

WHERE FLESH MEETS BONE: DANCE IN THE MODERN ART MUSEUM

by

Erin Joelle McCurdy

Master of Arts, Ryerson University and York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2010

Bachelor of Fine Arts, Ryerson University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2006

A dissertation presented to Ryerson University and York University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Program of Communication and Culture.

Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2017

© Erin Joelle McCurdy 2017

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION
FOR ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION OF A DISSERTATION

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this dissertation. This is a true copy of the dissertation, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I authorize Ryerson University to lend this dissertation to other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

I further authorize Ryerson University to reproduce this dissertation by photocopying or by other means, in total or in part, at the request of other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

I understand that my dissertation may be made electronically available to the public.

ABSTRACT

Where Flesh Meets Bone: Dance in the Modern Art Museum

Erin Joelle McCurdy

Doctor of Philosophy 2017

Joint Graduate Program in Communication and Culture

Ryerson University and York University

Dance has recently taken up an increasing presence in major modern art museums as core curatorial programming, occupying galleries throughout exhibition hours. Although time figures prominently in emerging literature addressing this trend, spatial analyses remain fragmentary. Yet, dance is distinctive from other time-based media because of its heightened relationship with space. This raises an important question: how does dance's newfound presence 're-choreograph' the spaces of modern art museums? Extending the work of Henri Lefebvre, this dissertation adopts an expanded definition of museum space encompassing physical, social and conceptual domains. Dance, an art concerned with the shaping of space, is examined as a transformative force, productively intervening with the galleries, encounters, objects, and historical narratives comprising modern art museum space.

In this study, purity and atemporality are identified as the preeminent principles organizing modern art museum space, and dance, an 'impure' and process-based art, is theorized as a productive contaminant, catalyzing change. Using this theoretical framework and evocative descriptions of Boris Charmatz's *20 Dancers for the XX*

Century (Museum of Modern Art, New York, 18-20 October 2013), dance's unique collaboration with modern art museum space is analyzed. Socially, dance's multisensuality pollutes museumgoers' ocularcentric experiences with art. Conceptually, dance diversifies understandings of objects and the androcentric history they uphold. Physically, dance is carving out new spaces, with performance venues being incorporated into the 'bones' of high-profile institutions. Interspersed between these analytical chapters, evocative descriptions of *Spatial Confessions (On the Question of Instituting the Public)* by Bojana Cvejić and collaborators (Tate Modern, London, 21-24 May 2014) introduce observations beyond the analytical scope, opening up the liminal spaces of this document to ongoing inquiry.

This dissertation contributes a sustained analysis of dance's spatial impact on modern art museums. By investigating how dance intervenes with the limitations of the white cube, it critiques this supposedly 'blank' space, questioning its continued supremacy within these institutions. Moreover, as dance is ushered into performance venues within the museum's expanding domain, this dissertation interrogates the modern propensity for specialization and master narratives pervading the spaces of these institutions, despite decades of interventional artistic and curatorial practices.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project would not have been possible without the support of many. First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Sophie Thomas. This dissertation is a direct result of her constant encouragement, insightful feedback, and endless patience. Sophie, I am always inspired by your commitment to scholarship and attention to detail, and am so grateful for the mentorship and guidance you have provided over the years. I would also like to thank my committee members Dr. Anna Hudson and Dr. Norma Sue Fisher-Stitt of York University. Their generous and thoughtful recommendations were integral to the development of this dissertation and their enthusiasm made committee meetings a joy. Thank you for all the journeys made to Ryerson. Also, thank you to my graduate program director Dr. Paul Moore for making this defense happen and for always finding a way to scrounge up funding to support research trips and conference presentations, which directly contributed to this work.

This dissertation would not have been possible without the financial support provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Ontario Graduate Scholarship Program, and the Rogers Family Fellowship. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to Ryerson's graduate program in Communication and Culture, the Canadian Media Research Consortium, and Ryerson International. Their contributions transformed my case studies from a dream into a reality.

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Izabella Pruska-Oldenhof, who inspired me to pursue a PhD and encouraged me along the way; Dr. Laura Levin, who invited me to audit her graduate seminar on performance art; and Dr. Danielle Robinson, who, despite being on maternity leave, still took the time to offer invaluable advice during the early stages of this project. I am also grateful to Dr. Natalya Androsova and Dr. Christina Halliday of Graduate Student Support. Their dissertation retreats, coaching sessions, and general enthusiasm for writing were instrumental to the completion of this project.

I offer special thanks to Dr. Selma Odom, for her ongoing guidance and generous spirit throughout the research and writing process. It was her graduate seminar on dance and museums that truly set this project in motion. Selma, I am eternally grateful.

On a personal note, I would like to thank my family and friends for their constant encouragement along the way. I extend special thanks to Steven Bjornson, Brendan McGeagh, and, of course, Nicola Waugh. Their emotional support and steadfast friendship saw me through the most difficult challenges. Finally, I would like to thank my mom, Lisa Heikkila, and step-dad, John Heikkila. I truly could not have done this without your unwavering love and support. Words cannot express my gratitude. This is for both of you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Author's Declaration	iii
	Abstract	v
	Acknowledgements	vii
Personal History	Dance and Museums	1
Prelude	The Rehearsal	5
Introduction	Where Flesh Meets Bone	15
	1. Context	17
	2. Research Background	20
	2.1 Co-opting the Choreographic	21
	2.2 Immaterial Labour in the Experience Economy	23
	2.3 Bodies and Objects	25
	2.4 Black Boxes and White Cubes	26
	2.5 Time	27
	2.6 Occupation	28
	3. Purpose of Study	28
	4. Theoretical Perspective and Methods	31
	5. Key Terms and Scope	39
	6. Chapter Descriptions	43
	7. A Note on Organization	46
First Interlude	Outside the Box	49
Chapter One	Dance in Museums: Towards a Theoretical Framework	53
	1. An Emptying and An Opening	55
	2. The Social Production of (Museum) Space	58
	3. The Mutability of Museum Architecture	63
	4. Re-choreographing Modern Art Museum Space	70
	5. The Empty Gallery Revisited	77
Second Interlude	The Visitors are Recorded and Reordered	81
Chapter Two	Contaminating the White Cube	85
	1. The White Cube	86
	1.1 Vision Disincarnate	93
	1.2 'Limbolike' Design	99
	1.3 <i>The History of Modern Art</i>	106
	2. Dance as a Contaminant	112
	2.1 Attacking the Centre	113
	2.2 The 'Dancing Museum'	118
	2.3 Theory in Action	125

Third Interlude	<i>20 Dancers for the XX Century: My Initial Encounter</i>	129
Chapter Three	Overcoming Distance: Multisensuality in the Museum	135
	1. Multisensual Museums	137
	1.1 Do Not Touch	138
	1.2 Spaces for Sensing	140
	1.3 Sensing Dance	146
	2. Listening in the Museum	149
	2.1 Fugitive Sounds	150
	2.2 Vocalization and Breath	155
	3. Sensing Movement	163
	3.1 Inhabiting Our Bodies	164
	3.2 Inhabiting the Art	167
	3.3 The Art of Movement	170
	4. Overcoming Distance	176
Fourth Interlude	The Visitor Exhibited	179
Chapter Four	Setting the Museum in Motion	183
	1. Setting Objects in Motion	185
	1.1 The ‘Infinite’ Presence of Modern Art	185
	1.2 Remaining ‘Differently’	189
	1.3 The ‘Slow Event’	193
	1.4 Performing Objects	197
	2. Setting the Canon in Motion	201
	2.1 Problematizing the Canon	202
	3. Gendering Museum Space	210
	3.1 Maculinization and Male-Dominance in Art	212
	3.2 Feminization and Female-Dominance in Dance	216
	3.3 Re-gendering Art History	219
Fifth Interlude	The Performance Room	225
Conclusion	When Flesh Becomes Bone	229
	1. Summary of Contribution	230
	2. Avenues for Future Research	237
	3. Building New Spaces	241
	3.1 The Whitney	242
	3.2 Tate Modern	243
	3.3 MoMA	245
	3.4 When Flesh Becomes Bone	247
	4. Concluding Remarks	250
	Complete Works Cited	253

PERSONAL HISTORY

DANCE AND MUSEUMS

I am a museophile. I have no knowledge of where this love stems from, only an awareness that it is there. As a child I loved to draw and paint, and adults would encourage this interest through museum trips. I remember looking in reverence at the paintings hung on the gallery walls hoping that, one day, my work would be among them. As an adult, I have become a trying travel companion – the one who plans itineraries around museum hours. The one who spends entire days indoors, venturing from room to room, poring over collections, soaking up every line of text emblazoned on the wall until feet are achy, eyes are tired, and blood sugars have reached record lows.

I am also a dancer. After some pleading on my part, I began dance classes at the age of four. I was enrolled at the Carousel Dance Centre, a children's recreational dance school affiliated with the now-defunct University of Waterloo dance programme, and I began studying ballet, modern dance, and creative movement in the on-campus studios. In the fifth grade, I was finally old enough to join the Carousel Dance Company, a contemporary dance company for children and teens run by the studio. Memorably, during my first season, we danced in the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto. We carpooled to the big city and, after a brief rehearsal, we performed our repertoire amidst the museum's collections. I will always remember witnessing the senior members of the company navigate around Claes Oldenburg's *Floor Burger* (1962), a pillowy sculptural hamburger capped with a single green pickle slice. My passion for dance continued into adulthood and led me to pursue a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Performance Dance at Ryerson

University. During this time, I became fascinated with the possibilities of showing dance outside of the theatre, and began exploring alternative venues, as well as dance-based video art. As a graduate student, I returned to the white cube, this time in collaboration with my classmate, a new media artist, who projected video on me as I danced in a small, privately owned gallery in Toronto.

As sometimes is the case with dissertations, this project developed through what feels like a series of chance encounters. After completing my coursework, I had started preliminary work on a topic I could not sink my teeth into. By happenstance, in the midst of an existential crisis, I found myself alone in New York City on the third day of the 2012 Whitney Biennial. During my visit to the museum, I stumbled upon dancers publicly rehearsing Sarah Michelson's *Devotion Study #1—The American Dancer* (2012). I did not know it at the time, but the biennial would become an often-cited example representing the current surge of dance in museum programming, with Michelson being one of several influential artists at the forefront of this trend.

After returning to Toronto, this chance encounter was followed by an opportune meeting with Dr. Selma Odom, professor emerita at York University. Selma was preparing an intensive spring course for students in the graduate dance program at York University, which she invited me to audit. The course, *Issues in Dance Heritage Studies*, concentrated on the relationship between dance and museums. While Selma had assembled a comprehensive list of readings related to the topic, I was struck by the general absence of literature in existence explicitly addressing the phenomenon of dance in museums. These circumstances, paired with my interests, gave rise to my dissertation.

Over the course of working on this project, a body of writing on dance and museums has begun to emerge. This dissertation is intended to be part of this growing conversation.

Performing dance in the art museum brings together two of my lifelong interests. Working on this project has brought about many adventures, including another gallery performance, this time as a cast member in a work by Bojana Cvejić in Tate Modern's Performance Room series. As such, the position I occupy as I write this dissertation is as a dancer and spectator, a participant and observer. Despite my own personal history with dance in museums and art galleries, as a researcher, I do not have a professional stake in this topic. Rather, what follows is driven by curiosity and a desire to uncover the conflict, collaboration, and change that arises when dance enters modern art museum space.

PRELUDE
THE REHEARSAL

I enter the Whitney Museum of American Art's Breuer Building, an imposing top-heavy pyramid clad in grey granite that occupies the corner of New York's Madison Avenue and 75th Street. It is the first Saturday in March (the third day of the 2012 Whitney Biennial) and I am coiling deliberately through each floor of galleries. As I systematically ascend through the museum, I am, for the most part, perpetually in motion. I walk pensively, eyeing the works as they hold their ground against white walls or claim patches of slate flooring. Occasionally, I am seized by an artwork; however, these pauses are brief, and I shake away the stillness, reverting to my ambulatory state. There are only a couple of hours to traverse all 30,000 square feet of gallery space before closing time, and my self-imposed mission is hindered by the throng of Saturday visitors. The threat of missing something gnaws away at my concentration.

A blackened room induces a prolonged bout of stillness, my first crystallized encounter. Upon entering, I sit quietly on the floor, pressing my spine against the wall. Werner Herzog's *Hearsay of the Soul* envelops three of the four walls of the gallery. The work is a five-channel video installation comprised of Dutch landscape etchings by Hercules Segers paired with an avant-garde performance by Dutch cellist and composer Ernst Reijseger. The etchings are pretty, but in the darkness, I disappear into the footage of Reijseger, watching him deftly choke mesmerizing sounds from his cello. Eyes shut, mouth agape, he grazes his bow just above the bridge producing quivering and rough

reverberations—something I have never heard before. The intensity of his introversion and the density of his sounds belie the flatness of his image.

On the third floor, I pass through a chaotic gallery where artist Dawn Kasper has installed the bulk of her personal belongings. Titled *This Could Be Something if I Let It*, the cluttered space is strewn with art paraphernalia, books, papers, clothing, and appliances, which triggers pangs of anxiety in my chest. The disorder is imposing and is amplified against the gallery's unyielding expanses of white and grey. There is a tower of white cardboard banker's boxes, a nest of black cables, a freestanding metal shelf piled with horizontal stacks of books, a floor lamp, a bed draped in a white sheet, records, various papers, an amplifier, rolls of tape, a pile of laundry, and a mangled tennis racket, among other things. The work is a durational performance and part of Kasper's larger *Nomadic Studio Practice Experiment*. Her plan is to occupy the gallery throughout the biennial making art, but also napping, reading, conducting impromptu artist's visits with patrons, and generally going about her daily business.

In this white box, Kasper and her possessions both shape and are shaped by their context. The gallery aestheticizes her belongings, her body, and her behaviour, excising them from the mundaneness of daily life and holding them up for contemplation. As a human installation, Kasper muddles presentation and representation as she performs herself in the studio within a museum. Yet, the friction between daily life and the hermetic white box runs both ways. As Kasper inhabits her room, transplanted piecemeal into the Whitney, the gallery is transmuted in my mind from a neutral space to a particular place. I am reminded that the supposedly transcendental modernist gallery is, in fact, also a place, a room, potentially habitable by a person and her ordinary things.

Ultimately, in the presence of Kasper and her possessions I am overwhelmed by a sense of trespass. Her physicality does not afford the distance of Reijseger's two-dimensional image and intrudes upon the solitude of my wandering. My presence feels out of place as I take up territory among her things. I respond by moving constantly around her gallery, awkwardly aware of my own body, feeling as though my looking is being looked at.

In the stairwell a uniformed guard informs me that the fourth floor is reserved for the biennial's ticketed performances and dance events; however, beforehand, rehearsals are open to the public. I eagerly peer into the gallery to discover a void complementing Kasper's plenum. The fourth floor is a rectilinear box pierced at one end with a cock-eyed window jutting out over Madison Avenue. Cantilevered over the previous storey, it is the most expansive gallery space in the museum. Yet, despite its scale, the room is devoid of art objects, and this emptiness intensifies the immenseness of the space. I step into the room and the slate tiles disappear beneath a cloak of white dance flooring imprinted with a light grey design. To my left, along the length of the gallery, white risers hold orderly rows of metal chairs (also coated in white). Their arrangement beneath a single band of ceiling-mounted theatrical lighting clarifies any confusion over whether the chairs are for admiring or sitting. The whiteness of the flooring, walls, and seating merges to form a single sweeping expanse pressing against the grey geometric ceiling. In this whiteout, the gallery feels simultaneously empty and full.

For the first eleven days of the biennial, choreographer Sarah Michelson is occupying the fourth floor with her work *Devotion Study #1 – The American Dancer*. As I move into the space, I take stock of the bodies in the room. The gallery is sparsely populated with a handful of visitors seated or wandering in and out of the space. A

female dancer is splayed supine on the floor near the window, clad in layers of rehearsal clothes. She quietly converses with a dark haired woman sitting on a folding chair positioned at the perimeter of the performance space. The remainder of the dance floor is unoccupied, except for a man rehearsing in the centre of the gallery. I move purposefully to the folding chairs to have a better look at his movements, stepping lightly to avoid tracking filth across the immaculate white flooring.

The dancer is running backwards, carving deliberate, circular pathways. His weight is shifted onto the balls of his feet, his heels halfway raised. The posture suggests that he is about to explode with forward momentum, and yet he continues to arc confidently backwards. He maps precise circles with his footsteps, orbiting a patch of the dance flooring. Although he is constantly in motion there is seemingly no progression to his movements. Each retrograde circle merely unfolds neatly into the next. His head faces forward and his eyes are dense with the look of someone turned entirely inward. His upper body is held, arrested, while his broad strides incessantly propel him backwards. Watching him dance, I become absorbed in his movements and my restlessness is overcome with stillness. Each movement I make feels like an interruption detracting from my capacity to witness the rehearsal. I am no longer a trespasser as I was among Kasper and her things. Instead I dissolve, my discrete body blurring into his repetitive movement.

I do not have a ticket for the performance, which has already sold out. This rehearsal, these fragments are all that I will see of Michelson's work. I speculate about the choreography, staying awhile, even as the dancer rests, hands on his hips, gaze cast downward, chest rising and falling from shortness of breath. As much as I am transfixed by the dance, I am also fascinated by its context, which is laid bare. The fourth floor, part

active rehearsal space and part empty void, is thick with expectancy—a white box endowed with the transformative power of a theatre before the curtain rises. In this emptiness, the aesthetic power of the white cube is most perceptible.

My focus drifts beneath the dancer's quiet feet to contemplate the impression on the floor. What initially appeared as a complex pattern of lines arranged at right angles, is now discernable as an enlarged architectural blueprint rendered in shades of grey. At the window end of the gallery, tidy printing reproduced on the floor identifies the blueprint as a revised floor plan completed by architects 'Marcel Breuer and Associates' on 'July 22, 1964.' In a cheeky act of appropriation, 'Michelson' is printed in block letters where the original drafter would have signed the work. Replicated on the floor of the museum, the varying line weights and arrangements of rectilinear shapes are instantly aestheticized. Transformed by scale as well as context, the plan takes on multiple meanings as a set of building instructions, a backdrop, and a study in form. As the ground for Michelson's choreography, the architectural plan lays in stark opposition to the dancer's arching pathway. His circular movement calls the straight lines, right angles, and rigid walls into question. His body is a fleshy intrusion. I watch his idiosyncrasies clamour against the omniscient view of the blueprint, acutely aware of his immediate presence against a floor plan that provides a view from elsewhere. Combined, the inconstancy of the body and the immutability of the architecture are each brought into sharp focus.

Circling over Breuer's blueprints, he infuses the white cube with something human. What is being deconstructed by this retrograde dance? What is being undone or redone, questioned or transformed by the presence of dance in the gallery? These

questions ricochet, unanswered, in the space between the dancer and the limits of the white cube.

- Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, March 3, 2012

The 2012 Whitney Biennial was unique in its equal treatment of object-based and time-based work. The event extended beyond video and performance art, which have an established presence in the art museum, to incorporate the lesser represented art forms of music, theatre, and dance. *New York Times* reviewer Roberta Smith remarked that the biennial's large-scale, democratic representation of the arts was without precedent in New York City. She also applauded the curator's decision to devote the fourth floor of the Whitney Museum's Breuer building exclusively to performances and events, thereby "remov[ing] from contention a space that in past biennials has tended to encourage big, show-stopping, sometimes bombastic, implicitly macho art objects" (para. 6).

Transforming the expansive fourth floor of the Whitney Museum's Breuer building into a temporary home for the performing arts was a curatorial gesture that carried symbolic weight. With different events and performance-based works rotating through the 6,000 square foot gallery over the course of the biennial, dance was given the opportunity to occupy some of the most desirable real estate in the building. If square footage signifies importance, the fourth floor sent a clear message about the changing status of the performing arts within the museum.

Devotion Study #1 – The American Dancer by Sarah Michelson occupied the fourth floor for the first eight days of the biennial. Derived from a choreographic detail from her 2011 work *Devotion*, Michelson created a 90-minute study that intensively

explores a looping, backwards-travelling phrase. The effect, according to biennial co-curator Jay Sanders, is “a zooming in...an intellectual unpacking of [Michelson’s] own history” (qtd. in Feidelson, para. 4). The work is composed of five dancers who enter the performance space successively to form an increasingly elaborate web of circles then exit one-by-one. For the most part, the minimalist piece proceeds with little variation, which makes the repositioning of an arm, the introduction of a tilted torso, the occasional choreographic departure, and a lengthy standstill in the middle of the work, noteworthy events.

In addition to the quintet of circling dancers, other figures are involved in the study. A dancer donning a rubber horse mask transplanted from Michelson’s 2009 work *Dover Beach* mysteriously enters and exits the space, while Michelson oversees the dancers, reincarnated as a large-scale, wall-mounted portrait executed in green neon light. Michelson provides part of the soundscape through a repetitive and stilted voiceover conversation with playwright Richard Maxwell paired with the monotonous pulse of a metronome. Her imprint is also made through the blown-up architectural plan recreated on the floor and modified through the addition of Michelson’s name in big block letters.¹ The result is a *Gesamtkunstwerk* born of Michelson’s careful control over scenic, sonic, and choreographic components.

These interdisciplinary elements are typical of the New York-based, British-born Michelson, who inhabits the territory between rigidly defined artistic boundaries, infusing her choreography with elements of installation and performance art. Arguably, her

¹ I never did obtain a ticket to the performance. This description is pieced together using press criticism and audience accounts of the performance. See Feidelson; Smith; Seibert, “Five Figures”; and Alpine.

success in the museum world is partly attributable to her capacity to form connections between dance and artistic genres that belong more readily to the visual arts domain. In fact, Sanders implied this association, remarking that Michelson's eccentric use of space is "almost like a visual artist," whereby "the room itself is her material" (Sanders qtd. in Feidelson, para. 6). The statement seems to rationalize the suitability of Michelson's work for the art museum by praising her capacity to use space as a visual artist, not a choreographer.

Despite the interdisciplinarity of her work, Michelson, made headlines when it was announced that she would be the recipient of the Bucksbaum Award, the largest monetary prize bestowed in the visual art world. The decision was an unexpected one, with Michelson being the first choreographer to ever receive the honour.² Established in 2000, the prize is awarded every two years to an artist participating in the Whitney Biennial. Selected by a jury, the laureate is not only given a \$100,000 grant, but is also invited to present a solo show at the Whitney Museum. The award was "conceived to encourage an artist who has previously produced a significant body of work, whose project for the biennial is itself outstanding, and whose future artistic contribution promises to be lasting," thus recognizing "an artist's full spectrum of production: past, present, and future" ("Bucksbaum Award," para. 1). The significance of *Devotion Study #1* therefore extends beyond its isolated critical success—the Bucksbaum Award acknowledges Michelson's entire body of work as a choreographer, and supports her

² An article published by *Out* magazine, titled "Sarah Michelson and the Infiltration of Dance" captures the controversy surrounding this win, reporting that Michelson "pulled off a *major upset* when she took home the Bucksbaum Award at the Whitney Biennial in 2012" (Schaefer, para. 1, emphasis mine).

continued presence in the space of the museum.³ The win also represents the institutional recognition of dance within the visual art world by assigning a dance artist one of its highest honours.

Devotion Study #1 is not an anomaly; rather, it is indicative of the current increased presence of dance within museums. From its eight-day occupation of the fourth floor gallery to its receipt of critical recognition within the visual arts domain, *Devotion Study #1* is but one high-profile example representing the shifting position of dance within the evolving space of the twenty-first century modern art museum.

³ Since winning the Bucksbaum Award, Michelson premiered *Devotion Study #3* at the Museum of Modern Art in 2013 and returned to the Whitney Museum with the premiere of *Devotion Study #4* in 2014.

INTRODUCTION

WHERE FLESH MEETS BONE

When modern art museums emerged in the first half of the twentieth century, they were a somewhat paradoxical concept. While museums had previously been defined by their historical orientation, this new breed of institution was devoted to recent innovations in the field of art. This novel mandate was echoed in new approaches to organizing exhibition spaces that broke from the imposing tradition of classical galleries. Ranging from the domestic to the carnivalesque, early modern art museums were heterogeneous in their organization of space.⁴ However, the object- and ocularcentric white cube gallery and monolithic narrative of art adopted by the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York rapidly became the prevailing approach to organizing modern art museum space, not only in America, but also throughout the western world. Despite its experimental origins, the modern art museum with its trademark white cube galleries had ossified into its own imposing tradition.⁵

Since the formation of modern art museums, dance has been underrepresented and relegated to the margins of these object-oriented spaces. In recent years, however, dance can increasingly be found “asserting itself right in the midst of...opening hours” (Moreno 77), taking up territory in galleries with unprecedented “scale, prevalence and

⁴ See Chapter Three for a discussion of alternative approaches to organizing modern art museum space.

⁵ This is not to say that modern art museum space has not evolved over the course of the last century. However, the spatial conventions established by MoMA nearly a century ago have remained remarkably resilient as the default from which alternative practices diverge. Furthermore, the white cube gallery aesthetic MoMA popularized prior to the Second World War remains relatively unchanged.

consistency” (Franko and Lepecki 4). The current frequency and scope of dance curation in major modern art museums suggests that dance is increasingly being welcomed as a regular presence in these institutions. But, what is the impact of dance’s migration into this purified, atemporal and ocularcentric space? What changes are engendered when flesh meets bone?

The current trend of dance in high-profile modern art museums initially seems like an unlikely pairing of content and context. In contrast to the calcified gallery, dance is characterized by the ‘slipperiness’ of the body in motion. While it bears similarities to other time-based arts, dance is distinctive in its heightened relationship to space.⁶ Dancers *take up space*. They cover territory. They continually travel *through space*, and arrange and rearrange their bodies *in space*. It is an art that produces and dialogues with its context. Indeed, through dance, Arabella Stanger observes, “space is plotted, shaped, and felt into existence” (Stanger 72). This raises some important questions. As an art concerned with the shaping of space, what impact does dance have across the spaces of major modern art museums? More specifically, how does dance reshape the physical, social, and conceptual domains of these institutions, transforming the galleries, encounters, objects, and historical narratives that form modern art museum space?

Motivated by these questions, this dissertation analyzes the spatial impact the heightened presence of dance is having on high-profile modern art museums. In so doing, it not only provides an account of the current influx in dance programming, it also investigates the productive disruptions and transformations dance initiates in these deeply

⁶ Notably, at MoMA, dance is curated by the Department of Media and Performance Art, which arguably foregrounds its status as a time-based medium.

entrenched spaces. Dance, it is thus argued is not simply a trend in museum content; it is a productive intervention, temporarily re-configuring the spaces of these institutions.

1. Context

The relationship between dance and museums is not unprecedented. In fact, it pre-dates the formation of modern art institutions. Already, at the turn of the twentieth century, modern dance pioneers were holding performances in museums and drawing inspiration from collections (Franko and Lepecki 3).⁷ This period of “dance reform,” involved a rethinking of performance venues, and so the museum was adopted alongside residences, parks, and concert halls as an anti-illusionistic alternative to the theatre (Brandstetter 64). As temples of high art, associated with the educated upper middle class, the museum-as-venue also seemed to legitimize the new ‘free dance,’ suggesting it deserved to be “on equal footing with other art forms” (64).

Not limited to free dance, the first half of the twentieth century saw the intermittent presence of dance in museums; however, it was not until the 1960s and 1970s that an initial period of heightened contact occurred in terms of live performances. Fertile crossovers between dance and the visual arts characterized this era, and dance performances began cropping up in major modern art museums in different regions of the world. In 1964, Merce Cunningham debuted a work at Vienna’s Museum of the 20th Century, simply titled *Museum Event No. 1*. This was followed up with his *Events No. 2* and 3 at the Moderna Musset in Stockholm (R. Copeland 172), where Robert Morris also

⁷ Isadora Duncan, for instance, drew inspiration from the British Museum’s collections of Greek and Roman antiquities and also performed the legend of Orpheus in London’s New Gallery before an audience of influential Londoners (Brandstetter 65; “Isadora Duncan”).

showed works in the 1960s (Franko and Lepecki 4). Stateside, dancers began participating in special museum events. During the late 1960s and 1970s, the Whitney Museum began featuring live dance as part of its *Composer's Showcase*,⁸ which included works by Trisha Brown, Lucinda Childs, Alex Hay, Deborah Hay, Meredith Monk, Steve Paxton, and Yvonne Rainer (Bishop, "The Perils and Possibilities" 69). At MoMA, dance was associated with music events as well. Its Summergarden series, established in 1971, was primarily a music programme, but included notable dance contributions by Simone Forti, Elaine Summers, Laura Forman, and the Multi Gravitational Dance Group (64).⁹

Dance and museums are thus not a novel pairing; however, prior to the twenty-first century, dance's presence in these institutions was inconsistent (Bishop, "The Perils and Possibilities" 63). When dance was performed in the museum context, it was peripheral to regular programming and often inserted into a music series or scheduled

⁸ This series was resurrected in 2006 by Whitney Live, paralleling the twenty-first century resurgence of performing arts in the museum.

⁹ Beyond museum performances, it should be noted that the twentieth century is rife with crossovers between dance and the visual arts. For instance, the Ballets Russes engaged in several high profile costume and setting collaborations, including designs by Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso. And, the company's 1927 ballet *Pas D'Acier*, choreographed by Leonide Massine featured an elaborate set conceived by Armenian painter and stage designer Georgii Yakulov, which brought constructivist design to the ballet stage (Sayers 163). Conversely, the Futurists used the theatre as an interdisciplinary art venue. To conclude one of their soirées, they confronted audiences with a stage filled with painting and sculpture (Bishop, *Artificial Hells* 42-43).

The 1960s and 1970s were marked by heightened interaction between dance and the visual arts. Merce Cunningham's choreography was performed amid Andy Warhol's famous mylar clouds and before backdrops by Robert Rauschenberg. Active over a fifty-year period, Rauschenberg was a prolific dance collaborator designing sets, costumes, lighting and sound elements for such influential choreographers as Paul Taylor, Yvonne Rainer, and Trisha Brown. Judson Dance Theatre, often credited as the birthplace of postmodern dance, was a loose collaborative network that included visual artists, such as Robert Morris, who performed in, and choreographed, dance works. As these brief examples indicate, the boundaries between dance and the visual arts throughout the twentieth century were quite porous.

after hours. By contrast, the current phenomenon of dance in museums is unparalleled in terms of its frequency and scale. No longer “sidelined” as secondary events, performances are now being consciously presented as core programming within a curatorial framework, filling both gallery spaces and exhibition hours (Moreno 77).

While Sarah Michelson’s winning contribution to the Whitney Biennial is often cited as emblematic of the current trend of dance in the museum, it was but one of several landmark events in 2012. That same year, MoMA presented *Some sweet day*, a three-week dance program in its central atrium, featuring six internationally renowned choreographers. Overseas, *Space, Body, Language*, an Yvonne Rainer retrospective, took place at the Kunsthhaus of Bregenz and Museum Ludwig in Cologne (Moreno 86, fn. 5), and *Moments. A History of Performance in Ten Acts*, a live exhibition featuring dance, was held at ZKM Center for Art and Media in Karlsruhe (Lista 7). In Paris, *Danser sa vie*, an ambitious exhibition featuring art objects, moving images and live performances, completed its five-month run at the Musée National d’Art Moderne at the Centre Pompidou. And, in London, Tate Modern unveiled its new performance space ‘The Tanks’ with fifteen-weeks of programming, including choreographic works by Boris Charmatz and Anne Teresa de Keersmaecker.

Over the last five years, this mutual interest between dance and museums has remained strong. In 2015 Tate Modern invited Boris Charmatz to stage a two-day takeover, which flooded the museum with approximately 90 dancers and choreographers. Meanwhile, MoMA, the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, and the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam co-commissioned *PLASTIC*, a slow-moving choreographic work by Maria Hassabi, which unfolded in their transitional spaces during exhibition hours. In 2016,

Ryan McNamara completed a five-month residency at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, which culminated in the Works and Process commission *Battleground*, a one-hour dance-off in the basement of the museum. And, as I write, *Merce Cunningham: Common Time*, an exhibition consisting of dance and music performances, as well as stage décor, costumes and art is simultaneously underway at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis¹⁰ and the Museum of Contemporary Arts in Chicago. This list is by no means exhaustive; it merely speaks to the heightened and sustained presence of dance in major art institutions.

