

MERCE GUNNINGHAM:

COMMON TIME

NEWS

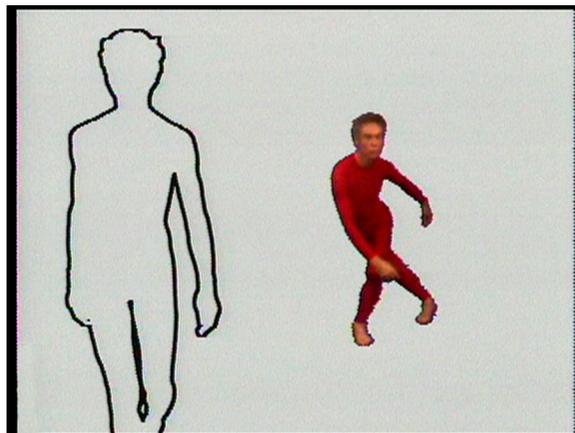
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WALKER ART CENTER, IN COLLABORATION WITH MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART CHICAGO, ANNOUNCES MERCE CUNNINGHAM: COMMON TIME

Exhibition to Showcase Depth of the Walker's Merce Cunningham Dance Company Collection along with a New Series of Commissioned Performances



Charles Atlas Collaboration with Merce Cunningham
Blue Studio: [Five Segments](#), 1976
Video, silent
16 minutes
©Charles Atlas; Courtesy of the artist and Luhring
Augustine, New York.

MINNEAPOLIS, November 18, 2015—The Walker Art Center and Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago are pleased to announce *Merce Cunningham: Common Time*, a major survey organized by the Walker that investigates Merce Cunningham's groundbreaking practice and multidisciplinary collaborations that revolutionized choreography in the 20th century and continues to influence generations of artists, composers, and choreographers. The exhibition will premiere **February 8–9, 2017 at the Walker and February 11–12, 2017 at the MCA**, with performances by international touring companies and former Merce Cunningham Dance Company dancers.

Organized by Fionn Meade, Walker Art Center Artistic Director, with Philip Bither, Director and Senior Curator of Performing Arts, in collaboration with curators from MCA, this exhibition embodies both institutions' dedication to cross-disciplinary programming and artistic practice. The core of the exhibition will be drawn from the Walker's Merce Cunningham Dance Company (MCDC) collection, acquired in 2011, featuring sets, sculptural props, and costumes by **Jasper Johns, Rei Kawakubo, Robert Morris, Bruce Nauman, Ernesto Neto, Robert Rauschenberg, Frank Stella, Andy Warhol**, and many others. The MCDC Collection will be accompanied by the presentation of significant artworks that illuminate the contemporaneous practice of these artists and the concentric impact of Merce Cunningham's collaborative engagement with pivotal art movements and transformational moments of artistic reinvention across more than six decades of creation.

Merce Cunningham: Common Time will be organized in key thematic sections that refer directly to compositional principles and frameworks active within Merce Cunningham and composer **John Cage's** collaborative approach. These sections will explore the key influences upon Cunningham's early career, from Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets



Robert Rauschenberg, *décor for Minutiae*, 1954/1976, Walker Art Center, Merce Cunningham Dance Company Collection, Gift of Jay F. Ecklund, the Barnett and Annalee Newman Foundation, Agnes Gund, Russell Cowles and Josine Peters, the Hayes Fund of HRK Foundation, Dorothy Lichtenstein, MAHADH Fund of HRK Foundation, Goodale Family Foundation, Marion Stroud Swingle, David Teiger, Kathleen Fluegel, Barbara G. Pine, and the T. B. Walker Acquisition Fund, 2011.

Russes to Northwest Coast American Indian symbolism; Cunningham's use of chance procedures in his choreographic process; the evolving role of technology in his work; his exploration of mimesis within nature; as well as the impact of his company's global travel and truly international cultural exchange, which includes the company's early 1964 tour to 30 cities in 13 countries, including India, Japan, and Sweden. In addition, the exhibition will consider Cunningham's influence on, role in, and dialogue with the pivotal historic movements of Fluxus, the Judson Dance Theater, and Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.). The cross-disciplinary exchange between MCDC and an entire generation of visual artists via Cunningham's "cooperation of interdependency" will be brought to the fore by presenting a multilayered synchronicity across artistic disciplines that opened up a new interdisciplinary landscape. *Common Time* will examine pivotal moments in the careers of Cunningham collaborators, including significant works from the likes of Robert Rauschenberg, Bruce Nauman, Robert Morris and **Nam June Paik**, featuring major works made at the time of collaboration with the MCDC.

