

For Immediate Release

THE PERFORMA INSTITUTE AND NYU STEINHARDT PRESENT

WHY DANCE IN THE ART WORLD?

**A LOOK AT THE RECENT EXPLOSION
OF THE ART WORLD'S INTEREST IN DANCE**

**Monday, September 17, 6:30-8 pm
Judson Memorial Church
55 Washington Square South
Free Admission**

New York, NY, September 12, 2012—The Performa Institute and NYU Steinhardt are pleased to present ***Why Dance in the Art World?***, an exciting event exploring the history and future of the art world's interest in dance. The evening will feature a context-setting introduction by historian **Jennifer Homans**, followed by a panel discussion with choreographer, writer, and visual artist **Ralph Lemon**, curator **Jenny Schlenzka**, and art critic **David Velasco**, moderated by Performa founding director and curator **RoseLee Goldberg**.

Dance and visual art have always had an exhilarating relationship. Although its best known form has been with visual artists designing sets for ballets (as did Pablo Picasso and Fernand Léger for the Ballets Russes and Robert Rauschenberg for Merce Cunningham and Trisha Brown), beginning in the sixties, museums and galleries also started bringing choreographers like Trisha Brown, Meredith Monk, and Lucinda Childs into their spaces, following breakthrough developments from visual artists and choreographers working in tandem with the Judson Dance Theater. There is also an important—and more frequently overlooked—tradition of visual artists creating new choreographic forms in combination with their experiments in visual art, as did Oskar Schlemmer at the Bauhaus, or Francis Picabia with the Ballet suédois in Paris, both in the 1920s. Valentine de Saint-Point, one of the few female members of the Italian Futurist movement, was a dancer whose inventive performances and ideas profoundly influenced the other Futurist artists.

In recent years there has been a resurgence of this trend, as evidenced by *Dance After Choreography*, a groundbreaking series in Performa 07 (2007) that specifically looked at dance in the art world (with choreographers Xavier Le Roy, Jérôme Bel, and Martin Spångberg), and culminating with the recent Whitney Biennial awarding its grand prize to a choreographer— Sarah Michelson—for the first time. The exhibitions of Tino Sehgal—who has a background in dance, but exhibits his work in a visual art context, most recently at the Guggenheim, Documenta, and the Tate Modern—have inspired a lively debate about the different value systems and expectations of these two worlds. A special performance series on dance, curated by choreographer Ralph Lemon and MoMA PS1's performance curator,

Jenny Schlenzka, (both of whom are part of *Why Dance*) will commence in the atrium of MoMA in October, and more and more visual artists are working with dance-based concepts and performers in their own work as well.

Why is there such a tidal wave of dance in the art world right now, and what are its historical precedents? Beginning with a critical introduction presented by historian **Jennifer Homans** (author of the acclaimed history of ballet, *Apollo's Angels*), followed by a discussion with **Ralph Lemon**, a choreographer who has frequently performed in visual art settings, **David Velasco**, the primary dance critic for *Artforum*, and **Jenny Schlenzka**, MoMA's first curator dedicated to performance, moderated by Performa Founding Director and Curator **RoseLee Goldberg**, *Why Dance in the Art World?* will be an unforgettable evening that explores this vital question.

PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES

Jennifer Homans is the author of *Apollo's Angels: A History of Ballet* (Random House, 2010) and the Dance Critic for *The New Republic*. She has also written for *The New York Times*, *The Guardian* (UK), and *The New York Review of Books*, among other publications. Homans holds a B.A. from Columbia University, and a Ph.D. in Modern European History from New York University. She is presently a Global Distinguished Scholar in Residence at New York University. Before becoming a writer, Homans was a professional dancer trained at the North Carolina School of the Arts and The School of American Ballet. She performed with the Chicago Lyric Opera Ballet and the Pacific Northwest Ballet and has danced a wide repertory ranging from works by Marius Petipa to Jerome Robbins and George Balanchine, among other twentieth-century choreographers.