2. Research Background

Since 2010, a new body of literature on the topic of dance in museums and galleries has been growing alongside these changes in practice. Formerly, this area of research was virtually non-existent, aside from monographs detailing the careers of individual artists. Sara Wookey's *Who Cares? Dance in the Gallery & Museum* examines the current presence of dance in these spaces through conversations with dancers, curators, and directors. Her project is aligned with the use of interviews in the field of curation as a strategy of self-definition and a means of documenting the largely unwritten history of twentieth century exhibitions.¹¹ In addition to these oral histories, catalogue essays, arts publications, and peer-reviewed research across the fields of dance, performance, and

¹⁰ It should be recognized that, since its first dance event in 1940, the Walker Art Center has consistently offered dance programming. This can be partly attributed to the fact that it operates according to an arts centre model.

¹¹ In particular, curator Hans Ulrich Obrist has been a strong advocate of using interview as a means "to protest against forgetting" and combat the "staggering amnesia about exhibition history" (Obrist with Smith, "Curating as Medium" 129). See Hans Ulrich Obrist's *A Brief History of Curating* as well as Carolee Thea's *Foci: Interviews with Ten International Curators* and *On Curating: Interviews with Ten International Curators*.

curation have begun to provide multifaceted analyses of the current trend. Across this literature the following key themes can be identified: these texts observe, and at times problematize, the co-opting of the ‘choreographic’ by the visual arts; they situate dance within the experience economy and expanded twenty-first century museum practices; and, they investigate the temporal friction arising when dance enters these institutions, affecting both object status and prevailing modes of spectatorship.

2.1 Co-opting the Choreographic

In 2010 Susan Leigh Foster declared that “[t]he term ‘choreography’ has gone viral” (“Choreographing Your Move” 32). From architecture to camerawork, DNA repair to web-based interfaces, Foster observed an exploding interest in the concept of choreography in the twenty-first century. Expanded from its earlier, stricter application to dance creation and notation, choreography is now deployed loosely as a term denoting the structuring, ordering, and regulation of movement (32). Interestingly, the viral status of the choreographic trails only slightly behind the explosion of the curatorial. In *Curationism*, David Balzer notes that, since the mid-1990s, curation has been appropriated from the museal and arts contexts as a dominant way of cultivating, organizing, and thinking about the world around us (8-9). Amid the current proliferation of dance in the museum, we are experiencing a merging of these two popular concepts. The title dance curator is increasingly cropping up in the place of artistic directorships

and dance programmers,¹² while the choreographic is being deployed as a strategy to think about curation and art making.

According to André Lepecki, the imperative for the visual artist to take up the choreographic derives from dance's inherent ephemerality and dematerialization, which offers a route to potentially "resist, or bypass, politically compromised notions of the art object as commodity, fetish, or surplus-value" ("Zones" 156). Tapping into this desire, the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity in Alberta recently held a cross-disciplinary residency titled *Choreography Across Disciplines* that focused on the application of choreographic methods and concepts for artists operating outside the field of dance ("Choreography Across Disciplines"). In the curatorial field the choreographic has also been adopted as model for exhibition making. Most notably, through *Choreographed Exhibition* (Kunsthalle St Gallen 2007-2008; La Ferme du Buisson 2008) and the subsequent 2013 publication *Choreographing Exhibitions*, Mathieu Copeland "envisages exhibition-making through the prism of choreography" (19).

This co-optation of the choreographic is not without its problems. In an interview with Copeland, Jennifer Lacey expressed her initial wariness of the concept of a 'choreographed exhibition' because it pointed to "a kind of romanticism about the form of choreography and dance" experienced by an outsider to live performance production, dance, and the rehearsal process (123). Moreover, Lacey points out, a view of the exhibition as choreography suggests that dancers are "the neutral material of the thing" as opposed to active agents in the art (Lacey 123). Erin Brannigan has similarly critiqued

¹² For instance, in 2015, Dancemakers in Toronto debuted its new operational model in which the artistic directorship was replaced by an executive director and appointed dance-curators.

Copeland for overlooking the labour of dancers and choreographers involved in the activity of choreography (6). For Brannigan, the expansion and overuse of the ‘choreographic’ fails to acknowledge the methods and strategies used by and originating within the discipline of dance (12-13). Thus, it has been argued that the proliferation of the choreographic within the visual arts domain carries the risk of diluting this concept, evacuating its history, and displacing its practitioners.

2.2 Immaterial Labour in the Experience Economy

The current popularity of dance and the choreographic in modern art museums can be viewed as part of a shift towards more participatory models of public engagement. From a less optimistic viewpoint, its popularity can be attributed to our broader “experiential service idiom,” which commodifies immaterial experience (Jackson 55). Indeed, because “[l]ive dance seems to exist in a different time zone to that of history,” Claire Bishop argues “it is usually deployed by the museum as presentist spectacle—a way to enliven its mausoleal atmosphere and play into the demands of an experience economy” (“The Perils and Possibilities” 72). Inés Moreno similarly claims that the current trend of dance in the museum reflects the restructuring of late capitalist production and labour, which is mirrored by the organization of the museum (Moreno 78).

Despite the fact Tino Sehgal does not self-identify as a choreographer, his ‘constructed situations’ figure prominently in discussions of dance and immaterial labour in the museum. According to Catherine Wood, Sehgal’s “work makes a deliberate address to the shaping of subjectivity, itself now a tradable commodity or brand, operating in the realm of the ‘experience economy’” (114). Similarly, through an analysis

of Sehgal's *This Situation*, Pape et al. argue that the 'object' this cyclical, machine-like performance work repeatedly contributes to the museum is "emblematic of the conditions of immaterial labor and dematerialization at stake in contemporary societies" (95).

The immaterial labour of dance within the predominantly product-oriented context of the museum brings its own unique set of concerns and considerations. Shannon Jackson details a series of potential "occupational hazards" arising from the current "context-swap" (56), which includes the asymmetrical distribution of power between the performing and visual arts. On one hand, as part of the tourist economy, the museum reaches a broader audience and has a stronger economic base than the theatre. On the other, it is ill-equipped to handle simple practical requirements that are given in many theatres, such as stage crews, backstage facilities (60), sprung floors, and lighting and sound systems.

The asymmetry of power between dance and the visual arts can also lead to the exploitation of dancers as labourers. Mark Franko and André Lepecki caution that the versatility of dancers makes them "the most usable and expendable bodies available for work whenever 'performance' needs to be activated" (2). Performances or happenings in the visual arts are often realized through a cast of dancers. Many of Bruce Nauman's performance instructions, beginning as early as 1968, open with the direction to "hire a dancer" (qtd. in Franko and Lepecki 2), Tino Sehgal's 'constructed situations' regularly make use of dancers, and Marina Abramović's *The Artist is Present* at MoMA (2010) was partially realized through dancers (2). However, the important role of dancers in the production of performance art is not always adequately recognized. Moreover, budgetary limits and long exhibition hours potentially leave artists working lengthy shifts at less

than ideal pay (Florence Peake in interview with Wookey 19). While the museum raises a new set of labour concerns for choreographers and dance artists, it also raises new financial issues for the museum. In contrast to a temporary exhibition with ticketed entry, museum performances are not effective revenue sources (Bishop, “The Perils and Possibilities” 73). The costs of dance performances increase over time, as performers and technicians must be paid for each passing day. By contrast, a longer exhibition run usually means a greater return on investment.

2.3 Bodies and Objects

Alongside discussions of immaterial labour, the processual nature of dance is often examined in tension with the object-orientation of the museum. A few key contributions move beyond the dichotomous treatment of these two types of programming. Notably, Wood suggests that, beyond destabilizing the object orientation of museal practices, the choreographic might encourage a reconsideration of the relationship between bodies and things (113). For Wood, the increasing presence of the choreographic in the museum urges us to reconsider our relationship with objects as “co-existent” and “mutually influencing” (118). This would allow us to reconceptualize the museum as “a living entity, as a breathing space for social encounters” (122). Such a view does not displace the museum object, but rather treats performance as a way to incite new relationships with it.

By contrast, Pape et al. argue that the performance itself can offer a “radically different object” within the museum (95). They argue that the repetitive, machine-like structure of Sehgal’s *This Situation* produces an “interstitial materiality” as it “constantly

does and undoes itself” (95). Through replication, Sehgal’s work disrupts the performance-object binary, offering “shifting encounters” in its stead (95). Franz Anton Cramer comes to a similar conclusion through his interpretation of Boris Charmatz’s *Musée de la Danse* project in Rennes, France. For Cramer, Charmatz’s conceptualization of a ‘dancing museum’ replaces the object-performance dichotomy with an understanding of “exhibition-as-performance” (25). Such a hybridization reveals that “the physical and the mental, the abstract and the concrete, the present and the absent, are modes of being that are *not mutually exclusive*” (29, emphasis in original).

Susanne Foellmer foregrounds the role of the spectator in the object-performance relationship in her analysis of Trisha Brown’s *Floor of the Forest* (1970). The choreographic work, which was included in *Move: Choreographing You* at the Hayward Gallery in 2010, takes place on a grid outfitted with articles of suspended clothing through which the performers move. When the performance was not taking place, the grid remained installed in the gallery, as a “leftover object” (104). As the grid cycles between immobile object and performance prop, the museumgoer undergoes a parallel shift from visitor to audience member (110). Moreover, the grid becomes reactivated in the visitor’s mind as they imagine the vanished performance. According to Foellmer, these mental re-enactments transform the visitor into a ‘spect/actor’ (110).

2.4 Black Boxes and White Cubes

Along with Foellmer, several scholars analyze the migration of dance into the museum in terms of shifting modes of spectatorship. Beyond a “purely formal” transition (Franko and Lepecki 3), dance’s relocation from the ‘black box’ to ‘white cube’ is theorized as a

temporal shift affecting modes of spectatorship and conventions of reception (Franko and Lepecki 3; Moreno 78; Bishop, “The Perils and Possibilities” 72). The black box is an immersive environment where performers and audience members convene at a specified time for a specified duration. By contrast, the open-ended temporality of the white cube and general lack of seating produces self-guided visitors (Foellmer 103; Franko and Lepecki 3; Moreno 78). These transient, distracted, “dispersed and fragmented” audience members, pose a unique challenge to the performer, who must solicit and retain their attention (Bishop, “The Perils and Possibilities” 72).

2.5 Time

Figuring prominently in most of these discussions of the object-performance relationship, and the shifting spectatorship that accompanies it, is the element of time. On more than one occasion, time-based media, such as film and video, are treated as a “methodological precedent” for the current trend of dance in the museum (Moreno 83). For Marcella Lista, the contesting temporalities and redefined spectatorship that arise from performance echo the effects of other time-based media found in these institutions (7). For Lista the “labyrinths, cross-rhythms, and breaks in time” dance performance brings to the museum (21) counter the temporality of the “slanted” and “linear” history of art promoted by these institutions (10). Moreno asserts the relationship between dance and time-based media more explicitly, comparing durational performances that fill exhibition hours with installed films (83). Unfolding over lengthy periods of time, these performance works test the “stamina” of spectatorship in the museum (82). Ultimately, the duration of the

encounter is determined by the visitor's level of interest. Museumgoers may choose to pass by entirely or return to the work repeatedly over the course of the museum visit (84).

2.6 Occupation

While dance has a transformative effect on the temporality of the museum and its objects, as well as on our encounters with art, it does so by claiming space in these institutions. Writing in the wake of the Occupy Wall Street movement, Alessandra Nicifero sees dance's occupation of museum space as a starting point for "interactive dialogue" with these institutions, potentially leading to greater equity in "negotiations and aesthetic decisions" (41). In her biographical approach to museum architecture, Suzanne MacLeod has similarly suggested the transformative potential of taking up territory within a museum (36). For MacLeod, occupation "implies the political nature of buildings and raises questions about people's 'right' to inhabit" them (81). The presence of dance in a space predominantly associated with the visual arts thus raises questions of gatekeeping and also encourages a rethinking of the museum's function.

3. Purpose of Study

As this survey indicates, considerations of time, spectatorship, and dematerialization loom large in much of the existing literature on dance in the museum. These themes are a logical extension of previous discussions surrounding the integration of performance, participation, and time-based media into these institutions. Indeed, dance can be situated within a broader experiential 'turn' originating in the 1990s, which led to a museal interest in live performance (Moreno 78). During this era, the impact of Bourriaud's

Relational Aesthetics made “discursive and dialogic projects more amenable to museums and galleries” (Bishop, *Artificial Hells* 2). This paved the way for “post-studio” participatory art works that use people and ‘the social’ as their material (*Artificial Hells* 1). Meanwhile, the ‘new institutionalism’ of this era helped destabilize object-centred practices through institutional critique (Moreno 78). Although dance shares common ground with these practices, I argue its heightened spatiality also contributes something distinct to the museum.

Although the field of performance art is also produced with live bodies, its “anti-institutional, anti-market” drives (Wood 114) result in an intensified relationship to time and preoccupation with disappearance, which differs from the reiterative temporality of dance.¹³ And, while film, video, and new media are time-based like dance, they are generally two-dimensional and shown in black boxes, which gives them a weakened relationship to space. Aligned with the new institutionalism outlined above, dance, when integrated into the museum, throws this context into sharp relief; however, as an art distinctly concerned with the shaping of space, dance can potentially re-choreograph these institutions in addition to critiquing their limits.

Diverging from previous analyses focused on immateriality and temporality, the concept of ‘occupation’ suggested by Nicifero and MacLeod provides a productive entry

¹³ I do not intend to imply that anti-institutional and anti-market approaches are absent from the history of dance. This is certainly not the case. It is also important to note that dance and performance art are not discrete categories. These two artistic fields are often mutually influencing, and the boundaries between them are sometimes blurry. Nevertheless, as performance art began to establish its independent identity as a creative field in the latter half of the twentieth century, issues of presence, disappearance and liveness became central topics of debate, assigning temporal considerations primacy over spatial ones. This is a complex historical topic, however, which extends beyond the scope of what can be addressed here.

point to consider the transformative impact of dance from a different vantage point—that of space. Indeed, underrepresented in the literature is an in-depth analysis of how dance dialogues with modern art museum space across its physical, social, and conceptual domains. By exploring the phenomenon of dance in the museum as a re-choreographing¹⁴ of space, this dissertation seeks to address how the heightened presence of this art contaminates the ossified white cube, inciting change.

This dissertation contributes to the important project of documenting and analyzing the phenomenon of live dance curation in major modern museums. It also fills an important gap by devoting sustained scholarly attention to the ways in which dance transforms modern art museum space within contemporary culture. By analyzing dance's transformative impact on these spaces, this project not only provides a new perspective for understanding the museum as an evolving concept in the early twenty-first century, it also accounts for a broader shift away from object-based epistemologies towards the privileging of experience, process and affect within the current field of cultural production.

It should be noted that although the present trend of dance curation extends to smaller-scale museums and other contexts conventionally associated with the visual arts, this dissertation is focused on the activities and spatial practices of major modern art museums. Smaller institutions and freelance curators can more readily adopt

¹⁴ I am aware that I have just critiqued the metaphorical appropriation of the choreographic only to adopt it in my own analysis. However, while I deploy the action of 're-choreographing' metaphorically to describe the production of new spatial configurations within the modern art museum, I also draw upon the literal performance of the term and its related activities. Contrary to the critiques outlined above, my use of the choreographic speaks directly to the actions and agency of dance practitioners using museum space as their material.

experimental practices because they are unencumbered by weighty legacies and organizational bureaucracies. As Bruce Ferguson notes, “[t]he activities of artists and critics and curators outside institutions are always closer to new methodologies, new forms and, increasingly, new interdisciplinary approaches” (130). By contrast, “[c]uratorial imperatives within museums...are often linked inextricably to market-driven forces, the social pressures of a small body of vested-interest gate keepers, disciplinary diversions and institutional stereotypes of public roles” (Ferguson 130). The increased presence of dance in major modern art museums is thus all the more notable because these institutions are resistant to change. Moreover, if examined in terms of power and influence, the practices of these museums hold disproportionate sway over the activities of smaller institutions. The high profile of these institutions paired with their broader audience base makes them influential in setting curatorial trends, establishing art histories, and calibrating visitor expectations. In focusing on major modern art museums, I am interested in how dance dialogues with the deeply entrenched spaces of these institutions and negotiates with their sedimented histories.

4. Theoretical Perspective and Methods

In order to investigate how dance collaborates with modern art museum space across physical, social, and conceptual domains, this dissertation proceeds from a Lefebvrian conception of space. Lefebvre’s unitary theory of space is used to analyze the modern art museum holistically, in order to illuminate how the presence of dance affects not only the physical design of these institutions, but also the experiences and understandings cultivated within their walls. Through this framework, dance—an art concerned with the

shaping of space—is shown to be a potent addition to the gallery. In accordance with this theoretical perspective, it is argued that dance transforms the medium of the museum and the manner in which it produces epistemologies, guides perceptions and communicates with users in the twenty-first century. This theoretical framework is developed in detail in Chapter One.

Primary research for this dissertation was collected through two case studies conducted at MoMA and Tate Modern. The first case study, *20 Dancers for the XX Century*, was a dance-based takeover of MoMA (18-20 October 2013) organized in collaboration with Charmatz and his Musée de la danse team from Rennes, France.¹⁵ Conceptualized as a “museum in the museum,”¹⁶ the event featured twenty dancers, who interacted with visitors, recounted oral histories, answered questions, and informally shared landmark and lesser-known choreographic works ‘collected’ in their bodies. Over a three-day period, the dancers roamed throughout the museum, claiming territory in The Agnus Gund Garden Lobby, The Donald B. and Catherine C. Marron Atrium, The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden, a selection of galleries housing the contemporary and modern art collections, and a variety of transitional spaces.

The diverse cast included men and women artists from different nationalities with an age-range spanning generations.¹⁷ Most of the works were concentrated around the

¹⁵ For an in-depth discussion of the Musée de la danse and Charmatz’s ‘dancing museum’ project, see Chapter Two.

¹⁶ Charmatz used this phrase to describe his project during a panel titled “An Evening with Boris Charmatz, Simone Forti, and Ralph Lemon” held in conjunction with the programme on Monday October 21, 2013 at 7pm in The Roy and Niuta Titus Theatre 2 at MoMA in New York.

¹⁷ Alongside Charmatz who also participated in the event, the cast consisted of the following artists: Magali Caillet-Gajan, Ashley Chen, Jim Fletcher, Brennan Gerard, Trajal Harrell, Burr Johnson, Lénio Kaklea, Catherine Legrand, Morgan Lugo, Richard

development of western modern and contemporary dance over the twentieth century; however, some of the works overlapped with the history of ballet, as well as non-western and popular dance. For, example, Christopher Roman shared works by William Forsythe, Boris Charmatz offered an interpretation of Vaslav Nijinsky's *L'après-midi d'un faune*, and Kenyan-born Mani Mungai shared a solo based on a traditional Kenyan dance as well as a high-octane work choreographed by Jacob Ngiri to Michael Jackson's *Bad*.

The second case study, *Spatial Confessions (On the Question of Instituting the Public)*, held at Tate Modern (21-24 May 2014), was a "programme in moving and speaking parts" ("BMW Tate Live: Spatial Confessions"). The multifaceted event, conceived by performance theorist and maker Bojana Cvejić, included a series of choreographic "experiments" conducted in the museum's expansive Turbine Hall, which redirected the movements of visitor-participants through a series of probing questions ("BMW Tate Live: Spatial Confessions"). The experiments were captured from a bird's eye view using stop motion photography with the intention of creating a time-lapse document of the work that could be later circulated.

To develop and conduct the choreographic experiment, Cvejić assembled a team, which included filmmaker Lennart Laberenz and performer-choreographers Christine De Smedt, Ana Vujanović, Neto Machado, and Nikolina Pristaš, among others. The questions composed by Cvejić and her collaborators acted as "barometers" probing the participants and taking their "temperature"¹⁸ on different issues, choices, lifestyles, and

Move, Mani A. Mungai, Banu Ogan, Leiomy Prodigy, Christopher Roman, Shelley Senter, Valda Setterfield, Gus Solomons, John Sorensen-Jolink, Meg Stuart, and Adam Weinert.

¹⁸ Cvejić used this language to describe *Spatial Confessions* during rehearsals with the participants in the Performance Room version outlined below.

circumstances with questions ranging from the seemingly mundane (“How many hours a week do you spend grooming yourself?”) to the political (“Arrange yourself lightest to darkest according to skin colour” or “Do you think there will be a revolution?”).¹⁹ A version of the experiment was also streamed online using a volunteer cast as part of Tate Modern’s Internet-based Performance Room Series, which transposed Cvejić’s experiment into a performance in digital space. Finally, the ‘speaking part’—a conference that took place in the museum’s Starr Cinema—incorporated talks, debates, and screenings questioning, “how the public is performed in art institutions today?” (“BMW Tate Live: Spatial Confessions”).

The fieldwork for these case studies was multifaceted. Experiencing these events in person was vital, as observing them within the context of museum space was central to my investigation. In both instances, my relationship to the case studies extended beyond witness or observer, as opportunities arose for me to participate in both programs. *20 Dancers for the XX Century* offered several chances to dance alongside the artists. Shelley Senter taught me a short excerpt of *Locus* (1975) by Trisha Brown. I joined a group of volunteers performing François Malkovsky’s *La Ronde* (1928) under the direction of Lénio Kaklea. Adam Weinert led me through movement exercises devised by Ted Shawn. And, in an unexpected turn, after meeting Richard Move, he left me ‘installed’ in a contemporary gallery reading aloud from the book *Martha Graham: The Early Years* as he scurried off for a quick break. The dialogical structure of Charmatz’s gesture also facilitated informal conversations with the artists involved, which provided

¹⁹ My restatements of the *Spatial Confessions* prompts are based, as accurately as possible, on their oral delivery at Tate Modern.

insights into both the dance works they were sharing as well as the inner-workings of Charmatz's gesture at MoMA.

Spatial Confessions, too, provided opportunities to cross over the boundary from witness to active participant. I voluntarily partook in the choreographic experiments occurring in Turbine Hall, as did my supervisor, Dr. Sophie Thomas and her family members. By observing and participating in the experiments I also witnessed the unsolicited reactions of other museumgoers. During the pauses between sessions I had impromptu conversations with Cvejić's collaborators, which revealed information about the production of the work. Moreover, by responding to an open call for participants on Tate Modern's website, I became part of the cast performing the internet-based version of *Spatial Confessions*. This involved attending rehearsals after museum hours and participating in a live feed of the work streamed online and archived on YouTube. This experience gave me a greater understanding of the rationale behind the work and Tate Modern's Performance Room Series in general.

Straddling the territory between witness and participant provided me with multiple perspectives on these case studies. It should be noted that my participation in and engagement with these case studies arose organically and was not the result of 'insider' access (meaning the same opportunities were available to other members of the public).²⁰ Through these experiences, I was able to investigate these two works from various vantage points, gaining a fuller understanding of how *20 Dancers for the XX*

²⁰ It should be noted that the public call to participate in Tate Modern's Performance Room Series required no special abilities and was open to individuals between eighteen and ninety-nine years of age. The only requirement was that the living space of each applicant be "smaller or equal to the size of the Performance Room (9.5 m x 5.5 m)," which "alluded to the high population density of London" (Epps). I do not know, however, what criteria were used to select the final forty-seven performers.

Century and *Spatial Confessions* dialogued, collaborated and interacted with their respective museum spaces. During my museum visits, photographs, video, and sound recordings were used to collect information. I also took copious notes, recording observations and producing written passages documenting these works. Afterwards, time was set aside to rigorously develop these initial accounts into ‘thick’ evocative passages. These descriptive texts capturing observations in minute detail were central to my investigation, and, chronologically speaking, served as the starting point for this dissertation.

As a research approach, my use of rich detailed writing borrows from ‘thick description’ and ‘evocative voice,’ two strategies originating in the field of anthropology. ‘Thick description’ is typically attributed to Clifford Geertz, who, adopting the term from metaphysical philosopher Gilbert Ryle, was the first to examine its utility as a research approach (Ponterotto 538). In essence, thick description involves the production of “deep, dense, detailed accounts” of cultural acts (Denzin 98). Instead of recording ‘thin’ factual observations, thick description is ‘high-context’; it is concerned with what is “insinuated” in the “background” (Geertz 9). Because this dissertation is concerned with the dialogue between dance and its spatial context, thick description is an effective starting point for interpreting the interplay between the individual performance and its broader cultural significances.

My descriptive writing also draws on anthropologist Dorinne Kondo’s “rhetorical/theoretical strategy” of evocative voice (8). Following Kondo, my descriptions are deliberately “overwritten” (8). Extensive detail is used to conjure an evocative view of dance in the modern art museum, while simultaneously

“problematiz[ing] the notion of ‘description’ as the transparent inscription of reality on the blank page” (Kondo 8). This writerly approach aims to draw attention to the creative production involved in writing and meaning making, subverting the authority of singular narrative. By focusing on the particular, I bypass any claim to uncover universal truths about dance in the modern art museum. As a research strategy, evocative voice weaves subjective experience throughout this dissertation, emphasizing my own positionality as researcher and author. While my project focuses on transformations to modern art museum space as a result of dance, my incorporation of the particular and the personal serves to emphasize the fact that contemporary dance, modern art museums, and users (often referred to as ‘visitors’ or ‘museumgoers’) are not stable, homogeneous categories. The particular serves to describe individual moments of rupture and tension that arise from the dance’s occupation of major modern art museums, while emphasizing the fact that each curatorial framework, environment, dance work, and even individual performance and audience grouping is unique.

Evocative description has precedents in the world of dance. Jennifer Fisher and Anthony Shay’s anthology of masculinity in dance intersperses evocative descriptions between chapters written using theoretical or historical approaches (6). The effect is a spiralling inward and outward, where experience both illustrates and gives rise to theory. Subjective descriptions are not dismissed as merely anecdotal; rather, they are afforded equal footing as sources of knowledge production. Excerpts from the thick evocative descriptions produced through my case studies are included in this dissertation, featured within and in between my chapters as the origin of and complement to my theoretical discussions.

Thick, evocative description is an advantageous strategy for writing about dance, as the translation of moving bodies into the fixity of a written text raises similar concerns to those faced by anthropologists inscribing cultures. Susan Leigh Foster has argued that the text is not a transparent “verbal explanation,” but “a process of interpretation, translation, and rewriting of bodily texts” (Foster, “Choreographing History” 9). As a result, Foster advocates a type of writing that moves, infusing the text with “the texture and timing of bodies in motion” (9). Although Foster is addressing the writing of history as a dialogue between past and present bodies (9-10), her commentary resonates with the unique challenge that always arises through attempts to ‘capture’ the moving body in the written word. Geertz has similarly described thick writing as an interpretive process, that “far from perfectly” inscribes cultural events “into an inspectable form” for future study (Geertz 19).

While thick evocative descriptions helped initiate my analysis, additional layers of qualitative research supported my case studies. Original archival research was conducted into the performance programming history of these institutions. It was my intention to situate these choreographic programs within the broader performance history of their respective institutions; however, this proved too large an undertaking for the scope of this dissertation.²¹ Nonetheless, this archival research informed my investigation of dance in museums and provided a historical context for my study. My case studies were further supported using the discourse surrounding these performance events.

²¹ Incidentally, Claire Bishop has begun to establish these programming histories in her article “The Perils and Possibilities of Dance in the Museum: Tate, MoMA and Whitney.” While a comprehensive survey is still needed, Bishop’s work, completed with the assistance of curators at all three named institutions, lays an important foundation for understanding current programming trends and offers a starting point for the development of more in-depth histories.

Publicly available promotional materials, press reviews, curatorial statements and criticism were analyzed. Panels and discussions featuring the artists and curators also provided further insight into this phenomenon.

Along with this multifaceted case study approach, literature was reviewed throughout the research process and is integrated throughout this dissertation. I drew primarily from scholarship in the fields of dance, performance, curatorial, and museum studies; however, I also consulted art criticism, architectural theory, philosophical texts, and studies from the emerging field of neuroaesthetics, among others, making this a truly interdisciplinary study.

5. Key Terms and Scope

Before proceeding, I would like to clarify what I mean by ‘dance’ and ‘modern art museum space,’ and also establish the scope of this study. The term ‘modern art museum’ refers to a subcategory of museum that collects, exhibits, and curates art usually ranging from the early modern period onwards. This can be misleading, as these institutions tend to focus predominantly on developments in European and North American art as opposed to modern art in a broader sense. Moreover, while these institutions emerged in the first half of the twentieth century with the aim of exhibiting recent developments in the visual arts, their scope has expanded as this field has continued to evolve. Thus, despite being referred to as ‘modern art museums’, the activities of these institutions bridge past and present, frequently covering modern, postmodern and contemporary art, spanning the nineteenth century to present day.

My discussion of ‘modern art museum space’ focuses on the dominant spatial organization of these institutions, which is not restricted to physical structures. Rather, using the Lefebvrian framework introduced above, my investigation covers the interrelated physical, social and conceptual spaces of modern art museums. ‘Modern art museum space’ thus refers to the gallery spaces, sensory spaces, exhibition spaces, and historical spaces that all contribute to the overall spatial organization of these institutions. In focusing on the prevailing construction of space across major modern art institutions, I do not intend to suggest that this category of museum is a homogeneous one. However, in order to address the transformative impact of dance within this type of institution, this dissertation focuses on consistencies in spatial organization that allow us to recognize the modern art museum as a subcategory of museum. In focusing on commonalities in spatial organization I have thus not been able to delve into the idiosyncrasies of individual institutions.

It should be noted that, for some, the words museum and gallery are used interchangeably. In the context of the United Kingdom, the term museum has been generally applied to institutions organized around the deposition of artifacts. The term gallery is usually reserved for a space exhibiting, and often collecting, art. The United States often uses this language interchangeably in the context of the art museum (Haines-Cooke 19). For the purposes of this dissertation, I use the term ‘modern art museums’ to denote institutions collecting and exhibiting modern and contemporary art, and refer to the individual exhibition rooms within these institutions as galleries.

The term ‘dance’ can refer to a diverse range of activities that contribute to cultural landscapes in a variety of ways. Dance plays a vital role in many cultures as a

form of artistic expression, social activity, ritual, or tradition. Because dance encapsulates a multitude of practices, it has been incorporated into different types of museal institutions for varying purposes. From an ethnographic perspective, for instance, traditional dance has been used as a strategy for representing different cultures in the museum. Social dance, by contrast, has become part of the recent phenomenon of ‘museum nights’, bolstering attendance by temporarily transforming atriums or lobbies into discothèques. For the purposes of this dissertation, however, ‘dance’ refers to western performance dance, developed for predominantly aesthetic purposes.

Produced with artistic aims, ‘performance dance’ uses bodily movement to achieve aesthetic, expressive, or conceptual ends, and is intended for an audience. While the terms ‘theatrical dance’ or ‘concert dance’ are also used to distinguish this type of dance from social or ritual practices, this terminology implies a theatre setting. This dissertation therefore uses the term ‘performance dance.’ In my chapters, I focus primarily on modern and contemporary forms of performance dance. ‘Modern dance’ refers to the practices of the “pioneer dance reformers” of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, who initiated a rupture from the ballet tradition (Burt 2). ‘Contemporary dance’ refers to work produced in the 1950s and 1960s that follows in this legacy of experimentation (Burt 2),²² as well as current forms of performance dance, making it a more ambiguous term. *20 Dancers for the XX Century*, which provides the

²² This is not to suggest that ballet did not also undergo extensive transformations over the course of the last century. Moreover, the field of twenty-first century performance dance is characterized by convergence and interdisciplinarity, making it difficult to clearly delineate between ballet, modern and contemporary dance. It is not uncommon for contemporary choreographers to create works for ballet companies and for rigorously trained ballet dancers to cross over into contemporary dance.

case study for my analytical chapters, mainly consisted of modern and contemporary dance.

