presented in Lawrence Halprin’s 1969 monograph The RSVP Cycles: Creative Processes in the Human Environment and expanded for his 1974 co-authored book with Jim Burns, Taking Part: A Workshop Approach to Collective Creativity, the acronym references the communication request for a recipient to respond. While the RSVP Cycles is largely attributed to Lawrence, I foreground the ways Anna’s rehearsal process and choreographic practice at SFDW beginning in 1955 was foundational to the development of the RSVP Cycles model before the system was codified in Lawrence’s publications. In charting the development of Parades and Changes, as well as Halprin’s ongoing creative reworking of the piece through dance scoring, I highlight Halprin’s career work as an ongoing process of artistic exploration rather than the accumulation of distinct, fixed repertory performance works.

The RSVP Cycles is a “model of creativity that organizes and makes visible methods for people to work together in groups,” actively integrating the individual responses and contributions of participants throughout the process. A key philosophy in this model is the belief that every person possesses unique creative potential and that through group interaction this
creativity can be engaged to enhance personal development, address group objectives, and approach social transformation. The four elements of the RSVP cycles are resources, score, valuaction, and performance. Resources are the ideas, materials, and relationships on which the group can draw in the creative process; Scores utilize these resources in tasks or activities that initiate process; Performance is the carrying out or realization of the score; and Valuaction is the procedure for evaluating the experience or results of the performance. The model is cyclical in that it continually repeats itself; the creative process involves a process of recycling, the ongoing reworking of a valuacted score in which it is presented anew as intentions or objectives are altered or made more specific.

![Diagram of the RSVP Cycles](image)

Diagram of the RSVP Cycles. Lawrence Halprin Collection, Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania.

For the Halprins, recycling is distinct from reconstruction. Reconstruction suggests a process of repeating the dance as it once was, performing the work in an identical format with the same appearance and intention. In opposition to this, the process of recycling foregrounds their intention of actively redoing anew within the same framework or with the same material
resources. Recycling takes into account the specifics of a work’s location, cast, and the type of audience that will be attending, as well as the social, cultural, and political moment of performance. Recycling suggests an active engagement with a work’s situatedness, which is engaged as a resource to inform and inflect the score. While the written directives of a given score may remain the same, in the process of doing the score again its performance is always made anew. As with a plastic bottle that is sent for recycling, it is reprocessed, possibly reformed into another plastic bottle, or potentially some other item, but it retains the same structural component at all points. Within the RSVP Cycles, recycling is how the Halprins move creativity forward, not only in the workshop process, but also when choreographic explorations coalesce as performance works. Even when a score becomes set, each iteration of the work in performance always involved a process of recycling.

The RSVP Cycles is participatory and exploratory. It foregrounds an ongoing creative practice that encourages the objectives of any process to be constantly reevaluated, permitting those involved to both contribute to and “influence profoundly what happens as well as how it happens.” Through the valuation and recycling process, the objectives of each situation or working process may be reconsidered or redirected as new information is learned or group dynamics shift in response to ongoing events. In working without a linear notion of goal attainment, the process encourages the continuous exploration and development of new creative possibilities. Any performance is therefore part of a system wherein the event is not a fixed product, but rather the accumulation and representation of continuing group processes.

Through a performance analysis of Halprin’s works from the early 1960s I situate *Parades and Changes* as the synthesis and expansion of an interconnected series of artistic interests and compositional procedures that were produced through an ongoing workshop
process with a relatively stable group of collaborators. Locating the repetition and evolution of both creative and aesthetic concerns between multiple performance events, I describe how and where Halprin has curatorially repurposed and imaginatively recycled existing choreographic directives, elements of stage design, and material objects. Not only did Halprin compose *Parades and Changes* through a process of continuously unfixing, recycling, and resituating her choreographic scores and theatrical fragments, the compositional logic of the piece itself demands an ongoing process of evolution and responsiveness. Between 1965 and 1970 Halprin continuously shifted the piece to present multiple different articulations of the work. Thus, *Parades and Changes* is not only the result of a compositional system that prioritizes the ongoing evolution of a creative project, but itself necessarily demonstrative of the system in action during each and every performance.

*Parades and Changes* was the last performance work that Halprin developed with dancers John Graham and A.A. Leath, who were founding members of SFDW. The piece had developed through ten years of collaborative work between these three dancers, and the departure of Graham and Leath from the company in 1965 effected a shift in both style and intention for Halprin. Halprin began working with a larger, younger group of dancers and redirected her creative focus to begin exploring models for audience participation, situating her work in the context of San Francisco’s expanding counterculture movement in addition to the city’s avant-garde art scene. SFDW restructured once again four years later following Halprin’s production of *Ceremony of Us* (1969), which combined dancers from SFDW and Studio Watts. The new mixed-race ensemble allowed Halprin to redirect her artistic intentions towards confronting racial inequality, which was reflected in her 1970 staging of *Parades and Changes* at the Berkeley Art Museum. These changes to Halprin’s collection of collaborators produced
recognizable shifts in the appearance and intended function of *Parades and Changes*. Between 1965 and 1970 Halprin utilized this performance work reflexively examine her own social and political situatedness, as well as the immediate circumstances of her working environment.

Returning to *Parades and Changes* in 2000, Halprin has since purposely resituated and recycled the work’s scores several times. Continuing her process of choreographic spolia, she has creatively incorporated existing scores from other performance works into *Parades and Changes* to create new evening-length iterations of the dance. She has also extracted specific scores from the piece and recycled them into new performance works. Each of these evolutions of *Parades and Changes* results from Halprin’s ongoing workshop-centered creative process, actively reflecting the shifting social, political, and cultural contexts of each performance. In these multiple evolutions of *Parades and Changes* Halprin has engaged methods of repertoire, reconstruction, and reperformance in ways that intentionally expose her shifting interests and intentions in dance. Through the work’s foregrounding of ongoing creative process and the juxtaposed accumulation of choreographic material, Halprin has engaged *Parades and Changes* as a compositional model for demonstrating and articulating her beliefs about choreographic legacy.

Locating Halprin’s work as emanating from a workshop-based approach, Janice Ross signals Halprin’s intervention in dance through her work as a pedagogue. She locates Halprin’s teaching methods and educational philosophy as rooted in her experience working with Margaret H’Doubler as an undergraduate at the University of Wisconsin Madison between 1938 and 1942, as well as the following year and a half Halprin spent in the artistic circle of Bauhaus architect
Walter Gropius at Harvard University, where Lawrence was studying landscape architecture. H’Doubler, herself not a dancer but a biologist, women’s basketball coach, and teacher of physical education, imparted to Halprin a model of dance education that utilized movement as an experiential tool for learning about oneself. Rather than enforcing a set technique and aesthetic like most dance classes of the era, H’Doubler’s classes were focused on the scientific study of anatomy and kinesiology. Through a creative investigation of the physical structures of the human body, as well as its capacity for expression and patterned behavior, students were directed in compositional investigations of time, space, weight, and effort. After being instructed in these fundamental movement principles, they were encouraged to tap into their own creativity to invent their own dances. H’Doubler’s vision of dance was process-based rather than product-oriented. Performance events were explicitly framed as an extension of one’s ongoing physical, emotional, and creative development, rather than the presentation of choreography as traditionally understood in theatrical dance. H’Doubler’s focus on natural movement and emphasis on the use of dance as a means of personal expression heavily influenced Halprin, who soon began experimenting with new movement styles and compositional techniques. After graduation Halprin departed Madison to join Lawrence in Cambridge, where she integrated herself into a community of artists working in different creative disciplines. While Halprin was never formally a student of Gropius, Ross elucidates the influence his interdisciplinary educational model had on Halprin’s teaching philosophy. During this time on the East Coast Halprin began integrating new artistic practices into her dance classes, which became increasingly interdisciplinary. Coalescing her foundational experience of H’Doubler’s process-based dance classes with Gropius’ educational model for a unification of the arts, Halprin began
to cultivate a workshop process that was predicated on improvisatory movement exploration and collective creativity models that moved between multiple artistic disciplines.

Ross situates Halprin’s workshop-based approach to dance as principally educational. She asserts that “Anna’s aesthetic is deeply pedagogical in conception, ambition, and scale. She is foremost a dance educator—primarily focused on others’ responses to prompts that generate movement and, often, dances.” Situating Halprin in the lineage of H’Doubler, Ross articulates Halprin’s movement directives in the dance studio as pedagogical rather than choreographic. I instead argue that Halprin’s workshop approach is intentioned toward the choreographic. Much like other choreographers who have developed codified dance techniques and utilized classroom teaching to cultivate dancers with a unified aesthetic and corporeal language that could be deployed in their choreographic work, Halprin has produced a model for working in the studio that is directly aligned with and in service to her artistic output. Halprin not only cultivated, but codified a mode of working with the body that was explicated in her 1975 publication *Movement Ritual*, which documents her philosophy on kinesthetic awareness and the structured, progressive movement sequence for honing physical responsiveness she forwards as the foundation for creative movement exploration. Additionally, in foregrounding an extended workshop process as necessary to cultivating among participants a shared understanding of her approach to dance, Halprin has developed a choreographic practice that intentionally extends compositional concerns first presented as studio processes into the creation of performance works.

Whereas H’Doubler regularly staged presentations of the movement work that was developed during the compositional explorations in her dance classes, the performances were seen as part of the educational process. These events were situated as reflective of students’ ongoing personal, physical, and emotional development, not of H’Doubler’s artistic vision.
H’Doubler saw herself as an educator, not a choreographer, actively and repetitively distancing herself from practices of theatrical dance. Conversely, Halprin explicitly locates herself as a choreographer and director, intentionally circulating her dance work within networks of theatrical performance. While Halprin’s approach to her workshop-based creative process is similar to H’Doubler in that it aims to inspire responses from participants rather than dictate or demonstrate movement, Halprin’s performance works are direct reflections of her choreographic decisions and directorial choices as lead artist. I argue that while Halprin integrates the ongoing personal, physical, and emotional development of her dancers, the primary focus in her theatrical works is on the development and presentation of choreographic structures that reflect and respond to her changing artistic intentions and creative concerns.

Like H’Doubler, Halprin’s approach in the dance studio also gives primary focus to proposing movement situations and improvisation structures that are intentionally designed as processes for self-exploration and deliberately meant to evoke the unique responses of those involved. Whereas H’Doubler frames such a practice as principally pedagogical rather than in the service of producing theatrical dance, Halprin frames her movement instructions as a process of dance scoring, framing her role as that of choreographer. Through this, Halprin positions herself to take an active directorial role during the creative process, making curatorial selections in regards to the movement that has been developed and guiding the production of new material. While Halprin allows for creative exploration of her scores, she manages her classes, workshops, and rehearsals in a way that ensures participants work within the scope of her artistic directives. When a score doesn’t produce a performance that Halprin finds engaging or compelling, she makes the directorial move to recycle it, elucidating or nuancing her intentions so as to move the score toward her desired experience. When a performer doesn’t stay within a score, breaking
away from her directorial oversight, Halprin reasserts her authority in the creative process. As
I assisted Halprin in her classes, during a group scoring exercise she would occasionally turn to
me, point out someone in the room, and whisper “What on Earth is she doing? We need to fix
that.” Or, she would abruptly stop everyone the room and gently chastise “You weren’t doing the
score. Start over.” Through the workshop process Halprin consciously directs the participants,
instilling a recognition of and familiarity with her working process, through which she shapes
and directs a unified approach to performance. Halprin’s theatrical works are reflections of her
ongoing workshop-based approach to collective creativity, but a creativity in which Halprin
maintains an authorial voice and asserts her own artistic intentions toward the evolution of an
explicitly theatrical product.

Halprin’s intervention into dance practice and choreography is a redefined concept of
dance technique. Halprin rejects the creation of a dance technique defined by an aesthetically
locatable movement stylization, instead presenting a dance technique predicated on a system of
kinesthetic awareness and mode of compositional process. Through this, Halprin extends her
choreographic legacy.

The Flowerburger

The first major choreographic work that Halprin developed with the San Francisco
Dancers’ Workshop was *The Flowerburger*, a collaboration with poet Richard Brautigan.
Halprin had been reading Brautigan’s 1958 collection of poetry, *The Galilee Hitch-Hiker*, and
was intrigued by the experimental simplicity of the poems. In her creative process Halprin began
to experiment with sections of three poems from the collection, including “The Flowerburgers.”
Working with dancers A.A. Leath and John Graham, Halprin integrated Brautigan’s texts as
spoken dialogue alongside her choreographic structures. *The Flowerburger* was Halprin’s first performance work that engaged a process of dance scoring. Rather than constructing pre-designed and set movement for her dancers, Halprin “attempted to plan a framework with defined limits, within which spontaneous occurrences are possible.” In the development of the piece Halprin tasked the performers to make improvisatory choices, exploring different ways to present the interplay of movement and sound.

In *The Flowerburger* Halprin, Leath, and Graham did not present Brautigan’s poems in their original forms, but instead chose to intermix the three texts with which they were working, juxtaposing lines from the different pieces to create new poetic combinations in the moment of performance. Halprin’s instructions for the use of sound outline that each "each performer collects at random sentences from a book of which a definite number are to be used in a specific order." The score for the improvisatory speaking of these texts includes the options for the performers to talk independently in separated sequence, overlapping with one other, or all simultaneously. This ongoing interplay of juxtaposition, serial continuity, and free association were “used in many combinations making for a complex network that creates the dance style.”

In creating this work Halprin wasn’t interested in dramatizing the words of Brautigan’s poems through movement, but instead was exploring the use of spoken dialogue as an additional resource for developing new possibilities in her working process. In *The Flowerburger* movement and sound are not referential, but exist as independent systems within the score and can be combined to creatively explore performance structure. Halprin tasks the performers to “focus on the space and time intervals between sound and movement. Explore, expand, and select the many combinations that occur in various relationships. Permit the phenomena of unpredictability to happen each time the dance is performed.” Working in this way allowed
Halprin to develop material separate from narrative and instead focus explicitly on examining form. *The Flowerburger* was not designed to forward a plot or invest in symbolism, instead the collaborative creative process was “based on a direct approach to pure materials in time and space.”9 Through this Halprin not only allowed for the creative, exploratory act to continue in the moment of performance, but highlighted this act as the central focus of the work; *The Flowerburger* was a presentation of the group’s working process as working process, allowing the audience to witness the multiple ways in which Halprin’s score allows for theatrical generativity. In her program notes for the audience, Halprin outlines this structure and tasks the audience to locate and examine the dance-dialogue’s compositional framework:

> The dance that you will see on the program tonite will be seen for the first time, and then can never be repeated in the same way. The dance is happening on the spot as the dancers and musicians improvise their own parts. In this departure the choreographer has constructed a framework open to a series of unpredictable possibilities and chance relationships.10

In creating a strict framework for improvisation, Halprin produced a fixed score that, when enacted, produced an unfixed and constantly changing performance event.

SFDW presented *The Flowerburger* at several venues throughout 1960, for which Halprin presented new articulations of her program notes on the dance. These successive texts worked to increasingly expand and clarify for the audiences the piece’s conceptual logic as well as its creative aims. In the program for a performance of *The Flowerburger* in November and December of 1960, Halprin chose to reformulate her notes to demonstrate rather than write about her creative process. She included sections of her movement and sound instructions for the performers, as well as a visual word design excerpted from the work’s score designed by Lawrence Halprin, who “arrived at his design through a method of improvisation similar to that which the dancers use in composing and performing the dance-dialogue.”11
For Halprin, working in this way was creatively beneficial and she notes that “I like working on this dance this way because I like being surprised, amused or astonished by relationships that I would never have pre-conceived.”12 The Flowerburger was a complete work in itself as well as the presentation of Halprin’s ongoing collaborative process with Graham and Leath, a creative exploration of structures and concepts wherein new ideas and information were constantly being produced, even in the moment of performance.

The Flowerburger not only explored new compositional models, but also rethought the separation between audience and stage space in performance. Halprin, Graham, and Leath always began the work by entering through the audience. The audience space became a resource in the performers’ creative explorations of Halprin’s score. With the performers infiltrating the auditorium through various doors, performances began “with the audience seemingly unaware that the evening’s performance of Flowerburger has begun.”13 Music critic Peter Yates, recalling the experience in a review for Art and Architecture magazine, notes how the audience was caught off guard by the unexpected start of the performance evening:

My wife draws my attention to a young woman… lugging into the auditorium a conspicuously hard-edged, cheap black suitcase sprinkled with labels. The woman… hauls her suitcase to an aisle seat, sits; then, as if discontent, pushes herself and her suitcase along the row of people. I am distracted from her by an eruption elsewhere… A shout answers from the balcony, another from the rear. Something may or may not be happening; one doesn’t understand clearly all that is being said. And one realizes, belatedly: this is it. The Ann Halprin Dancers’ Workshop Company of San Francisco is loose among us… shouting, speaking and signaling to one another.14

The three performers move throughout the audience, leaning over balcony rails, climbing over seats, and pushing their way through rows of people, all while shouting their fragments of Brautigan’s text as they progress toward the stage. Yates noted that The Flowerburger’s “effect
is confusingly dramatic,” providing an exhilarating mix of unexpected theatrical activities and performance events.15

**Birds of America, or Gardens Without Walls**

While SFDW was continuing to perform *The Flowerburger*, Halprin and the company developed another, longer work, *Birds of America, or Gardens Without Walls*.16 By the end of 1960 Halprin had assembled and reworked the experiments in interdisciplinary collaboration and group improvisation that she had been developing over the previous two years, in part through *The Flowerburger*, into this new fifty-minute piece. Continuing her work with dance scoring that she had initiated with *The Flowerburger*, Halprin visually charted *Birds of America* on a large sheet of newsprint. Utilizing handwritten text and geometric diagrams, Halprin’s score outlines the specific tasks and directives for the dancers, as well as the prop activities they were to undertake, in each of the work’s six segmented movement explorations. Halprin’s instructions are concise and specific, but intentionally left open to interpretation by the performers. These choreographic directives include such actions as roll, lie still, sit, and kick balls out into space. The score also diagrams the duration of each section, providing a time structure for the piece as a whole. Halprin’s score is simultaneously fixed and fluid, a model that allows for continuous ongoing exploration within a set of predefined limits.

Like *The Flowerburger*, "the concern in this work was for non-representational aspects of dance, whereby movement, unrestricted by music or interpretive ideas, could develop according to its own inherent principles."17 Halprin notes that each theatrical aspect of the piece were created in a similar manner, with light, sound, word, movement, and objects all conceived independently and intended to come together in unfixed relationships during performance. Each
element was developed “according to its own intrinsic sensory natures, and allowed to relate to other elements in unpredictable ways.” In bringing together and overlapping these different creative parts, the work displays the ways Halprin’s compositional ideas can be realized through different media. Halprin also hoped that the audience would be able to perceive each of the work’s multiple elements independently. This model of developing the different aspects of a performance work as separately defined systems, then integrating them together in performance, would continue to be engaged in her future works and form the conceptual logic of Petades and Change’s compositional structure.

Esposizione

Following The Flowerburger and Birds of America, Halprin and her collaborators continued to engage this mode of dance scoring and performance structuring for their 1963 work Esposizione. This new piece recycled several performance concepts and compositional techniques Halprin had previously developed. In returning to and intensifying her focus on creative concerns she had already been addressing, Halprin examined how her ideas could be differently engaged to produce new theatrical effects.

Commissioned by the Venice Biennale, Esposizione is a forty-minute opera by Italian composer Luciano Berio for three voices, fourteen instruments, and four-part tape. Berio had been developing his musical works in a comparable manner to Halprin’s choreographic and theatrical explorations, “composing in a parallel style of aural collage—suturing spoken and sung text with live and recorded, natural and synthetic sounds, run through tape machines and live performers.” Esposizione is separated into three acts, or episodes, each of which has distinct physical and vocal tasks for the performers. These tasks combine into “an improvised
stream-of-consciousness procession of actions and sounds… a continuous polyphony of almost independent developments in action, situation, words, and sounds. There will be no story but rather an indefatigable assemblage of situations.”

As with *The Flowerburger*, *Esposizione*’s first section features the dancers entering from different areas of the theatre. However, for *Esposizione* Halprin recycled the task-based entrance score from her earlier work, this time adding that each performer move towards the stage with a bulky collection of objects in tow. For this section Halprin and her dancers “took a single task: burdening ourselves with enormous amounts of luggage.” In a letter to Berio in advance of her arrival in Italy, Halprin describes her plan for the first episode of *Esposizione*: “we each carry large sacks, boxes, umbrellas, and so much litter that none of it is separable but together it makes a monstrous, ridiculous sculpture.” Infiltrating the audience space, the dancers negotiate their cumbersome loads, climbing over the ornate gold-leafed tiers of the theatre’s boxes and maneuvering their objects around both the architecture of the theatre and its occupants, methodically progressing to the stage. Three starting points in the theatre were selected for the six dancers, with each path towards the stage presenting a different set of obstacles that needed to be negotiated in the realization of the score. Halprin gave similar instructions to some of the work’s musicians, who likewise moved between different predetermined points in the audience space. The Venetian audience was unaccustomed to being so directly confronted by the actions of performers within the theatre, and Halprin recalls their dance “was like an invasion” into the audience space.

All of the objects in *Esposizione* were everyday items and included such incongruous things as spare automobile tires, an umbrella, rolled up newspapers tucked into gunnysacks, bundles filled with rags, parachutes shoved into containers, and a wicker hamper filled with 200
tennis balls. These props were selected and designed to be purposely precariously, with many things that could easily unfurl, come unhinged, or explode if not handled carefully. Jo Landor, who had been participating with SFDW as an art director, collaboratively selected the objects for their texture and form. The intentionally curated collections of materials compiled for each performer were assembled based on their combined visual effects, and through these individual accumulations of costumes and props, “each person was really designed as an object.”25 The dancers’ costumes were designed as extensions of their assembled props, reflecting the textures, forms, and functions of their materials.

In addition to the choreographic task of maneuvering with and within these objects, the distinct and fixed nature of Berio’s time score for Esposizione affected the performance of Halprin’s task-based choreographic instructions. Berio and Halprin outlined that the performers were to reach specific locations by certain fixed times in the score. The unique time structures allowed for overlapping temporal shifts in the individual yet simultaneous performances, from actions carried out at laboriously slow paces so as to not arrive at an end point early, to frantic and hysterical movements necessary to reach a set location by the predetermined time in the score. To manage the complexity of all this action, five timekeepers were strategically and inconspicuously positioned around the auditorium. Throughout Esposizione’s first episode they marked Berio’s time score with stopwatches and were able to give hand signal cues to the performers, alerting them to the progression of time so as to ensure each performer accurately accomplished the fixed temporal directives of the score.

The dancers entered the theatre so overburdened that if they fell behind in their timing they would occasionally need to divest themselves of a bundle of their objects and hurry forward so as to catch their next cue. In Esposizione “each person had to carry these things and to allow
his movements to be conditioned to speed that had been set up for him”²⁶ As this section of the piece progressed, the dancers littered the audience space, leaving a trail of material behind them, sometimes intentionally and other times as an accidental casualty. While this framework was clearly defined, the score “allowed each collaborator with use of his skills to actually determine and shape the piece, and each performer the freedom to invent his own unique manner of accomplishing his task within the physical obstacles and time limits.”²⁷ Through this framework Halprin allowed for individual creative response and interpretation, creating a system in which each performance could manifest a new exploration, juxtaposition, or recombination of artistic possibilities. As with The Flowerburger, Esposizione was both the result and exhibition of creative process by all those involved.

The assembled physical resources for each dancer in Esposizione were selected and juxtaposed much like Marcel Duchamp’s process for creating “assisted readymades” in the early 20th century. In these sculptural forms Duchamp combined recognizable, everyday, utilitarian objects into artworks that integrated both found and/or manufactured items. Duchamp repositioned and joined his selected materials in ways that subverted and negated the object’s original use functions. Bicycle Wheel (1913), the earliest readymade work of Duchamp’s in this self-defined category, features a tire-less bicycle wheel mounted upside-down on a wooden stool. In pieces such as this Duchamp reframes the individual objects, highlighting their forms and aesthetic qualities rather than employing them for their traditional utilitarian function. Through this he tasks the viewer to reexamine their preconceived notions and references, as well as the aesthetic qualities of both the individual objects and their juxtaposed state. Halprin and Landor’s collaborative work in Esposizione can be seen to undertake this Duchampian concept while also extending it, as they ambulate their recombined and juxtaposed object material for a performance
scenario. Each dancer in the work can be read as an assisted readymade, one that must continuously maneuver throughout the theatre space.

As with The Flowerburger and Birds of America, text was integrated throughout Esposizione. Berio’s score included vocal parts for two young boys and a mezzo-soprano, which was performed by his wife, Cathy Berberian. The opera’s libretto, developed by the Genoese poet Edoardo Sanguineti, also incorporated directives for additional verbal fragments, excerpted from texts in Italian and English, as well as Latin biblical verse. Midst their physical tasks throughout the opera, the dancers undertook these vocal tasks, sporadically shouting, laughing, and singing the selected texts. Like with Brautigan’s texts for The Flowerburger, Sanguinetti’s libretto featured language that was segmented and disjointed from its original sources, a process that served to remove language from narrative and instead focus on the sonic qualities of linguistic utterances. Sanguinetti’s work was separately conceived from the musical and choreographic composition, and was integrated in juxtaposition to the other happenings throughout the piece. The vocal work erupts at different pre-determined moments in the work, with directions to last for specific lengths of time. Together, the different aspects of Esposizione “[piled] up parallel lists of cultural clutter” that would continuously abut, overlap, and interfere with each other. This model of juxtaposing simultaneous yet separately conceived component parts in the creation of a performance work served as an ongoing model in Halprin’s directorial practice, forming a core process in the creation of both Procession and Parades and Changes.

Beyond integrating performers into the audience, for Esposizione Halprin wanted to expand her intention of choreographically rethinking the theatre’s space by utilizing a multi-level constructed stage environment. Halprin’s earlier piece Five-Legged Stool, which had been
developed and presented in different articulations between 1961 and 1962, engaged a constructed set with different platforms on which the performance was staged. Interested in experimenting with the ways a performance work could be engaged vertically, Halprin recycled ideas from *Five-Legged Stool* and directly focused on conceiving a stage design that could act as creative resource, a design on which she could explicitly task the performers with exploring movement outside of the traditionally horizontal plane of the stage. The impetus for this choice of environmental design also came from Halprin’s desire to rethink how the proscenium focus of the stage could be used differently in performance. She decided that it would be the “vertical feeling in the space and the formality of that we want to change” for the work at Teatro La Fenice, her company’s first international commission.

For *Esposizione*’s environmental set Halprin collaborated with Charles Ross, a recent alumnus of the University of California’s graduate sculpture program. Developed for the Teatro La Fenice in Venice, the design featured a specially-designed fiberglass ramp that curved and slanted a large section of the stage floor toward the audience as well as a 40-foot cargo net that was brought onto the stage, strung to the theatre’s flies by 20 stage hands, and raised 25 feet into the air. Additionally, a giant Eucalyptus tree trunk shipped from California was integrated into the stage design, unloaded onto the stage from a barge docked at the theatre’s gondola entrance. The rigging of the net and unloading of the Eucalyptus tree was done in full view of the audience during the evening’s intermission before *Esposizione* began. This act also made explicit Halprin’s choreographic focus on displaying task-like activities on stage, as the stage hands moved purely functionally in undertaking and accomplishing their directives.

At the front of the stage, the cargo net spreads past the proscenium to lie on the theatre’s apron. Stretching sharply upward, it fills most of the stage’s vertical space. The net is hung in a
tent-like shape, rising at a steep slope from the apron, peaking near the fly space at mid-stage, then angling downward toward the upstage wall but never reaching it, leaving a precipitous drop to the floor at the rear. It would be in this stage environment that Halprin and her dancers would negotiate the movement tasks set forth in her dance’s score. Noting her original inspiration for using the net for *Esposizione*, Halprin recalls that “while thinking about the opera house, I’m driving down San Francisco’s Embarcadero and notice a large cargo net on a ship and men moving packages up it. My god. If they can send packages up that net, we can go up that net.” It was this action of hauling cargo up the vertical net that Halprin would reframe to accomplish her desire of shifting how the stage space was used in performance.

*Esposizione*’s second act begins once all the performers, objects in tow, reach the apron of the stage and begin their next task: negotiating their objects as they climb the vertical expanse of the cargo net. Halprin’s score engages the same task-like activity of the dockworkers, but does not aim to replicate either their movements or their characters. She instead takes the dockworkers’ actions and directives as resources in her choreographic project. The performers laboriously cart their cargo up the net, some scaling the front side of the net while others maneuver up its inner surface. The choice of how to approach and accomplish the task was left to the interpretation and strategic plan of each individual performer, creating an effect where “the group forms into a journey on this net always going together but each of us adapting ourselves differently.” The scored, rather than choreographed, nature of *Esposizione* necessarily engaged the unique personalities and sensibilities of the different performers in the cast. Throughout this score all dancers expressed their own personalities, exposed their creative logic, and displayed their ongoing artistic process while repeatedly negotiating their task in response to both the stage environment and the other performers around them.
Images of the piece in performance capture the physical work of the dancers, whose tense faces expose the concentration and risk involved in their task. Their hands grip to the net, which sways and shifts in response to the different bodies all pulling and pushing simultaneously as they pursue their task. For some, their cargo is strapped to their backs, while others have hung things over their shoulder, and a few are shown to have things slowly slipping out from under their arms as they try to maneuver around the net to catch hold of another, higher section of rope. For Halprin, “one of the most compelling parts of the dance was the effort of carrying those things up the cargo net, because the stuff would fall”35 “Throughout the work objects inevitably break free from the performers’ grips and careen off the net, unplanned casualties of the score’s central task.

Once the group reaches the top of the net, they all reverse their journey and drop back down to the stage, weaving their movements across the net’s multiple surfaces and supporting rigging as they descend. Divesting themselves of their enormous amount of collective cargo, the performers release objects from the net’s summit high above the stage floor. During the performers’ descent there were “automobile tires rolling down, and tennis balls flying. It was a great crash of things. Tennis balls bounced all over so that the whole space exploded.”36 The cast descends as precariously and haphazardly as the objects they let fall. As they move back to the stage from the heights of the net, “some people go head first down the net, some tumble and roll, some fall and hang from the net.”37 The effect of the movement on the dancers was rough and violent. Halprin recalls that during Esposizione “costumes go through their own transformations as the monster net, with a life of its own, tears into them. We start out looking grand and end up ragged and like we've been through a monumental experience, and we have.”38
danger inherent in the task was never masked, but instead fully revealed to create a sense of suspense in the dynamic quality of the work.

After the cast descends the cargo net and reconvenes as a group at the floor of the stage, the third section begins. With the auditorium’s lights shutting off, the work progresses in darkness. Holding flashlights, the cast slowly disperses, again infiltrating the audience, moving out through different areas of the theatre. Halprin’s score for this episode highlights her choreographic intentions: “Figures are walking as if in a procession, each by himself … A moderately slow walk characterizes the tempo... Although each person goes on his own the unison action makes for a connection.” As the dancers move toward the theatre’s different exits, the flashlights would occasionally, accidentally illuminate a member of the audience or another one of the performers. While the individual movements of the dancers directly affected the movement of the flashlights’ beams, the episode’s progression in darkness removes visual focus from the dancers’ bodies and displaces it onto the beams of light; the flashlights implicate the action of the performers without showing it.

The score for this short, five to six minute episode would later be recycled into Halprin’s next two choreographic works: Procession and Parades and Changes. The simple, monotonous walking directive for the performers as a means to redirect the viewer’s focus away from the body and onto a comported object became a central idea in the development of the score for Procession. Additionally, the use of moving lights, controlled by dancers in darkness, would later be recycled as an independent score in Parades and Changes.

**Procession**

Halprin wished to stage *Esposizione* in the United States after she returned from her three-city European tour in 1963.\(^4^0\) However, the success of her company’s commission from the prestigious Venice Biennale did little to change her reception with local presenters in San Francisco.\(^4^1\) San Francisco Opera had considered presenting *Esposizione* with Halprin’s choreography in their 1964 season, but ultimately decided against the work amid concerns about the expense of mounting the production, as well as doubts of its marketability and hesitations about managing a possible controversial backlash to the avant-garde piece.\(^4^2\) Without financial backing or invitations from another theatre, *Esposizione* was never again mounted after its premiere. Lacking a presenter for the opera as it had been presented in Venice, Halprin began to rework the choreographic and aesthetic material she had designed for *Esposizione*. Reexamining the dance’s costumes, props, and score ideas as resources for the creation of a new performance piece presented new creative opportunities for Halprin and her collaborators. Additionally, recycling this existing material fulfilled a practical purpose of developing new theatrical possibilities for her work outside of Berio’s opera.
Procession was the result of more than a year of choreographic and theatrical experimentation following Esposizione. For this new work Halprin eschewed Berio’s music and Sanguinetti’s libretto, instead working with tape music composer Morton Subotnick, with whom she had previously collaborated on *The Five-Legged Stool.*\(^{43}\) Esposizione’s art director Jo Landor, sculptor Charles Ross, and lighting designer Patric Hickey all continued as collaborators with SFDW in the company’s ongoing creative explorations in California, including the development of Procession. During this working process Halprin sustained and intensified her directorial intention of integrating the separately conceived technical elements of her production as she had done in *Esposizione.* Halprin highlights the collaborative nature of the work’s development:

> All the elements, whether they are sound, or light, or whether they’re the elements of the physical environment that our sculptor might be bringing to us, all of these elements come together, and they’re equally important. It’s not that you’re focusing on one, but that you’re focusing on all of them so they become interchangeable.\(^{44}\)

During the convergence of these multiple parts in *Procession,* each collaborator is tasked with responding to the contributions of the others and reacting to the juxtapositions that occur. All members create and propose new possibilities throughout the process, working towards achieving a synthesis of the arts in a new system for creating performance. Not only did this occur during the workshop process, but throughout the performance of the work. In this way, *Procession* directly exposes SFDW’s working model by highlighting process and foregrounding the act of collaboration.

In her directorial rethinking of *Esposizione’s* movement tasks and aesthetic ideas during the creation of *Procession,* Halprin separated *Esposizione’s* engagement of vertical space from the task of exploring form through the use of costumes and objects. Making them two unique
scored sections, Halprin allowed these ideas to be separately explored. Halprin’s valuation of *Esposizione* led to the recycling of its resources to create new scores that could constitute a new performance. *Procession* premiered on 13 November 1964 at the University of California, Los Angeles’ Royce Hall as part of a mixed bill including Halprin’s *The Flowerburger* and a music event by Morton Subotnick. The piece was presented as part of UCLA’s Improvisation Festival, and the work was explicitly framed as both the result of and process for improvisation.

The integration of everyday objects in *Esposizione* was recycled in *Procession*. As with *Esposizione*, the score for *Procession* tasks dancers to maneuver through space in relation and response to bulky, cumbersome, and incongruous materials. Whereas in *Esposizione* the individual performers were assigned their materials, keeping the same given prop objects and costume pieces throughout the work, in her recycling of the score in the creation of *Procession* Halprin removed the specific pairings of performers and objects and instead tasked the dancers to continuously encounter and address new objects throughout the score. The performers were no longer each conceived of and designed as objects in themselves, but given the agency to explore and create new recombinative sculptural forms in the moment of performance.

*Procession* followed the evening’s intermission. Like both *The Flowerburger* and *Esposizione*, *Procession* began surreptitiously, with the dancers infiltrating the audience space en route to the stage. The piece begins with an empty stage and the performers enter the theatre “lugging loaded cardboard boxes to the stage. They carry down the aisle armloads of brightly colored clothing, heaping them on the stage, go back for more; the labor becomes a procession, a processional.” On the stage, these items are laid out in lines, with commonplace household materials and objects stretching from the proscenium to the back wall of the theatre. The cast is costumed neutrally, each enter in a white artist’s smock and painter’s cap. Halprin’s choice of
the recognizable white artists’ clothing emphasizes her shift in the framing of her cast, with the performers becoming visual artists in her perception:

There might be moments when we feel that we’re simply movers of costumes or movers of colors and form and this instance… I feel more like a painter who happens to be using movement to work with color, or a sculptor working with form. So, this is one example of one of the interchangeabilities, when we’re not so much dancers at that moment as we are perhaps visual artists.47

The overall impression is task-like and introverted, with each performer focused on helping set the space, just like the stagehands preparing the set for *Esposizione*.

In addition to assortments of costume pieces, blankets, and sections of fabric, the objects on stage include such items as an inflatable beach ball, an umbrella, bouquets of silk flowers, a hula hoop, a string of triangular flags, a birdcage, and a plastic clothes basket. Many of the costume pieces and objects that were used in *Esposizione* reappear in the landscape of *Procession*, including a spare tire, umbrella, wicker hamper, pith helmet, and a black military parade jacket with gold braiding, among other items. Halprin’s choice to engage these objects from *Esposizione* in her ongoing creative explorations exemplifies the development of her working process that would come to be outlined as the RSVP cycles. These objects were readily available resources for Halprin and her collaborators, having already been sourced and engaged in *Esposizione*. In the RSVP Cycles, resources are “all the knowable and controllable quantities in a given situation” that are “brought into the process as the building blocks which the group uses as its basis of operation.”48 Following *Esposizione*, the assembled costume and prop material became building blocks that could be engaged in a new process. In choosing to work again with the same object resources, the group undertook an exploratory rehearsal process wherein they developed further options for their creative reuse in a performance context, expanding the ways these resources could be engaged and broadening their artistic choices.
Once all their materials are on the stage, the performers remove the artist smocks, revealing basic undergarments: the women in white leotards and men in white tights or briefs. The dancers begin to walk neutrally and methodically up and down the rows of costumes and objects that are spread along the stage floor. One of the performers quietly orchestrates changes of direction in the walking paths, dictating ‘left’ or ‘right.’ This shifts the entire group, who each turn to a new facing and continue to walk among the brilliant heaps of clothing and objects. As they progress, they regularly reach down to collect various items, slowly situating their finds about their bodies. Halprin specifies that “in Procession there is one task, and the task varies according to the particular environment that the performers are confronted with. The task is to simply keep moving forward. Part of the task is that they must take that environment with them as they move forward.” The movement directives for the piece are simple and specific, yet require improvisation and result in indeterminacy in performance.

The piece progresses at an uninfl cted pace, continuing “on and on, this brilliant adagio of walking colors, garments, objects.” Against the neutral and functional white of their uniforms, the eccentricities of the individual items the performers collect are highlighted. Incongruous hats and helmets are donned simultaneously, lengths of fabric are unconventionally wrapped around bodies and draped over heads, and increasing amounts of clothing are tucked under arms into unwieldy wads. Many of these costumes and objects are not used or worn in traditional ways: an umbrella is held upside down and becomes a basket in which Halprin loads the various objects she encounters, a hula hoop becomes a ring through which to thread longer objects that trail along behind a walking performer, and feet are stuck into clothes as if they were shoes and shuffled along the floor.
As the performers progress throughout *Procession* their figures becomes increasingly obscured by the objects they collect, transforming into moving sculptures that ambulate around the stage. Halprin notes that the choreographic mechanisms of *Procession* situate a "continual confrontation between the movers and the physical environment, and the objects of it, until object and movement become interchangeable, become welded." In highlighting the multidisciplinary nature of the piece, Halprin reframes her movement directives through the tradition of painting and sculpture, drawing focus to the creative act of working with object material. In this, Halprin suggests connections between her work and simultaneous developments in the visual arts and her work can be seen as a response to or extension of trends in painting like gestural abstraction, but produced through the media of performance.

Halprin conceives of the object-filled stage of *Procession* as a landscape rather than a set design. This further emphasizes Halpin’s framing of the piece in a visual art context as well as reflects the shared collaborative interests and influences of Lawrence’s work with landscape design. Halprin directs the movement of *Procession* as a response to the stage’s landscape: “you might think of a person walking down a straight path, and as he moves… these various changes of environment come along like obstacles… and the way in which he adapts to these various obstacles is what creates his quality of movement, his imagery, whatever meaningfulness is eventually brought into play.” More than something that must be overcome, the landscape of *Procession* is a creative site, a resource for experiential and aesthetic exploration.

Halprin highlights her use of these objects for their form and compositional possibilities, focusing expressly on their materiality. While the objects in *Procession* may be used and worn unconventionally, they are intentionally recognizable and none are intended to forward any symbolism:
Nothing is fabricated for the event… instead objects are found and used straight away so as not to hide or cover the orderly disclosure of processes. This allows experience to be direct and naked… not derived. It avoids predigested interpretation and forcefully discloses the actual working of encounters. Objects then are revealed to the audience for what they are and for their own impact.\textsuperscript{52}

By disclosing these objects as they are, Halprin leaves the piece to the interpretation of the individual viewer, tasking the audience to construct their own impressions and employ their own imagination in response to the gestural abstraction of the performance.

As the performers become encumbered, they begin discarding some of the objects that adorn them, one by one dropping them back down to the floor only to eventually pick up and put on new objects they encounter. In addition to navigating interaction with the landscape, in \textit{Procession} the performers also encounter one another throughout the piece. In these encounters, the individual dancers treat each other as they treat the objects they come across. The score tasks the performers to continuously adapt and engage rather than avoid, and in these moments of encounter objects are passed between the performers as they negotiate around one another. In each interaction the object material is re-examined and repurposed, recycled from one performer’s sculpture into another’s, with the object being donned or carried in a new, improvised way.

The grand conglomerations of disparate objects collected by and draped around each performer in \textit{Procession} create moving sculptural forms. These forms not only morph throughout the piece, but change in their makeup of materials as the dancers proceed with the score; the dancers regularly change the collection of materials they carry with them, occasionally redistributing one of their assembled objects to another person in the cast. While the visual appearance of Halprin’s object-laden dancers is similar in both \textit{Procession} and \textit{Esposizione}, Halprin’s recycling of this task-based score produces a new performance experience. Whereas in
Esposizione the audience observes the movements created by each dancer with the same object set over the course of the entire score, in Procession attention is directed to the evolution of the performers’ sculptural forms, their ongoing construction and deconstruction of their material assemblage as an ongoing creative visual practice enacted in the moment of performance. In the piece the performers “try to expose how we arrive at what we’re doing as we are doing it” and “actually form, evolve the environment right before your eyes so that the dancers, you can see they are simply adapting, adjusting, confronting, reacting to the materials which are brought to them.”

Through this choreographic shift, intention is changed from the act of negotiating the same objects to the creative act of addition, recombination, and transference. As with Esposizione, Procession was an exhibition of process and exposes the performers’ ongoing creative explorations. This mode of performance as process rather than the presentation of a fixed choreographic work exemplifies the working model that would be outlined in the RSVP Cycles, which highlights a system wherein “recycling is continuous, new resources are constantly developed and plugged into the cycle.” Not only was recycling engaged as a process in the development of Procession, but the collaborators actively recycle the score in the moment of performance; the score is in itself a directive for continued and ongoing recycling. No enactment of the score can be the same, and in each performance the dancer develops further resource-options for the work. The score necessitates an in-the-moment development of new possibilities for organizing the materials as sculptural forms, expanding opportunities for the performers to undertake creative acts in performance.

The movement quality of the dancers in response to their object materials in Esposizione and Procession are distinctly different. In Esposizione the dancers negotiate the perilous task of moving about the audience and on the cargo net, explicitly revealing the work and energy of
their actions. In *Procession* the performers move methodically, producing a neutral quality of action. As they progress through the piece, the performers’ object accumulations in *Procession* eventually “begins to condition the way in which they move. They must move slowly. There is a certain clumsiness involved in having to gather up that much material and take it with them as the procession continues.” In this way, *Procession* follows the movement directives of *Esposizione*’s third episode, with moderately slow walking. The movement directives of *Procession* also follow *Esposizione* in that each person’s individual movements, working at the same dynamic level, combines into the appearance of connected, unison action. This shift of movement quality redirects the visual focus in performance, from a focus on the dancer’s movements in *Esposizione* to the production of shape and design in *Procession*, exemplifying Halprin’s reframing of the dancer’s role as a sculptor working with form.

*Procession* also marked a recycling of Halprin’s work with exploring the use of a vertical environment and exhibiting the task-actions of the stagehands in *Esposizione*. As the object-laden performers move throughout the space, a large black scrim at the back of the stage is partially lowered. Alongside it, to one side of the stage, sculptor Charles Ross positions a tall folding ladder, which reaches almost to the light rail onto which the lowered scrim is hung. The cast maneuvers themselves toward the ladder, and some begin to climb up. A scaffold constructed of pipes and ladders is maneuvered against the light rail from behind, mirroring the ladder’s placement. The group slowly hands items from one person to another, progressively moving the objects up the ladder where they are tossed over the scrim. The steady stream of objects continues, and as the individual items are methodically handed up and over the scrim. Slowly the stage is cleared of all the debris that had been laid out at the beginning of the piece. One dancer climbs over the scrim, stepping onto the scaffold and vanishing behind it. The cast
follows, climbing up the ladder, along with all their materials, and one by one each disappears behind the scrim. In *Esposizione* the dancers climb the vertical space of the cargo net, which dynamically moves and alters their performance, then the cast collectively descends with perilous, energetic, and violent movements. In *Procession* the movement up the vertical space of the ladder is calm, orderly, and maintained. This action quality continues Halprin’s focus on the movement of the objects rather than the energetic movements of the dancers.

A second scaffold moves onto the rear of the stage, still with only the upper platforms and ladders visible above the scrim. One dancer begins to emerge up the scaffolding from below, slowly climbing up the metal beams. Totally divested of her object load, she is only in the simple white leotard in which she began. The scrim is flown away to fully reveal the two moving scaffold constructions and the rear stage area, which is backed by a brightly lit white scrim. The metal scaffolds reach three levels from the stage, with diagonal ladders connecting each level. The dancers ascend the scaffold structures, calmly climbing up the ladders between levels or reaching up to grab higher beams and smoothly hoist themselves up.

Their ongoing movements throughout the scaffolding are focused yet playful, as if they are on a massive jungle gym. The performers lean out from upper levels, slide down the vertical support pipes that form the structure’s sides, and hang upside down from horizontal bars, interweaving their body around the construction and creating new, continuously morphing geometric shapes. Some of the object material from *Procession*’s earlier section remains in use as the dancers move about the scaffolding, each having kept a few costume pieces or other objects. This highlights the playfulness of the work, keeping the quality of incongruity. Each continues to navigate this environment in response to the other performers, gently pushing past or slinking around the moving bodies that block their way. The movements in *Procession* are
pedestrian, reflecting and exposing the actual conditions and physicality of the working process. Halprin rejects choreographic stylization and “the performers each move as necessary in order to accomplish whatever task has been assigned.”

Nothing is intentionally exaggerated, and each performer reveals a unique movement quality. In this way Halprin exposes the individuality of the performers as themselves.

A long rope is anchored to the top of one scaffold, allowing members of the cast to latch on and lean further out from the scaffold, high above the stage and almost parallel to the ground. This movement task is also recycled from Esposizione, in which Halprin’s daughter, Rana, "jumped onto a perpendicular rope and swung. She got a big momentum going and swung clear across the heads of the audience in the first few rows and all the way back into the stage.”

Rather than an expansive, dangerous action, in Procession the use of the rope becomes a functional tool to explore geometric form and mirror the environment’s shape through the body.

As the performers continuously move throughout the scaffold constructions, exploring different movement possibilities on the structures, others descend to the floor to begin gently turning and wheeling the scaffolds around the stage. Two other folding ladders are brought to the stage, which the performers methodically set up. These five structures, two ladders and two scaffolds, provide different levels and angles, which the performers continuously explore, moving from one to the other and shifting each around the stage.

Halprin’s choice of scaffolding as a resource for exploring a vertical performance space is a recycling of the environment from The Five-Legged Stool, which used scaffolding to build a two-level fixed set. In the recycling of this resource for Procession, Halprin mobilized the scaffolding, allowing it to move throughout the stage on wheels. This shift altered the performers’ relationship with the built environment. In Procession the scaffolding is not only a
space on and within which the dance is staged, but an active object with its own movement possibilities and choreographic functions. Making this stage element a moving sculpture rather than a fixed set piece exemplifies Halprin’s interest in reframing the aspects of theatrical production as interchangeable in both function and use, exploring how elements could evolve during the performance event itself.

This section of *Procession* also evokes Halprin’s dance film *Hanger* (1957). Beginning in the mid-1950s Halprin encouraged her collaborators to "[seek] out novel environments in order to witness the kinds of improvisational dialogues dancers might initiate with a locale."\(^{58}\) SFDW dancer Norma Leistiko and her boyfriend, Jacques Overhoff, located a new United Airlines cargo hangar that was under construction at the San Francisco Airport and called filmmaker William R. Heick to suggest a filming a dance improvisation at the site with Halprin and others from SFDW. Halprin agreed, and a week later the group undertook the project. Heick filmed three hours of footage before a security guard forced the group to stop. Compiled with additional aerial footage of the site, the film material was edited into a seven-minute short. In the dance improvisation "Ann and her five dancers start to echo in their bodies and their acts the visual rhythms of the three-story orange steel skeleton of the hangar."\(^{59}\) The film shows the dancers positioned within the construction site, moving along the geometric spaces of its architecture. They calmly shift along joists and between beams, tracing industrial shapes through movement, cantilevering their bodies away from the hangar, and dipping limbs below girders. Suspended above the ground, the beams on which the dancers perform are precarious and the film highlights the verticality of the piece. In one section the camera frame cuts out the immediate foreground, showing only the recognizable hills that run the length of the San Francisco Peninsula, with the dancers perched on a steel beam floating above the hillcrest. Another shot pans out to reveal the
dancers pressed against tall, narrow I-beams that span the width of the hangar site, with one hanging on by his hands, dangling from the beam’s bottom lip.