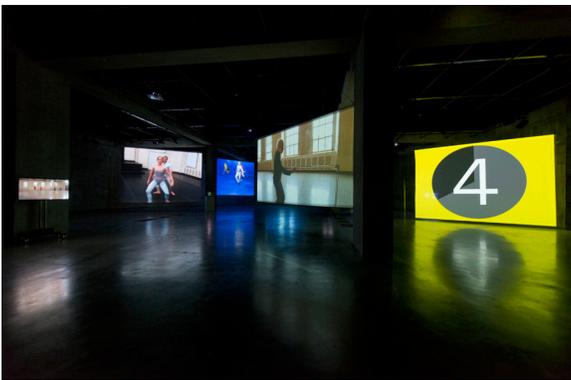
Throughout the exhibition, listening rooms will present some of the many important musical compositions commissioned by Cunningham from **Cage**, his longtime partner in art and life, and composers such as **David Behrman**, **Morton Feldman**, **Takehisa Kosugi**, **Pauline Oliveros**, and **David Tudor**. *Common Time* will also include major film and video installations by **Charles Atlas**, **Nam June Paik**, **Stan VanDerBeek**, and **Tacita Dean**, among others, that incorporate mediated performances by Cunningham and his company done for the camera. By exploring little-known facets of well-known careers within the context of Cunningham's work, *Common Time* promises to shed new light on the truly risk-taking spirit Cunningham embodied in his own practice and cultivated among his collaborators.

"Merce Cunningham is one of the most influential innovators of the 20th century," said Fionn Meade, the Walker's Artistic Director and the lead exhibition curator. "His vision of a 'common time' shared across disciplines significantly altered and continues to shape our contemporary understanding of the relationships between choreography, music, and visual art. The Walker and MCA Chicago partnership brings together two institutions known for their commitment to multidisciplinary programming. Presenting the exhibition across these two institutions and cities allows for an unprecedented examination of Cunningham and his lasting impact on interdisciplinary artistic practice. *Common Time* embraces the risk-taking yet exacting spirit Cunningham embodied in his own practice and cultivated over decades among his artistic collaborators."

Merce Cunningham: Common Time marks the Walker's continued commitment to the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, which began with an early company engagement in 1963 and the Walker's first full-scale residency with the company in 1969 (one of the earliest dance residencies of its kind nationally), which was followed by eight subsequent residencies, three commissions, several smaller exhibitions, and 17 separate engagements, including the monumental staging of Cunningham's *Ocean* in a Minnesota



Jasper Johns, *set elements for Walkaround Time*, 1968. T.B Walker Acquisition Fund, 2000. Collection Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.



Charles Atlas, *MC?*, nine-channel synchronized video work with sound; edition of 3 and 2 artist's proofs, duration: 18 minutes, Image from 'Charles Atlas and Collaborators', 2013, BMW Tate Live, The Tanks, Tate Modern. Photo: Gabrielle Fonseca Johnson for Tate Photography ©Charles Atlas & Tate.

granite quarry 2008. In 2011, the Walker acquired the Merce Cunningham Dance Company (MCCD) Collection, which includes more than 4,500 objects from more than 150 choreographies from the company's 50-year history. This collection will shape the core of the exhibition.

Through various partnerships and collaborative programs, *Merce Cunningham: Common Time* will present commissions and performances by renowned contemporary dancers, choreographers, musicians, and sound artists at both the Walker and MCA. International touring companies, including France's **Ballet de Lorraine**, will showcase Cunningham's choreography, as will short-form in-gallery *Cunningham Events* performed by a small ensemble of former Cunningham dancers, to include **Dylan Crossman**, **Silas Riener**, **Jamie Scott**, and **Melissa Toogood**, among others. Related commissions will include new works by **Rashaun Mitchell** and Riener in collaboration with Charles Atlas, as well as new works from contemporary choreographers **Beth Gill** and **Maria Hassabi**, among others.

Merce Cunningham: Common Time will further explore the interdisciplinary reach of Merce Cunningham through public programs, dialogues, and public tours, as well as an extensive catalogue featuring eleven new essays by pre-eminent art and dance historians, critics, curators, and theorists, as well as interviews with artistic collaborators and former MCCD members. The exhibition and accompanying scholarship will open new doors to understanding Cunningham's pioneering attitude, which drastically transformed the possibilities of cross-disciplinary approach and artistic production.

ABOUT THE WALKER ART CENTER AND THE MINNEAPOLIS SCULPTURE GARDEN

One of the most celebrated art museums and multidisciplinary art centers internationally, the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis is known for presenting today's most compelling artists from around the world, as well as modern masters. In addition to traveling exhibitions and its world-renowned collection, the Walker presents a broad array of contemporary music, dance, design, and theater, and the best in film and moving image arts. The 12-acre Minneapolis Sculpture Garden is one of the country's largest urban sculpture parks and first of its kind. At its center is the beloved Twin Cities landmark—the playful fountain-sculpture *Spoonbridge and Cherry* by Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen. The Garden features more than 40 works of art and the Cowles Conservatory. walkerart.org

ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART CHICAGO

The MCA Chicago is one of the nation's largest multidisciplinary museums devoted to the art of our time. With an international reputation for presenting ground-breaking exhibitions, the MCA documents contemporary visual culture

through painting, sculpture, photography, film, and video. The performing arts program, MCA Stage, features leading performers from around the globe in its 300-seat theater. Located near the historic Water Tower in the heart of downtown Chicago, the MCA features special exhibition spaces, a gift store, restaurant, and a terraced sculpture garden with a view of Lake Michigan. mcachicago.org

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The Walker Art Center is located at 1750 Hennepin Avenue—where Hennepin meets Lyndale—one block off Highways I-94 and I-394, in Minneapolis.

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