Between the chapters, evocative descriptions of my second case study address the theme of dance in the museum more loosely. As a choreographic ‘experiment’, *Spatial Confessions* used the museumgoers moving through space as its material. It should be noted that the bulk of the team Cvejić assembled to create the experiment self-identify as choreographers and are associated with the field of performance dance through their training and practice. Thus, while this work is best described as an application of the ‘choreographic’ within the museum, the background of its producers and its curation as part of the BMW Tate Live series, connect this experiment to the field of performance dance.

I selected the case studies for this dissertation because they represent two distinctive ways in which dance is being incorporated into modern art museums. They also represent the practices of two top-tier modern art institutions, situated in two major museum hubs on two different continents. London is often cited as the birthplace of the public museum, while MoMA in New York is usually credited as the original modern art museum. Among the most visited modern art museums in the world, MoMA has had unparalleled influence over the spatial organization of other modern art institutions. Along with this legacy comes a rigidity of practices, making its current increase in dance programming all the more notable. Tate Modern, by contrast, is a twenty-first century institution. Despite opening in 2000, it has already become the most visited modern art museum in the world. Arguably, the high profile and scale of these ‘top tier’ institutions, not only speaks to their influence in the museum landscape, but also to the extent of the

current phenomenon of dance in museums, making them compelling case studies for my investigation.

6. Chapter Descriptions

As noted above, this dissertation proceeds from a Lefebvrian conception of space, meaning that space is understood to be socially produced, extending across physical, social and conceptual territory. ‘Museum space’ is thus not the product of museum buildings; rather, it is the ever-evolving outcome of physical designs, social practices and conceptual understandings. Combining the work of Henri Lefebvre, Suzanne Macleod, and Arabella Stanger, Chapter One, “Dance in Museums: Towards a Theoretical Framework,” establishes an interdisciplinary theoretical basis for examining the socio-spatial relationship between dance and the modern art museum. The chapter provides a foundation from which to advance my broader argument that the current migration of dance into major modern art museums is a collaboration between ‘content’ and ‘context,’ resulting in the significant ‘re-choreographing’ of the physical, social, and conceptual spaces of these institutions.

Chapter Two, “Contaminating the White Cube” establishes the manifold ways in which the prevailing sensory organization, design, and historical narrative of modern art museums contribute to the creation of an atemporal and purified space. Juxtaposed with Charmatz’s ‘dancing museum’ project, this chapter demonstrates that the tension between the modern art museum and dance is far more complex than a superficial object-performance distinction. Using Charmatz’s theory and practice, this chapter establishes how the mobility and embodiment of dance contributes a significant and multilayered

intervention to modern art museum space. Through a close reading of Charmatz's "Manifesto for a Dancing Museum" the chapter illuminates how the seemingly unified and fixed space of the modern art museum is 'contaminated' by the presence of dance.

Chapters Three and Four combine theoretical frameworks and evocative descriptions of *20 Dancers for the XX Century* to analyze specific ways in which dance contaminates modern art museum space and instigates transformation. Chapter Three, "Overcoming Distance: Multisensuality in the Museum," focuses on how the multimodality of dance pollutes the ocularcentric space of the modern art museum. Through an analysis of dance's kinesthetic and acoustical elements supported by Hans Jonas' phenomenology of the senses, this chapter investigates how dance impacts the museumgoer's spaces of experience. By encouraging the visitor to become an embodied witness as opposed to a disembodied eye, dance is shown to offer alternatives to the detached, distancing, and totalizing effect of eyesight alone.

Chapter Four, "Setting the Museum in Motion," establishes how purity and atemporality permeate the conceptual space of the museum, arresting not only the objects on display but also the history they are used to uphold. Through a close reading of critical texts by Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried, the prevailing formalist account of modern art is shown to correspond with and reinforce the museum's prevailing masculinized organization of space, whilst reinforcing the recurrent anti-theatricalism in western thought. Drawing upon theoretical frameworks by Rebecca Schneider and Catherine Wood, I argue that dance incites a dynamic understanding of objects and their histories. More specifically, as a feminized and female-dominated art, dance is shown to productively collaborate with the purified and (relatively) fixed androcentric history of

modern art, disrupting the patriarchal structure of the canon and the gendered narrative it upholds.

The concluding chapter, “When Flesh Becomes Bone,” focuses on how the popularity of dance not only actively transforms the existing spaces of the art museum; it also carves out new ones. My conclusion addresses recent architectural transformations to MoMA, Tate Modern and the Whitney, all of which include new facilities specially designed to present dance and the other performing arts. These architectural transformations indicate an ossification of current curatorial practices and suggest major changes to how the modern art museum is conceptualized in the twenty-first century. Arguably, the integration of theatre venues and flexible performance settings into the ‘bones’ of these institutions indicates that the increased presence of dance (and performance) in the modern art museum is anticipated to be a lasting trend.

While dance activates every particle of the white cube gallery, and provides interesting opportunities to dialogue with the art exhibited, the separation of dance into its ‘proper home’ may extinguish some of the innovation occurring in current practices. Amid these major structural transformations we must ask what will happen to dance (the living breathing body) in the gallery once this experimental programming has hardened into bricks and mortar. Will there be room for movement, experimentation, and change? Or, will dance be exiled from the white cube and relegated into a theatre, swallowed by the expanding domain of the museum?

7. A Note on Organization

Between the chapters, my second case study is interspersed, establishing territory in the liminal spaces of this dissertation. *Spatial Confessions* unfolded in a variety of museum spaces; however it never entered Tate Modern's white cube galleries.²³ Inspired by this fact, I position *Spatial Confessions* in the interstitial spaces of this dissertation in order to introduce alternative perspectives on how dance, choreography, and movement can illuminate or open up the existing spaces of the museum. Incorporated as a series of interludes, *Spatial Confessions* is used to introduce lateral observations, discussions, and questions about the relationship between dance and museums, which fall outside the scope of my analysis. Instead of advancing an argument that identifies how dance transforms the modern art museum, as I do in my dissertation chapters, my intention with this second case study is to open up the boundaries between the chapters to questioning and observation, aligning my writing with *Spatial Confessions*' subtitle 'on the *question* of instituting the public' (emphasis mine).

In "The Question Concerning Technology," Martin Heidegger emphasizes from the outset that his essay is, in fact, a "*questioning*" (4, emphasis in original), which serves to open up pathways of thinking. Unlike a technological approach, organized around a problem-solution model, he writes, "[q]uestioning builds a way" that facilitates a "free relationship" to the object of investigation (4). To question is to open oneself to possible answers, without claiming one. I see an affinity between dance and the act of questioning. Dance is a movement towards (or away), not an arrival. As an

²³ It should be noted that the space used to record the Performance Room resembles a white cube. However, the empty room is distinct from the museum's galleries—it is only accessible to museum staff—and for *Spatial Confessions*, the room was painted bright green.

art, it is ongoing. The rituals of *rehearsal*, the *repetition* of training, and the activities of *restaging* are deeply entrenched in the discipline of dance. And, while all art making is processual,²⁴ this absence of an arrival—of an easily identifiable, singular and stable product—is particularly pronounced in dance. Furthermore, many recent examples of dance programming in museums can be framed as interventions, interruptions, or interrogations, opening up the possibilities of museum space.

My aim to investigate dance in the museum as (*and through*) a process of questioning and observing, resonates with Charmatz's larger *Musée de la danse* project. In an interview with *Dance Research Journal*, Charmatz stresses that implicit in the invention of a new kind of museum is the opportunity for "thinking freely" about "working rules, whether economic, aesthetic, or symbolic" (50). He continues,

The project of *Musée de la danse* has opened this area of questioning without seeking to close it down too quickly, and in many ways we have so far been a "dance museum" with a question mark. We could certainly do with more institutions in the world, including the most ancient and august institutions, considering themselves interrogatively: we maybe need a *Centre Georges Pompidou with a question mark* in Paris. (Charmatz, "Interview" 50)

How can I open up my text to draw attention to its status as an exploration and investigation and not a concrete thing—printed, bound, complete? By drawing attention

²⁴ It is my contention that all art making is essentially a collaborative, process-oriented endeavor. So-called single author works are never created in a vacuum; they are rooted in communities, histories, and dialogic structures and are realized as 'Art' through networks of dealers, patrons, institutions, curators, and exhibitions. Artworks continually evolve through new configurations of presentation or display, and their meanings shift over time and through encounters with different audience members. Thus, product-oriented works are never the complete stable objects they are often purported to be.

to (and expanding) the interstitial spaces of this dissertation I aim to activate alternative pathways of thinking, just as movement can be viewed as shift off-balance, a straying off-axis, a temporary instability for the sake of exploring new territory. Movements readily open up into multiple meanings and affects. Questions open up conversations by initiating and animating lines of discussion. By mapping aspects of Cvejić's experiment through evocative vignettes, my aim is to chart a multitude of directions opened up by moving bodies, balancing my own evaluable 'scholarly contribution' with the ongoing and open-ended activities of questioning and observing.

Although *20 Dancers for the XX Century* is rife with rich entry points to discuss the relationship between dance and museums (and Charmatz's work in particular is a recurrent touchstone in discussions of dance and the museum), I felt it imperative to incorporate a second case study. My inclusion of *Spatial Confessions* thus is intended to pay heed to the heterogeneous ways in which dance, choreography, and movement are entering the plural spaces of the museum. With the recent resurgence of dance in major modern art museums and the nascent discussion surrounding it, it is a fertile time for opening, not closing, discussions.

FIRST INTERLUDE

OUTSIDE THE BOX

I enter Tate Modern's Turbine Hall on a Wednesday morning in May 2014, and am overcome by the scale of the building. It is a cavernous box painted in shades of taupe, with an ocean of concrete underfoot. The entrance opens onto a ramp, skirted by a row of steps, that draws the visitor down below street level, swallowed into the belly of the museum. Whichever route you take, the building opens up, larger with each step as the floor strays further and further away from the ceiling. It has a disorienting effect, as though the ceiling is floating away from the foundation of this massive structure. Its monumentality is not simply a product of its scale. This shell of a massive power station, surrounded by the sprawl of London, is a fossil, a vestige, a monument of industry. Repurposed as Tate Modern, the building is now the most-visited modern art museum in the world. I try to imagine the giant turbines whirring, the electricity of the hall.

Since its foundation in 2000, Tate Modern has developed an emphasis on participation, which has led to the institution's embrace of dance and other modes of performance, as well as experience and event focused programming.²⁵ Across time, the building's previous life as a power station forms an interesting connection with its current activities. While the power station produced the seemingly immaterial product of electricity, the dance, performance and participatory events featured in the museum feel equally ephemeral.

²⁵ Claire Bishop has noted that the high status of participation within Tate Modern programming is aligned with UK cultural funding opportunities ("The Perils and Possibilities" 68).

With no admission fees connected to Turbine Hall or the museum's permanent collection, visitors colonize the repurposed space for their own use. In the hall, currently devoid of traditional art objects, people talk at a frequency and volume much higher than one witnesses amidst the 'serious' contemplation of the upper galleries. Overall, the acoustics are terrible. The spectacularized scale of Turbine Hall, paired with its obdurate floor, unyielding walls and high ceiling form a rigid box that entraps each sound and sends it ricocheting. Voices ping off each surface. The uneven pitter-patter of a toddler dashing down the ramp punctuates the air. Teenagers laugh loudly. The air rumbles, buzzes, quakes, with all the noises that cannot escape.

A group of schoolchildren sprawl on the floor, chattering happily as they colour on sheets of paper under the watchful eyes of their chaperones. A group of women in their 30s and 40s huddle on the ramp, listening attentively to a man in a suit speak. He unfurls the museum map with gusto and addresses them as a tour group. A young boy with a mop of golden curls and a yellow rain coat giggles as he dashes through the open space, his father trailing behind. Visitors lean on the railing of the bridge, and sit on the benches overlooking the hall. They are absorbing Turbine Hall. The space, in its magnitude, is contemplated like a work of art.

As the ramp nears the centre of the hall, it levels off, forming a plateau. To the right, a sweeping black counter is manned by museum staff ready to sell tickets to the special exhibitions. Bright displays advertise current events and prices and black rope barricades form a path that zigs and zags, funneling the visitor-customer towards the counter. Upstairs, the exhibition *Henri Matisse: The Cut Outs* is happening. Not long after the museum opens, the barricades fill with queuing visitors, waiting to purchase

tickets for the blockbuster exhibition (which, at the time of this writing, is the highest attended exhibition at Tate Modern to date). The gravitational pull of Matisse, quickly transforms the hall into a thoroughfare with visitors coming and going, procuring their admission tickets and hustling towards the galleries.

To the right of the ticket line-up, an expanse of glass is covered in white vinyl, concealing the ongoing construction of the new building. A hole, possibly torn by a curious passerby, allows me to peer in and see the chaos of the tower being built. The museum is in the process of expansion, of becoming—a seemingly inescapable occurrence during the current museum boom.²⁶ At varying intervals, the high-pitched buzz of a saw, or the noisy collision of metal hammering against concrete pierce the air in Turbine Hall. These acoustic disturbances distinguish the hall from the white cube galleries on the upper floors.

Opposite the ticket counter, a glass curtain wall provides vistas into the gift shop, where beautifully designed books are thoughtfully arranged on rows of shelves, lined up like paintings on the wall, ready to be admired. However, unlike the gallery, where the paintings have room to breathe, the gift shop bursts at its seams with mugs, and stationery, and tote bags, and umbrellas, and novelty objects. (There really is no shortage of things you can buy from a museum gift shop.)

The immense hall is crossed in the centre by a black bridge, which traverses the width of the space. A staircase located at the base of the ramp allows visitors to ascend once again, to observe the bustling hall below, or take a break in the museum café. The

²⁶ While Michel Foucault described the museum as a “heterotopia of indefinitely accumulating time” (234), I argue that twenty-first century museums, characterized by ongoing expansion projects and supersized square footage, are also accumulating *space* indefinitely.

sleek darkness of the bridge is a visual jolt, a black hole in the vaulting hall, a sci-fi spacecraft parked in the centre of Tate Modern.

It is in this plateau area at the base of the stairs, flanked by the ticket counters and the gift shop, and overlooked by the café, that *Spatial Confessions* is occupying Turbine Hall. But not everyone knows it. A rectangle has been cordoned off on the shiny cement floor. Or, perhaps more accurately, the four right angles of a rectangle have been designated in rubbery, bright orange tape. A vertical and horizontal strip composes a tidy 'L' in each corner. While the edges of the rectangle are unmarked, the corners begin to form a psychological barrier, and are further punctuated through the placement of bright orange pylons. The rectangle is the site of the choreographic experiment, and by process of elimination, the area surrounding the tape is territory for onlookers.

The orange rectangle, an island in the centre of Turbine Hall, is far away from the expansive walls that form the limits of the space. Freestanding signs border the work, informing visitors that *something* is happening. The vertical 'wall' text recreates a communicative strategy deployed in the white cubes on the floors above (and in the white cubes scattered all over the world). Whether or not the contributors agree,²⁷ the sign seems to connote that *this is curated. This is art.*

²⁷ Throughout the duration of *Spatial Confessions* at Tate Modern, Cvejić maintained that her project was an ongoing choreographic experiment and not a work of art. Despite her stance, the team she assembled to develop and facilitate the experiment consisted of artists, many of whom are dancers or choreographers (artists who utilize the moving body as their medium). Furthermore, aesthetic decisions regarding the use of space were made in order to improve the experiment's documentation as a stop-motion film, revealing at least some level of artistic consideration.

CHAPTER ONE

DANCE IN MUSEUMS: TOWARDS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

On the night of April 28, 1958, Yves Klein staged a “gesture” at Galerie Iris Clert, which, in Brian O’Doherty’s words, had profound “implications for the gallery space” (88).

Titled *Époque pneumatique* (*The Specialization of Sensibility in the Raw Material State into Stabilized Pictorial Sensibility*), the work was a departure from Klein’s previous exhibitions at the gallery, where he had established a reputation through his monochrome canvases. For *Époque pneumatique*, Klein set out to facilitate immediate communication, free of the intermediary of the canvas. To do this, Klein stripped Clert’s 150-square-foot space bare, eliminating the furnishings, and even carting out the telephone. Then, treating the walls like one of his monochrome canvases, he spent forty-eight hours applying a fresh coat of white paint (Weitemeier 31).²⁸ To complete the space, Klein positioned a single display case in the vacant gallery; it contained nothing. While the lack of art objects characterized Klein’s gesture with a sense of emptiness, his exhibition was full of meaning. By stripping the gallery bare, Klein had made visible the ideologically charged, yet seemingly neutral exhibition space that typically houses and dialogues with modern art.

The term ‘museum space’ readily conjures the image of a pristine white cube gallery. Corresponding with a modern conception of space as a “pre-existing void” (Lefebvre 170), the white cube is constructed according to a rigid set of aesthetic

²⁸ Klein produced a smaller iteration of the work the year prior (1957) at the Galerie Colette Allendy. There, he had left a small room in the gallery empty in order to “testify to the presence of pictorial sensitivity in a state of primary matter” (qtd. in O’Doherty 88).

conventions that create the illusion of neutrality and the annulment of space and time. However, the gallery is not simply an empty container awaiting occupation; it is a hegemonic representation of how ‘blank’ space might be constructed.²⁹ Even when evacuated, the white cube “is heavily imprinted with ghost-histories of sculpture and painting” (Wood 114). Despite being tacitly accepted and widely deployed as *the* backdrop for exhibiting art, the neutrality of the white cube is completely a social construct.³⁰ It is not simply the product of expansive white walls and hard floors underfoot. Indeed, these physical aspects compose but one facet of a broader, socially constructed definition of museum space.³¹

Using Klein’s *Époque pneumatique* as an entry point, this chapter draws upon the work of Henri Lefebvre extended by Suzanne MacLeod to formulate a dynamic conception of ‘museum space’ that expands beyond the bricks and mortar of these institutions to envelop their physical, social, and conceptual domains. Employing Arabella Stanger’s interpretation of Lefebvre’s theoretical framework, this chapter distinguishes dance as an art concerned with the active plotting of space. The increased presence of dance in major modern art museums—where it has been historically underrepresented—is thus positioned as a potent transformative force, distinct from other time-bound and performance-based arts. Applied to the current phenomenon of dance in modern art museums, these authors provide a theoretical basis to argue that museum

²⁹ Charlotte Klonk’s *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000* traces the emergence and proliferation of the white cube design, revealing that it is a historically specific product, as opposed to an aesthetic inevitability.

³⁰ Every time the white cube is accepted as a default context, or overlooked in an exhibition review, the myth of its neutrality is perpetuated.

³¹ While the physical properties of the white cube obviously influence the production of space within these institutions, this chapter is concerned with a broader understanding of modern art museum space. For an analysis of white cube design, see Chapter Two.

space is mutable and the current migration of dance into modern art museums results in the significant ‘re-choreographing’ of its spaces.

1. An Emptying and An Opening

Much fanfare surrounded the opening of Klein’s unoccupied gallery. To rouse interest, Klein and Iris Clert (the gallery’s owner, curator, and namesake) mailed out 3,500 invitations. They consisted of blue, embossed script on white paperboard, sealed in an envelope bearing a monochromatic stamp made by Klein (also blue) (Cabañas 20).³² The text, composed by art critic Pierre Restany, was shrouded in both mystery and mysticism. It read: “Iris Clert invites you to honor, with your entire spiritual presence, the bright and positive advent of a new era of experience. This demonstration of perceptual synthesis will facilitate Yves Klein’s pictorial quest for ecstatic and immediately communicable emotion” (as translated by Weitemeier 34). While the invitation only offered a cryptic introduction to Klein’s ‘pictorial quest,’ it also served as a voucher, admitting up to two guests. For those without, an entrance fee of 1,500 francs was charged in order to gain access (Cabañas 20). These invitations were just one of many ritual elements surrounding the seemingly empty exhibition, imbuing the vacant gallery with importance.

When the first guests arrived at 9:00 p.m., they found the front entrance to the gallery blocked off and the glass of the street-facing windows obscured under a coat of blue paint, preventing anyone from seeing in or out. Visitors were redirected to the

³² The hue of blue used on the invitation and throughout the exhibition was International Klein Blue (IKB), a deep ultramarine hue that Klein developed with the assistance of Parisian art supplier Edouard Adam. In the late 50s, IKB became central to Klein’s practice. He deployed the colour as content in his performance-based works as well as in his monochrome paintings.

alleyway entrance, which was flanked by blue drapes and a pair of Republican Guards, outfitted in their full regalia. Once inside a dimly lit threshold space, visitors were served blue cocktails—a mixture of gin, Cointreau, and methylene blue (Cabañas 19-20), which reportedly had a ‘colourful’ effect on their urine (25; Weitemeier 32). There, they waited to gain admittance to the gallery through another curtain framed by private guards checking invitations and controlling the flow of visitors. Guests then entered the empty white gallery housing the empty display case. While the guards attempted to limit the volume of visitors, those inside refused to leave, and those outside clamoured to get in. Soon the gallery was completely filled with bodies, and a crowd of people flooded the street waiting for their opportunity to enter. According to Klein’s account, written a year after the event, by 9:45 p.m. the atmosphere in the gallery had become “frenzied,” filled with a “crowd...so dense that it cannot move anywhere” (qtd. in Cabañas 21).

In the absence of art objects, the presence of the visitors in the exhibition became amplified. In the same written account, Klein reports his attempts to ‘choreograph’ the crowd:

Every three minutes, I shout in a loud voice to the people that are increasingly squeezing into the gallery (the security service is no longer able to contain them or regulate the entries and exits): ‘Mesdames, messieurs, please be so kind and not stay too long in the Gallery so that other visitors who are waiting outside may have their turn.’ (qtd. in Cabañas 21)

Amid this chaos, Klein spotted a man attempting to draw on the wall and chronicled his intervention as a noteworthy event. Klein reported that the crowd fell “silent” as he escorted the graffitist to the private guards ordering them to “*Seize this man and throw*

him out with violence” for his attempt to mar the art (qtd. in Cabañas 21, emphasis in original). By Klein’s account, the visitors became an audience to the intervention, and his attempts to direct the flow of their bodies transformed them into an active material aspect of the exhibition.³³

According to Klein, the gesture was a rousing success. By around 10:00 p.m. the police and fire department arrived and began responding to the 2,500 to 3,000 people who had (allegedly) gathered in the street awaiting entry to the overflowing gallery. Klein reflected, “[o]n the whole, the crowd enters the Gallery angry and leaves completely satisfied. What the Great Press will be compelled to record officially in writing is that 40% of the visitors are positive, capturing the pictorial sensible state, and *seized by the intense climate that reigns, terribly within the apparent void* of the exhibition” (qtd. in Cabañas 22, emphasis in original). Albert Camus famously left praise in the visitor’s album, writing, “With the void, full powers” [“Avec le vide les pleins pouvoirs”] (qtd. in Weitemeier 32).³⁴ The ‘*apparent void* of the exhibition,’ described by Klein, was just that: only *apparent*. Through an exhibition bereft of objects, the spatial codes of the gallery are put on display. The white cube is amplified: ground becomes figure.

³³ Klein produced a third iteration of *Le Vide* in Krefeld’s Museum Haus Lange as part of his exhibition *Monochrome and Fire* (14 January – 26 February 1961). Created on a smaller scale, this museum version occupied an empty seven-metre room, ideally experienced in solitude. Klein painted the ceiling, walls, and floor white, but omitted the display case and exhibition fanfare deployed at Galerie Iris Clert. In light of these alterations, it can be argued the museum iteration more successfully isolates the individual’s perceptual experience. For a description of the museum version, see “Intervention: Yves Klein – Le Vide” paras. 1, 6-7.

³⁴ For a description of the opening of *The Void*, see Weitemeier 31-35 and Cabañas 19-22.

In a radio interview with André Arnaud, broadcast on Europe 1, Klein specified his intention was not to display the walls of the gallery but rather its “ambiance” (qtd. in Cabañas 20). Despite the exhibition’s popular name, Klein clarified in the interview that the empty gallery was not a void “because, in fact, everything *happens in space*” [“*tout se passé dans l’espace*”] (qtd. in Cabañas 20, emphasis in original). Thus, as Cabañas has argued, *The Void* is not reducible to its physical elements: the monochrome gallery walls and case on display. The work also cannot be limited to the immediately communicable ‘pictorial sensibility’ that Klein purported to display for the public (Cabañas 21). Rather, Klein’s ‘gesture’ consisted of the appropriation of the complex spatial ambiance of the gallery “produced through the built context’s inextricable links to an ensemble of signs, symbols, and rituals” (Cabañas 21). In fact, “[f]rom the guards to the invitations to the cocktails, the rituals of the event framed the gallery in its emptiness, revealing that there was, in fact something in that supposedly blank space” (Cabañas 21).

While the invitations had promised “ecstatic and immediately communicable emotion” through the dematerialization of painting (Restany as translated by Weitemeier 34), Klein’s project also accomplished the transformation of the white cube from exhibition context into primary content. In the empty space, it was the potency of the white cube—the social constructions, aesthetic conventions, and codes of behaviour associated with it—that became readily visible.

2. The Social Production of (Museum) Space

As Klein’s gesture shows, the white cube gallery, and by extension, the modern art museum that houses it, cannot be reduced to its physical design. However, this fact is

obscured by popular definitions of the word ‘museum.’ Oxford Dictionaries defines it as “a building in which objects of historical, scientific, artistic, or cultural interest are stored and exhibited” (“museum”). This fragmentary definition, which restricts the museum to a building and the objects it houses, does not reflect real world practices. With the rise of digital and digitized museum collections and the tendency toward off-site storage, museums regularly operate beyond the confines of a building. Moreover, this definition makes no reference to the people and activities that form the social space of the museum. It also fails to acknowledge the conceptual space in which these institutions (re)produce knowledge. How might we more accurately define the museum as a constellation formed across places, actions and ideas?

Henri Lefebvre’s *The Production of Space* provides a theoretical basis for a multidimensional understanding of modern art museum space. At the outset of the book, Lefebvre provides a summary of the fragmentary yet pervasive ‘spaces’ of modernity. Art history, he observes, is littered with examinations of pictorial space, with trajectories of artistic ‘progress’ often linked to shifts in the treatment of space. Similarly, discussions of architecture and literature frequently take on a spatial dimension. Not limited to creative output, day-to-day life is also spoken about in spatial terms: people occupy public and private spaces and inhabit spaces of leisure or work, to name but a few examples. Different forms of illness are even discussed as possessing their own unique sense of space (Lefebvre 8). For Lefebvre, the sheer multiplicity and lack of cohesion among these different conceptions of space “makes them suspect” (8). In modern society, he observes, “[w]e are thus confronted by an indefinite multitude of spaces, each piled upon, or perhaps contained within, the next: geographical, economic, demographic,

sociological, ecological, political, commercial, national, continental, global. Not to mention nature's (physical) space, the space of (energy) flows, and so on" (8). According to Lefebvre, this unending sectioning is not an inherent property of space. Rather, it is symptomatic of the modern mode of production, in which material *and* intellectual labour are "subject to endless division" (8).

While modern mathematics and philosophy offer theorizations of space, these too are fragmented, and contribute to an artificial chasm separating mental (abstract) space from the social world. Modern mathematics evolved as a self-contained science with equally contained treatments of space. Despite chronicling an "indefinity" of separate subspaces, including non-Euclidean spaces, curved spaces, and spaces with infinite dimensions, modern mathematicians neglected to formulate a unifying theory of space (a cohesive "space of spaces") (Lefebvre 2). They also failed to offer an obvious bridge connecting these abstract spaces with 'reality'—the space of social life (3).

Philosophical treatments of space are equally fragmented. While space figures in the philosophy of time and duration, it only receives partial consideration through its entanglement with the disjointed topics of mental, social and historical time (Lefebvre 24). In epistemology, space is ubiquitous, with authors mostly, if not exclusively, referring to 'mental space' as the locus of philosophical activity (Lefebvre 3). Despite the prevalence of this supposedly extra-ideological 'mental space,' Lefebvre notes that authors consistently overlook the need to define its parameters (4-5). For Lefebvre, the disjunction between philosophical and mathematical conceptions of space and the world of human interaction is, at its root, ideological. It promotes the "egocentric thinking of specialized Western intellectuals," and falsely assumes that the space of ideas, logic, and

abstraction can exist independently of the social world (24). In actuality, the “abyss between the mental sphere on one side and the physical and social spheres on the other” (Lefebvre 6) is symptomatic of the fragmentation of capitalism (24).

Employing Gramsci’s concept of hegemony, which is “exercised over society as a whole, culture and knowledge included,” Lefebvre argues that it is inconceivable social and mental spaces would somehow be exempt from ideological influence (Lefebvre 10). Space, like everything else under the dominance of capitalism, is subject to the segmentation, specialization, and alienation upon which the entire system is predicated. In fact, he adds, the (re)production of ideology in space is essential to its operation: in order to achieve consistency, it must describe, refer to and make use of the space of social relations in which life unfolds (44). Ideology, thus “might well be said to consist primarily in a discourse upon social space,” and the “body therein” (44). Each society, or, more specifically, each new mode of production, thus *produces* its own distinct space (46).³⁵ Reconceiving of space not as an empty vessel that can be filled with content, but rather something that is produced, positions space as the outcome of social relations. Space, it can thus be said, is a social product.

In response to the endless, capitalist division of space (and the fragmented “bits and pieces of knowledge” it produces), Lefebvre formulates a hypothesis for a ‘unitary theory’ of space, bridging the physical, mental, and social spaces in which human experience unfolds (11). For Lefebvre, these spaces are not distinct and separate, but rather are mutually dependent. The schism that separates the mental (or ideal) space of

³⁵ Lefebvre attributes the downfall of Soviet constructivism to its failure to redefine space. Without a new form of spatial organization, this ideological shift and transformation to the system of production could not take hold (59).

mathematics and epistemology from the ‘real’ world of social relations is an artificial one because “[i]n actuality each of these two kinds of space involves, underpins and presupposes the other” (Lefebvre 14). Through the act of production, Lefebvre reconceives of space as something dynamic arising from social activity. However, although “(social) space is a (social) product,” space must also pre-exist its actors (26, emphasis in origina). There cannot be a social world unless there is a space in which human interaction and thought can unfold. Thus the relationship between space and social activity is a dialectical one. According to this dialectic, the pre-existence of space shapes the conditions for the “presence, action and discourse” of individuals (Lefebvre 57). For Lefebvre then, space *shapes* and is *shaped by* bodies.

Whereas the primacy of the *Oxford Dictionaries* definition of the museum lies within the building (and its capacity to house objects of cultural significance), this dissertation expands the meaning of the museum across actions and ideas. *The Production of Space* provides a theoretical framework for considering museum space as the ongoing outcome of social practices as opposed to a stable receptacle filled with art.³⁶ Moreover, Lefebvre’s formulation of a unitary theory of space facilitates the cohesive discussion of space across physical, social, and abstract realms. This theoretical framework provides a basis for arguing that the curation of dance by the modern art museum has a transformative impact on its ‘space,’ not only as a building, but also as a set of activities and concepts. Thus, the recent, increased presence of dance in modern art

³⁶ It should be noted that Lefebvre’s theorization of the socio-spatial dialectic reciprocally provides the basis to argue that the space of the museum exerts influence over the art of dance. The migration of dance into the modern art museum is not the occupation of an inert venue. Rather this environment contours and shapes the art within it. This is a fertile area for discussion, but falls beyond the scope of what can be addressed in this dissertation.

museums can be said to transform the physical,³⁷ social, and conceptual spaces of these institutions.

3. The Mutability of Museum Architecture

As of late, the museum as a physical structure has been receiving substantial attention in the world of architecture. So far, the twenty-first century has been host to a museum boom. Despite cutbacks to public funding, existing museums are undergoing extensive expansion, renovation, and construction projects and new institutions continue to be founded. Modern art museums, as a specific subset of museums, are not exempt from these changes.³⁸ Although millions of bodies file through these institutions annually, architectural analyses of these spaces tend to focus on building designs in their ideal states, unsullied by the presence of users and unaffected by the activities staged inside. These dominant discussions only represent a small sliver of the lives of these buildings and fail to fully acknowledge how these physical spaces are transformed, not simply through renovations, but also through use. If space is a social product, then architecture, by extension, is produced through the ‘presence, action and discourse’ of users.