The dancers’ movements throughout Hangar are structural and geometric as they experiment with the different ways the site can be engaged to create new movement possibilities. While not formally scored, Hangar shows Halprin’s new working model of creating structures in which dancers could improvise, and the film anticipates Halprin’s later choreographic developments in Procession. Halprin’s structures task the dancers to contribute to the development and overall appearance of the work, as "the improvisation in Hangar is bounded by just a few preliminary decisions—like the choice to have vertical movements predominate." As in movement directives for Hanger, in Procession Halprin tasks the performers to move within and in response to the industrial, metal skeletons of the work’s scaffolding. The careful improvisations in each work draw visual exhilaration from the controlled precarity, as the dancers climb high above the floor below them.

Whereas in *Hanger* the dancers had to travel to and infiltrate their architectural site, in *Procession* the vertical architectural concept is brought into and constructed for the theatre space. *Procession*’s sculptural collaboration, developed by Charles Ross, also reflects contemporaneous directions in minimalist sculpture by foregrounding the medium and materials of the work. The scaffolding is easily recognizable as such, and it encourages the viewer to expand their awareness of the theatre’s industrial and mechanical materiality. The metal poles of the scaffolds are mirrored in the stage’s lighting trees and rigging, as well as other technical aspects of the theatre that are exposed and revealed in *Procession*. The scaffolding emphasizes the working quality of the stage, removing illusionism and referentiality by highlighting stage production as a series of simultaneously-occurring tasks. The moving nature of Ross’ sculpture also rejects the traditionally frontal nature of theatrical sets. In physically moving this environmental construction as part of the work, the performers expose the sculpture from all sides, providing a multi-faceted and ever-changing viewing experience.

As with the rigging of the cargo net and positioning of the eucalyptus stumps in *Esposizione*, in *Procession* the environment of the production is constructed as part of the performance rather than being hidden from the audience’s view. The act of assembling the theatrical event itself becomes a task-based performance process. Halprin frames the crew as performers, who are carrying out their own tasks, similarly and simultaneously to the dancers. Halprin also actively blurs the traditional roles of all those on stage, as both the crew and the performers manipulate the assembled constructions. Through *Procession* “the spontaneous, seemingly irrational juxtaposition of kinds of performers, doing different kinds of tasks, using everyday objects and pieces of clothing, all in surprisingly new contexts, creates a kaleidoscopic view of the 'things' of life itself.” In this way Halprin exposes actions as they are, providing the
audience with a multifaceted experience of theatrical process and objects in a way that exposes the technical nature of stage production. In recycling this creative framing from *Esposizione*, Halprin produces a work that reveals the act of theatrical construction throughout the performance, rather than as an act that only occurs only before and in anticipation of a performance. Additionally, Halprin mobilizes the production of the stage environment and the working process of the crew as ongoing creative acts, rather than simply the predetermined process of setting the stage according to a fixed plan.

As the performers continue to move around and through both the scaffolding and ladders, Charles Ross hauls an immense plastic wad onto the stage begins to unfurl it. He grabs the large, long, wide piece of translucent plastic sheeting near its middle point and hauls up one of the scaffolds. At the summit the plastic is draped over the scaffold’s top level, and tossed so its ends spill down sides. Nearly touching the floor on either side, the plastic sheet partially engulfs the structure. The last section of *Procession* has begun, with the plastic sheeting falling “lumpish, like an El Greco cloud; and the dancers going again upwards start the final descent.”62 The final descent is slow and intensifies contact between the dancers. The cast moves, together but not in unison, working with and off one another. They climb over each other, giving and taking weight, using this partnered work to find new movement possibilities for descending. One dancer sits on the shoulders of another, while one supports and guides another as they slow flip over one of the beams, sliding upside down to the level below. Limbs intertwine and stick out as the jumbled group of bodies progress gradually downward, constantly morphing throughout the descent. Effort is apparent. The dancers’ movements are clunky as they haphazardly negotiate the structure and one another, and they often get stuck in positions from which they have to wiggle themselves out or wait for the assistance of a boost from someone else to dislodge them.
Throughout all this action, the plastic sheet wafts slightly, sometimes obscuring the action of the performers. The partnered group work continues as the dancers reach the stage floor, and they carry on cantilevering off of and climbing up one another to make ever-shifting, leaning, moving, forms. They move partially behind the plastic sheet, which is now back-lit, each appearing in distorted silhouettes. The dancers eventually pull the plastic sheet down on top of them, creating a noisy billowing mound that they spin around themselves and crumple as they move.

In *Procession* Halprin’s use of scoring does not dictate formalized, fixed choreography, but instead serves to initiate and reveal process. Working models, task actions, and the creative practice of the dancers are all exposed in the moment of performance. In *Procession*, “the process of exploration and the evidence of mechanisms is so much a part of what happens.” Rather than masking or deemphasizing the creative investigations that led to the work’s development, Halprin actively exposes and demystifies her creative interests and compositional models. Halprin signals this as a new mode of dance making, highlighting that “the dance form evolves from the very process which forms it.” In *Procession* the performers are tasked with creating and responding throughout the performance, employing improvisation within the framework of the work’s overarching intentions:

Though it is fixed within a confined and accepted space and adheres to given directions, it is the action and the ongoing interactions between movement and what had already occurred which are allowed to stimulate what happens next. In this sense the composition is continuously being composed during the actual performance.

The score for *Procession* maintains consistent conditions and restrictions, but the nature of the work necessitates that each performance will render a different, unique result. In this way, *Procession* reflects Halprin’s process of producing ongoing choreographic adaptation and
evolution through creative models for dance scoring. Halprin’s scoring model for *Procession* not only represents the compositional logic of the particular performance work, but the whole working method of SFDW. Focusing on the ongoing development and evolution of the company’s creative work, Halprin’s work on *Procession* foreshadows *Parades and Changes*, which would expanding and intensify *Procession*’s compositional logic.

**Parades and Changes, 1965-67**

Following the 1964 performance of *Procession* at UCLA, Halprin continued her collaborative exploration of the movement ideas, compositional processes, and collective creativity models she had been developing over the previous five years. By this time San Francisco Dancers’ Workshop had settled into two large studios at 321 Divisadero Street on the eastern edge of San Francisco’s Upper Haight neighborhood, or Haight-Ashbury as the district has come to be popularly known. SFDW shared the building with The San Francisco Tape Music Center, with which Morton Subotnick was affiliated, and KPFA public radio. Both SFDW and the Tape Music Center were dedicated to creative experimentation, and the artists working within both of these organizations actively moved away from traditional performance in favor of developing radical new methods of composition. Together, Halprin and Subotnick intensified their work on developing new models for artistic collaboration and the structuring of theatrical performance events. The scores and processes they had each presented in *Procession* were re-examined and recycled as material for the creation of a longer, evening-length work with SFDW, which had been commissioned by the Stockholms Festspel in Sweden. Coalescing within a few months in early 1965, the recycled and expanded work became *Parades and Changes*. 
Parades and Changes was designed as an experiment in ‘cell-block’ structuring, a compositional model developed by Subotnick during the creation of the work. The model employs a format that serves to separate and compartmentalize different scored sections for movement, sound, light, and environmental design. The combined system of discrete, movable sections permits for the various cell-blocks to be rearranged in multiple ways to produce new creative possibilities in performance. Subotnick’s cell-block model also allows for every collaborating artist to develop their creative material independently, each in response to a defined time-based program of discrete thematic directives and activities representing one major task or idea. In the creative process, each collaborator responds in their own way to the intentions of the cell-block, using their own sensibilities to approach the given scoring task. While Halprin served as the director of the work as it coalesced, acting as the force and vision behind the piece, she foregrounded a process that aimed to equalize the different disciplines of her collaborators. In this way the performance was mutually developed rather than the result of different aspects being composed referentially or hierarchically. The scores for Halprin’s movement tasks, Subotnick’s and Folke Rabe’s sound actions, Patric Hickey’s light events, Jo Landor’s artistic objects, and Charles Ross’ sculptural environments that coalesced in Parades and Changes offered all the collaborators a diversity of interpretation in performance. This model allows for creative exploration on two levels: within the scored activities that comprise each cell-block, and in the score for the work as a whole, which tasks the collaborators to select, rearrange, and modify the cell-blocks. Each performance could therefore be altered, transformed, or constrained by directorial choices to produce a new theatrical event.

This cell-block model provided a structure that allowed for and marked an expansion of Halprin’s previous work with improvisation. The larger, more complex configuration of Parades
and Changes required all contributors to intensively workshop strategies for collaborative interdisciplinary process and hone skills for group problem-solving that could be activated in the moment of performance. The work’s scores not only permitted, but tasked the artists to work across different forms, with their roles and functions within the piece at times becoming interchangeable as several cell-blocks span and combine artistic categories. In this way, Halprin and Subotnick’s work created a system in which new interactive situations, cross-disciplinary actions, and multimodal dialogues would necessarily arise.

In addition to exploring the different possibilities within a single conceptual idea, as Halprin had arranged in her previous performance works, Parades and Changes foregrounds the act of addressing and negotiating multiple highly specific tasks. Halprin marks the evolution of her creative process leading into Parades and Changes, noting that for the work “a very complicated score was worked out by Mort Subotnick and me, which permitted us complete and total flexibility.”

The more expansive, intricate framework of the piece and its malleability resulted in a performance process that rarely repeated the same progressions. Halprin was free to force the work to constantly be created anew in each iteration. By leaving the transitions between cell-blocks unfixed rather than directly choreographing how they would occur, Parades and Changes embodies an inclusive process that necessitates the direct, responsive collaboration of all involved during each performance.

Similar to Halprin’s other choreographic works of the past five years, the dance scores for Parades and Changes engage ordinary tasks and reveal pedestrian activities. As with Esposizione and Procession, Halprin intended the work to demystify both dance and theatrical production: “We made everything absolutely visible. The stage was completely visible, stripped of curtains, flats. The light sources were completely visible, movements were everyday
movements that everybody could identify with.” Halprin believed that everything included in the work must be as it is encountered in real life, and in this way the work would disclose the actual encounters, with the performers moving only as necessary, without any stylization, to accomplish the task activities that had been assigned. The piece’s costumes reflect this intention of unstylized ordinariness: simple black unisex business suits, white button-up shirts, and functional black boots. In *Parades and Changes* “nothing is fabricated for the event… instead objects of the most common sort are found and used straight away so as not to hide or cover over the orderly disclosure of processes.” The involvement of performer and the physical environment, objects, and technology of the piece progress continuously throughout the performance event, and the piece intends for the audience to clearly see the conditions that affect and transform the experience of those producing the work.

The scores presented in *Procession* became “Parade of Costumes,” “Parade in Construction,” and “Plastic Sounds” in *Parades and Changes*. These scores were joined by other scores and task-actions, including “Dialogue,” “Stomp,” “Dressing and Undressing,” “Paper Dance,” “Parade of Light,” and Parade of Objects,” among others. The multiple scores that comprise *Parades and Changes*, each with a distinct dynamic quality and conceptual idea, were intended to create a multi-part performance event with a “conscious de-emphasis on the detailed inspection and growth of any one static relationship. Instead events move on, meetings occur and merge into departures, tasks are set, obstacles overcome, parades of changes take place.” Halprin intends for *Parades and Changes* to continually progress forward, to move in a continuous ongoing manner, with new situations and experiences constantly emerging. As it was conceived, *Parades and Changes* was to be performed differently each night.
The flexibility of *Parades and Changes*’ cell-block model was both creative and practical. With multiple aspects of the work interchangeable, the piece was able to adapt to the specific situations and particular needs of different venues. Halprin was able to select which cell-blocks she felt would work best in the particular performance space and for a specific audience, as well as how the cell-blocks could be arranged to respond to each other in different ways. The independence of these cell-blocks also served personnel needs within the company: as new performers and collaborators would eventually enter the work and others leave, each artist could function according to their own choices within the work’s scores, rather than having to learn and repeat a set performance or directly recreate the designs of a previous collaborator. This openness allowed for an ongoing evolution of the piece.

Halprin and Subotnick perceive a distinction between their work and the theories, intentions, and practices of their New York-based contemporaries Merce Cunningham and John Cage. Janice Ross locates Bauhaus ideas a key foundational influences in the work of both Halprin and Cunningham, yet also notes their distinct theoretical and compositional divergences from one another. While neither choreographer formally studied under Bauhaus faculty, each worked and socialized within the circles of Bauhaus teachers during their early careers. Halprin became friends with Walter Gropius and László Moholy-Nagy during her time with Lawrence in Cambridge in the early 1940s. Cunningham, as a member of the summer faculty at Black Mountain College in the late 1940s and early 1950s, worked with school head Josef Albers and intensified his collaborations with John Cage, who had previously worked with Moholy-Nagy while on faculty at the Chicago Institute of Design. Ross notes that Halprin’s exposure to Bauhaus came primarily through its architectural philosophies, which influenced her “spatial explorations of the body and the environments in which dance happens; for Cunningham, the
Bauhaus impact was more about breaking from the synchronicity of gesture and sound. Halprin and Subotnick’s work on Parades and Changes reflects this architectural influence in its direct engagement with an explicitly architectural environmental design and foregrounding of discrete compositional blocks that be structurally rearranged into new formations.

Halprin and Subotnick repeatedly assert that there is no “chance” within Parades and Changes. Rather, the piece represents the outcomes of a multi-year process of ongoing workshops during which numerous creative possibilities were developed as resources for collaborative processes in performance. Although Parades and Changes resulted in a different articulation in each performance, Subotnick frames the work by stating that “everything was done by choice, but there was freedom in choice. We did everything independently first… then we’d look at ways of putting each section together. It was a real collaboration.” While the tasks, activities, and transitions of Parades and Changes have openness, the work’s structures were intentionally designed and selected for artistic effect rather than combined by or arrived at by chance methodologies. Halprin’s early statement on the work also articulates the notion of choice in Parades and Changes:

It should be made clear at the outset that there is a very rigid structure (a score) which is carefully predetermined and schedules both the sequence of events and the stage materials with which these are involved. What is fluid are the ways in which performers select and develop the materials within the fixed score which has been designed so as to allow for many choices inside the basic structure. In this sense the event is both continuously being composed during the actual performance, but is also structured strongly by an underlying predetermined order.

While Parades and Changes is designed to evolve from performance to performance, each iteration and evolution was carefully organized and directly overseen. The extensive workshop process of SFDW also emphasized ongoing collaboration, and Parades and Changes presents an
actively interdisciplinary creative process, rather than Cage and Cunningham’s model of simultaneously juxtaposing the results of set and separate, discipline-specific artistic processes. Foregrounding procedures for choice, collaboration, and ongoing evolution, Parades and Changes serves as a model for Halprin to continuously examine her shifting creative concerns and intentions, as well as the ongoing influence of a changing set of collaborators and performers with whom she is working.

Between 1965 and 1967 twelve performances of Parades and Changes were presented, each representing a different iteration of the score. Before the company traveled to Sweden for the work’s premiere, two in-progress showings were presented in California, the first at the University of California, Berkeley’s Wheeler Auditorium in April 1965, and the second the following month in Fresno as part of the city’s Five Arts Festival. SFDW’s September 1965 performances in Sweden marked the start of the company’s second European tour, which included three evenings of Parades and Changes in Stockholm, a filmed version of the work produced for Swedish National Television, a performance of Apartment 6 (1965) in Helsinki, Finland, and one evening of Parades and Changes in Warsaw, Poland. After returning to the United States, Parades and Changes was presented in March 1966 at San Francisco State College, then in April 1967 at both the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, Connecticut, and Hunter College in New York.73

In Stockholm, twenty minutes before each of the three performances of the work Halprin rearranged index cards that contained the separate scores and instructions for dance, then posted the results. This same pre-performance task was also undertaken for sound, light, and sculpture. Through this process the correspondences between the work’s composite parts were constantly arranged anew. Ordered shortly before the performance and left mostly unreehearsed in its
configuration, each performance of *Parades and Changes* was presented as an exercise in collaborative problem solving. The “float cards,” as Halprin refers to them, were not arbitrarily shuffled nor was their order a result of chance. Rather, the cards allowed Halprin to visualize the different cell-blocks and examine the various effects they might produce when arranged in different orders. Halprin highlights how the unique specificities of each venue were addressed in constructing the internal ordering and structuring of each performance of *Parades and Changes*:

> With all these little cell blocks, it’s like you arrive with a trunk full of different clothes, and then, depending upon the weather, you decide what you’re going to wear that day. This is exactly what we do. We come into a theatre and look and study it. What is it? What will work here? We say ‘I’m going to pick out five of my blocks. I’m not going to do two of them because they just don’t work here.’

Depending on the performance space, whole scores could be omitted or new scores that had arisen out of the company’s ongoing workshop process could be added. Halprin has repeatedly said that the flexible and recombinative nature of the work could lead to a performance with duration anywhere between five minutes and five hours. This emphasizes her extreme openness to the creative exploration of variation, which forms the core logic of *Parades and Changes*’ performance structure. In selecting, omitting, and recombing the different cell-blocks in each performance, “very often a whole new section is invented during the performance in order to make a link between one block and another. Sometimes blocks overlap in a way that they never have before, in order to fill the space.” This allowed the performance to evolve not only through workshops, but in the moment of performance itself. Through her work with the cell-block structure, Halprin utilized scoring as model for ongoing theatrical generativity.

In Europe, *Parades and Changes* was filmed for public television broadcast. Produced at the National Swedish Television Studios, this iteration of the piece responds to the uniqueness of the soundstage and its lack of an audience. The footage gives a rare example of several of the
work’s original scores and the company’s performance process. The performers begin outside of the white stage area of the film set, carrying a plastic sheet as they quickly move up and down a set of stairs in a procession that circles around itself. As they move the plastic shifts and crumples. Lifted above their head, the plastic at times evokes the Chinese dragons that are paraded during festive celebrations, with the performers supporting and manipulating the fabric from underneath as they walk. The work continues through other events, and the final score in the film is “Paper Dance,” during which the performers conclude the work by disappearing into a large, rectangular trap in the stage. Once all the dancers have disappeared, a stagehand enters with the trap’s door, replacing it as the music fades to silence. In this film adaptation, Halprin and her collaborators create a nuanced iteration of the work in response to the new location. Additionally, the film’s multiple variations on zoom and occasional overlapping of footage produces new visual effects different from watching the performance live. Through this, a new way of experiencing Parades and Changes is produced.

Halprin’s intention of directly engaging and responding to the unique specifics of each venue in which Parades and Changes is staged was an integral part of the conception of the work before the company embarked for Europe. For the piece’s second work-in-progress iteration, staged in Fresno, Parades and Changes was produced outdoors on a pedestrian mall that had been converted into a performance venue. At the Fresno Five Arts Festival Arena Theater the audience was seated on bleachers and the stage area was backed by a strip of vacant downtown storefronts. The piece began with four of the six performers emerging from the top of the bleachers. This staging immediately integrated the audience into the space of the performance, an act that was further enforced as an enormous balloon was inflated and volleyed back and forth between the audience and the performers. As the dancers eventually convened on
the stage, they commenced “Parade of Costumes,” a core component score of *Procession*. This then transitioned into “Plastic Sounds,” with the dancers moving the large sheet around the stage, billowing it up into the air, crawling underneath it, and weaving it among each other’s bodies. Lighting candles, the dancers then began “Parade of Light,” entering the empty storefronts that backed the stage. As they moved throughout the two-story buildings with their candles in hand, “suddenly there were guitar players in the upper windows, someone played a trombone (badly) up and down the hall, a violinist struggled with double stops in another window” and some of the dancers began to sing. Charles Ross wheeled the scaffolding onto the stage as the dancers transitioned out of the buildings for the final score, “Parade in Construction.” While the dancers were manipulating the scaffolding and climbing about its rungs, Ross himself entered the empty buildings to push and throw plastic sheets and lengths of foil out the windows onto the ground below, as well as slowly descend a tall ladder from an upper floor window. Through the creative use of the bleachers and empty storefronts, Halprin allowed for the scores of *Parades and Changes* to adapt to the unique specificities of the venue. Rather than attempting to make the outdoor mall correspond to a fixed, pre-conceived performance, Halprin recycled the scores to create new creative possibilities for the work.

The results of rearranging the cell-blocks produced strikingly different performance results in each of the twelve iterations of the work between 1965 and 1967. Reflecting on the work after returning from Europe, Halprin noted that the performances of *Parades and Changes* “are so completely different that people who have seen them all don’t even know it’s the same dance. It’s been a culminating point for us in developing a system of collaboration we started five years ago.” Positioning *Parades and Changes* as the result of ongoing creative processes conducted over multiple years, Halprin highlights how SFDW never compiled a repertoire of
works in the model traditionally associated with dance companies. Halprin’s model instead kept exploring and developing her choreographic and collaborative ideas, not only up to the time of performance, but through and beyond each theatrical event. This model that Subotnick and Halprin engaged throughout Parades and Changes marks another strong distinction from Cage and Cunningham’s collaborations, which resulted in fixed choreographic works that became discrete repertory pieces for Cunningham’s company.

Two years after Halprin had begun work on Parades and Changes she received an invitation to present the work at Hunter College in New York. By 1967 Halprin had a distinctly different cast from the group with whom she had originally performed Parades and Changes, with most of the new dancers having joined the company following a series of workshops and a performance of Parades and Changes at San Francisco State College in 1966. Reconsidering the Parades and Changes for this new group, Halprin decided to reshape the work, noting that “since the performers are the most important element of the process, their personalities change the piece.” The performances at Hunter College would be the last production of the full work that Halprin would stage in the 1960s, becoming the final two of the work’s original twelve iterations. The Parades and Changes that was presented at Hunter College in April 1967 was “very different from the Stockholm performance. Only the undressing and dressing and paper-tearing section remained similar.” Halprin had been continuing her workshop process over the previous two years, developing new creative material and recycling her scores to both reflect her ongoing artistic concerns and respond to the performers with whom she was working. In her program notes for the Hunter College performance Halprin acknowledges this evolution of the piece, remarking that “each place has left its impact on the work, and each performer has shaped the present tone.” Rather than presenting Parades and Changes as it had been staged
previously, Halprin engaged the work’s cell-block structure to arrange a work that was remarkably different in appearance and intention. Halprin also integrated a recycled task-based element of *Esposizione* for the performance at Hunter College: the evening began with Patric Hickey managing the technical set-up of the theatre. At the outset of the work “he had all the curtains, the scaffolding, the legs, everything on the stage floor, heaped like garbage. Before our entrance, he dresses the stage. He slowly raises everything up from ground level. He is preparing the spectator for something.’’ 83

Halprin’s ability to shift and replace the scores utilized in *Parades and Changes* to such an extent that the newly added scores outnumber the original cell-blocks emphasizes how the work is centered on a compositional logic rather than a fixed set of activities. Subotnick, who had relocated to New York in 1966, continued his collaboration with Halprin on the Hunter College performance. Like Halprin, he had also been recycling and continuing to develop his sonic material. Much of the music composed for *Parades and Changes* “ended up in one form or another in *Silver Apples of the Moon*,” Subotnick’s first major electronic composition, which was also released in 1967. 84

*Parades and Changes* as it was produced in the 1960s cannot be understood in its complexity through the analysis of any single performance of the work. Rather, the piece must be understood as part of an expansive working process inclusive of a multi-year series of creative evolutions achieved through ongoing workshops, writings, and performance events. In the *RSVP Cycles* Lawrence Halprin proposes how *Parades and Changes* necessitates a rethinking of how we conceive of the temporality of a dance work: “we ordinarily think of time in regard to the length of time of the performance. Here I’m suggesting we think of time over a period of years as well.” 85 Examining *Parades and Changes* in its multiplicity exposes Halprin’s ongoing artistic
development during the 1960s, a personal process focused not on the composition of repertory work, but the constant exploration of new models for creative process.

More than just an evolution of Halprin’s earlier performance works, *Parades and Changes* is an arrival at a mode of choreographic generativity that would shape her creative work and artistic process going forward. The piece represents an achievement of the intervention in dance on which Halprin had embarked in 1955 when she redirected her creative focus away from fixed choreography and toward experimenting with new improvisatory performance structures. The complex use of dance and performance scoring represented both in the creation and performance of *Parades and Changes* exemplifies the process that Lawrence Halprin would outline as the RSP Cycles. Throughout the creative process Halprin continuously cultivated new resources, composed scores, staged performances, valuated her work, and recycled her compositional and choreographic ideas in an ongoing collaborative process that highlighted mutual creation and collective creativity.

**Parades and Changes, Berkeley Art Museum Invocation, 1970**

In 1970 Halprin was invited to present an excerpt of *Parades and Changes* as the inaugural event at the new University Art Museum in Berkeley. This pre-opening exhibition performance by SFDW was presented in the empty museum before the art collection was installed. The evening began with a new improvisatory score that included dancing, drumming, hand-held percussion, clapping, and vocal response, then moved into performances of the “Undressing/Dressing” and “Paper Dance” scores from *Parades and Changes*. The main floor gallery space of the museum is situated significantly lower than the building’s entrance lobby, accessible by a steep cement ramp but viewable from the higher level. Other smaller, open
gallery spaces spiral up around the interior of the building, all overlooking the central area of the main floor. This architectural design allows for multiple, elevated perspectives of the sunken gallery. The performance filled this large central space and the audience was situated above the dancers, with onlookers leaning over to peer down onto the piece from above, sometimes several stories up. Halprin responded to the specifics of this unique space, allowing the dancers to repeatedly shift the focus of their performance from one another to the audience above them, working on both horizontal and vertical planes.

Staged three years after the last performance of *Parades and Changes* in 1967, the presentation these scores for “Dressing/Undressing” and “Paper Dance” outside of the larger work continues Halprin’s process of repurposing her existing creative work to explore how her choreographic material can be used to rethink and reframe dance. By 1970 the SFDW company had again changed significantly, and Halprin’s creative focus had shifted toward addressing concerns of public engagement, audience participation, and issues of race. Halprin took the invitation by the University Art Museum to reframe *Parades and Changes*, engaging the piece to reflect her changing intentions in dance.

Prior to this 1970 performance at the Museum, in 1968 and 1969 Halprin developed a new performance work, *Ceremony of Us*, in collaboration with Studio Watts. Halprin was initially invited to work with young African American theatre artists affiliated with Studio Watts, and as an outgrowth of that workshop period, to create a new performance piece that reflected the experience of these young artists working with a master teacher. Halprin rejected the proposal, instead suggesting that she wanted to develop an all-black company of dancers at Studio Watts and combine that group together with her all-white company in San Francisco to create a work that would explore the tensions, negotiations, and experiences of bringing these
communities together in a collaborative creative process. After a five-month series of workshops, traveling back and forth between San Francisco and the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles to work with the two groups independently, Halprin assembled the companies together for an intensive ten-day studio process that integrated the material they had been developing while also allowing the dancers to shape the trajectory of the resulting performance creation. The work that emanated from this was *Ceremony of Us*, an evening-length performance in which the participants directly confronted racial stereotypes and personal prejudices in a process aimed to “erase boundaries, prohibitions, and taboos.” Halprin’s intention was to respond to the real issues of those involved in the working process and to highlight the actual interactions and experiences of the dancers.

Following *Ceremony of Us* Halprin invited several of the Studio Watts dancers to join SFDW, forming a multiethnic company that would continue to address questions of racial inequality, cultural history, and social activism through their workshops and performances. In the summer of 1969 Halprin led a multi-week interracial performance workshop, which expanded into the development of the company’s Reach Out program. Reach Out was a leadership initiative aimed at training new dance teachers, primarily those from underserved communities and minority groups, to design and lead arts outreach events. Reach Out was concerned with the development of a multi-ethnic, cross-cultural community of performing social artists, teachers, and community leaders in the Bay Area that could collectively engage art to address the pressing social concerns the region’s residents were experiencing. The program coalesced quickly and in the spring of 1970 Halprin announced a $25,000 funding initiative from the San Francisco Foundation to expand the program while continuing her performance work addressing group experiences of race.
Working with this new multi-ethnic company of dancers and actively exploring issues of race, Halprin’s 1970 presentation at the University Art Museum reframed her two extracted scores from *Parades and Changes* to exhibit the harmonious working together of an ethnically integrated cast, suggesting a move towards peace. Halprin describes the use of nudity in *Parades and Changes* as “ceremony of trust.” Engaging the work with this new cast, Halprin presents the dance in a way that reflects the creation of an intimate, trusting community of individuals from different racial, social, and economic backgrounds. With the performance serving as an invocation for the new Museum, Halprin’s work forwards her artistic focus on the ways art can be mobilized to foster new ways of interacting, produce new social experiences, and confront racial inequality.

In the staging of these two scores from *Parades and Changes* at the University Art Museum, Halprin removed the set costumes she had used in the original production five years earlier. The unisex business suits of *Parades and Changes* were originally selected to be reflective of the conservative establishment against which Halprin was rebelling as well as present a stark contrast to the image of openness and freedom evoked by the fully nude dancers. In the 1970 performance at BAM Halprin’s dancers instead wore their own clothes, contemporary articles that reflected their individual choice and self-presentation rather working towards an appearance of uniformity and conformity. This shift foregrounds the actual participants with whom Halprin was working, showing them as real people. Additionally, Halprin’s inclusion of the drumming ritual that initiated the evening also served to display the unique response and contribution of all those involved, as each performer contributed their own rhythm, voice, and movement to the communal work.
Rather than presenting *Parades and Changes* as it had been staged previously, Halprin selected key scores and engaged them to respond to the changing concerns and intentions of her ongoing creative process. Working with these two scores outside of the larger work, she focuses the performance on the specific themes of trust and integration, foregrounding her shift toward use of dance as social action. In the reframing of this piece, Halprin maintains her creative focus on working with the performers to create a performance that directly responds to both the individuals involved and unique situation of the performance event.

Parades and Changes, Berkeley Art Museum, 2013

In February 2013 Halprin staged her first full, evening-length performance of *Parades and Changes* since 1967. For this iteration of *Parades and Changes* Halprin utilized many scores from the original production while adding additional scored sections, both scores repurposed from other performance works and new scores created for the 2013 production. As with the original production of *Parades and Changes*, Halprin created a set of float cards for the scores in the work: “Dialogue,” “Entrances,” Umbrella Score,” “Walking,” “Dressing/Undressing,” “Paper Dance,” “Falling,” “Embrace and Restore,” “Stomp,” and “Running.”
Through the staging of the work, produced much later in her career, Halprin actively and intentionally exposes her contemporary concerns and interests in dance. The production reflects on the history of *Parades and Changes*, allowing the piece to shift and evolve in ways that respond to Halprin’s career work in dance while incorporating the creative input of a new cast of dancers. Halprin’s new staging of *Parades and Changes* encapsulates a retrospective of her major choreographic intentions over multiple decades, articulating her legacy through a creative model that rejects choreographic fixity in favor of artistic exploration and theatrical generativity.

Produced at the Berkeley Art Museum, the piece engaged the same space as the 1970 performance by SFDW, but recycled how the museum and audience was engaged. While the performance still took place in the large, main gallery, the audience was seated on the floor around the performers as well as in the surrounding overhanging galleries. This allowed for numerous audience perspectives, from close, intimate viewing positions directly alongside the performers, to distanced, overhead views. Seating was not assigned, providing the opportunity for the audience to choose their location. This openness also allowed for those who attended more than one performance in the program’s three-night run to choose new perspectives on the work. Recycling her use of the space for this staging of *Parades and Changes*, Halprin created the opportunity for multiple different audience experiences.

The performance commences as soon as the audience begins to arrive to the museum, with the work’s first event, the score for “Parade of Light.” While Halprin didn’t include this score as one of the new float cards she developed for this production, the event is a conspicuous recycling from the original performances of *Parades and Changes* and a further evolution of a score first presented in *Esposizione*. As the audience enters the museum, two spotlights slowly
trace the interior architecture of the space. One red and one blue, the circles of light gradually expand and constrict as they move along the sharp lines of the cement walls and overhanging galleries. Maintaining a constant speed and moving independently, these lights echo Halprin’s original notes for the flashlight-carrying dancers in *Esposizione*: a moderately slow tempo wherein each moves following their own path, yet are connected by uniform action. Halprin’s original float card for “Parade of Light” outlines the score’s exploration of light use: "Candles, Flashlight, Spotlight. Audience-performer switch. Slow Fast. Passing Light." The card is marked with the name of *Parades and Changes*’ original lighting design collaborator, Patric Hickey, and suggests an investigation of the movement qualities of light.

As the score was used at the Berkeley Art Museum in 2013, there are no performers on stage and the event could easily go unnoticed if one wasn’t paying close attention. Similar to Halprin’s productions in the early 1960s, the audience only slowly becomes aware that the performance is already unfolding around them. As these spotlights trace the space, they also occasionally pass over audience members, illuminating and coloring people as they continue to talk among themselves, shift positions in their seats, and occasionally move to new locations in the space. Highlighting these individual actions, the lights reframe the audience members as performers for those who are watching the spot as it moves. Halprin’s choreographic works of the 1960s, including *Parades and Changes*, were revolutionary in framing pedestrian action as dance, and the recycling of this score furthers that choreographic interest. Rather than only tasking performers to use pedestrian activity in performance, Halprin’s integration of the moving spotlights directs attention to actual unrehearsed pedestrian activity. Recycling this score to redirect the viewer’s focus onto their fellow attendees, the score works to switch the role of audience and performer.
While the spotlights continue to move, the cast slowly begins to enter the space from different locations within the audience, infiltrating the gallery from all directions (including one dancer eventually descending from above through the use of a belay harness). As with The Flowerburger, Esposizione, and Procession Halprin uses the whole space of her venue with the intention the engaging the audience in an awareness of their surroundings and the interconnected spaces of the theatre. The dancers do not simply move through the crowd to get to the stage space, but instead inconspicuously situate themselves as members of audience; each moves to a position within the crowd as if they themselves are ready to spectate. Dressed in Parades and Changes’ characteristic, pedestrian black suits and white button-down shirts, the performers could all be mistaken for members of the audience until they begin the next score, “Dialogue,” a vocal event with spoken text. Morton Subotnick, who signals to each performer with hand gestures, orchestrates their vocalizations. Subotnick is similarly inconspicuous, dressed in a pedestrian outfit of jeans and a grey fleece. His dress and actions do not call attention to his role, as he at first appears to himself be a member of the crowd, and his hand gestures read as if he is attempting to get the attention of another audience member.

Subotnick’s gestures affect the performer’s volume and vocal dynamics, as well as when they begin, resume, cut off, and restart their vocal material. Like in Halprin’s works of the early 1960s, the audience gradually becomes aware that the performers are loose among them and that the work has already commenced. The score continues Halprin’s intention of redirecting the focus and attention of her audience differently than through the expected convention of dimming house lights and making a loudspeaker announcement. The score for “Dialogue,” sometimes referenced as “Parade of Dialogue,” appears in one of Halprin’s early notes for Parades and Changes and was included in the first iterations of the work in 1965. A collaborative contribution
by Subotnick and produced with the dancers, the score is worked out with the individual cast members. The original score notes indicate vocal material that is story-telling and response-driven, such as “be a tour guide,” “greet a favourite attraction with great enthusiasm,” and “refuse to buy life insurance.” In the 2013 production at the Berkeley Art Museum, Halprin recycles “Dialogue,” tasking the dancers to approach the score with the new activity “I remember.” As they speak, they articulate their own personal memories alongside pieces of text composed of Halprin and Subotnick’s own memories of Parades and Changes, culled from their archival notebooks from the 1960s and their current reflections on the work nearly fifty years after its first iteration. This recycling of the score highlights the unique individuality of the performers in the new cast while simultaneously looking back at the history of Parades and Changes. In this score Halprin and Subotnick not only engage vocal dialogue, but also create a dialogue about Parades and Changes, foregrounding the integration of past and present in an ongoing exploration, where the hands of the original composers continue to manipulate and direct how the work evolves in the moment of performance.

Within this contemporary production of Parades and Changes Halprin also reframes the intention of some of her original scores to reflect her ongoing work with dance as social activism. The new score “Falling” is a recycling of her score idea “Diving,” and the original Parades and Changes score for “Embrace” is recycled as “Embrace and Restore.” One of Halprin’s early notebooks for Parades and Changes suggest a score entitled “Diving” in which the dancers jump off the stage into the theatre’s orchestra pit and are then lifted back up onto the stage. A blackout is listed as immediately following, during which time the performers reposition themselves for the score “Embrace.” The original score intention for “Embrace” during the 1960s was an exploration in touch and physical contact, a depiction of intimacy, love,
acceptance. The score tasks the dancer to “go as far as you can (and get away with),” which Halprin felt was a radical, revolutionary act in dance as it knowingly moved towards depictions of intimacy that could be deemed lewd, vulgar, or indecent. Reflecting on these scores for her 2013 production in Berkeley, Halprin chose to redirect their intention, noting that “Parades and Changes until now was completely task-oriented and I wanted something more humanistic.”

Responding to contemporary social issues, Halprin’s score for “Falling” gives each performer the activity to fall and the intention of working with an image of shooting. Set on a platform in the center of the performance space, the falls are focused public displays, evoking videos of unarmed civilians being shot by American police officers while simultaneously connecting to the increased mediatization of deaths from gun violence. Following this score, “Embrace and Restore” sets an intention to heal, tasking the performers to contact each other, with the actions of contouring, hugging, and carrying one another. In these two scores, Halprin recycles the actions of “Diving” and “Embrace” to redirect intention toward contemporary concerns and her changing social activism.

In this production Halprin also integrates a recycling of her score for En Route (2004), an improvised piece produced in connection with a performance at the Centre Pompidou in Paris. In its original staging, En Route connected the hotel where the performers were staying to the theatre, with the dancers processing from one location to the other, through Place Igor Stravinsky, carrying umbrellas and wearing the costumes for Parades and Changes (the performance at Centre Pompidou included “Dressing/Undressing” and “Paper Dance” at the opening of the program). As the dancers progress to the theatre, their exaggerated and comical walks emphasize the humorous quality and inflated pedestrian activity Halprin often integrates into her lighthearted works. In the piece the dancers create new movement material within this
simple, open task action. The recycling of this work as “Umbrella Score” in the 2013 iteration of *Parades and Changes* was situated immediately after the dancers collectively assembled in the main performance space at the museum. For this score Halprin gives the intention of introducing the space with exuberant movement, tasking dancers to explore large motions such as crashing waves, swirls, and swooping. The dancers allow their movements to pull them off balance and shoot across the gallery, often appearing as if propelled by an imaginary wind pushing their umbrella forward as they steadfastly grip to the handle. Including this humorous score in *Parades and Changes* exposes the breadth of Halprin’s choreographic work, in kind with her witty use of clown-like performance scenarios in works like *Four in the Afternoon* (1951) and *The Golden Positions* (1970). Through this additional score, Halprin reflects a greater retrospective view of her career work through the structure of *Parades and Changes*.

The 2013 iteration of Parades and Changes concludes with the score “Running.” A recycling of Halprin’s *Planetary Dance* (1987), the inclusion of this score foregrounds Halprin’s current work and ongoing creative focus in community-based social activism. The intention of this score, both as it is integrated into *Parades and Changes* and as an independent work, is to dance for a purpose, for a personalized intention and conscious concern for social conditions. *Planetary Dance* developed similarly to *Parades and Changes*, through a process wherein Halprin undertook extensive score-based workshop processes and presented ongoing performance events over multiple years beginning in 1980.

Having initially developed public-participatory events throughout the 1970s, Halprin began intensifying her work with communal rituals in 1980 through an eight-month series of workshops entitled *A Search for Living Myths and Rituals through Dance and the Environment*. 
In these workshops Halprin explored how community-based dance could spiritually reconnect society with its surroundings and heal man’s relationship with the natural environment. The group that Halprin assembled in these events met regularly to address pressing community concerns through the Halprins’ model for collective creativity. During this workshop series the group collectively gravitated towards shared anxieties surrounding a series of unsolved murders on Mount Tamalpais in Marin County that had occurred in the past year. Halprin embraced this collective concern and began directing the workshop toward developing dance pieces reflective of the group’s connection to the mountain. As an outgrowth of this workshop period, Halprin embarked on creating In and On the Mountain (1981), a two-day site-specific dance ritual that would actively engage the local community with reclaiming its spiritual power over the mountain. Through this act Halprin hoped the event would allow the community to recover from the fear that the murders had evoked and ritualistically heal Mt Tamalpais. A few days following the community-based ritual performance, the murders were solved, the suspect apprehended, and the mountain reopened for public access.

Following this first ritual performance on Mount Tamalpais in 1981, Halprin undertook four more large, community-based performances to create a five-part, five-year series of works: Thanksgiving Offering (1982), Return to the Mountain (1983), Run to the Mountain (1984), and Circle the Mountain (1985). After this fifth piece, in 1985 the annual event was renamed Circle The Earth and the series continued to evolve through yearly workshop events that responded to community themes and culminated in multi-part community-engaged performances: Circle The Earth: A Dance in the Spirit of Peace (1986) Circle The Earth: A Peace Dance with the Planet (1987) Circle The Earth: Dancing Our Peaceful Nature (1988) and Circle The Earth: Dancing with Life on the Line (1989). During this period Halprin received requests to stage Circle the
Earth with communities in other locations, so she selected an easily taught excerpt of the larger piece to share as an independent work that could be enacted by groups around the world. The central score for Circle the Earth, the “Earth Run,” was excerpted and expanded as the Planetary Dance for this purpose in 1987. Since the 1980s Halprin has continued to participate in annual enactments of the Planetary Dance at Mount Tamalpais and the dance has expanded to numerous locations across dozens of countries. Additionally, Halprin actively integrates the piece into her training programs, foregrounding it as a central work in her creative philosophy.

Integrating the Planetary Dance as the concluding score in her 2013 iteration of Parades and Changes connects Halprin’s beliefs about her own legacy as a dance artist. Showcasing and integrating these two pivotal, influential, and widely circulated works alongside one another traces Halprin’s choreographic work across multiple decades and looks into the future. Halprin reflects that “in my late nineties, after a lifetime of dancing, I think a lot about my legacy. The dance I care most about leaving behind is the Planetary Dance.” The Planetary Dance is intended to be a work that transcends both cultural and temporal barriers, a score that can be circulated around the globe and accessed by all people. As with Parades and Changes, it integrates the contributions and personalities of the unique individuals that participate in it, directly responding to those involved in the process. Allowing both Parades and Changes and the Planetary Dance to shift in ways that address contemporary issues, these works grow with Halprin as her creative concerns evolve. She envisions both works continuing beyond her and asserts that she “hope[s] that the legacy of the Planetary Dance, as it continues to evolve, may show us how we can all as a global community dance with purpose upon the earth.”

Concluding Parades and Changes with this score tasks the audience to themselves look forward, to envision how they create community by working in creative dialogue with those around them.
Through this, Halprin signals her legacy through the creation of artistic models in which people can enact ceremonies that nurture personal expression, cultivate compassion, and foster trust among people.

Alongside the performances at the Berkeley Art Museum, a gallery exhibition featured archival scores, photographs, correspondence, and other ephemera documenting the history of *Parades and Changes*. This material from the original productions of the work juxtaposed both the contemporary performance as well as Halprin’s new set of scoring notes, artist statements, and float cards. The exhibition highlighted Halprin’s process of looking back while moving forward and served to foreground the creative logic and choreographic structures that form *Parades and Changes*. Together, these documents spanning multiple decades, along with the contemporary staging of the piece, exhibit the evolution of Halprin’s work, exposing the performance to be a new iteration of *Parades and Changes* rather than a reconstruction of the dance as it once was in the mid-late 1960s. The exhibition reinforces Halprin’s work as never static, foregrounding her ongoing process of using her choreographic structures to reflect and respond to her changing artistic intentions and creative concerns.

Leading into these performances at the Berkeley Art Museum, Halprin announced that this production would be her final iteration of *Parades and Changes*. Recognizing the increasing interest in the piece among audiences and curators, she publicly asserted her intention of pursuing new work rather than spending continued time staging *Parades and Changes*. Closing the possibility of her setting or touring the work, Halprin highlighted “I don’t have that much time left. I want to have complete freedom to explore what’s meaningful to me.” The idea of ending work on a score such as *Parades and Changes*, which Halprin had developed as a model for ongoing choreographic exploration, repeatedly repurposed for her own creative development,
and grown into a vehicle for articulating her choreographic legacy, seems antithetical to both Halprin’s process and artistic beliefs. However, Halprin’s work with *Parades and Changes* did not actually end with these performances at the Berkeley Art Museum. Rather than actually closing her work with *Parades and Changes*, only a few months after the “final” performance in Berkeley, Halprin was actively preparing a full production of the piece in Israel and experimenting with creative adaptions of one of the work’s central scores.

**Parades and Changes, Vertigo Dance Company, 2014**

In 2014 Halprin traveled to Israel for the final portion of her performance trilogy *Remembering Lawrence*, which honored her 70-year relationship with her husband, Lawrence. She considered this time in Israel not as merely a visit, but as a multi-part artistic work that spanned various regions and combined public workshops, performance events, community activism, and a women’s interfaith peace walk on the Goldman Promenade in Jerusalem, which Lawrence had designed. *Trip to Israel* reflected Anna and Lawrence’s shared Jewish heritage, as well as his deep connection to the region—Lawrence had lived in Palestine from 1933 to 1936, where he helped found Kibbutz Ein-Hashofet near Haifa.

While in Israel Anna worked with Vertigo Dance Company on a production of *Parades and Changes*. Vertigo Dance Company was founded in 1992 by Noa Wertheim and Adi Sha'al, who were central to the development of the Eco-Art Village in Kibbutz Netiv HaLamed-Hey. Located in the rural Ellah Valley between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, the Kibbutz is a regional center for collaborative art and ecology with a focus on environmentally-engaged creative practices. Along with Wertheim and Sha'al, the kibbutz was envisioned and designed by a collaborative group of visual artists, writers, land artists, permaculture experts, and architects.
Today the Eco-Art Village is an ongoing extension of their collaborative and community-oriented artistic, social, and environmental projects. Workshops, education initiatives, exhibitions, and performances at the Village promote social and environmental change by means of cultural and artistic expression, focusing on ecospiritualist interdisciplinary creative practices that integrate Torah study and expressive arts therapy. Akin to the Halprin’s work, the Village aims to inspire social consciousness and creative sustainable living by fostering connections between art, community, spirituality, and the environment.

Halprin was in residence with the Vertigo Dance Company over five days, during which time she introduced the dancers to the RSVP Cycles as well as developed a new articulation of *Parades and Changes*. The company worked from 10:00am to 7:00pm each day with Halprin and musical director Miguel Frasconi, a colleague of composer Morton Subotnick. The version of *Parades and Changes* that evolved from this collaborative rehearsal process culminated in two performances in the art center at Kibbutz Netiv HaLamed-Hey, after which the company toured the work to Jerusalem, performing at the Israel Museum.¹⁰⁴

During their collective working period, Halprin and the dancers examined how the scores of *Parades and Changes* could be used to reflect the unique specificities and setting of company in the kibbutz. As with previous productions of this work, Halprin and her collaborators “look at the space, the cast, the social conditions, and ask: What will work here, now, with these performers?”¹⁰⁵ Working in a different political and social context than with American casts, Halprin wanted to reflect the uniqueness of local culture as well as the social and spiritual priorities of the community. Halprin noted that “rather than imposing an American aesthetic, I want to evolve a dance that is meaningful both to the performers and to an Israeli audience.”¹⁰⁶ Foregrounding the unique experiences and creative voices of the dancers in this cast, Halprin
focused on process, allowing the dance to evolve with and through the performers in a collaborative working environment.

The scores Halprin employed in this staging of *Parades and Changes* included “Entrances,” “Dressing/Udressing,” “Paper Dance,” “Shooting/Falling,” “Embrace & Restore,” “Stomp,” and “Running.” Each of these scores was used in the production Halprin had staged at the Berkeley Art Museum the previous year, but they were engaged to fit the specifics of Vertigo Dance Company. Reflecting on this practice, Halprin notes that "what gets renewed in *Parades and Changes* every time is our ability to express our humanity through the language of dance and art." Rather than recreating the dance as it had been previously performed, Halprin allowed the dancers to interpret the scores’ directives and intentions through the workshop process.

Halprin’s score for “Entrances” is a recycling of an activity she regularly employs both in her public workshops and weekly open classes, generally as the very first activity. In this score each dancer introduces themselves by name while simultaneously performing a movement of their own design. Dancers are encouraged to connect their speaking to their movement, using the voice and body creatively, incorporating their own personality into this introduction. These short performance events not only serve to familiarize the workshop participants to one another by name, but also serve as a way for the group to quickly enter into a personalized expressive process. The members of Vertigo Dance Company were unaccustomed to speaking in performance, and many commented on how it was initially difficult to produce these personal introductions. While the personal introductions proved challenging, the dancers all commented on how they had learned surprising new things about each other through the score. Rather than simply reproducing a set piece of choreography, the dancers were tasked with creating the movement within the framework of the score, presenting a uniquely personal expression that
directly connected them to others. Halprin’s development of this score as a section in *Parades and Changes* serves to highlight the communal nature of Kibbutz Netiv HaLamed-Hey and the mission of the Eco-Art Village, which foregrounds art as a socially and community engaged practice.

