

MILLS

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MILLS COLLEGE ART MUSEUM

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TRISHA BROWN

SO THAT THE AUDIENCE DOES NOT KNOW
WHETHER I HAVE STOPPED DANCING

January 20–March 14, 2010

Opening Reception: January 27, 6:00-8:00pm

Oakland, CA—The Mills College Art Museum is pleased to present *Trisha Brown: So That the Audience Does Not Know Whether I Have Stopped Dancing* from January 20 through March 14, 2010. A conversation with Trisha Brown and John Killacky will take place on January 27 at 5:30 pm in Danforth Lecture Hall followed by a public reception from 6:00-8:00 pm in the Art Museum; and a Mills Repertory Dance Company performance of *Planes*, 1968.

While Trisha Brown is best known for her innovative choreographies that revolutionized modern dance, she has for many years made drawings and other works beyond the stage that integrate the performing and visual arts. The exhibition presents a particular occasion to consider the lesser-known visual arts practice of one of the most acclaimed contemporary choreographers at a moment of increasing interest in the broad sweep of her work and its influence. Drawing has long featured prominently in Brown's maverick practice, shifting from a tool for schematic composition into a fully realized component of her broader investigation into the limits of her own body.

Early in her career, Brown created works in which performers walked on the walls of a gallery or down the exterior façade of a building—rather than on the floor. The exhibition takes inspiration in its structure from Brown's interest in reorienting the performer and audience, with a performance installation that places live dancers on the wall of the gallery, and a participatory audio work that invites visitors to lie on the gallery floor and contemplate the ceiling. The former work, *Planes* (1968), is a major early performance that includes a film by Jud Yalkut and soundtrack by Simone Forti; the latter, *Skymap* (1969), was Brown's one attempt to engage the ceiling as a performative surface.

The exhibition centers on a broad survey of Brown's drawings going back more than three decades. To a significant degree, the arc of Brown's work in drawing parallels her developments in dance, and footage of seminal performances is present throughout the exhibition. Turning to video to help compose dances freed Brown to make her drawings more "private and experimental," says exhibition curator Peter Eleey. "Looking at 35 years of Trisha's drawings, you watch her discover and embrace ways in which the line she draws can have bigger and more direct connections to her body and its

movements.” Whether she is working within the frame of a sheet of paper, on the wall, or on the stage, Brown delights in the play between structure and improvisation, between repetition and invention, and between choice and chance. “I get involved in the mystery of space,” she says. “I have the same adrenaline and heartbeat going as I enter the paper as I do going on stage.”

An icon of contemporary dance, Trisha Brown is regularly seen in the world’s great opera houses and festivals. She has consistently pushed the limits of choreography, creating some of the most compelling and visually powerful work of the past four decades—from her roots in the experimental Judson Dance Theater to her early site-specific dances that took place on rooftops and walls to the fluid, precise movement of her 30 years of staged pieces.

Trisha Brown’s work has been shown in group and solo exhibitions, most recently *Documenta 12*, and she has directed numerous operas. She is the first woman choreographer to receive the MacArthur Foundation Fellowship and has been awarded many other honors, including the National Medal of Arts in 2003. She was named Chevalier dans l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the government of France in 1988; was elevated to Officier in 2000; and then to the level of Commandeur in 2004. Brown’s *Set and Reset* is included in the baccalaureate curriculum for French students pursuing dance studies. At the invitation of President Bill Clinton, Brown served on the National Council on the Arts from 1994 to 1997. Brown received her DFA from Bates College in 2000 and her BA from Mills College in 1958.

Image: Trisha Brown creating a performative drawing, Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2003. Courtesy Trisha Brown Dance Company. Photo: Kelly & Massa Studio

Public Programs (please visit our website for updated details):

January 27, 2010

Danforth Lecture Hall, Art Building, 5:30 pm

Trisha Brown in conversation with John Killacky, program officer for arts and culture, The San Francisco Foundation

Art Museum, 6:00-8:00 pm

Opening Reception

Featuring a Mills Repertory Dance Company performance of Planes, 1968

February 3, 10, & 17, 2010

Art Museum, 5:30 pm

Mills College Repertory Dance Company performance of Planes, 1968

Mills College Dance Department presents:

January 30, 2010

Walter Haas Gym, 11:00-12:00 pm

Trio A “Teach In” with Yvonne Rainer

Littlefield Concert Hall, 1:00-3:00 pm

Where’s the Passion? Lecture by Yvonne Rainer

Also on view: *In Focus: Photography from the Mills College Art Museum Collection* from January 20 through March 14, 2010. Featuring work by approximately 30 artists, *In Focus* offers a snapshot of the Museum's unique photographic holdings. From vintage prints to contemporary images, the Museum has collected works that epitomize photographic processes and experimentation.

Trisha Brown: So That the Audience Does Not Know Whether I Have Stopped Dancing is organized by Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

The exhibition is curated by Peter Eleey, Visual Arts Curator, Walker Art Center.

The exhibition at Mills College has been supported by the Joan Danforth Art Museum Endowment.

The Mills College Art Museum, founded in 1925, is a dynamic center for art that focuses on the creative work of women as artists and curators. The museum strives to engage and inspire the diverse and distinctive cultures of the Bay Area by presenting innovative exhibitions by emerging and established national and international artists. Exhibitions are designed to challenge and invite reflection upon the profound complexities of contemporary culture.

Docent-led tours of the exhibition are available by appointment. Please call the Museum at 510.430.2164 to schedule a tour. Museum hours are Tuesday–Sunday 11:00 am–4:00 pm and Wednesday 11:00 am–7:30 pm. For more information, visit <http://www.mills.edu/museum/>

**Mills College Art Museum
5000 MacArthur Boulevard
Oakland, CA 94613**

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