In order to recapture some of the lost, lived histories of buildings, Suzanne MacLeod uses a Lefebvrian framework to develop a user-centred approach to the history

³⁷ It is important to note that Lefebvre defines physical space as ‘natural’ space and the space of the cosmos (11). Even these types of space are constituted socially through their apprehension or perception by people. In this dissertation ‘physical space’ is interpreted as the built environment, which is the product of and locus for social interactions.

³⁸ For example, Tate Modern, the most visited modern art museum in the world, opened in 2000, and, by June 2016, it had already completed a massive extension and renovation project. Also, as I discuss in the Conclusion, The Whitney Museum of American Art recently moved to a new building in New York’s Meatpacking District, while, Midtown, the Museum of Modern Art is currently undergoing an extensive renovation project.

of museum space. Focusing on episodic occupations of the space, MacLeod does not aim to offer a complete narrative of the gallery. Rather, her project demonstrates how architecture is modified by use over time and formulates a biographical approach for examining the ongoing lives of buildings. Her project elaborates a strand of architectural theory predicated on Lefebvre's socio-spatial dialect, which purports that architecture is remade "through use, through occupation and appropriation, through representation and through social practice" (MacLeod 83). For MacLeod, the 'making' of architecture extends well beyond the architect's vision expressed in the "initial moment of construction" (78-82).

Despite the fact that architecture is a complex system, the dominant way it is discussed is as the product of the architect. This favouring of the architect's vision—produced in 'mental space'—over the social lives of buildings is prevalent in the museum world, where renovations and new constructions are typically celebrated as the iconic expression of an architect's signature style.³⁹ This limited view of architecture falsely conflates the terms 'architecture' and 'building.' While 'building' denotes a structure designed by an architect and constructed in the physical world, 'architecture,' by contrast, represents the entire system that imbues our built environment with meaning, shaping how we interact with and understand our material surroundings (MacLeod 54-55). Not limited to the physical materials of a building, architecture is 'constructed' through "the processes of design and representation," as well as "through use of the physical built thing" (MacLeod 391). The interchangeable use of 'building' and 'architecture' in

³⁹ In the introduction to her study, MacLeod references a multitude of design failures in the museum world where the architect's vision was privileged over the users' needs (32-33).

popular discourse thus creates the false notion that architecture is immovable when, in actuality, it is shaped by inhabitants, transformed through use, and (re)produced through representations. It limits the meaning of architecture to the building in its 'ideal' state on opening day, and does not take into account how buildings are occupied, or how they change, weather, and age over time. In actuality, how we conceive of architecture in the design process, construct it in the physical world, represent it in text and images, and inhabit it, all actively contribute to its constantly evolving meaning of space.

This privileging of the architect's vision is mirrored in dominant narratives of museum design, which MacLeod notes are centred on iconic, individualistic visual-centric structures. Presented as a linear progression advanced by individual 'genius' architects, these exclusionary narratives support the popular conception of the museum as a landmark structure, and a work of art in its own right. Arguably, these lineages of 'iconic' museum designs perpetuate an exclusionary and self-validating myth of aesthetic progress (MacLeod 60), not unlike the canon and art historical narrative that modern art museums have been criticized of producing and upholding. While these historical surveys of museums offer rich insight into the design of specific institutions, MacLeod notes the breadth of these histories is troubling. Discussions of the 'iconic' in the museum world tend to favour a narrow segment of institutions "produced by a relatively small group of elite architects" (59), which are used as the benchmark for quality museum design (60). MacLeod notes, "[i]n the historical surveys of iconic museum architecture, the field of museums is dissected, cut into pieces as some buildings are deemed worthy of study and others are not. Museum architecture here is surface, it is an art object to be studied; it is devoid of life" (63).

Within these narratives of progressive development, considerations of function and use are typically eclipsed by the celebration of form and individual style (MacLeod 60). Omitted from these histories of architectural prowess are museums in converted structures, or smaller institutions designed by local architects (MacLeod 63-64). Modern art museums are perhaps most susceptible to this emphasis on the iconic, or what Miles Glendinning refers to as the ‘cult of individualism,’ in the contemporary architectural landscape (MacLeod 28). Increasingly, these buildings are discussed as works of art in their own right, and a particular emphasis is placed on museum exteriors, which are reduced to the unadulterated artistic expression of the architect as opposed to an interface between the gallery, its context, and the public.

The Frank Gehry-designed Guggenheim Bilbao is a notable example of an iconic structure that privileges the architect’s signature style over functional or contextual considerations. The undulating metal-clad exterior of this museum bears no relationship to the community of Bilbao and has the spectacular appearance of an “inter-galactic spaceship” plunked upon the bank of the Nervion River (Rybcynski para. 2). Moreover, Charlotte Klonk has noted that beneath its braggadocio shell, the museum’s interior does little to innovate or advance gallery design. In fact, its “extrovert architecture” has been criticized for “overpower[ing] the impact of the works shown within,” and for “fail[ing] to acknowledge that the history of modern art presented there is only partial” (Klonk 197-202).

This predilection for the ‘iconic’ in the world of art museums has resulted in what Witold Rybcynski termed “The Bilbao Effect” in an article for *The Atlantic*. According to Rybcynski, in the wake of Guggenheim Bilbao, selection competitions, in which big

name architects submit (and sometimes publicly present) proposals, have become the preferred strategy for determining the designs of high-profile buildings (para. 7). While these competitions do drum up publicity for a new building, they do not necessarily result in better design. According to Rybcynski, “[t]he charged atmosphere promotes flamboyance rather than careful thought, and favors the glib and obvious over the subtle and nuanced” (para. 8). Show-stopping buildings make for more captivating drawings and models, meaning visual bravado fares better in competition than subtler designs that may emphasize embodied experience or a thoughtful relationship to context. In fact, as Rybcynski notes, selection competitions have contributed to the “alien presence” of high-profile buildings because international architects are saddled with the responsibility of contributing civic monuments to cities they have scarcely visited (para. 11).

Short of (re)constructing buildings, a Lefebvrian conception of space enables us to consider different ways of engaging with modern museum design. Applied to museum space, Lefebvre’s dialectic foregrounds “the agency of users and the continual and varied remaking of architecture through use, through occupation and appropriation, through representation and through social practice” (MacLeod 83). As MacLeod’s survey of the field of museum architecture demonstrates, it is not simply modern aesthetics that produce a visual bias towards our built environment. It is also how we conceptualize and represent buildings in our social world. Reinserting the user into narratives of museum space offers grounds to explore the transformative impact occupation can have on physical structures. Different users (and uses, such as dance) have the capacity to contribute dissenting narratives to architectural histories, disrupting the visual bias of the modern art museum.

By employing biography as a methodological approach, MacLeod's project examines the history of the museum as a series of episodic chapters. Her intention is not to produce a complete architectural history of the museum, but rather to investigate how the museum is continually modified over time. In so doing, MacLeod complicates (visually) dominant histories of museum architecture, which separate architectural vision from the active and ongoing life of a structure. For MacLeod, this emphasis on architecture in its 'ideal' form "is active, even complicit in, the production of abstract space" (MacLeod 83), which not only influences how we conceive of buildings, but also positions the public as passive consumers as opposed to social actors (MacLeod 83). Thus, the dominant discourses on museum space as outlined by MacLeod, with their emphasis on formal elements and 'iconic' designs, only reproduce the chasm between abstract ideas and lived experience.

By focusing on how the ever-changing occupation of a building modifies a structure through use, MacLeod's project provides the necessary foundation to argue that museum space is mutable and that the presence of dance has a transforming impact on the modernist gallery context. While occupation can simply denote a body filling a space, it can also be intensely political, "rais[ing] questions about people's 'right' to inhabit certain buildings" (MacLeod 81-82). Criticism has long been levelled against modern art museums over cultural gatekeeping, in which only an 'elite' selection of artists is given representation in collections. Art that falls outside the trajectory of dominant narratives, as well as the work of artists belonging to marginalized communities have, historically, been inadequately represented. Equally, an emphasis on collectible, object-based art has resulted in the underrepresentation of ephemeral or time-based arts, such as dance.

Central to this dissertation is an investigation of how dance's occupation of modern art museums has a transformative effect on the spaces of these institutions. MacLeod's formulation of the social production of museum architecture provides a basis for analyzing museum space as a dynamic concept as opposed to an immovable building. Inspired by MacLeod's biographical approach, the theoretical arguments developed in this dissertation are supported by discrete, episodic case studies representing recent examples of dance in major modern art museums. Instead of offering an unabridged history of each institution's relationship to dance, this episodic structure investigates what can be gleaned from the in-depth exploration of individual dance events in major modern art museums. The current trend of dance curation is treated as a distinctive chapter in the lives of modern art museums, with dancers occupying galleries and transitional spaces in a way that diverges from conventional use.

While the emphasis on form in modern architecture has a distancing effect and is linked to the world of abstract ideas, dance, by contrast, is rooted in the flesh. The inclusion of dance into existing modern art museums not only opposes the intended function of these spaces as exhibitions sites for object-based art, but it also clashes with the eternal, predominantly visual aesthetic of these institutions.⁴⁰ In addition to introducing a new use of museum space, dance introduces a new user. In a collapsing of categories, the dancer's body both exhibits a work of art and occupies space as a subject. Dance thus operates as a distinct force reshaping the modern art museum through its positioning of the artist as an active and present social agent plotting museum space through use.

⁴⁰ See Chapter Two for an in-depth analysis of the tension between dance and the museum.

4. Re-choreographing Modern Art Museum Space

In contrast to object-based arts, dance uses the body moving through space as its material. For this reason the art of dance is distinctly capable of transforming the modern art museum. When examined through a Lefebvrian framework, dance cannot be reduced to mere content inserted into the ‘neutral’ box of the modern art museum. Rather, through its ‘against the grain’ occupation of the white cube gallery, dance acts as a social force, reshaping the physical, social, and conceptual spaces of these institutions.⁴¹

Despite the fact movement is often identified as the primary substance of dance, bodily motion cannot be divorced from the space in which it unfolds. Indeed, John Martin, America’s first full-time dance critic, made this observation in 1933 while writing about the emerging art of modern dance. According to Martin, dance is distinctive from the other arts because it “deals in more dimensions than any of them” (52). Involving metakinesis, dynamism, space and time, dance cannot be purified to a single defining feature, meaning a “dancer cannot make a movement which does not occupy time, cover space, involve energy and have a motivation” (52). Expanding upon the heightened spatiality and “volume” of dance, Martin describes the dancer as a “three-dimensional instrument” who “moves *in* space” producing an art characterized by “not only length and breadth but depth and thickness as well” (Martin 53, emphasis in original). Space, as Martin points out, is an integral aspect of the art of dance.

⁴¹ According to Lefebvre’s socio-spatial dialectic, dance is reciprocally impacted by the context of the modern art museum and the historical residues associated with this space. The migration of dance into these gallery spaces not only subjects it to the social protocols and practices of looking ascribed to the white cube, it also inserts dance into the art historical narratives the museum has played an integral role in producing.

If space is socially produced, as Lefebvre contends, its qualities are relational and mutable, as opposed to absolute and pre-existing. Proceeding from this dynamic conception of space, Arabella Stanger theorizes the mutually influencing relationship between choreography and context (73). Building upon the assertion that space “does not contain but is constituted by the exercise of bodies” (72), Stanger devises a socio-aesthetics of dance—an analytical approach addressing the interrelationship between the aesthetic form and societal context of a choreographic work. For the purposes of this dissertation, one of Stanger’s key contributions is her use of Lefebvre’s theory of spatial production as a “prism” through which to define choreographic practice (72). Following Lefebvre, Stanger defines choreography as “an activity that creates space (and time), through the organization of moving bodies” (72). She distinguishes dance from the other arts through its “heightened sense of space,” noting that during the choreographic process, “space is plotted, shaped, and felt into existence by the organization of a set of bodily actions” (72). As an art form that uses bodies and space as its materials, the integration of dance into the modern art museum can be analyzed as a powerful force, reshaping the space of these institutions.

As Lefebvre establishes, each configuration of space possesses its own laws of discrimination which pre-exist social organization. For Stanger, these laws of discrimination can also be understood as a set of aesthetic possibilities belonging to a particular space. Employing Lefebvre’s socio-spatial dialectic, Stanger argues that the formal (or aesthetic) elements of a dance are inherently social because they are contoured by the ideological context in which a choreographic work is produced. The body produces space, and in return, the laws of discrimination of a particular space govern the

body. According to this rationale, the formal properties of a choreographic work are shaped by the space in which the work is created. Stanger writes,

“If space is produced by the activities of human beings who live in social relation to one another and, as such, is a product of these relations in all their complexity, then the laws of discrimination, or the aesthetic principles that shape a choreographic production of space, should be thought of as belonging to (extending from and feeding into) the relational terrain that defines the social world of a given time and place.” (73)

If all space is produced through human organizing-activity, as Lefebvre contends, then the aesthetic production of space through dance is “essentially related to broader societal forces, orders, and ideals” (Stanger 74). Thus, choreographic space can be simultaneously conceived of as both formal and social because it is created by individuals situated in (and influenced by) a social landscape (75). The formal elements of a choreographic work should not be considered in isolation from social ones because these elements “are, in fact, mutually embedded in each other” (79).

While the field of dance studies tends to treat the social and formal aspects of choreography as “adjacent” elements (81), Stanger proposes a flexible analytical schema that acknowledges their interrelation. The schema consists of five integrated ‘environments,’ each addressing the formal and social spaces of dance at a different scale. Beginning with the broader social context and telescoping inward, the schema acknowledges the complex entwinement between the social and the aesthetic, instead of promoting an analytical division between properties that are external to the work and the formal properties internal to the choreography.

The broadest sphere is the social space in which a choreographic work is situated, such as its national context or local culture (Stanger 78). The next sphere is the field (or fields) of production in which choreographic activity is undertaken. This may be diachronic, referencing “the cross-historical constitutions of a consolidated genre or form” such as the field of classical ballet (78). It may also be synchronic, “refer[ring] to a historically specified situation in which artistic productions are made, requiring a closer analysis of particular cultural and socio-economic conditions of production” (78).

Focusing in, Stanger then considers the physical environment, or venue, where the dance takes place. She notes that environment can refer to conventional dance settings, such as a proscenium stage, but it can also consist of any architectural structure or ‘non-built’ environment in which the dance is situated. This open-ended approach to venue accounts for the range of site-specific or site-sensitive works in the field of dance. At this level of analysis, spaces are “examined for their material-societal configurations, and the way in which these configurations participate in choreographic processes” (79).

If, as Lefebvre demonstrates, space is not a neutral container, then the choreographic venue cannot be reduced to an “inert” receptacle into which dance is inserted (Stanger 74). Rather, the act of choreographing exists in a dialogical relationship with the environment, “engaging with the traces of human activity that have produced (and continue to produce this space)” (74). Thus choreographic practice (re)produces space, intervening with a given environment’s history of use by “choreograph[ing] with a piece of architecture that was conceived, constructed and used by human beings” (74). This level of analysis holds particular relevancy for examining the impact of dance on

modern art museum space. By entering this context, dance implicitly enters into a collaborative dialogue with this space.

The final two ‘spaces’ are found at the level of the dancer’s movements. The first is what Rudolf von Laban referred to as ‘general space.’ This is the territory bodies occupy as they move through space, which “may be choreographed by setting the pathways made by a dancer as he or she travels around a given performance environment” (Stanger 79).⁴² Arguably, the space ‘taken up’ by the dancer in the modern art museum context results in a renegotiation of territory between the visitor and the (at times, unmarked) performance space. The final space outlined by Stanger is Laban’s notion of the ‘kinesphere.’ This level of space is a sphere encircling the dancer’s body organized through the articulation of the limbs, head, torso and the postural carriage of the dance style (Stanger 79). For Stanger, “The way in which each of these five, interrelated spheres – social space, field of production, performance environment, general space, kinesphere – is organized by a given choreographic project indicates a particular production of space” (Stanger 79). Instead of treating these ‘spaces’ of production separately, Stanger’s analytical scheme mirrors Lefebvre’s unitary theory. Whereas Lefebvre bridges physical, mental, and social space, Stanger treats these ‘spaces of production’ as interrelated and inseparable, connected to *both* social context and formal outcome.

While Lefebvre’s theoretical framework leads us to view space as something that is “both created by and contours the action of bodies” (Stanger 73), Stanger’s project

⁴² It is important to note that choreography may be set in advance and rehearsed, or it may also be improvised (i.e. ‘written’ at the moment of the performance). Stanger acknowledges both of these approaches to dance creation, not limiting her analytical schema to choreography set in advance (72).

provides a theoretical basis for investigating dance specifically as a potent force dialoguing with the space of the museum. Although dance is not the only performance based art to find a home in the modern art museum, it arguably impacts the space of the museum more than other media through its use of space as its primary ‘material.’ Actively shaping space while guided by the laws of discrimination, dance is not simply a mobile art inserted into the neutral container of the white cube. Rather, it is an art entrenched in context—a powerful force plotting space within the modern art museum.

Significantly, Susan Leigh Foster has argued that changing conceptions of the choreographic during the twentieth century resulted in a paradigm shift characterized by a more dynamic understanding of space. Choreography became occupied with producing a statement about movement, as opposed to a work of self-expression, and with this change,

space takes on a new identity as something that is protean, malleable and co-created. Not the geometrically defined system of coordinates in which horizontal and vertical positions can be determined, nor the viscous medium through which the momentum-filled body enunciates itself, space becomes a co-production between body and surroundings. It is not something through which you move, but something that you define in the act of moving. Each body performs a duet with space. (Foster, “Choreographing Your Move” 36-37)⁴³

Such an observation of the reciprocal relationship between bodies and space proceeds from a Lefebvrian framework. The dialogic relationship between dance and site suggests

⁴³ Writing on dance in museums, Mark Franko has similarly observed that “[t]he phenomenon whereby a particular site is articulated by the movement performed within it or wherein movement takes on a specific dimension and meaning by virtue of the site in which it is performed is...worthy of further exploration.” (Franko 96).

transformation through collaboration. And, this collaboration reaches beyond the relationship between performance and space as a mere venue. During a performance, everything in the space becomes involved in the whole theatrical “situation” (Fried 155). Thus, dance’s dialogue with museum space extends past the built environment to include the objects and museumgoers that co-exist in the space. As Mark Franko asserts, “[s]omething is communicated between the artifact and the act...that exceeds theatrical heightening and becomes an *exchange* of qualities” (Franko 97, emphasis mine). Arguably, this conception of dance performance as an exchange between the moving bodies and art on display is distinctive from understandings of performance as interventional critique.

Indeed, installation and performance artist Tania Bruguera, in dialogue with Claire Bishop, has suggested that museal ‘collaboration’ is a crucial feature distinguishing the performance arts from the performing arts with which dance has been historically aligned. Whereas the performance artist possesses “a more antagonistic relationship to the museum,” characterized by “disruption and intervention,” the performing artist “knows how to collaborate with institutions, and is—in the majority of cases a seasoned professional” (Bishop, “The Perils and Possibilities” 72). Indeed, performance art evolved in the late 1950s and early 1960s in opposition to the market as well as dominant institutional practices (Wood 114). These artists often identified with the visual arts field, while simultaneously critiquing this field and the white cube gallery it frequently calls home. Endeavouring to expose, oppose and attack the museum’s limitations is a worthwhile pursuit; however, it is arguably not the only means by which to initiate transformation.

In contrast to performance art, the performing arts are characterized by adaptation and collaboration. Dance works are adjusted to accommodate differences in venue or adapted with changes in cast. They are also almost exclusively the outcome of some form of collaboration. Choreographers and performers, as well as artists or designers specializing in sound, lighting, costuming, and sometimes even sets and props, work together to produce the dance. While Bruguera's viewpoint seems to suggest the collaborative nature of dance limits its critical impact in the museum, this is arguably a potential source of its transformative power. While institutional critique has effectively pointed out the limitations of the white cube, institutional collaboration can encourage transformation or hybridization. Collaboration brings the promise of something new. Considered within a socio-spatial framework, the trespass of dance into modern art museum space has productive potential to bring about change. This will be investigated in the following chapters.

5. The Empty Gallery Revisited

Klein's *The Void* opened nearly 50 years ago, but the 'empty' white cube continues to capture the attention of artists, curators, critics and the public. One high profile example is Martin Creed's *Work 227: The Lights Going On And Off*, consisting of an empty gallery in which the lights turn on and off at five second intervals through the use of an installed electrical timer. The work was awarded the Turner Prize in 2001,⁴⁴ and, following the win, it toured internationally to major modern art institutions before being

⁴⁴ This high-profile £20,000 prize awarded annually by the Tate Gallery acknowledges developments in contemporary art made by a British artist under fifty years of age ("What is the Turner Prize?").

permanently acquired by Tate in 2013. *Work 227* is in line with Creed's larger body of work, which, through the minimal manipulation of seemingly mundane, nondescript, 'blank' material, frequently treads the territory between "something and nothing" (O'Reilly para. 8). For instance, his *Work No. 340* and *Work No. 384* consist of blank sheets of paper, which have been folded then unfolded, while his *Work No. 79* is composed of "some Blu-Tak kneaded, rolled into a ball, and decompressed against a wall" ("Works"). Writing on Creed's practice John O'Reilly has stated that "[f]or someone working with such limited data, he has tapped a rich vein of nothing" (para. 5). Unlike the use of white paper or sticky tack, however, *Work 227* has a heightened relationship to the white cube in which it is shown. With its simple binary manipulation of the gallery's electrical system, it uses the empty white cube and its lighting (or lack thereof) as its material.

Creed's receipt of the Turner Prize was not without controversy. According to an arts correspondent for *The Telegraph*, *Work 227* was "met with a mixture of incredulity, attempts at deep philosophising and plain outrage" (N. Reynolds para. 3). The work has provoked indignation in the press and one artist resorted to "throwing eggs at the walls to register her disgust at the piece" (Clark para. 2). For art critic Louisa Buck however, *Work 227* "is an important work. It is a sober minimalist piece in a long line of artists using every day materials for potent formal and psychological effect" (qtd. in Clark para. 6). This range of responses to seemingly 'nothing,' and its acknowledgment with a prestigious art prize in the twenty-first century, demonstrates the continued relevance of, and fascination with, the empty white gallery. Even when art is dematerialized, the values of modern art museum space pervade, arguably becoming more apparent in the absence

of ‘content.’ Of the work, Creed has stated, “it activates the whole of the space it occupies without anything physically being added...it’s a really big work with nothing being there” (qtd. in Reynolds para. 12). There is something to this nothingness. Indeed, *Work 227* follows in the legacy of Klein’s emptied gallery, indicating a recurrent desire to ‘illuminate’ the properties of the supposedly blank white cube.

This chapter has demonstrated that ‘museum space’ is a dynamic category that exists in a dialogical relationship with the bodies that occupy it. For this dissertation, the ramifications of Lefebvre’s conceptualization of space as a social product, when reconsidering the transformative relationship between dance and the modern art museum in the twenty-first century, are threefold. First, following MacLeod, museum architecture is not static; rather it exists in a perpetual state of becoming, continually modified through occupation and use. Second, following Stanger, choreography is understood as an art particularly concerned with the social production of space. Consisting of the movement of bodies through time and space, dance has a transforming effect on modern art museum space, intervening with its activities, aesthetics, and perceived function. Finally, if space encompasses physical, social, and mental territory, ‘museum space’ can be understood as not only a building, but also a set of activities and concepts.

From here, it follows that dance is a particularly influential force for reshaping the space of modern art museums. Not only does performance dance have a transformative impact on the physical space of these institutions, intervening with their established architecture through its temporary occupation of gallery spaces, it also impacts the social and conceptual spaces of the museum as well. Socially, dance intervenes with aesthetic space of the museum by modifying the distance experienced between the public and the

art. And, conceptually, dance dialogues with the art objects on display, transforming the art historical space of these institutions. Chapters Three and Four examine these interventions in greater detail, chronicling dance's transformative impact. The next chapter, however, will look more closely at the modern art museum's construction as a purified and atemporal space and establish dance as a productive contaminant.

SECOND INTERLUDE

THE VISITORS ARE RECORDED AND REORDERED

Poised at the edge of the bridge overlooking *Spatial Confessions* is a foreign structure constructed of black metal. A long, articulated arm looms over the railing, suspended over the orange rectangle of the experiment. Affixed at the very end of the arm is a stop-motion camera, an all-seeing eye. The camera is operated by two men and connected to a monitor and a tangled web of cables. Are they documenting the work for posterity? To create something new? To record the findings of the experiment? Perhaps all of the above?

The suspended camera is being used to capture a stop-motion record of the experiment. Every three seconds the camera records an image, transforming the choreography into a series of points in space. This raw footage is captured with the intention that it will be edited into a time-lapse film chronicling the movements and arrangements of the participants. Through stop-motion, the moving participants will become a pictograph. The choreography will be broken into arrested moments in space. The film provides a document of the experiment, but it also offers a perspective of the work in its entirety from the omnipotent third eye of the camera above. An encyclopaedic version of the choreography is thus created, consisting of every iteration of the experiment. In contrast to traditional performance documentation, which captures only one performance, or splices together multiple ‘takes’ to produce a single performance, the stop-motion film documents all expressions of the choreography as executed by every group of participants. Through time lapse, the film sacrifices the detail of individual

‘dances’ in order to show the choreographic experiment as a whole. As a digital film, the project will be able to inhabit alternative spatio-temporal locations, extending beyond the parameters of a weeklong experiment in the museum.

People pass in and out of the hall. They disperse after encountering the experiment, shuttling up the escalators to the exhibitions inhabiting the white cubed floors above. I stay and watch the waves of visitors flood in and out of the space, pooling temporarily around the experiment before trickling away. However, the boundary designating the ‘experiment’ is not always clear. Some museum visitors, with exhibition tickets in hand, trudge across the rectangle. This often elicits snickering from the participants, as well as spectators observing the experiment. The organizers react with both amusement and dismay, cognizant of the fact that the interlopers will produce a visual glitch in the stop-motion film. In this regard, the experiment, at times, feels as though it is in service of the film being produced.

It is the first day of *Spatial Confessions*. One of the collaborators, Nikolina Pristaš, approaches me as I sit on the steps, writing in my notebook. (The stairs are my perch as I watch the experiment). She asks me if I would like to participate and I enthusiastically accept, explaining that I am here for my dissertation. I ask her about the project and she explains it is a work-in-progress. The team is still refining the questions that will prompt the visitors’ bodies to move through space. She reveals that Bojana Cvejić and Christine De Smedt outlined the main themes of the experiment. Then, all the choreographers compiled questions. As their database of questions grew, themes emerged.

I linger throughout the day, becoming a lasting fixture amidst the endless carousel of participants rotating through the experiment. Neto Machado, one of the collaborators walks over. “We’re still working it out,” he confesses as he reflects on the experiment, adding “I think we have a lot of work to do.” Specifically, he wants to find clarity in the beginnings and endings. He also wants to talk to people after the experiment to learn about how the instructions were received. While the project seems fairly simple, it is surprisingly difficult to communicate movement instructions orally to the ad hoc groups. The questions require clear answers paired with straightforward movement instructions. Meanwhile, the themes of the project are hardly simplistic. They tap into complex issues of politics, citizenship, and race, among others.

A recurring complaint from the participants centres on the binary framing of the questions. Often, the questions are not met with a definitive ‘yes’ or ‘no’ response. Rather, they yield a muddled ‘yes and no,’ or ‘yes but sometimes no,’ or simply ‘undecided.’ Asking visitors what they think is relatively new territory. It is in line with the late twentieth century turn towards experience- and visitor-centred exhibition strategies.

At times, the contributors have issues soliciting participants. I watch them between sections, approaching museumgoers, each with their own spiel to encourage visitors to take part. I overhear fragments of their conversations:

“We need participants—”

“I’m one of the artists—”

“We ask very simple questions about how the public sphere is choreographed—”

“Want to help me out?”

“The film will just be dots moving about in stop motion—”

“Sorry to interrupt—”

“You just need to move around. It’s simple choreography—”

“We start in about five minutes—”

A collaborator approaches a woman in bright blue jeans. “Would you like to join us?”

Eagerly, she blurts out, “I think it’s brilliant.”

CHAPTER TWO

CONTAMINATING THE WHITE CUBE

As a performance medium, dance is an art that resides in bodies, not in museum vaults. When integrated into the museum, dance interrupts the standard practices of collection and exhibition, which have, historically, been central to museum mandates. While art objects are typically lifted out of time, held and displayed within the transcendent space of the white cube, dance sets the static atmosphere of the gallery in motion. And, while these opposing temporal structures introduce an interesting point of tension, the presence of dance in the modern art museum is not simply the insertion of new curatorial content into a neutral container. Indeed, the antagonistic relationship between dance and the modern art museum runs deeper than dance's status as a time-based art and its resistance to being collected. As an art form invested in the shaping and plotting of space (Stanger 72), dance is uniquely positioned to destabilize the culturally constructed frame of the modern art museum.

Borrowing from criticism and theory across the fields of art, architecture, and museum studies, this chapter examines the white cube's cultural construction as a pure and atemporal context for apprehending, understanding and experiencing art. Drawing upon Boris Charmatz's creative practice and his "Manifesto for a Dancing Museum," I examine how dance transforms the seemingly fixed space of the modern art museum, subjecting it to change. Overall, this chapter frames the increasing presence of dance in the white cube as a form of contamination, defiling the pure and atemporal space of the modern art museum. Despite its often negative connotations, my use of the word

contamination is deliberate. It not only references the idea of inserting a foreign element into the gallery, but also speaks to the sterile, laboratory-like aesthetic of the white cube and its tendency to display artworks as specimens for disinterested contemplation. By examining the dancer as a trespasser or contaminant, my intention is to frame dance as a transformative force. Contamination results in mixing, catalyzing change and giving rise to new configurations of modern art museum space.

1. The White Cube

Brian O'Doherty was the first to submit the modern art gallery to sustained critical scrutiny,⁴⁵ directing our gaze beyond the contours of the art object to its exhibition context.⁴⁶ At the time of his writing in 1976, the pristine, unadorned 'white cube' had already become the international standard for displaying western modern and postmodern art, and, with few exceptions, it remains the quintessential design for modern and contemporary gallery interiors.⁴⁷ In the twenty-first century, characteristics of the white cube continue to be reproduced in independent galleries and institutionalized by art

⁴⁵ O'Doherty's criticism first appeared as a series of essays published in *Art Forum*.

⁴⁶ O'Doherty's project can be situated within a broader turn towards context over the course of the last century. In an introduction to O'Doherty's essays, Thomas McEvelley notes 'context' had come to dominate twentieth century thought. The modern focus on specialization and disciplinarity was redirected to the boundaries between subjects. In the art world, context gained increasing importance, until it eventually "devour[ed] the object, becoming it" (McEvelley 7), resulting in installation and environmental art. Reflecting on this cultural preoccupation with context, McEvelley writes "[i]t has been the special genius of our century to investigate things in relation to their context, to come to see the context as formative on the thing, and, finally, to see the context as a thing itself" (7). O'Doherty's essays examine the white cube as the 'thing itself': an ideologically charged system of aesthetics, shaping the perceptual experience of the spectator and the status of the art objects contained within its walls.

⁴⁷ While O'Doherty's description is focused on the white cube gallery, his observations can arguably be applied to the spatial practices of modern art museums, with their standard white cube interiors.

museums throughout the world. It is due to this ubiquity that the white cube, “more than any single picture, may be the archetypal image of twentieth century art” (O’Doherty 14). Today, amidst the globalization of art and homogenization of museums, O’Doherty’s description of the white cube as “everywhere the same place” continues to resonate (87).

By virtue of its ‘neutral’ design and widespread adoption as *the* backdrop for exhibiting art, the white cube is often falsely associated with previous ambiguous notions of space as an “empty area” (Lefebvre 1) or “pre-existing void” (170). Countering this view of the gallery as a disinterested, empty container, O’Doherty’s project reframes the white cube as an active agent, influencing and, at times, overpowering our encounter with art. Near the outset of his first essay, O’Doherty observes, “[t]he history of modernism is intimately framed by that space; or rather the history of modern art can be correlated with changes in that space and in the way we see it. We have now reached a point where we see not the art but the *space* first. (A cliché of the age is to ejaculate over the space on entering a gallery.)” (14). While the sexualized metaphor of ‘ejaculating’ in response to the exhibition space captures the climactic role of context in the reception of art, O’Doherty’s statement can also be read in sharp contrast to his own description of the properties of the white cube.