A central score of *Parades and Changes* is “Dressing/Undressing.” Every performance of the work has included this score, even when only selected excerpts are presented rather than the full evening-length work. This score posed a significant challenge for Halprin when determining how to stage this work on Vertigo Dance Company. While the use of nudity was the initial action that instigated the original score, Halprin did not feel it was an appropriate action in Kibbutz Netiv HaLamed-Hey, where it would convey disregard for religious beliefs. Halprin developed this score as an exploration in self-revelation, creating it in response to a personal experience during a group therapy session led by Gestalt therapist Fritz Perls in early 1964. The ongoing rejection of her work by American art and theatre presenters, especially San Francisco Opera’s rebuff of *Esposizione*, had left Halprin “feeling pretty upset and brazen and sort of furious with the world.” Seeing a man in the group session who was wearing a conservative, formal black suit, Halprin channeled her anger at the establishment she perceived him to represent, violently disrobing immediately in front of him while staring directly in his eyes. Halprin’s act of undressing was that of confrontation and defiance, of fuming resentment about feeling her work was not understood. Reflecting on this experience after the event, she began to rethink her action as artistic material, reframing the act of undressing as a mode to expose vulnerability and cultivate an expanded openness in performance. In Israel, recognizing that the exposure of full nudity wouldn’t communicate the score’s intention of openness and closeness, she adjusted the action. Halprin chose instead to costume the Israeli dancers in flesh colored leotards and
briefs, allowing her to maintain the task of undressing, but stopping short of full nudity. After undressed to this point, the dancers adopted sculptural poses before dressing again. Halprin believed this recycling of the score maintained the intention of communicating sacredness through everyday ritual action.

Halprin’s score for “Shooting/Falling” also carried a special resonance, with Israel experiencing ongoing internal violence between different religious and cultural groups, as well as geographically situated in a region marked by violent social and political upheavals. For some dancers, the score aroused memories and personal experiences from their service in the military. Throughout the working process, Halprin encouraged the dancers to bring their own life histories and personal mythologies into the creative process, to actively express and confront aspects of their life history as part of addressing the scores. A dancer recalls that “because the workshop was dealing with emotions and internalizing, I felt I was letting all my emotions out, and I was crying so much!” Working in a way that personally connected the dancers to the score, the staging of *Parades and Changes* encouraged dancers to uncover previously hidden aspects of themselves, which allowed them to effect changes both in their performance work and their own psychological development.

Throughout the workshop process with Vertigo Dance Company Halprin integrated the dancers into the creation of the work, employing the RSVP Cycles to craft an experience of collective creativity. The company’s performances of *Parades and Changes* grew out of the rehearsal process, including new adaptations to the work that responded to nuances unique to both the dancers and their community. Reflecting on the experience, one dancer recalls that “it was wonderful that [Halprin] always wanted to hear our thoughts and experiences, and really wanted to create this piece with us, so that it reflected each of our different personalities.” This
exemplifies Halprin’s focus on cultivating a process-oriented creative model that foregrounds the individual situations and personalities that come into the work. Using performance as a means to explore and express personal themes, Halprin allows *Parades and Changes* to continuously evolve and reshape as a result of the process of those involved in each staging of the work.

**Paper Dance**

On July 10, 2013 I received a phone call from Halprin. She mentioned that she had spent the past week working with visual and performance artist Janine Antoni on a new collaboration, and wished to alert me to its performance the following afternoon at the Berkeley Art Museum.\(^{113}\) While Halprin and Antoni regularly appear alongside one another in curated gallery exhibits, museum catalogs, and writings on the history of performance, this piece marks the first time the two have worked together.\(^{114}\) The small crowd visiting the museum that day had mostly, like me, received a last-minute call from either Halprin or Antoni and arrived specifically to see the performance. Staged in Gallery B, the museum’s central exhibition space, the new solo performance work that Antoni premiered that afternoon had developed the previous day through her work with Halprin. Together, they had been exploring the possibility of reconceptualizing Halprin’s score for “Paper Dance,” a group section from *Parades and Changes*, as a solo piece.

“Paper Dance” is one of the most recognizable performance scores Halprin has developed in her career. Since 1965 this score has been presented as an excerpt from *Parades and Changes* on several occasions and photos of this section more than any other from the piece are featured in publicity, programs, articles, exhibits, and books. The score is beautiful in its originality and simplicity:
**Paper dance.** Make ten single sounds on the paper. Crumple the paper for sixty counts, then tear continuously, listening to your sounds. When you have had enough, collect as large a bundle of paper as you can, and exit.  

Both as a part of *Parades and Changes* and as an excerpt, “Paper Dance” has historically been staged with a cast of several performers, all in the nude and with several long sheets of brown butcher paper. The piece mingles and blends body with object to construct the overall visual effect of a unified moving figure. With the performers moving about through the large mass of paper, crumpling and tearing, the paper becomes a vibrant musical accompaniment to the performance. As the paper is shredded into small pieces, the act of tearing is mixed with throwing as dancers collect giant armfuls of paper and repeatedly hurl them into the air, only for the bits to cascade over them and down to floor while they collect the next batch to throw. A note card Halprin saved from her work on the February 2013 performances of *Parades and Changes* summarizes the experience of the piece for both performers and viewers: “Paper as Sound. Paper as Environment. Paper as Sculpture.”

When Antoni arrived in Kentfield to work with Halprin, they together pulled a long piece of brown paper off a large roll that Halprin kept at her home on the slopes of Mt Tamalpais. Halprin gave Antoni the paper and together they went down to Halprin’s dance deck, nestled in a redwood grove alongside her studio. Halprin gave no instruction, only mentioning “You may want to take your clothes off.” Halprin sat on the benches built into the hillside and observed as Antoni began to work with the paper on the deck. Antoni believed that Halprin would be guiding and crafting the piece, creating the work on and for her: “I went with the intention of doing whatever she told me, but she didn't tell me anything.” Throughout the exploration Antoni waited for Halprin to interject with instructions, but Halprin continued to silently watch. Antoni remembers this movement exploration:
No instruction is coming, and I’m working and working and working with the paper, maybe two hours. It got dark but I didn’t notice. And then I hear a quiet voice saying, “you can stop now.” I guess she was just waiting for me to stop, and I was waiting for her to stop me.  

Rather than actively directing the piece or imposing her own movement sensibilities, Halprin instead created a situation in which Antoni was given a fixed resource and invited to investigate the different movement possibilities that could emerge. This permitted Antoni to create her own dialogue with both the paper and the history of Halprin’s original score. In allowing the score for “Paper Dance” to be recycled rather than simply restaged, Halprin repurposed her initial idea for a new artistic exploration that foregrounded Antoni’s own creative process.

Antoni’s exploration of Halprin’s group score as a new solo, independent from the larger work, similarly works to experiment with the numerous ways paper can be used to create sound, construct environment, and build sculpture. Like the original score as it is performed within Parades and Changes, Antoni’s Paper Dance appears meditative and intimately sensorial. However, Antoni’s work with the score focuses more on the sensations of the skin than of the ear. Her performance is an introverted, tactile experience that is centered on a personal experimentation with differing ways of relating to and communicating through paper using touch. Antoni begins Paper Dance by slowly unfurling a large roll of brown butcher paper, first with slight taps of her toe, then with gentle nudges from other parts of her body. Once the sheet of paper is fully unrolled she lies on the floor and pulls the paper over her body until shrouded underneath it. While hidden by the large sheet of paper, she begins to slowly remove her clothing, first wriggling out of her shirt, which causes the paper above to writhe and rustle. Moving herself above the paper, she lies on top of the long sheet and gently moves her body
along the floor, propelling herself forward with butterfly strokes that crumple and collect the paper underneath her as she progresses. Throughout the work Antoni experiments with numerous processes of using her body to extend and collect the paper in ways like this, finding new methods of moving within and around the material. In the piece she also rolls across the floor to wrap herself in a tall cylinder of paper, spins herself like a whirling dervish with a stream of paper billowing out to her sides in an image evocative of modern dance pioneer Loie Fuller, winds the paper into a massive turban that grows to engulf her entire head, and swirls the paper into a circular mound, which becomes a nest in which she sits and burrows. Ripping off small pieces of the paper nest that surrounds her, she stuffs the crumpled wads in between her toes as well as in her belly button, nose, ears, and mouth, using the paper to isolate herself from the sensations around her in order to focus entirely on the sensations of her skin.

Antoni transforms the roll of butcher paper into new environments, costumes, and objects, continuously finding new ways of sensing, experiencing, and knowing the material with which she is working. She draws the audience to a focus on her closeness and intimacy with the paper, highlighting her ever-shifting tactile sensations. Paper Dance exploits the audience’s sense of touch and calls the viewer to kinesthetically empathize with Antoni, sensing the effect of the butcher paper against her skin. Through the intricacy and nuance of Paper Dance, both Antoni and the audience are presented with the task of navigating negotiations between body and object.

It seems fitting that this new interpretation of “Paper Dance” should be premiered in the Berkeley Art Museum. In 1970, Parades and Changes was the first exhibit staged in the new modernist building that had been specially constructed for the Berkeley Art Museum. In 2013, as the museum planned to move to a new location and shutter the concrete structure that has housed
it for over 40 years, Halprin returned to renew her collaboration with the museum in a series of events reflecting on this inaugural performance.\textsuperscript{121} Never content to let her work remain static, Halprin’s process with Antoni on this collaborative reconceptualization of the score for “Paper Dance” brings a new focus to her well-known piece: the haptic.

In addition to the performance at the Berkeley Art Museum, \textit{Paper Dance} was staged a second time, that evening, on the dance deck.\textsuperscript{122} In this venue Antoni’s performance had a different affective quality than when it was staged at the museum. Shifting the piece from the museum’s concrete interior to the outdoor venue altered the framing, aesthetics, and experience of the work. In the museum the cool blue-grey cement offered a stark contrast to the warm pale brown of the butcher paper, setting Antoni’s material apart. Additionally, the hard, unmoving quality of the museum’s cement environment highlighted the comparatively soft malleability of the paper. Within the cavern-like architecture of the museum, the sound created by Antoni’s manipulations of the paper were amplified and reverberated throughout the space, making this sonic quality of the performance strikingly apparent. The arrangement of the floors in the museum also allowed for the small audience to watch the piece from multiple angles, peering over the edges of the gallery levels that spiral around the open central hall of the museum.

Halprin’s deck maintains a lot of the angular architectural qualities of the museum, but the different construction material and surrounding environment create an exceptionally different atmosphere for witnessing performance works. The wooden deck, ringed by trees, provides a natural and soft setting, a significant change from the poured cement brutalism of BAM. In this space, Antoni’s paper blends into the venue much more than at the museum; the natural color of the brown butcher paper compliments and combines with the earth tones of the natural surroundings rather than standing apart. The open space of the deck also allows for the sound of
the paper to dissipate into the environs, and the natural setting adds new sonic qualities to the soundscape, including birdsongs, the crackle of underbrush, the movement of squirrels as they run from tree to tree, the rustling of leaves in the evening breeze, and the creaking tones of the tall swaying redwoods that frame the deck. In her teaching, Halprin constantly highlights the natural sounds that surround us. Attuning the ear to the specifics of the outdoor environment provided a new experience of Antoni’s performance- her movements and sounds are one part of a whole network of events and actions occurring simultaneously. Antoni’s nude body, in dialogue with the butcher paper and the deck, was linked with the environment. Antoni’s ever-morphing sculptural forms created with the paper, which evoked natural forms in the dance’s presentation at BAM, draw more direct connections when juxtaposed with the landscape of Halprin’s outdoor venue.

In this performance on the deck Antoni also responded directly to her environment. Reaching up to the redwood tree limbs that overhang Halprin’s deck, Antoni draped the crumpled and torn lengths of paper over the branches, catching the paper on jagged edges and nooks. Extending the performance vertically, Antoni simultaneously worked with and against the tree, using it as a form and partner. The tree both molded and displayed the paper she had reshaped through her performance. As Antoni continued to move she pulled the paper, moving the branch, which resisted, occasionally tearing the paper. In displaying the paper on the tree, Antoni created a participatory sculpture installation, which was left on the deck after her performance concluded.

The presentation of Paper Dance at these two locations, and Antoni’s shift of movement and performance choices between the two venues, exemplifies Halprin’s process of recycling scores. The two sites provided different resources for the performance, and Antoni acknowledges
the different effects these had on her performances: “Anna’s deck is magical. Something happens on that deck. It gave me permission to use time in a different way.” Rather than ignoring the situatedness of her performances and presenting the dance in an identical fashion, Antoni actively applied Halprin’s creative methodology by engaging the uniquely different material aspects, limitations, spatial arrangement, and environmental textures of these two sites to create performances. Not only is *Paper Dance* a recycling of Halprin’s original score from *Parades and Changes*, but Halprin continues to allow for the work to be recycled in each presentation. *Paper Dance* exposes Halprin’s conception of dance as an ongoing practice, with constant exploration as equally important, or more important, than the finished artwork.

**Janine Antoni in *Paper Dance*.**

**Ally**

In 2016 Antoni revised and expanded *Paper Dance* for an artist-in-residence commission at the Fabric Workshop and Museum in Philadelphia. In addition to collaborating with Halprin for this residency project, Antoni chose to work and with dancer-choreographer Stephen
Petronio. Their collaborative multi-part performance and art installation was presented as *Ally* and ran for over three months, occupying the whole of the gallery space at the museum.\textsuperscript{124}

Antoni began to conceive this project more than six years before its realization at the Fabric Workshop and Museum, envisioning a retrospective of her artmaking presented through dance. In 2010 she began collaborating with choreographers and dancers, first Annie B. Parson and then Jill Sigman, working together to explore how her creative output, working processes, and artistic intentions could be expressed between or across movement and sculpture. Antoni began to imagine a project wherein five choreographers would “choose a body of my work as a source from which to make a dance. I would call it a retrospective.”\textsuperscript{125} Antoni had been approached by curators suggesting a mid-career survey of her work, and she felt terrified about looking backwards at her output in that model. She felt that exploring her body of work through a new creative project would assuage those fears, and that a “dance retrospective would be a way to move forward while looking back.”\textsuperscript{126} Working with Halprin aligned with this desire, as Halprin’s work foregrounded new creative development through the recycling of past choreographic and creative output.

Antoni’s choice to work with Petronio on this project linked their shared interests in Halprin’s dances and art making process. This also marked a second collaboration between Antoni and Petronio. In 2013 curator Jill Brienza invited Antoni to a rehearsal with Petronio’s company, then a week later he visited Antoni’s studio and asked if she would create a set for his new work *Like Lazarus Did*.\textsuperscript{127} Similar to Antoni, Petronio had been exploring notions of retrospective, and since 2014 had been undertaking an initiative to present reconstructions of dance works by influential American postmodern choreographers, arranging for the dances to be staged on and performed by his company.\textsuperscript{128} Entitled *Bloodlines*, Petronio’s ongoing historical
performance project traces the choreographic influences that have shaped both his own creative practice and contemporary experimental dance in the United States. Through this project, Petronio actively situates himself and his company as part of a genealogy of significant experimental dancemakers. For the second year of this five-year project, Petronio selected to work himself with Halprin, visiting California in fall 2015 to join her and Antoni at Halprin’s home and studio in Kentfield. During this period Antoni continued to work with Halprin on Paper Dance, Petronio learned Halprin’s 2000 solo The Courtesan and the Crone, and together the three worked on a new performance piece, Rope Dance.

As Antoni worked with Halprin and Petronio, she highlighted the mutually-inspired working process that simultaneously integrated existing work and working processes, while developing new work and performance models. Speaking on the work’s formation, Antoni notes that Ally “evolved into a truly collaborative creation that allows us to find a way to continue making new work while looking back.”¹²⁹ The simultaneous looking forwards and backwards, drawing from the past creative output of each artist to explore new creative possibilities, resulted in an exhibition that thought to rethink and reframe notions of an artistic retrospective.

Spread throughout four floors of the museum, Ally presented a mixture of sculpture, documentary film, dance performance, and installation environments. Each aspect of the exhibition sought to present their joint work, which represented the different combinations of collaboration: Antoni and Halprin’s Paper Dance on the eighth floor, Petronio’s performance of Halprin’s The Courtesan and the Crone on the seventh floor, Antoni and Petronio’s sculpture installation Swallow on the second floor, and their group work Rope Dance on the first floor.
Antoni’s *Paper Dance* installation occupied the entire eighth floor, which was separated into three distinct sections. At the far end of the space is a white wall centered in the room with space on each side leading to an exit, from which Antoni enters and departs. Leaning upright against this wall are rolls of brown butcher paper, evenly spaced in a line, one roll for each of the 22 times Antoni will perform the work during her residency. Each roll is held from unfurling by a short piece of blue tape, on which is written the date and time of the performance in which it will be used, and the 22 rolls are situated left to right in chronological order. As Antoni enters the space, she selects the roll of butcher paper corresponding to that performance, removes the piece of tape and attaches it to the wall slightly above where the roll was positioned. During the run of *Ally*, the removal of the butcher paper rolls and placement of their blue tape markers on the wall charts the progression of Antoni’s performances, marking her ongoing continuation through the piece. This also emphasizes the repeated recycling of the score, marking each roll of paper as unique and signaling the multiplicity of her performances that occur over a time of more than three months.

The second area of the gallery encompasses the majority of the space and is where Antoni’s performance of *Paper Dance* occurs. A wooden floor delineates it from the cement floor of the remaining gallery space and thirty-six wooden shipping crates of various sizes are arranged around the borders of the gallery, several stacked on one another to produce an environment with multiple, differently-sized levels. Stickers attached to their sides and stenciled texts spray-painted onto the wood mark the crates with names of Antoni’s sculpture works. Similar to the way Halprin recycles her dance scores, finding new ways to differently present her own work and ideas, Antoni recycles the traditional score for exhibiting her artworks, instead presenting them in, or as, their shipping crates. We are tasked to question whether the objects are
hidden from view inside the crates, or if the crates are empty representatives of her work. In presenting a retrospective of her sculptures in this way, Antoni creates a new possibility for experiencing her work in a way that integrates the history of these objects, which have been made at different times and collectively shipped to Philadelphia.

These crates also serve as the seating area for *Paper Dance*. A stack of grey-blue movers’ blankets are available to use as cushions, and the audience is instructed to situate themselves within the space, choosing where and how they sit for the piece. Antoni enters dressed in simple black clothes, carrying with her a plastic bucket of tools, which she situates off to the side before picking up and handing the remaining moving pads to the audience. Indistinguishable from the gallery’s ushers, her focused, work-like actions result in most people being unaware the performance has begun. The audience continues to filter into the gallery, most talking among themselves. Some occasionally decide to select a new place to sit, swiftly moving across the space to a different location, thinking they still have time to reposition themselves for a better vantage point before the dance commences, oblivious that Antoni is already performing. This start to *Paper Dance* recycles Halprin’s interest in beginning a performance by entering through and infiltrating the audience space, which was engaged in *The Flowerburger, Esposizione, Procession, and Parades and Changes*.

Alongside an unpacked crate, Antoni’s white resin sculpture *to channel* (2014) is set on the floor with a small lamp illuminating the work. With most of the audience still unfocused on her action, Antoni carefully wraps the sculpture in a piece of clear plastic and moves it into the open crate, securing it with a protective wooden bar and replacing the crate’s missing side before screwing it shut with an electric drill. Antoni does not call attention to herself, instead working introspectively. Similar to *Esposizione* and *Procession*, Antoni includes the technical actions of
preparing the performance space as part of the work. Additionally, like Halprin’s movement directives for *Procession*, Antoni’s packaging of her sculptural element is task-based; her movements are purely functional and the sounds that occur are incidental to her actions. Her role as performer only slowly becomes fully apparent when the audience members who are last to arrive finally fully situate themselves and the room grows still with the exception of Antoni undertaking her tasks.

After fully re-crating *to channel*, Antoni silently moves a few audience members to new paces among the boxes, gently leading them by the arm. This ensures no one has sat in a place that would be a risky location or impede her performance. She then moves to another crate, across the performance space. Again using her electric drill, she removes the screws at the top and lifts off the lid. Donning white gloves, she carefully unpacks a framed image, removing its protective casings, leans it up against yet another crate. It sits displayed throughout the performance that follows, and in the final moments of *Paper Dance* Antoni moves the small, industrial clip lamp that illuminated *to channel* to more brightly illuminate the newly displayed work before exiting. Antoni’s task activities expose for the audience the traditionally unseen acts involved in preparing gallery exhibitions: the unpacking, arranging, lighting, and eventual re-packing of artworks. This recycles and reflects Halprin’s work of exposing the technical mechanisms of the theatre in pieces like *Esposizione* and *Procession*, where the stage space would be constructed and arranged in full view of the audience.

Antoni repeats this task anew for each performance, opening a different crate and setting up one piece within the audience space before she begins her dance. As a way of reflecting on her own artistic output, Antoni allows the performance of *Paper Dance* to develop in the moment in dialogue with the work she uncrates and sets up in the gallery. Antoni’s 22
performances of the score together combine into a multi-part reflection on her collected work: “I will treat each instance of this like a small show by creating a narrative line throughout all the performances, accentuating various aspects of my pieces and how they relate to the dance.”  

Antoni uses *Paper Dance* to craft an ongoing investigative interchange between her work and Halprin’s, using the moment of performance to reflect on her past work while creating anew and moving forward. Like *Parades and Changes*, as well as the performances that led to its evolution, *Paper Dance* is an exhibition of process, a model for creative exploration, never a fixed work.


While Antoni undertakes these tasks, a video projector pointed toward the gallery’s wall screens “Dressing/Undressing” and “Paper Dance” from the 1965 made-for-TV video of *Parades and Changes*. As it is installed, the archival footage creates a dialogue between
Halprin’s staging of the piece with San Francisco Dancers’ Workshop and the new, contemporary collaborative production of *Paper Dance* with Antoni. The projector is situated atop a crate in the corner of the installation, in a position where a majority of the audience cannot see the video in full, and the projection is rather small and angled, making it hard to see with clarity, especially at a distance. What is clear for the entire audience, however, is Subotnick’s musical accompaniment from the video, including the recognizable musical cell blocks of Petula Clark’s “Downtown” and The Beach Boys’ “The Warmth of the Sun.” Rather than recycling Subotnick’s original musical score, as was done in the full productions of *Parades and Changes*, Antoni recycles the music as it was performed for the Swedish TV recording. In this way, Antoni further highlights her performance installation as a contemporary recycling of the work, rather than a reconstruction of the original performance. In *Paper Dance* the video becomes a resource in the creation of Antoni’s installation, exemplifying Halprin’s creative directives in the RSVP Cycles. In combining this archival video of *Parades and Changes* and her own previous sculptural works into *Paper Dance*, Antoni situates herself chronologically, blending past and present into a new viewing experience that progresses over fourteen weeks. In this way, Antoni and Halprin artistically look back while moving forward.

The video fragment of *Parades and Changes* runs continuously when Antoni is not performing. She switches it off when she begins her dance and restarts it as she finishes each of the 22 performances. This choice marks the ongoing duration of the installation, continuing the score of “Paper Dance” even when Antoni is not present. Antoni notes that this is meant to make the piece feel continuously in progress, unfinished. Situating her 22 performances as part of a single, ongoing process in dialogue with both her different sculptural works and the history of “Paper Dance,” Antoni works in a way that reflects Halprin’s ongoing interest in process,
exploration, and evolution. Antoni’s *Paper Dance* is not a repertory work, but an ongoing model for self-reflection and creative exploration.

Antoni concludes her performance following the text of Halprin’s original score: “collect as much paper as you can, and exit.” Meticulously picking up each scrap of paper that lays about the gallery, she maneuvers the large, precarious bundle to the opposite end of the space from which she began and heaps the crumpled paper into a pile against the wall. As Antoni’s 22 performances progress, she continues to add to the pile, which grows with each recycling of the score. Each performance of the score is singular, but together they comprise a new ongoing sculptural work in progress.

One level below Antoni’s installation of *Paper Dance*, the seventh-floor gallery is staged for Stephen Petronio’s performance of Halprin’s 1999 solo *The Courtesan and the Crone*. Halprin began developing *The Courtesan and the Crone* as a rumination on representations of the aging body in western concert dance and a personal exploration of her own ongoing performance practice at the age of seventy-nine. The work was first presented as part of *Memories from My Closet: Four Dance Stories*, a series of dance vignettes inspired by clothes and other objects culled from her closets. The short solo work presents a courtesan, dressed in a rich brocaded golden robe, golden shoes, and long white gloves, with her face covered by an ornate Venetian carnival mask. She performs a demurely seductive dance, coyly enticing the viewer with suggestive gestures, flirtatious posturing, and blown kisses. Slowly revealing her true nature behind the costume and mask, the courtesan gradually pulls off her gloves, drops her ornate robe to the floor, and removes her mask to expose her ageing body and face. Wearing only a plain white smock and stockings, she stands in a frail slump and shrinks in shame,
trembling with self-conscious embarrassment at the full exposure of her ruse. Exaggerating the sag of her body and physical weakness, Halprin embodies the crone, the grotesque archetype of the repulsively and tragically aged woman, marking a stark physical contrast to the wry youthfulness of the courtesan.

Halprin’s crone is not a wholly feigned character, but an exaggeration of her own physical, mental, and emotional experience of aging. The embarrassment, isolation, disagreeableness, anger, resentment, frustration, and weakness that Halprin exposes in her performance as this persona are reflections of the ways she has felt, seen, and imagined her aging body, as well as its repercussions both in her life and creative practice. Halprin considers *The Courtesan and the Crone* an ongoing work, a continual process for self-reflection, and has performed the dance for over fifteen years. As Halprin has aged from seventy-nine to ninety-seven, the work has become a performance practice that allows her to regularly return to her personal explorations of aging. While Halprin has continued to present this dance for many years, it does not function like most repertory dance works; *The Courtesan and the Crone* is not a fixed piece of choreography, but rather a scored movement structure for the creative investigation of the body and its relation to life themes. In each performance Halprin responds to her immediate experiences of her ever-changing body as well as her emotional reactions to it. While the dance maintains a clear recognisability through its maintenance of the original score and costuming, each of Halprin’s individual performances of the work expose shifts in both movement and expressive choices; every performance of the work is marked by a difference that reframes and re-presents Halprin’s evolving experiences with aging and her changing body.

This mode of working aligns with the foundational belief of Halprin’s Life/Art Process, that the body is an ever-changing reflection of an individual’s way of being in and relating to the
world. According to Halprin, the body is not merely a collection of anatomical structures and physiological functions, but also the cumulative result of one’s emotional states, imaginal thinking, personal relationships, community role(s), and spiritual connections. Employing this multi-faceted awareness to an uncovering of the self, the body can be understood as the full, physicalized expression of our being. Halprin pioneered this expressive arts working process in the 1960s and further developed the work in collaboration with her daughter, Daria, at the Tamalpa Institute, which they co-founded in 1978. Writing on the expressive qualities and capabilities of the body, Daria Halprin highlights that the “entire repertoire of our life experiences can be accessed and activated through the body in movement.” The Courtesan and the Crone becomes a vehicle for the performative exploration and presentation of Halprin’s own physical and emotional repertoires, which are both unique and constantly shifting. Recognizing and investigating these changes rather than fixing the work, The Courtesan and the Crone becomes an ongoing model for self-reflection and self-learning, as well as a therapeutic process.

Daria highlights the intrinsic connection between movement practice and the production and recovery of personal meaning in this mode of investigative creative work, noting that “since movement is the primary language of the body, moving brings us to deep feelings and memories.” In The Courtesan and the Crone, Halprin employs her choreographic practice to both evoke and confront her feelings about aging, as well as process memories of how she has personally experienced herself and her body over time. Connecting this practice to the Halprins’ joint work on developing their movement-based therapeutic process, Daria articulates that “the way we move also reveals disabling and repetitive patterns. Whatever resides in our body – despair, confusion, anger, joy – will come up when we express ourselves in movement. … As
creative and mindful movers, we are able to explore whatever rises to the surface, experimenting, opening up, and investigating ourselves in new ways. In identifying the emotional states and responses brought up through the exploration of specific life themes and personal memories, the dancer is able to develop new insight into their own experience of themselves. Halprin embodies this in *The Courtesan and the Crone*, engaging the movement practice to recognize, confront, process, and change aspects of her life that are detrimental to physical well-being as well as her mental, emotional, and spiritual health.

*The Courtesan and the Crone* also reflects another central methodology of the Life/Art Process: body part mythology. The Life/Art Process focuses the individual on the multiple and interconnected parts of their body through the exploration of body parts. In the extended training program at the Tamalpa Institute students work with movement explorations of the body’s parts in isolation, engaging in an extended exploration of the multiple ways each body part in its different functions, associations, themes, and movement situations. Through the use of anatomical exploration, structured improvisation, and movement repetition, each body part is examined for its multiple efforts and shapes in movement, as well as the gestural and emotional qualities such movements can produce, both for the mover and those who are witness to the physical actions.

Halprin’s gestures in *The Courtesan and the Crone* utilize the expressive qualities of the body, examining the parts of her body both in isolation and in concert. As the courtesan, Halprin uses the isolation of specific body parts to draw attention to specific regions of her body, accentuate their movement qualities, and draw associations to recognizable and readable gesticulations. She performs beckoning motions with her fingers, quizzically tilts her head, undulates her shoulders, strokes the sides of her body, gyrates her hips, arches the spine, regally
poses her arms, and cups her breast with her hand. As the crone, Halprin examines the contraction of the spine, pinched extension of the neck, shuffling of the feet, and droop of slack muscular tone. Each gesture is meticulously conveyed for its expressive qualities, crafting a narrative that works to reveal each part of the body through movement before uncovering and unmasking.

While Halprin has used her performance practice to explore her own life themes throughout her career, this is her first work to deal with her own aging process. In addition to dealing with her own personal themes choreographically, the costume choices for this work are also direct reflections of Halprin’s life and career. The ornate mask she dons as the courtesan was given to her by her daughter, Daria, who brought it from Venice as a gift, symbolizing a reminder of their 1963 performance of *Esposizione* in Venice as part of their first European tour. Through its inclusion, Halprin references herself as a younger woman, using the mask as a resource to recall a period of her life when she was first emerging as an internationally recognized choreographer. Halprin recalls that the mask served as the initial inspiration for the piece: “I put it on, and the radio happened to be playing Corelli’s *Concerto in D*. I ran upstairs, picked up the fancy coat I’d gotten for a White House ceremony, and began responding to the beguiling mask with the radio music.”

Halprin’s choice of a personally significant costume also connects the performance to her own life history. The courtesan was a well-educated and artistic woman who was regularly invited to attend royal and government events in feudal Europe, often residing at court, sometimes in close proximity to the monarchs. Halprin, who was invited with her husband, visited the White House during the Clinton administration, where she was welcomed by the president and first lady as a leading choreographer and dance educator. In the recycling of these costume resources for use in her choreographic exploration of her aging
process, Halprin integrates personal mementos into the work that reference significant memories and life events across multiple decades of her career, marking the passage of time and referencing her own aging.

Halprin’s performance of the courtesan in *The Courtesan and the Crone* presents several similarities with one of her earliest documented choreographic works, “Princess Printemps” from *Four in the Afternoon* (1951). A few years after Halprin moved to San Francisco she was cast in a new work by poet and filmmaker James Broughton. The short film *Four in the Afternoon: A Quartet for Poems Moving* was developed from Broughton’s book of poems *Musical Chairs*. Halprin appeared in the third section of the work, embodying the character of Princess Printemps, a young maiden of 30. Wearing a courtly Mantua dress, Printemps flits about the grounds of San Francisco's iconic Palace of Fine Arts. Halprin’s choreography mixes the stylistic mannerisms of 18th-century European court dance with humorous physical tics and gestural posturing reflective of contemporary American modern dance. Halprin’s flirtatiousness catches the eye of a young man, portrayed by John Graham, who pursues her on a humorously circuitous and trip-strewn chase through the gardens. Halprin’s courtesan in her 1999 work is reminiscent of her 1951 performance as Princess Printemps, similarly drawing on a mixture of charming flirtations and comic gestures to create the character of an alluringly droll and young woman. Through these similarities, Halprin’s work references her own history as a dancer as a younger woman, connecting her performance work across decades of her career.

Petronio’s performance of *The Courtesan and the Crone* does not significantly rework Halprin’s repertoire of gestures and scored actions, but rather shifts the gender and age of the performer embodying the characters. Petronio’s courtesan is modeled on Halprin’s character, but his crone presents a mixture of the middle-aged gay man and the exhibitionist male transvestite,
both of which have been similarly characterized as physically disagreeable and sinister. In their collaboration, Petronio and Halprin present the recycling of this performance work as an installation in the museum. The long, narrow gallery serves as a deep proscenium stage, giving Petronio an extended runway-like area from the distant rear of his performance space. Downstage is a small red velvet theatre curtain, set up close to the location of the audience. Not spanning the whole proscenium, the curtain shows its rigging, including the sandbag that is used to lift and lower it. In exposing the edges and the artifice of the set, Petronio’s piece calls attention to the work’s theme of exposing pretense and façade. This also references Halprin’s interest in exposing the trappings of theatrical production, as was engaged in *Esposizione, Procession, and Parades and Changes.*

Petronio dons a costume very similar that that of Halprin’s, with the noticeable addition of a black wig, whereas Halprin never masked her own hair. While the wig alludes to the femininity of the courtesan character, the wig has a recognizable cheapness that belies itself as fake, giving clue to the ruse of a disguised reality; Petronio is immediately suspect as not-courtesan well before the eventual disrobing and unmasking of the character. Petronio’s revelation of his true identity underneath the disguise of the courtesan also comes much quicker and more indiscreetly than in Halprin’s performance. During Halprin’s series of tempting gestures as the courtesan, she pulls her gold robe up her left leg to her hip, flirtatiously revealing her full leg in its white stocking and gyrating her pelvis in a manner evocative of a burlesque showgirl. Petronio takes this gesture further, pulling the robe just slightly higher to flash his penis, which the audience can see through his sheer black nylon pantyhose. Petronio’s direct visual exposure of his penis is an abrupt revelation of his masked identity, and the presentation of the unmistakable marker of his maleness is a much more shocking action than Halprin’s
gradual disclosure of her age. In Halprin’s performance the first visual revelation of herself as not-courtesan is her slow removal of her gloves, which exposes her aged hands. By the time Petronio removes his gloves, his penis has already divulged that he is not the female courtesan of the masked role. His masculine hands and tattooed arms that come out of the gloves are not only unsurprising, but decidedly more tame than the flashing of his penis. This change in the work produces an added perversity to Petronio’s persona in the role, making him appear more salacious and assaultingly erotic than Halprin’s suggestively playful character.

While Petronio’s performance highlights artifice and exaggeration, it removes the subtle humor and playful whimsy of Halprin’s performance, instead replacing it with jarring quickness and blatant directness. Halprin creates a character that is amusing, inviting, and emotionally revelatory, which fosters an experience of empathy for the forlorn self-consciousness of the character when her aged body is fully revealed and her embarrassment is exposed. Petronio’s embodiment of the role instead produces an alienating effect, affrontingly distancing the viewer rather than drawing them in through curiosity and seduction. His performance also removes the experience of vulnerability exuded by Halprin’s character, instead presenting a more confrontational relationship that evolves into an anguish that appears feigned rather than personally experienced. Petronio moves through the work’s gestures with a cool remove, presenting the work as a set of motions and progressions rather than a deeply felt experience of self. Halprin clearly draws on her own emotional experiences in her performance, whereas Petronio’s connection to the work’s theme appears as more commentary than genuine expression.

The variations evoked in Petronio’s performance of this work exemplify Halprin’s focus on an ongoing and evolving creative process, as well as her emphasis on incorporating the
unique sensibilities of the individual dancer and actively considering the context of each performance. Like Halprin’s other dances, *The Courtesan and the Crone* is not a rigid choreographic work, but a form for exploring the self through movement, during which one makes personal choices within the work’s structure in response to their own life themes. Petronio’s performance engages Halprin’s original thematic intention while producing a different visual and emotional result. Rather than reproducing Halprin’s work as wrote, Petronio’s performance represents the inclusion of his own resources and follows his own creative explorations, reflecting his own circumstances, environment, and experiences. Petronio’s performance of this work is neither a reconstruction of Halprin’s performance, nor is it a creative departure from the original work.

A new work, *Rope Dance*, was performed on the ground floor of the FWM five times during the exhibition’s run. The dance was created in September 2014 as a collaboration between Halprin, Antoni, and Petronio, with the intention of extending the work into audience participation. *Rope Dance* developed from a workshop score Halprin routinely introduces as part of her teaching. Presenting this score as a performance piece exhibits Halprin’s practice of recycling activities developed during and through her ongoing workshop process into theatrical events, demonstrating the way she uses her teaching as a laboratory for cultivating and refining her artistic output. Similar to the scores for *Parades and Changes*, the collective exploration of the score ideas for *Rope Dance* that Halprin engaged in the studio evolved into a performance work. Allowing the performance to include audience participation, Halprin invites the public into a physical exploration of her practice. Whereas *Ally*’s other component parts—*Paper Dance, The Courtesan and the Crone*, and *Swallow*—position the audience as viewers and spectators, *Rope*
Dance engages the visitor as part of the artistic process. Through this Halprin invites the public to not only share in her working model, but recognize this as integral to her artistic legacy.

Halprin has redeployed and evolved this score through her workshops and training programs, experimenting with and collecting new resources for her creative process with each group that engages in the score. Halprin stretches a few length of rope along the floor then tasks participants to close their eyes and use their feet to trace the length of the rope, slowly moving across the room as they progress from one end of the rope to the other. The intention of the score is for the participant to become kinesthetically aware of their body, to notice how one’s sense of balance and uprightness is often connected to seeing, as one visually locates themselves in space to keep from tipping over. Once the participant is able to tune into their body, to sense their own balance, Halprin begins to repetitively recycle the score. She shifts the rope on the floor into a new pathway, which the participants only discover as they find themselves, eyes closed, tracking the rope in a new, unanticipated direction. Halprin then picks up a length of rope and moves it so it crosses another, intersecting two pathways. Her instructions are simple: When you encounter another person as you move, maintain contact with them until you reach the end of the rope—without talking or opening your eyes, you must together decide which direction to travel. As the score progresses Halprin quietly integrates another participant into the score, tasking them to enter at the end of one rope, unbeknownst to the people already in the dance. Then she integrates another person, and yet another again, continuing until there are several people progressing from multiple ends of the ropes, some following one another at slight distances, others heading directly at one another. Pairs of dancers moving together become trios as they encounter another body traveling on the rope, then trios morph into groups as they confront other individuals or pairs. The intention of the score is to become aware of how you interact as a group, how you
make decisions kinesthetically, both individually and collectively. For those watching, the
score is engrossing, excitingly unpredictable as the participants navigate the instructions in
curious and often comical ways. The spectator is privy to more than participants, whose eyes are
closed, and there is excitement in anticipating an upcoming confrontation among participants or
watching as groups unknowingly begin to pull in different directions. What begins as a simple
movement exercise in balance quickly becomes a diverse and ever-changing performance event
that displays the individual personalities and patterned behavior of all those involved. This score
exhibits Halprin’s workshop model of first training the dancer to become kinesthetically aware
of their body, and then tasking them to engage this awareness in the creation of active and
responsive group-based performance work.

Working with Antoni and Petronio, Halprin presented the rope as a tool in an
improvisatory score with the intention to connect their bodies and draw lines through space. The
dance evolves from a blindfolded solo by Antoni, who walks the length of rope on the floor. She
is then connected via another rope to Petronio, who wraps its long length around both his body
and hers. As they move throughout the space the rope is stretched, slacked, and shifted,
eventually looping in the audience one by one, who exert their own pull; the duet becomes a trio,
then a group work, slowly accumulating bodies into an expanded participatory performance.
Petronio calls out directives to the group as the rope begins to form a web between multiple
people. The directives are clear, yet open—lower, higher, taught, loose—and the multiple
individuals respond with their own creativity in interpreting the score. The work is playful, as
evidenced by the smiles throughout the room, but also focused and serious. The ongoing
interactions reveal the unique sensibilities of all those involved, with each participant effecting
the shape, design, and experience of the work. Through the piece the participants become newly
aware of their own choices, their own ways of approaching the task and each other, thus developing an expanded sense of self and a growing sense of community through collaborative group interaction. Through the piece the audience-participants also become aware of Halprin’s working process, giving them a tool by which to understand how the other performance works in the exhibit were developed, thus experiencing an expanded sense of Halprin’s choreographic legacy.

Pairing Rope Dance alongside The Courtesan and the Crone and Paper Dance, Halprin’s collaborative contributions to Ally present a retrospective of her models for dance practice as well as the ways she approaches pedagogy and mentorship. In Ally Halprin presents her work in task-based performance scoring through Paper Dance, Life/Art Process methodology through The Courtesan and the Crone, and group improvisation structures focused on the physical body and explorations of trust through Rope Dance. Presented together, these pieces exhibit Halprin’s multifaceted creative output in dance. In each of the collaborative works Halprin also allows the existing scores and workshop models to be recycled in a way that integrates the unique sensibilities and contributions of the artists with whom she is working. Rather than simply staging her work on Antoni and Petronio, she guides and advises them through their own creative process in ways that encourage them to make the work their own, to expand their own artistic voice through self-reflection and ongoing experimentation.

**Conclusion**

Watching performances of her scores as they evolve through collaboration is an exciting and rewarding process for Halprin, who enjoys seeing ideas and events unfold in ways she wouldn’t have developed or imagined by herself. A film included in Ally captures this personally
rewarding experience that Halprin finds in her working process. Filmed in a tight close-up on Halprin’s face, the footage shows Halprin as she watches Antoni and Petronio work together on the dance deck. The film doesn’t capture any of the dance as it is unfolding, focusing instead exclusively on Halprin’s reaction to the piece from her position on the benches overlooking the deck. Halprin’s eyes glitter with intrigue, excitement, and joy as she watches. Slight nods and soft murmurs suggest moments where a choreographic direction has been successfully realized, smiles and short laughs hint at the new creative revelations she witnesses during the dancers’ ongoing exploration, and small gasps mark unexpected instances of suspense and beauty in the performance. Halprin is intently focused on the work, directly responding as it progresses and collecting resources for how to guide the next recycling of the score. Her face exposes the care and investment she has in the work, as well as her delight in watching how her score inspires new experiences that unfold in front of her through performance. The film captures Halprin as an observer of her own work in process, looking on as new artists take on her legacy, extending her choreographic ideas and structures into the future.

Throughout the creation and evolution of *Parades and Changes* Anna Halprin has undertaken a choreographic process centered on repurposing existing creative material for use in the development in new performances. Never interested in her works becoming static, Halprin foregrounds her ongoing creative practice as integral to the continuation of her choreographic works. Halprin’s model for choreographic legacy involves a spolia of her existing work, a process that demands the ongoing evolution of her dances and the integration of the personal responses of those involved in each iteration of the work. In making work that demands continual transformation, Halprin develops new structures of dance practice, challenges spectatorship, and democratizes performance.
**Factions, Composites, and Insertables:**
The Choreographic Multiplicity of Yvonne Rainer’s *Trio A*

Yvonne Rainer has repeatedly reformatted and repurposed *Trio A* since its premiere in 1966, presenting multiple transmogrifications of her piece to provide new ways of experiencing the dance on stage and on film. She has intentionally altered the work’s choreography, staged performances of the piece under different titles, and appropriated the dance for use in several of her other major performance works. In her process for choreographic transmission Rainer utilizes methods drawn from repertoire, reconstruction, and reperformance. Rather than working in a single mode, Rainer adopts an engagement with multiple practices to produce a panoply of different iterations of *Trio A* that collectively expose the multiple approaches to and multiply-understood outcomes of choreographic transmission.

While *Trio A* was designed through an extended and exhaustive process of formalist movement analysis, Rainer’s approach to its choreographic transmission moves beyond a formal concern with movement design to instead utilize *Trio A* as a process to challenge the principles, processes, and systems of repertoire, reconstruction, and reperformance. The multiple transmogrifications of *Trio A* utilize its formal qualities of movement as tools to analyze and expose how repertoire, reconstruction, and reperformance function as processes of justification in the production of historical knowing in dance. Directly engaging with the seeing difficulty inherent to watching transmitted choreography, Rainer radically juxtaposes different transmogrifications of *Trio A* as an experimental processes for structuring performance. I argue that through this practice Rainer not only exposes the persistent difficulties and assumptions of each existing mode of choreographic transmission, but locates within these difficulties new sites of artistic potential to reflexively confront the ideological beliefs that shape the creation and
circulation of choreographic legacy. Rainer utilizes a unique process of choreographic transmission to repeatedly resituate *Trio A*, a practice that actively reshapes her own history and legacy.

Working within existing systems of dance presentation and valuation, Rainer signals her engagement with methods of repertoire, reconstruction, and reperformance in recognizable ways so as to legibly situate *Trio A*. However, Rainer simultaneously reworks, moves between, and collapses these seemingly separate practices for choreographic transmission as a means of directly critiquing and confronting the systems within which *Trio A* circulates. The multiple modes of transmitting *Trio A* and numerous rearticulations of this dance that have been developed over more than fifty years collectively expose Rainer’s changing choreographic aims and artistic intentions.

*Trio A* has become a canonical work of postmodern dance. Arguably, the scholar most instrumental in the production of Rainer’s canonicity is Sally Banes. Banes’ 1978 16mm film of Rainer performing *Trio A* allowed the dance to be circulated to an extent that few other experimental choreographic works from the 1960s had achieved. Additionally, Banes’ 1980 monograph *Terpsichore in Sneakers* directly locates Rainer’s work as the identifiable center of discourse on postmodern dance. Banes reflects the laudatory treatment Rainer’s work received from dance critics like Jill Johnston in the *Village Voice*, asserting Rainer’s choreographic output during the 1960s as exemplary of an interconnected group of artists’ collective intervention in dance. Banes recognizes that even by 1980 Rainer had become a stand-in for an entire genre of dance: "the post-modern movement with all its diversity of interests, styles, and methods was collapsed by the public into a singer enterprise with Rainer in the lead." Within Rainer’s entire
choreographic oeuvre, Banes specifically signals *Trio A* as illustrative of the influential shift in dance practice that Rainer and her contemporaries effected:

> With *Trio A*, Rainer created a paradigmatic statement of the aesthetic goals of postmodern dance. [*Trio A*] exemplifies a new way of making and looking at dance, one that would influence a whole genre... I believe that *Trio A* is the signal work both for Rainer and for the entire post-modern dance.²

Banes dedicates nearly her entire treatment of Rainer to a discussion and analysis of *Trio A*, locating the work’s formalist movement analysis as a means for Rainer to propose a new anti-dramatic, anti-imagistic, and anti-participatory mode of choreography, which Banes defines as the postmodern intervention in dance.

Banes situates Rainer in a way that has directly influenced scholars, dance presenters, and museum curators for decades. Beyond *Terpsichore in Sneakers*, Banes continued to write extensively on American postmodern dance, solidifying her position on the topic and thereby vaulting Rainer’s significance. Banes is inescapable in a discussion of Rainer, as her language and tone reappear through the literature. I also recognize this inescapability in my project, as Banes also inflects my own writing on Rainer’s work. *Terpsichore in Sneakers* has become a canonical text in dance studies, and the book’s championing of Rainer is locatable as a point of justification for a continued reification of Rainer’s canonicity. While Banes has been instrumental in elevating *Trio A* as canonical, I argue that Rainer herself laid the foundation for *Trio A*’s canonicity in her own philosophical writing on this dance as well as the repetitive deployment of *Trio A* throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s. Through this Rainer cultivated a legibility of *Trio A*’s intended intervention into both dance practice and dance theory.

Rainer’s 1966 article “A Quasi Survey of Some ‘Minimalist’ Tendencies in the Quantitatively Minimal Dance Activity Midst the Plethora, or an Analysis of *Trio A*” presents Rainer’s theorization on the aesthetics and choreographic models of modernist theatrical dance.
In this essay Rainer gives readers a way to locate the ways she differently approaches compositional and spectatorial concerns in dance, explicating the new aims and processes that directed her choreographic practice during the creation of Trio A. The importance of this particular piece of Rainer’s writing to an understanding of Trio A was recognized by Jean Morrison Brown, who included Rainer’s text in her 1979 edited volume of choreographers’ writings, a move that Banes echoed in Terpsichore in Sneakers the following year, integrating into her book Rainer’s list of choreographic concerns that were invoked during the creation of Trio A. Through her article Rainer provides dance writers with a primary source material that elucidates and makes legible the specific modes in which she is working. The direct adoption and repetitive citation of Rainer’s writing in scholarly literature as a means to describe her work shows the influence Rainer’s own scholarly voice has had in shaping the discourse on her choreographic intervention and choreographic legacy.