Ralph Lemon is a dancer, choreographer, writer, and visual artist. He currently serves as the Artistic Director of Cross Performance, a company dedicated to the creation of cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary performance and presentation. Lemon's most recent work, *How Can You Stay in The House All Day And Not Go Anywhere?* (2008-2010), was a four-part project consisting of live performance, film and visual art. This critically acclaimed work was presented across the U.S. at venues including BAM (Brooklyn), the Walker Art Center (Minneapolis), and REDCAT (Los Angeles). In January 2011, one section of the work was presented at MoMA in conjunction with the exhibition *On Line: Drawing Through the Twentieth Century*. Lemon's solo visual art exhibitions include *How Can You Stay In The House All Day And Not Go Anywhere?* (Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, 2010) and *(the efflorescence of) Walter*, (Contemporary Art Center, New Orleans, 2008; The Kitchen, New York, 2007; and the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 2006). Lemon's mixed media solo exhibition *1856 Cessna Road* was on view at The Studio Museum in Harlem from March 29-May 27, 2012. Lemon is currently completing *Four Walls*, a live dance and film installation. This fall, he will curate a performance series titled *Some sweet day* at MoMA.

Jenny Schlenzka is the Associate Curator at MoMA PS1, New York, in charge of live programming. From 2008-2012 she was Assistant Curator for Performance in the Department of Media and Performance Art at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, where she was the first curator to focus on presenting, collecting, and exhibiting performance-based art, and where she co-organized the *Performance Exhibition Series* with artists like Tehching Hsieh, Simone Forti, Roman Ondák, Xavier Le Roy, and Allora & Calzadilla, among many others. Prior to working at the Museum, Schlenzka worked as a curatorial liaison between KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, and PS1 Contemporary Art Center, New York, where she helped organize exhibitions such as *Into Me / Out of Me* (2006), *Fassbinder: Berlin Alexanderplatz* (2007), and *Political/Minimal* (2008). In 2008 she organized the group show *through a glass, darkly* at RedLine, Denver, and edited the

accompanying catalog. Schlenzka has an M.A. in Cultural Studies from Humboldt University, Berlin, in 2007. She is currently writing a dissertation on the notion of time in the split-screen image at the University of Applied Arts, Vienna.

David Velasco is the editor of artforum.com and a regular contributor to *Artforum*.

ABOUT THE PERFORMA INSTITUTE

The Performa Institute is a year-round think-tank that fosters learning, critical discourse, and deeper engagement in performance by directly supporting its scholarly investigation. The Performa Institute showcases a range of in-depth programs for the presentation and exploration of ideas and the exchange of research and knowledge, with a focus on the study of history and on forging a new intellectual culture surrounding contemporary art. It asks artists, curators, writers, and scholars to function as educators across disciplines to explore innovative visions for the future of art and ideas in New York City and around the world. The Performa Institute was launched on the occasion of the Performa 11 biennial (2011), during which it presented over 50 artist-led classes and workshops.

ABOUT PERFORMA

Founded in 2004 by art historian and curator RoseLee Goldberg, Performa is the leading international organization dedicated to exploring the critical role of live visual art performance in the history of the twentieth century and to generating new directions for the twenty-first century, engaging artists and audiences through experimentation, innovation and collaboration. Performa's unique commissioning, touring, and year-round education programs, involving all disciplines, forge a new course for contemporary art and culture and culminate in the Performa biennial every other November. In 2005, Performa launched the first-ever biennial dedicated to visual art performance, Performa 05, which was then followed by Performa 07 (2007), Performa 09 (2009), and Performa 11 (2011). Performa will present its fifth biennial, Performa 13, in November 2013.

Since its inception, Performa has operated as both an urban and international project demonstrating how organizations can collaborate to present major arts programs that are both artistically innovative and internationally relevant. Performa has developed partnerships with major international institutions, commissioning, producing and touring work from the Performa program. The Performa Institute, a platform for the research and educational components of Performa, presents lectures, panel discussions and workshops on an ongoing basis that explore critical issues surrounding performance and its history across disciplines, including dance, film, music and architecture.

For more information, visit www.performa-arts.org.

Why Dance in the Art World? is organized by Performa Film and Dance Curator Lana Wilson (lane@performa-arts.org)

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