The evocation of sensual pleasure (and bodily fluids) diverges from the sanitized, aphysical and unchanging space of the white cube gallery. In O’Doherty’s initial analysis of the white cube, he describes it as an “[u]nshadowed, white, clean,” and “artificial” space “devoted to the technology of [a]esthetics” (15). In this context, he writes,⁴⁸

⁴⁸ O’Doherty’s description of the white cube continues to be foundational to discourses surrounding gallery design, so it is worthwhile to quote from this passage at length.

Works of art are mounted, hung, scattered for study. Their ungrubby surfaces are untouched by time and its vicissitudes. Art exists in a kind of eternity of display, and though there is lots of ‘period’ (late modern), there is no time. This eternity gives the gallery a limbolike status; one has to have died already to be there.

Indeed the presence of that odd piece of furniture, your body, seems superfluous, an intrusion. The space offers the thought that while eyes and minds are welcome, space-occupying bodies are not – or are tolerated only as kinaesthetic mannequins for further study. (O’Doherty 15)

A close reading of this single passage reveals three key ways in which the white cube gallery is constructed to produce a purified environment that is seemingly elevated out of the flow of time. First, in this context, visitors are urged to adopt a pure visual-mental state, liberated from the temporality associated with other sense experiences. Second, the art, immaculately preserved, appears eternal and unchanging. Third, the white cube as an aesthetic system has been purged of extraneous elements and the temporality of everyday experience.

The typical white cube gallery is deliberately unwelcoming to the flesh – there is no touching or eating, conversations are hushed, and the body is met with expanses of hard surfaces and a general lack of seating (McEvelley 10). The other senses, time-bound and more intimately connected with the body, are diminished in favour of visual experience. Sanitized of these ‘baser’ senses, the white cube represents a “Cartesian paradox,” where the body is reluctantly accepted as an unavoidable intrusion shuttling the gaze of the visitor throughout the space (O’Doherty 15). For O’Doherty, the impetus to cleanse the white cube of the flesh culminates with the convention of the installation shot,

which jettisons the body altogether. Through photography, the visitor is transformed into pure vision – a disincarnated eye, who is “there without being there” (O’Doherty 15).⁴⁹ Inside the white cube the visitors are seemingly dematerialized, temporarily liberated from both their flesh and spatio-temporal coordinates. Through favouring the eye and mind, the white cube seems to offer visitors a temporary reprieve from the hostile effects of time.

In addition to describing the purified vision of the white cube, O’Doherty’s account also captures how the design of the gallery and the art on display serve to create an environment seemingly liberated from the effects of time. His depiction of the white cube as an immaculate shadowless white space composed of man-made surfaces evokes an unchanging, “limbolike” context (15). The white cube evokes purity through the concepts of visibility and hygiene, while its unchanging manmade aesthetic distinguishes it from the disorder of the outside world and its inescapable temporality.

The purified, static environment of the gallery is extended to the collections on display, as O’Doherty references the “ungrubby surfaces” of the art (15). While dirt and decay point both to impurity and the passage of time, the sterility of the white cube reinforces its supposed eternity – its apparent resistance to change. The white cube thus “clarifies itself through a process of historical inevitability usually attached to the art it contains” (14). Ostensibly untouched by time, the white cube thus not only promotes an unchanging view of art and the narrative it represents, but it also suggests the space itself is permanent and neutral.

⁴⁹ While the digitization of museum collections in the twenty-first century supports democratic access to art online, it can also be viewed as an extension of the ocularcentrism described by O’Doherty, which reduces the reception of art to pure vision.

Since O'Doherty's initial publication, the white cube has been the subject of numerous critiques, which focus on its purified and unchanging atmosphere and the ideologies it represents.⁵⁰ For instance, in examining the archetypes of modern art installation, Germano Celant has described the "ideal" space of the modernist gallery as "an aseptic container full of visual cotton fluff" (267). In this space, artworks assume a state of "contextual dematerialization" (Celant 267). They are apprehended as "uncontaminated and virginal material" (267), as opposed to the manifestation of messy creative processes situated within a complex web of meaning making. Aseptic, uncontaminated and virginal – the descriptors in Celant's analysis evoke a purified space unsullied and unchanged by human presence.

Jim Drobnick has similarly critiqued the white cube's "state of purity" by focusing on the anosmia of this ocularcentric space (265). For Drobnick, the white cube's lack of odors "defends a pretence toward universality," which helps position it as "a zero-degree status of display" (265). The gallery thus acts as "the mythic fundament out of which art objects emerge *ex nihilo*" (Drobnick 265). In the purified and unchanging context of the white cube, the art appears to materialize from nothing as the product of divine creation. And, in the modern art museum, it is the artist-genius who is the Creator.

Juhani Pallasmaa has also commented on the white cube's "forceful detachment" of art from its context of production ("Museum as an Embodied Experience" 206). Using Francis Bacon's chaotic studio as an example, Pallasmaa argues that the "mountains of

⁵⁰ It should be noted that Charlotte Klonk has termed O'Doherty's depiction of the hermetic white cube a "fiction" (218). In tracing its historical development, Klonk has argued that the white cube was intended to provide a "flowing", "open", "flexible and adaptable" exhibition space (218). In contrast to these practical aims, however, O'Doherty's account of the white cube's hermetic, static and sanitized effects continues to resonate with modern art museum interiors into the twenty-first century.

paint, rags, paper, publications, and so forth on the floor, exemplifies the perceptual distance between the spaces in which artistic works are made and displayed” (“Museum as an Embodied Experience” 206). While the studio context in which art is often produced is multisensory and process-oriented, the hermetic space of the white cube imposes a sense of purity and stability on the art it contains. And, while decontextualization and ocularcentrism operate in tandem within the white cube to promote a purified visual and product-oriented relationship to the art on display, this context is also purified by virtue of its whiteness. As Pallasmaa has observed, the default white backdrop of modern art museum interiors is not only “far from any objective perceptual neutrality,” it also contains “hidden moralistic tones” (“Museum as an Embodied Experience” 205).⁵¹

In this brief sampling of literature, language patterns across these critical discourses already become evident. The white cube is described as an uncontaminated space that abolishes time in favour of fixity. And, while purity and atemporality may initially appear as two distinct characteristics of the white cube, I argue these concepts are deeply entwined. Indeed, in *Purity and Danger*, Mary Douglas establishes their interrelationship. “In chasing dirt, in papering, decorating, tidying,” she writes, “we...are positively re-ordering our environment, making it conform to an idea. There is nothing fearful or unreasoning in our dirt-avoidance: it is a creative movement, an attempt to relate form to function, to make unity of experience” (3). As this short passage indicates,

⁵¹ In tracing the evolution of the modern gallery, Charlotte Klonk has noted that the popularization of displaying art against white walls was “a modern notion originating in the 1920s” (123). However, despite its cultural construction as a ‘neutral’ backdrop, “white never quite lost its association with purity, particularly since this fitted into a modern concern for hygiene and functional simplicity” (Klonk 122).

the creation of a unified experience functions as a purifying act. To unify is to expel difference, disruption and disorder. To unify is to cultivate stability, negating transformation, and therefore time. Moreover, in adapting our surroundings to an idea, we recalibrate our lived, time-bound environment according to the atemporality and purity of thought.

Thomas McEvelley points to the interrelationship between purity and atemporality within the white cube, describing the gallery as a “device that attempted to *bleach out* the past and at the same time control the future by appealing to supposedly transcendental modes of presence and power” (McEvelley 11, emphasis mine). He continues on, comparing the white cube to “Plato’s vision of a higher metaphysical realm where form, shiningly attenuated and abstract like mathematics, is utterly disconnected from the life of human experience below” (McEvelley 11). Here, McEvelley deploys the cleansing metaphor of ‘bleaching’ to describe the obliteration of time within the gallery. And, by aligning the white cube with the abstract and stable plane of mathematics, he further depicts the entwinement of purity and atemporality within this transcendent space.

In the following sections I will identify three key areas in which these interrelated concepts of purity and atemporality operate within modern art museums. First, I will address the purification of vision in modern art museums. Next, I will analyze their sanitized and stable design. Then, I will examine the static art historical narratives these institutions typically privilege. Finally, these multiple dimensions of purity and fixity will be positioned in tension with the collaborative and performance-based art of dance. By expanding upon Boris Charmatz’s theorization of a ‘dancing museum’ I will argue that

dance is a contaminating force, opening up the museum to process and plurality, contradiction and change.

1.1 Vision Disincarnate

Despite Michel Foucault's immense popularity in the field of museum studies,⁵² his body of work offers only a few "fragmentary" discussions of museums (Hetherington 467). For the purposes of my discussion, however, one of his most notable references to the museum appears in the essay "Of Other Spaces," in which he contrasts the temporality of the museum with that of the festival. In the essay, Foucault details his theorization of heterotopias as "counter-sites" that represent, contest, and invert real spaces within a culture (Foucault 231). According to Foucault, these counter-sites typically offer us an "absolute break" from our general relationship to time, and he illustrates this fact by describing two types of heterotopias with opposing temporal structures (234).

The first type consists of heterotopias that present us with "indefinitely accumulating time," for which Foucault uses the museum as an example (234). These counter-sites act as a "place of all times," while simultaneously being, "outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages" (Foucault 234). This "perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile place" is a modern notion (Foucault 234), which is exemplified by the atemporal context of the white cube. The second type of heterotopia expresses time "in its most flowing, transitory, precarious aspect," such as fairs (234).⁵³

Although Foucault's descriptions clearly capture the contrasting temporalities of these

⁵² Steven Conn refers to Foucault as "the patron saint of the new museum studies" (3).

⁵³ As museums increasingly channel their resources towards temporary exhibitions to encourage repeat visits, the temporal distinction between these two types of heterotopias arguably becomes less clear-cut.

two types of counter-sites, the museum and the festival are also markedly different in terms of the sensory experiences they tend to offer. I argue that the sensory organization of these sites makes significant contributions to structuring their respective temporalities. While the festival is a multisensory environment, the museum is organized around the purification of vision.

Popular ‘lower’ entertainments, such as the festival described by Foucault, flood the senses with stimulation. These environments are characterized by what Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett terms “sensory saturation,” and are culturally associated with spectacle, hedonism, and excess (*Destination Culture* 58). Through multimodal aesthetic stimuli, these events force the visitor into a state of “selective disattention, or highly disciplined attention” (58).⁵⁴ Not only rendered impure through sensory excess, these environments are brimming with time-bound sense experiences that are ephemeral in nature. The “flowing, transitory, precarious” temporality of the festival (Foucault 234) thus not only stems from its temporary occupation of a site. By offering multisensory stimulation, the festival promotes a fleeting relationship to time through the natural interplay of transient tastes, smells, noises, and kinesthetic stimuli that erupt and dissipate through time.

In the seminal essay “The Nobility of Sight: A Study in the Phenomenology of the Senses,” Hans Jonas distinguishes the temporality of sight from all other sense experiences. According to Jonas’ analysis, the non-visual senses are “time-bound” because they orient us to the world through a “sequence of sensations,” that are woven

⁵⁴ At the festival, events materialize in different locations, as opposed to within a “hermetically sealed...aesthetic space created by a proscenium, frame, or vitrine” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture* 58).

together (136). For instance, a song is never wholly present at any given moment; rather it becomes an ‘acoustic object,’ synthesized and experienced sequentially in the listener’s mind (138). Thus, non-visual sense experiences are always unfinished, as their “content is never simultaneously present as a whole” (Jonas 136). This partiality and incompleteness lends the non-visual senses a “fugitive quality,” as they are inextricable from time (Jonas 136).

In contrast to the evanescent ‘sensory saturation’ of the festival, the modern art museum is organized around the purification of vision. As Kirshenblatt-Gimblett observes, within the western cultural paradigm, there is a modern tendency to compartmentalize the senses and “parcel them out one at a time to the appropriate art form” (*Destination Culture* 57).⁵⁵ Consequently, a popular trajectory of ‘high art’ in the west became organized around the increasing purification of artistic media.⁵⁶ And, alongside art, cultural environments underwent a parallel process of purification, organized around the artificial isolation of the senses.^{57, 58} In the case of the modern art

⁵⁵ Caroline A. Jones has argued that the isolation of vision within modernist art was characteristic of a broader cultural “bureaucratization of the senses” (389). Within modernity, as the government became increasingly segmented as the ruling body politic, the body of the individual became equally segmented as the sensorium was divided into specialized and purified sense experiences (xix). In the visual arts, this segmentation of the senses provided the context for formalism to take root as a critical approach to art (389).

⁵⁶ For an in-depth discussion of this narrative of purification, see Chapter Four.

⁵⁷ Notably, the separation and isolation of the senses was not limited to vision. Parallel to the rise of formalism in art and the proliferation of the white cube, Jones observes “‘the isolation of sound,’ and the need to separate it from the thinking self, became the grail of acoustic science” (406). The aim was to amplify a single sensory experience through the dulling of other sensory stimulation. In acoustic sciences, this meant the construction of a ‘dead’ room, the term for a space with ideal sound conditions (406). Not only does the dead room parallel the white cube by providing the means to isolate and amplify a single sense experience, as a result of the elimination of other stimuli, these spaces are both

museum, visual isolation was encouraged by the “hush...built into MoMA’s 1939 international-style galleries,” which subsequently “characterized all the gypsum-wall ‘white cubes’ from that moment forth” (Jones 406). Moreover, guards patrol the gallery to ensure that “decorum prevails” and nothing distracts from the intended aesthetic experience (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture* 57). Designed to facilitate a “single-sense epiphany” (58) the hermetic white cube not only dulls the non-visual senses, it intensifies vision, thus fulfilling “the modernist imperative to address and *purify* sensory input” (Jones 407, emphasis mine).

The isolation and distillation of vision not only contributes to the purity of the modern art museum space, it also adds to its atemporality. While the majority of our sense experiences are ‘time-bound’, vision is distinct in its capacity to instantaneously apprehend “a complete visual field” all-at-once (Jonas 137). This is not to say that our sense of vision is absolute and all encompassing; rather, it is uniquely able to present us with a seemingly stable image, in a single glance. As a result, vision possesses a stronger relationship to the dimension of space, while providing a diminished sense of time. In describing eyesight from a phenomenological perspective, Jonas observes that, “[a] view comprehends many things juxtaposed, as co-existent parts of one field of vision” (136). Through eyesight, our heterogeneous surroundings are unified and purified, transformed into a single image. And, in contrast to the non-visual senses, this apprehension takes place instantaneously: “as in a flash one glance, an opening of the eyes,” the world

associated with a type of purgatory or *death* that seals out the multisensuality of lived experience.

⁵⁸ Kirshenblatt-Gimblett acknowledges that there are notable exceptions to this single-sense structure, such as opera; however, western ‘high’ art as a whole tends towards specialization and isolation of the senses (*Destination Culture* 57).

appears as “co-present qualities spread out in space, ranged in depth, continuing into indefinite distance” (136). By enabling us to survey our surroundings as a “static order” extending away from our vantage point, vision is distinct in its distancing and atemporal effect (136).⁵⁹

When isolated, these properties of vision colour our reception of art, promoting a unified, stable and detached experience within the modern art museum. As Salomé Voegelin has argued, in this ocularcentric space, museumgoers are coerced into adopting a meta-position that synthesizes “one representation, one transparent knowledge about the work” (119). When purified, vision tends to apprehend art as “totality rather than sense it as process” (119). Importantly, the ocularcentric atemporality of the modern art museum extends beyond the exhibition context. Through installation shots, catalogues and imaged-based reproductions, works of art, exhibitions, and, by extension, art history, are transformed into seemingly fixed and self-contained products, which circulate the museum’s physical boundaries.

By encouraging a visual relationship to the art on display, the modern art museum neglects the body in favour of the mind and spirit. As Martin Jay observes, as early as the ancient Greeks, vision is distinguished from the other senses. In Plato’s *Timaeus* (c. 360 BC), the creation of sight is aligned with the birth of intelligence and the soul, while the

⁵⁹ In contrast to the properties of visual isolation described by Jonas, it is important to note that dance, despite being perceived visually, is ultimately a multisensual art apprehended by the whole body (Daly, “Dance History” 307). Instead of contributing to the stable visual field Jonas describes, dance’s visual elements are inherently embodied and kinesthetic in nature. Dance is seen, but its visual elements are inseparable from an embodied sense of how the movement might ‘feel’ if experienced firsthand. Thus, while we ‘watch’ dance, we do not perceive this art through eyesight alone. And, its visual elements, produced through movement, do not offer a reprieve from time. The integrated sense experience of witnessing dance is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three.

remaining senses are associated with the materiality of man (Jay 26).⁶⁰ Furthermore, Jonas notes that, throughout western thought, sight has been used to “furnish the analogues for the intellectual upperstructure” (Jonas 135). In fact, dating back to Greek philosophy, “[t]he noblest activity of the mind, *theoria*, is described in metaphors mostly taken from the visual sphere” (Jonas 135). While the time-bound senses have been linked to the mutability of the sensual world, the recurring association between vision and the apprehension of ‘immobile forms’ arguably derives from the perceived atemporality of this sense experience.

Thus, while the term ‘high’ culture evokes notions of purity by implying a rarefied or elevated cultural plane, the ocularcentrism of the modern art museum also produces a purified environment linked to the ‘higher’ territory of the mind and spirit. O’Doherty describes the ocularcentric white cube as an “elastic space we can identify with Mind” (O’Doherty 87), and McEvelley similarly contends that “the white cube promotes the myth that we are there essentially as spiritual beings – the Eye is the *Eye of the Soul* – we are to be understood as tireless and above the vicissitudes of chance and change” (10). Purified within the white cube, vision therefore transforms “intrusive reality” into “contained appearance” and replaces the flow of “existence” with the stability of “essence” (Jonas 31). As a heterotopia, the museum thus not only accumulates time through the collection and conservation of objects as Foucault describes; it also

⁶⁰ Vision has been privileged throughout Western thought for either its capacity for “pure sight of perfect and immobile forms with ‘the eye of the mind’ or as the impure but immediately experienced sight of the actual two eyes” (Jay 29). These two dominant interpretations of vision are distinctive – either the noble eye is attuned to the unmoving plane of forms, or our sense of sight uniquely possesses the capacity for instant apprehension. Although these interpretations differ, they both ultimately dissociate vision from the innate temporality of lived-experience.

arrests time through the purification of vision. Isolated and amplified within the hermetic space of the white cube, vision encourages a disincarnated and purified intellectual-spiritual relationship to the art on display, while diminishing the evanescence of embodied experience.

1.2 'Limbolike' Design

This distillation and purification of vision, and the atemporal plane it represents, was not always built into the physical design of modern art museums. When the first modern art museums emerged in New York, their interiors were disparate. From the domestic to the carnivalesque, these early museums offered a range of sensual relationships to the art on display.⁶¹ Nevertheless, by the Second World War, the white cube aesthetic promoted by the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York had become “the dominant idiom for international museums” (Klonk 13). The proliferation of the white cube gallery has perpetuated its perceived neutrality. Designed in accordance with the seemingly eternal aesthetic of International Style, and varying minimally across time and space, the white cube appears to have staved off its own evolution through its status as an atemporal and purified exhibition context. This has contributed to its misrepresentation as an objectively neutral and atemporal space, exempt from the vagaries of style.⁶²

⁶¹ See Chapter Three for a discussion of alternative, multisensual museum designs.

⁶² Similar to the white cube's homogenizing effect on museum interiors, the history of modern architecture has been sanitized of alternative approaches to design. For instance, Ada Louise Huxtable notes that Art Deco, which gave rise to the entirely modern invention of the skyscraper, has been omitted from dominant histories. Its “embroidered” surface has been relegated to the footnotes of history, its embellishment incompatible with the formal ideologies of International Style (“Skyscraper” 140).

Indeed, the popularization of the white cube has had a homogenizing effect on modern and contemporary art museums. And, as early as the 1930s, the white cube design also began to colonize pre-modern galleries, with “[m]useums like the National Gallery in London and the Nationalgalerie in Berlin los[ing] their colourful walls and period details” (Klonk 195). These “modernisation campaigns” (195) have only recently been reverted through meticulous restoration projects (196). While certain galleries are being returned to their former, period-specific splendor, the white cube remains the default context for exhibiting modern and contemporary art. Despite the fact art is always transforming, the exhibition contexts of modern and contemporary art museums remain “strikingly uniform” (196). In other words, while the context for displaying art is potentially as mutable as the art it contains, the white cube’s supposed neutrality has *neutralized* alternative design approaches.

Designed according to the tenets of International Style, the white cube serves to coerce the visitor into assuming a purified visual relationship to the art on display. With its immaculate, unornamented, and ocularcentric design, the modern art museum epitomizes Kirshenblatt-Gimblett’s description of “pristine” ‘high’ culture contexts “in which the object of contemplation is set off for riveting attention” (*Destination Culture* 57). While our experience of architecture has the capacity to be time-bound and multisensory (Pallasmaa, “Hapticity and Time” 78, 80), modern architecture overwhelmingly presents users with an “instant visual image” through its emphasis on geometric form (78). Exemplified in the white cube, this “architecture of eternal geometry” is constructed around a homogenizing and “singular concept or image” that closes in to detail instead of opening up to possibility (82). Juhani Pallasmaa has argued

that, in pursuit of the “perfectly articulated autonomous artefact, the main line of Modernist architecture has preferred materials and surfaces that seek the effect of flatness, immaterial abstractness and timelessness” (“Hapticity and Time” 79), which aptly describes the white cube. Rather than engage the body in a meaningful way, the evenly lit geometric surfaces of the modern art museum, appeal predominantly to the sense of sight. Moreover, its autonomous and complete formal design is hostile towards time. Perfection leaves no room for change.

In Plato’s *Philebus*, the philosopher distinguishes organic and imperfect beauty from the unique satisfaction derived from perfect geometry. According to his argument, the “straight lines and circles, and the plane solid figures which are formed out of them by turning-lathes and rulers and measurers of angles” are “not only relatively beautiful,” but are “eternally and absolutely beautiful” (236). For Karsten Harries, “the bloodless beauty” described by Plato has a “perennial appeal” (63). This is because “the beauty of inorganic, geometric forms...belongs to the spirit, not to the body,” an observation underscored by the fact that the body alone is incapable of producing such perfection (Harries 63). While form appeals to the purified plane of the spirit, it also introduces atemporality through the “ideals of perfection and completeness” (Pallasmaa, “Hapticity and Time” 79). By appealing to “being” and not “becoming” (Harries 63), modern art museums, with their geometric white cube interiors, offer a temporary escape from time.

In his essay “Ornament and Crime,” Adolf Loos anticipates the formalism of International Style, and advocates the eradication of ornament. In the text, Loos contends “*The evolution of culture is synonymous with the removal of ornament from objects of daily use*” (30, emphasis in original). According to Loos, the seemingly useless,

superficial detail added by ornamentation is wasteful of “human labour, money and material” (31), making it a crime against the “national economy” as well as “its cultural development” (32). Moreover, Loos argues the addition of ornamentation or ‘style’ causes a design to expire before it is no longer functional (34). Cleansed of ornamentation or materials that would make the space fall victim to the passage of time, the white cube gallery is often viewed as a neutral space, radically efficient, and impervious to change.

In addition to his economic argument, Loos’ text associates ornamentation with criminality, amorality, and degeneracy (29). Conversely, he declares that a “lack of ornament is a sign of intellectual power” (36), and that “[o]rnamment can no longer be borne by someone who exists at our level of culture” (35). Thus, Loos equates the stripping away of surface detail in favor of timeless form with moral and cultural superiority. In Loos’ racist analysis, ornamentation is the pathology of undeveloped, unsophisticated cultures, and accordingly, it can be argued the white cube not only represents a purity (or simplicity) of design, but also a purity of spirit.⁶³

While the typical interiors of modern art museums promote purity and atemporality through formalist design, these spaces also evoke these characteristics through their ‘sacred’ status. The continued reproduction of the white cube in modern art museums throughout the world has not only made it the archetypal gallery design, it has also established the white cube as a sacred space for experiencing art. In writing about the role of architecture in arresting the flow of time, Harries writes, “[t]he traditional

⁶³ Loos deems ornamentation immoral because it is excessive. He dismisses superficial decoration as “unaesthetic,” comparing it to “the flinging of gold coins instead of pebbles, the lighting of a cigarette with a banknote, [and] the pulverization and drinking of a pearl” (35).

symbolism of temple, church, or house, which establishes a particular building as a repetition of some divine archetype, lets those worshipping or dwelling in it participate in a timeless archetypal pattern” (Harries 62). By the time O’Doherty wrote his critical analysis of the white cube in 1976, it had arguably already become an ‘archetypal pattern’ reproduced “along laws as rigorous as those for building a medieval church” (O’Doherty 15). Constructed according to a relatively narrow set of criteria, the typical gallery has an ‘artifying’ effect on anything deposited within its white walls. “In this context,” O’Doherty writes, “a standing ashtray becomes almost a *sacred* object” (15, emphasis mine). As a “technology of [a]esthetics” (O’Doherty 15), the white cube not only renders art static as a decontextualized product, it promotes atemporality as a sacred and purified temple for the worship of art.

Thus far, I have drawn upon philosophical texts and art and architectural theory to establish the atemporal and purified properties of white cube design. However, these inquiries are easily grounded in architectural criticism and practice. The Breuer building, which, until recently, housed the Whitney Museum of American Art⁶⁴ (and figures in the introduction of this dissertation), is an iconic example of modern art museum design and modernist architecture in general. Completed in 1966 and designed by Marcel Breuer, an “architect’s architect” credited for his role in importing European modernism to America in the 1930s (Huxtable, “Harsh and Handsome” 49), the building’s exterior is comprised of an inverted stack of boxes that looms over Madison Avenue. Inside the brutalist

⁶⁴ During the writing of this dissertation, the Whitney moved into its new purpose-built space in New York’s Meatpacking District, however the Breuer building continues to provide a backdrop for twentieth and twenty-first century art. In March 2016, the Metropolitan Museum of Art reopened the building under the name Met Breuer as the site of its modern and contemporary art programs.

pyramid, the mostly windowless white galleries are capped off with a repeating ceiling motif: a relentless grid of squares set in relief. While the dimensions of Breuer's design are not consistently cubic, the effect of his hard-angled boxes, completed in shades of white and grey, reproduces the formal modern aesthetic outlined by O'Doherty: clean, geometric, unmoving and linked to the realm of ideas.⁶⁵

A close reading of two 1966 reviews of the Whitney's Breuer building in the *New York Times* reveal remarkable parallels with O'Doherty's conceptualization of the white cube as a hermetic and transcendental space. While Ada Louise Huxtable's reviews predate O'Doherty's project by a decade, she employs similar language to describe the design of the then-new museum. The title of her first review—"Harsh and Handsome: The New Whitney Is Superbly Suited For an Art that Thrives on Isolation"—implicitly genders the Breuer building with the adjectives "harsh" and "handsome." In the body of the review, she refers to the museum as "less than pretty" and emphasizes its masculine interior ("Harsh and Handsome" 49). This gendered language is reproduced in Huxtable's second review, which describes the building's flame-treated gray granite as "one of the handsomest stones to be seen in New York," and dubs the design "suave-brutal" ("Art: The Whitney" D25), personifying the building with a masculine charm.

Huxtable praises Breuer's severe modernist design for its capacity to sequester art away from the outside world. Huxtable reports that the Breuer building pairs "deceptive and esoteric austerity" with "the most sophisticated technology" to produce "a total 20th-century phenomenon: a superb artificial environment for an art that maintains it is part of its time, but thrives best in hothouse isolation. The Whitney is a splendid hothouse"

⁶⁵ Interestingly, this design is quite distinct from the original Whitney, which exhibited art amidst the latest trends in domestic interiors (see Hankins).

("Harsh and Handsome" 57). Anticipating O'Doherty, Huxtable introduces the Whitney as a transcendent context, where art *of the time* can be housed *out of time*, ostensibly isolated from the processes and conditions of production and impervious to its conditions of reception.

This annulment of time is one of the ways Breuer's design operates as a "technology of [a]esthetics" (O'Doherty 15), having a transforming effect on the objects displayed within its galleries. Huxtable observes: "There is a curious mixture of crushed automobile fenders (sculpture), objets trouvés (art), and electric tools and equipment (construction). It is rumored that a shovel stood by a wall for a week until its status was settled" ("Harsh and Handsome" 57). This humorous statement reiterates the 'artifying' power of the white cube, which endows the most secular objects with a sacred aura through the act of decontextualization. Utilitarian objects are stripped of the temporality of the productive world, and transformed by the limbo context of the gallery. Huxtable also remarks upon the aestheticizing effect Breuer's design has on the streetscape outside, commenting on the building's "trapezoidal windows that offer occasional exotically-framed glimpses of the ordinary world" ("Art: The Whitney" D25). The ideal design of the building transforms the ordinary into the aesthetic, purifying glimpses of the sensual world beyond the museum's wall by converting them into foreign and artistic vistas.

This hostility towards the body, paired with a transcendental atmosphere, serves an ideological purpose. Excised from the outside world, art is divorced from its manner of production and converted into something pure and timeless, supporting a heroic narrative away from the plane of experience. It is perhaps because of this annulment of space and time that the white cube has successfully staved off its own evolution. A

historical product solidified through exhibition “habits, which become conventions, which become laws” (O’Doherty 27), the white cube has managed to maintain its transcendental status as the ideal space for showing modern and contemporary art, despite emerging as the manifestation of modern ideologies nearly a century ago.

1.3 *The History of Modern Art*

Inside the white cube, art is displayed as the product of a virginal birth, separate from the messy creative processes that gave rise to it. For the most part, the art, like the museum space, appears as an unchanging, self-contained product, complete without the viewer and indifferent to his or her presence. However, in addition to these acts of decontextualization and preservation, the art also contributes to the purity and atemporality of the museum through the narrative it is used to support. In the white cube, art is redeployed to make visible a unified and stable art historical narrative, told from an omniscient viewpoint.

Throughout the history of modern art museums, art has overwhelmingly been organized to tell a chronological narrative of progress. As both a “philosophy of history” (Lubar 170) and “information architecture” (170), the chronological timeline often appears as neutral, natural, and objective (169-170). However, Steven Lubar cautions this strategy for organizing the past is charged with suppositions regarding “the narrative structure of history”, “the primacy of chronological understanding”, and the inevitability of progress (Lubar 169). As the spatial organization of time, a chronological exhibition lays out history as a stable and unidirectional path in which the visitor moves metaphorically “from the beginning of the story to the end,” seemingly “re-creat[ing]

historical time” with their locomotion through the static gallery (169).⁶⁶ Commonly used in modern art museums, chronological exhibitions allow visitors to walk through – *while paradoxically experiencing a reprieve from* – time. Through the art, history is depicted as a series of periods each leading to the next and frozen within the white cube. This narrative approach produces a static view of the past, aptly summarized by O’Doherty’s observation that although “there is no time” in the white cube, “there is lots of ‘period’” (O’Doherty 15).

Just as the ubiquity of the white cube has established it as *the* neutral setting for exhibiting modern and contemporary art, the ubiquity of the dominant modern art narrative has made it appear as a fixed truth as opposed to a subjective account. Indeed, the seeming fixity of chronology renders it a problematic mode of organizing history. The chronological narrative “removes the storyteller from the story, so that history seems to tell itself,” appearing inevitable (Lubar 170). The seeming naturalness of the timelines as a mode of exhibition organization also promotes the view that museums were always organized this way, which is not the case.⁶⁷ Not only does the chronological timeline

⁶⁶ It is important to note that simply because a museum is organized chronologically, it does not mean that visitors will experience the exhibitions this way. Certain visitors may not be aware of the arrangement, and others may take-short cuts or move through the space in reverse (Lubar 183). While the exhibition arrangement can have a strong influence on the visitors’ movements through space and the narrative of art produced, it does not have total control.