Unlike most choreographic works, especially those that have been vaulted into the canon of choreographic masterworks, Trio A is not a singular dance. Rather, it has existed and continues to exist in several stagings other than its original performance. Rainer notes in her 1966 article that Trio A presents a “seeing difficulty,” and throughout the 1960s and early 1970s she intentionally and explicitly repurposed the dance to direct attention to each of the dance’s multiple “seeing difficulties.” Carrie Lambert-Beatty reveals the ways Trio A, and the specific mode of watching that it demands, allows the viewer to not only recognize persistent difficulties in the seeing of art, but locate how a confrontation with such difficulties became the explicit focus of Rainer’s creative process. Through an analysis of Trio A’s multiple transmogrifications, I further Lambert-Beatty’s argument to suggest that Rainer’s process of making her audiences keenly aware of Trio A’s seeing difficulties allowed her to directly articulate her philosophies on
dance in a way that made her choreographic interventions both apparent and understandable.

In repetitively shifting the presentation of Trio A, Rainer sought new ways to demonstrate and describe how Trio A functions as a means to theorize on both dance practice and spectatorship. Examining Trio A in its multiplicity, I suggest that Trio A is not single choreographic work, but a practice through which Rainer can continuously produce, mobilize, and redirect discourse. Thus, Trio A functions as a process for the articulation of choreographic legacy.

I draw from primary research in the Yvonne Rainer Papers at the Getty Research Institute to chart a stage history of Rainer’s performance works in the 1960s and early 1970s. Analyzing Rainer’s choreographic output during this period, I locate multiple reappearances of Trio A across numerous performance pieces. Connecting a descriptive movement analysis of these works to Rainer’s personal writings and choreographic notes, I reveal the ways Rainer has undertaken repetitive and reflexive re-engagement with her own choreographic material by which she explores new models for structuring the ways we see, experience, and understand her work. Situating Rainer’s works chronologically, I locate Trio A as a fraction or insertable that was variously and repeatedly integrated into her composite performances and lecture-demonstrations until 1974, when Rainer transitioned away from choreography to filmmaking. In her engagement with Trio A as a lecture-demonstration, Rainer directly articulates the concepts, strategies, and practices that were employed in the dance’s creation as well as its restaging. More than a performance piece, Trio A is an overt explication of Rainer’s creative process, a model for communicating her ideas and intentions in dance.

I connect my analysis of Trio A’s historical appearances in the 1960s and 1970s to Rainer’s later re-engagements with this dance since 1999, locating Trio A as an ongoing process
for Rainer’s articulation of choreographic legacy. I draw on videos of Rainer’s work in performance as well as my own contemporary observations of Trio A, both in rehearsal and performance. The first time I saw Trio A live was a performance by Rainer herself in 2010 at Judson Church as Trio A: Geriatric With Talking (2010), an experience which I might retrospectively locate as the moment that initiated my curiosity with this piece and its ever-evolving history. Four years later I followed Trio A to AXIS Dance Company in Oakland to observe as Linda K. Johnson rehearsed the next transmogrification of Rainer’s dance, this time recalibrated for performers in wheelchairs. Later that year I learned Trio A myself, working with Pat Catterson, who learned it from Rainer in 1969 and has become the dance’s most senior transmitter. I have since worked with both Catterson and Rainer to dance some of Trio A’s multiple transmogrifications, as well as present and participate in new iterations of the dance, myself extending Trio A’s evolution and perpetuating its legacy. Trio A has become part of my repertoire, a piece that I repetitively dance in my own studio practice, enacting the choreography to reassure and reinforce my own embodied knowledge, lest I forget its specificities. I also track my experience with this dance temporally, aware of how much time has passed since I last met with Catterson or Rainer to have my Trio A “tuned up,” as Rainer says. Through this ongoing engagement with Trio A I am both a participant in and observer of a network of authorized Trio A practitioners, giving me a unique experience of Rainer’s choreography as I move between and within embodied acts of transmission and the production of discourse.

I utilize my embodied knowledge of Trio A’s particularities to carefully parse the dance’s corporeal semantics and choreographic syntactics in each of its multiple reappearances throughout Rainer’s career. Outlining the precise and intentional variances between the dance’s
different deployments since 1966, I locate how Rainer situates new meanings onto Trio A, utilizing the piece to mobilize discourse on dance, the body, and choreographic legacy.

Generating Trio A

In 1965 Rainer spent six months working independently in her New York City studio, reflecting on her previous choreographic work and experimenting with movement material for a new performance piece. Two creative products that resulted from this introspective period have come to define Rainer’s entire career.

The first product was a short article published in the Tulane Drama Review entitled “Some Retrospective Notes on a Dance for 10 People and 12 Mattresses Called ‘Parts of Some Sextets,’ Performed at the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut, and Judson Memorial Church, New York, in March, 1965.” The article appears toward the end of the quarterly journal’s Winter 1965 issue, behind the full score for Allan Kaprow’s happening Eat, a Fluxus fold-out by George Maciunas, and a 25 page interview with choreographer Anna Halprin that Rainer had conducted. Rainer’s article on her own work includes a now famous single-sentence paragraph, un-highlighted and tucked into her postscript on the final page:

NO to spectacle no to virtuosity no to transformations and magic and make-believe no to the glamour and transcendency of the star image no to the heroic no to the anti-heroic no to trash imagery no to involvement of performer or spectator no to style no to camp no to seduction of spectator by the wiles of the performer no to eccentricity no to moving or being moved.³

Colloquially referred to as the “NO Manifesto,” this singular sentence has been excerpted from Rainer’s article to be reprinted and rearticulated an uncountable number of times. In each instance the “manifesto” is used as means of exemplifying the mindset behind Rainer’s
massively influential choreographic output as well as the ethos of postmodern dance during the 1960s and ‘70s “Judson Era.”

Also in the postscript to her reflection on *Parts of Some Sextets* Rainer articulates that the dance produced “an effect of nothing happening. The dance ‘went nowhere,’ did not develop, progressed as though on a treadmill or like a 10-ton truck stuck on a hill: it shifts gears, groans, sweats, farts, but doesn't move an inch. Perhaps next time my truck will make some headway; perhaps it will inch forward – imperceptibly.” Following *Parts of Some Sextets* Rainer chose to hone in on this “nothing happening” and “going nowhere” effect in her development of new choreographic material.

Rainer’s dances of the past three years had increasingly rejected the psychological, atmospheric, and intentionally theatrical. Setting out toward further distilling dance down to its seemingly most objective and neutral form, Rainer began to reduce or eliminate what she saw as unnecessary energy output in performance, discernable phrasing, projection of persona or narrative, direct acknowledgement of the audience, and any hierarchy between or emphasis of any particular movement over others. Rainer found the process of generating new work that fit this task to be slow coming, describing herself as working “doggedly every day, accumulating tiny bits of movement.” Often Rainer started her choreographic explorations with larger movements, then undertook a drawn-out process of examining the many ways each action could be made increasingly smaller and more specific until she felt the motion was suitably neutral, gestural, and task-like for use in her new work. This process was begun anew for each movement she developed; Rainer decidedly rejected the use of repetition and variation in her movements to ensure that each choreographic element was separately conceived and distinct from every other she had designed.
This focused movement experimentation resulted in the second major creative outcome of Rainer’s period of independent work, *Trio A*, a short movement phrase that took up the challenges set forth in her article’s postscript, intensified her movement aesthetic, and furthered her choreographic ideals. First presented at a work-in-progress showing in her studio on 26 November 1965, the dance was introduced with the provisional title *The Mind is a Muscle, Part 1*. The title signaled Rainer’s intention of expanding the choreographic material into an evening-length dance, for which this initial movement phrase would be the work’s first section.

By the end of 1965 the dance was taught to two of her colleagues from Judson Dance Theater, David Gordon and Steve Paxton. The work premiered at Judson Memorial Church on 10 January 1966 as part of a mixed program of eight pieces by Rainer, Gordon, and Paxton entitled *A Dance Concert of Old and New Works*. In addition to Rainer’s title announcing it as only the first segment of a larger work, *The Mind is a Muscle, Part 1* was explicitly framed as a work-in-progress in its program listing. *The Mind is a Muscle* continued to evolve over the following two years, expanding into a multipart evening-length performance piece for seven dancers interspersed with film and text. As the piece grew in length, Rainer’s original choreographic phrase was given the new, pragmatic title *Trio A* to distinguish it from other sections of the work. In the production it was performed by a group of three dancers and integrated alongside other movement sections that took different approaches to her idea of dance stripped of stylization, including a *Trio B* and *Trio A*\(^1\). Keeping with Rainer’s previous listing of this dance as “Part 1” of *The Mind is a Muscle*, *Trio A* remained the opening section of the larger work throughout its development. Following intermediary performances of the work in various venues, including a roller skating rink, *The Mind is a Muscle* was presented in its complete and final version in April 1968 at the Anderson Theater in New York.\(^{10}\)
Rainer never again staged *The Mind is a Muscle* following these performances and the piece as a whole was not preserved. Even through many of her original scores, “people plans,” and notes for the work’s various sections were saved, Rainer maintains that the piece cannot be faithfully reconstructed as too many of the performance details went undocumented. While the choreographic specifics of *The Mind is a Muscle* have mostly been lost, *Trio A* was actively maintained and has endured as an individual work.


Rainer describes *Trio A*, which is independent of music, as lasting approximately four and one-half to five minutes in length depending on the physical inclinations and pacing of the individual performer. The dance is comprised of a series of abstract gestures, quotidian activities, and geometric movements that progress in a state of continuous motion. The piece engages the body’s “actual weight, mass, and unenhanced physicality,” and its structure presents no climax or discernable trajectory of development.\(^{11}\) Rainer’s phrase ends in the same place it began; when her collection of movements brought her back to the same spot in her studio in which the phrase opened, she decided the dance was finished. Rainer’s dance, which was carefully designed and meticulously rehearsed, framed movement phrases that appear to lack structure as pieces of choreography and championed the neutral body in performance.
In *The Mind is a Muscle, Part 1* Rainer first staged *Trio A* as set of three simultaneously-occurring yet non-synchronized performances of the dance for two men and one woman. Since 1966 Rainer has repeatedly restructured the way this piece is performed to provide new ways of experiencing the dance on stage and on film. Some of the many iterations include a balletic solo version with added turns and jumps for dancer Peter Saul, a solo performed in tap shoes, a group work with the musical accompaniment of the Chambers Brothers’ rendition of “In the Midnight Hour,” and a retrograde version, to name only a few.

To highlight the multiple ways *Trio A* has been and can be presented as an individual piece of choreography apart from *The Mind is a Muscle*, Rainer has given performances of the dance under different titles, including *Convalescent Dance* (1967), *Trio A with Flags* (1970), *Trio A Pressured* (1999-Ongoing), *Trio A in Ten Easy Lessons* (2009), *Trio A: Geriatric With Talking* (2010), *Trio A Condensed* (2016), *Trio A: Horticultural Fragment* (2016), *Slow Dancing/Trio A* (2017), and *Trio A: a Baker’s Dozen* (2017). Beyond staging it as an individual work, Rainer has also integrated the choreography of *Trio A* into numerous of her other performance works: *Performance Demonstration # 1* (1968), *Rose Fractions* (1969), *Performance Fractions for the West Coast* (1969), *Connecticut Composite* (1969), *Continuous Project – Altered Daily* (1969-70), *This is the story of a woman who...* (1972-3), and *Rainer Variations* (2002). In each of these productions *Trio A* is repurposed as a tool for experimenting with collage techniques and exploring new models for structuring performance. Repeatedly returning to the same choreographic phrase and actively working to alter its context in each iteration, Rainer engages a practice of self-reflexive citation and variation that resists choreographic fixity. In each of *Trio A’s* returns Rainer resituates the dance to locate new difficulties in the production and reception art, investigating and exposing the artistic concerns
that she finds most pressing. Charting Trio A’s multiplicity both as a performance work and a teaching practice, I expose Rainer’s continuous use of this particular dance to communicate her philosophical interventions in dance practice, performance spectatorship, and choreographic legacy.

Teaching Trio A: Transmitting Legacy Through Repertoire

In addition to being a performance piece, Trio A has been a cornerstone of Rainer’s teaching work in dance. Throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s Rainer was approached to teach dance at numerous universities across the United States, both as a permanent faculty member and as a guest teacher during her own choreographic residencies. As part of her teaching work Rainer regularly staged Trio A with students, a coaching process that consistently took many hours over multiple days. Engaging Trio A in this way allowed Rainer to further capitalize on the dance, receiving important financial support and personal income to sustain her ongoing choreographic work. In her classes Rainer employed Trio A as a primary vehicle for educating students about her choreographic ideals and artistic concerns. This process served to frame discourse on Trio A throughout the 1960s and early 1970s while creating a network of dancers who were intimately familiar with this specific choreographic work, as well as the ways it
forwarded Rainer’s choreographic philosophies. Rainer’s first impression of Trio A’s function as a legacy practice was to position her as a “post-modern dance evangelist bringing movement to the masses.” Repetitively teaching the dance at college programs across the country to both dancers and untrained performers, then allowing those that knew the dance to teach it to others, led to a process of choreographic dissemination that was unprecedented in theatrical dance in the 1960s.

The teaching of Trio A provides Rainer the opportunity to fully articulate the internal structure and intentions of the dance. While the series of movements that comprise the piece appears to lack phrasing, Trio A is in actuality composed of several discrete movement sections separated by distinct changes in physical tasks and movement objectives. For performance, dancers are instructed to progress between sections without observable accent or pause, creating the appearance of smoothness and a constant state of transition during the dance. While teaching, Rainer also uses a wealth of imagery in her descriptions of individual movements, including a windmill, turtle, airplane, boomerangs, and Egyptian sculpture. Additionally, throughout the coaching process Rainer shares the concepts and ideas behind many important positions and key movements in the dance. Several of these moments in the dance reflect Rainer’s practice of employing abstracted references to other dance works or choreographic styles, including recognizable characteristics of Martha Graham’s dance technique, classical Indian dance forms, Donald O’Connor’s performance in the movie version of Singing in the Rain (1952), and Vaslav Nijinsky’s Afternoon of a Faune (1912) and The Rite of Spring (1913). In designing these movements in Trio A Rainer drew from her own training in ballet and modern dance as well as her experience watching dance, then distilled these motions into their most neutral and uninflected forms. This process of choreographically engaging and responding to characteristics
of other dances exemplifies Rainer’s approach to movement-as-task and movement-as-object. *Trio A* never repeats itself and each movement was developed independently, making each motion an individual and isolatable part. In this sense, Rainer created *Trio A* through collage techniques; she collected materials that were of interest to her and arranged them in a formal juxtaposition to “equalize and suppress hierarchical differentiations of meaning.”

In drawing on preexisting movements from virtuosic dance performances as source material for the creation of the *Trio A*, then intentionally and visibly distorting these movements, Rainer challenges notions of citationality and iterability in dance. Iterability, the capacity for something to be identically repeated, is constituted through the development of a recognizably unique signature of form that allows it to be read as itself in different contexts. Once the signature is understood as such, there simultaneously develops the possibility for the creation of an inauthentic copy, a counterfeit. The counterfeit’s form approximates the original, masquerading as an authentic copy with the intention of being read as genuine. When the signature is understood to testify to the existence of an authentic original, the existence of a counterfeit challenges our ability to discern the essential markers of authenticity. If the dance performances from which Rainer drew on in *Trio A* are argued to have their own signature recognizability, and therefore iterability, one should be able to reproduce them identically. However, in *Trio A* Rainer suggests the impossibility of identical reproducibility in performance. Highlighting herself as not-Graham, not-O’Connor, not-Nijinsky, she not only marks her counterfeiting as such, but intentionally abstracts her counterfeited material to such an extent that it is all but impossible to recognize the original source from which the movement was drawn. Rainer’s approach to citationality in her dance furthers the conceptual work of *Trio A* by rejecting the notion of authentic repeatability in dance.
Because one cannot clearly read the use of citation in Trio A during performances of the dance, Rainer shares descriptions and frameworks of her choreographic theme material in her teaching process. Sharing this information with her students offers transparency into her movement design and choreographic intentions. Through the teaching of Trio A Rainer instructs students not just how to physically perform the dance, but she also elucidates the ideals, concepts, structures, and working models that formed her choreographic process. Rainer frames this information not as tangential to the learning of the dance, but integral the understanding and performance knowledge of Trio A.

**Choreographic Layerings: The Mind is a Muscle and its In-Betweens, 1966-68**

During the first presentation of The Mind is a Muscle, Part 1 at Judson Church in January 1966, Trio A was performed twice in succession, extending the work to nine minutes in duration. Throughout the performance Alex Hay dropped wooden slats one at a time from the sanctuary’s choir balcony, releasing them with “metronomelike regularity.” Approximately 100 slats crashed onto the wooden floor of the nave over the course of the piece, creating a cacophony of sound that resonated throughout the sanctuary. Rainer has referred to this sound as music, and it
was an aspect of the work she had conceived early in its development. However, she hadn’t intended the area of the stage onto which the slats were dropped to be a bare wooden floor, but rather an area covered in mattresses. On the first page of a notebook that contains Rainer’s early notes taken during the creation of *The Mind is a Muscle*, she outlines her idea for “dancing on an uneven or soft surface - forgotten about in Sextets. A floor strewn thickly with sticks. 3-4 feet long. ½ the area covered by single layer of mattresses. Throughout piece sticks are thrown down from above on one side of stage until they form a mound.” This original idea was a variation on her use of mattresses in *Parts of Some Sextets* and foreshadowed Rainer’s integration of mats into the final version of *The Mind is a Muscle* in 1968.

This stage arrangement, with mattresses covering the floor, would have dampened and altered the sound of the wood as it landed. Instead, the effect of the slats hitting the wood floor caused attendees at the first Judson Church show to complain about the relentlessness of the sound. Rainer recalls how a man seated in the front row of the audience was so averse to her music, that he “picked up a slat, placed a large white handkerchief on one end and waved it around in a gesture of capitulation.” Regardless of this audience response, Rainer retained the dropping of wooden slats onto the stage space to create a sound environment in *The Mind is a Muscle*.

Following this public work-in-progress performance, *The Mind is a Muscle* was presented as a full work in Washington, D.C. at the NOW Festival on 29 April 1966. The expanded 40-minute performance was staged at the America on Wheels National Arena, a large roller-skating rink. Rainer had previously performed at the Arena three years prior, as a member of Judson Dance Theater in the group’s *Concert #5*, during which she premiered *Terrain* (1963). To account for the Arena’s cavernous space as well as expand on the multiple ways her
work could challenge spectatorship, Rainer had an accordion-paneled wall of mirrors specially built as the décor for *The Mind is a Muscle*. Rainer had envisioned that when the audience was seated at a rather close distance, the mirrored wall would allow them to “observe simultaneously a performer walking from left to right and his multiple reflections—some of them walking in the same direction and some of them in the opposite direction.”21 This would give the audience multiple, if fragmented, perspectives of the work in performance, providing different ways of seeing and watching the dance. However, the elevated seating arrangement of the audience provided a viewing angle that did not allow for Rainer’s intended effect. Looking slightly downward at the mirrors from their seats, the audience could not benefit from a reflection of the dance, but rather saw mostly a reflection of the Arena’s floor.

![America on Wheels National Arena, Washington, D.C. Photographer Unknown.](image)

By this first performance of *The Mind as a Muscle* as a full work Rainer was already actively exploring different ways of presenting *Trio A*. *The Mind is a Muscle* opened with *Trio A* in its first formulation, as a trio for two men and one woman, performed by Rainer alongside William Davis and David Gordon. For this expanded version of the piece Rainer also created a balletic version of *Trio A* specifically tailored to dancer Peter Saul, a former soloist with American Ballet Theatre and member of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company at the time.
Rainer noted that while teaching the work to Saul, "wherever possible I stuck in a pirouette or jump." Rainer situated this dance as the final section of the evening-length work, and titled the reworking of her choreography Lecture, directing attention to the intended educational or explicative function that it served in her work. The intentional integration of conspicuously balletic movement into the choreography of Trio A may appear to negate Rainer’s aim of presenting dance characterized by a neutral doing and uninflected use of energy. However, I argue that such a variation foregrounds Trio A’s conceptual logic by drawing increased attention to the ways it exhibits Rainer’s assertions about the aesthetic intentions and compositional structures of classical and modern dance, showing how her approach to dance is an intentionally distinct departure from these earlier choreographic modes. Thus, Lecture actively demonstrates for the audience Rainer’s intervention into dance composition.

As with Parts of Some Sextets, Rainer authored an article on the choreographic, theoretical, and aesthetic concerns she engaged in the creation and performance of Trio A: “A Quasi Survey of Some ‘Minimalist’ Tendencies in the Quantitatively Minimal Dance Activity Midst the Plethora, or an Analysis of Trio A.” Applying Rainer’s choreographic intentions as outlined in this article to an analysis of Lecture, I expose how the piece functions exactly the way its title suggests, as a lecture on her ideas. Lecture also foreshadows the ways Rainer would later deploy Trio A in her public lecture-demonstrations in the late 1960s. In her article Rainer suggests that

Much of western dancing we are familiar with can be characterized by a particular distribution of energy: maximal output or “attack” at the beginning of a phrase, followed by abatement and recovery at the end, with energy often arrested somewhere in the middle. This means that one part of the phrase—usually the part that is the most still—becomes the focus of attention.
In the composition of _Trio A_ Rainer rejected this mode of energy distribution in dance by producing choreography that exhibits a continuity of movement with no observable accent. While _Lecture_ re-inserts dynamic energy shifts in ways _Trio A_ actively omits them, it does so in a way opposite to energy usage in Rainer’s characterization of Western theatrical dance. The energetic “attacks” of _Lecture_ are inserted wherever possible, without any attempt to follow the format Rainer notes is typical of ballet and modern dance: maximal output, then an abatement, and concluding with recovery. The attacks of _Lecture_ are not integral structural progressions.

This is made apparent for the audience through the positioning of _Lecture_ as the final section of _The Mind is a Muscle_. Appearing after _Trio A_ in its original form, _Lecture_ is a conspicuous variation of the dance, with its punctuation with "balletic furbelows."24 Through this arrangement, in _Lecture_ the focus becomes not the moments of the dance that are the most still, which Rainer highlights as a characteristic of ballet and modern dance, but the moments that are the most energetic. Rainer emphasizes her choice to present the balletic movements in _Lecture_ with their full energy output, noting that ballet movements necessarily require dancerly technique to be perceived as ballet, and therefore the dancer must perform “with all the necessary nuances of energy distribution that will produce the look of climax.” In _Lecture_ attention is drawn to the disruption of the choreographic phrase, as Saul’s climactic balletic movements rupture the placidity of the dance’s energy.

Rainer further asserts that in Western theatrical dance the presentation of energy has been implemented to exhibit “heroic more-than-human technical feats.”25 In _The Mind is a Muscle_ Rainer actively removes the appearance of the heroic (with an emphatic “no”) and any overt presentation of technical feats, instead searching for choreographic alternatives that focus on banality, pedestrian action, and the quotidian, revealing movement without the artifice of concert
dance. In such a context Rainer argues that any “display of technical virtuosity and the
display of the dancer’s specialized body no longer make any sense.”

With Lecture situated as the final section of The Mind is a Muscle, its moments of ballet technique are conspicuously out
of place in the work as a whole. Until this moment Rainer presents only matter-of-fact movement
and choreographic structures in which skill is difficult to perceive. This integration of apparent
energy and balletic virtuosity in radical juxtaposition to the uninflected quality of The Mind is a
Muscle emphasizes the ways Rainer’s choreographic structures depart from traditional concert
dance and reinforces the shift in dance aesthetics she forwards in the work.

Beyond departing from ballet and modern dance structures in her choreographic practice,
Rainer asserts that the modes in which these performance genres display the body in
performance has “exhausted itself, closed back on itself, and perpetuates itself solely by
consuming its own tail.” The ouroboros, an image from ancient Egyptian iconography
depicting a serpent or dragon eating its own tail, symbolizes a self-reflexivity and introspection.

Trio A as the first section of The Mind is a Muscle, functionally the work’s head, is explicitly
connected to its tail, Lecture, and through these two sections of the work Rainer demonstrates
her own choreographic self-reflexivity. She repurposes ballet technique, drawing from her own
training in dance, digesting the material and incorporating it into her new work. Where Trio A
takes ballet and engages it in ways that make skill difficult to locate, Lecture engages ballet in a
way where the balletic elements directly refer to themselves as such. In their recognizability as
ballet yet separation from ballet phrasing, these dance elements become objects within the scope
of Rainer’s choreographic structures. In Lecture the elements of ballet technique are discrete
tasks and singular actions for the dancer to accomplish, much like the task structures that form
The Mind is a Muscle’s other sections. While Trio A represents a removal of fanciful elements in
dance, the re-introduction of these fanciful articulations exemplifies Rainer’s notion of dance as task, thereby maintaining her conceptual strictures for *Trio A*.

This version of *The Mind is a Muscle*, including Saul’s performance of Lecture, was presented again at Judson Church on 22-24 May 1966. For these three performances Rainer re-introduced the dropping of wood slats onto the performance area, but shifted their use from *Trio A* to Lecture. Through this, Rainer maintained her practice of developing new ways to present the choreography for *Trio A* while initiating a new practice of layering ideas from multiple transmogrifications together, which she would continue to engage throughout her career work in dance.

Rainer continued to develop and expand *The Mind is a Muscle* in the months following these performances at Judson Church, while also creating new work. In late 1966 Rainer struggled with a serious intestinal illness that led to emergency surgery and an extended hospitalization. As part of her recovery process after her release from the hospital Rainer employed *Trio A* as a rehabilitative physical practice. More than just a performance work, *Trio A* now became an exercise routine for Rainer, a rigorous yet familiar physicality that engaged her whole body. During this recovery period Rainer was invited to perform at the *Week of Angry Arts Against the War in Vietnam*, a series of art and performance events featuring New York artists who used their work to protest and dissociate themselves from U.S foreign policy. Rainer performed as part of *Dance Protest*, an evening of performances by several choreographers that was held at Hunter College on 2 February 1967. For the event Rainer presented the choreography for *Trio A* as she had been using it in her rehabilitation practice. To emphasize her repurposing of *Trio A* as a therapeutic process, Rainer titled the performance *Convalescent Dance*. Clothed entirely in white, Rainer’s appearance evoked hospital dress and
her performance appeared to connect the feebleness of her health to the physical struggle of those recovering from combat injury in Vietnam. While Rainer could not present Trio A’s choreography with the same strength she had previously, she considered Convalescent Dance to be “the most perfectly realized version of the sequence, since her convalescent state suffused her performance with exactly the right quality of lightness.”

Rather than detracting from the intended qualities of the dance, the task of performing Trio A while convalescing emphasized the intended neutrality and anti-virtuosity of the dance.

While Rainer did not alter her choreographic phrase, her choice of costume and the situatedness of the dance within the Week of Angry Arts concert drew direct political implications for the audience. In this piece Rainer shifted the context and discourse of Trio A, not its choreography, as a means to alter the reception of her work. Rainer’s redeployment of Trio A exposes how her abstract and neutral choreographic phrase can be reframed to shift spectatorial impressions of her work, and Rainer explicitly utilizes this shift in frame to elucidate a recognition of Trio A’s intended presentation of the uninflected body in performance. Convalescent Dance is not an example of dance as protest, but instead an example of the way Rainer actively deploys Trio A in a process that both exposes and redirects the production of meaning through spectatorship.

Rainer in Convalescent Dance at Hunter Playhouse, 2 February 1967. Photo by Peter Moore.
Following her recovery, Rainer began actively performing and choreographing again, developing new choreographic and film material that would become additional sections of *The Mind is a Muscle*. In July 1967 she performed an abridged version of the piece, *The Mind is a Muscle (Excerpts)*, with William Davis at the Tenth Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto, Italy. The performance featured four sections from the larger work: *Trio A*, *Film*, *Mat*, and *Lecture*. For this performance *Trio A* was staged for the first time as a duet, continuing Rainer’s multiple ways of arranging the work in performance.

The fourth iteration of the Mind is a Muscle was presented 13 January 1968 at Brandeis University, and in April 1968 Rainer presented the final version of the piece at the Anderson Theater in New York. Peter Saul was unavailable for these performances, leaving Rainer without a performer for *Lecture*. She envisioned Jacques D’Amboise, a principal dancer with New York City Ballet, in the role, as well as Merce Cunningham. She eventually invited Cunningham to perform the piece, which he declined. Eventually, Rainer decided to perform *Lecture* herself, but reconceived the dance. Rather than dancing *Trio A* with its ballet additions, she performed the dance wearing tap shoes. While changing how the choreography was presented, Rainer retained the use of wooden slats, which were hurled onto the stage from atop a ladder hidden in the wings. During this solo Rainer also employed a new scenic element, a large wooden grid that spanned the stage’s proscenium. During her performance the grid descended, remained fully lowered for one minute, then ascended back into the theatre’s fly space.
In this final version of *The Mind is a Muscle* Rainer also referenced elements from two pervious performances of *Trio A*: the April 1966 early version of the work in Washington, D.C. and *Convalescent Dance*. During *Trio A* Rainer included a “highly reflective wall of mylar stretching from wing to wing and floor to flies” that lasted through the mid-way point of *Trio B*.\(^{37}\) This chrome metalized film backdrop referenced the mirrored wall that Rainer designed for the first performance of *The Mind is a Muscle*. Similar to her experience with the audience arrangement at the National Arena, the Anderson Theatre’s elevated proscenium stage again stymied Rainer’s intention of using mirrors, so she instead employed this reflective surface, creating a new variation on her original concept for *Trio A*’s decor.\(^{38}\) Rainer also repeated her use of all-white costume, which she had employed in *Convalescent Dance*. In every section of the performance at the Anderson Theatre a different dancer wore all white, which gave them each the appearance of a soloist during the evening. This final iteration of *The Mind is a Muscle* presented not only a juxtaposition of multiple *Trio As*, but also an amalgamation of the different previous iterations of the dance that layered and collapsed Rainer’s ideas into new self-reflexive examinations of the history of her creative process between 1966 and 1968.
**Trio A as Public Lecture: Demonstrating Choreographic Practice**

Between the premiere of *The Mind is a Muscle, Part 1* in 1966 and her transition away from choreography into filmmaking in 1974, Rainer reformatted Trio A’s choreographic phrase and repurposed the piece in multiple ways. Repeatedly returning to Trio A, Rainer presented the dance in a new form or format at least once each year, continuously providing new ways of experiencing the dance in ways that confronted notions of choreographic fixity. During this period of Rainer’s choreographic work she also produced collage-style pieces that she titled lecture-demonstrations, performance fractions, and composites. Rainer deployed Trio A as an insertable into these pieces, often juxtaposing multiple articulations of the dance within a performance to directly explicate the ways this particular choreographic phrase can be mobilized to communicate her philosophical positions on both dance practice and spectatorship. While Trio A had been developed though Rainer’s examination of the formal qualities of movement, the multiple reemploys of this dance were utilized to directly challenge the production of choreographic legacy while simultaneously reinforcing Trio A’s continuing presence as a repertory dance.

Following the final performances of *The Mind is a Muscle* at the Anderson Theater in 1968 Rainer continued her experimentation with staging Trio A in different transmogrifications. Later that year she was invited to participate in *A Series of Lectures in Connection with Avant-Garde Dancers* at the Library & Museum of Performing Arts at Lincoln Center in New York.\(^{39}\) Rather than prepare a traditional lecture, Rainer chose instead to develop a mixed-media format that would be both a discussion and demonstration of her work. She titled this lecture-event *Performance Demonstration #1*. The program note for the event on 16 September 1968 announces that the “presentation—which will include live performance, music, film, slides, and
verbal taped material—will vary according to Miss Rainer’s concerns of the moment.”

Rainer had only recently begun to employ multimedia collage and spoken text in her performance work, and Performance Demonstration #1 was an extension of the techniques and concerns she developed in the creation of The Mind Is a Muscle.

Having worked on The Mind is a Muscle for over two years, creating various iterations, her creative process had also come to focus on the repeated expansion, revising, and re-presenting of her performance works. Performance Demonstration #1 both continued and foregrounded this shift from her intention of developing wholly new work to a creative practice that examined the different ways existing work could be rethought and reworked. Rainer confessed that Performance Demonstration #1 “might be called ‘in progress’ in that it continues to be rearranged and added to.”

In Performance Demonstration #1 Rainer highlighted her interest in the process of rehearsal, reframing it as not merely an unseen series of events and procedures engaged in the creation of a work, but as an event worthy of significance in itself. In thinking about restructuring and interrogating her existing performance strategies, Rainer noted that “the rehearsal presents a new area of focus: my role of boss-lady to my people-material, the ‘people-material’ as responding human beings, the tentativeness of decision-making, the revelation or lack of revelation of the boss’ thought process.”

Choosing to go beyond referencing or analyzing her rehearsal process, Rainer developed a performance format that focused on directly exhibiting rehearsal as an ongoing practice.

For Performance Demonstration #1 Rainer selected to engage Trio A as a tool to reveal her rehearsal strategy and compositional process. During the lecture-event Trio A was first performed in full by Steve Paxton as a solo to the musical accompaniment of The Chambers Brothers’ “In the Midnight Hour.” With a duration of five minutes and thirty seconds, the song
roughly matched the time it took Paxton to perform *Trio A*. This was the first time Rainer had staged the dance with music (aside from the wooden slat “music”) and she built upon her use of popular songs as atmospheric musical interludes in *The Mind is a Muscle*. Following Paxton’s performance, *Trio A* was staged again, danced for the first time by an untrained dancer, Frances Brooks. In presenting a performer without a background in dance, Rainer demonstrated how *Trio A* democratized performance. Additionally, Brooks’ performance was overlaid with a pre-recorded tape of Rainer reading an excerpt from her article “A Quasi Survey…” which described for the audience her choreographic concerns, giving them a tool by which to read and understand the dance as they watched it in performance. This segued into a third presentation of *Trio A*, this time by Becky Arnold, who only knew a portion of the dance. As Arnold progressed through *Trio A* Rainer stood on stage, giving her corrections on the movement and teaching her further sections of the dance beyond what she had previously learned. During this teaching of *Trio A* Rainer had planned another event to occur simultaneously: three minutes into the section a buzzer sounded, alerting a group of 15-20 people to begin walking back and forth across the stage, putting down and picking up books and small articles that they had brought with them. As they crossed the stage, these additional performers jostled Rainer and Arnold as well as partially obscured the audience’s view of Rainer teaching the dance. This continued for two minutes until a second buzzer sounded, which marked the conclusion of the section and cued the performers to exit the stage.  

In each of these iterations Rainer layered *Trio A* with yet another seeing difficulty, simultaneously revealing and obscuring the dance.

By presenting these three performances of *Trio A* in succession, Rainer juxtaposed the different ways the concerns and aspects of her work could be approached and communicated. Articulating the multiple aims and facets of her choreographic intentions and creative models,
this format exemplifies her focus on presenting the relationship between process and product in dance. In this performance format Rainer created a model through which she could reframe her previous choreographic output and create a collage of representations of her work that blurred the distinction between rehearsal, performance, and lecture.

Rainer repeated *Performance Demonstration #1* in March 1969 at the Pratt Institute, presenting the work in a slightly different format. For this event *Trio A* was presented twice, as a performance and a rehearsal event. In the demonstration Rainer coached Barbara Lloyd in the dance. Lloyd, who had performed in *The Mind is a Muscle* and already knew *Trio A*, didn’t need to be taught the work, but Rainer was able to correct details of her performance, giving the audience added perspective on the specificity and imagery of the dance. During this coaching the cast’s other dancers performed *Trio A* around them, allowing the audience to compare different performances of the work simultaneously. This version of Rainer’s lecture-event concluded with a performance of *Trio A* with “In the Midnight Hour.” Resituating the performance of *Trio A* after rather than before the segment featuring its rehearsal provided the audience a greater insight into the work and an increased ability to read Rainer’s choreography.

Becky Arnold and Yvonne Rainer in *Performance Demonstration #1* at the Library & Museum of Performing Arts, Lincoln Center, 16 September 1968. Photo by Peter Moore.
Fractions, Composites, and Insertables

Between the two showings of Performance Demonstration #1 Rainer presented Rose Fractions at the Billy Rose Theater in New York in February 1969. Her first evening-length work since the Mind is a Muscle, the show furthered Rainer’s interest in collage formats and the use of non-professional dancers in the development of new performance events. Rainer remarked that the difference between these two evening-length works “lay in the rambling construction of Fractions and its constant turning over of the material, in contrast to the thorough and somewhat didactic investigations in each section of Muscle.” Again engaging Trio A as a collage fragment, Rainer gave the dance its own section at the end of the performance, during which it was performed twice, first by five non-professional dancers and then by five professional dancers with the accompaniment of “In the Midnight Hour.” For this performance Rainer reworked and rearticulated the two solo performances from the first iteration of Performance Demonstration #1, staging them as quintets (with Brooks and Paxton each joined by four other performers) and reversing their order, providing a different experience of witnessing the dance.

Rainer continued to rework the multi-media form she had designed for Performance Demonstration #1 and Rose Fractions in the development Performance Fractions for the West Coast. She presented three articulations of this work, at the Vancouver Art Gallery on 2 April, Old Los Angeles Music Conservatory on 14 April, and Mills College in Oakland, CA on 25 April 1969. These three performances included local participants, most of which were college students and not trained dancers, who filled the work’s group sections alongside Rainer. Each performance included Trio A and its rearticulation with “In the Midnight Hour.” As in Rose Fractions, these versions of Trio A were situated at the conclusion of the performance, although
the Vancouver performance organized the work’s sections slightly differently, with Rainer’s film *Rhode Island Red* situated between *Trio A* and “In the Midnight Hour.”

A dress rehearsal for *Performance Fractions for the West Coast #3* at Mills College was filmed and aired by KQED, San Francisco’s public access television station. In this performance Rainer dances *Trio A* three times, each time moving further downstage before beginning the dance again. The first time she performs the work she does so as a solo in silence. As she initiates the choreography a second time, “In the Midnight Hour” begins and a collection of nine other performers enter the space behind her, each attempting to follow Rainer in the dance and learn its choreography during the performance. Rainer proceeds through the dance at such a quick pace that she is able to begin the dance again before the song concludes. She progresses approximately a third of the way through *Trio A* before the music fully finishes, and the lights fade to black, cutting off the third performance. *Performance Fractions for the West Coast* reworks Rainer’s presentation of a *Trio A* rehearsal. Rather than guiding the students in the dance they are tasked with learning the choreography in real-time on stage, attempting to match their movements as closely as possible to those of Rainer. As *Trio A* never repeats and follows no patterned movement structure, the task is a clear challenge for the students, who fumble through the work at the rear of the performance area. This serves to demonstrate for the audience Trio A’s persistent presentation of material, a core choreographic concept in the creation of the work.

Working with large groups became a focus of Rainer’s work in the ensuing years. In the summer of 1969 Rainer and her company were in residence at Connecticut College during the American Dance Festival, an annual summer school that attracted dance students from across the United States to work with a collection of leading choreographers. Each student who participated
in Rainer’s residency that summer learned Trio A. Rainer divided the large group of students three repertory groups, led by David Gordon, Becky Arnold, and Barbara Lloyd. As members of the original cast of The Mind is a Muscle, Gordon and Arnold had both learned the choreography directly from Rainer, although at different times. Lloyd, however, was never formally taught the dance, but rather learned the choreography by watching it in rehearsal and performance, then received coaching from Rainer (including during Performance Demonstration #1 at Pratt). As a result of their different experiences learning the dance, there were discrepancies and inconsistencies between their performance and teaching of Trio A. These distinctions were clear to those who were participating in the program. Pat Catterson, who attended that summer and has since became a custodian of Rainer’s dances, remembers being able to watch a student perform Trio A and immediately know which teacher had transmitted the work to them.

At Connecticut College Rainer developed a new collage performance work, Connecticut Composite, which combined pieces of her existing work alongside new choreographic material. This evening-length work involved the 80 students who were attending the program, and the performance was presented in five interconnected spaces on the main floor of the school’s gymnasium building. In the east gym space Rainer presented Trio A in yet another new articulation: Trio A (Continuous). Over the course of the evening students performed the dance one at a time in succession, with a new dancer entering and beginning the dance as soon as one finished and exited. The audience was free to move throughout the various performance areas during the course of the evening, choosing when and how long to watch Trio A. In this work not only did Rainer present a new way of staging the dance, but also allowed for the audience to determine their viewing experience.
During the residency Rainer also worked on expanding and refining new choreographic material that she had begun to develop earlier that year with her company, referring to this new material as *Continuous Project*. A rehearsal of this material was included in *Performance Demonstration #1* at Pratt, and the work was performed that May at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The choreographic ideas used in this work were further developed during *Performance Fractions for the West Coast*, and additional material was added during her residency at Connecticut College, where it was integrated it as a section of *Connecticut Composite*. Rainer perceives these multiple performances not as wholly separate works, but as overlapping extensions of the same format that focuses on presenting fragments from existing work along with slides, sound, voice recordings, spoken monologues, and any other new material she was developing.

Following her time at Connecticut College, Rainer received increased invitations to perform her work at universities and prepared to begin touring with her company. In November of 1969 Rainer sent a memorandum to her production agency, New York Review Presentations,
outlining the details for any college or theatre that was interested in a performance by her
and her group. The letter asserted that *Performance Demonstration #1* would be called
*Continuous Project—Altered Daily.*

Like the performance works that evolved into *Continuous Project—Altered Daily*, the
piece was “was constructed of interchangeable units of material, some very elaborate and
requiring the whole group, other units being solos that could be done at any time, or duets and
trios.”*51 Trio A* persisted as a component of Rainer’s composite work, including in *Continuous
Project—Altered Daily*. Many choices of when and where to deploy Rainer’s choreographic
units in this work was left to the dancers, allowing for *Trio A* to appear at different points and in
different contexts within the larger piece. David Gordon regularly “fell back on doing the
sequence whenever he felt he might run out of things to do.”*52 While *Trio A* was not selected as a
component for every performance of *Continuous Project—Altered Daily*, it recurred multiple
times and in various articulations throughout the evolution of the work. As the piece continued to
be performed, Rainer “supported the process of ‘erosion’ and reconstruction” that characterized
its continual development, allowing for several of the different articulations of *Trio A* to become
a part of the piece.*53 As *Continuous Project—Altered Daily* evolved and changed with each
performance, Rainer slowly allowed the dancers to increasingly have greater autonomy in the
structuring their performances, even allowing them to substitute their own material in place of
her original components.

In September 1970 Rainer was invited to participate in the *People’s Flag Show* at Judson
Church. Organized by John Hendricks and Jean Tochte, the exhibition was a designed as protest
against flag desecration laws, as well as a direct response to the conviction of gallery owner
Stephen Radich for exhibiting a show featuring sculpture by Mark Morrell that prosecutors
argued desecrated the American flag. At the time Rainer had been working on another show, *WAR*, in which the American flag was used as a prop to reference the theme of nationalist conflict and connect her piece to the subject of U.S involvement in foreign conflict. For the *People’s Flag Show*, Rainer “felt a need for a statement with stronger political overtones” than *WAR*. Thinking about other aspects of performance that were contentious for confronting taboos and indecency laws, Rainer chose to combine the flag with public nudity, as it “seemed a double-barred attack on repression and censorship.” In *Convalescent Dance* Rainer had previously reframed *Trio A* as a protest against government policy, and for the *People’s Flag Show* she again chose to mobilize *Trio A* as a political statement, submitting *Trio A With Flags* to the event at Judson Church. On 9 November 1970, Rainer and five dancers gathered in the church’s sanctuary, where the exhibit was installed. They each tied a three by five foot American flag around their necks like a bib, then undressed and proceeded to collectively perform *Trio A* twice. While the use of nudity was a criminally punishable act, no event organizers or member of the audience interfered with the performance, and the work was filmed for television by NBC and Global Village.

Following this performance Rainer allowed *Trio A* to a become unit in *Continuous Project—Altered Daily*, which by late 1970 was being presented alongside *WAR*. In these performances both pieces were staged simultaneously, but in separate spaces, and the audience was invited to move between the two works at their discretion. Rainer was scheduled to perform at the Smithsonian Museum of History and Technology in Washington, D.C. a few weeks following the *People’s Flag Show*, and she selected to present this program for the engagement. *WAR* was staged with a large group of local participants in the museum’s Pendulum Room, and *Continuous Project—Altered Daily* was performed in museum’s large Flag
Hall, which exhibited the massive Star Spangled Banner. From Flag Hall one could look through a large circular hole in the floor, down to the Pendulum Room one level below. While the pieces were situated on different levels, the audience could witness portions of both performances simultaneously.

To further connect these works and directly relate her protest statement to the historic Star Spangled Banner, which formed a backdrop to the performance, Rainer wanted to include *Trio A With Flags* in this version of *Continuous Project—Altered Daily*. She knew this would be a deliberately political and emotionally loaded artistic action, as did presenters at the Smithsonian, who requested that the dance not be staged in this manner. Rainer informed Steve Paxton of this, yet he chose to perform a solo version of *Trio A With Flags* in the work in defiance of the Smithsonian’s wishes. During the company’s on-site rehearsal Paxton entered the space, donned a flag around his neck, undressed, and began to perform *Trio A*. A female museum employee, backed by two security guards, quickly intervened to stop Paxton’s performance. The employee had to physically interfere with Paxton’s performance to stop him, after which he took off the flag and handed it to her, standing completely nude in the space. Rainer and Paxton both argued with the employee’s decision to censor the dance, citing representations of nudity and the flag in other artworks housed in the museum to their defense, but eventually conceded to not stage *Trio A With Flags* during the public performance. Through this act of censorship Rainer’s piece accomplished its aims, simultaneously confronting legal constraints on free speech in art as well as exposing the ways arts institutions reinforce these laws.

In response to the museum’s intervention into her work, Rainer organized an open dialogue between the audience, dancers, and museum presenters that directly followed their performance the following evening. During this dialogue Jim Morris, the director of performing
arts at the museum, explained that *Trio A With Flags* was cut from the performance as the display of public nudity was illegal in Washington D.C. and that the performance could be interpreted as a desecration of the flag. Beyond possible legal ramifications resulting from such a performance for both the performers and the museum, Morris also contended that the use of nudity and the flag might damage the reputation of the museum, which as a public, tax-supported institution, needed to be mindful of what its attendees might find objectionable.\(^6^3\)

A few weeks following the Smithsonian performance, Rainer staged *Trio A With Flags* during an untitled Grand Union performance at NYU’s Loeb Student Center.\(^6^4\) For this performance Rainer invited a group of ten dancers who were learning *Trio A* from Barbara Lloyd in a weekly class that was held at Rainer’s loft on Greene Street.\(^6^5\) Pat Catterson, who had learned *Trio A* during Rainer’s residency at Connecticut College and was attending Lloyd’s class, was one of the invited students.\(^6^6\) It was for this performance that Catterson developed a retrograde version of *Trio A*. Catterson recalls that she was so nervous about performing nude that she chose to design a task for herself that would distract her from these feelings. She had been experimenting with backwards manipulation of choreography in her own work and believed that the solution to her nervousness was to work out *Trio A* in retrograde, spending three nights working intensely on this task in preparation for the performance with Grand Union.\(^6^7\) While Rainer had invited ten dancers from Lloyd’s class, Catterson was one of only two who arrived at the performance to participate, something she only discovered when she got up from the audience to join the six Grand Union dancers for the performance of *Trio A With Flags*. Catterson didn’t know the dance as well in retrograde as she did forwards and she progressed slowly through the work, so much so that the other performers finished *Trio A* before her and exited the stage. Realizing she was the only person still dancing, she quickly forgot the
choreography, and in her nervousness quickly performed the first movement of *Trio A*, which would have been her last in the retrograde sequencing, and retook her place in the audience without completely performing the dance.

Almost a full year later, in October 1971, Catterson performed *Trio A* in retrograde again, this time fully clothed, as part of a concert of work she shared with Douglass Dunn at the Merce Cunningham Studio. While Catterson’s nervousness around performing nude was the initial impulse for her development of *Trio A* in retrograde, her continued interest in this version of the dance stemmed from her affective experience performing the dance; whenever Catterson finished dancing *Trio A* she desired to dance it again. She wrote, “If I could do it retrograde, I could do it end to end continuously, forward and backward.” The development of a retrograde *Trio A* not only revealed a different way to experience Rainer’s choreography, but also presented a new, alternate possibility for performing the dance multiple times in succession.

Catterson also began teaching *Trio A* in 1971. Rainer was receiving continued requests to teach as well as increased touring opportunities, which demanded further commitments with Grand Union. This precluded her from committing to teach every group, class, or individual dancer who wanted to learn *Trio A*. While on tour in Minneapolis Rainer met two women who were interested in learning the dance, and hearing they would be visiting New York that summer she directed them to Catterson, from whom they learned the dance. That fall Catterson was again called on to teach *Trio A*, this time in place of Rainer at the School of Visual Arts during another of Rainer’s extended hospitalizations. While working with the SVA students Catterson developed her second rearticulation of *Trio A*. Hearing that Rainer was in the hospital, the students wanted to send a gesture of support, so Catterson arranged to bring a group from the class to Saint Vincent’s, where Rainer was staying. When the group arrived Catterson phoned
Rainer and asked her to look out her window to the street below, where on the opposite sidewalk her students were performing fragments of Trio A as they walked up and down the block.

