

GALERIE MARIAN GOODMAN

TACITA DEAN

Craneway Event, 2009

16 mm colour anamorphic film, optical sound, 108 mins.

11 June – 23 July 2010

3 daily screenings from, Tuesday to Saturday: 12 pm ; 2:30 pm ; 5 pm

Length of the film: 1h48mn.

In November 2008, Tacita Dean filmed the choreographer Merce Cunningham (1919-2009) and his dance company rehearsing for an event in a former Ford assembly plant in Richmond, California. Sadly it was to become Cunningham's last film collaboration. The feature-length film concentrates on Cunningham as he works with his dancers over three days and across three stages in the stunning 1930's Albert Kahn building. Glazed on three sides and situated in a working port, the factory looks out across San Francisco Bay. The continually shifting light, the passing pelican and the ship traffic all contribute to the choreography and the film, the sort of random intervention much welcomed by both Cunningham and Dean.

Merce Cunningham often constructed these "event" in non-dance spaces re-using moments or parts of his choreography, as he did in London, in Tate Modern's Turbine Hall in 2003. Borne out of a working practice developed with his long-term partner John Cage, the music for such an event would be produced in parallel to the dance, and was often heard by the dancers for the first time during the performance itself. As a consequence he dancers would time themselves by counting. When Dean was invited to work again with Cunningham, she chose instead to film the rehearsal, which, she explained, would allow her to watch Merce more closely, but also observe the construction of the dance without music. *Craneway Event* is a film about Merce working on something with his dancers over three afternoons on site, as they have done on countless occasions before, but it is also the document of a celebrated practice, and of a legendary man at work, and now a moment lost in time.

When Merce died in July 26th, I had just begun editing Craneway Event. It immediately left me with an absence, which I filled initially by watching recordings of Merce dancing in his youth or chatting in interviews. When I returned to the film, I realised that I was in the unique position of still being able to work with him and to create something new, not only about him, but also with him. Although I lost the pleasure of imagining him watching the film, I gained a different sort of Muse. Merce's joy in the process was steadfastly there and his enthusiasm seemed to have a directional force. I began to feel that Merce had set up the components that make the film – the building, the dancers, the light, the ships and the birds, because he knew they would not fail him in absentia.

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Tacita Dean was born in Canterbury, UK, en 1965. She studied at Falmouth School of Art and at Slade School of Fine Art. Recent solo exhibitions have included: Sprengel Museum, Hannover and Fondazione Nicola Strussardi, Milan (2009), Dia Beacon, New York (2008), The Hug Lane Gallery, Dublin and The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (both 2007). Dean's work are included in many collections worldwide including Tate Gallery, The British Council, MoMa, New York, Art Institute Chicago, Centre Pompidou, Paris ; Fondation Emanuel Hoffman, Bâle et Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, amongst other.

Craneway Event will be screened at the Cinémathèque Française on 8th November 2010 in Paris in the frame of the Festival d'Automne.