⁶⁷ According to Lubar’s survey of the use of timelines in exhibitions, the first museum to present visitors with a static, chronological arrangement of history was the Musée des Monuments Français. The popularity of the arrangement led to other museums to organize history as periods “frozen in time” (Lubar 173). By the 1850s, British museums had adopted a genealogical approach to art history, collecting works strategically to fill holes in their comprehensive art historical narrative. According to this approach, institutions were “[m]ore interested in great artists than great art” (173). The ultimate goal of chronology was accomplished through the acquisition of “lesser art of great

make it difficult for the museumgoer to imagine how history might have unfolded otherwise (Lubar 170), it also obscures the plurality of history, eradicating anything that cannot be subsumed within the dominant narrative structure. The chronological organization of twentieth century art history thus has had a purifying effect by obscuring the plural, parallel histories of art.⁶⁸

The use of a chronological timeline necessitates “an agreed-upon narrative” (Lubar 174). In terms of modern art, the art historical narrative promoted by MoMA’s founding director Alfred H. Barr Jr. has, without a doubt, had the strongest influence in shaping, reproducing and disseminating the ‘official’ history. Although Barr did not produce the dominant narrative “single-handedly” (Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals* 102), its origins are frequently attributed to the MoMA exhibition *Cubism and Abstract Art*, which he curated in 1936. Not only did this exhibition depict historical progression spatially through a linear row of paintings, the catalogue included a now-famous flowchart depicting the antecedents, descendants, chronology and causality of modern art.⁶⁹ Ultimately, this particular account of modernism has had a tremendous impact on the history of modern art, not only functioning as an “organizing narrative” for MoMA

artists” (Lubar 174). Within this logic of acquisitions, it is the chronological narrative that takes precedence over the individual works on display.

⁶⁸ And, as I discuss in Chapter Four, this narrative overwhelmingly supports the work of white, male ‘geniuses,’ which *purifies* the history of art of marginalized artists and their perspectives.

⁶⁹ It should be noted that Barr continued to revise the chart, treating it as a living document as opposed to a “definitive” history (“Hand-Drawn Chart”). Interestingly, *Cubism and Abstract Art* was the inaugural exhibition in a series of five exhibitions, curated between 1936-1943, focusing on key movements in modern art (“Hand-Drawn Chart”). However, as Lubar and many others have claimed, “[w]ith Barr’s exhibition *Cubism and Abstract Art*,” consisting of a single row of chronologically organized art, “the modern display tradition was born” (Lubar 175).

(Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals* 102), but also proliferating formal art-historical education, popular conceptions of art, and modern art museums throughout the world.⁷⁰

During the postmodern era, the supposedly neutral timeline fell under attack for its hegemonic promotion of a “conveyor belt of history” (Serota, *Experience or Interpretation* 55).⁷¹ Museums began to diversify their approaches of exhibition organization, transforming the timeline into simply one method for displaying museum collections. While thematic exhibitions have become more commonplace, this mode of exhibition organization has not always been well received by critics. American art critic Jed Perl went so far as to accuse Tate Modern’s thematic organization as an attempt “to

⁷⁰ As Carol Duncan notes, “modern museums (and modern wings in older museums) continue to retell its [MoMA’s] central gospel, as do almost all history of art textbooks” in American and European contexts (*Civilizing Rituals* 102).

⁷¹ Diverging from the chronological narrative popularized by MoMA, Tate Modern regularly rehanges their permanent collection according to thematic clusters. Interestingly, however, when I completed my fieldwork at Tate Modern in the spring of 2014, chronology continued to permeate the institution. A massive timeline, forty metres in length, filled the concourse wall outside the permanent collection galleries. Commissioned by Tate Modern in 2006 and completed by Sara Fanelli, the timeline plotted the ‘isms’ of modern art as well as notable artists. Through the linear organization of art history according to ‘noteworthy’ artists are movements, the timeline ultimately reinforced a modernist view of art as epochal and advanced by the contributions of individual geniuses. Although Fanelli’s handwritten timeline was intended to depict the dynamism of art history, its installation outside the permanent galleries and mass production as a foldout paper timeline available through the Tate Shop, both serve to reinforce the permanence and authority of a particular art historical narrative. Moreover, the backwards, colonizing gaze of the timeline was evidenced by the fact the timeline ends in 2000, the year Tate Modern was opened. In addition to the narrativizing effect of the timeline, the museum’s temporary exhibitions imposed a prescriptive route on visitors. They were organized around a single route reinforced by a disposable paper map numbering the galleries chronologically. Thus, despite thematic and rotating hangings, there is still a dominant art historical narrative being reinforced through the museum.

In the fall of 2016 I returned to Tate Modern to discover that Fanelli’s timeline had been removed and thematic hangings filled both the Boiler House (the museum’s original building) and the Switch House (its new structure). Essentially dispensing with the established narrative of modern art, the thematic hangings often brought together artists across time and space, and demonstrated a concerted and impressive effort to represent a more diverse range of artists.

disguise the fact that they have almost no classic modern work worth a visit” (qtd. in Lubar 182). Importantly, it is the ossified narrative originally espoused by MoMA (which conveniently values its own holdings) that continues to play a crucial role in determining what modern art is ‘worth a visit.’ Arguably, this dominant narrative is so deeply entrenched, that even when museums stray from it, their curatorial decisions are inevitably analyzed in relation to the chronological default.

This widespread influence has encouraged an omniscient and unmoving narrative of progress, which complements the modern predilection for master narratives. The history of art is depicted as a “series of moments, each involving a new and unique artistic achievement and each growing out of (or negating) something before it” (Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals* 106). Characterized by “relentless and irreversible” progress, the narrative “is propelled by the efforts of artists who, individually or in teams, work through issues or overcome impasses posed by earlier modern artists” (Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals* 106). This progress is ultimately depicted as an escape from representations of the time-bound world into the atemporal plane of abstraction. At the apex of this narrative is art that appears to be completely manifest at any given moment, liberated from the folds of time.

Duncan has characterized this dominant history as a narrative of ascension in which the artist sheds the visible, material world, as he (and it is overwhelmingly a ‘he’) takes flight into the ‘higher’ plane of abstraction. As Duncan writes, within the ritual space of the modern art museum, the self “strives for spiritual, implicitly male, *purity* by transcending the limited and finite material world” (*Civilizing* 130, emphasis mine). At the acme of this modernist narrative are the “bigger-than-life heroes” of American

Abstract Expressionism, who, “made the final breakthrough into the realm of absolute spirit, manifested as absolute formal and non-representational *purity*” (109, emphasis mine). And, arguably, whatever has come after has been organized according to the logic of this prevailing narrative structure, viewed as a response to the ‘absolute’ mid-century achievement of the purified medium and artist.

Alongside this narrative of purified aesthetic experience and the purification of media, is a narrative of moral purification. Exhibitions, wall text, catalogues, and monographs, reproduce a narrative of self-sacrifice that conflates aesthetic and moral achievement (Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals* 107). While ocularcentrism is associated with cultural refinement and the ‘higher’ plane of ideas, and the museum’s whiteness and lack of ornamentation is associated with cultural ‘superiority’, the art privileged in the dominant narrative of modern art has similar moral undertones. The artist, engaged in a “moral-aesthetic struggle, renounces representation of the visible world in order to connect with an inspiring realm of *purity* and truth that lies beyond it” (Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals* 108). Artistic ‘progress’ is framed as a journey of spiritual and moral accomplishment the visitor is invited to follow. Depicted within the spatial logic of the museum, this narrative of purification becomes a “ritual scenario” in which the visitor participates (106). Through the art, Duncan argues, “viewers enact a drama of enlightenment in which spiritual freedom is won by repeatedly overcoming and moving beyond the visible, material world” (*Civilizing* 109). As visitors travel through the hermetic space of the white cube (and the static history it contains) they too temporarily escape to a purified atemporal space.

While this is, by no means, the only way to understand the history of twentieth century art, nor is it even necessarily an accurate representation of the intentions of individual artists, it is the core narrative individual works of art are deployed to serve within modern art museums (Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals* 109). Its cultural entrenchment has transformed it into a backbone from which other histories diverge. Despite being critiqued and countered by revisionist art histories, this narrative has remained surprisingly stable in the context of modern art museums. Duncan attributes this to the museum's mediating position, answering to board members and trustees, as well as publics "whose expectations are barely touched by the new or revisionist art-historical thinking" (*Civilizing Rituals* 105). Thus, while curators may want to represent alternative genealogies of modern art, they have arguably been restricted by the popularity of this dominant narrative. Indeed, the longevity of the formalist narrative has only helped solidify its seeming stability as *the* history of art from which other stories deviate.

2. Dance as a Contaminant

The purified and atemporal space of the modern art museum raises an important question: what happens when dance, a temporal- and body-based art, enters the white cube, a transcendental chamber divorced from the plane of experience? How might its presence transform the museum and its collections, as well as the experiences of visitors? The remainder of this chapter will position dance as a contaminant to this sterilized and fixed space, as an initial step towards answering these questions. By drawing upon Boris Charmatz's "Manifesto for a Dancing Museum," enhanced by his interview with *Dance Research Journal* and selections from his creative practice, this chapter establishes dance as a transformative addition to the museum. Charmatz's theoretical framework will be

used as the basis to argue that dance as a concept and artistic practice can be used to contaminate the pure and atemporal space of the modern art museum.

2.1 Attacking the Centre

In January of 2009, Charmatz began his tenure as director of the Centre chorégraphique national de Rennes et de Bretagne (CCNRB). The CCNRB is one of 19 Centres chorégraphiques nationaux (NCCs) scattered across 15 of France's 22 regions, established to decentralize dance by nurturing its creation, education, and dissemination outside the nation's capital. As director of the CCNRB, Charmatz has led a rebranding of the choreographic centre as a 'Dancing Museum,' which he publicly declares in his "Manifeste pour un Musée de la danse." Translated as a "Manifesto for a Dancing Museum," the text contends that the joining of dance with the museum will have a revolutionary impact on both of these concepts.

Charmatz's use of the manifesto to call for a radical shift draws upon a lengthy tradition in the arts. In the introduction to the anthology *Manifesto: A Century of Isms*, Mary Ann Caws outlines the standard elements of the artist's manifesto. Central to these texts is the contrarian or combative position they assume as they urge action in the present. Caws observes, "[a]s if defining a moment of crisis, the manifesto generally proclaims what it wants to oppose, to leave, to defend, to change. Its oppositional tone is constructed of *againstness* and generally in a spirit of a one time only moment" (Caws xxiii, italics in original). Consistent with Caws' definition, the "Manifesto for a Dancing Museum" is written as a call to action in the present. Through multiple references to the current context, including "today," this "time in history," and this "exciting era" (2),

Charmatz declares that now is the time in which the museum and dance can be joined to achieve revolutionary results.

Charmatz also captures the tone of ‘againstness’ outlined by Caws through his condemnation of the label ‘National Choreographic Centre.’ He openly critiques this designation for symbolically confining practices to national boundaries and choreographic dance forms. He also takes issue with the word centre, citing that a key aim of the establishment of the NCCs was to decentralize creative practices by promoting dance throughout the country. He writes, “[t]he word ‘Centre’ in National Choreographic Centre is the result of an impressive public policy which has proved that the centre could be plural and multiply elsewhere than in the capital of France” (“Manifesto” 1). Here, Charmatz is referencing a trajectory of decentralization in France, which originated in the activities of the 1970s dance community, and was furthered through a series of pro-dance policies, established in the 1980s under François Mitterrand’s socialist government.

In 1982, Jack Lang, the then-Minister of Arts and Culture, created an autonomous governmental division to handle dance policy and allocate support, and, over the next four years, he quadrupled national dance funding (Gore, Louppe, with Piollet 29). Most notable, however, was Lang’s establishment of the NCCs, which remain “the most visible, and most highly funded dance legacy of this era of rapid expansion in dance” (Gore, Louppe, with Piollet 29). Céline Roux, director of the Association des Centres Chorégraphiques Nationaux, a body overseeing and promoting exchange between the NCCs (4), notes these pro-dance policies emerged at a time when the contemporary dance community in France was grappling with a host of concerns (1). There were issues with “collecting royalties, the actual status of the choreographic artist, work spaces,

support for creation, touring networks, the structuring of both pedagogy and dance transmission, venues for preservation and legacy,” which, according to Roux, “all needed studying in order to improve and find recognition for the art of choreography in France” (1). For Roux, the CCN label, emerging in this unstable context, signified a key moment, “contributing to the institutional recognition of the art of choreography as an autonomous, unique and *plural* art form, needing... a structure supporting creation, research, touring, transmission and conservation, facilitating the validation and appreciation of choreographic culture” (1, emphasis mine).

The ‘plurality’ of dance was reflected in the multifaceted principal missions assigned to the NCCs. An internal memo circulated by France’s Direction de la Musique et de la Danse dated June 18, 1984 instructed each centre to act as a “developmental axis, not limiting its dynamic to its own artistic action” (qtd. in Roux 3). The memo also specified that each NCC “must carry out three of the four principal missions: creation, touring, training, hosting” (qtd. in Roux 3). In 1991, Lang reiterated the importance of plurality specifying “the creative and touring work” of each centre “shall be strengthened by raising awareness of the art of choreography by hosting other companies, an affirmation of aesthetic *plurality*, with a strong training component” (qtd. in Roux 3, emphasis mine). It was also required that each NCC be integrated into its home region on a cultural and choreographic level (Roux 3). The NCC initiative thus not only acknowledged and emphasized the plurality of dance through the promotion of aesthetic and cultural diversity; it also supported the plural activities of creation, touring, training and hosting, which are needed to nurture the development of dance.

Despite this obvious emphasis on plurality and decentralization, the term ‘developmental axis’ also implies the centralization of the aims and activities of these institutions. Moreover, the label ‘National Choreographic Centre’ reflects what is ultimately a choreographer-centred structure. Roux notes that in the 1980s, the NCC designation “mirrored the contemporary landscape of the time, which was considered a *danse d’auteur* (creator’s dance),” and the organization of the NCCs continues to reinforce the primacy of the choreographer by assigning him or her a singular position of power as the director, in charge of determining how creative resources are utilized (2). Thus, while the NCC initiative supports plurality and the decentralization of choreographic activity through the presence of centres distributed across the nation’s regions, the structure of these organizations arguably remains centralized under the singular vision of the choreographer-director and arranged around the central spine of a ‘developmental axis.’

For Charmatz then, the current moment is one in which the NCC designation has become a limiting one, organized around the binary thinking of centralized or decentralized practices. In order to extend the trajectory of 1980s policies, he writes, “a further emancipation must be expressed today: the question of centre and decentralization would then give way to a space where such issues would continue to surface only in traces” (Charmatz, “Manifesto” 1). According to Charmatz, this emancipation would be accomplished through reconceptualizing the NCC as a ‘Dancing Museum.’

To support this move away from an identifiable ‘centre,’ Charmatz employs the double meaning of this word in the field of dance. While ‘centre’ denotes a hub for training and creation, he notes that the ‘centre’ “resonates physically first of all” as the

core of the body, facilitating strength and balance, and providing the impetus for movement (“Manifesto” 1). Charmatz’s proposed abandonment of the NCC label parallels a shift away from the ‘centre’ in dominant approaches to dance movement. “Not so long ago,” Charmatz observes, “the dancer, when he was training, was systematically told to ‘find his centre’” (“Manifesto” 1). However, he adds, “[t]he body of modern times has no need for a centre, because that absent centre, the core which would enable one to feel reassured...has ceased to be there. For in the void of a body expropriated of its centre, there is room for dance” (“Manifesto” 1). Without a centre, the dancing museum, proposed by Charmatz, possesses room for movement, creating the conditions for an open, mutable organization to supersede the NCC, which will “fulfill all the tasks of a Choreographic Centre while taking a radical, new and unusual direction” (“Manifesto” 2).

This background is important for understanding the context for Charmatz’s manifesto and the cultural landscape that gave rise to his dancing museum project. For the purposes of this discussion, however, I am most interested in the latter half of Charmatz’s manifesto in which his public rejection of the NCC label transitions into a discussion of how dance can be used to revolutionize the museum. Over the course of the manifesto, Charmatz’s ‘oppositional tone’ is redirected at previous, limited conceptions of the museum. To be clear, Charmatz is not against traditional museal activities; rather, he opposes the *boundaries* that surround and constrict the museum. By destabilizing the dominant definition of the museum, Charmatz ultimately proposes an ‘opening up’ of this

ossified concept through the action of dance.⁷² And while Charmatz's aim is to produce a new kind of institution – a Musée de la danse – his manifesto effectively chronicles the transforming effect dance can have on the atemporal and purified museum context.

2.2 The 'Dancing Museum'

While the first half of this chapter has argued that the purified space of modern art museums promotes stability, unity and timelessness, the concept of the museum itself is not rigid. In an interview with *Dance Research Journal*, Charmatz points to changing notions of museums to argue that, historically, this concept has not necessarily been defined by “water-tight boundaries” (“Interview” 50). According to Charmatz, the museum “is a potential space” that “provides an opportunity for thinking freely” (“Interview” 50). This freethinking does not necessitate “repudiating the usual prerogatives of museums—the construction of a heritage, conservation, exhibitions of works, public access and the sharing of knowledge, [and] publications” (“Interview” 50). Rather, conceptualized as a space of possibilities, the museum has room for both conventional activities and radically new inquiries initiated by dance.

While dance encourages the museum to open up in uncharted directions, its status as a process-based art also promotes a spirit of questioning. Emphasizing inquiry over answers, Charmatz describes his dancing museum project as one that “sets ideas in motion, not ruling anything out in principle, except perhaps the idea of finishing things

⁷² It should be noted that Charmatz's text strays from the conventional artist's manifesto, as it does not signal a clear break from the past. Rather, his text points to the mutually beneficial relationship between dance and the museum, in which neither concept shakes away its previous meanings. However, through the mutual contamination of these concepts the possibilities and meanings of dance and the museum are diversified.

off?” (“Interview” 49). In exploring the possibilities for a museum of dance, Charmatz initiates “questioning without seeking to close it down too quickly,” adding, “in many ways we have so far been a ‘dance museum’ with a question mark” (“Interview” 50). Dance lends itself more to investigation than stable answers. Both the dancer and the dance are never static. Through repetition, dance revisits the same gestures always anew.

In celebrating the open-inquiry of dance over the finality and surety of answers, Charmatz’s project inverts the morality of the white cube. While the purity and timelessness of the white cube has been associated with moral virtue, Charmatz places value in the ongoing *process* of self-interrogation, suggesting that the most established and recognized institutions in the world would benefit from being followed “*with a question mark*” (Charmatz, “Interview” 50, emphasis in original). Reinterpreted through dance, the museum would be characterized by action as opposed to arrival, movement as opposed to stasis. And while Charmatz’s project is concerned with constructing a *new* type of organization, his strategy of opening up the existing museum framework, paired with collaborations with established modern art institutions, such as MoMA and Tate Modern, offers practical examples of how the presumptions of the modern art museum might be questioned through the action of dance.

The spirit of questioning diverges from the act of institutional critique, which has been a significant aim within the field of performance art. Instead of reflecting critically on the boundaries and limitations of the museum, the inquiry suggested in Charmatz’s manifesto moves into the terrain of invention and collaboration. A dancing museum has the potential to function procreatively as an act of “institutional invention” or “institutional engineering” (Charmatz, “Interview” 50). While the late twentieth century

saw the exploration of the critical potential of performance in the museum, Charmatz declares that the current moment is “a marvelous point in the invention of a new kind of museum, with the *questioning* of museology, collecting, and creation that goes with it” (“Interview” 50, emphasis mine). The processes of questioning, inventing and engineering, which dance effectively supports, can thus be positioned as intrusive acts contaminating the heretofore seemingly stable context of the modern art museum. Rather than point out the limitations of the static environment of the modern art museum, dance has the potential to set it in motion.

Alongside encouraging the act of questioning, dance provides a new framework for organizing the museum. The use of dance as an organizing principle for the museum is a seemingly unlikely move, as it contradicts the timelessness and purity of this space. As Charmatz attests, “[d]ance and its actors are often defined in opposition to the arts that are said to be perennial, lasting, static, for which the museum would be the favourite place” (“Manifesto” 2). Overwhelmingly, it has been the art object – solid, stable, inanimate, and unchanging – that has served as the organizing principle for the modern art museum. In fact, so much so, that museums have transformed into art objects in their own right.⁷³ Reinterpreting the stable museum-object through the action of dance would produce the conditions for a museum that moves, changes, and is full of life. Charmatz writes, “we are at a time in history where a museum can be alive and inhabited as much as a theatre” (“Manifesto” 2), meaning the museum, “in no way excludes precarious movements, nor nomadic, ephemeral, instantaneous ones” (3). Within the changing structure of a dancing museum, performance-based art need not be embalmed by the

⁷³ See my discussion of the museum as art object in Chapter One.

framework of object-oriented exhibitions. A changing structure would readily accommodate arts that cannot be reduced to a singular authentic ‘thing.’ By offering a context that changes, a dancing museum would allow art to exist in its multiplicity. Through various iterations and interpretations, art is kept alive.

Reinterpreted through dance, the museum can become a suitable home for arts that are changing, ephemeral, and animated. Shaking away the stillness of the gallery, a dancing museum would incorporate the art of dance without reducing it to mere representations. Faded ephemera, stage models, documentation, and other trace materials, would give way to movement. And, the suspended sense of time typically associated with the museum (and death), would be contaminated with motion. Charmatz points this out explicitly, declaring that the dancing museum will not become “a dead museum, it will be a living museum of dance. The dead will have their place, but among the living” (“Manifesto” 3). Reorganized through dance, the museum would not negate object-based art, but would rather question the supposed atemporality of these works and the deeply entrenched narratives they have been used to represent. In redirecting attention from dead bodies to living ones, a museum that dances would implicate the visitor in the conditions of reception.

By expanding beyond the conventional museal functions of collecting, classifying and assigning order to the world, a dancing museum would open up to meaning-making as opposed to closing in on knowledge. For Charmatz, the dancing museum “does not seek to establish a taxonomy of dance, its goal is not to offer a settled definition of the subject. Its ideal isn’t to give an exhaustive representation either of the different dances performed around the world. It wishes to stimulate the desire for knowledge”

(“Manifesto” 4). In abandoning the drive to complete stable systems of knowledge, dance, as an organizing principle, would allow the museum to prioritize not only artistic processes but also the processes of meaning-making, more accurately reflecting how art is constructed and consumed in daily life.

Dance’s emphasis on process over product would give primacy to movements and gestures, which provide the building blocks of dance. In their capacity to open up into multiple meanings, gestures would challenge the purifying context of the modern art museum. Reconfiguring the museum around the concept of movement as opposed to fixity, Charmatz conceives of a museum that can be contradictory and mutable.

According to Charmatz, the museum, modified by dance,

would be both ancient and modern, humorous and antiquated, dusty and stimulating, a Museum with no equivalent in the world. [...] Every activity that takes place would be reviewed through a different prism, a prism that would be able to combine in one single movement the patrimonial and the spectacular, research and creation, education and fun, openness to singular artists and the desire to produce a collective work. (“Manifesto” 2)

The instability and multiplicity inherent in dance would thus leave the museum open to heterogeneity and contradiction. While the purified space of the modern art museum functions to produce a unified context, the dancing museum Charmatz describes would leave room for diversity. The dancing museum would consist of and be created through gestures, thus defining itself through action.

The production of a contradictory space also leaves room for all kinds of art making. While artists’ manifestos typically function as a rallying cry, declaring the

arrival of a new artistic movement and a rejection of the past, Charmatz's manifesto focuses predominantly on the context for art production and dissemination instead of the art itself. His text essentially functions as an attack on the limitations of the systems that disseminate (and, arguably, contribute to the value of) the art, which would have a freeing effect on the artists, giving them greater agency in shaping the conditions of reception. Greater freedoms would also lead to the erosion of artificial boundaries that limit approaches to art. According to Charmatz, "[t]he creation of *Musée de la danse* is part of a pressing need to change the apparently rigid separation between history and improvisation, visual art and living art, institutions and experimentation, and what has been called conceptual art and popular art" ("Interview" 50). By letting go of the concepts of fixity, finality and unity, Charmatz's project opens up the museum to movement, questioning and heterogeneity. Through the process of 'opening up,' binary distinctions and master narratives would crumble. When examined through a prism, even the most stable object becomes multifaceted and fractured, vivid but incomplete.

Produced through gestures, a dancing museum, by extension, would also include the body, contaminating the disincarnated vision promoted within the white cube. Envisaging the museum as an "incorporated" space, Charmatz proposes that a dancing museum be "built by bodies moving through it" ("Manifesto" 3). Integrating the bodies of artists, visitors, and staff, Charmatz's conceptualization of the museum exists in stark contrast to the modern art museum as a transcendental space, devoid of life. And, as I have argued in the previous chapter, dominant definitions that focus on the museum as a building and its collections fail to acknowledge the central role of people in making the museum. Living bodies are glaringly omitted from traditional object-oriented exhibitions

as well as the dominant architectural histories of museums. Moreover, art objects are predominantly decontextualized and distanced from the bodies that made them, exhibited as an ‘end result’ neatly contained within the white cube. In a museum reinterpreted through dance, the bodies of artists, visitors, and staff would be used to animate the space and become implicit in the art (Charmatz, “Manifesto” 4), especially since “dancers’ bodies are one of the main spaces for collecting [dance] works” (Charmatz, “Interview” 49). A nomadic museum, constructed primarily through bodies, and thus untethered to site, would allow for decentralized expansion, exploration and growth in a multitude of directions. The idea of the museum is more malleable than the building that conventionally houses it. By separating the museum from place (and therefore its conventional definition), the museum would be opened up to new possibilities. In fact, in terms of location, Charmatz proposes that the museum would span physical and virtual spaces and evolve and relocate with “the rhythm of the seasons” (“Manifesto” 5). Loosened from the limitations of bricks and mortar, the idea of the dancing museum would allow it to be transported anywhere and everywhere.

Charmatz draws upon the metaphor of the virus to describe how a dancing museum might act as a contagion, colonizing physical and virtual spaces. Countering the stable and unchanging context of the modern art museum, the dancing museum would be an “active”, “reactive” and “mobile” institution (“Manifesto” 5). As a “viral museum” a dancing museum could be “grafted onto other places” and “spread dance in place where it was not expected” (5). The image of a virus, as something that mutates, reproduces, spreads, and can find a host in various loci is a particularly pointed metaphor. Choreography mutates, even if slightly, as it is articulated through the body of each

distinct performer. Dance is a mobile art form, a viral art form – it spreads from body to body and moves from location to location, with each venue and each cast member providing a new host site. As a virus, a dancing museum would not be relegated to a traditional museum building, with its austere associations with history. It would access the public in new and innovative ways, transmitted place to place by the bodies that build it. Importantly, however, the metaphor of the virus also brings evocations of contamination. By infiltrating the white cube, dance brings with it powerful potential to pollute the purity of this space and catalyze change. Examined not only as exhibition content, but also as an organizing principle for the museum, dance reintroduces the movement, inquiry, process, and bodies that have been, historically, underrepresented in the purified, atemporal space of the white cube.

2.3 Theory in Action

Bridging theory and practice, Charmatz's manifesto provides a conceptual road map for analyzing his recent artistic projects, which thoroughly explore the potential of a dancing museum through installations that investigate the mutually transformative relationship between dance and museums. *Expo Zéro*, which premiered in 2009, uses performance, improvisation, and other ephemeral elements to examine the possibilities of an 'objectless' exhibition. Devoid of costumes, scores, photographs, and other trace materials frequently used to represent performance in an exhibition context, *Expo Zéro* consists solely of participants set "adrift" in an empty space,⁷⁴ encountering visitors and each other through "ad-hoc lectures, performance experiments and long conversations

⁷⁴ Similar to Yves Klein's *Epoque pneumatique* discussed in Chapter One, all furnishings were removed from the site of *Expo Zéro* to create an 'empty' space.

about the ephemeral nature of performance, techniques of improvisation and the history of museum” (Etchells, para. 2). Relying solely on participants and visitors to produce exhibition content, the installation occupies an in-between space, which British artist Tim Etchells describes as an “exhibition-cum-performance” (para. 1).⁷⁵ As a participant in the installation, Etchells reported in *The Guardian*, “it was an exhausting, slightly delirious and rather wonderfully fluid space for thinking and doing” (para. 2).

Fluid space is a notable outcome of this hybridized ‘exhibition-cum-performance.’ A distinguishing feature between the performance-based exhibitions and object-oriented ones is that the subjects ‘on display’ possess the potential to speak for themselves and enter in dialogue with visitors. While the curatorial process mediates the visitor’s relationship to objects, centralizing sources of knowledge, performance has the capacity to decentralize exhibitions by allowing knowledge (and exhibition content) to emanate outward from a multitude of sources (or performers). In this performance-oriented exhibition, visitors are required for the co-creation of content. The exhibition thus takes on the unpredictability of the theatre where not only the reception is unfixed, but the content itself is charged with the ‘presentness’ of performance.

Charmatz’s *20 Dancers for the XX Century*, which is used as a case study in Chapters Three and Four of this dissertation, explores the possibilities of a body-centric museum, however with a more specific focus on dance. When the work premiered at MoMA over a three-day period in October 2013, dancers wandered throughout the galleries and transitional spaces of the museum and interacted with visitors by holding

⁷⁵ This description of *Expo Zéro* can also be read as a combination of the two contrasting Foucauldian heterotopias described earlier. In this hybridization of the festival and the museum, history or knowledge is accumulated in the body then shared through transitory encounters during the impermanent ‘expo.’

impromptu conversations about the history of dance, recounting their personal oral histories, and sharing embodied memories of choreography. In this sense, the dancers acted as ‘micro museums,’⁷⁶ the histories of their art imperfectly sedimented in flesh and bones. Situating the museum within the body as opposed to a building, the installation offered an alternative to the atemporal and purified space of the modern art museum. Reinterpretation through dance, the museum can be both mobile and alive, where memory and oral history are privileged over the production and perpetuation of master narratives through the exhibition of objects.

Most recently, *20 Dancers for the XX Century* and *Expo Zéro* were both reconceived as part of Charmatz’s ambitious two-day takeover of Tate Modern in May 2015. Titled *If Tate Modern was Musée de la danse?*, Charmatz’s programme investigated this proposition through a range of activities. Involving approximately 90 dancers and choreographers occupying Turbine Hall and the upstairs galleries, the takeover used dance as a lens to envision “how art might be presented and encountered differently in the future museum” (“BMW Tate Live: If Tate Modern was Musée” para. 4). Through open-ended questioning, the event gestured towards the possibilities of a dancing museum, including a variety of performances, involving both professionals and museum visitors, and opportunities for participation through movement and open dialogue. Conversations were extended across digital space with Tate Modern inviting the public to share their conceptions of a dancing museum over social media using the hashtag ‘#DancingMuseum’.

⁷⁶ This term was used by Charmatz in his manifesto and throughout the duration of his gesture at MoMA.

An institution that dances implicates the entire body. An institution that dances is always moving, continuously evolving. By reviewing these practice-based investigations alongside Charmatz's manifesto, I have aimed to set in motion an expanded, decentralized, and open-ended reinterpretation of the museum. Through his rhizomatic treatment of the museum, Charmatz's project untethers this concept from its common definition as a place, and reinterprets it through the 'prism' of dance. Together, Charmatz's manifesto and his recent artistic practice offer a cohesive reconceptualization of the museum as a free-floating concept that can be grafted onto nomadic bodies. Subject to change (especially change initiated by bodies), Charmatz contaminates the concept of the museum, allowing for movement, development, and inquiry to reverberate in a multitude of directions.

THIRD INTERLUDE

20 DANCERS FOR THE XX CENTURY: MY INITIAL ENCOUNTER

I push through a glass revolving door flanked by a security guard on West 53rd Street and enter the reception area of MoMA. I cross broad rectangles of greenish grey stone, weave around clusters of visitors, and pass the sleek reception desk. The entryway boasts the business-like hospitality of an office tower, signalling it is a space of seriousness, of work. A capitalist monument to twentieth-century art. Everything is low, streamlined, commercial, lacking the grandeur and ornamentation of a Beaux Arts lobby. Matte white walls and cylindrical pillars hold up a nondescript ceiling intercepted lengthwise with rows of lighting. Directly across from the entrance, and one city block north, glass doors puncture the 54th Street façade, transforming the street level of MoMA into a north-south thoroughfare abuzz with throngs of visitors, coming and going, queuing for tickets, gathering in groups, and dispersing into the lobby. The metropolis brought inside with all its noise, congestion, hard surfaces, and industrial lines.