After this hospital stay Rainer intensified her work in film, developing stand-alone films as well as creating footage intended to be integrated into a performance work, which become This is the story of a woman who.... As with The Mind is a Muscle and Rose Fractions, in the creation of this new work Rainer integrated films, slide projections, spoken dialogue, tape-recorded text, props, commercially-released music, and dance (including her own existing short choreographic works). After initial performances in October and November of 1972, the work premiered in March 1973. This is the story of a woman who... is a two-hour dance-theatre work for two women and one man, and was performed by John Erdman, Yvonne Rainer, and Shirley Soffer. The work incorporated Rainer’s dance works Inner Appearances (1972/1973), Three Satie Spoons (1961), Walk, She Said (1971), and Trio A.71

Trio A is the last dance segment in This is the story of a woman who..., appearing shortly before the conclusion of the piece. In this performance Rainer presents three new variations on Trio A staged together in succession. First, both Rainer and Erdman mark through the dance together. This revision of Trio A’s choreography presents a new way for Rainer to stage a rehearsal scenario within the context of her performance work, and it exhibits a further intervention into the ways Trio A confronts the presentation of energy in performance. Marking choreography, also referred to as walking the choreography, is a process wherein a dancer progresses through a dance with diminished intensity. Generally used as a rehearsal process, marking allows for the dancer to reinforce their knowledge of the dance’s movement sequence and progression through space without actually performing the full physicality of the
choreography. Marking is a mental task and memory exercise, shifting focus from the performance of the dance to an articulation of the structure of the work. In the process of outlining the choreography, the dancer often substitutes choreographic elements with gestures that are representations of the movement so as to further decrease energy output. In such a situation a performance of the choreographic element becomes unimportant if the element can be referenced in such a way that is clear to both the dancer and rehearsal director that the choreography is demonstrably understood. It is common for dancers to mark through choreography before a performance, employing this process to confirm their knowledge of the dance without expending unnecessary energy. By marking the choreography of Trio A, Rainer and Erdman both expose their rehearsal process. Marking is an individualized process. Each dancer makes their own choices about the ways and extent to which the choreography’s intensity will be diminished, and also determines how to represent choreographic elements through movement substitution. Such individual differences expose which aspects of the work the dancer imbues with the most focus and attention when preparing for the performance. Including this marking process in This is the story of a woman who... not only exhibits how both Rainer and Erdman prepare for a performance, it exposes their own relationship with the work’s choreography in each moment of the dance.

In this marked version of Trio A Rainer also exposes how the work’s choreography can undergo a further movement reduction while still exhibiting the structure of her piece. Though this marked performance does not present the full physicality of Trio A, it directly references each of the work’s movements. Intensifying Rainer’s original choreographic process of removing unnecessary energy output in performance, Rainer and Erdman create versions of Trio A that gesture towards the choreography in ways that are clearly readable to them and those who are
familiar with the dance. Reframing *Trio A* as a memory exercise, Rainer exposes how performing the dance can become more of a mental than physical task, challenging the viewer to see the dance through its marked version as she and Erdman do during their rehearsal process.

The second and third variations on *Trio A* that appear in *This is the story of a woman who*... do not alter the dance’s choreography, but present new musical accompaniments for the work. Following their marked version of the dance, Erdman and Rainer each perform *Trio A* in full, one after the other as a solo. Rainer’s script for the piece notes that during Erdman’s performance, after he completes the dance’s upstage rolls, an audiotape begins, playing three piano sonatas from Edvard Grieg’s *Lyric Pieces*: “I Hjemmet (In My Native Land),” “Arietta,” and “Takk (Thanks).” Erdman concludes his *Trio A* just before the final bars of “In My Native Land,” and Rainer’s performance progresses through “Arietta” and “Thanks.” The construction of Grieg’s *Lyric Pieces* reflects several of Rainer’s choreographic structures in *Trio A*, and presenting the two together highlights important characteristics the works share.

Grieg’s *Lyric Pieces* are 66 solo piano works that were composed over more than 30 years and published in ten books. Like *Trio A*, the pieces are short, each only a few minutes in duration. While these piano pieces were written for performance, they are technically uncomplicated, of modest difficulty, and not virtuoso concert efforts, making them approachable to amateur pianists and common exercises for students. Similarly, *Trio A* was composed as a stage work, yet was staged as an educational tool and taught to amateur dancers. Through these works, both Grieg and Rainer present material that that can be deployed for multiple purposes.

The first work in Grieg’s *Lyric Pieces*, “Arietta” concludes with a final measure that repeats the same notes as the opening measure, but with shifted articulations. The work returns to where it began, yet the shift in instructions for the performer necessitates a different physical
action. Similarly, *Trio A* begins and concludes at the same location in the performance area, yet tasks the performer to enter the space with different movement articulations. Grieg also repurposed “Arietta” for the 66th and final piece in the collection, “Efterklang (Remembrances),” which engages the same melody as “Arietta” but situates it in a different time signature. Through this, Grieg offers a different way to experience the original musical phrase, as does Rainer with her multiple different permutations of *Trio A* in performance. Not only does “Arietta” end where it began, Grieg’s *Lyric Pieces* as a whole returns to the opening of the work. Choosing “Arietta” for her performance, Rainer connects Grieg’s compositional structure and authorial intent to her own work with *Trio A*.

As with many of her previous composite performances, Rainer continued to rework *This is the story of a woman who*... over the period of a few years. Following this 1973 performance Rainer also intensified her work in film, transitioning away from creating and performing dance. *This is the story of a woman who*... was adapted into *Film about a woman who*..., which omits *Trio A*, signaling her departure from the using the work as a recurring element in her composite works.

John Erdman performs *Trio A* as part of *This is the story of a woman who*..., Theater for the New City, March 1973. Photo by Babette Mangolte.
Trio A (Film)

In August 1978 dance historian Sally Banes produced a film of Rainer dancing *Trio A*. Recorded at Merce Cunningham’s studio and shot in silence, the 16mm black and white film includes a full performance of the dance followed by a “details” section featuring close up shots of several of the dance’s choreographic specificities. This film has since become a significant work in Rainer’s oeuvre, entering into the collections of major museums, university libraries, and research collections.

Produced more than twelve years after the first presentation of *Trio A* and five years after Rainer had stopped performing publicly, the film is far removed from Rainer’s early performances of *Trio A*, when she was dancing the work regularly. After her transition to filmmaking in 1974 Rainer had struggled with recurring medical issues, and after not dancing regularly, was admittedly out of shape when this film was made. While the film serves to document her in the dance, Rainer is open about her displeasure with her performance, describing it as “terrible.” Highlighting the difference between her early performances of the dance and the 1978 film, Rainer notes that:

One performance lives only in my memory, muscles, and photos, the other—quite different—confronts me on the screen… The 1978 film reveals someone who can’t straighten her legs, can’t plié ‘properly,’ and can’t achieve the ‘original’ elongation and vigor.

For many years Rainer believed this film to be the only video documentation of her performing the work, unaware of the 1969 Dilexi film of *Performance Fractions for the West Coast* that includes her performing *Trio A*. The 1969 film, made during an intensive period in Rainer’s performing career, provides a striking comparison to Banes’ film. Rainer’s criticisms of the 1978 film become apparent when it is viewed alongside the 1969 recording. In the earlier film Rainer presents the dance with greater clarity of movement, more precise choreographic specificity, and
superior physical control, all while performing at a much faster pace than the 1978 film.
Whereas her performance in the 1978 film is languid and shaky, the 1969 film documents a performance that is strong, precise, and controlled. The performance does not present virtuosity, but it exudes a rigor that is missing in the 1978 film. Joking about her lack of stamina and power in the 1978 film, Rainer has called her performance “flaccid.”

Rainer is critical of how the 1978 film is perceived to preserve and present *Trio A’s* choreography and movement intention. Beyond her concerns with the quality of her dancing, at several moments in the film Rainer performs the choreography incorrectly. With a decreased physical prowess, Rainer omits nuances of the dance and misarticulates her carefully designed movements. This is further apparent to a viewer knowledgeable of *Trio A’s* intricacies; the choreography is so precise and meticulously taught that Rainer’s missteps become vividly apparent.

In April 1979 Rainer presented a screening of the Banes film at a benefit concert for The School for Movement Research and Construction, and directly after the film performed *Trio A* as *New Version of Convalescent Dance.* For her performance Rainer donned a slightly altered costume from the original *Convalescent Dance.* While still clad mostly in white, Rainer’s white tee shirt featured a diagram of the body’s internal organs. As with *Convalescent Dance* in 1967, Rainer used *Trio A* to directly refer to her physical condition: she had again been hospitalized and had a portion of her intestines surgically removed. Twelve years earlier, in 1967 the dance had been situated within the context of a political protest and referenced U.S. involvement in Vietnam, but this new presentation within the benefit concert did not make the same political connections. Rather, in performing this work alongside her film, Rainer mirrored her physically
diminished performance in the Banes film, offering the added context of her convalescence by which to read and understand the film.

Less than two years after Banes’ film, another film version of Trio A was produced, this time for the 1980 television documentary Beyond The Mainstream. Filmed by WNET New York for the Public Broadcasting Service’s Great Performances: Dance in America series, the documentary focuses on the choreographic innovations of the American counterculture, presenting the work Rainer, Trisha Brown, David Gordon, Steve Paxton, and Kei Takei. The segment on Rainer centers on Trio A and includes a significant portion of the dance, although not performed by one dancer. The film intersplices Banes’ video of Rainer with three other filmed solo performances of the work by different dancers, fading between the four at varying intervals. The performers selected for the video demonstrate the different types of people with whom Rainer had staged Trio A throughout the piece’s many iterations: Bart Cook of New York City Ballet, untrained dancer Frank Conversano, and Sara Rudner of Twyla Tharp Dance.

While each dancer’s performance of Trio A was filmed in silence, the documentary overlays their combined footage with narration, transitioning between the film’s narrator and audio clips from an interview with Rainer that was recorded for the documentary. The dialogue contextualizes Rainer’s work in the New York downtown scene and outlines the historical importance of Trio A, then analyzes Rainer’s choreographic process, focusing on the intentions and stipulations that she engaged when composing the dance. The documentary narration also exposes how Trio A can be variously performed with any number of dancers, either costumed or nude, and in tennis shoes or bare feet. The fragments of Rainer’s interview further articulates how the piece has been differently performed, including by dancers of varying age and skill level, as well as by Rainer in various physical condition. Framing the democratic nature of the
dance, Rainer remarks that “In teaching it over the years I realized that anyone could learn it and do some version of it that was acceptable.” The documentary’s repeated shifting between the different performers and juxtaposition of dancers from different movement backgrounds presents a new way of seeing Trio A.

This segment of the documentary also functions much like Rainer’s performance lectures in the late 1960s. In Performance Demonstration #1 at Lincoln Center in 1968 Rainer included a taped recording of her reading the majority of “A Quasi Survey…,” describing Trio A for the audience. In the television documentary Rainer’s dance is similarly presented alongside a lecture on its history and structure of Trio A. Through this, the viewer is provided with tools to read Rainer’s choreography and understand her intervention into dance.

The availability of these films has led to multiple people attempting to learn and perform the dance from the video recording. In many professional and educational dance settings it is often customary for dances to be taught from video, with video becoming a major tool in contemporary dance reconstruction. However, Rainer resists the notion that Trio A can be learned from video. Firstly, Rainer cites her imprecision in performing Trio A’s choreography in the Banes film. When she hears of people learning the dance from this film, she asserts “that they have achieved only a faint approximation of the dance, with little understanding of its subtleties.”77 Not only do they not learn of the internal imagery and conceptual nuances of the dance, they re-perform Rainer’s mistakes as documented in the film. Additionally, Rainer foregrounds the ways video distorts dance in the process of translating it from a three-dimensional medium to a two-dimensional product. Rainer asserts that as a result of “the camera’s fixed position and its tendency to foreshorten, the video and the film of the dance lack the precision that live teaching can impart.”78 The geometric floor pattern over which Trio A
progresses is as important as the physical motions of the dance. Not only are these spatial arrangements distorted when the dance is filmed, the rotation of the camera makes it difficult to locate exactly where in the performance area the dance progresses as well as the precise facing of the body and its gestures throughout the dance. Even though there are several filmed performances of Trio A, either in whole or in part, Rainer contends that they do not document the dance with enough precision to faithfully preserve the work because of these multiple inconsistencies presented by film.

While Rainer asserts that films of Trio A in performance are not accurate resources from which to faithfully reconstruct the dance, she does recognize the benefit of video in producing recordings of rehearsals in which she has taught the dance.\(^79\) In preparation for a 1999 performance, Rainer coached Paxton in the work, a process that was filmed to document not only Rainer’s teaching, but Paxton’s recollection of the Trio A’s history as they converse in the dance studio. A film was also made of Rainer coaching Linda K. Johnson and Shelly Senter, two dancers who have since become custodians of the dance. Both of these videos distort the performance of the dance, but preserve the particulars of Rainer’s language as she describes the dance.

**Returns: Further Rainer Variations, 1997-2010**

After nearly 25 years working as an independent filmmaker, when Rainer returned to working in dance in the late 1990s she did so through Trio A. Her first public performance of the dance since 1981 was in an August 1997 concert in Sweden, and she again began to teach the dance for the first time in many years. Like in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Trio A has continued to be an integral and often revisited source material in Rainer’s later choreographic
career. In addition to performing the work herself, Rainer has staged the piece on dance companies in new formats and taught the choreography to college students in workshops as well as credit-bearing classes. While Rainer has embraced presenting the dance in different articulations, she has been rigorously meticulous about the movement details and performance quality of the work in each of its iterations.

In April 1999 *Trio A With Flags* was restaged at Judson Church by Clarinda Mac Low, the daughter of avant-garde poet Jackson Mac Low. In 1992 Mac Low was one of the first dancers in many years to learn *Trio A* directly from Rainer. At Judson, Mac Low performed the dance with six other women as part of *Breaking Ground: Judson Dance Theater and Beyond*. While situated in the same space as the first performance of *Trio A With Flags*, the reconstruction provided a significantly different statement than the work first did in 1970. At the *People’s Flag Show* Rainer’s performance was surrounded by a décor of artworks that repeated the theme of the American flag, and her work presented a dialogue with these other pieces on the theme of censorship and free speech in art. Similarly, the performance of *Trio A with Flags* as it was included in (or planned for) *Continuous Project—Altered Daily* during the 1970s situated the work in relation to other flags, either those used in *WAR* or the Star Spangled Banner at the Smithsonian Institution. Through this Rainer made explicit the connections between *Trio A With Flags* and the more overt political implications and histories of these other flags. In the 1999 reconstruction of the piece there were no other flags present— the work was an isolated performance, separated from the context for which it was designed and deployed. Additionally, the legal subversiveness of the work had significantly shifted. By the late 1990s both indecency laws and flag desecration legislature had changed, making presentations of nudity on stage and the performance of acts representing contempt of the flag both legal actions. Situated after these
historical changes, this 1999 performance of *Trio A With Flags* did not confront laws the way the work had in 1970.\textsuperscript{81} Neither did it maintain the original intention of using the work to present an attack on repression and censorship. Situated in a retrospective on Judson Dance Theater and its influence on developments in dance during the latter half of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, the work became a distanced historical fragment, articulating the ways in which the piece had been once subversive. In this reconstruction *Trio A With Flags* worked to display a narrative of Rainer’s choreographic work in relation to the political and curatorial interventions of dance programming at Judson Church.

In October of that year Rainer herself performed *Trio A* at Judson Church as part of a new performance she titled *Trio A Pressured*. According to Rainer, *Trio A Pressured* is a performance format in which any three or more different variations of *Trio A* are combined into a single performance event. Presented together, these multiple versions of the dance expose and juxtapose the work’s history. As with Rainer’s composite works from the 1960s and ‘70s, the multiple variations of *Trio A* are considered units that can be selected and arranged differently for each staging of the work. Describing her choreographic practice following her return to dancemaking, Rainer acknowledges the ways she creatively responds to her previous work: “I steal from myself, raid my iceboxes for nuggets frozen in memory and notebooks dating from the sixties and seventies.”\textsuperscript{82} Not only does *Trio A Pressured* reframe and resequence several versions of *Trio A* to create a new performance, the work’s open format has allowed for an ongoing exploration for over fifteen years of the different ways *Trio A* can be variously combined and presented together.

For the first performance of *Trio A Pressured* Rainer was joined by one of *Trio A’s* original dancers, Steve Paxton, as well as Pat Catterson and Colin Beatty. The performance
presented four different articulations of the dance: Catterson and Paxton performed the dance forwards as a duet, Catterson danced *Retrograde*, Paxton joined Rainer for *In the Midnight Hour*, and Rainer premiered a new version of *Trio A*, a duet for her and Beatty that she titled *Facing*.

One of the fundamental imperatives of *Trio A* is that the gaze of the performer should never meet that of the audience. *Facing* exemplifies this by tracking where the performer’s gaze is directed throughout the piece. In *Facing*, while one performer dances *Trio A* a second performer is tasked with trying to maintain eye contact with the dancer as often and consistently as possible. The “façeur” rushes around the stage, circling and following the dancer, tracking their gaze by trying to return it with their own. Rainer has said that the façeur does not need to know the dance’s choreography from an embodied perspective, but they must develop an intimate knowledge of Trio A’s progression to be able to arrange their choice of position on stage and manage transitions throughout the piece so as to best accomplish the task while not interrupting the dancer’s movement.

The façeur has no set choreography, rather Rainer leaves it to each individual performer in this role to undertake the task of analyzing the dance and choosing their own movement (potentially in dialogue with a dancer) to solve this version of *Trio A*. In this way the task of the facing was not simply used in designing the piece, but it is the task itself, undertaken anew by each performer, that defines the work. Through this construction each façeur will develop a version of this work with apparent differences that exhibit their working process and movement choices.

*Facing* also includes a moment of partnered contact between the dancer and the façeur. As an older performer, Rainer was uneasy about executing *Trio A*’s handstand in the final moments of the dance. To accommodate this, she configured *Facing* to include Beatty assisting her in this
choreographic element, catching her legs in the air at the height of her handstand and giving her a controlled release, acting as a spotter for her movement.

Like Rainer’s other rearticulations of Trio A, Facing focuses on one element of Trio A’s conceptual design and directs attention to this aspect of the work. While the facer appears to negate Rainer’s imperative that the performer’s gaze never meet that of the audience, the facer can be understood as a performer rather than an audience member. Though the facer’s primary task is that of watching, similar to that of the audience, it is the performance of this rehearsed task that is watched by the audience. Additionally, the moment of touch between the dancer and the facer during the handstand further positions the facer as a performer, showing the facer to be an active partner in the performance of the dance. Through this, Rainer is able to exemplify Trio A’s confrontation with gaze while simultaneously maintaining the strictures that outlined the work in its creation. As in the 1960s and ‘70s when she repeatedly rearticulated Trio A to explore new ways of expressing her artistic concerns and philosophy on dance, Rainer foregrounds how she has continued to search out new ways of repurposing the piece: “I have broadened the options… to include choices that had not occurred to me forty-five years ago.”

Maintaining an ongoing interest in rethinking and rearticulating Trio A, Rainer systematically highlights the multiple aspects of the work’s structure and logic.

Rainer has also broadened how Trio A can be presented as a teaching practice. In 2001 Rainer adapted her process of teaching and coaching the dance into a comedic mock rehearsal scenario in which she teaches Trio A to Martha Graham, who is portrayed by artist Richard Move. Since 1996 Move has been developing performances as Graham, delivering fictional monologues in the style of Graham’s public speaking as well as performing dances that reflect and intensify elements of Graham’s most recognizable choreographic works. His Graham is
atemporal, drawing from the ethos of her public persona across her career while integrating anecdotes and epigrams that blur the real with fiction. Rainer and Move began collaborating in May 2000, developing sketches that posed fictional encounters and dialogues between Rainer and Move-as-Graham. Their mock rehearsal of Trio A was designed for film and is included in Charles Atlas’ 2002 video montage Rainer Variations.

Rainer, who had studied with Graham in the 1950s and ‘60s before creating her own choreographic work, reverses her relationship with Graham in this mock rehearsal situation. As a student Rainer struggled with aspects of Graham’s movement technique that she found challenging for her physical body, and she recalls that during technique classes she was often the direct recipient of Graham’s polite yet cutting criticisms, an aspect of Graham that Move had been highlighting in his performances. Leaving the Graham School, Rainer actively developed a choreographic practice that not only resisted, but overtly rejected Graham’s technique, aesthetic, and compositional concerns. In Atlas’ film Rainer and Move-as-Graham switch their roles in the rehearsal studio: Rainer becomes the teacher with clear, steadfast intentions on transmitting her dance and choreographic ideas, with Move-as-Graham filling the character of the rebellious dancer who blatantly refuses to adopt the teacher’s style, both unable and unwilling to perform the choreography without altering it to fit her own beliefs about dance. As Rainer teaches Move-as-Graham Trio A, Move reinterprets the dance with hallmark representations of Graham’s technique and choreography. In his Graham-esque performance of Trio A, Move re-integrates the aspects of modern dance that Rainer worked to remove from her choreography, including overt use of energy, dynamic phrasing, presentation of emotion, and virtuosity of performance.

As Rainer and Move-as-Graham argue about her choreography and performance style, as well as their beliefs about dance, Rainer articulates the nuances of Trio A. In attempting to impart
her ideas to Graham, she outlines her choreographic ideas and intentions for the work. More than just a comedic sketch, the video serves to document these details of Trio A’s choreography and record the way Rainer approaches her teaching of the dance. In this mock coaching of Graham, Rainer employs same imagery, kinesthetic metaphors, and movement descriptions as when she actually teaches the dance. Additionally, in the film’s scripting, the conversation between Rainer and Move-as-Graham serves to articulates the multiple ways in which Rainer’s choreography is direct break from Graham’s style, outlining Rainer’s multiple interventions into dance composition and performance. Highlighting Rainer’s rejection of narrative in dance, an intentional departure from Graham’s plot-driven choreographic works, Rainer and Move-as-Graham discuss the choreographic intentions of one movement in Trio A:

Graham: Yvonne, what does this mean?
Rainer: What do you mean, what does it mean?
Graham: How does this speak to the soul, to the human condition, to the meaning of life?

This discussion emphasizes the ways that Graham’s works are centered on metaphorical themes, physical emotivity, and explorations of the human psyche, whereas Rainer’s work presents movement stripped of meaning, a pure movement study without story.

Their dialogue also highlights Trio A’s reframing of the performer’s relationship to the audience. When Rainer describes a moment of Trio A in which the performer rotates their torso away from the audience, Move-as-Graham grimaces and interjects with dismay “Spiral upstage? Never!” In spiraling the body upstage Rainer partially conceals her gestural arm movements from the audience and obscures the physical work of the front of the torso. Spirals of the torso are a fundamental aspect of Graham technique, and in Graham’s choreographic work they are often used to exhibit dramatic tension in the body when facing the audience. Highlighting this
contradictory use of spiraling in dance, *Trio A* is demonstrated to oppose Graham’s choreographic structures.

The conversations between Rainer and Move-as-Graham also allude to Rainer’s “NO manifesto,” foregrounding Rainer’s choreographic motivations when creating *Trio A*. As Rainer demonstrates a moment in the dance that takes the performer upstage, facing away from the audience, and progresses into a series of hip movements that appear to stick the butt out at the audience, Move-as-Graham balks:

Graham: I cannot do that.
Rainer: Why not?
Graham: Yvonne, the stage is a magical place.
Rainer: Well, one of my projects was to dismantle notions of magic.

In 1965 Rainer wrote “no to transformations and magic and make-believe,” and *Trio A* rejects the presentation of illusion, demystifying the glamorous notion of the dancer that choreographers like Graham had developed and perpetuated. Through this exchange between Rainer and Move-as-Graham, their differing perspectives on how the dancer should be presented on stage is emphasized, exposing their conflicting views and exemplifying Rainer’s intervention in dance.

In teaching the dance Rainer also highlights her concept of movement-as-object, reinforcing her rejection of the ways choreographers like Graham crafted movement for the depiction of character and narrative expression:

Rainer: Try thinking of yourself as an object not a character.
Graham: Oh! An object of lust, of desire, of passion, of terror, of remorse, of guilt, of redemption!

While Move-as-Graham speaks this line she momentarily moves out of the camera’s frame, reappearing with the Isamu Noguchi-designed stylized prop knife from Graham’s *Clytemnestra* (1958), and dances with large gestures into a flourish of expansive and expressive Graham-esque movement reminiscent of Clytemnestra’s “Knife Dance.” The juxtaposition of Rainer’s
straightforward movement tasks with the embellished dancing of Move-as-Graham, complete with costume and prop, both displays and describes the stark contrast between the two choreographers.

Atlas’ film is presented as a set of clips that are spliced together as a montage. Footage of Rainer and Move-as-Graham in rehearsal is interspersed with clips drawn from the 1978 Banes film of *Trio A*, juxtaposing Rainer’s description and teaching of the dance with footage of her performing it at a younger age. Atlas also arranges the film to display multiple takes of the same scenes between Graham and Rainer. Combined together, these different takes expose slightly altered dialogue, interactions, and movement choices. Additionally, both Move and Rainer are shown to talk with the camera operator and Move-as-Graham appears in several different costumes throughout the work, without any mention paid to the change. These choices call attention to the scripted and constructed nature of the sketch, exposing the ways Rainer and Move consciously worked to compose and refine material to elucidate the multiple aspects of Rainer’s dance.

Through this mock rehearsal scenario Rainer creates a new articulation of *Trio A*, engaging the dance in a format that both depicts and describes her movements. *Rainer Variations* is simultaneously a new performance work and a record that serves to preserve Rainer’s choreographic objectives. In comedically situating her dance against the characteristics and intentions of Graham’s work, Rainer illustrates the ways her philosophical concerns in dance and resulting movement design reject the lineage of modernism and ballet.
**Juxtaposing Performers: Trio A in Ten Easy Lessons**

In addition to staging *Trio A* for productions, in her later career Rainer has returned to teaching *Trio A* to college students. As a professor in the Art department at the University of California, Irvine Rainer taught *Trio A* as a credit-bearing course three times between 2008 and 2012. In fall 2008, the first iteration of this course enrolled six students, three trained dancers and three untrained people. Meeting with these students once a week for an hour and twenty minutes throughout the quarter’s ten-week cycle, Rainer taught and coached the dance in full. The culmination of this class was a performance of the work by all six students as part of the school’s faculty dance concert in February 2009. To highlight the way her dance was taught within the scope of the University’s quarter system, Rainer titled this staging *Trio A in Ten Easy Lessons*. This change of title also signaled a new articulation of the dance, a staging in which Rainer offered a new way to see *Trio A* on stage. In the concert each of the performers danced the work twice, as in the first staging at Judson Church in 1966. However, the performers did not all begin together. *Trio A in Ten Easy Lessons* began with a group of three performers starting the dance together, and as each finished the choreography through once, a subsequent dancer
would enter and begin the dance; at any given moment in the performance there were no
more than three people performing the dance. In this format, Rainer set up a relay structure that
maintained the constant appearance of a trio on stage. As each performer is coached to find a
unique pacing in which they most clearly present the work’s characteristic even tempo, the cast’s
six different dancers developed individualized pacings that resulted in staggered finishes. As one
performer ended the dance another would enter, creating a fluid transition rather than a series of
separated sections. While Rainer set the starting order for the six performers, the ordering of
their second run of Trio A was not set, tasking the cast to negotiate in the moment of
performance when they would enter and begin the piece within Rainer’s restriction of
maintaining the appearance of a trio on stage until the conclusion of the piece as a whole.

Working with performers from different backgrounds, Rainer chose to integrate the
trained dancers and untrained dancers together, beginning the performance with two trained
women and one untrained man. This mixing of performers of different abilities was a departure
for Rainer, who had previously separated performers into distinct groups; in the past when
Rainer employed untrained people in her performances she “had isolated them—that is, had them
perform alone or in a group of others with a similar lack of training.” Juxtaposing performers
with different movement capabilities tasked the audience to recognize variations in performance,
creating a situation in which the viewer could immediately determine the moments of
precariousness and difficulty within the dance.

Demystifying The Geriatric Body

While Rainer continued to teach and stage dances after her return to dance in the late
1990s, she did not include herself in her performances for many years. Working primarily with
her newly established company of dancers, to which she informally refers to as the
Raindears, Rainer created new works but did not herself perform with the group. Rainer’s choice
to remove herself from performing was the result of a reflection on her own aging and her
questioning of when and why a dancer decides to finally leave the stage. Rather than denying her
own aging, as she had witnessed in the extended performance careers of other notable dancer-
choreographers, Rainer investigated what the aesthetics and physicality of aging meant and could
mean in dance. Returning to dance at age 65 Rainer had to confront her own body in the creation
and performance of dances. During this period she developed her own philosophy on how to
approach aging in dance: rather than attempting to conceal the physical changes of the aging
body and deny its changing movement ability, Rainer chose to expose these physical changes
and focus attention on the ways the movement restrictions of an older body could be explored in
performance. In her new conception of dance, Rainer posited that “If you’re going to make an
appearance in front of an audience and you can’t execute the material as robustly or as accurately
as you once did, then be honest; tell them what’s going on moment by moment.”89 Rainer began
to apply this to her own choreography, integrating herself once again as a performer in her
works, but doing so in a way that directly commented on both her age and diminished physical
abilities.

Rainer’s first performance that embraced this new philosophy was yet another return to
Trio A. To expose her relationship with the dance at age 76, she presented Trio A in a new
articulation, Trio A: Geriatric With Talking, at Judson Church in October 2010.90 Thirteen years
prior to this, in 1997 Rainer introduced her own performance of Trio A as a “geriatric version” of
the piece, acknowledging the markedly different performance quality she brought to the work as
an older dancer.91 Going beyond this, in Trio A: Geriatric With Talking Rainer explicitly
engaged *Trio A* to directly reflect on her age and physicality, presenting the work as a new lecture-performance in which she narrates her diminished performance capacity while simultaneously performing the dance. *Trio A Geriatric With Talking* extends and expands on Rainer’s use of *Trio A* as material for a lecture-performance, a process she first explored in *Performance Demonstration #1* in 1968. Through the continuation and reworking of this performance format Rainer articulates her changing ideas about dance and exposes the shifting philosophical concerns she has confronted in both her choreographic work and performance practice.

Rainer’s lecture narration during *Trio A: Geriatric With Talking* includes an overlapping mixture of prewritten personal monologue, read quotations, and extemporaneous talking. Rainer lays out several sheets of white printer paper on the floor in various places across the performance space before beginning to dance. Each paper features a quote about the relationship between art and politics from *Diary of a Bad Year* by J. M. Coetzee, which Rainer had excerpted and typed out for use in her performance. Occasionally during the performance of *Trio A* Rainer pauses her dancing, slipping out of the choreography to reach down to the floor, pick up a page, and read it aloud. After each of these interruptions into *Trio A*, Rainer re-enters the dance, picking up the movement approximately where she had left off. Between these moments of reading from the page Rainer crafts a dialogue about *Trio A*, describing aspects of the dance, sharing anecdotes, and musing on her philosophy of aging in dance.

Rainer begins the piece in silence, moving through the first few motions of *Trio A* before stumbling out of the piece’s first jump. She breaks her performance of the dance and walks back to her starting position to begin again. However, she skips the first arm gestures, moving more directly into the section of the dance where she had misstepped, this time holding the balance she
had previously fallen out of, moving her leg in and out of the tricky maneuver several times, demonstrating how she rehearses the motion and reinforces her sense of balance. After successfully demonstrating the balance, she progresses through the next few motions of the dance before stopping again, pausing her dancing to begin her lecture-narration, greeting the audience with a “hello,” explaining the pages that surround her, on the floor and reading the first quote. As she begins dancing again, she begins to speak expository on *Trio A*.

Narrating her performance while progressing through the piece, Rainer articulates her physical struggles and difficulties with the dance. Unable to fully achieve the vigor demanded by certain aspects of the choreography, Rainer honestly admits to the audience what the movement is intended to be despite what her body allows her to physically demonstrate: “This move is supposed to be a slow rise of the leg, not a battement, but why can’t I get my leg up any higher than this anymore?” she elucidates as she repeatedly tries to accomplish the intended action. “There used to be a handstand here,” she says, fully skipping the movement and moving on in the dance. In these moments Rainer explains to the audience how the dance would appear if she could fully execute the choreography. By describing rather than showing the dance, Rainer clarifies her choreography in a new way in performance.

Making alterations to the *Trio A*’s choreography to accommodate her abilities, Rainer further reflects on the intentions of the dance’s movements. Acknowledging her substitution of movements and reworking of aspects of the choreography, Rainer not only outlines the ways she has changed the dance, but questions if and how these changes constitute a departure from the *Trio A*’s choreographic objective: “I can no longer do this… But why isn’t this other method just as good?” Through these changes, Rainer’s performance provides new examples of physical choices that accomplish her choreographic ideas and objectives in key moments of the dance.
While Rainer can not physically perform the whole of Trio A’s choreography, she positions her performance as a different yet suitable accomplishing the work, situating necessary movement variations as acceptable as long as they approach the concepts and intentions of the dance.

In Trio A: Geriatric With Talking Rainer’s narration acknowledges and addresses the audience; her narration is not an interior monologue for us to experience voyeuristically, but rather a demonstration composed to directly convey her thoughts and beliefs. Rainer further acknowledges the audience by occasionally responding in the moment to the audience. Speaking improvisatorially, when someone loudly blew their nose Rainer quickly retorted, “That’s good accompaniment.” The framing of Rainer’s performance as a lecture is also reinforced by her choice to wear a wireless microphone pack conspicuously tied to a belt around her waist. This allows for her voice to be amplified, but it also becomes an aspect of the performance around which she must negotiate. Rainer not only modifies Trio A to her age and ability, she adjusts her movement in response to this accessory, correcting the microphone pack’s position after it slips around her body and navigating the dance’s floor work to avoid uncomfortably rolling on top of it. In not attempting to hide or ignore the device, Rainer calls attention to the fact she is rigged with technology.

Knowing that her audience at Judson Church was likely familiar with the dance, in the performance Rainer comments directly on the history of Trio A’s spectatorship. Soon after she begins dancing she introduces Trio A and acknowledges that it is “a dance many of you are familiar with from a DVD that I’ve tried several times to take off of YouTube,” calling attention to the 1978 Banes film that had repeatedly been illegally uploaded to the internet. This tasks the audience to recall from memory their own knowledge of the piece, to compare the way Rainer
danced at a young age to her contemporary performance at age 76. While Rainer does not fully present Trio A’s movement phrase as it was designed, she tasks the audience to draw from their own memory to envision the dance, to see the full choreography through her geriatric version. In this piece, Rainer’s alteration of the choreography highlights the physical rigor of Trio A by not showing it. However, she actively conjures the image of the dance in the memories of her viewers. Through this shift, Rainer provides a new way to see Trio A. Throughout the piece, Rainer’s monologue also exposes her own emotional experience with her aging body and its changed capabilities. Rainer voices her frustrations with the physical demands of the dance and exposes her fear of the audience’s reaction to her performing a dance she cannot fully realize, and what this would mean for how people perceive her and her work.

Through Trio A: Geriatric With Talking Rainer presents her philosophy on aging in dance, using a combination of lecture narration and performance demonstration to exhibit her defiance of the view that older age is an inadequacy that must be veiled or overcome by a dancer. Rainer reframes the appearance of age in dance, positioning the movement restrictions it presents as a choreographic and aesthetic quality of interest in itself. In this work Rainer tasks the viewer to think of her geriatric Trio A not as evidence of deterioration and decline, but to envision her performance “as a new form of avant-gardism.” For Rainer, Trio A: Geriatric With Talking is a new intervention into dance.

**Notation and Preservation**

During the early 1960s Rainer’s choreographic practice included a scoring and notation process. Through a combination of written text and hand drawn diagrams, Rainer documented her choreographic ideas in notebooks and on typewriter paper, with supplementary notes jotted
on cue sheers and the backs of programs, letters, and scrap paper she had on hand. These notations became memory resources for Rainer and were often used as a way to convey choreography to her dancers. Rainer also used scoring as a generative process, collecting her movement ideas and frameworks on paper, then translating them into physical action. Rainer did not develop a codified system or consistent method of notation, rather engaging a blending of practices and possibilities drawn from her experiences working with Anna Halprin and John Cage, as well as from her peers in the Dunns’ composition workshop and Judson Dance Theater.

Her documentation for *The Mind is a Muscle* includes narrative descriptions of movement tasks and detailed track diagrams for stage plans, as well as combinations of these two modes of writing dance. While several of the work’s various sections are documented through these notations, the compiled notes mostly don’t comprise full scores, as they don’t contain the full information Rainer intended for the dances. Several of these scores are included in her publication *Work 1966-73*. Absent from the book, however, is a score for *Trio A*, the piece’s most recognizable section. While *Trio A* was developed around a strict set of parameters, which Rainer outlines in her multiple essays on the dance, these parameters do not describe the physical progression of motions that comprise her dance. Rainer never developed a full score for *Trio A*. In a handwritten annotation in the margins of her copy of *Work*, jotted in red ink alongside other notes for a possible second edition of the book, Rainer acknowledges *Trio A*’s absence from the volume on her work, explaining that there exists “no written, notated, or filmed documentation of *Trio A*. At some point in the early stages of creating it I gave up keeping entries in a notebook. It is one dance I don’t think I’ll ever forget.” While she gave up on completing a notation of *Trio A*, she did keep the notebook in which she first started making entries on the dance during its creation.
Rainer’s notebook opens with her idea for the use of mattresses and the dropping of wooden sticks. Following this a new section of her notes begins with simple designation “(A),” marking the start of her first choreographic section. Written in the notebook’s margin, slightly angled and hanging below this, Rainer wrote “(1st trio),” with an arrow pointing diagonally at the “(A).” The following text articulates the opening motions of Trio A through a combination of ballet terminology and common vernacular descriptions of movement, with abbreviated references to stage directions and sides of the body. For one who knows Trio A, these early moments of the dance can be read clearly through Rainer’s notes. However, a few descriptions show differences from the choreography as it has been documented and preserved. Slight variations, such as the direction of the gaze and placement of the hand on the body, appear to have been rearticulated as the dance developed. Also, as the pages progress, a reading of the dance becomes fragmented. Descriptions of unrecognizable motions intercut familiar sections of the dance, and directions for movement material that now comes significantly later in the dance appear closer to its start, suggesting that Rainer shifted and reordered her movement ideas during her working process. While these notes give insight into Rainer’s documentation strategy and compositional process during the early development of Trio A, their incompleteness shows how Rainer has resisted the notion that this dance can be successfully preserved through notation.

Although Rainer did not develop her own notation of Trio A, she remains deeply invested in its preservation. Outlining her unique relationship with this particular dance among the many in her oeuvre, Rainer asserts: “The only dance of mine that I feel a very rigorous attachment to is Trio A. One, because it was documented in film in 1978; two, because I remember it so well. So I would like it not to change.” As part of her return to dance and renewed interest in working with Trio A after 1999, Rainer has shifted her views on the teaching and performance of this
dance. Rainer at first taught the dance to “anyone who wanted to learn it – skilled and
unskilled, trained and untrained, professional and amateur—and gave tacit permission to anyone
who wanted to teach it to do so.” In the 1960s and ‘70s Rainer taught the dance to a large
number of professional performers as well as students, many of whom went on to perform the
dance and teach its choreography to others over the ensuing decades. Rainer at first saw herself
as a “post-modern dance evangelist bringing movement to the masses,” a move that further
sought to de-eliticitize dance by making it accessible to all. This continued for several decades
until she encountered one re-taught version, a fourth or fifth generation teaching, that strayed so
far from her original choreography that to Rainer it was “all but unrecognizable.” Since this
incident she has re-tightened her protection of the work. Much like other choreographers, Rainer
now licenses performances of the dance to individual performs and has worked to dispel the
notion that her dance can be taught or performed by anyone who has learned it.

For those who desire to learn Trio A, Rainer requires that before the rehearsal process
begins a contract be signed, outlining that the dancer agrees not to “teach, restage, perform,
videotape, or film” Trio A. Rainer currently has six dancers who are entrusted to be
“custodians” of the work, as Rainer refers to them, preserving and teaching it for her: Pat
Catterson, Shelley Senter, Emily Coates, Sara Wookey, Linda K. Johnson, and Emmanuelle
Phuon. These six dancers communicate regularly with Rainer and coordinate periodic coaching
sessions with her to ensure they haven’t lost any detail in their own performance and teaching.
Almost all requests from people who wish to learn the dance, of which there are many, are
handled by Rainer’s custodians. The custodians organize these teaching sessions, for which they
assess their own fees, and relay their work with every student to Rainer. The custodians also
prepare dancers for performances of Trio A when Rainer approves, a process that takes
additional coaching beyond the initial learning process and a video sent to Rainer for review.

Rainer has become so insistent on the choreographic accuracy and exact quality of movement in performance that not all dancers who learn and are coached in the work are given permission to stage it publicly. Each dancer who learns the dance enters the rehearsal process with the knowledge that they may ultimately be told their performance does not accomplish the precision necessary for a licensed production, a decision that has been assessed and invoked by several of the custodians. Rainer acknowledges the shift in her experience of the dance since 1999, writing: “I have become far more rigorous—some might call it obsessive—not only with respect to the qualifications of those whom I allow to teach the dance but in my own transmission of its peculiarities.”

In 2003 Rainer was approached to teach the dance herself during the London International Summer School at Greenwich Dance Academy, and from this arose the opportunity for Trio A to be recorded in Labanotation. Rainer was skeptical of the proposition: “If the thought of having Trio A notated via Laban’s method had ever crossed my mind, it was only with the conviction that such a venture would be quite impossible. The subtleties and dynamics of this dance, performed without the structuring of a musical score, seemed outside the domain of any graphic notation system.” However, she chose not object to the project, and a notating of the dance was undertaken by notators Melanie Clarke and Joukje Kolff. Reflecting on her increasing fastidiousness in regards to the details of Trio A, Rainer felt that teaching the dance herself while Labanotators were present would be “an opportunity to set the record straight as possible and forget, at least for the moment, my scruples and caveats about fetishization and immortality.” Through the creation of a Labanotation score, Rainer felt relieved that the work would be
preserved, especially since the recording of the dance had been done with her as the teaching source.

*Trio A* represents one of the shortest complete scores for a full work in the Dance Notation Bureau’s collection. The score is only 31 pages, each of which are strikingly bare compared to scores for other choreographic works. The dance is separated into small segments, some of which are only a few steps long, with occasional text notes alongside the notation. These notes include quotes from Rainer, descriptions of movement imagery, and comments on intention in performance, which collectively provide added clarity to several important specifics of the dance.

A video of Rainer teaching *Trio A* is supplied with the score. Created by Clarke and Kolff, the footage was not originally intended to be distributed along with the Labanotation, but rather to be used as a resource during the notating process, which requires extensive rewriting and editing outside of the studio. However, the notators found the footage to be such a useful resource in documenting Rainer’s teaching of the dance that it was edited to become part of the archival record of the dance and support future reconstruction projects. The video consists of three sections: an overview of the workshop, Rainer introducing the dance’s sequence to students, and information about the history of the project and about the use of the video. Recorded on DVD, chapter markings correlate with the pages of the score and numbers on the bottom of the video direct the viewer to the movement’s location in the Labanotation score. Presented in this way, the video and the score are each organized to support a reading of the other.

All Labanotation scores require proofreading, a process which entails the dance being staged directly from the score. Writing shortly after the score was completed, Rainer encouraged
this missive: “Step up to the bar, all and sundry, and reconstruct Trio A from this score. Be my guest (after contacting the Dance Notation Bureau). I eagerly await the result.”

This testing of the score was first undertaken in early 2006, when Clarke reconstructed the dance from Labanotation on students at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance in London, and Rainer was invited to observe these students demonstrate the dance. Watching the students performing Trio A, Rainer noted that even though the dance was staged by Clarke, who had an “extensive study of the dance and attention to the finessed graphics of notation, it needed not just fine-tuning but gross adjustments.” Rainer had to re-insert herself into the coaching of the dance, correcting errors on the students’ performances. Reflecting on this experience, Rainer positions the Labanotation score as a precarious document. She recognizes that the Labanotation preserves Trio A in a “very specific and precise” manner, yet she belies that this documentation is inadequate to a reconstruction of the dance that meets her exacting criteria for its performance. Rainer further suggests that the added video documentation that accompanies the score may not be a suitable substitute to learning the dance from someone who has developed a deep relationship with dance and the specific process of teaching it. Rainer maintains that it “would still be tricky business to try learning Trio A only from the tapes without additional input from an official instructor.”

Through this, Rainer reinforces the importance of the physical interaction and immediate connection between student and teacher in the transmission of Trio A.

**Embodying Trio A**

While I was studying Labanotation at the Dance Notation Bureau in 2011 I would regularly spend my lunch break browsing their library stacks. Culling through the rows of file cabinets that hold their collection of archival scores, I would pull folders for notated dances and
attempt to apply my growing fluency with Labanotation to reading choreography. My interest in Rainer’s work repeatedly brought me to the score for Trio A. My impression of Trio A before I opened the Labanotation score was that the dance was choreographically uncomplicated and composed of simple geometric movements, aspects that would make it ideally suited to the structural analysis of Labanotation and therefore a relatively easy dance to read from a score. I had watched the 1978 video of Trio A on several occasions and read multiple descriptions of the dance’s minimal choreographic style. I also knew Rainer’s history of teaching the work to persons without dance training. Based on this knowledge, I entered into my first reading of the score with the assumption that I would be able to quickly teach myself sections of Rainer’s dance.

With the score in hand I began to mark out the opening movements of Trio A in the Bureau’s small lobby, trying not to inadvertently crash into the file cabinets as I plotted out the specifics of Rainer’s choreography (which, in the early moments of dance, includes wide arms gestures as well as a series of traveling steps around a blind curve that lead into a demi-grand rond de jambe en l’air en dedans and an arabesque). As I tried to translate the Labanotation onto my own body, I found the choreography more intricate than I had expected, and the notation of a much more advanced level than I anticipated. The score for Trio A was by far the most challenging of the readings I had selected from the Bureau’s collection. After making my way through two pages of the score, during which I had to repeatedly return to Labanotation manuals to look up uncommon symbols and the usage notes for complicated theory, I felt my embodying of the score was coming at such a sluggish pace and sloppy result that I gave up on the dance and returned the score to its folder. For Trio A, the appearance of the dance’s ease and simplicity in performance presents a striking incongruity to its rigorous specificity and uniquely intricate
choreographic structure. This experience of realizing the exceptionally complicated nature of Trio A would recur throughout my later experiences with the dance.

In March 2014, nearly three years after my abandoned attempt at deciphering Trio A from its Labanotation score, I contacted Pat Catterson about the possibility of my learning the dance from her. We coordinated for her to teach me Trio A that fall. While Trio A has a duration of roughly four and one half to five minutes depending on the performer’s pacing, Catterson explained that the teaching process for Trio A takes between 10 and 15 hours. Additional hours beyond this are also needed for further corrections on choreographic details, movement quality, and pacing throughout the piece. Catterson organizes her coaching process into four to six days of rehearsals. This is the format she uses for transmitting the dance to those without a dance background as well as trained and professional dancers. Such an extended rehearsal time for a comparatively short dance is uncommon in professional ballet or modern dance. Catterson notes that, in her experience, attempts at learning the dance in fewer days are rarely successful. Because Trio A engages the body in ways that are contradictory to kinesthetic patterns in ballet and modern dance, and the piece lacks any repetition, recurring movement themes, or standardized phrasing, it is necessary to teach every single moment of the dance individually and in its layered complexity. Trio A is so specific in its details and distinct in its choreographic nature and that learning the dance requires such a high level of mental engagement that memorization of the dance rarely progress much faster than the way Catterson has arranged in her teaching.

Around the same time that I contacted Catterson about learning Trio A, two other dancers, Patrick Corbin and Abigail Levine, also inquired about learning the work from her. Catterson, who regularly teaches the dance to multiple people in the same rehearsal, suggested
that we might all work together and learn the piece in its original formation: as a trio with two men and one woman. Corbin, Levine, and I learned the dance over five consecutive days in September 2014. Catterson ran her rehearsals in part collaboratively. After she taught sections of the dance we would individually perform the choreography for each other, and as witnesses we were tasked with giving feedback to the other two dancers based on our growing knowledge of the dance’s intricacies. This cultivated a greater clarity in our own performances and provided Catterson additional opportunities to articulate nuanced answers to questions that arose when we noticed inconsistencies between our three individual performances of *Trio A*. In the final coaching process Catterson honed our individual performances, working with us to locate a pacing that allowed us to most accurately present the fluid continuity and uninflected precision of the dance in performance. This resulted in our developing quite different pacings from one another. Levine performed the dance at a quicker pace than most performers, a speed close to Rainer’s original performance of the work in the 1960s. My own pace was average, as I completed the dance in roughly five minutes. Corbin performed with a slower pacing. Catterson highlighted that Rainer accepts, and in part encourages, this difference in the choreography’s duration to ensure that the dancer embodies the stylistic and conceptual concerns of the dance.

On the final day of this rehearsal period I asked Catterson if she taught the retrograde version of *Trio A*, which she had developed in 1970 and has regularly performed since. She said that with the exception of one instance when she taught it to two dancers in Mikhail Baryshnikov’s White Oak Dance Project, she does not stage or teach this version the dance. She suggested that if I wanted to dance *Trio A* in retrograde that I would have to solve it for myself, offering two ways to do this: to videotape myself performing the dance forwards and watch the video in reverse, learning from this film, or to spend time in a dance studio as she did
and work out the choreography in reverse one motion at a time. While she acknowledged that the use of video might quicken the learning process, she emphasized that she felt it would be “cheating,” citing Rainer’s distrust of video in transmitting dances. The best way to understand the retrograde version, she contended, was to work exclusively with my own embodied knowledge of Trio A.

For the remainder of fall 2014 Trio A became my regular practice. Several days a week I would rehearse the dance so as to not forget the choreography or lose details in the movement. Additionally, I undertook Catterson’s challenge of reconstructing the retrograde version individually. Solving Trio A in retrograde took roughly two months, during which time I worked on the dance in 90-minute rehearsal periods two to three times a week.

Solving the retrograde version was a multi-step process. First, I worked through the dance backwards, one action at a time, to understand the ways each motion would progress in retrograde. Once I deduced this, I began the task of physically performing the sequence. The greatest challenge was accounting for changes in the experience of gravity and momentum when reversing movements. This necessitated greatly different applications of force and the training of new muscle memory to accomplish actions that did not progress in ways I was accustomed to moving. Throughout this process I struggled to perform each action with the same level of emphasis. I also found the endeavor at times exceptionally humorous, with laughable moments when I would awkwardly stumble after misjudging the necessary force for a motion or when I would get ‘stuck’ in positions from which it was difficult to propel myself into the next movement. My solitary rehearsal process, undertaken over several months, reflected the working process through which Rainer choreographed Trio A. I worked with each motion individually to
articulate the essence of every action and repeated it until it was appropriately neutral,
controlled, and uninflected.

I then approached matching the spacing of the piece, which necessitated my marking out
on the floor the detailed geometric pathways that order Rainer’s dance, developing my own
techniques to make retrograded traveling sequences cover the same distance as when Trio A is
performed forwards. This involved repeatedly reworking my use of momentum and
reconsidering the ways I approached reversing many movements. For example, reversing a
sequence in the original dance that moves from series of controlled balances into a running
pattern required deducing how to maintain the speed, trajectory, and distance of the run when it
was taken in retrograde, then landing the final running step with enough composure and stability
to be able to fluidly continue into the sequence of balanced positions.

During this period of independent work I also rehearsed Trio A with the musical
accompaniment of The Chambers Brothers’ rendition of “In the Midnight Hour,” a variation of
Trio A that was first presented in 1968. I trained myself to avoid altering the movement quality
or pacing of Trio A to match the song’s meter or musical inflections, a task that again proved to
be more difficult than I had anticipated; as a dancer I am highly accustomed to performing in
relation to musical timing, matching movements to musical counts and inflecting choreography
in response to musical qualities. Whereas most of Trio A cannot be ordered into a rhythmic
structure, there are several moments in the dance where movements can easily fall in tempo with
the music. In performing this version of Trio A I had to train myself to maintain an awareness of
my own internal tempo, as I had rehearsed it in silence, when dancing alongside the music’s
competing rhythm.
I continued to work independently on *Trio A* in these three articulations for the next 15 months before rehearsing again with Catterson. When I first contacted her to share that I had undertaken her challenge of solving *Trio A* in retrograde myself, she acknowledged that I was the only person other than her who had completed this initiative. As she coached my performance we shared stories of the strategies we independently developed for solving the dance’s complexities in reverse, as well as where we had caught ourselves inadvertently ‘cheating’ to make performing certain actions easier or inadvertently left out a detail of the choreography. We also commiserated over periods of extended confusion on how to accomplish specific movements. Catterson contends that performing the dance in retrograde “is technically much more difficult than the original, forwards version,” an assertion which I can corroborate from my experience performing the dance. An additional difficulty in performing *Retrograde* is remembering the progression of the dance in reverse. Because Rainer’s choreography does not follow clear logical progressions or repeat any phrasing, it is easy to get confused and start to go forwards. Both Catterson and I have experienced this in rehearsal, catching ourselves in momentary lapses of memory where our reinforced knowledge of the original dance punctures our knowledge of *Retrograde*, leading us to forget which movement comes next in progression and accidentally slip into a forward progression before realizing our mistake. Both Catterson and I have found that the added mental focus of *Retrograde* and kinesthetic peculiarities of articulating Rainer’s multi-layered choreographic elements in reverse produces for us a smoother pacing in performance. Rainer has told Catterson that she does the “pacing better with the retrograde version than the forwards,” a comment both Catterson and Rainer also made of my performance.

Following my rehearsals with Catterson I worked with Rainer on fine-tuning my performance of these three versions of the dance. Rainer coached me in a new version of *Trio A*
Pressured, which I performed in April 2016. Like Catterson’s impetus for creating Retrograde, I too feel dancing Trio A to be such a rewarding experience that as I finish the dance I desire to do it again. In this Pressured performance I presented the dance Forwards, Retrograde, and In The Midnight Hour, exposing how Retrograde allows for an ability to stage the dance continuously without interruption.

As I read through the Labanotation score for Trio A again in 2016, now with an increased fluency in the notation system, I can compare it to my own embodied knowledge of the dance. The score provides the dance’s physical structure, recording an exceptional amount of corporeal and spatial details with a precision that other documentation of Trio A has yet to accomplish. However, there are other aspects of Trio A that are of equal importance that I cannot locate on the pages of the Labanotation score or in its accompanying video: the full extent of Rainer’s unique internal physical references and idiosyncratic subtleties. The notation cannot record all the conceptual structures of Rainer’s work, the personal anecdotes and detailed knowledge that Rainer painstakingly maintains in her own body and is passed on by the custodians of Trio A. The details may just be too many and too subtle to lend themselves to a few documentary elements. Trio A is as much a feeling-state and embodied historical practice as it is a movement phrase. Rainer articulates that Trio A must project a “sense of precariousness and achievement.” It is this affective quality that is gained through a doing and a being-there, experiencing the dance in motion under a critical eye.
Recent Rearticulations of Trio A, 2014 and Onwards

Rainer’s continued process of reworking the way Trio A can be taught, staged, and presented in new formats has in part shifted to her six custodians. As the custodians receive propositions for new variations on the dance or unique presentation opportunities, they discuss with Rainer if and how to approach these projects. While Rainer leaves many specifics of the working process to the judgment of the custodians who undertakes approved projects, she actively places restrictions on how the dance can be performed or changed so as to maintain the piece’s integrity. Additionally, Rainer selects titles for each new reconceptualized version of her dance and tracks the developments of every project. Since 2014 multiple new transmogrifications of Trio A have been developed: Trio A Pressured #X (2014), Trio A Pressured: Horticultural Fragment (2016), Trio A Condensed (2016), Slow Dancing/Trio A (2017), and Trio A: a Baker’s Dozen (2017). These new iterations of Rainer’s piece investigate particular aspects of Trio A’s choreographic phrase and historical situatedness. In each production Rainer actively resituates the dance by engaging a new seeing difficulty, pressuring
the ways Trio A can renegotiate the spectatorial encounter to both elucidate and develop new understandings of her choreographic legacy.

Since 2014 Trio A custodian Linda K. Johnson has developed three new versions of the dance, which she refers to as grafts of Trio A. Her first reconceptualization of Trio A was designed for the physically integrated dance company AXIS, which premiered in April 2014 as Trio A Pressured #X. For AXIS the choreography of Trio A was translated for two performers in wheelchairs, who dance the work alongside two able-bodied dancers performing the work’s original choreography. While Trio A has existed in many permutations, this is the first time since Pat Catterson’s 1970/1971 Retrograde version of the dance that Rainer has allowed for a significant rewriting of the choreographic phrase.

In October 2013 Johnson was invited to Oakland, CA to explore with AXIS how Trio A might be staged with dancers of mixed ability. The project of restaging Trio A on AXIS offered an exciting opportunity for the company. Not only was AXIS participating in the history of Trio A, they were expanding their repertory practices to conceive of new ways that existing dances could be staged on the company. The task of translating this canonical work, known for its strict precision of style and form, for bodies quite different from those for which Rainer originally choreographed the dance, presented a conceptual and physical challenge for both Johnson and the dancers. Johnson was exceedingly supportive of and enthusiastic about the work, but Rainer chose to maintain final word on the feasibility of the project and any major revision to the choreography. One of Rainer’s original concerns with the work at AXIS was preserving the task-like quality and uninflected energy of the movement as well as maintaining a clear readability of the original phrase when translated onto bodies of differing abilities.
After the residency Johnson sent Rainer a collection of video clips that documented her early attempts at translating the choreography. Reviewing the videos, Rainer too became excited about the piece. She was pleased to see that Johnson’s work with translating the movement continued to display the essence of functionality in the dance. Through the process of translating *Trio A*, both Johnson and Rainer discovered that “the task of moving in the chair was in itself unexpectedly well-suited for the principle of *Trio A*’s conceptual integrity.” Working with the added element of the wheelchair exemplified Rainer’s interest in a performance style marked by unhurried control, the presentation of actual energy, and an explicit engagement with the body’s physicality and weight.

With Rainer’s approval to continue working on the piece, Johnson and the AXIS dancers began full rehearsals in January 2014. The cast of *Trio A Pressured #X* included able-bodied dancers Sonsherée Giles and Juliana Monin as well as wheelchair dancers Joel Brown and Marc Brew. At AXIS Johnson worked closely with Brown and Brew on the task of deciding how to locate which essence of each movement was most important and then translating those choices into a version for the chair. Like Rainer’s initial development of the movements for *Trio A*, the motions of the dance needed to be distilled to their most simple forms. The three examined such qualities as the facing, physical gesture, directionality of movement, and pathway of travel for each moment of the dance. The individual movements of *Trio A* are mostly characterized by simultaneous and opposite movements of the limbs, torso, and head. As not every aspect could be simultaneously engaged, the task for Johnson and dancers Brown and Brew was to examine how these movements that were developed for all four limbs could be reconfigured for two arms and two wheels, without losing the intention, direction, travel, and flow of the dance. Not only did the movements of the legs need to be reconsidered, many of the sequences of arm gestures
did as well, as the dancers needed one or both of their hands to manipulate the movements and traveling paths of their chairs. Johnson and the dancers also needed to account for and work through unintended movements of the wheelchair during their process of adapting the movements, as certain important arm gestures and torso motions engaged enough energy to slightly shift the chair’s facing or set the chair in motion.

AXIS Dance Company in rehearsal for Trio A Pressured #X by Yvonne Rainer. Photos by Ren Dodge.

In the version for wheelchairs, Johnson and the dancers experimented with different ways of representing the intentions and qualities of each movement. Johnson shared Rainer’s diverse collection of visual concepts and stylistic language with the dancers, and together the three began to conceptualize how these ideas could be similarly represented. In the translation for wheelchair sometimes the movements of the legs were performed by the arms, rolls on the floor were turned into turns of the chair, and jumps became tilts of the chair or slight rises of the body from the seat. Throughout the process Johnson and the dancers “sought to respect the principles of choreography, exploring the balance between maintaining the integrity of individual movements while also staying true to the piece as a whole.”117 Once each movement was analyzed in itself, it needed to be examined in relationship to the flow and progression of the dance to preserve the uninflected quality and smoothness of continuity that characterizes Trio A.
Through the development of this work on AXIS, not only has Rainer allowed for the rewriting of *Trio A* to include a wheelchair version, but multiple wheelchair versions. The two chair dancers in AXIS that performed in the work each have unique levels of injury-ability and different wheelchair design, which necessitated different set modifications to the dance. One dancer’s chair had traditional vertical wheels, while the other used a sports wheelchair with angled wheels. These differences created significant variations for movement ability, most notably the different turning radii of the chairs and one chair’s ability to turn in place on one wheel while the other only allowed for a circular travelling pattern around oneself. Brew also chooses to keep his legs strapped into the chair, whereas Brown does not, maintaining the ability to use his arms to pick up and manipulate his legs during performance. This allowed for Brown to represent the dance’s actions of the legs with the legs, though the actions were accomplished in a very different manner. The height of Brown’s spinal injury also allows him to use his upper body to lie his chair on the ground, either on its side or back, creating the opportunity to maintain some of *Trio A*’s floor work in a lying position even though still connected to the chair. Such individual difference and resulting modifications created two differently nuanced representations of the dance. Designating this work a *Pressured* version of the dance, Rainer calls attention to the presentation of three different versions *Trio A* within the performance by AXIS: the two individualized wheelchair versions appear alongside the original choreographic phrase performed by two non-disabled dancers.

The two wheelchair variations developed with AXIS suggests that a wheelchair version of *Trio A* could never be fully codified as the individual concerns of each dancer will necessitate choreographic renegotiations of both their own body’s ability and their chair’s functionality, potentially demanding even more different articulations of the dance. Johnson will approach this
in 2017 when she works with AXIS again to stage the work, this time with new dancers who have joined the company.

*Trio A Pressured #X* directly questions how we watch and experience historical works of choreography. Johnson chose to set the work on AXIS as a canon, with the four dancers entering and beginning the dance at staggered intervals. Canon formation allows for the recognition of pattern and repetition in a work. While *Trio A* involves no repetition in itself, staging the work in a series of staggered beginnings challenges the viewer to search for movement patterns across the four separate performances. One catches repetitions of motions, gestures, and pathways in the piece, and is thereby given a tool to see the original dance through the wheelchair performances as well as recognize the multiple ways translation was approached in the working process.

In showing the original choreographic phrase alongside the new version for wheelchairs, *Trio A Pressured #X* enacts a historical layering and presents a dialogue between past and present that unfolds as the dancers progress through the piece. With the dancers sharing the same stage space, the original choreography and its reconceptualization blend together into a singular work. However, the flexible pacing of Rainer’s choreographic structure and the lack of accompaniment against which dancers can mark their speed results in a different timing of their overlapping every time the work is performed. In her staging of this piece Johnson chose for each performance to rearrange the order in which the dancers begin *Trio A*, making each showing unique. With several performers on stage simultaneously, working with different pacings and beginning in different orders, the dancers are tasked with being conscious of the positions of others in every moment as well as knowing where in the choreographic phrase each performer is, so as to be able to negotiate their own timing and movement to ensure they don’t collide. Throughout the piece dancers navigate around each other, repeatedly shifting their
performance and modifying their paths of travel to account for the positions and movements of others. This continuous interplay between the dancers performing the past and present versions of dance, as well as the ways the choreography must be renegotiated on stage, presents a new experience of the dance in every performance.

The second *Trio A* reconceptualization that Johnson developed was created in March 2016 as part of a research project designed by Joshi Radin, Brian M. John, and Linda Tegg, three graduate students at School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC). *Trio A Pressured: Horticultural Fragment* employed a section of *Trio A*’s choreography in an experiment on how performance can be engaged to tune our awareness to the interactions and interconnections between humans and plants. Radin, John, and Tegg create collaborative projects that engage cultural content to expand human capacity to empathize with plants. Their project *A Program for Plants* began with the proposition of programming a video art festival to be screened for plants. In curating this series of screenings, Radin, John, and Tegg analyzed the light output of the top 50 most requested films from the Video Data Bank, a repository and distributor of films by contemporary artists that is housed at SAIC. Examining the films from a photosynthetic rather than aesthetic perspective, they used a photosynthetically active radiation (PAR) meter to ascertain which films produced the greatest amount of light available for photosynthesis, arguing that these films would be the most stimulating to plants. Of the 50 films they sampled, the 1978 film of *Trio A* was recorded to emit the most PAR per minute of film. This film of *Trio A*, along with four other videos in their sample that presented the greatest amount of PAR, was screened in late 2015 for inter-species audiences of plants and humans.

Following these film screenings, Radin, John, and Tegg contacted several of *Trio A*’s custodians, proposing a project where they would each learn Rainer’s dance and perform it for
plant audiences. Johnson was the only custodian who replied. She forwarded the idea to Rainer, who was skeptical of the project, thinking it a hoax, and suggested telling the group “no.” Johnson, however, helped persuade Rainer to allow her to investigate the project, arguing that it was approaching the dance both theoretically and in a radical way, and that the project had received financial support from the school under the approval of a faculty mentor.¹²¹

In March Johnson traveled to Chicago to work with the students, teaching a segment of Trio A in a three-day workshop.¹²² In addition to learning Trio A during the workshop, participants collectively considered how performing the dance for a plant audience could expand their capacity for empathizing with plants. Each of these three days Johnson worked with the group for eight hours, teaching the Trio A fragment over the first two days and dedicating the third day to coaching and cleaning the work. Following this workshop every participant performed this fragment of Trio A as a solo for a unique plant audience, each selecting a different location in which to perform. These solos were staged for tropical flowers in the Lincoln Park Conservatory, potted shrubs in a Home Depot Garden Center, aquatic plants near a beach on Lake Michigan, a bouquet of daffodils laid on the dance studio floor, and a jade plant in an apartment window. The five solo performances of the Trio A fragment that Johnson taught were not publicized per Rainer’s request, as they did not present the dance in full. However, the fragments were filmed and edited together as a new work, collectively called Trio A Pressured: Horticultural Fragment. In designating the work Pressured, Rainer maintains her use of that title to signal a format where any three or more different articulations of Trio A are presented together, highlighting the different performance locations and intentions selected by each dancer in response to their chosen plant audience.
Following these performance fragments Johnson danced Trio A in full for an invited audience of both plants and humans at SAIC. For this performance Radin, John, and Tegg developed a specific audience arrangement, which they titled *Score for an Interspecies Audience Awaiting Trio A*. The audience space was a 20-foot square grid, subdivided into twenty-five four-foot square areas, delineated on the floor by tape. One plant was placed in each square, and one audience member was invited to join each plant. For her performance Johnson danced Trio A twice, first in silence, then with “In the Midnight Hour.” Following this performance Johnson chose in the moment to enact a final experiment as part of the project, to perform the dance for a third time with the intention of specifically attuning her performance to the presence of a plant audience. Johnson is unaware if this change in her perspective as a performer noticeably altered the appearance of the dance, but it subtly shifted her experience dancing, which she remarked to feel more smooth and calm. Staging this experiment in front of an audience and sharing with them the intentions behind the project, Johnson continues Rainer’s tradition of engaging Trio A as a lecture process, presenting new ways to see and think about the dance.

Johnson developed another graft of Trio A in July 2016, adjusting the dance for a four-foot square performance space. *Trio A Compressed* premiered as part of Ten Tiny Dances in Beaverton, OR, an annual festival that invites choreographers to present dances on the festival’s portable wooden stage, which measures four-foot square and is elevated one foot off the ground. Choreographers typically develop new works specifically for the festival’s unconventional stage size, making Johnson’s work of rearticulating an existing piece choreography, which was designed for a much larger stage a significant departure for the festival’s programming.
Johnson had been invited to perform *Trio A* as part of the festival in 2004, but declined because she felt condensing the dance onto this stage would be too dangerous as the complicated choreography of *Trio A* would risk her falling off the platform. Additionally, she noted that the Ten Tiny Dances stage, which is situated with audience seating on all sides, would remove the proscenium intention of *Trio A* and confront the piece’s imperative about the gaze of the performer never meeting that of the audience. When approached about the 2016 festival, Johnson negotiated to flip the small stage on its side and perform the dance on the ground, using the wooden square as the back wall of her performance space. This arrangement would give the performance area a clear front, even if the audience didn’t reposition themselves. To refer to the size constraints of the wooden stage, Johnson used salt to outline a four-foot square on the floor, delineating the enclosed area as the space in which she would perform. Staging *Trio A Compressed* on the floor rather than the elevated platform allows for some leeway in the spacing of her performance, permitting Johnson to momentarily slip beyond the square without risk of falling off the stage. While the lines of salt mark the performance area’s borders, these borders are disrupted during the performance, revealing the ways *Trio A*’s choreography necessitates crossing over and out of the four-foot square. This showed how the constraints of the space could not fully hold the dance, even when condensed as much as possible.

In reconsidering the choreography of *Trio A* for this small performance area, Johnson approached the project with the goal of maintaining every aspect of the dance except the floor pattern, which needed to be partially renegotiated. However, Johnson followed the floor pattern as closely as possible, trying to match her location within the four-foot square to where the performer would progress in the larger stage space for which *Trio A* was designed. Johnson rehearsed the work diligently so that in each moment of the dance she would place herself in
exactly the right zone of the square to ensure the movements of the dance could be executed as close to their original intention as possible within the condensed performance space. For Johnson, the most challenging aspect of this dance to spatially organize was *Trio A*’s backwards summersault. Positioning herself at the very front of the downstage line of salt, Johnson could barely accomplish this movement within the four-foot depth of the space, her feet skimming the wood square that marked the back of the performance area as she came out of the movement. While the traveling steps and spatial maneuvers were spatially condensed, the small stage area did not restrict Johnson’s limbs and the gestural motions of the dance were executed in full; Johnson only condensed aspects of the dance when absolutely necessary.

*Trio A Condensed* took Johnson approximately seven minutes to perform, a significantly longer duration than that of her pacing in *Trio A*. Johnson found that she had to exceptionally slow the pacing of the dance so as to concentrate on staying within the parameters of the space and maintaining the intentions of *Trio A*. Throughout the performance Johnson aimed at treating...
the movement carefully, “without being precious, but pragmatic” in her choices of when to adapt the dance’s movement.\textsuperscript{125}

The title \textit{Trio A Condensed} was chosen by Rainer, as with the dance’s previous rearticulations. Johnson emphasized that this name change signals the alteration to the dance, noting that it would be inaccurate to simply call the piece \textit{Trio A}, as this rearticulation removes the spatial rigor of the dance. Johnson framed this performance in part as a lecture on \textit{Trio A}. Before beginning her performance she spoke directly to the audience, summarizing the history of the dance and articulating the way she approached the task of condensing it to fit in the constrained performance area of Ten Tiny Dances, including the intentions behind using the salt border on the ground. Johnson outlined for the audience the spatial criteria of \textit{Trio A} as it is normally staged, and noted how she has “made an iteration of a preexisting dance that one would normally go to the theatre to see.”\textsuperscript{126} As with her work on AXIS, Johnson tasked the audience to try to envision the original dance through the reconceptualized version, providing context and insight into the characteristics of \textit{Trio A}.

In December 2016 Rainer collaborated with filmmaker David Michalek on a new articulation of \textit{Trio A} on film, \textit{Slow Dancing/Trio A}, which premiered the following year as an installation at Danspace Project in St Mark’s Church.\textsuperscript{127} In 2007 Michalek began an ongoing video project that creates film portraits of individual dancers. Using a specially constructed high-speed, high-definition camera that records at 1,000 frames per second, Michalek records dancers performing for five to seven seconds then slows the footage to several minutes in duration. These hyper-slow-motion films are projected onto expansive screens as video installations, generally with several projections installed together to juxtapose multiple performances simultaneously.
To adapt *Trio A* for the structure of Michalek’s *Slow Dancing*, Pat Catterson segmented the dance into 46 pieces, each roughly five to six seconds in length, and worked with Rainer to cast a different dancer for every section. The individual filmed performances were then linked, creating a continuous performance of *Trio A*. The 46 dancers in *Slow Dancing/Trio A*, including Rainer, collectively represent *Trio A*’s extensive performance history and the diversity of people who have performed the work over more than fifty years. Through its casting, *Slow Dancing/Trio A* encompasses both the history and legacy of Rainer’s work.

Rainer performs the opening section in the film, a positioning that situates her as the first dancer of the work, the origin point of *Trio A*. She is followed by Catterson, *Trio A*’s senior-most transmitter and the lead for most stagings of the dance, including this project. The following 44 performers in the film appear in no specific order, an arrangement that blends and juxtaposes performers from different period of Rainer’s career and different types of dancers, thus fracturing both *Trio A*’s chronological linearity and situatedness in contemporary dance practice. Performers in the film represent the wide spread of Rainer’s career, including John Erdman, who danced *Trio A* in Rainer’s *This is the story of a woman who...*, her last performance work before her shift into filmmaking (thus bookending Rainer’s choreographic explorations of *Trio A* in her early career); Thyrza Goodeve, who appeared in Rainer's 1985 film *The Man Who Envied Women*; Richard Move from *Rainer Variations*, this time performing as himself rather than in his Graham persona; UC Irvine professor of art Simon Leung, who danced in the first production of *Trio A in Ten Easy Lessons*; and myself, who little more than a week prior to filming had coordinated with Rainer to present the next transmogrification of her dance, *Trio A: a Baker’s Dozen*. Rainer’s casting also looked to the future through her inclusion of Stephen Petronio, on whose company Rainer’s dances were being rehearsed for a March 2017 performance as part of
his Bloodlines project, including a staging of *Trio A With Flags* as a proscenium work. Thus, Rainer locates *Trio A* as an expansive, multifaceted, and ongoing practice, tracking the legacy of her piece from 1966 into the future.

Slow Dancing/Trio A also represents the panoply of performers who have danced the work and exposes the multiple networks within which Rainer has circulated *Trio A*. The cast includes professional dancers, untrained dancers, and dance students from Rutgers University, where Catterson had taught *Trio A* that fall. Incorporated into the project are members of Rainer’s current performing ensemble, which she affectionately calls the Raindears: Pat Catterson, Emily Coates, Patricia Hoffbauer, Manou Phuon, Keith Sabado, and David Thomson. Showcasing the breadth of Rainer’s intervention into dance practice, other professional dancers in the film reflect a diversity of movement backgrounds, including Sarah Haarmann from the Mark Morris Dance Company, former New York City Ballet principal Wendy Whelan, and baroque dancer Patricia Beaman (who also once performed *Trio A* in full 18th century regalia, I am told). Recognizing *Trio A* as a work that has been a significant subject in both scholarly writing and dance criticism, the cast of Slow Dancing/Trio A also incorporates dancer-critic Wendy Perron, who has been writing on Rainer since the 1970s, as well as current *New York Times* dance writer Siobhan Burke.

Rather than simply linking the dancers in an ongoing stream of solo segments, Rainer makes an intervention into the film, not as a dancer, but as a teacher. She appears alongside dancer Robbie Cook, about midway through the film, coaching and cleaning his segment of the dance. In this moment the film references *Performance Demonstration #1*, in which Rainer coached Becky Arnold in *Trio A* mid-performance, further layering the multiple histories of *Trio
In *Slow Dancing/Trio A* Rainer juxtaposes her work as a choreographer, dancer, and teacher, forwarding these multiple aspects of her legacy.

As installed in Danspace Project, *Slow Dancing/Trio A* reflects Rainer’s interest in juxtaposing multiple iterations of *Trio A* to create an ever-changing experience of watching the dance. The installation is arranged on three separate screens, with each projector showing the slow-motion dancing at a slightly different speed. As in the first performance of *The Mind is Muscle, Part 1* at Judson Church in 1966, *Slow Dancing/Trio A* presents three simultaneous yet non-synchronized performances of the same dance. The extreme slowness of the film makes this difference in speed across the three projections hard to discern, integrating a seeing difficulty into the work. This also makes the piece hard to encompass as a whole, as the three projections will always juxtapose different sections of the dance, providing perpetually new spectatorial experiences throughout installation.

Also integrated into the loop for each of the three projectors is a full-speed version of the Michalek film and a video of Rainer dancing the whole of *Trio A* that was taken during the production of *Slow Dancing*. Rainer performs her *Geriatric* version of the dance, accomplishing what she can at age 82 with the assistance of Catterson. Each individual screen in the exhibition is thereby a *Pressured* version of the dance, showcasing three different transmogrifications of the piece together. In addition to these film projections, the 1978 Sally Banes film of Rainer dancing *Trio A* is shown at the front of the sanctuary, and at the back of the sanctuary a slide projector facing the rear wall cycles through images of *Trio A* taken by photographer Peter Moore during the 1960s. Thus, the entire installation itself is also a *Pressured* version of three *Trio As*, all progressing simultaneously. Michalek sets a microphone up to the slide machine, which echoes the mechanical clicks of the projector as it pulls up a slide, rotates, and drops the next slide down
at precisely timed, regular intervals. This sonic accompaniment to the installation intentionally references the sounds created by the wooden slats dropped to the stage in *The Mind is a Muscle* during Trio A.

The multiple histories and transmogrifications of Trio A that are embedded into *Slow Dancing/Trio A* are viewable to the well-tuned eye, but still partially elusive. The spatial arrangement of the installation makes it impossible to see all aspects of the piece at once, further compounding the seeing difficulty of Trio A in its historical complexity. The viewer must choose where they position themselves in the space, deciding both what and how they watch as the piece unfolds. With *Slow Dancing/Trio A* Rainer intensifies her radical juxtapositions and historical layerings, fracturing our ability to fully encompass Trio A’s ever-expanding multiplicity. Thus, Trio A perpetuates its seeing difficulty through the simultaneous revelation and obfuscation of its function as a legacy practice.

![Installation view of Slow Dancing/Trio A. Danspace Project, St. Mark’s Church, 2017. Photo by the author.](image)

In November 2016 I was invited to perform Trio A at University of Illinois at Chicago’s Gallery 400 as part of the exhibition “Embodiment Abstracted: The Influence of Yvonne
Rainer,” which ran 13 Jan-14 March 2017. Discussing the exhibition with curator and art historian Elise Archias, I suggested that rather than my simply performing Trio A, we might rather rethink how we could situate a live enactment of the dance in a way that reflected the specifics of the gallery setting and the show’s intention of revealing Rainer’s experimental approach to the body during the 1960s as extended into contemporary performance. Thinking about Archias’ curatorial choice for the exhibition as comprised exclusively of looped videos of work in performance, I suggested to Rainer that I might reconstruct Steve Paxton’s 1972 performance at the L’Attico Gallery in Rome, where he danced Trio A continuously for one hour. Spatially, Trio A ends where it began, making it possible for a dancer to simply start the dance anew at its conclusion, looping the piece. Rainer determined this proposal to reconstruct a past transmogrification of Trio A was not contemporary enough for the exhibition context, but she agreed that the choice to loop the dance in live performance seemed structurally fitting when situated in relation to the looped video works in the gallery. Taking this into consideration, Rainer suggested a similar yet new transmogrification of Trio A: performing the dance as a continuous loop not for a specific duration, but for a set number of repetitions. With Rainer’s choreographic phrase approximately five minutes in duration, 12 Trip A’s would extend the work for roughly an hour. Always pushing the dance forward, Rainer suggested Trio A: a Baker’s Dozen, 13 repetitions of the dance in looped succession, which I performed on 22 February 2017.

Rainer acknowledges that Trio A takes a considerable amount of her time. In the midst of planning Slow Dancing/Trio A, Trio A: a Baker’s Dozen, and the reconstruction of Trio A With Flags for Stephen Petronio’s company, all being presented in 2017, Rainer ended an email to me thusly: “After all this attention, maybe the dance should be banned!” 30 Trio A hasn’t been
banned. I doubt it ever will be. In May 2018 Rainer will be in Dublin at the Museum of Modern Art Ireland for performances of Trio A, and at her suggestion I will be presenting a lecture-demonstration on the dance at SUNY Purchase’s Neuberger Museum of Art alongside the exhibition “Women Artists 1960s-1970s.” And I believe more of Trio A is on the horizon. As Rainer keeps moving the dance forward, Trio A endures as a legacy practice.

Conclusion

The multiple modes of transmitting Trio A and numerous rearticulations of this dance that have been developed over more than fifty years collectively expose Rainer’s changing choreographic aims and artistic intentions. Throughout her career in dance Rainer has repurposed Trio A as a tool for experimenting with collage techniques in both performance and film, exploring new models for structuring the ways we see, experience, and understand dance. Repeatedly returning to the same choreography and actively working to alter its context, Rainer engages a practice of self-reflexive citation and alteration that resists choreographic fixity.

Through Trio A Rainer presents a new philosophy on dance that furthers the aims and ideals of postmodernism. Not only does Rainer’s work reject the compositional structures and performance traditions of both ballet and modern dance, the multiple rearticulations of Trio A are used to directly comment on her work’s interventions in choreography and performance. In her use of this dance as a lecture-demonstration, Rainer’s performances intentionally reveal the concepts, strategies, and practices that were employed in both the dance’s creation and reconstruction. More than a performance piece, Trio A is a treatise on Rainer’s work. Through the different versions of this dance, Rainer has intensified and highlighted the various strictures and structures that formed her creative process. In making a dance that demands continual
transformation, Rainer’s iconoclastic mode of choreographic generativity presents new models for dance practice, challenges spectatorship, and reframes dance’s relationship to documentation.

Rainer’s unique stance toward the revisiting and reconceptualizing of her work explicitly highlights choreographic difference and change. However, the rearticulations of Trio A cannot be conceived of simply as variations on an original, as Trio A was developed to present difference in every performance through the juxtaposition of performers dancing the work nonsynchronously. In her development of Trio A as part of The Mind is a Muscle, Rainer actively worked to unsettle notions of an ‘original’ in dance by immediately and already situating her work in a process of choreographic change, a practice she has continued to intensify. Explicit in Rainer’s practice with Trio A is an active exploration of the relationships between the body and documentary object, performer and spectator, and past and present. Throughout her career in dance Rainer has returned to Trio A to examine and express the artistic concerns that she finds most pressing, engaging the piece aesthetically, politically, philosophically, and comically. Rainer has used her process of choreographic transmission to repeatedly re-write Trio A, a practice that continuously re-writes her own history and legacy. This evolving practice and the choreographic returns that result from it confront traditional modes of spectatorship and affect historical knowing of Rainer’s work.

Trio A is a paradoxical artistic product. In authoring and approving multiple iterations of this dance Rainer opens a critique into the modernist project of distinguishing choreographies as singular artworks. While her work with Trio A unsettles notions of choreographic fixity, Rainer simultaneously maintains a meticulous practice of preserving an authorized version of the dance, complete with legal and financial structures. This dualism of Trio A, wherein the piece is
constantly being re-written yet retains a recognizable structure, simultaneously reinforces and subverts projects of canonization in dance.

The multiple versions of *Trio A* lead me to question our practice of referring to *Trio A* as a singular dance. When we talk of *Trio A*, to which *Trio A* do we refer? What aspect of *Trio A* is the defining characteristic of the work? Through the multiple iterations of the dance that exist Rainer has, in one version or another, discarded each central tenet of the work: the specific chain of movements that comprise the choreographic phrase, the neutral energy of the body performance, the rejection of acknowledging the audience, and the experience of development and climax in performance. Through this practice, Rainer has repeatedly deconstructed and furthered her critique of dance.
Laura Dean’s creative output in minimalist art spans interconnected and intertwined work in dance, music, and drawing. Through an analysis of her compositional practice across disciplines, I expose Dean’s use of schematic systems, numerical structures, and geometric forms as primarily concerned with ideation and energy patterning. Existing scholarly literature and dance criticism on Dean’s work center on the physicality of her dances, examining her choreographic output from a perspective of bodily action, notably her insistent use of stylized spinning. In my investigation of Dean’s dances I examine the ways Dean describes her artistic aims alongside the writings of dance critics who were reviewing her work during the 1970s. Dean’s archive shows a meticulous practice of collecting press clippings and journal articles related to her work. Comparing these descriptions of Dean’s works to the choreographic notes she has included in her archive, as well as the personal reflections she shared with me through written correspondence, I aim to disentangle spectatorial impressions of Dean’s work from an analysis of her choreographic structures and creative practice. In juxtaposing Dean’s writings with those of dance critics, I reveal how reviewers consistently applied additional meaning to her work in a way that resituates the function and motivation of Dean’s choreography. Focusing on the significantly reduced movement vocabulary, use of simple geometric patterning, and rhythmic percussiveness of Dean’s pieces, dance writers have described her work with added choreographic references to ritual and folk dance rather than positioning Dean purely in a discourse of choreographic abstraction.

Dean acknowledges her extended engagement with schools of philosophical thought that developed in connection to religion and spiritualism. While she recognizes the influence this
study has on her worldview, she notes that her choreographic work is not a spiritualist practice. In her artistic process Dean is interested in investigating questions of consciousness, a mode of questioning that she also recognizes in the writings of Advaita Vedanta, Tibetan Buddhist, and Christian philosophy. Dean studies these philosophical texts as a way of informing and expanding her own inquiry on the nature of perception, existence, and permanence. In my analysis of dance criticism on Dean’s work, I investigate how audiences perceived Dean to be directly engaging with spiritualism and primitive ritual in her dances. In highlighting this, I make a distinction between meditation and trance, both in practice and intention, to demonstrate how audiences conflated the minimalist, regulated, and introspective qualities of Dean’s dances to the experience of observing a hypnotic spiritual event. I also highlight Dean’s mode for archiving her dances as a process that foregrounds a visual experience of her work on paper rather than a visual experience of the body in performance, a practice that removes the spectatorial experience in favor of a direct engagement with the conceptual systems and structures of her work.

Through my recognition of Dean’s creative work as inclusive of, but expansive beyond, choreography I instead situate Dean in the context of visual art to examine her creative output alongside contemporaneous developments in serial and conceptual art. Through movement description and visual analysis I foreground Dean’s work with process models and serial progression to expose her highly ordered conceptual systems and clearly defined compositional logic.

Dean’s dances existed as repertoire in both ballet and modern dance companies for several decades, and she previously authorized reconstructions of pieces. However, in January 2009 Dean stopped all reconstructions of her performance work as well as the use of her choreographic and music material in classes, workshops, lectures, panels, and in any other way
whatsoever. Foregrounding her own documentation as insufficient to preserving her dance
works, Dean’s decision about the future, or lack thereof, of her dance works suggests a belief
that any attempt at recording dance constitutes an endeavor that produces a wholly different
object from which the original dance can never be fully recuperated. Engaging Dean’s
suggestion, I explore issues of preservation and reproducibility in dance to reevaluate the
practice of ‘seeing’ dances through documentation.

In discussing her work Dean cites the practice of Tibetan Buddhist sand mandalas,
situating her philosophy on choreography as a meditative act wherein a letting go or destroying
of the artwork is an integral component of the creative process. Following my framing of Dean’s
work as conceptual art, I propose that her minimalist dances do not require the body to be
communicated or articulated, but rather allow for a de-emphasizing or even elimination of the
perceptual encounter with the art object. The de-emphasizing of the performance event suggests
a letting go of the moving body and a choreographic legacy of ideation that is perpetuated
exclusively through Dean’s archival material. Thus, Dean’s intervention in dance is an active
resituating of choreographic legacy outside and apart from repertoire, reconstruction, and
reperformance.

**Dance – Music – Drawing**

Since her early multidisciplinary solo loft events in the mid-1960s and emergence as an
influential choreographer in the early 1970s, Dean has, by her own count, created 109
performance works. While often discussed as a choreographer, her creative process and career
work suggest a more appropriate label of choreographer-composer, or even composer-
choreographer, alongside artists like Meredith Monk. Dean first integrated her own vocal
material into several solo performances during the 1960s, and in 1976 she began composing her own music. Over the following three decades Dean created 30 musical scores specifically for her choreographic works, intrinsically linking these components of her creative process. Positioning Dean’s work in music composition as equal to and inseparable from her choreographic output, as Dean does herself, emphasizes the ways she has actively approached artistic exploration interdisciplinarily, drawing from and influencing new developments in minimalism across multiple media.

Dean’s dance and music works foreground structure, pattern, and form. Her minimalist choreography presents simplified movement structures, uncomplicated gestural vocabulary, repeated choreographic phrases, canon forms, geometric floor patterns, and powerful pulse rhythms. Reflecting contemporaneous developments in postmodern dance, Dean utilizes movement unrelated to ballet and modern dance techniques, including walking, stamping, jumping, running, skipping, hopping, and spinning. Her choreographic structures map these movements onto geometric floor patterns, each working with different combinations, juxtapositions, and layerings of circles and/or straight lines. The intentionally restricted and extremely simplified movement vocabulary in Dean’s work allows for a focused revelation of visual patterning—the underlying structural and compositional logic of her work—both through the body and in the use of stage space.

The steady pulse rhythms of Dean’s pieces work to clearly display how her choreographic patterns continuously shift and develop. Dean’s geometric structures become clear as the dance progresses, with variations in her restricted pattern forms unfolding with rhythmic concentration and control. Dean’s precision movements highlight the nuances of her shifting musical systems, which utilize repetition and variation to draw attention to structure, sequence,
ordering, and patterning. While the movement and musical material within Dean’s systems remain the same, the structures change, producing steady swells of intensity that gradually increase and decrease. These shifts may happen slowly, with the dance morphing at what feels like a glacial pace, or quickly, as forms and positions that have been maintained at length suddenly break apart in precisely timed actions that move the performers into the next structural formation. Each transition is meticulously designed to reveal the complex logic of Dean’s compositional structures. Dean’s pieces both appear and sound mathematical, progressing through detailed rhythmic cycles and mosaic forms in highly ordered counting sequences. As the dances unfold in repetitive processes that slowly reveal difference, we are drawn into solving the equations and systems that comprise her work. Through a sustained introspection and steady progression of pattern, Dean’s pieces are exceptionally focused and intimately meditative.

Dean’s creative practice also includes work in visual art. Throughout the 1970s Dean represented her choreographic structures in minimalist geometric drawings. These were included in her program notes, published alongside descriptions of her dances, utilized in advertisements, and included in gallery exhibitions. Dean’s drawings served to represent the floor patterns and rhythmic structures of her dances, depicting her compositional ideas on paper rather than through the body. Dean also created drawings independent from specific choreographic works. These brightly colorful grid pieces, produced with felt markers on large sheets of graph paper, allowed Dean to experiment with ideas of color, symmetry, repetition, pattern, and form differently than through her musical and choreographic explorations. These works on paper visualize Dean’s thought processes and minimalist concerns. Viewed alongside her choreographic and musical works, Dean’s drawings reveal her creative work in minimalism as part of an intrinsically linked multi-modal artistic practice. Dean is explicit in articulating that she does not perceive her
drawings, even those representational of her choreographic structures, as dance scores or
even as notation. This assertion serves to distance her drawing practice from the scoring work of
other choreographers during the 1960s and ‘70s, including Lucinda Childs, Deborah Hay, and
Yvonne Rainer. However, I situate Dean’s drawings in relation to other minimalist visual
artworks to explore how they might be considered notations, if not dance notation. Examining
Dean’s work on paper in the context of drawing, rather than dance, allows for a reconsideration
of how Dean worked to represent her structures and systems in different media as a way to
foreground and forward concept.

Early Dances

Born in 1945 on Staten Island, Dean attended the High School of the Performing Arts in
New York, training in ballet, jazz, and modern dance. Additionally, she studied at several
independent studios across the city, including the Third Street Settlement, School of American
Ballet, Martha Graham School, and Merce Cunningham Studio. She joined the Paul Taylor
Dance Company in 1964, where she danced for two years before joining the Paul Sanasardo
Dance Company. In 1966 she began integrating herself into New York’s avant-garde art scene,
performing in Kenneth King’s duet Blow Out (1966) at Judson Church and Meredith Monk’s
Time Stop (1966). Dean also began creating her own performance work in 1966. Working first as
a solo artist, in the 1970s she began to create group pieces. As she intensified her choreographic
work, Dean founded a non-profit organization, The Dean Dance and Music Foundation, and
established Laura Dean and Dance Company in 1972.²

Dean’s first choreographic works were two solo performances, Medieval (1966) and 3
Minutes and 10 Seconds (1967), both presented at the Clark Center for the Performing Arts as
part of their Young Choreographers Series. Continuing to explore solo performance, Dean began composing small-scale theatrical work in late 1967, creating six pieces over the ensuing year: *Christmas Piece* (1967), *Hush Little Baby* (1968), *Life is All Around You* (1968), *Sitting-Stamping-Spinning (Red, White, Black)* (1968), *Farewell* (1968), and *No Title* (1968). Presented in loft spaces, these early works were interdisciplinary, mixed means performance events that collectively engaged and integrated spoken word, whistling, singing, tape recorded text, movement actions, dance, prop drama, object theatre, installation activities, and music. With the exception of *Sitting-Stamping-Spinning (Red, White, Black)*, Dean recalls that “none of these works were performed publicly—for which I currently am extremely grateful—but for a small group of friends.” These performances reflected cross-disciplinary trends in experimental performance that were being developed and presented in SoHo by an expanding coterie of young artists, into which Dean had integrated herself.

Dean left New York in March 1968, expecting to be gone for only two weeks, but instead remained away from city’s avant-garde art milieu for the better part of two years. Dean first traveled to Texas, where she spent a few weeks in San Antonio and Austin, before arriving in San Francisco. Dean believed her work *Sitting-Stamping-Spinning* "was total avant-garde kitsch" and decided to spend extended time in San Francisco to do some “mental housecleaning.” During this period she utilized *Sitting-Stamping-Spinning* as a starting point for creating new work and clarifying her artistic intentions. Dean returned to New York in August 1968, but her stay was brief. After being in the city for fewer than three months and only presenting one new work, *No Title*, she traveled back to San Francisco, where she would stay from November 1968 until January 1970.
In San Francisco Dean rented an empty storefront on Hayes Street, which had an attached apartment in the back. Using the empty storefront as a studio space, she continued to experiment with creating new choreographic material. During this time Dean worked independently and in isolation, with the intention to “establish new inner connections with the dance.” In her introspective creative process Dean actively worked to distance herself from the dance techniques and choreographic styles of her training, instead experimenting with simple motions, rhythmic structures, and geometric patterns. Exploring new movement possibilities, Dean began walking in circles in her studio while letting her body lean slightly in toward the center, utilizing gravity and momentum to partially direct her steps. This action eventually created a spiral, leading Dean toward center of the pattern, making progressively smaller circles until her steps began to revolve her in place. This activity led to Dean’s development of a choreographic action that she would continue to intensify: extended, non-spotted spinning. Dean considered spinning to be a breakthrough in her work. Reflecting on this choreographic development, Dean recalls “I spin because I remember spinning and whirling as a child. These childhood memories of whirling came back to me when I was working on movement, by myself.” Spinning, whirling, and turning became a signature choreographic element of Dean’s new works, not only in the 1970s, but also throughout her career. With Dean’s spinning primarily an action of the feet, it allowed for intricate positioning and gestures of the arms and hands, as well as angling of the head and torso, to create new moving shapes in performance. The repetitive, rhythmic steps of Dean’s spins also allowed for intricate stamping patterns, wherein the dancer could produce sound during the performance. Dean utilized stamping as an accompaniment to musical scores, while other times the stamping rhythms constituted the sole music for a choreographic work.
Returning to New York in 1970, Dean continued her choreographic investigations of spinning, repetitive structures, and geometric patterning. The first dance work she created after her intensive period of isolated artistic exploration was presented at the loft of postminimalist visual artist Alan Saret. Dean’s solo was performed on a five foot by three foot rug, and she recalls that in this piece “I walked a straight line from stage right to stage left and did a repetitive dance phrase from stage left to stage right. This was repeated a number of times.” This choreographic section was followed by the work’s second portion, wherein Dean sang while sitting on the rug. The next solo Dean presented in 1970, *An Hour in Silence*, was a three-part work that involved stamping, spinning, and singing. Dean began the piece by stamping in a large square pattern, then transitioned into an extended non-spotted spin that lasted approximately 20 minutes. The work concluded with Dean singing for about 15 minutes, repeating only one note. Integrating dance and music, *At Alan Saret’s Loft* and *An Hour in Silence* demonstrate Dean’s process of conveying her compositional concerns and minimalist explorations through multiple media, a process she would continue to engage throughout her career.

These two private, one-night, invitation-only performance works allowed Dean to present her new creative material and compositional ideas to an audience for the first time. Following these events, Dean intensified her work with geometric patterning, choreographic repetition, and spinning for her first public performance piece in over three years, *Bach Preludes* (1971). Performed at the Merce Cunningham Studio, *Bach Preludes* includes “a set sequence of movement starting out with a large circle, an x pattern in the space, and a spiral leading into spinning.” Dean repeated this choreographic phrase twice, once in silence and, after an intermission, a second time accompanied by a selection of ten Bach preludes played by pianist Steve Chambers.
In her program notes for this performance Dean directly outlined her creative concerns and artistic efforts: “As a choreographer I am involved with dance, rhythm, repetition, and pattern.”

Below this statement she included definitions of these key terms, culled from Webster’s Dictionary:

- dance: to move the body, esp. the feet, in rhythm, usually to music. n. 1. rhythmic movement, usually to music.
- rhythm: n. (Gr. rhythmos, measure) 1. movement characterized by regular recurrence, as of beat, accent. 2. the pattern of this in music, verse etc.
- repetition: 1. to say or do something again.
- pattern: n. 1. a person or thing worthy of imitation. 2. A model plan, etc. used in making things. 3. a design decoration. 4. definite tendency or characteristics.

Focusing on these specific interrelated definitions, Dean constructs a manifesto-like statement that simultaneously defines and bounds the parameters of her choreographic work. In *Bach Preludes* Dean utilizes regulated movement structures that progress rhythmically through space and time: “she skips in place, runs a big circle, turns a small circle waving her arms like windmills, steps with one foot to the back, side, front, or bends forward throwing one arm ahead and the other behind to parallel a stretched leg.”

Dean engages the most basic geometric forms in this minimalist work, employing circles, straight lines, and spiral patterns. Her continuously recurring steps and rigorously maintained cadence throughout the piece repetitively pattern into clearly defined geometric plans that eventually coalesce into a sustained spinning action.

Changes in dynamics and tension throughout the work are minimal, and Dean visually reinforces her metrical framework through the use of beat and repetition. Dean distills her dance material to these most simple, structural limitations, and then works within this clearly defined system to produce numerous possible recombinative choreographic variations.