Past reception, in proximity to the ticketed entrance, a large black monitor hung vertically cycles through promotional materials highlighting ‘What’s On’ at the museum. An overview of the performance series *Musée de la danse: Three Collective Gestures* materializes in the automated slideshow, followed by a promotional image and brief description for each ‘gesture’ in Charmatz’s series. Visitors are informed in white text that the first gesture, *20 Dancers for the XX Century*, will be unfolding for the next three days from noon until five, over the bulk of exhibition hours. Even without this information it is already evident that dancers are taking over the museum. Only a few

minutes after noon, museumgoers have already gathered just beyond the main entrance. I hear the crowd before I see it. The conversations of individual guests merge to form a dull roar, which threatens to smother the recorded music that rises happily in the lobby air. Amid the competing sounds, congestion and general chaos, a tall dancer commands the museum entrance.

As I approach the gallery attendant, I display a plastic card emblazoned with an image of Van Gogh's *Starry Night*—a prominent object in the museum's permanent collection. She scans it rapidly and I enter the lobby, a transitional space with a glass curtain wall that provides vistas to the outdoor sculpture garden. This entry space is sparsely filled with furnishings and a select few pieces of art. Distinct from the museum's galleries, the lobby is normally a place to pass through or collect oneself at the beginning or end of a museum excursion. It is a buffer zone, stripping away the clamour of the street, preparing the visitor for the quiet contemplation in the galleries ahead. Steps spanning the width of the space create a raised landing—a nexus point, from which visitors funnel into the sculpture garden; ascend to the second storey where the bookshop, atrium, and first collection of galleries are located; or retrace their steps past the museum guards as they make their departure.

Today, the lobby is transformed into a performance space, with the elevated landing appropriated as a stage of sorts. I navigate towards the perimeter of the room where visitors are amassing, standing with their backs against the wall, or sprawled out on upholstered benches. The music continues to compete with the din of the visitors, and my eyes scan for its source, falling on a bulky boom box on the landing, partly visible beyond a lone pillar-like sculpture. Visitors passing through the space slow to a halt as

they become absorbed in the performance. They orient themselves toward the dancer as though they were in a proscenium or black box theatre, instinctively avoiding the ‘backdrop’ of the glass curtain wall. A few visitors briskly cross over alongside the glass, caught in the crossfire of gazing museumgoers. But, for the most part, this interstitial space, separating the galleries from the outside world, has become a destination, a place to pause. Instead of moving through the lobby, visitors perch on benches, pool at the base of the stairs, lean against railings, stop in their tracks. Others, wanting to pass by, weave through the lobby briskly, their strides tinged with discomfort. Straying from the crowd puts the singular visitor on display, their utilitarian, pedestrian movements contrasting with those of the performer.

The dancer, John Sorensen-Jolink, is tall and fair. He wears black sneakers, a striped tank top, and a pair of Adidas track pants in cerulean blue. His limbs are long and elegant and he moves with the refined coordination, grace, and fluidity of a disciplined body with extensive performance experience. He eats up space in the lobby, moving with ease around the elevated platform. The music swells and I am finally able to place the singsong voices. It is Rodgers and Hammerstein’s *Sound of Music*, and the familiar tones of Julie Andrews and the singing von Trapp children are bouncing playfully around MoMA’s austere lobby.

Between the musical tracks, Sorensen-Jolink informs the visitors that he is performing Doug Elkins’ *Fräulein Maria* as he takes in deep breaths. Commissioned in 2006, this first choreographic work already strays from the alleged focus of the exhibition. *20 Dancers for the XX Century* promises to share a collection of twentieth century choreographic works as remembered in the bodies of the dancers. By

incorporating the odd twenty-first century work, the exhibition's anachronistic treatment of time rubs against the neat temporality and historical gaze of the art museum. In the dancer's body, history and memory collide, resurfacing in the present. However, this is not the only collision arising from Charmatz's gesture. Through the nomadic dance performances taking over MoMA, myriad sensory stimuli are brought together, interrupting the ocularcentric space of the modern art museum.

Julie Andrews' theatrical yodeling dances around the lobby as "The Lonely Goatherd" rises from the boom box. The choreography weaves together a musical movie soundtrack with contemporary dance and a mishmash of street dance styles, including pop and lock, stepping, and voguing. Sorensen-Jolink throws his arms up with a sense of bravado. His ribs thrust forward. His hips move serpentine with fanning arms, wrists positioned stylistically at right angles. The sexually suggestive movements contrast with the family-friendly music. One of the von Trapps sings "layee-o-dl layee-o-dl-o" and Sorensen-Jolink punctuates the phrase with an outstretched arm and a satisfying snap of the fingers. Through his body, dance styles and music that have generally been divided along the entrenched yet problematic categories of 'high' and 'low,' fuse together. In the museum context, the work is a marriage of the 'popular' and the 'serious'.

Sorensen-Jolink luxuriates in the space, using every inch available and I take kinesthetic pleasure in (and am envious of) his expansiveness. His movements leave me feeling buoyant. A one-handed cartwheel in the crowded space makes my own stomach hover for a moment until he is right side up. Transforming his body into a percussive surface, he taps rhythmically, complementing Andrews' "Layee-o-dl layee-o-dl lay-ee-

o.” He slaps his hands against his chest, his foot, the outside of his shin. His body is an instrument for sound and motion, instigating reverberations in my own body.

- Museum of Modern Art, New York, October 18, 2013

CHAPTER THREE

OVERCOMING DISTANCE: MULTISENSUALITY IN THE MUSEUM

During its occupation of MoMA, *20 Dancers for the XX Century* imbued the space with a level of multisensory activity atypical of modern art museums. Dancers took over the museum, performing in The Agnus Gund Garden Lobby, The Donald B. and Catherine C. Marron Atrium, The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden, and a selection of galleries. They also inhabited a collection of interstitial spaces, sandwiched between the staircases, escalators and corridors that transition visitors throughout the museum. For a three-day period, dancers transformed the atmosphere of the museum through eruptions of movement and sound. Before and after performances, they could be found wandering through galleries, conversing, and kneading tired muscles as they sprawled out on the typically uninviting museum floors. As my initial encounter with Sorensen-Jolink illustrates, *20 Dancers for the XX Century* was a sensory rich event that flooded the museum's spaces with visual, acoustic and kinesthetic stimuli.

This takeover, abounding with sound and motion, is a salient case study for considering how performance dance might transform the museum, albeit temporarily, into a multisensual environment. Since the international proliferation of the white cube during the mid-twentieth century (Klonk 13), modern art museums have tended to provide an extended and purified visual experience to the detriment of the other senses. As the previous chapter has shown, the physical design of these spaces has evolved to promote a detached gaze, and, within the social space of the museum, the dominant

curatorial practices and conventions of visitor conduct are organized around a cultural bias for the visual.

The museal tendency to separate and distil vision not only compromises the manifold sensory experiences art is capable of provoking, it also inhibits meaningful visual engagement by encouraging a limited and isolated form of sight (Lippit in Axel and Feldman 291). Although the dominant tendency in the west is to purify art forms based on single-sense experiences (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture* 58), dance evades this process of specialization. While ocular bias colours the language used when witnessing⁷⁷ a dance performance (we typically say we are *watching* dance), the aesthetic impact of dance is ultimately the culmination of visual, aural and kinesthetic elements. The recent and marked rise in dance programming in modern art museums is therefore not a benign trend in curatorial activity; it presents a significant interruption of, and challenge to, the ocularcentrism of these institutions.

This chapter illuminates the transformative effect the multisensual art of dance has on the purified, ocularcentric⁷⁸ space of modern art museums. To begin, I briefly review the multisensual history of public museums, as well as the disparate and experimental exhibition strategies of early modern art institutions, in order to position the

⁷⁷ I use the term ‘witness’ deliberately. Through the verb witness, I intend to acknowledge that the audience member is not restricted to a ‘spectator’ and the multisensual engagement of the dance event is not limited to ‘watching.’

⁷⁸ Although the modern art museum privileges vision, it is impossible to entirely isolate and divide our senses because they operate in continuous interplay. Sense experience is inherently synesthetic (Lippit in Axel and Feldman 291) and the reception of a mono-modal work of art can engage more than one sense at a time (Voegelin 119). For instance, our reception of a visual medium, such as painting, is never purely visual. Our visual apprehension of a painting is always tainted by the tactility of its material existence and manual production (Mitchell 259-260). Moreover, the dimensions of affect and emotion further contaminate our sensual apprehension of the work (Mitchell 263).

ocularcentrism of the white cube as simply one possible mode of sensory engagement. Then, through the case study of *20 Dancers for the XX Century*, I analyze the sensory impact of dance in modern art museums, focusing on the acoustic and kinesthetic engagement it reintroduces into these spaces. By encouraging the interplay of the senses, I argue that dance provides numerous entry points for the apprehension of art, diversifying the experiences offered and disrupting the ideological privileging of vision upheld by the dominant spatial practices of modern art museums. Through its contribution of acoustic and kinesthetic elements and its inherently collaborative structure, dance is positioned as an important sensory intervention, contaminating the visual purity of the white cube, thereby overcoming its static, hermetic, and distancing effects.

1. Multisensual Museums

As the previous chapter has shown, a western visual bias and tendency to isolate the senses is reified in museum space on multiple levels. The art included is primarily visual; the strategies of exhibition and display tend to isolate vision, while minimizing other sense experiences; and the history of art typically espoused is a narrative of ascension away from the sensual world toward the ‘purified’ plane of visual abstraction. Moreover, the physical design of museum interiors tends to emphasize eternal forms over transient matter, creating a space that is seemingly static. For these reasons, the ocularcentric white cube has been described as a “technology of [a]esthetics” (O’Doherty 15), which transforms the visitor into a disincarnated “Eye” (15, 42).

1.1 Do Not Touch

Despite the ocular bias of modern art museums (and museums in general), it is important to note that early institutions fostered the interplay of the senses (Howes 238). Travelers' accounts from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries reveal that visits to public museums, such as the Ashmolean, were characterized by multisensual stimulation. Visitors would handle, finger, and caress the collections, confirming or complementing visual observations through the sense of touch. Objects were also held up to the ear, smelled and, at times, even tasted (Howes 240; Classen 138).⁷⁹ This early, experiential format fell out of favour during the nineteenth century, when the public museum evolved into a disciplinary instrument, refining the taste and comportment of the public.⁸⁰ During this chapter in museum history, "[t]he sensing body was gradually taught to direct itself exclusively through the faculty of vision" (Classen 146). Untangling the visitor's senses, however, was not easily accomplished, and visitors had to be instructed to "[t]ouch what you like with the eyes, but do not see with the fingers" (Charles Dickens Jr. qtd. in Classen 146).⁸¹

The new "taboo on touch" not only stemmed from the fear that contact potentially threatened the longevity of collections; it was also based on the belief that it offered no "cognitive or aesthetic" benefit (Classen 145). During this period in museum history, the proximal or 'lower' senses became associated with uncivilized behaviour and touch fell by the wayside in favour of quiet, detached contemplation (Howes 240). As a result of

⁷⁹ David Howes notes this multisensual engagement with the collections mirrored the contemporary methods of scientific investigation (240).

⁸⁰ See Tony Bennett's chapter "The Exhibitionary Complex" in *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*.

⁸¹ According to Charles Dickens Jr., this phrase was emblazoned on a sign in the Bodleian Library Picture Gallery in the late nineteenth century (Classen 146).

this public instruction in ‘proper’ comportment and the isolation of vision, the distance between the visitor and the artwork expanded, regardless of whether or not a physical buffer, such as a display case, was present (Howes 241).⁸²

While the isolation of vision and the social comportment that accompanied it created a physical gulf between the visitor and the art, the detached gaze museums promoted expanded the aesthetic distance experienced between the visitor and his or her object of contemplation. It is important to note, however, that although museums had transformed into visually biased institutions during the nineteenth century, not all modern art museums initially assumed an ocularcentric approach to art. When museums devoted to the exhibition of *new* art were founded in the first half of the twentieth century, they were a revolutionary, if not oxymoronic, concept. Breaking from the imposing beaux-arts structures of the past, the designs of early modern art museums were heterogeneous and experimental, reflecting the novel art that lined their walls.⁸³

⁸² Although sight supplanted all the other senses in the museum during the modern period, Howes notes that haptic experience was never fully eliminated, as individuals such as collectors and curators retained the privilege of touching art objects. During the latter twentieth century, this exclusive access fell under public scrutiny and touch began to be reintroduced in the museum to benefit marginalized and disadvantaged populations, for example improving access for the vision impaired (Howes 241). Vision, however, remains the dominant mode of engagement in museums, and for the general population, opportunities to taste, smell, touch, and, to a lesser extent, listen to art remain exceptions to what can be described as a visual default in modern art museums.

⁸³ Experimental modes of display were not limited to early modern art museums. Throughout the historical avant-garde, artist-run exhibitions were at the forefront of exploring the relationship between site and art, and these temporary events tested different modes of sensory engagement. The Surrealists, for example, were inimical towards the white wall because it constrained the visitor by limiting participation and offering a singular mode of looking. They created immersive environments that flooded exhibition spaces “with pulsating sensations, involving the spectators” (Celant 267). Instead of placing their art in the hermetic void of the white cube, the Surrealists incorporated the “disorder” of the external world, to “provoke a psychophysical jolt” that engaged both the senses and imagination (Celant 267).

1.2 Spaces for Sensing

When the Whitney Museum of American Art first opened its doors in 1931, its gallery aesthetic was a far cry from the brutalist design of the Breuer Building (its home from 1966 to 2014, described at the outset of this dissertation) or its current building in the Meatpacking District. In contrast to the white unadorned galleries comprising these buildings, the interior of the original Whitney Museum emulated a private residence—a design choice Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney and founding director Juliana Force deployed to “make visitors not just comfortable but at home with American Art” (Hankins 165). For Whitney and Force, existing museum design did not complement the contemporary art being produced (Hankins 165). They believed the imposing atmosphere of existing institutions, such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, impeded liberal artists from “crashing the gate” (Force qtd. in Hankins 165). Thus, when renovating four adjacent row houses at 8-14 West Eighth Street in Greenwich Village, the pair decided to take an alternative approach, opting to accentuate the museum’s domestic heritage (Hankins 165).

After passing through the museum’s salmon-pink stucco façade (Hankins 168), visitors discovered “a series of intimately scaled, oddly shaped spaces topped by ceilings of different heights” (169).⁸⁴ The original residential layout was maintained, which promoted “casual roaming” over a prescribed route (Hankins 169). The galleries, each possessing its own ‘personality’, were designed in accordance with the latest trends in domestic décor, replete “with colored walls, household furnishings, and an array of

⁸⁴ This description of the original Whitney Museum is heavily indebted to Evelyn Hankins’ doctoral research into the en/gendering of New York display spaces, which informs her chapter “En/Gendering the Whitney’s Collection of American Art” in Leah Dilworth’s edited volume *Acts of Possession: Collecting in America*.

decorative details and precious objects” (Hankins 165). Painted gray, white, rose, powder blue, canary yellow, the galleries were also outfitted with carpeting, furniture, and curtains coordinated with each room’s feature colour (Hankins 177). With Force redecorating the galleries every few years to keep pace with current trends in interior décor (Hankins 183), the Whitney Museum was not intended to be timeless; rather, it was a museum inherently *of the time*. In this evolving environment, the visitor was met with a variety of surfaces and textures that acknowledged and welcomed his or her body, offering an experience that extended beyond the purely visual. Furnishings encouraged visitors to sit and linger in the galleries, producing a comfortable environment (Hankins 173).

The destabilizing effect the Whitney Museum’s hospitality had on the ocularcentrism of dominant museal practices is well-captured by critic Frances Edgars who, in a 1931 review of the Whitney Museum, noted that, “[a]s a rule, in a museum when one comes upon a beautiful antique chair or lounge, there is a gentle but firm hint in the way of a forbidding cord...that this furniture is to be *seen* and not sat on” (qtd. in Hankins 173, emphasis mine). By contrast, in the Whitney Museum, Edgars observed that,

Every room is provided with beautiful chairs, lounges, or settees, most of them upholstered in the delicate tones of leather or satin, here one may sit and look and long at a favorite painting. The floors are covered with thick carpet that deadens all sound of the annoying clock of footfalls...the setting of the Whitney Museum counts more in one’s pleasure in looking at pictures than I previously realized it would. (qtd. in Hankins 173)

Edgars' description captures the surprising tactile dimension of the Whitney Museum and its acknowledgement of the visitor as a body occupying space. In reading it, we can imagine museumgoers experiencing the feel of leather and satin and the plushness of the carpeting. This warm, welcoming atmosphere was also noted by Bryson Burroughs, curator of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Among his praises in a letter penned to Force in 1931, he compliments the museum for being both "comfortable" and "hospitable" (qtd. in Hankins 173), which evokes a space that recognizes the visitor as a feeling body as opposed to as a disembodied gaze. It should be noted that this domestic approach to gallery design at times received more attention than the collection in contemporary reviews. This had the effect of lowering the status of the art to an element of the décor (Hankins 185). Hankins contends that the public preoccupation with the museum's feminine domesticity had ramifications for the American modern art Force and Whitney championed inside, contributing to its failure to achieve "canonical status" (185).⁸⁵ However, as Edgars and Burroughs indicate, the original Whitney Museum, in contrast to the white cube aesthetic simultaneously being developed by MoMA, pleurably acknowledged the visitor's body and encouraged a sensual museum experience that extended beyond the visual.

Just over a decade later, another New York City museum rejecting the ocularcentrism of dominant exhibition practices was opened to the public. Art of This Century (1942-1947), Peggy Guggenheim's gallery, exhibited art in a multisensual and

⁸⁵ See Chapter Four for an in-depth discussion of the gendering of museum space.

immersive environment.⁸⁶ Situated on the seventh floor of an office building on West 57th Street, the gallery, designed by Frederick Kiesler, boasted numerous unconventional features.⁸⁷ Informed by Kiesler's background in theatre design, the gallery was rife with "theatrical possibilities," which "transformed the installation elements into expressive factors" (Celant 268). In the Abstract and Cubist Gallery, two ultramarine curtained walls created an atmosphere that resembled a circus tent (Guggenheim 319). Adding to the sense of spectacle, frameless canvases hung on ropes, some in triangular clusters in the centre of the room, and sculptures were displayed on suspended wooden platforms (Haines-Cooke 131; Guggenheim 319). The free-floating works could be manually rotated (Celant 268), and Guggenheim encouraged visitors to manipulate the paintings in order to examine them under different lighting conditions (*Peggy Guggenheim: Art Addict*). Through this unique hanging approach, touch and movement became active components of visual apprehension, contrasting with the isolated and distanced museum gaze that had become the norm, along with its corollary, the fixed object.

In the Surrealist gallery, a concave gumwood façade (Guggenheim 319) and false wooden ceiling produced an intimate, tunnel-like gallery (Haines-Cooke 133). Each work of art, mounted on a repurposed baseball bat projecting out from the curved walls, was illuminated with its own spotlight (Guggenheim 319). Set on a timer, alternate sides of the gallery would light up at two-minute intervals, redirecting visitor attention. Co-ordinated with the lighting changeover, a sound recording of a train would pierce through

⁸⁶ Art of This Century was referred to as a gallery, however, it was a multi-purpose space, functioning as a public museum, a popular gathering space for artists, and a commercial gallery selling the work of young American artists (Haines-Cooke 19).

⁸⁷ The experimental format of Guggenheim's gallery was not always reviewed favourably in the press. For instance, in a critical review published in the *New York Sun*, Henry McBride wrote, Kiesler's "circus has more than three rings" (qtd. in Haines-Cooke 132).

the temporarily darkened tunnel (Haines-Cooke 139-140), imbuing the gallery with an immersive, theatrical atmosphere, not conventionally experienced in art museums. The automated lighting, which influenced the visitor's navigation through the gallery, imposed a temporality upon the reception of each painting (Guggenheim 319), contrasting with the typically open-ended duration of a gallery visit.⁸⁸

The Kinetic Gallery, a narrow, corridor-shaped space, was filled with mechanical viewing devices. Peepholes and “intensely lit shadow boxes” punctuated the gallery’s black walls. Popularly known as the “Coney Island Section,” the devices promoted “an ethos of fun” among visitors (Haines-Cooke 135). Interactive “pipes, frames, mirrors, and telescopes” all worked to support Kiesler’s view that “the spectator should be enticed to use their imagination in the experiencing of art” (Haines-Cooke 136). Devices employed in the Kinetic Gallery and throughout the museum introduced elements of time and opportunities for participation typically absent from museum design. A *paternoster*, located in an interstitial space, cycled through seven works by Paul Klee. According to Guggenheim, “[t]he wheel automatically went into motion when the public stepped across a beam of light” (320). Reproductions of Marcel Duchamp’s works were only visible if the visitor “looked through a hole in the wall and turned by hand a very beautiful spidery wheel” (Guggenheim 320). Not only did Art of This Century offer an alternative to the static environment associated with the white cube, it assigned the visitor an instrumental role in initiating movement. Through their physical manipulation of

⁸⁸ It is difficult to say exactly how long these effects lasted, especially since there is little documentation of the gallery. According to Guggenheim, the sound and lighting effects were short lived, as negative responses ultimately resulted in their removal (319).

devices and canvases (and, in the case of the paternoster, simply their presence) visitors set the gallery in motion.

Irrespective of the fact that Guggenheim closed the doors after only five years, Art of This Century represents a striking alternative for modern gallery design. Through viewing machines, peepholes, sound and lighting effects, and hands-on opportunities for engagement, the gallery fostered a participatory approach to artistic reception that integrated rather than isolated sense experience. Instead of producing an empty box for the art on display, Kiesler designed an immersive environment, in which artistic experimentation extended beyond the frameless canvases to create a total work of art (Haines-Cooke 145) that elicited the visitor's participation.⁸⁹

These early institutions demonstrate radically different exhibition formats, which facilitated a range of sensory experiences while fostering different relationships with the art on display. Arguably their experimentation was aided in part by the fact that they existed early in the establishment of the white cube as the default exhibition context. In the case of the Whitney, visitors were encouraged to feel at home with it, their bodies comfortably integrated, welcomed, and acknowledged in a shared environment. In the case of Art of This Century, the visitor took on an active role interacting with the art in multisensory environments. As these two experimental design approaches illustrate, the

⁸⁹ Interestingly, it was the Daylight Gallery, a white rectilinear space that, arguably, had the most lasting impact on the history of art (Haines-Cooke 153). This flexible, brightly lit gallery was the site of Guggenheim's temporary exhibitions (Haines-Cooke 138). It was in this space Jackson Pollock's first solo show took place (November 1943), as well as the significant *Exhibition by 31 Women* (January 1943), the first show to consist exclusively of the modern art contributions of women artists. Despite Guggenheim's championing, patronizing and exhibiting of new modern art, Haines-Cooke argues that the critical reception of Art of This Century as a sort of "Coney Island experience", swayed public response and impacted its overall status as a serious institution (19).

white cube design is not the sole context for exhibiting modern art. These historical spaces suggest that visual art need not be apprehended through eyesight alone and are particularly resonant now as we consider how dance interrupts the deeply entrenched ocularcentrism of modern art museum space.

1.3 Sensing Dance

Despite these multisensory alternatives, the white cube aesthetic championed by MoMA emerged as the dominant model over the course of the twentieth century, and remains the standardized context for exhibiting modern art. While there are practical reasons for the white cube's continued popularity – for instance, it is more flexible than Kiesler's environmental designs – this ossified environment exerts a powerful influence over the aesthetic experiences of visitors. The privileging and isolation of vision built into the dominant spatial practices of modern art museums, results in a predisposed hostility towards non-visual arts and alternate sense experiences. Inside the white cube, “artworks float here and there, denying any physical properties” and “any hint of noise or ruffling of any of the senses has been banished” (Celant 267). What happens then when dance – a multisensual, embodied art – enters this visually biased and seemingly metaphysical context?

While museum design can encourage multisensory experiences, multimodal artistic content can, conversely, open up the single-sense framework of the white cube. As I established in Chapter One, occupation has a transformative effect on the spaces of the museum. Simply because the white cube privileges a particular type of visual experience does not mean it cannot be inhabited in alternative ways. In fact, the white

cube context has served as a foil for many artists who have used the space against the grain by intervening against the white cube's inhospitality towards the body and the 'lower' senses (Drobnick 280). Performance artists have responded to the inherent hostility between the white cube and the flesh by focusing on presence within the gallery, while other artworks have temporarily contaminated this antiseptic space with sound, smell, taste, touch and motion. It is because of these interventional artistic and curatorial histories, Jim Drobnick contends, that the white cube is "a paradoxical space – at once the paradigm of exclusion and visual hegemony and an enabler for sensory experiences of all modalities" (280). The suffusion of white cube galleries with non-visual or multisensual art is thus not without precedent; however, I argue that the multimodal properties of dance paired with its current popularity in modern art museums uniquely position this art form as a transformative force, recalibrating the sensory experiences of museumgoers and redefining what a museum can be for.

When the multimodal art of dance enters the sterile context of the white cube, it confronts visitors with a manifold sensory experience. Bringing together visual, acoustic and kinesthetic elements, dance is a collaborative and multisensual art, which can effectively counter the museum's artificial separation of the senses. Ann Daly claims that, despite having a "visual component," dance "is fundamentally a kinesthetic art whose apperception is grounded not just in the eye but in the entire body" (307). It is because of this corporeality that dance is particularly antagonistic towards the so-called purification and isolation of vision promoted by the white cube. As an art that unfolds through (and is inseparable from) the body, dance counters the museum's penchant for visual isolation and abstraction – in terms of both the art exhibited and the visitor experience promoted.

With dance, the body, which has been quietly absented from the museum in favour of the eye and mind, takes centre stage. By encouraging the reintegration of vision with the other bodily senses, dance has the potential to encourage more robust visual experiences, while diversifying overall sensory engagement in modern art museums.

The heightened curatorial interest in dance has increased its profile in top tier institutions, as well as the time and space it is allotted. Dance is now occupying museums with an unprecedented frequency and square footage, and the strategy of spatial ‘takeovers,’⁹⁰ exemplified by *20 Dancers for the XX Century*, intensifies its transformative potential. Since dance is innately mobile and fundamentally concerned with movement, it can readily travel through the museum, potentially exerting influence over multiple loci. Not quarantined within a single hermetic gallery, takeovers occupy and animate different zones of the museum concurrently, often throughout exhibition hours. While a single contained performance may offer a brief reprieve from the museum’s visual isolation, the presence of dance throughout the museum – in terms of

⁹⁰ Charmatz revisited *20 Dancers for the XX Century* as part of *If Tate Modern was Musée de la Danse?*, a two-day dance-based occupation of Tate Modern from 15-16 May 2015. In promotional materials for the event, Tate Modern notified the public that “around 90 dancers and choreographers will *take over* the gallery spaces and the iconic Turbine Hall” (“BMW Tate Live: If Tate Modern was Musée”, emphasis mine). In the press, the event was also described as a “takeover” (Ellis-Petersen), a term I argue aptly represents the curation of dance over multiple sites or in an expansive area within the museum, as opposed to in a contained or theatrical set-up. Other high profile instances of dance or movement-related takeovers I have identified include Maria Hassabi’s *PLASTIC*, which occupied MoMA’s atrium, and lobby and upper gallery stairways during exhibition hours; Tino Sehgal’s *This Progress* (2006) which unfolded over museum hours in the emptied rotunda of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in 2010; and the 2012 Whitney Biennial in which the museum’s entire fourth floor was devoted to rehearsals and performances, including choreographic occupations by Sarah Michelson (*Devotion Study #1 – The American Dancer*) and Michael Clark (*WHO’S ZOO?*), as well as a hybridized installation-dressing room by Wu Tsang (*GREEN ROOM*).

space and exhibition hours – opens up the existing ocularcentric framework to include other sense experiences. Dance, then, not only offers multisensory stimulus, but by moving through the museum it also arguably recalibrates the visitor, encouraging the apprehension of other art works to extend beyond the purely visual. By claiming territory amongst or adjacent to other art works, dance can heighten the visitor’s awareness of other sense experiences, encouraging the reception of monomodal art to extend beyond visual apprehension.

The remainder of this chapter illuminates this unique capacity to diversify sense experiences while complicating the purified museal gaze. Through a detailed analysis of *20 Dancers for the XX Century*, I investigate how the multimodal art of dance opens up the sensory experience of modern art museums by contaminating these ocularcentric spaces with acoustic and kinesthetic stimulation.

2. Listening in the Museum

Reflecting on the white gallery wall in 1929, Wassily Kandinsky praised it for being “perfectly smooth, vertical, proportioned,” and “mute” (qtd. in Celant 268). The taciturn wall admired by Kandinsky is perhaps most intriguing when considered in relation to the broader acoustic conventions of white cube galleries. Its muteness encroaches on the rest of space, producing an atmosphere of *quiet* contemplation.⁹¹ Combining “the sanctity of

⁹¹ Although modern art museums extend and isolate vision, this does not mean sound is absent from these institutions. Seth Cluett notes that curators have recently begun re-acknowledging the “noisiness of the art world” (111). In the current interdisciplinary and increasingly post-medium context, thematic exhibitions are becoming more commonplace with sound operating as one material among many in the museum (Cluett 111). However, despite the recognition of sound art, the modern art museum arguably remains a visually dominant environment, and sound, when integrated, is often isolated

the church, the formality of the courtroom,” and “the mystique of the experimental laboratory” (O’Doherty 14), the white cube integrates the characteristics of several ‘serious’ and hushed spaces to create a hallowed chamber for art.

In this atmosphere, sounds are amplified by the museum’s generally poor acoustics. Noises, chatter and music rebound against hard surfaces and cut through the air. Footsteps strike polished floors, and, in transitional areas, individual conversations merge into an amorphous roar. In this space that sends sound reverberating, the ideal visitor is one who ambles about the galleries quietly, not interfering with the purified visual experience cultivated by the white cube’s design. In contrast to these typical conditions of reception, the dance performance contributes an orchestra of sounds disturbing the ocularcentrism of the modern art museum.

2.1 Fugitive Sounds

When dance enters the modern art museum, its acoustic elements seep beyond visual boundaries, blurring the typically hermetic galleries. ‘Sound bleed’ signals something out of sight, cueing visitors of (and piquing their interest in) activities unfolding in adjacent spaces. Dance performances in atriums or central structures send sound ricocheting through the entire museum, which can create a ubiquitous sonic backdrop for the museum visit, encouraging visitors to follow their ears to upper storey balconies to gain a view of the work. While the white cube has a compartmentalizing effect, the “boundless ephemerality of sound” can render its walls porous (Voegelin 114).

through the use of headphones or contained within specific galleries as to not interfere with the visual apprehension of other works.

In his phenomenology of the senses Hans Jonas notes that, when isolated, vision produces a “simultaneous” and “coordinated” image (136). Through sight, we are able to survey a field instantaneously and at a distance, which allows for a static and detached perspective (136). Listening, by contrast, is dynamic and immersive. Sounds unfold through time and situate the listening subject within an environment (138). While we can close our eyes or divert our gaze, our sense of hearing is always prepared to observe changes in the environment (139). We can listen attentively for a particular sound, however it is generally the loudest noise that captures our attention. Our acoustic encounters are thus ultimately determined by the outside world, a fact Jonas pronounces as “the contingency aspect of hearing” (139). Thus, unlike vision, sound imposes itself upon us. When introduced into the modern art museum, sounds interrupt the compartmentalizing, static, and distancing effects of this ocularcentric environment.

As interlopers drifting beyond the confines of individual galleries, the acoustic elements of dance have the capacity to transform our sense of space in the museum. As I previously described, my initial encounter with *20 Dancers for the XX Century* was a sonic one. Before ascending to the museum’s white cube galleries, even before queuing at the ticketed entrance, I was overwhelmed by the chatter of an amassing crowd, the periodic eruptions of applause, and the sound of music (literally *The Sound of Music*) ringing in the air. As dances erupted and dissipated in MoMA, so did the sounds that accompanied them. Music rose out of the dancers’ portable boom boxes and sounds emanated from the performers. Vocalization and breath, including the grunts and moans of physical exertion, contributed to the acoustic landscape, as did the audible impact of flesh colliding with flesh or colliding with other surfaces in the museum.