Two months later, in October 1971, Dean presented a reworked version of this piece under the new title *A Dance Concert*. This performance work utilized the exact same sequence of
movement as *Bach Preludes*. However, Dean eschewed the Bach music and presented the solo material three times rather than twice, again pausing between each iteration of her choreographic phrase. In *A Dance Concert* Dean’s solo was first danced in white with audible breathing, then in green with bells attached to her ankles, and a third time in black with an iron castanet in hand while accompanied by two musicians playing maracas, which were borrowed from minimalist composer Steve Reich. Dean had been teaching dance and yoga breathing at her Crosby Street loft studio, and the integration of this stylized breath in *A Dance Concert* allowed her to mark the work’s rhythmic structures through forceful exhalations out her nostrils. The piece’s second section shifts the auditory focus to Dean’s feet as she stamps her rhythm, with the bells at her ankles reverberating her metric pulse. In the final section the two musicians shake their maracas in a steady 4/4 rhythm while Dean marks the one-beat with a single clang of her metal castanet. Dean’s integration of her own musical accompaniment in *A Dance Concert* produces three variations on the same choreographic phrase, reinforcing her rhythmic structure through the use of breath, feet, and hands respectively. In repeating this same movement three times without altering the work’s physical or spatial patterns, Dean draws increased attention to her compositional system. The nonhierarchical juxtaposition of these three sections yields expanded revelation of concept through their relationship in serial succession.

After this solo project Dean began creating her first group works, growing an early ensemble of four dancers including herself. Dean had also begun a personal and professional relationship with Steve Reich. In their creative processes, Dean and Reich had a shared interest in minimalist structures, both engaging repetition, patterning, and forceful rhythms in their compositions. With Dean working in dance and Reich in music, each used simple processes to expose their complexly ordered conceptual systems. Together they embarked on a European tour

*Drumming*, an evening-length 90-minute intermissionless work, was the last piece Dean created with Reich. Reich’s score for *Drumming*, composed several years earlier between 1970 and 1971, utilized phasing, a musical process that is achieved when two players produce the same short, repeated phrase simultaneously but with slightly altered tempi. While one player remains constant, the other gradually shifts further away from the first, and eventually the two players are a full beat or more out of sync. Linking multiple phasing arrangements together allowed Reich to layer and further develop this model for intricate musical patterning. Dean had begun to examine this structural model in her choreographic explorations: “I had worked on phasing dancers in the studio along with the phasing in the music. Choreographically I found it uninteresting.”

Instead, Dean created a choreographic structure wherein the dancers held a steady pulse while the musicians phrased, a process she found much more satisfying. By 1975 Dean had become increasingly frustrated with creating her dances to the musical structures and systems of Reich’s compositions. She reflects that phasing was not her creative process, but Reich’s, and that she “needed both the music and choreography to be much more integrated” in
her work. This shift away from Reich’s compositions to instead create her own music allowed Dean to move beyond the limited percussive and vocal accompaniment produced by the dancers in her early works. Through this Dean could further articulate her compositional concerns with rhythm and pattern structures through her own instrumentation.

During Dean’s three-year period of work in the early 1970s with Reich she created pieces that experimented with pattern formation, including the multiple ways circles and straight lines can be geometrically arranged and differently investigated. These works also explored regulated rhythmic structures and simple, repetitive numerical systems. While straightforward in form, the intricately challenging specificity of Dean’s dances necessitate extreme concentration in performance, resulting in an appearance of inward focus and concerted mental effort. In addition to these geometric floor plans and structured count systems, the intentionally limited vocabulary of formalized movements Dean employed in her early works—stamping, stylized walks, shuffling steps, spinning, jumping in place, and abstracted semaphore-like gestures—allowed her to examine ongoing recombinative variations, mining the multiplicity of possibilities that could be constructed within a limited system. The fixed structures of Dean’s works allow no improvisation or deviation, actively foregrounding the regulated processes and compositional logic that form the work, akin to processes of serial and conceptual art.

Dean chose to represent most of these early compositions through simple geometric diagrams and concise structural descriptions that were included in her program notes as a means of elucidating her minimalist choreographic forms for her audiences. Additionally, she produced expanded drawings of at least three choreographic works from this period: Stamping Dance, Circle Dance, and Walking Dance. These drawings articulate Dean’s minimalist compositional structures, communicating her ideas in a mode that is distanced from the dancing body. Through
these drawings Dean explicitly foregrounds her conceptual systems, directly presenting her choreographic works as the result of precise numeric processes and highly ordered serial progressions.

**Stamping Dance, 1972**

*Stamping Dance* is one of Dean’s earliest ensemble works, composed in 1971 and first presented in 1972 alongside *Quartet Squared* and *Trio* at Pro Musica Nova in Bremen, West Germany. The piece is for four dancers and set on a pattern of four identical circular paths, one for each dancer, which are symmetrically layered over a larger circular path for the whole group. The entire movement vocabulary of the dance is restricted to a single repeated motion, a stylized walking action along the circular floor pattern—stamping down on the outside foot and pushing off with the inside foot—which the dancers perform continuously. This piece marks one of Dean’s earliest uses of a highly structured numerical system for ordering step progressions in her work. The dancers begin evenly spaced, traveling on the larger circular pattern. Throughout the piece they follow a progressive count cycle that dictates a series of 180-degree changes of direction, reversing the circle at precisely determined moments. This patterning continues until another specified moment in Dean’s count structure when each dancer simultaneously separates from the group to begin moving on their own individual yet identical circular path. Although the floor pattern shifts, the patterned rhythmic stamping movement is meticulously maintained: “after the break-off from one circle to four individual circles, one of the dancers has three rhythm patterns with the feet interlocked with the stamping of the other three dancers.” Dean’s count cycle of stamps begins at 128, progressing the dancers forward counter-clockwise. Then the dancers simultaneously turn and repeat their action in the opposite direction, traveling clockwise
for 128 counts. The number is then halved: 64 stamps counter-clockwise, then clockwise. This numerical diminution pattern continues: 32, 16, 8, 4, 2. Then the whole counting pattern inverts: 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128. However, this additive progression of Dean’s count cycle is punctuated by a change in floor patterning, segueing the dancers onto their new pathways. In *Stamping Dance* Dean establishes her count structure, but rather than simply reversing the system, she inserts a structural variation that expands the work’s geometric complexity while maintaining its rhythmic specificity.

Dean’s drawing of *Stamping Dance* maps the geometric floor patterns of the piece, articulates its count system, and describes the pacing and stepping actions for the dancers. Utilizing two large sheets of graph paper, Dean visualizes her compositional structures and symmetrical forms as conceptual system processes. The layout of her count cycle, ordered in a table, draws clear attention to the operational diminution and accumulation that occurs throughout the piece. Representing this dance’s mathematical logic and numerical seriality, Dean emphasizes her minimalist exploration of pattern formation and regulated rhythmic energy in *Stamping Dance*.

Circle Dance, 1972

*Circle Dance* is Dean’s first work for a larger cast. Designed for ten dancers, the piece is set on four evenly spaced concentric circles. Two dancers move along each of the inner two circles and three dancers move along each of the outer two circles. All the dancers are equidistant within their respective circles and move at the same speed throughout the piece. Dean notes that the work’s geometric structure of “four concentric circles interested me because the size of one circle in relation to another circle appears to be moving slower or faster.” Although the dancers all move at the same pace and maintain the spatial relationship within each of the four circles, the combined spatial arrangement of the work as a whole produces a visual effect of shifting patterns. The four varied circumferences result in different distances of travel, continuously morphing the appearance of the figure while steadfastly regulating the unison speed of each dancer. This concentric circular floor pattern is maintained until the end of the piece, when the formation gradually dissolves as each circle successively breaks away into spinning.

Like *Stamping Dance*, *Circle Dance* is methodically counted and the dancers maintain unison timing through a steady pulse. In this piece Dean introduces a new stylized movement element in her work—a quick, even-tempoed shuffling step—that emerged from her exploration of walking. While she rejected simply walking in circles, noting that it didn't hold her interest, she “took the inherent rhythm in walking and double timed it.” This shuffling also produces a continuous, driving rhythmic musical accompaniment to the work. The dancers shuffle along their circular paths, moving clockwise or counterclockwise, and each circle changes direction at given intervals determined in Dean’s count cycle for the work. While each turn (one and a half revolutions in place) takes four counts, their location in the count cycle is different for every circle; each circle changes direction independent from one other. "The counts are not in logical
conclusion from each individual circle but are in sets of twos to the 2nd circle from the center circle. The count cycles are progressions of over 500 down to 2 and back up to over 500. The center circle has the largest count cycle. The outside circle has the smallest count cycle.”

Although the four count cycles do not progress in response to one another, each is mathematically ordered in its internal logic:

Circle Four:
- 504, four count turn, 504, four count turn
- 252, four count turn, 252, four count turn
- 124, four count turn, 124, four count turn
- 60, four count turn, 60, four count turn
- 28, four count turn, 28, four count turn
- 12, four count turn, 12, four count turn
- 4, four count turn, 4, four count turn

A series of 24 two-count turns, four count turn
- 4, four count turn, 4, four count turn
- 12, four count turn, 12, four count turn
- 28, four count turn 28, four count turn
- 60, four count turn, 60, four count turn
- 124, four count turn, 124, four count turn
- 252, four count turn, 252, four count turn
- 504, four count turn

Break away from the circle into high-speed spinning for 300 counts
Sudden stop

While Dean maintains the circular pattern formation and speed of her dancers, she overlays four variations on timing to continuously shift the work.

In *Circle Dance* Dean utilizes a stylized movement vocabulary and simple geometric pathways to draw increased focus to her experiments with shifting visual patterning and numerical system. The regimented uniformity of action and regulated processes of *Circle Dance* expose Dean’s minimalist concerns while producing new possibilities for dance. Working within these structural restrictions, Dean produces a highly complex work that both reveals and obscures the dance’s conceptual design.
Laura Dean’s drawing *Circle Dance, 1972* on exhibition alongside two of Dean’s untitled grid drawings.

**Walking Dance, 1973**

*Walking Dance* is a piece for two dancers, accompanied by two musicians performing Steve Reich’s *Clapping Music* (1972). Dean’s work is modeled on the compositional structure of Reich’s piece, which includes thirteen sections: twelve different repetitive clapping patterns in succession, with the thirteenth pattern the same as the first. In Reich’s musical structure one performer remains fixed throughout the work, repeating the same basic 12-beat clapping pattern. The other performer begins in unison with the first, but after a number of repetitions, shifts the pattern’s downbeat over one beat. “This abrupt change of down-beat position makes it difficult to hear that the second performer is in fact always playing the same original pattern as the first performer in each of the 12 sections of the piece.” Reich’s 12-beat structure allows for the
entire system to progressively shift by one beat until it eventually re-aligns, returning to the original, unison clapping pattern. When Reich’s work is notated, the visualized serial pattern and conceptual structure of the piece become mathematically and logically apparent, whereas in performance the structure regulating the gradual shifts is challenging to discern.

Dean’s dance follow’s Reich’s 13-part structure, with the opening pattern repeating itself at the conclusion of the work, both choreographically and spatially. Dean situates the two dancers back to back at the center of a circle with a 50-foot circumference. The dancers travel in opposite directions from the center to the edge of the circle, then back to the center, along straight lines, spatially mirroring one another. Dean segments this circle, demarcating 12 evenly spaced radii. For each progressive pattern phrase the dancers move out on the next demarcated line clockwise. The circular spatial pattern of the work maps out over time, with the formation of the piece as a whole only becoming apparent as the dance progresses. Like Reich’s musical patterning, Dean’s 12-part geometric segmentation of space is constructed so that the dancers return to where they began the work at the conclusion of the twelfth section, allowing for the pathway of dance’s first pattern line to be repeated as the work’s final section.

The movement of *Walking Dance* is percussive and rhythmic, reflecting the clapping of Reich’s score. Dean outlines that the stylized stepping in this work “is a hard down on the left foot on the 1 of the 12 beat clapping pattern. This is maintained throughout the dance.” A simple hand pattern is also integrated, which serves the functional purpose of coordinating with the musicians, signaling a change into the next pattern phrase. While the rhythmic pulse of the steps in *Walking Dance* do not change, and the spatial progression of the work consistently unfolds throughout the piece, Dean shifts the facings of the two dancers for each of the work’s 13 patterns. Dean’s systematized arrangement of facing relationships in *Walking Dance* variously
move the dancers forward, backward, and sideways along their straight pathways during the
work. At the end of each linear passage one or both of the dancers walk a small circle as
necessary to achieve the appropriate facing in the pattern:

1st pattern: back to back out / back to back in
2nd pattern: back to back out / face to face in
3rd pattern: face to face out / face to face in
4th pattern: face to face out / back to back in
5th pattern: back to back out / face to face in
6th pattern: right side to left side out / right side to left side in
7th pattern: right side to right side out / left side to left side in
8th pattern: left side to right side out / left side to right side in
9th pattern: back to back out / face to face in
10th pattern: face to face out / back to back in
11th pattern: face to face out / face to face in
12th pattern: back to back out / face to face in
13th pattern: back to back out / back to back in

Similar to Reich’s score, Dean’s use of variation is straightforward but visually complex,
producing a seeing difficulty in performance, wherein the conceptual logic of the work is
challenging to perceive. Where Reich shifts his musical phrase, Dean shifts her dancers’ facings.
However, Dean’s dance includes seven rather than 12 patterns, arranged in an almost
palindromic structure. Dean’s first five patterns present each combination of forward and
backward facing symmetrical relationships for the two dancers. The sixth pattern introduces
sideways stepping, with the dancers facing opposite directions, and the seventh pattern
progresses with the dancers facing the same direction. Then, Dean’s structure for the facing of
the dancers begins to invert itself: the eights pattern is a retrograde of the sixth, and the ninth
through thirteenth patterns are in reverse order to the first through fifth patterns:

(A) 1st pattern: back to back out / back to back in
(B) 2nd pattern: back to back out / face to face in
(C) 3rd pattern: face to face out / face to face in
(D) 4th pattern: face to face out / back to back in
(E) 5th pattern: back to back out / face to face in
(F) 6th pattern: right side to left side out / right side to left side in
(G) 7th pattern: right side to right side out / left side to left side in
(I) 8th pattern: left side to right side out / left side to right side in
(E) 9th pattern: back to back out / face to face in
(D) 10th pattern: face to face out / back to back in
(C) 11th pattern: face to face out / face to face in
(B) 12th pattern: back to back out / face to face in
(A) 13th pattern: back to back out / back to back in

Similar to *Stamping Dance*, *Walking Dance* engages serial development of a conceptual compositional relationship, then inverts the whole system, providing an additional overarching variation within the logical evolution of the minimal form. While Dean’s 13 sections in *Walking Dance* align with Reich’s 13 sections in *Clapping Music*, Dean presents a different structural exploration. Working within the same constraints, Dean and Reich each present unique variations on patterning and concrete progressional procedures.


As works on paper, *Stamping Dance*, *Circle Dance*, and *Walking Dance* depict Dean’s minimalist compositional structures and visualize her choreographic ideas without the necessity of the work’s embodied realization as a live performance work. Through these three drawings
Dean directs explicit focus to her use of arithmetic systems and serial processes, exposing her preoccupation with exportations of the ways complex yet clearly ordered patterns, structures, and forms can be deployed in the presentation of choreography as a regulated energy system.

**Serialism, Structures, and Choreography as Conceptual Art**

Dean created the graphic drawings of *Stamping Dance*, *Circle Dance*, and *Walking Dance* after the dance works were complete. I argue that these drawings are not an artistic afterthought to Dean’s choreographic process, but are demonstrative of her ongoing practice of representing her compositional ideas across multiple media, a practice wherein dancing, music, and drawing are intricately connected. These visual representations of the symmetrical floor patterns and count systems that Dean engages in her work were produced not for the intention of documenting the dances for reconstruction, but instead for communicating the dances’ concepts and ideas. Fulfilling this function, Dean’s drawings have been variously used in advertisements, program notes, publications, and gallery exhibitions. Dean maintains that these drawings are not dance scores, asserting that they leave out too many aspects of her choreography and the precise movement stylization that is characteristic of her work. According to Dean, “there is no way the actual dance could have been reconstructed from those drawings… There was no (or at least very little) information about the actual steps.” While these drawings work to convey Dean’s choreographic systems and structures, the physical nuances of her minimalist dances in performance are more intricately particular and meticulously designed than the diagrams and notes she puts onto the page. If not functional as working dance scores, Dean’s drawings can be interpreted instead as a complimentary visual art practice that is adjacent to her choreographic
work. In highlighting her numerical processes and geometric systems rather than her choreographic specificities, Dean aligns her work with practices in conceptual art. 

Conceptual art foregrounds an engagement with ideas, de-emphasizing or even wholly eliminating the perceptual encounter with an art object. As a result of this focus, highly schematic structures, process models, and serial production emerge, with conceptual artworks directly revealing the processes of artistic thinking. In moving towards reductivism in art, conceptual artists "push the conventional objectness of the artwork toward the threshold of a complete dematerialization." By positioning greater emphasis on concept over the production of a permanent art object, such practices challenge the institutionalization of art, especially with regard to the perception and production of value; conceptual art works to negate the manifestation of commodity fetishism. Through a focus on communicating idea, within conceptual art "the prominence of text expands, and the degree to which viewing is dependent upon the integration of contingent and contextual elements becomes a focal point." When produced, the object always directly and explicitly points back to the conceptual model that ordered its production. The art object is not meant to exist separate from the explication of its system function process.

Dean’s drawings de-emphasize the material aspect of the body in favor of communicating the numerical systems and geometric patterning of her work. The drawings serve to articulate her thinking process rather than the aesthetic content of her dances. In this way, Dean’s drawings de-materialize the dances they reference. However, when Dean’s dances of the early 1970s were first staged, extensive program notes presented the geometric diagrams for the floor plans alongside textual descriptions of count structures and choreographic models. Through this practice Dean positions the concept-idea of each dance and the materialized performance event
as contingent and contextual elements in her artistic output. Following the work of conceptual artists in painting and sculpture, in Dean’s choreographic work "the process of conception stands in a complementary relation to the process of realization, mutually supplying each other's lack, and thus [are] of equal importance."\(^{21}\) Dean’s drawings are simultaneously intrinsically connected to and distinct from her performance works, holding equal importance to the revelation of artistic intention.

In conceptual art, by communicating the art idea textually, the artist produces "an increased emphasis on the possibilities of publicness and distribution."\(^{22}\) In addition to distributing her geometric diagrams and count systems as program notes, Dean compiled her work into a series of journal articles and book chapters in the 1970s, which further disseminated her conceptual creative models and ideas for choreographic structuring. Dean’s larger drawing works were also included in gallery exhibitions throughout the 1980s, including the 1980 Venice Biennale, where she appeared as part of *Drawings: The Pluralist Decade* in the United States Pavilion. With Dean’s creative output situated between art and dance, her drawings moved between exhibitions of work by postmodern choreographers and gallery shows wherein she was presented alongside visual artists working in minimalism.

Dean’s use of numerical structures and progressional procedures in her work also reflects compositional developments and philosophical concerns in serial art. Theorizing on seriality in the visual arts, Mel Bochner examines works characterized by the use of mathematical or arithmetic systems that produce external constraints on the conceptual ordering or production of the composition. Works of serial art organize internal parts in uninterrupted, logical succession.

Systems are characterized by regularity, thoroughness, and repetition in execution. They are methodical. It is their consistency and the continuity of application that characterizes them. Individual parts of a system are not in themselves important but are relevant only in how they are used in the enclosed logic of the whole.\(^{23}\)
Bochner forwards that serial ordering in art is a compositional procedure or method rather than a style, and he locates the use of seriality among several artists working within conceptual art, specifically Sol LeWitt, Carl Andre, and Dan Flavin. For these artists, the serial or systematic processes in their work are explicitly revealed as a means of directly communicating their compositional logic, thus exposing their artistic thinking.

Produced through strict and narrowly delimited systems, works of serial art present the structural and computational variations that can exist under a fixed circumstance.

Seriality is premised on the idea that the succession of terms (divisions) within a single work is based on numerical or otherwise predetermined derivation (progression, permutation, rotation, reversal) from one or more of the preceding terms in the piece. Furthermore the idea is carried out to its logical conclusion, which, without adjustments based on taste or chance, is the work.24 In this way, the resulting composition is a serial composite of procedural outcomes, a functionalization of the data set as art object. Often highlighting the system idea or concept as constitutive of the work and proposing that no form is intrinsically superior to another, serial artists suggest that the physical execution of the object is unnecessary to communicating the concept.

Reading Dean’s work through Bochner’s explication of serial art, Dean’s drawings show an explicit engagement with simple arithmetical forms and formalized systems of logic that are used to produce complex, multipart compositions. Her dances follow an organizing set of structural decisions from which variable combinations are produced through a fulfillment of the work’s regulating processes. The interior divisions of Stamping Dance, Circle Dance, and Walking Dance are predicated on numerical patterning, systematically predetermined sequences. These pieces exhibit arithmetic progressions, geometric permutations, regulated rotations, and structural reversals. The latter of the three works, Walking Dance, presents a further system
exhaustion by carrying out the ordering of facings between the two dancers to its logical conclusion, presenting each derivation of this simple conceptual ordering.

In performance, the regularity, thoroughness, and repetition of Dean’s work presents her conceptual systems over space and time, revealing seriality through the action of the body. The structural arrangement of Dean’s works articulate a precisely specified spatialization to her stage patterns and traveling formations, as well as a steady, driving pulse rhythm that regularizes the linear progression of time in her choreographic structures. Similar to Dean’s work in dance, Sol LeWitt’s serialized visual artworks dictate size and organization in space.

In his first manifesto, “Paragraphs on Conceptual Art,” LeWitt outlines considerations that the conceptual artist must address in realizing their ideas as art objects, noting that compositional factors such as size and space can be regularized or themselves patterned in serial form. He asserts that "the intervals and measurements can be important to a work of art. If certain distances are important they will be made obvious in the piece.”25 Dean sets specific spatial arrangements and distances in her works, like the 50-foot circumference of Walking Dance’s floor pattern, which orders the appearance of the work by setting the distance of step in her repetitive vertical walking patterns. This specific distance is ordered out of practicality, decided so as to produce the dance in such a way as to effectively reveal the work’s idea and facilitate understanding in the viewer. LeWitt also notes that “regular space might also become a metric time element, a kind of regular beat or pulse. When the interval is kept regular whatever is irregular gains more importance.”26 The regularization of rhythmic pulse in Dean’s dances serves to expose the metric time structures of her count cycles. The precisely timed changes of direction in her works, as well as Circle Dance’s use of irregularity between the four concentric circles, highlights important developments in Dean’s systems. Through these specific considerations of
spatial measurement and steady pulse Dean elucidates her choreographic experimentation with the serialization of pattern and energy.

Dean maintains that these drawings are not notation, an assertion that logically follows when examining the drawings through the lens and processes of dance. In describing and articulating her work, Dean often utilizes definitions of key terms and concepts, pulling directly from Webster’s Dictionary. Drawing from this practice, to further examine the relationship between Dean’s dances and drawings I bring in the Webster’s Dictionary definition of notation:

a : the act, process, method, or an instance of representing by a system or set of marks, signs, figures, or characters
b : a system of characters, symbols, or abbreviated expressions used in an art or science or in mathematics or logic to express technical facts or quantities

Dean’s drawings demonstrate clearly defined systems that employ sets of marks, signs, figures, and abbreviated expressions to present the technical facts and numerical logic of her works. The drawings also reflect accepted mathematical formulas, direct attention to determined quantities, and reveal a schematized process. However, not enough choreographic information is included in any of Dean’s drawings to recuperate the fullness of the dance they represent. Therefore, Dean’s drawings are not dance notations. Instead, I argue that when analyzing Dean’s work as constitutive of a practice of conceptual and serial art, the graphic renderings of her creative models as works on paper do function as notations through their ability to functionally communicate concept and idea.

**Spectatorial Impressions: Ritual, Trance, Folk, and Primitive Energies**

In most contemporaneous dance reviews of Laura Dean’s work during the 1970s and 1980s significant focus is directed at articulating Dean’s use of the physical body and the atmosphere of her dances. While noting Dean’s use of geometric patterning, mathematical
systems, minimalist movement vocabulary, and rhythmic percussiveness, reviewers regularly formulate their spectatorial impressions by describing Dean’s works not as abstract or computational, but as ritualistic or folksy. Dean’s use of extended spinning action and rhythmic repetition in her work is experienced as evocative of spiritual dances, with her movements interpreted to reflect a means of inducing a hypnotic or trance-like state. Reviewers describe Dean’s work as having not only the appearance of a ritual experience for the performer, but that the work’s incessant and extended use of repeated action produces the same effect for the audience; the mesmerizing movements of Dean’s dances put the audience into a trance. Other reviewers focus on Dean’s intentionally restricted movement vocabulary, high-energy footwork, percussive stamping actions, and organized use of simple geometric pathways to connect her choreographic work to folk dances. The interpretation of Dean’s work as folksy is also likely reinforced through her routine placement of the musicians within the performance space, allowing the reviewers to perceive Dean’s work as referencing the spatial arrangement of musicians and dancers together in a social rather than theatrical venue.

Both of these lines of description suggest referents in Dean’s dances outside of theatrical dance, directly proposing Dean’s choreographic influence as drawn from beyond her own movement background in neo-classical ballet and American modern dance. While Dean perceives her work as concerned with numerical systems and minimalist structures, which develop apart from the expression of emotion and separate from both narrative and theatrical atmosphere, dance critics have nevertheless applied their own perceptions to situating and narrating Dean’s work as inclusive of these aspects. Such descriptions distance Dean’s dances from the realm of art, suggesting her choreographic work as being concerned with the ritualistic and social rather than the analytic and conceptual, thus displacing Dean’s artistic labor. These
writings also suggest Dean’s intervention in dance to be an integration of ambiguously othered mysticism and abstracted folk choreography into minimalist dance. Outlining these existing modes of situating Dean’s dances, I instead propose Dean’s intervention into minimalist dance as a shift away from the body towards serialism and conceptualism.

In her writing for *The New Yorker*, dance critic Arlene Croce positions Dean’s choreography within notions of ritual or spiritual dance. Croce sees Dean’s dances as having a “quasi-mystical intensity” that pervades the work. Centering on Dean’s use of stylized spinning, Croce explains the dances as trancelike and dervish-like, connecting Dean to both Sufi dance and mysticism, thus interpreting Dean’s choreographic work though the notion of dhikr, Islamic devotional acts, and the Sama, a religious ceremony inclusive of whirling actions that produce hypnotic states and ecstatic trances. Dean is insistent that she was neither inspired nor influenced by Sufi dance in the development of her spinning movements. In her program notes for the December 1972 premiere of *Circle Dance* she asserts that she had only first seen Sufi dancing at the Brooklyn Academy of Music the month prior, several years after her integration of spinning into her works: “When I was walking in circles and spiraling into the turn I was doing I was aware of Sufism as a religious cult but did not know of any dances.” In the program note she expands upon the choreographic specificities of both her spinning action and Sufi dancing, using nuanced movement descriptions to articulate how the work differs:

Choreographically (for I am a choreographer and not a member of a religious cult) the Dervish turn is highly stylized with turning to the left only (I turn to the left because I’m left handed and it’s easier for me to turn left), with the left foot pushing off, the right foot stepping over the left, the right hand raised to the heavens and the left toward the earth. A magical form I must admit. The turn I am working with is on two flat feet. The arms can be any number of forms. The reason for the weight on both feet is so that the turn (as I am working on it now) can be jumped, moved, changed quickly into another step etc.
Dean’s attempt to intervene in the discourse on her work through this program note does not seem to have even momentarily stopped the descriptions of her choreography in comparison to Sufi dances. Reviews of Circle Dance continued to describe Dean’s movements as dervish-like, using the reference to muse on what must be an astral plan and cosmological significance in Dean’s dance.

Engaging the perception of Dean’s movements as connected to ritual, dance critics have implied that Dean’s pieces seem intended to spin the dancers into religious trances. Describing Dean’s 1978 work Music, Croce suggests that “the naïve, plainspoken little phrases seemed to dissolve back into a motive for doing them, which was apparently to put the dancers into a trance. I found myself looking not at a dance but at a rite.” Through their inclusion of spinning action and rhythmic repetition, Dean’s works are perceived to function as ritual events. Rather than locating Dean’s choreographic influence within just Sufi dance, Croce suggests multiple ritual practices and spiritual traditions have inflected Dean’s dances, that her work “takes its tribal-rite from mixed origins (East Indian, Russian, Early American, tap, disco).” Thus, Dean’s dervish-like mysticism is perceived to be unsituated, drawing inspiration across several cultures, geographic locations, and time periods.

Writing of Dean’s work in 1980, Croce notes what she perceives as an aesthetic and atmospheric connection between Dean’s dances and the sacred dances of early 20th-century Greek-Armenian mystic philosopher George Ivanovich Gurdjieff. The Gurdjieff movements utilize a highly stylized system of postures and gestural actions that followers believe to represent cosmic truths and transmit spiritual knowledge. As a practice, the movements are intended to invoke sensations in the body that direct shifts in emotion and thought. Gurdjieff’s dances are directly correlated to geometric floor patterning derived from a cosmological
enneagram, and integrate highly systematized movement vocabulary including spinning, percussive actions of the feet, and vocalized breath work. Croce had seen some of these dances in Peter Brook’s 1979 film *Meetings with Remarkable Men* and muses if the resemblance of Dean’s dances to those of Gurdjieff is intentional. Akin to her description of Dean’s dances as evoking mixed ritual and mystic origins, this reference to Gurdjieff suggests a similar notion of choreographic ambiguity. By his own account, Gurdjieff pursued many years of travel to meet with spiritual leaders throughout central Asia, India, Tibet, East Asia, and Africa, eventually leading him to a purported secret mystical community, the Sarmoung Brotherhood, where he crystalized his choreographic practice. His dances reflect an amalgamation and synthesis of multiple movement systems and spiritual traditions, both widespread and esoteric. Croce reads Dean’s dances through this notion of an unsituated ritualism and esoteric spiritual practice.

Further tying this view of Dean’s choreography to her perception of their religiosity and trance-inducing mysticism, Croce posits Dean’s work bluntly: “Dean is amassing a cult.”\(^{32}\) In Croce’s impression, Dean’s dances are distanced from art practice, instead functioning as ritual practice.

Other dance writers in the 1970s and ‘80s mirror Croce’s perceptions, further describing Dean’s dances as primitively ritualistic or spiritual in nature. In the *SoHo Weekly News*, Marcia Siegel writes that in Dean’s work there is a mesmerizing experience that extends the dance beyond itself: “self-possessed but egoless, the dancer is a calm, centered, timeless functionary of the universe.”\(^{33}\) In the *Village Voice* Deborah Jowitt suggests that Dean’s dances are “shaped like communal rites.”\(^{34}\) In his compendium on modern dance, *New York Times* critic Don McDonagh locates how “the fascination of hypnotic movement has been harnessed by Dean into a series of utterly absorbing dances.”\(^{35}\) McDonagh further suggests the mysterious, ritual characteristic of Dean’s work, noting “the very simplicity put one in the ambiance of an older, less complex
society.” Jowitt similarly connects Dean to images of an ambiguously located and temporally unfixed past civilization, suggesting that her pieces are “so ritualistic... that you expect corn to sprout between the floorboards when a dance finishes or rain to well in.” These descriptions of Dean’s dances as rites propose a spiritual otherness, connecting her to notions of the primitive and ritualistic rather than the logical and formulaic.

Such writings by Croce, Siegel, Jowitt, and McDonagh connect Dean to beliefs about pre-literate civilizations and shamanism. Locating in Dean’s work a perceived mysticism, these writers not only infer Dean’s dances as characterized by an interest in the primitive, they directly label her work as such. Tobi Tobias calls Dean’s dances “primitive” in three separate reviews of her work for *New York Magazine* between 1981 and 1990, also describing her pieces as “simple-minded” and representative of an “immature world view.” Through a framing of Dean’s dances as primitively ritualistic and mystical in nature, this literature seemingly rejects Dean’s highly complex mathematical progressions, conceptual systems, and choreographic patterns as interventions in minimalist dance. Through the spectatorial imposition of this perceived theatrical atmosphere, Dean’s dances are framed not only as disconnected from the discourse of minimalism in which she is working, but interpreted as less than or apart from art. I argue that the introverted and concentrated focus of Dean’s work is not a function of religious trance, but instead reflective of Dean’s intention of distilling her work to unadorned representations of energy, shape, form, and concept, thus aligning herself with minimalist art.

Noël Carroll rejects the notion that Dean's dances are spiritualist. Neither does Carroll perceive Dean’s spinning work as hypnotically trance-inducing. Instead, he describes Dean’s work through a formalist movement analysis that he connects to folk dancing, suggesting her work is evocative of celebratory group social dances. Carroll notes that Dean’s engagement with
folk dancing "is obvious in the highly articulate stampings, which are sometimes reminiscent of czardas," a regional Hungarian dance.\textsuperscript{39} He also locates a folk dance quality through the ecstatic communal movement in her work, writing that "often Dean can engender a very powerful sense of joyous release by contrasting stamping and spinning."\textsuperscript{40} However, akin to authors who describe Dean’s dances as spiritual experiences, Carroll connects his vision of Dean’s dances as festive, communal folk works to notions of primitivism and mythologized cultural pasts:

A folk feeling pervades Dean's work. In early pieces like \textit{Circle Dance} the reference - including the cosmological hints - seemed to be American Indian ritual, while entries like \textit{Spinning Dance} appeared to have Middle Eastern, if not Sufi, reference. But Dean's increasingly complex footwork, with its springy stepping and stamping, now suggest Eastern European or Balkan origin. It is the type of fleet-footed, jigging virtuosity associated with agricultural cultures based on the plough. But whatever the specific origins, the folk aura in Dean's work projects a strong feeling of communality.\textsuperscript{41}

For Carroll, Dean’s use of rhythmic patterning and intricate footwork is specifically connected to notions of the folk, thus distancing her work from a theatre dance context. Carroll uses this impression of Dean’s pieces to characterize her use of geometric floor plans and restricted movement vocabulary as unsophisticated and rudimentary. He notes of Dean’s dances that "there is a simplicity here, and the repetitive sound and movement suggest a tribal or primitive source of inspiration. The line of attack is predominantly sensual rather than intellectual."\textsuperscript{42} By characterizing her dances as primitive, Carroll displaces Dean’s choreographic intervention. Carrols dismisses Dean’s conceptual systems and geometric structures as derivative of folk forms, rather than locating her dances as intentionally designed, complexly arranged, and the result of highly intellectualized systems.

Similarly, Jowitt links Dean’s choreography to primitivism through her perception of the dances having a communal atmosphere. She too focuses on the use of rhythmic
steps in Dean’s work as evocative of folk dance: “Through their complicated yet clear rhythms and formations, they crystalized the image of the dancer as a member of a peaceful, vigorous community.” For Carroll and Jowitt, the appearance of the moving body in Dean’s works is representative of communal tradition and folk dance rather than demonstrative of Dean’s minimalist artistic frameworks or her uniquely specific and precisely defined choreographic vocabulary.

Marcia Siegel echoes Carroll and Jowitt’s readings of Dean’s work through the lens of folk dance. In her reviews of Dean’s early pieces she repeatedly references folk dancing or proposes that Dean is creating a new American folk dance. Writing of Dean’s 1976 work Dance, Siegel suggests that the dancers look like quicksteppers, clog dancers, and tap dancers, descriptions that seemingly collapse vernacular and social dance into ideas of the folk. Siegel also reflects that during a particularly accelerated section of the piece “American hillbilly music and dancing comes to mind.” Siegel’s framing of Dean’s work as folk-inspired or folk-adjacent is furthered through her movement descriptions of the dances, which explicitly draw on generalized stylistic tropes of folk dance, such as noting how Dean’s dancers keep the upper body contained and stable while directing focus almost exclusively to footwork.

The description of Dean’s rhythmic patterning in her dances as folksy significantly misrepresents her creative intentions and compositional process, as Dean’s choreographic practice does not draw from representations of popular culture or traditional dances, as did several of her contemporaries. Conversely, I argue that Dean’s work rejects notions of the folk through a specific focus on mathematical compositional structures, energy systems, and serial progressions; Dean’s dancers are functions of her system, not a folk community or tribe. As with her attempts at dispelling notions of her work as influenced by Sufi dancing, Dean’s assertion of
her choreographic intention as not-folk seems lost, as this mode of description pervades her career.

Like the unsituated mysticism proposed by authors who perceive Dean’s dances as ritualistic, critics who describe her work as folksy reference a panoply of geographic regions and cultures of incongruous time periods. The perception of Dean’s dances are thus variously located in the folk and religious traditions of Western Europe, Eastern Europe, the Balkans, Africa, the Middle East, Russia, North-Central Asia, India, Appalachia, the American South, and an ambiguous “Native America” that seems to encompass and collapse a diversity of peoples in the North American Southeast, Plains, Southwest, and Great Basin. This extreme divergence in describing Dean’s situatedness seems to position her work everywhere but contemporary art, even though Dean’s works continuously circulated within a recognizable network of modern art museums, galleries, and contemporary dance venues, as well as the various spaces utilized by other artists of New York’s downtown avant-garde.

In situating Dean’s spinning motions within discourses of religious and folk dance rather than concert dance, this existing literature also misses an analysis of Dean’s work within a larger context of 20th century developments in choreographic abstraction. While Dean arrived at her use of spinning independently, thus presenting a highly specialized and uniquely codified articulation of this action, she was not the first to repeatedly integrate extended spinning into theatrical dance. German modern dance artist Mary Wigman’s technique classes included instruction in drehen (turning or spinning) as a core choreographic concept. As Susan Manning suggests, this element of Wigman’s technique developed from her choreographic works. Pieces like Monotony Whirl (Drehmonotonie) (1926) “presented a seemingly endless duration of turning in place,” and by the early 1930s spinning had become a choreographic signature of Wigman’s work.45
Wigman’s classes introduced numerous variations on spinning, expanding choreographic possibilities through different combinatory alterations of positionings for the feet, hips, torso, and arms. Wigman also utilized spinning actions on traveling pathways, both circular and linear. Similar to Dean’s choreographic interests, Wigman’s class lessons would deploy movement categories like drehen to explore the interplay of space, time, and energy. However, contrary to Dean’s choreographic process, which utilizes numerical and geometric structures onto which movement is applied, Wigman’s classes focused on movement improvisation as a compositional skill in the development of choreographic structures. Wigman also used spinning as part of her larger choreographic interest in exploring the expressive and emotive potential of movement. Instead, Dean’s use of spinning is not intended as an expressive movement, but as minimalist action, an exploration of mathematical energy, physical rhythm, and spatial form.

In resituating Dean within the context in which she was creating her work, I expose her dances as neither ritualistic nor folk-inspired, but squarely within the discourses and practices of minimalism, serialism, and conceptual art. Through an analysis of her choreographic stylization in relation to Wigman’s use of spinning in theatrical choreography, I further suggest Dean’s work as an intervention into formalism and abstraction in dance through the rejection of expressivity as a compositional interest. Thus, I further reinforce Dean’s work as representative of a minimalist approach to both dance and art.

**Meditative Energies**

While the appearance and effect of Dean’s works have led to her be erroneously labeled by dance writers as a Sufi and a Buddhist, Dean does not herself ascribe to these religions or their practices. However, Dean’s artistic process is influenced by her experience with Tibetan
Buddhist thought and ongoing study of Advaita Vedanta, a school of Hindu philosophy. Dean connects her artistic interest in energy systems in dance, music, and drawing to these two systems of inquiry. Drawing connections between her artistic process, Tibetan Buddhist sand mandalas, and mantra repetitions, Dean has formulated a unique artistic practice that utilizes movement, sound, and work on paper as interconnected meditative exercises to examine her own individualized experience of energy and consciousness.

Advaitan philosophy is based on the teachings of the Upanishads, the *Brahma-sūtras*, and the *Bhagavad Gita*, sacred scriptures of India. It proposes non-dualism, that there is no individual soul or infinite cosmic deity, but that all of existence, across all space and time, is one and the same. It considers that any differentiation between the individual self and Brahman, the transcendental self, is illusory. Brahman is the ultimate, infinite, unchanging metaphysical reality that is all matter, energy, time, space, and being. Brahman appears as the world because of its creative energy, and perception is simply the immediacy of consciousness. The path of Advaita Vedanta is a search for consciousness and a realization of self as identical with Brahman. With this the individual can recognize their transcendence and be released from the illusory state of worldly entanglements. Dean has continued a study of this philosophical tradition since she was 17 and notes “I am a student of Vedanta and will be for the rest of my life.”

This study has deeply inflected her approach to both dance and drawing.

Beyond her practice of drawing representations of her dances’ floor patterns and count cycles as works on paper, Dean has also created colorful geometric drawings that function as deeply focused meditations. These large compositions, drawn on graph paper with felt markers, present intricate symmetrical pattern formations that appear to emanate from a central grid square. While the drawings have mistakenly been labeled as dance scores or choreographic
studies, they do not correspond to any of Dean’s dance works, nor are they the result of any movement composition exercise. Whereas other postmodern choreographers, such as Simone Forti and Trisha Brown, have composed drawings on paper as a means of exploring choreographic possibilities, Dean’s visual art practice fulfills a different purpose in her creative work. She clarifies that “each graph drawing is done at one sitting (usually three hours) with the intent and focus being for world peace. They are active meditations.”

Dean began producing these graph drawings in 1969, and during the 1980s several were included in gallery exhibitions. In the catalog for the group exhibition *Tracking, Tracing, Marking, Pacing* at the Pratt Institute in 1982, Dean provides a concise summary of her drawings: “Rhythm. Pattern. Color.” The compositional concerns of these drawings are reflected in Dean’s stage works. Dean’s musical compositions and choreographic structures are intrinsically related to explorations of rhythm and pattern. Additionally, Dean’s self-designed costuming shows specific choices in color design. While her early minimalist works of the 1970s mostly employed uniform, neutral white costumes, by the end of the decade Dean’s group pieces began to integrate vibrant monochromatic, primary color palates, including brilliant yellow, energetic red, and deep blue.

In describing these drawings and her creative process, Dean connects her work to traditions in sandpainting, the art of pouring colored sands and powdered pigments onto a surface to make a graphic design. This practice has long established histories in multiple cultures around the globe and mandalas are often ritually prepared as a spiritual exercise or part of ceremonial events. Dean specifically locates her work as being done in the spirit of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition of dul-tson-kyil-khor, colored sand mandalas. The large and intricately beautiful mandalas are produced by hand, through a process of using funnels to pour individual colors of sand into precise patterns. The symbolic geometric structures of Tibetan Buddhist sand mandalas “are two-dimensional representations of three-dimensional structures.”

From the Sanskrit word for circle, the mandala represents the universe and uses visual form to communicate core mystical teachings and philosophical traditions. These artistic compositions are an intrinsically spiritual practice, as “monastics create sand mandalas as part of their mindfulness practice and consider their efforts to be compassionate offerings for well-being of all sentient beings.” The mandala tradition functions as a meditative ritual process for the creators. Like the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, Dean experiences the creation of her graph drawings to be a meditative practice. While Dean’s graph pieces do not represent any of her dance works, they expose her compositional thinking across media; her drawings present two-dimensional renderings of compositional ideas that also often manifest over space and time in her dance and music works.

Like her grid drawings, Dean’s minimalist dances function as a meditative practice. Reflecting the history of Dean’s dances as perceived and described to be ritualistic and trance-inducing, it is important to note the distinction between meditation and trance as two significantly different physical practices and states of consciousness. Meditation is an
introspective process of focusing the mind, a conscious act of concentration that is intended
to cultivate awareness of mental patterning, thus allowing the practitioner to focus on the body’s
internal and self-generating energies. Conversely, trace is a state of only partial consciousness,
characterized by forgetfulness, ignorance, and an absence of the ability to fully mediate response
to external stimuli. In meditation one’s concentration is focused and consciousness is maintained
within the self, whereas in trance the mind and body functions under limited conscious, with
control displaced to another entity or energy.

Drawing from her study of Advaita Vedanta and experiences with Tibetan Buddhism,
Dean highlights the meditative spiritual practice *japa*. Japa is used in both Buddhism and
Hinduism, as well Jainism and Sikhism. Drawn from Sanskrit, the term translates variously as
muttering, whispering, or reciting, and japa practice involves a constant repetition of mantras as
an exercise to concentrate the mind. The cyclical pattern of japa is numerically counted, often
using a japamala, a string of 108 prayer beads. The number 108 reflects special religious
significance in a number of Hindu and Buddhist traditions, as it is derived from mathematical
equations based on scriptural, cosmological, and astrological numbers. Shorter mala strands of
54, 27, and 18 are also produced representing equal divisions on 108, with the intention for the
mala to be circularly counted multiple times, emphasizing the numerical repetition cycles of
japa. While Dean utilizes systematized numerical systems such as this in her work, they do not
represent any larger cosmological significance or mystical experience. Rather, Dean engages the
action and intention of japa separate from its religious function.

The constant repetition of mantras in japa is intended to create a steady pulse and mental
vibration that quiets the disorganized mano-jalpa, mental chattering. Mano-jalpa, synonymous
with vikalpa or vicāra, is an imaginative tendency, a mental process of thought-construction
centered on fantasy or illusion. This daydreaming state draws the mind to things that do not exist, conceiving of future situations or replaying past events and envisioning different outcomes. The cyclical rotation of the mantra pattern in japa practice serves to quiet this murmuring of the mind, ordering and focusing thought. This meditative practice helps to induce a focused state of consciousness. As Dean employs this concept in her dances, the practice aligns with her minimalist compositional interest, a desire to quiet the dance to regulated energy systems.

Dean’s choreographic practice engages the philosophy of japa through the moving body, utilizing numerically counted repetitive physical action. The first dance work she created in New York after her period of isolated, introspective movement exploration in San Francisco reflected this new development in her work. Dean’s 1970 solo performance at Alan Saret’s loft was composed of the same dance phrase repeated in multiplicity and directly engaged her interest in repetitive models in spiritual practice: “I wanted to express the repetition that I was doing in both my Vedanta studies and Tibetan Buddhist studies with movement.”

Intensifying her investigation of repetition and numerical patterning in her work following this piece, Dean created dances that served a meditative function beyond her conceptual work with systems and aesthetics.

The rhythmic walking and steady pulse Dean had explored in San Francisco allowed for a breakthrough in both her choreographic work and personal practice. For Dean, "the agitation of the whirling motion of the mind is placed into organic rhythm by walking and this organic rhythm takes on symbolic significance as one places one foot after the other, left/right, left/right in balanced harmony." Like the repetitive spoken mantra cycles of japa, Dean utilizes the intensely focused repetition of a simple movement action in her works. Dean’s practice replaces the intentionally succinct syllabic phrase of the mantra with the physical syllable of the walking
step. The repetition of this walking step, placed on a spiral pattern, led Dean to the characteristic spinning movement of her minimalist works. In the studio Dean’s spinning practice could last three hours at a time, a continuous action that gave her the experience of "a direct physical connection to the whirling motion of the mind." Through the use of repetitive movement in an introspective process for calming the mind, Dean shifts levels of attention and reinforces her focus on distilling action and form in dance.

Dean’s work with count cycles and number systems is also influenced by and connected to her personal meditative practice. The structures of Dean’s dances work to elucidate energy, utilizing repetition and variation to explore dynamic qualities of the body:

Energy, although invisible, can be mathematically worked out and felt intensified. Pure mathematics, I see, as a meeting point with another layer of reality. Contact through a mathematical structure establishing a psycho-physical connection with the invisible inner structure that we see only a reflection of.

Like the spiritual numbering of japa meditation, Dean’s numerical structures and arithmetic compositional processes utilize math to examine perceptions of consciousness. Through these systems, Dean’s dances approach psycho-physical connections, allowing for focused states of consciousness. This permits Dean to utilize dance practice as a model to philosophically investigate thought processes and energy states.

Although Dean’s dances are characterized by ordered and extended repetition of form, she signals an extreme importance on the moment of stopping. The instantaneousness of stopping in Dean’s work, rather than gradually slowing to a stop, produces a distinct stillness following the repetition. Dean’s dances employ “repetitive movement that will train the mind to stop its chattering.” She connects this quieting of body to the quieting of the mind, using repetitive movement to produce a state of having no thoughts. Once this mental state is achieved, the physical state of ongoing action can be stopped, so as to exist in a pure stillness. Dean
acknowledges that achieving this state is easier said than done, but entering into the dance with this intention serves to mobilize the work as a practice with purposes beyond the aesthetic event. Dean marks this as a rewarding aspect of her work: “For me I am not doing the same thing over and over again… But I am intensifying what has occurred before. And as an artist who uses the body for creative expression, it also feels good.” This movement practice allows Dean to investigate energy patterns as a way of exploring consciousness.

In addition to Dean’s experience as a performer, her dances produce for the viewer an effect that is meditative. The ongoingness of rhythmic pulse and repetitive action in Dean’s pieces serve to create a meditative feeling-state among spectators. Reviews of Dean’s work occasionally note the quieting effect of performances on the audience, who sit calmly and silently for a noticeable period after the dance concludes. Dean’s audiences are not hypnotically entranced, but meditatively calmed. Dean asserts that among her intentions as “a creative artist it is also important for the audience/spectator to experience this STOP.” This moment of stopping in the dance arrests the repetitive movement of the work, creating stillness on the stage, and the audience maintains their stillness. This stillness may only be momentary, but the effect moves towards Dean’s aim of calming the mind. Deborah Jowitt, writing in the Village Voice of Dean’s work Song (1976), notes that at the conclusion of the work "you feel that expansiveness, that relieving grace in the center of your own mind and body." Robert Pierce, writing of the same work for Dance Magazine, remarks that "when it ended, about an hour after it began, I found myself speechless." Dean’s dances effect a quieting of the minds of the audience, expanding and extending Dean’s meditative process to the viewer.
A Philosophy of Impermanence as Legacy Practice: No to Moving and Being Moved

Dean no longer allows for the reconstruction of any of her dances, nor does she permit the use of her dances or creative materials in classes, workshops, lecture-demonstrations, or any other way whatsoever. This decision was announced in January 2009, and over the course of that year she informed, in writing, “all the reconstructors, dance companies, universities, and organizations that had a dance work of mine in their repertory that I was not doing any further reconstruction projects… I also told these organizations that I was not renewing any licenses that they had.”

Dean honored each of the outstanding licensing agreements she had contracted, with the final agreement culminating in 2012. This event was the final performance of Dean’s work, and there have since been no approved activities of any kind using Dean's choreography or music.

Five years prior to her announcement signaling an end to all reconstruction projects, in 2004 Dean decided that she no longer wanted to travel for professional projects. Until this point she had herself regularly traveled to visit the schools and dance companies who would be performing her works, providing her the opportunity to “meet the musicians and dancers,… give input, clean it up, check the costumes and the lighting” before the performance. Rather than continuing to undertake these trips, beginning in 2004 Dean instead requested that a recording of the work be sent to her, which would allow her to observe the company’s performance. Through this Dean believed she could manage her dances from afar. However, “for the first couple of years everything seemed to work out fine. The reconstructions looked wonderful. But starting in 2007 things started to not look so good.” Dean began to witness increasing and more noticeable occurrences of stylistic inaccuracy, discrepancy in stage patterning, and choreographic
divergence in the reconstructions of her dances. Dean also experienced a few instances where significant changes to her works transpired.

Over a 25-year period of her career Dean had more than 30 different reconstructors who set her dance works. “Most of them were wonderful to work with and did a beautiful job of reconstruction. But I have also had some bad experiences… I had one reconstructor who without asking me, was adding his own steps!” Being absent from the reconstruction and rehearsal process also resulted in issues of accuracy beyond the work of her reconstructors. At one company the ballet master shifted the timing and mechanics of a partnering section in one of Dean’s dances, and in a different instance another organization, without consulting Dean, changed the costume design for a piece. Dean is meticulous about the entire look of her work, producing the music, choreography, and costume design. Noting that she “worked more like a painter than a choreographer,” her specific decisions on the visual appearance of her work meant that to “change the costume design was to partially destroy my work.” Facing these experiences and concerns, Dean decided to reject further reconstructions of her dances.

Dean connects her rejection of reconstructing her dances to the philosophy of Tibetan Buddhist sand mandalas, as she does with her practice of creating grid drawings. After the sand mandala is completed, the image is ritualistically destroyed. The symbolic dismantling of the mandala begins once accompanying ceremonies and viewings of the piece come to a close. This destructive act is as philosophically and spiritually important as the initial creative act. “The construction and subsequent destruction of such artworks is an overt expression of the Buddhist belief in the impermanence of all phenomena, in contrast to the more Western understanding of works of art as hallmarks for posterity.” Symbolizing the Buddhist doctrine that all things are transient and ever changing, the dissolution of the material life of the mandala foregrounds
notions of ephemerality. The ceremonial vanishing of the creation marks an end to the physical form, but the essence and intention carries on. Rather than working to preserve the object, the destruction marks a giving in to and acceptance of the transitory nature of life and the world. The destructive process works to emphasize that one should not become attached to materiality, but embrace a moving on and detachment from the self-interest of accumulation and legacy.

Dean highlights that this philosophy has directly shaped her experience of her career work in dance. Connecting to this Buddhist tradition, Dean emphasizes that “part of the artistic creation (not separate from) is the destruction of the work.” The destruction is a potent and very important part of the practice, an integral component of the philosophy of impermanence and transcendence from a focus on materialism. When I asked Dean about the original drawings of works like *Stamping Dance* and *Circle Dance* that she had created in the 1970s, she asserted “I destroyed those drawings about 10 years ago.” As with the sand mandalas, the ceremonies and viewings of these dances were complete, the purpose fulfilled, and thus began the symbolic destruction of the physical form. Dean had not created the drawings for the purpose of reconstructing her dances and “did not want them being used in the future by some ‘reconstructor’ who thought they could reconstruct my original work from these drawings. They could not.” Recognizing the impulse in contemporary dance practice to restage historical dances that have been deemed canonically important, or to reconstruct lost works of choreography from archival records, Dean systematically destroyed her drawings to prevent them from being misinterpreted as documents that could be used to authentically restage her dances.

While Dean had allowed for reconstructions of her work until her 2009 announcement, the choice to destroy her materials and symbolically end the continuation of her work in a
performance context evolved over recent decades. Dean explains, “although I did not set out from the very beginning of when I started to choreograph, in 1965, that I was going to destroy everything that I had created, it seems to be working this way. And I am fine with this.”

Reconsidering her terminology, Dean shifts away from the use of the word ‘destroy’ to rearticulate her philosophical intentions and experience of this action. She remarks that “perhaps the word is not ‘destroy’ but ‘release.’ To let go. To not hang onto. To not possess. To not own.”

Similar to the intentions of the Tibetan Buddhist sand artists, Dean asserts that “I am a dance and music artist that is not interest in ‘setting in stone’ my dance and music works.”

The idea of release, of letting the dances go, highlights the ephemerality and impermanence of life, connecting her beliefs about her work to Buddhist philosophy. Dean elaborates this gradual development in her own philosophical thought:

> It took me a number of years to realize that I do not want reconstructions of my dance and music works done in the future. Of course, after I am dead, who knows what will happen. In my now living opinion, I don’t think any reconstructions of my dance and music works in the future are going to look very good much less represent what I really wanted in the first place.

As Dean began to witness her works shifting, becoming different than what she had created, she became increasingly aware of the ways reconstruction and preservation present a distortion over time. This experience of change, both gradual and abrupt, resulted in a divergence of intention, of purpose for the work. Releasing the work, allowing it to disappear, would release the self-interest of possession, both for Dean and those trying to maintain or own the work.

Dean gifted her archive to the American Dance Festival in 2008 and created a website that went online in 2010. Reflecting on this collection, Dean notes “I, at one point, was going to throw everything out. I did not spend a great deal of time putting together the materials.” The photos, ephemera, and other materials are mostly ordered chronologically by performance work.
Throughout the collection Dean has annotated items and documented detailed information about the original production history of her works. Compiling her materials for ADF and composing her website “were not to ‘create a legacy’ or even to create an archive for posterity.” Instead, Dean intended these repositories to present factual history and correct mistakes that appear in written accounts of her work. The compiled information stored in her archive collection and uploaded onto her website serves as a place she can easily direct students and scholars who contact her with an interest in writing on her work. Like with her choice to stop traveling for professional projects, Dean admits “I wanted to stop responding to individuals so I put together what I did have in my files.” Dean continues to assert she has no interest in a legacy plan nor any interest in preserving her dance and music works for reconstruction.

However, in destroying her drawings and rejecting the reconstruction of her dances, Dean posits a distinctly different notion of artistic legacy. Dean again returns to Webster’s Dictionary to clarify her terminology, citing that legacy is “something handed down from one who has gone before or from the past.” Legacy can be interpreted materially, such as a bequest of property, or socially, a transmitting from an ancestor. Dean is firm in her belief about rejecting the ongoing materiality or bequeathing of her creative output as products: “I do not wish to ‘hand down’ my dance and music works.” However, what Dean does hand down is a philosophy about reconstruction, a notion of dance as something to be eventually let go, released, destroyed. Dean’s legacy practice is that of intentional impermanence, disappearance, of not holding on.

Yvonne Rainer’s 1965 “NO manifesto” concludes “no to moving and being moved.” Reflecting on Dean’s work I am drawn back to this clause with a new insight. Dean’s negation of choreographic preservation and rejection of dance reconstruction issues a distinct ‘no’ to moving
and being moved. She intentionally removes her dances from the body and her choreography will never again be moved. Dean’s 2009 pronouncement infiltrates the crux of Rainer’s seeing difficulty. As I examine Dean’s archive, opening each grey binder to flip through the plastic sleeves neatly filled with materials representing four decades of creative output, I question my own process of seeing dance and recognize my own seeing difficulty. What does it mean for me to try to ‘see’ Dean’s dances, to write about a creative corpus that Dean has deliberately dictated to remain still? I question how my writing might perpetuate, mobilize something that has been asked to not move, and if my engagement is functioning against Dean’s wish to not hand down her work. As I articulate Dean’s philosophy I find myself reaching back, holding on. I find myself being moved.
Conclusion

Anna Halprin, Yvonne Rainer, and Laura Dean present new models for dance practice that resituate and reconceptualize existing modes of choreographic transmission. Through unique strategies for engaging with the historical returns of their dances, each actively interrogates beliefs about and practices for the production of choreographic legacy, thus proposing new processes for addressing the futurity of dance history. In their choreographic work Halprin, Rainer, and Dean draw from the legacy practices of repertoire, reconstruction, and reperformance while simultaneously exposing and confronting the recognizable systems of justification inherent to each. Opposing the notion of choreographic legacy as objective and stable, they directly challenge the assumptions and beliefs that construct and perpetuate canonicity in dance. Recognizing that dances necessarily change over time, these choreographers utilize multiple models for choreographic transmission in ways that intentionally collapse historically constituted dialectics of body vs. archive, abstract vs. concrete, and historicity vs. creativity. Halprin, Rainer, and Dean deploy experimental processes for structuring performance, utilize unique notational practices, and undertake methods for archive formation in ways that intentionally direct and define discourse on their compositional strategies, choreographic output, and philosophical interventions in dance.

In the development of *Parades and Changes* Anna Halprin utilized experimental processes of dance scoring as a model for choreographic and theatrical generativity. Through an extended workshop-based approach to collective creativity she allows for the ongoing evolution of her movement directives and choreographic situations. During the early 1960s Halprin engaged in a process of self-citation that rethought and redirected her own creative output for the
sustained development of artistic material, a process she has continued throughout her career. Through a compositional method of choreographic spolia Halprin repeatedly repurposes artistic material and dance scores from previous performances as blocks in the construction of new artistic projects. This process is both practical and ideological, allowing her to expand the creative possibilities of her artistic output while furthering her notion of dance as a process for personal, physical, emotional, and communal growth. First coalesced in *Parades and Changes*, Halprin’s model for choreographic transmission necessitates the ongoing adaptation of her dances in a process that intentionally retools and rearranges its choreographic blocks. Each iteration of *Parades and Changes* integrates the personal responses of its participants and addresses contemporary social contexts. Thus, charting the multiple reappearances and evolutions of *Parades and Changes* reveals Halprin’s evolving interests and intentions in dance. This choreographic approach not only presents a new practice for choreographic legacy, but also constitutes a redefinition of dance technique. Rejecting a stylized and idiosyncratic movement system, Halprin instead proposes a model for dance practice founded on a philosophy of kinesthetic awareness and mode of compositional process, which she directly extends into her choreographic practice.

Yvonne Rainer has similarly repurposed and redeployed *Trio A* in a plurality of ways through an ongoing engagement with the numerous methods and practices of repertoire, reconstruction, and reperformance. In her transmission of this dance Rainer has created a panoply of *Trio As* that collectively expose her multiple choreographic intentions and concerns. Beyond her initial process of formally investigating movement and the conditions of watching in dance, which led to the creation of *Trio A*, Rainer extends the work’s choreographic intention of exposing persistent seeing difficulties in dance through the process of choreographic
transmission. Rainer has continued to pressure *Trio A* through an investigation of how its choreographic phrase can be mobilized as an ongoing articulation and demonstration of her philosophy on dance spectatorship. The numerous reappearances of *Trio A* throughout Rainer’s career expose her persistent intention of utilizing this particular choreographic work as a site of artistic potential for confronting belief systems and processes of canonization in dance. *Trio A*’s multiple transmogrifications are not simply the result of choreographic transmission, but a means by which Rainer can actively propose new ways of thinking about and working with choreographic transmission. Through the radical juxtaposition of several *Trio A*s in performance, Rainer intentionally exposes the multiple and multiply understood outcomes of choreographic transmission, thereby requiring of her viewers a recognition of the assumptions and priorities inherent in the legacy practices of repertoire, reconstruction, and reperformance. I show that when *Trio A* is understood as necessarily defined by its repetitive diversions of form and extensive redeployments throughout Rainer’s career, the seeing difficulty Rainer forwards through her ongoing engagement with the work becomes a problem of fully discerning the work’s historical layerings; what cannot be easily encompassed is *Trio A*’s ever-expanding multiplicity. Thus, the seeing difficulty *Trio A* poses is a simultaneous revelation and obfuscation of its function as a legacy practice.

Laura Dean’s minimalist dances of the 1970s are predicated on austere geometric structures, numerical processes, systematized patterning, percussive action, and forceful rhythms. While primarily discussed as a choreographer, Dean’s creative process represents an interconnected and multi-modal practice that encompasses dance, music, and drawing. I argue that situating Dean’s work across and between genres is integral to an explication of her artistic and philosophical concerns. Repetitively representing her compositional ideas as works on paper,
Dean’s drawing practice allowed for an expanded visualization of her investigations of color, symmetry, repetition, pattern, and form. Throughout the early 1970s Dean communicated the compositional structures of her dance works through minimalist geometric drawings and formalist descriptions, which she included in her program notes, utilized in print advertisements, published in academic articles, and displayed as part of gallery exhibitions on both dance and minimalist art. Examining Dean’s creative output alongside contemporaneous developments in serial and conceptual art, I foreground Dean’s work with highly schematic structures and process models as primarily an engagement with ideas. While Dean insistently worked in dance for multiple decades, her 2009 choice to reject transmitting her dances as embodied performance works suggests a de-emphasizing and elimination of the perceptual encounter with the choreographic event. Thus, Dean posits that her compositions can be perpetuated exclusively through her archival material. Citing Tibetan Buddhist philosophy and the artistic intentions of sand mandalas, Dean emphasizes that in her creative process the destruction, or letting go, of an artwork has become integral to her view on choreographic futurity. Asserting choreographic transmission as a practice that necessarily requires the presence of the creator to assure authorial integrity, and choosing to extricate herself from that practice, Dean rejects the possibility of her dances accurately existing beyond her involvement. When analyzed as conceptual systems, Dean’s dances do not require the materiality of dancing body to be directly communicated. This letting go of the embodied experience of dance suggests Dean’s choreographic legacy as that of ideation.

Halprin and Rainer present legacy practices that produce a continual and unremitting revelation of new permutations of *Parades and Changes* and *Trio A*. Conversely, Dean forecloses the possibility of resituating her dances as live performance works specifically
because such a practice necessarily evokes choreographic permutation. Through an
intentioned engagement with the challenges that temporality exerts on spectatorship and
historical knowing, these choreographic strategies seek to complicate our experience of watching
and writing dance history. I return to the Rainer’s notion of an intrinsic “seeing difficulty” in
dance, utilizing this as a frame to expose the ways inherent problems in the watching of dance
history are not only explicitly addressed in the work of Halprin, Rainer and Dean, but actively
engaged as the site for new artistic possibility. These practices propose new relationships
between the individual artist and the production of cultural memory, intentionally reshaping the
experience, understanding, and embodiment of dance history. The work of these choreographers
not only functions to redirect the formation of choreographic legacy, but actively reveals the
production of legacy as a subjective and ongoing practice.
Notes

Introduction

1 Recognizing that choreographers Lucinda Childs and Deborah Hay undertake a legacy practice in similar modes to Halprin, Rainer, and Dean, in future research I foresee this project expanding to encompass an analysis of their work.


7 Collections of material from Halprin’s career outside of MP+D also mostly contain duplicate items, and the collections do not reflect or expose any larger curatorial intention on Halprin’s part.

8 The Lawrence Halprin Collection at the University of Pennsylvania Architectural Archives is the primary repository of Lawrence’s materials.


11 While Rainer has since returned to New York, where she currently lives and works, she remains Professor Emerita at UCI.

12 The exhibition ran 17 March - 4 June 2016.

13 Experiments in Environment: The Halprin Workshops, 1966–1971 was organized by the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts in Chicago in collaboration with the Architectural Archives of the University of Pennsylvania. This exhibition ran 22 January – 3 July 2016. Also on display at the California Historical Society during this period was Selections from the Collection: Countercultural Art and Lifestyle Movements.

14 In 1953 the neighborhood was designated a redevelopment zone and the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency produced their Report on the Redevelopment Pan for the Yerba Buena Center: Approved Redevelopment Project Area D-1 in 1965. Demotion and redevelopment plans were reconceptualized during the ensuing decade in response to legal challenges from residents and business owners. In 1976 Mayor George Moscone appointed a Select Committee to study the area with citizen input. Lawrence Halprin & Associates, working with John Carl Warnecke & Associates and Mario Ciampi and Associates, developed plans for the redesign of San Francisco’s Market Street Corridor, the northern boundary of the Yerba Buena redevelopment zone, which were executed in the 1970s and 1980s.

Chapter 1


2 Halprin and Burns, Taking Part, 29.
Margaret H’Doubler began teaching dance at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1917. This was the first time dance had been offered as a university course in the United States. At Wisconsin-Madison H’Doubler also established the first university degree program in dance in 1926.


Halprin, “Program for Performance of Ann Halprin and Company at UCLA on 22 April 1960.”


Halprin, “Program for Performance of Ann Halprin and Company at UCLA on 22 April 1960.”


Ibid.

*Birds of America, or Gardens Without Walls* premiered 29 November 1960 at the Contemporary Dancers Center, San Francisco in a mixed program with *The Flowerburger* and *Mr. & Mrs. Mouse* (1959).


Berio had seen a performance of *The Five-Legged Stool*, after which he invited Halprin to work with him on his opera.

Ross, *Experience as Dance*, 164.


Like Halprin’s process for the continuing development and ongoing evolution of her existing work as a resource for the creation of new performance pieces, Berio and Sanguineti reworked their musical and verbal material from *Esposizione* into *Laborintus II*, which premiered in 1965.


Halprin began developing *Esposizione* in 1962. Before taking the piece to Italy, she gave four work in progress open showings of the piece on November 30 and December 1, 7, and 8 of that year. These events, during which the company rehearsed and developed the piece and took audience questions, were presented at the San Francisco Theological Seminary in San Anselmo, in the campus’ Festival Theatre. Proceeds from admission to the events were used to support the company’s international travel.


Mill Valley artist Jerry Walters designed the fiberglass ramp and collaborated with Halprin on determining the rigging of the cargo net.

Halprin, “Esposizione.”

Halprin, “Letter to Luciano Berio.”


Ibid.

Halprin, “Esposizione.”

Ibid.

Halprin, “Letter to Luciano Berio.”

In addition to performing in Venice, the company toured to Rome and Zagreb, Yugoslavia.

Ross, *Experience as Dance*.

Ibid.

This was the second time Halprin had worked with Subotnick on recycling a performance work that originally had music by a different composer. *The Five-Legged Stool* was a recycling of *The Four-Legged Stool* (1961), which had music by Terry Riley. In a letter to Berio, Halprin notes that Subotnick had attended rehearsals of *Esposizione* in California, and mentions that he was recording John Graham’s voice. It is unclear if this tape recording was sent to Berio, or if it could have been part of the four-part tape used in Berio’s opera.


Procession was filmed at UCLA and commercially released by the University of California Extension Media Center. The 19-minute 16mm black-and-white film transitions between excerpts from the performance and an interview with Halprin conducted by Alma M. Hawkins from UCLA’s Department of Dance. Purchase and shipment was $115 in the United States and Canada and $138 internationally. The film was also available for rental for $8 per day.


Halprin, *Procession: Contemporary Directions in American Dance*.


Halprin, *Procession: Contemporary Directions in American Dance*


The Five-Legged Stool premiered on 29 April 1962 at the San Francisco Playhouse. This piece was Halprin’s first use of task-based scoring as the structure for an evening-length work. The piece underwent several name changes between its earliest development in 1960 and 1962-63 when the work was presented in its final version. Early documentation of the work in progress refers to the piece as Three-Legged Stool. On 24 September 1961 the dance premiered as Four-Legged Stool at the San Francisco Playhouse, where it was poorly received. After revising and reworking the piece, it was presented again as Five-Legged Stool. While the creative team partially changed between these versions, the evolution of this work is one of the earliest examples of Halprin recycling a performance work.

Ross, Experience as Dance, 129.

Ross, Experience as Dance, 130.

Ibid.


Ann Halprin, “Procession: First Draft.”

Ibid.

Halprin, Moving Toward Life, 95.

Halprin, Moving Toward Life, 8.


Halprin, “Parades and Change (A Dancers’ Workshop Production).”

Ross, Experience as Dance, 66.


Halprin, “Parades and Change (A Dancers’ Workshop Production).”

In several previous publications the San Francisco State College performance has mistakenly been labeled as occurring in 1965.

Halprin, Moving Toward Life, 96.

Halprin, Moving Toward Life,

Halprin, Moving Toward Life, 96.

The project was produced by Arne Arneborn, with the performance adapted for film by Charles Ross and Jo Landor. The television broadcast was aired in two parts, with the first on 13 November 1965 and the second on 21 November 1966. It was telecast to Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland, and Iceland. The film was also acquired as part of the International T.V. Film Festival in Hamburg, Germany. In the United States, the film was distributed by the University of California Extension Media Center, who also produced the film of Procession.


81 Ross, *Experience as Dance*, 192.


85 Halprin, *The RSVP Cycles*.

86 The invitation came from Museum’s director, Peter Selz.

87 Ross, *Experience as Dance*, 271.


89 French dance artist Anne Collod staged Halprin’s scores as *parades & changes, replays* (2008) and *parades & changes, replay in expansion* (2011), working in conversation with Halprin and Subotnick. These performances, which toured internationally, were conceived and directed by Collod, who refers to her staging as a complete reinterpretation of the work. The production of *parades & changes, replays* included performers Boaz Barkan, Nuno Bizarro, Alain Buffard, Anne Collod, DD Dorvillier, and Vera Mantero, with music by Morton Subotnick assisted by Sébastien Roux. While Collod had previously worked with Halprin as a dancer, and Halprin advised her staging project, Collod’s version of the work is not a direct example of Halprin’s directorial output. However, I do recognize this production within the lineage and public understanding of *Parades and Changes*. While I attempted to contact Collod for an interview early in my research process, I have never received a response. A detailed analysis of this production is outside the scope of this dissertation and will be addressed in further articulations of this research.

90 Anna Halprin / Matrix 246 was organized by Assistant Curator Dena Beard. The three performances of *Parades and Changes* ran 15-17 February.


95 Ross, *Experience as Dance*.

96 Between August of 1979 and November of 1980 six women were found murdered on Mt. With the murders remaining unsolved and victims continuing to be found, the California State Parks Department chose to close access to Mount Tamalpais State Park in 1980. Nicknamed the “Trailside Killer,” David Carpenter was apprehended in San Francisco in 1981. Charged with the murders on Mount Tamalpais among others, Carpenter was sentenced to death and remains on death row at San Quentin State Prison near San Rafael, California. The park was reopened to the public following his arrest. See: Ramsland, Katherine. "The Trailside Killer of San Francisco: The Man Behind the Predator." TruTV Crime Library.


Ann Schumann met Lawrence Halprin at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Hillel in 1939, and the two were married on 19 September 1940. *Remembering Lawrence* is comprised of *Spirit of Place* (2009) *In the Fever of Love: Song of Songs* (2011), and *Trip to Israel* (2014), each of which engages a different landscape designed by Lawrence. *Spirit of Place* was presented a few months before Lawrence’s death, and was performed at the outdoor theatre in San Francisco’s Stern Grove that he had designed as part of the park’s renovation. To direct the audience’s focus to Lawrence’s design for the terraced seating area of the amphitheater, which integrates into the park’s natural setting, Anna situated the audience on the theatre’s stage and set the performance on the amphitheater’s slopes as well as the surrounding areas in the Grove. Through this framing, *Spirit of Place* tasked the audience to see not just the dancers, but whole environment of the space as well as the deep connection between Anna and Lawrence’s work. *In the Fever of Love: Song of Songs* was inspired by erotic drawings that Lawrence drew while he was deployed in the U.S. Navy during WWII. Anna had never seen these works during Lawrence’s life, only uncovering them when clearing out and organizing his papers after his death. Anna decided to interpret the drawings as scores, developing a performance work on their themes and imagery. Anna paired this with selections from the holy text *Song of Songs* (also known as Song of Solomon), a scroll included in the Ketuvim, the final book in the Tanakh, the Hebrew Bible. *Song of Songs* is a plotless poetic scripture that celebrate sexual love. Staged on the Halprins’ dance deck next to their home in Kentfield, Anna used the work to reflect on their personal relationship.

Halprin led one open public workshop at Moa Oasis, an ecological retreat and peace center in Israel's southern desert, and two workshops at Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance, one for dance therapists and the other for faculty and students at the Academy.

After these years abroad, Lawrence returned to the United States to attend Cornell University, yet he desired to again live on a kibbutz in Israel. He believed his return to the United States would be temporary, but he never did relocate back to Israel. See: Janice Ross, *Experience as Dance*.

*Parades and Changes* was presented at the Israel Museum 16-17 June 2015 as the final performance event in the annual Israel Festival. Vertigo Dance Company also presented excerpts from *Parades and Changes* as part of their mixed repertory program *Vertigo Global* in 2014 and 2015.


In Halprin’s classes this exercise is usually conducted in a circle. As each participant presents their name and movement, the workshop echoes their introduction, collectively repeating their name and movement.

The session was held at therapist John Rinne’s Berkeley home. Three of Halprin’s dancers also attended: A.A. Leath, John Graham, and Norma Leistiko.


In 1970 when Halprin was invited to present *Parades and Changes* at the University of California Art Museum in Berkeley, director Peter Selz attempted to convince her to set the work in leotards or dim the lights. Halprin rejected both proposals, noting that it “would only make the dance look like something that should be hidden.”
The choice to allow leotards in this 2014 performance marks a shift in opinion about this aspect of the work in response to local religious tradition. Janice Ross, Experience as Dance, 196.

Halprin, “Highlights of Anna Halprin’s Recent Trip to Israel.”

When I arrived at the museum, staff working at the ticket office and information desk were unaware of any performance slated to happen in the galleries. Halprin was scheduled to be at the museum to assist in editing documentary footage of her work taken several months prior, but nothing else was on the museum’s calendar. Halprin had only alerted curators that morning of her intention to orchestrate a performance in the museum’s galleries, and news of this plan hadn’t spread far. Afterwards, assistant curator Dena Beard referred to Halprin and Antoni’s event as a “guerrilla performance.”

A year prior Antoni had attended a workshop with Halprin at Esalen, but she did not introduce herself.

Halprin, Moving Toward Life, 102.


Abigail Levine, “Janine Antoni in Conversation with Abigail Levine.”

Antoni quoted in Levine, “Janine Antoni in Conversation with Abigail Levine.”

The Berkeley Art Museum featured performances of Parades and Changes, directed by Halprin, from 15-17 February 2013, and opened an exhibition of scores, photographs, and documents from the piece’s history that ran 15 February – 21 April 2013.

Similar to the performance earlier that afternoon, the audience was all individually invited by Halprin and her office manager, and the group reflected the local artists, friends, and professional connections that follow Halprin’s work. The performance on the dance deck was followed by another event that Halprin and Antoni developed together. A thin white string had been strung from a tree overhanging the deck and along a circuitous path through the redwood grove behind Halprin’s home. The audience was encouraged to follow the string, which took us around tress, over stumps, and through bushes, up to the house’s main patio where Halprin had laid out a potluck community meal. Like Antoni’s negotiations with the paper, the audience was tasked with negotiating their relationship with the string and it’s path, necessitating new ways of experiencing the environment and forcing new modes of sensing outside of everyday experience. When I returned to Halprin’s home nearly six months later, the string was still running through the forest, giving me the opportunity to follow its path again.

Antoni was working with the Latin American tradition of milagros, religious folk charms and figurines that are displayed in churches as votive offerings reflecting an act of devotion. Milagros are not codified or universal in their symbolism, but instead have numerous regional and cultural differences. Antoni was particularly interested in the use of milagros as healing objects, whereby a person with an ailment would buy or produce a wax body part, take it to the church, and hang it from the ceiling as a prayer for healing. Installed in the church, the body part milagro serves as a symbol reminding a saint of the petitioner’s particular need and may be left to remain in gratitude for a prayer answered. For the set design Antoni developed a sculpture installation that hung at the height of the proscenium, slightly away from the stage, overhanging the audience. The installation was comprised
of several body part sculptures cast in polyurethane resin, below which was suspended a helicopter stretcher. During the performance Antoni occupied the sculpture, lying still in the stretcher.

128 Based in New York City, the Stephen Petronio Company was founded in 1984.


131 Memories from My Closet premiered as part of Halprin’s 80th Year Retrospective at the Cowell Theatre at Fort Mason in San Francisco. The program also included Intensive Care, Reflections on Death and Dying and excerpts from Parades and Changes. Accompanying the performance was a retrospective exhibition entitled Five Decades of Transformational Dance, as well as images from Parades and Changes and a series of photographs by Eeo Stubblefield from Still Dances, her collaborative work with Halprin. Memories from My Closet included From 5—110, The Courtesan and the Crone, Grandfather Dance, and Gratitude.

132 The Tamalpa Life/Art Process is a movement-based expressive arts approach to both artistic development and counseling psychology that integrates movement, dance, visual arts, creative writing, performance techniques, and group communication practices. The process shares a similar name to Anna and Lawrence Halprin’s Life/Art Workshop Process, which was initially developed in the 1960s and articulated in an article by Anna Halprin that was included in Lawrence Halprin and Jim Burns’ book Taking Part: A Workshop Approach to Collective Creativity. However, the workshop model developed at the Tamalpa Institute since the late 1970s includes a greater focus on therapeutic applications and outcomes of the original working models, notably expanding Anna Halprin’s work with totems and self-portrait ritual performance. Daria Halprin, who was introduced to Fritz Perls through her participation with the San Francisco Dancers’ Workshop in the 1960s, further pursued training in Gestalt therapy, eventually developing her own models for the interface of dance, psychology, and theater. She brought her Gestalt therapy influences as well as her own therapeutic processes to the forming of the Tamalpa Institute in 1978, where she worked on developing and articulating the workshop method and self-reflective methodologies that are currently taught in the Institute’s training programs.


135 Ibid.


137 Anna and Lawrence Halprin were invited to the White House as part of events surrounding the dedication of the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial, which Lawrence designed.

Chapter 2


2 Banes, Terpsichore in Sneakers, 43.


4 In questioning Merce Cunningham’s positionality between what he cites as conventional delineations between modern and postmodern dance, Roger Copeland marks the “Judson Era” as a discipline-specific period within the
cross-genre movement of postmodernism. Through this, Copeland complicates definitions and applications of the term ‘postmodern’ in relation to dance history.

5 Rainer, “Some Retrospective Notes,” 78.

6 Banes, *Terpsichore in Sneakers*.


9 The promotional poster and performance program list slightly different titles for this concert. The poster uses the title *David Gordon, Yvonne Rainer, Steve Paxton: Dance Concert of Old Work & New Work*, framing the choreographer’s names larger and above the descriptive section of the title. The printed program titles the evening *A Dance Concert of Old and New Works by David Gordon, Yvonne Rainer, Steve Paxton*.

10 April 11, 14, and 15. Dancers included Rainer, Paxton, and Gordon, as well as Becky Arnold, William Davis, Harry De Dio, Gay Delanghe and Barbara Lloyd. The work was presented in eight parts and had a running time of one hour forty-five minutes. The Anderson Theatre was located in the East Village, at 66 Second Avenue between 3rd and 4th Streets. Originally a Yiddish theater, by late 1967 the Anderson became an avant-garde venue, presenting performance works and psychedelic rock concerts.


15 Rainer, *A Woman Who...*, 42.

16 Yvonne Rainer, Choreographic notebook, circa 1966, Yvonne Rainer Papers, Getty Research Institute.

17 Ibid.


19 The sections of *The Mind is a Muscle* in this performance were: *Trio A*, *Trio B*, *Trio A¹*, *Horses*, and *Lecture*. *Trio B* and *Trio A¹* were performed simultaneously.

20 *Concert #5* was presented on 9 May 1963. Seventeen dances were performed during the concert, with some occurring simultaneously, for a total of 14 events. Five of these seventeen dances were the different sections of Rainer’s *Terrain*. The concert also included work by Judith Dunn (Index and Speedlimit), David Gordon (Helen’s Dance, Mannequin Piece, and Random Breakfast), Steve Paxton (Proxy), Trisha Brown (Lightfall and Trillium), William Davis (Field), Albert Reid (Bird Solos), Robert Rauschenberg (Pelican), and a collaboration between Paxton and Rainer (Word Words). See: Sally Banes, *Democracy’s Body: Judson Dance Theater 1962-1964* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993).


22 Rainer, *A Woman Who...*, 42.


26 Ibid.


28 *The Mind is a Muscle* was presented on a shared evening of performance. At this performance *Trio B* and *Trio A¹* were performed in succession rather than simultaneously.
During this period Rainer premiered *Carriage Discreteness*, a commission made in collaboration with engineers from Bell Laboratories in Murray Hill, NJ as part of the 9 *Evenings Theatre and Engineering* festival at the 69th Regiment Armory in New York. This work premiered on 15 October 1966.

The events ran 29 January to 5 February 1966.

The concert on 2 February included performances by James Waring, Aileen Passloff, Rainer, Remy Charlip, Robert Huot, Twyla Tharp, and Margot Colbert. A previous evening of dance in the festival was presented on 30 January and included work by Anne Wilson, Meredith Monk, Merle Marsicano, and Eleo Pomare.

*Banés, Terpsichore in Sneakers*, 52.

The festival was presented 1-9 July at Teatrino Delle Sette and 9-11 July at Teatro Caia Melisso. The program lists Rainer as also presenting *Three Satie Spoons* and *Terrain*. However, this contrasts with Rainer’s memory of her trip as described in *Feelings Are Facts* (2002), which suggests she only presented *The Mind is a Muscle*. The concert was a shared evening with other choreographers.

*Mat* was later reworked and performed by William Davis and Becky Arnold, first in a ChoreoConcert at the New School for Social Research in September 1967, then in the final version of *The Mind is a Muscle* in 1968. *Mat* continued *Trio A*’s aesthetic by simultaneously presenting non-synchronous performances of the same movement material by two people. For a full description of the work, see Rainer 1974, 79 and 96-99. *Film* was a movement piece centered on traveling in a herd, and was performed partially behind a downstage screen onto which two films were projected: *Foot Film* and *Hand Movie*. *Foot Film* was shot by Bud Wirtschafter. Davis filmed *Hand Movie*, which was produced during Rainer’s hospitalization in 1966. For a full description of the work, see Rainer 1974, 89 and 103-105. Only Wirtschafter’s film is listed in Rainer’s program notes for the performance in Spoleto. These notes also list five interludes: *Conversation, Dmitri Tiomkin (Dial M for Murder), Conversation (continued), John Giorno (Pornographic Poem), and Jefferson Airplane (She Has Funny Cars)*.

At Brandeis University’s Nate B. and Frances Spingold Theater the *Mind is a Muscle* was presented in a slightly different order than the performances at the Anderson Theater. Additionally, for the final iteration of the work Rainer added *Stairs* and three interludes: *The Greenbirar Boys (Amelia Earhardt’s Last Flight), Silence (6 minutes), and Frank Sinatra (Strangers in the Night)*.

Rainer, *A Woman Who…*.

This mylar was purchased from Mirro-Brite Coating Products. The sample of this material that was sent to Rainer is included in the Yvonne Rainer Papers at the Getty Research Institute.

The other performers represented in the series include Alwin Nikolais, Carolyn Brown, and Rev. Al Carmines of Judson Memorial Church.


Ibid.


*Rose Fractions* was presented on 6 and 8 February 1969. The cast included Becky Arnold, Frances Barth, Heywood Becker, Frances Brooks, Rosemarie Castoro, Douglass Dunn, David Gordon, Barbara Jarvis, Marilyn Leach, Fredric J. Lehrman, Barbara Lloyd, Susan Marshall, Judy Padow, Steve Paxton, and Yvonne Rainer. The Billy Rose Theatre now operates as the Nederlander Theater, an active Broadway theater.


*Dance Fractions for the West Coast* is accessible at the Getty Research Institute and Berkeley Art Museum / Pacific Film Archive’s Film Library. The film was aired as part of the Dilexi Series, a 12-part weekly series of


*Connecticut Composite* was performed the Crozer-Williams Center on 19 July 1969.

*Continuous Project-Altered Daily* was performed 8-19 May 1969 at the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts Studio Theatre.

Rainer presented further developments of *Continuous Project-Altered Daily* at the University of Missouri, Kansas City on 8 November 1969 and Amherst College on 12 December 1969. The piece was presented in a definitive form on 31 March 1970 at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, after which Rainer “no longer formally contributed anything new to the performances.” Yvonne Rainer, *Work 1961-73*, 125.


*WAR* was first performed on 6 November 1970 at Douglass College, a women’s college affiliated with Rutgers University.


Ibid.

A film of the 1970 performance of *Trio A with Flags* is accessible at the Getty Research Institute.

The performers in *Trio A With Flags* were Nancy Green, David Gordon, Barbara Lloyd, Steve Paxton, Yvonne Rainer, and Lincoln Scott.

The Museum of History and Technology (now the National Museum of American History) opened to the public in January 1964. A key goal of the architectural plan was to provide a space that could better and more safely display the Star-Spangled Banner. Flag Hall, at the center of the building, was specifically designed so that the banner would hang vertically in its entirety. The 30 x 42–foot garrison flag, sewn by Mary Pickersgill with her daughter, two nieces, and an African American indentured servant, was produced over seven weeks in 1813 for Fort McHenry in Baltimore, Maryland. On 14 September 1814, U.S. soldiers at the fort raised the huge American flag to celebrate a crucial victory over British forces during the War of 1812. It was this sight that inspired Francis Scott Key to write a song about the flag, which eventually became the United States’ national anthem. The Smithsonian acquired the Star-Spangled Banner in 1907. By the time of its installation in the museum, the flag had deteriorated significantly, including a substantial loss of length, and now measures 30 x 34 feet.

This large central space in the museum featured a pendulum modeled after one produced by French physicist J. B. L. Foucault in 1851. The 240-pound brass, hollow bob of the pendulum was suspended from the 4th floor ceiling by a 54-ft. steel cable. This cable drew audiences to visually follow it down to the inlaid compass rose and moveable markers on the Pendulum Room’s floor.


This performance was on 15 December 1970. Grand Union had performed *Continuous Project—Altered Daily* at the Loeb Student Center on 22 November 1970, two days after the group’s performance at the Smithsonian. In Rainer’s recollection of that period she writes that *Trio A With Flags* was incorporated into *Continuous Project—
Altered Daily at NYU, which may signal its inclusion in the 22 November performance. However, referring to the same performance, she highlights Catterson’s participation in the program, which makes it more likely that the event to which she is referring is the 15 December event. In an article reviewing this performance in the New York Times, Anna Kisselgoff refers to the 15 December performance as an untitled event, but it too may have been a performance of Continuous Project-Altered Daily.

Rainer took out advertisements in the Village Voice to promote the “Post Modern Dance Classes” at her loft. During this period Rainer developed her works WAR and Grand Union Dreams, both of which included students who were attending classes at her loft. Grand Union Dreams premiered at Emmanuel Midtown YM-YWHA in New York City on 16 May 1971.

Catterson had learned Trio A from Becky Arnold and was attending Lloyd’s class as both a refresher and to better understand the slight variations of the dance that were being transmitted by Rainer’s dancers.

Catterson, “I Promised Myself I Would Never Let It Leave My Body’s Memory.”

1-2 October 1971.


The first version of this work was presented on 13 October 1972 at Hunter College in New York. It was later presented on 15, 16, 18, and 19 November as Spectacle Mélangé at the Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, and again on 30 November at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, NY.

Inner Appearances was developed for a female dancer and first presented in 1972. In 1973 Rainer presented this piece with a male performer.

Yvonne Rainer, Interview with the author, March 28, 2016.

Rainer, Feelings are Facts, 165.

Linda K. Johnson, Interview with the author, November 6, 2016.

Performed at Washington Irving High School in New York, the concert included works by David Gordon, David Woodberry, Simone Forti, Trisha Brown, Nancy Lewis, Mary Overlie, Christina Svane, Colin Walcott, Bob Carrol, and Steve Paxton with Lisa Nelson and Daniel Lepkoff.

The episode first aired 21 May 1980.

Rainer, Feelings are Facts, 165.

Films of Rainer coaching Trio A are included in her archive at the Getty Research Institute.

22-23 April 1999. Performers included Masako Abe, Tatiana da Rosa, Zoi Dimitriou, Marquita Levy, Clarinda Mac Low, Jody Sterling and Paschal Wettstein


Ibid.


“Studio Art 100: Performance- Trio A” was offered Fall 2008, Winter 2011, and Winter 2012. Rainer is now Professor Emerita of Art at UC Irvine.

The students in this class included fellow UCI professor of art Simon Leung, art historian Julia Bran-Wilson, former Paul Taylor dancer Caryn Heilman, and undergraduates Rachel Pace, Amanda Prince-Luboway, David Gutierrez.
The concert, *Dance Visions*, was performed 5-8 February 2009.

Rainer, “*Trio A: Genealogy, Documentation, Notation*,” 18.


This piece was performed 28-29 October 2010 as part *A Sanctuary for the Arts: Judson Memorial Church and the Avant-Garde 1955-1977*, a mixed concert of performance work and gallery exhibition. A video of the performance is held in the Yvonne Rainer Papers at the Getty Research Institute.

Yvonne Rainer, *A Woman Who*....

A typed version of these notes was also produced.

Rainer, “*Trio A: Genealogy, Documentation, Notation*,” 16.

Ibid.

Ibid.

The full agreement reads: “The undersigned agrees not to teach, restage, perform, videotape, or film the dance, *Trio A*, choreographed by Yvonne Rainer, and agrees not to allow others to do the same without prior written permission from Yvonne Rainer. The undersigned also agrees that in no instance will a videotape of an agreed upon performance of *Trio A* be copied or used to restage *Trio A* without permission from Yvonne Rainer.”


Rainer, “*Trio A: Genealogy, Documentation, Notation*,” 17.

The score was digitally transposed to LabanWriter (4.5.1) in 2004 by Mira Kim, with amendments made by Joukje Kolff in 2004 and 2005. Proofreading of the score was done by Shelly Saint-Smith in July 2004, and a checking of the score’s movement veracity was completed in February 2005 by Vicki Watts. In addition to the notation for *Trio A*, the score includes notes on the work’s background and performance style.

It is clear that the notators believed the Labanotation symbology needed additional information to articulate the nuances of Rainer’s choreography and outline the slight variations in performance that are acceptable based on the physical capacities of each performer.

Yvonne Rainer, Email to Joukje Kolff, September 10, 2004.

Rainer, “*Trio A: Genealogy, Documentation, Notation*,” 17.

Retrograde was included in *Trio A Pressured #3* as part of the company’s production *Past-Forward* (2000).


Rainer, “*Trio A: Genealogy, Documentation, Notation*,” 18.

*Trio A Pressured #X* was presented as part of AXIS Dance Company’s 27th annual home season, *Realign the Curve*, which ran 11-13 April 2014 at the Malonga Casquelourd Center for the Arts in Oakland, CA. The program
also included Alex Ketley’s dance film *The Gift (of Impermanence)* (2014) as well as two works by Marc Brew: *Divide* (2014) and *Remember When* (2008).

112 Johnson first learned *Trio A* in 1997 from Clarinda Mac Low, the daughter of Judson-era poet Jackson Mac Low. In 1992 Mac Low was one of the first dancers in many years to learn the piece directly from Rainer rather than from another dancer designated to transmit the work. Johnson then went on to work with Pat Catterson for an additional instructional process in 2002.

113 Rainer herself has a very particular movement style and physical inclinations based on her own body type. Pat Catterson, who has taught the dance for decades, asserts that any person, regardless of their training and abilities, struggles with the unique and challenging physicality of the dance.


115 Ibid.

116 Johnson, who is based in Portland, OR, made multiple trips to Oakland to work with the company in periods that ranged from a few days to two weeks. The piece was fully developed in January, further coached in February, staged in March, and finally cleaned for precise details of movement approach in April shortly before the work’s premiere.

117 “Questions From the Audience, Part 2.”

118 http://www.aprogramforplants.com

119 Photosynthetically active radiation encompasses the spectral range of 400 to 700 nanometers. Natural PAR changes seasonally and varies depending on both the latitude and time of day. Modern electric lighting, including film projectors, can also present light within the range available for photosynthesis.

120 The films were screened from 30 November to 4 December 2015 at the SUGS Gallery, LeRoy Neiman Centre School of the Art Institute of Chicago. The five films selected were *Papillon d’amour* by Nicholas Provost, *RE:THE_OPERATION* by Paul Chan, *Theme Song* by Vito Acconci, *Hostage: The Bachar Tapes (English Version)* by Walid Raad and Souheil Bachar, and *Trio A* by Sally Banes and Yvonne Rainer.

121 *A Program for Plants* was advised by Dr. Giovanni Aloisi and supported by the Earl and Brenda Shapiro Center for Research & Collaboration through the EAGER grant program at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

122 Radin, John, and Tegg were joined by Bobbly Gonzales and Alissa Chanin for the workshop.

123 *Trio A Condensed* premiered on 9 July 2016. Organized and curated by Mike Barber, Ten Tiny Dances has been produced since 2002. The 2016 edition was presented during the Beaverton Farmer’s Market in Beaverton City Park.

124 Johnson was also pregnant at the time of the 2004 festival, making condensing the dance to a space of this size even more difficult to conceive.

125 Linda K. Johnson, Interview with the author, October 27, 2016.

126 Ibid.

127 *Slow Dancing/Trio A* was filmed 15-18 December at the Baryshnikov Arts Center in New York. The film’s installation at Danspace Project was organized by Judy Hussie-Taylor and Lydia Bell. The installation ran June 23-24, 26-27, 29-30, and July 1, 2017.

Thomson, Joshua Tuason, Damani Van Rensalier, Isabelle Vergara, Debra Wanner, Timothy Ward, Wendy Whelan, and Megan Wright.

129 The ordering of performers was arranged by their availability during filming, with Catterson situating dancers into a tightly segmented production time schedule. The aesthetic ordering of dancers in the piece is thus both intentional and practical.

130 Yvonne Rainer, Email to the author, December 9, 2017.

Chapter 3

1 In addition to composing solo dances for herself and group works for her own company, Dean utilized her postmodern choreographic structures to produce work for ice skating companies and commissions by such notable ballet companies as New York City Ballet, Royal Danish Ballet, and Joffrey Ballet.

2 Dean’s company underwent several name changes: Laura Dean Dance Company in January 1976, Laura Dean Dancers and Musicians in October 1776, and Laura Dean Musicians and Dancers in 1992. The final shift in the company’s name, reversing “dancers” and “musicians,” was done in response to Dean’s experience having presenters, dance writers, and critics drop “musicians” in their printed materials. Shifting it before dancers, she was able to ensure they included this important title. Laura Dean Musicians and Dancers toured across the United States and internationally for nearly 30 years, until 2000 when Dean created her last new work for the ensemble and disbanded the group. Dean’s final choreographic work was created was in 2004 at Duke University, and she dissolved her foundation in 2007.


4 Sitting-Stomping-Standing premiered 28 April 1968 as part of HemisFair in San Antonio and Farewell premiered 30 May 1968 in Austin.

5 Dean, “Laura Dean,” 95.

6 Laura Dean, “Program for Bach Preludes at Merce Cunningham Dance Studio, 28-29 August 1971,” Laura Dean Papers, American Dance Festival Archives, Duke University.


8 Dean, “Laura Dean,” 97.

9 Dean, “Program for Bach Preludes at Merce Cunningham Dance Studio.”


11 Dean’s original company included Dana Reitz, Suzanne Wasser, and Catherine Kerr.


14 Laura Dean, “Program for Laura Dean and Dance Company at LoGuidice Gallery, New York, 9 & 16 December 1972,” Laura Dean Papers, American Dance Festival Archives, Duke University.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Walking Dance was first performed by Dean and Judy Clark, with Clapping Music played by Reich and Russ Hartenberger.


Ibid.

Ibid.  


Mel Bochner, “Serial Art, Systems, Solipsism,” 100.


Ibid.


Dean, “Program for Laura Dean and Dance Company at LoGuidice Gallery.”

Ibid.


Croce, Going to the Dance, 47. Reprinted from 5 December 1977.

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Susan Manning, Ecstasy and the Demon: The Dances of Mary Wigman, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 93-94.


Ibid.
Dean quoted in Ellen Schwartz, *Tracking, Tracing, Marking, Pacing: (Movement Drawings)* (New York: Pratt Institute, 1982).


50 Ibid.


54 Dean, “Notes on Choreography,” 11.


59 Ibid.

60 Ibid.

61 Ibid.

62 Ibid.


64 Dean, Letter to the author, October 13, 2017.

65 Ibid.

66 Ibid.

67 Ibid.

68 Ibid.

69 Ibid.

70 Ibid.


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