These sounds of *20 Dancers for the XX Century* imposed upon me as a listener. They bled beyond the architectural boundaries of MoMA as well as the limitations of my gaze, signalling performances out of sight. As I continued roaming the museum, I found myself following my ears from gallery to gallery. Aside from the publicized start time of noon, and a vague guideline of what museum spaces the dancers would be occupying (“The Donald B. and Catherine C. Marron Atrium, second floor, and interstitial spaces”)⁹² there was little information about when and where dancers would be performing. Without a set schedule or a map, sound became my guide.

After my initial encounter in the lobby, I ascended to the museum’s second floor where I met Lénio Kaklea, a dancer sharing interwar works by François Malkovsky, a choreographer of the free-dance movement. Kaklea was situated in a transitional zone connecting the lobby stairway with the escalators ascending to the upper galleries. In this interstitial space, Kaklea was frequently drowned out by acoustic elements emanating from other performances in close proximity. Sounds floated up from the lobby, flooded in from the neighbouring atrium and drifted down from an outlook on the third floor, creating aural competition.

Michael Jackson’s *Bad* (1987) would sporadically pierce through the air as Mani A. Mungai, stationed next to a railing overlooking the second floor, would channel the singer’s iconic movements and lip sync enthusiastically. Perhaps because of its familiarity, the song seemed to ring out at a higher decibel level than the other music being played, overlaying Kaklea’s performance with Jackson’s warning to “tell you once again, who’s bad!” I heard Mungai’s performance multiple times before (and after) I saw

⁹² It should be noted the nomadic dancers took up territory beyond this list of locales displayed on the ‘What’s On’ screen at the museum’s entrance.

it. Based on the sound bleed, I knew that I was likely to see it if I ascended to the third floor.

Similarly, sound was the first element I experienced from Jérôme Bel's *Shirtology* (1997). Performed by Trajal Harrell, the work involves the removal of layer after layer of t-shirts printed with slogans, text, and images, which are discarded into a pile on the floor. Although the work unfolded predominantly in silence, it also included a few audible outbursts in which Harrell would stare down at his torso and vocally respond to what was emblazoned on his shirt. At one point, a layer was removed to expose a t-shirt displaying a musical score, which Harrell sounded out while pointing to the notes one by one. Sung in a staccato and almost abrasive tone, Harrell's stilted rendition of Mozart's *Eine kleine nachtmusik* (1787) became my first encounter with *Shirtology*. With his back to me, Harrell's voice spilled over the third floor railing, "Da! Duh-da! Duh-da-da-da-da-daaaah!"

While art is typically categorized and separated using the museum's architecture, listening can undermine "the certainty of the gallery floorplan and the artifact" (Voegelin 120). Sounds encourage connections across spatial divisions, making new relationships within the museum evident (Voegelin 119). The sounds of *20 Dancers for the XX Century* oriented my body within MoMA and supplied an imposing soundscape for my visit. Whether I was contemplating a work of art from the museum's collection or absorbed in a different dance performance, music or a sudden wave of applause would swell up, complicating my relationship to the object or performer before me. Contrasting with the sensory isolation of the white cube, these fugitive sounds produced a saturated

sensory experience that more closely resembled the liveliness of a festival.⁹³ The sounds of Charmatz's gesture thus interrupted the isolated contemplation of artwork, encouraging instead a comparative, contextual, and time-based mode of reception. Countering the dematerializing effect of the museum space, my location became defined relative to acoustic sources, which positioned me in a spatiotemporal relationship to the dance, even as it unfolded out of sight. Through sound, the 'nowhereness' of an individual gallery was transformed into a specific somewhere. During Charmatz's gesture, museumgoers became listeners oriented in space.

From acoustic cues, I formulated a mental map of where I might encounter performances, which guided my route through the museum. Listening my way through MoMA disturbed my usually systematic strategy of ascending through the galleries (and through time). Instead of progressing through the museum in a sequential way, I bounced from location to location, gravitating towards these acoustic elements. My route through the museum was also reliant on directions provided by other museumgoers. During a conversation with David Thomson, a New York-based dance artist and fellow visitor, I learned that Richard Move was holding court in the contemporary galleries on the museum's second floor. Until this information was relayed to me orally, I had not been able to locate Move, nor was I aware that Charmatz's gesture had infiltrated the contemporary galleries. Combatting the linearity of both the museum and my sense of sight, the aural eruptions and oral directions that arose from *20 Dancers for the XX*

⁹³ The isolation of vision in the modern art museum contrasts with popular 'lower' entertainments, such as the festival, the circus, and the fair, which flood the senses with stimulation. These environments are characterized by what Kirshenblatt-Gimblett terms sensory saturation, and are associated with spectacle, hedonism and excess. Through multimodal aesthetic stimulus, these events force the visitor into a state of either "selective disattention, or highly disciplined attention" (*Destination Culture* 58).

Century caused me to navigate through the museum acoustically, along non-sequential pathways.

In addition to disrupting the linearity and hermeticism of the galleries, fugitive sounds also shattered the static space of the museum, by introducing the element of time. Music rang out then receded into the listener's memory, where it was synthesized into a unified acoustic object (Jonas 138). Experienced sequentially, the fleeting sonic elements of *20 Dancers for the XX Century* differed from the typical acoustic aesthetics of the art gallery. As curator Alan Licht notes, sound-art usually conforms to the temporal structure of the visual arts: it is either totally "evident from the outset" or intended to be contemplated "over time without, paradoxically being time-based" (151). This makes these acoustic works "more attuned to the rhythm of gallery-going," as the visitor ideally moves at his or her own pace during the "intrinsically open-ended" museum visit (152). And, while the open-ended temporality of the museum exists in tension with the time-bound acoustics of dance, this temporal friction was a source of interest. By dissipating in time, the acoustic elements of *20 Dancers for the XX Century* encouraged visitors to take moments of pause and spend longer stretches with the works, as they were only temporarily accessible. Furthermore, by contributing time-based encounters in interstitial spaces, this gesture transformed corridors from places to move through into places to linger.

2.3 Vocalization and Breath

While sound combatted the hermetic and static default of the white cube, it also helped overcome the distancing effect of these ocularcentric spaces. Sounds impose upon us.

They enter our ears, which can make listening feel more intimate than the gaze. In addition to this physical closeness however, sound, in the form of voice, can introduce intimacy by revealing insider information and establishing interpersonal connections between the visitor and the artists. There is a stereotypical view that dancers do not speak, but *20 Dancers for the XX Century* demonstrated this could not be farther from the truth. While some of the choreographic works involved vocal elements, the event also incorporated the dancers' voices through speech and conversation taking place before, after, and sometimes during the performances.

Since the dancers were given the freedom to interact with museumgoers as they pleased, their use of voice ranged vastly. For some, the use of voice was minimal. Despite the vocal elements of *Shirtology*, when I encountered Harrell in the museum, he spoke very little. Without announcing himself, he began performing the work in silence, and upon completion, he simply provided the audience with the title and by-line, opting not to contextualize the choreography or share his own history with it. In this instance, his voice took on the dimensions of a gallery label, providing scant details about the title and authorship of the work of art. Harrell's minimalist approach, however, was the exception, as the bulk of performers used voice as a means to explicate or reflect upon the choreography. For the most part, the performer's ability to address the museumgoers appeared to be a significant aspect of his or her museum tenure. Many dancers encouraged visitors to ask questions, and urged forming audiences to huddle close, signifying the importance of 'being heard' amid the cacophony produced by Charmatz's gesture.

The casual structure of the performances, the lack of boundaries between those who were dancing and those who were watching, and the impromptu and informal conversations that were spurred by the dancing, created an atmosphere that more closely resembled the studio *process* than a stage *production*.⁹⁴ The fact that the artist is present and able to talk about the work is an asset of integrating dance into the museum. Through addressing their audiences, the performers in *20 Dancers for the XX Century* revealed supplementary information about their movements through speech, allowing process to be presented in the museum.⁹⁵

Some of the performers spoke in a more polished, rehearsed manner, which complemented the more distant, historical relationship they had with the early twentieth century dances they were performing. Kaklea interspersed her performances of Malkovsky's (1889-1982) interwar works with rich historical detail. As a visitor unfamiliar with Malkovsky, I quickly learned about his move from Czechoslovakia to Paris in order to avoid military service and the subsequent influence Isadora Duncan had on his work. By providing descriptions before and after she danced, Kaklea was able to explain how Malkovsky's preoccupation with antiquity and wariness of 'progress,' as well as his naturalist and pacifist beliefs were manifest in his choreography. After performing *The Little Shepherd* (1928), Kaklea highlighted Malkovsky's references to Vaslav Nijinsky's *l'après-midi d'un faune* (1912) and also decoded a series of

⁹⁴ Inés Moreno identifies 'performance in retreat' as mode of practice in which the artist is "constantly face to face with the spectator" (85). The result is a transposition from museum to studio, in which the typically private activities involved in art making are made public (85).

⁹⁵ Alessandra Nicifero similarly observed that opportunities to listen to, interact with, or question the performers contributed "[r]elational possibilities" to *20 Dancers for the XX Century* (39).

representational gestures (playing the flute, watching the sun, and saying goodbye to friends) deployed in the work. Similarly, Adam Weinert framed his performances of Ted Shawn's (1891-1972) choreography with historical discussions of American folk songs and masculinity. Delivered orally, these histories brought the convention of museum wall text to life, not only providing the visitor with contextualizing historical information, but also with opportunities to ask follow-up questions. In this sense, the dancers, as educators, adopted a hybridized role of an artist-docent,⁹⁶ contributing both *content* and *context* to the museum.

Other performers used their voices to express supplementary information of a more personal nature, which ranged from their own experiences learning choreography to how the work intersected with their personal lives. Before performances of *One Part of the Matter*, an excerpt from *The Matter* (1972) by David Gordon, Valda Setterfield recounted how she initially learned the work in a hotel room in Detroit, Michigan. Gordon, her husband, had sent her a score consisting of a selection of action photographs of men and women from Eadweard Muybridge's *The Human Figure in Motion* (1887) cut and arranged into a sequence, and had instructed Setterfield to memorize the postures. Setterfield noted that the work was originally set to a soundtrack she and Gordon had produced using their son's tape recorder, and was later staged with music by Philip Glass. She also informed us that MoMA eventually purchased Gordon's original paper score and it was likely somewhere within the bowels of the building. Alongside this supplementary information about the work, peppered with insider details about its development, Setterfield deployed her voice conscientiously to clarify her stance on

⁹⁶ Reviewing *20 Dancers for the XX Century* in *The New York Times*, Brian Seibert describes the dancers in absence of a programme as 'docents' ("Artwork on Foot").

museum dance. Specifically, she asserted that her interest lies in the continued “evolution” of dance, and not in notions of “preservation” or “resurrection.”

At times, Ashley Chen used his voice in confessional terms, candidly revealing how the choreographic works he selected intersected with landmarks in his personal life. Before performing Merce Cunningham’s solo from *Rainforest* (1968), Chen not only mentioned factual information about its iconic set composed of Andy Warhol’s *Silver Clouds* (1966), but he also informed visitors that the piece bore personal significance because he had been performing the solo when he started dating his wife. Chen also prefaced *Next of Skin: The World from Inside and Outside* (2008) by John Scott with its personal resonance as opposed to its historical relevance. He emphasized that his fondness for the work stemmed from the fact his wife, also a cast member, was seven months pregnant when they originally performed it. Diverging from Kaklea and Weinert’s predominantly historicizing use of the voice, these personal narratives revealed that art is not beyond experience, but rather deeply entrenched in the lives and bodies of those involved in its production.

Writing on the “slippery ‘poetics’” (76) of the voice, Irena Tomažin situates the voice in a liminal territory that borders our inside and outside worlds (79). While the voice reverberates through the body, it also separates from its source and disperses (78). Central to Tomažin’s description is the confessional quality of the voice; it exposes what is deepest and most intimate, “strip[ping] bare a human being” (79). Juxtaposing the surface quality of nudity with the naked vulnerability of the voice, Tomažin writes, while “[t]he body has a surface that delineates how far and how deep the eye can see...the ear hears the depth” (79). The voice thus not only reveals information about our physical

insides, it is a vehicle revealing our inner lives to others, which can inflect our words with our innermost thoughts (79).

During *20 Dancers for the XX Century*, performers were exhibited throughout the museum. As dancers, their bodies were put on display. In the atrium, Chen stripped down to his underwear in a matter-of-fact manner in the centre of the room, leaving his clothes in a heap as he performed *L'anatomie*. For this choreographic excerpt from Philippe Découfle's *Decodex* (1995), Chen's own visible anatomy became an important aspect of the choreography. Accompanied by the sound of an accordion, he traced his finger along the contours of his body, between each toe and around his kneecap, and approximated the pathway of his digestive tract. Although he was nearly nude in the middle of MoMA, this superficial exposure arguably did not lay the artist bare in the same manner as the voice, which offered glimpses into the interior landscapes and personal histories of the dancers.

Although the dancers varied in the degree of intimacy they established, they all used their voices to build connections with the visitors, which overcame the detached visual default of the museum. The voice afforded opportunities for conversation and exchange, which was effectively used to overcome the distancing effect of the museum. Overall, the dancers used their voices to communicate a more intimate understanding of the choreography, while their recollections and reminiscences contributed the oral histories and personal narratives that tend to slip through the cracks of broader art historical narratives. Listening, paired with opportunities to ask questions, actively involved the visitor and counteracted the fixity and one-sidedness of exhibition wall text. Free of the theatrical divisions of audience and stage, and the conventional museal separation of product from process, the takeover allowed dancers to occupy space

alongside visitors, which facilitated direct conversation. Through voice, visitors and artists established interpersonal connections beyond what can be accomplished in the formal and far more conventional discussion panel format.

In addition to voice, breath overcame the gulf between the visitor and the art. As an audible material frequently deployed in modern and contemporary dance, breath was a palpable element of Charmatz's gesture. Just as speech borders interior and exterior space, the mechanics of breathing weaves together the dualities of inside and outside, empty and full (Louppe 55). Breathing reveals "the body as a passage, a porous screen between two states of the world, and not a full, impenetrable mass" (Louppe 55). The breath betrays the stillness of the gallery; it reveals that the body is always moving, even when motionless. Through inhalation and exhalation, "[b]reath is the sensation of a mechanism for beginning and becoming, leading us ceaselessly from letting our weight go to suspending it, from the before to the after, from the empty to the full. It is a mechanism for taking hold of the outside, and for returning to the world the air that our body has extracted from it" (Louppe 55).

Producing a visual, acoustic and kinesthetic effect, the breath impacts both the performer and the audience. It texturizes or provides the impetus for movement, generates "vocal vibration," and sends "movement reverberating" (Louppe 55). Breath punctuates and suspends, expresses and communicates. Reflecting on the aesthetics of breath, Mary Oliver emphasizes, "*It is as good as a language. We sigh. We pant. We reveal ourselves*" (3, emphasis in original).⁹⁷ For Oliver, breath is "an indicator, perhaps the most vital one, of mood" (3). Although a gasp or a sigh conveys feeling, the

⁹⁷ Although Oliver's discussion of breath focuses on its impact in metrical poetry, I argue her discussion of the aesthetic potential of breath is applicable to all the arts.

significance of breath extends beyond its emotive potential. The breath connects the body of the visitor with that of the performer.

Entwined with physical responses, the impact of breath is not simply audial, visual or kinesthetic; rather, it weaves together different “channels” of experience (D. Reynolds 129). Its sound not only influences the visual experience of witnessing dance, it can also have a physical impact on the spectators.⁹⁸ The breath can endow a performer with an intense and intimately felt presence, collapsing the distance many experience between the audience and the performer. In certain instances, a performer’s breathing can elicit involuntary responses in the spectator’s own respiration (D. Reynolds 130). For some spectators, the sensory cross-modality of breathing can have the effect of “short-circuit[ing] visual distance, provoking a reflexive affectivity” (130), and, at times, has the result of “confusing boundaries between the dancer’s body and their own” (131).

As dancers co-existed in the museum alongside visitors as living breathing bodies, the sound of their inhalations and exhalations, grunts and groans, revealed their efforts and the expenditure of their energies. As a visitor I would not only watch and hear the dancer catching his or her breath after a particularly strenuous performance, I would also, to a certain extent, feel their exhaustion, empathizing as their chest heaved up and down. Without the distancing effect of the stage, the role of breath in the execution of choreography became perceptible, the closeness of the gallery revealing sounds that may

⁹⁸ As part of the UK-based research initiative Watching Dance: Kinesthetic Empathy, the impact of sound on spectators was investigated. For the project, choreographer Rosie Kay created *Double Points: 3x*, a dance work repeated to three different accompaniments: music by Bach, electroacoustic music, and a soundscape produced solely by the dancer’s rhythmic breathing. The work was performed for a diverse audience, ranging from untrained to professional dancers and inexperienced to frequent watchers of dance. Focus groups held after the performance, revealed that breath had a notable effect on the performance (D. Reynolds 129).

not typically be audible. The sustainment or punctuation of breath during the dance acted upon my body, impacting my experience as a witness. This embodied, synesthetic response to sound, crossing the distance between performer and visitor, contributed another sensory element to the museum: kinesthesia.

3. Sensing Movement

Not limited to acoustic elements, the multisensual art of dance also introduces opportunities for ‘body feeling’ in the seemingly metaphysical white cube. The building design, social protocols, and dominant exhibition strategies of modern art museums all tend to devote little attention to the moving body as a form of visitor engagement or source of aesthetic stimulus. By offering educational opportunities to experience the art from the inside out through bodily movement, and by taking advantage of the aesthetic potential of kinesthetic stimulation, I argue *20 Dancers for the XX Century* demonstrates the unique potential of dance to collapse the distance the museum typically maintains between the visitor and the art.

If performance dance is artificially pared down to its most foundational component, it can be viewed as human movement through space and time. As such, the aesthetic reception of dance is, in its simplest form, a response to the visual and kinaesthetic stimuli of human movements. Etymologically speaking, kinesthesia first appeared in the late 19th century as a Modern Latin compound derived from the Greek *kinein* (to move) and *aísthēsis* (sense perception) (Harper), broadly encapsulating the body’s “sensations of movement and position” (Reynolds and Reason, “Introduction” 18). Although ‘body sense’ is often referred to interchangeably as proprioception,

kinesthesia, kinesthesis, and kinesthetic empathy, in actuality, the meanings of these terms differ. Cultural understandings of this sixth sense also vary across the domains of art making, aesthetics, neurology, and cognitive psychology (Jola, Ehrnberg and Reynolds 20; Reynolds and Reason, “Introduction” 18).

For the purposes of this chapter, proprioception is employed as a narrower term referring to movement stimulus sensed within the body (Reason and Reynolds “Related Pleasures” 52). It is the process by which sense receptors in the inner ear, muscles, tendons, and joints perceive the body’s movement and positioning in space (Reynolds and Reason “Introduction” 18).⁹⁹ Kinesthesia, by contrast, is a multimodal sensory process that integrates the externally focused sensations of hearing, touch, and sight with internal stimulus of proprioception (Reynolds and Reason, “Introduction” 19; Reason and Reynolds, “Related Pleasures” 52; D. Reynolds 124). While all of our senses operate in interplay, the intermodality of kinesthesia is pronounced (D. Reynolds 124), distinguishing it from the sensory isolation promoted by the design of the white cube.

3.1 Inhabiting Our Bodies

The internal sensation of proprioception is unconscious, ceaseless, and as a result, frequently overlooked (Sacks 49). According to renowned neurologist Oliver Sacks, it is how “the body knows itself, judges with perfect, automatic, instantaneous precision the position and motion of all its movable parts, their relation to one another, their alignment in space” (49-50). Proprioception then implies a *proprietary* aspect of self-knowledge

⁹⁹ At times, proprioception is differentiated from exteroception, which is the perception of environmental changes using receptors found in the skin, ears, and eyes. This distinction, however, is problematic, as the boundary between inside and outside is not always rigid (Reynolds and Reason, “Introduction” 18).

and self-possession (50). According to Sacks, “[o]ne has oneself, one *is* oneself...confirms itself, at all times, by this sixth sense” (50). Inherent in this understanding of proprioception as self-possession and self-knowledge is an integration of body and mind, in which our sense of self is predicated on our sense of physically being in (and moving through) the world. Proprioceptive knowledge, according to Sacks, thus mends the mind-body dualism that plagues western philosophical thought (50), which is reinforced by the immaterial atmosphere of the white cube.

A typical visit to the modern art museum is not characterized by full body engagement. Our movements tend to be utilitarian, serving the purposes of rendering our gaze ambulatory. Visitors walk at a slow, yet continuous pace, intercepted by pauses “while the eyes have at the wall” (O’Doherty 15). There is a tendency not to move too fast nor stay too long, and although visitors typically self-regulate according to dominant social conventions, their movements are also closely monitored by security staff. Guards brusquely inform us when we get *too close* to the art, asking us to maintain a safe physical (and, consequently, aesthetic) distance. When transitional pathways are clogged up, impeding flow through these high volume institutions, guards act as traffic controllers, instructing visitors to continue along or move out of the way.

Modern art museum design suggests that “eyes and minds are welcome” and “space-occupying bodies are not” (O’Doherty 15); however, the ability to continually sense our bodies in space prevents us from fully dissolving into our gaze. While body sense may be atrophied in this ocularcentric environment, it never fully vanishes. For instance, when visitors awkwardly circumnavigated dancer Sorenson-Jolink, who was occupying MoMA’s lobby, it was as though his own exceptional movements sparked a

heightened awareness their own unremarkable pedestrianism. As I observed visitors traversing the space, in the crossfire of the audience's gaze, their pace quickened as their heads awkwardly bowed and their shoulders curved inward.

It was not only moments of being singled out of the crowd, however, that amplified the visitor's awareness of his or her own body in the dematerializing context of the white cube. As I moved through the museum witnessing performances, I occupied its galleries, atrium and corridors for longer than usual durations. As I stood stationary for prolonged periods of time, curled up awkwardly on the unyielding floor, or hunched uncomfortably against the wall, I became acutely aware of my own body as muscles became cramped and bony protrusions were met with hard surfaces.

Tracing the redistribution of exhibition space over the final decades of the twentieth century, Reesa Greenberg notes the gradual withdrawal of furniture from galleries resulted in a "changed spatial relationship between viewer and art,"¹⁰⁰ which promoted ambulation (247). "Seating is conducive to the prolonged gaze," Reesa Greenberg observes, while "its absence encourages a passing glance" (247). Although seating is not completely absent from MoMA, its inclusion is minimal. Any benches in proximity to the performers were quickly claimed, and, for the most part, the bulk of audience members were found standing, leaning, or sprawled on the floor. By encouraging visitors to occupy spaces for lengthier periods, *20 Dancers for the XX*

¹⁰⁰ Initiated by artist-run exhibitions, adopted by independent galleries, and finally institutionalized by museums, the removal of furniture had a practical basis: the large-scale paintings of the 1960s required an unobstructed view, while the floor sculptures of this period took over the real estate once occupied by seating. However, in addition to these practical reasons, the disappearance of furniture and its continued scarcity in museums and galleries serves to influence the relationship between the viewer and the art (R. Greenberg 247).

Century thus drew attention to the visitor's body as well as to the museum's inhospitable attitude towards it. The presence of dance in the white cube also confused established territorial divisions in the museum, forcing the audience to renegotiate their spatial relationship to the art, increasing their body awareness. As the dancers transformed space into artistic material, they infiltrated and re-territorialized the domain of the visitor. In a reversal, it was often museumgoers, not the art, splayed against the wall, pushed out to the perimeter of the gallery or atrium, displaced from the centre of the room.

Arguably, the heightened body awareness brought about by dance performances in the museum can have a lingering effect. As we are reminded of our own corporeal presence in the museum, it is possible we will carry this consciousness into adjacent exhibitions, thereby texturing our interactions with visual art in ways that are not exclusively visual. In the typically incorporeal context of the modern art museum, dance can encourage us to encounter art with not only our eyes and minds, but with our whole bodies.

3.2 Inhabiting the Art

In addition to heightening proprioceptive awareness during the museum visit, *20 Dancers for the XX Century* also utilized proprioception as a pedagogical strategy and mode of audience engagement. By providing opportunities for visitors to try out movements, Charmatz's gesture encouraged visitors to experience art from the inside out. For instance, over the three-day period at MoMA, Weinert led volunteers (myself included) through technical exercises by Ted Shawn, allowing museumgoers to attempt sequences from one of the earliest codified modern dance classes. Kaklea also provided

opportunities to move by teaching volunteers Malkovsky's *Ronde (Circle Dance)* (1928), a circular dance she likened to Henri Matisse's *Dance (I)* (1909), which holds a place of pride in MoMA's permanent collection. Other one-on-one experiences arose from the informal and improvisational structure of the exhibition. For example, during a memorable encounter in an upper floor gallery, Shelley Senter taught me the beginning of *Locus* (1975) by Trisha Brown. Attempting this work, in addition to witnessing it, gave me a greater understanding of both Brown's choreography and Senter's movements.

Upon Senter's invitation to dance, I had eagerly removed my shoes and piled my belongings on the museum's floor. Senter began by explaining that *Locus* unfolds within an imaginary cube surrounding the dancer's body. Standing next to me, she gestured towards the invisible points and planes of her own cube before helping me envision my own coordinates. Then, Senter showed me the first three movements and I followed along to the best of my ability. As she instructed me, she described each gesture in terms of its endpoint. A raised shoulder was not a shrug; it was a part of the body extending towards a precise point on the cube.

With heavy concentration, I followed Senter, and quickly slipped into the habit of copying her movements, privileging outward appearance over how my own energy was organized within the cube. It was challenging to shift my focus away from the gestures themselves and turn my attention to the exact relationship between my body and the invisible structure surrounding it. Together, we repeated the opening movements in unison several times, with Senter observing me intently. With the repetition, I had become imprecise and Senter noted that, on the first gesture, my right arm had slipped into a no-man's-land in between the points that formed my 'locus'.

We continued to rehearse, with Senter skilfully building up her directions without overloading me with information. “May I put my hands on you,” she asked before guiding my body. Instead of positioning me, she encouraged my body to feel the pull of the cube’s different energy points. Gently holding the flesh at my right elbow she asked me to reach my fingertips towards a locus point, allowing energy to direct the limb while maintaining space in the joint by not locking or overextending the arm.

As we repeated the gestures in silence, I indulged in the different movement sensations. I envisioned my palm sliding across the flat plane of the cube, and felt my shoulder drawn almost magnetically towards a corner point. I delighted in the weighty feeling of my limbs as they succumbed to gravity, enjoying the pendulum swing of an extended arm. I took particular pleasure in the stirring sensation produced in my shoulder joint as my right arm, extended through to the fingertips, traced a circle parallel to the floor. After learning and practicing the first ten or so movements from *Locus*, I returned to my pile of belongings, resuming my position as a witness with a newfound perspective on the dance.

As these encounters demonstrate, dance can be deployed as a powerful pedagogical tool, allowing the visitor to experience art in his or her own flesh and bones. Through the novelty of moving in a non-pedestrian manner, dancing in the museum encourages the visitor to fully experience his or her own body in the museum space. Importantly, by dancing, visitors may also gain embodied insight into choreographic history. Physically participating allows the visitor to form new connections while complementing other modes of sensory apprehension. By allowing visitors to inhabit the art, albeit as amateurs, dance presents a significant alternative to the default vision-at-a-

distance that colours the museum visit, allowing museumgoers to temporarily cross the threshold between audience and art, creator and consumer.

3.3 The Art of Movement

In addition to offering museumgoers opportunities to step inside the art, dance can also overcome the distancing effect of ocularcentrism by introducing occasions for empathic kinesthetic stimulation. Kinesthetic empathy concerns our intermodal perception and affectual response to the bodily movements of others (D. Reynolds 124). While proprioception allows me to ‘possess’ my own body, weaving together the falsely separated body and mind, kinesthetic empathy does something quite different; the movements of another are mirrored within me, collapsing the distance and distinction between our bodies. If we accept that movement is a primary substance of dance, then the apprehension of movement should serve a pivotal role in our reception of this art form. Indeed, spectators often empathically sense the movements of the performers as well as associated ideas and feelings (Jola, Ehrenberg and Reynolds 20), even while they are “sitting motionless” (Montero 236). I argue that when dance enters the museum, there is interventional potential in this ‘catching’ of movement, which can result in the forging of inter-subjective and empathic connections. By overcoming the gulf between myself and another, kinesthetic empathy counters the conventional visual and emotional distance of the white cube.

In the metaphysical atmosphere of the modern art museum, the sixth sense of ‘body feeling’ is generally under-engaged. It is also frequently omitted from treatises of

the senses and formulations of the aesthetic.^{101, 102} Arguably, the under-acknowledgement of kinesthetic empathy partially stems from the mystery surrounding this sense

¹⁰¹ This is not to say kinesthetic empathy has been entirely absent. However, in comparison to the aesthetic senses of hearing and sight, the acknowledgement of kinesthetic empathy has been marginal.

¹⁰² Despite being largely overlooked in western aesthetic philosophy, Barbara Montero contends that both proprioception and the empathic experience of movement can, in fact, operate within the Kantian aesthetic framework. For instance, the dancer frequently self-evaluates his or her arrangement in (or locomotion through) space based on “feeling,” as opposed to outward appearance (Montero 231). These aesthetic judgements are proprioceptively grounded in whether a movement feels ‘right’ or ‘beautiful.’ Aesthetic proprioceptive evaluation can also include the judgment of movements that are not our own; we might deem a sculpture graceful simply because we know the gesture or movement implied by the artwork would *feel* graceful if experienced in our own bodies. Thus, Montero concludes it is possible to judge a movement beautiful because we believe that, if it were seen, it would appear beautiful, and conversely, from visual stimulus, it is possible to judge a work beautiful because it would feel beautiful to move that way (Montero 236).

Our aesthetic evaluations, however, are not limited to our own movements, as well as to those we imagine to feel beautiful. Recent neurological evidence suggests that we empathically sense the motion of others, mirroring their movement sensations within our own bodies. Montero argues that these mirrored sensations potentially provide the basis for aesthetic judgements, which she terms third-person proprioceptive aesthetics. Despite a sensual resonance within the body, these aesthetic judgements are aimed at an external source (Montero 237), which satisfies Kant’s requirement that aesthetic sensations must be outwardly directed (Kant §3,40).

It should be noted that Montero acknowledges the interdependency between vision and third party proprioception, making her formulation resemble the multisensory concept of kinesthetic empathy. Throughout this chapter, I use ‘kinesthetic empathy’ to describe the sensing of movements that are not our own, which reflects the terminology deployed in neuroaesthetic studies focused on the mirrored apprehension of movement. Arguably, Montero’s decision to use the more limited term of proprioception is a strategic one, aligned with the isolated treatment of the senses in aesthetic philosophy.

While Montero’s contribution provides a basis for considering kinesthetic empathy within the legacy of Kant’s aesthetic framework, the focus of this chapter is broader, addressing the sensory experience of not only art, but also the entire space of the museum. Kant’s formulation of the aesthetic has had a major impact on western conceptions of art, as well as the tendency to isolate and hierarchize the senses. As such, it is important to demonstrate how ‘body sense’ can operate within (and open up) this existing aesthetic framework, as Montero demonstrates. However, I also note that Kant’s formulation of pure aesthetic judgment and its precondition of disinterestedness is inherently class-based, granting a select few the freedom and opportunities to cultivate taste and judge beauty (for an in-depth critique, see Pierre Bourdieu’s *Distinction: A*

experience. New developments in the field of neuroscience, however, are beginning to provide insight into this sensory process. The controversial discovery of mirror neurons in primates has spurred a series of studies investigating kinesthetic empathy in humans, in which activity in the motor and pre-motor areas of the human brain are monitored in response to the observation of human movements.¹⁰³ This emergent area of research, within the recently established sub-discipline of neuroaesthetics, is beginning to develop an empirical basis for describing the movement sensations associated with witnessing dance.¹⁰⁴

Although kinesthetic empathy has been largely absent from aesthetic philosophy, and we are now only beginning to understand the mechanisms behind it, it has long been understood as a vital element of witnessing dance. Kinesthetic empathy first became associated with dance reception through the writings of John Martin, who was the first major dance critic operating in North America and a steadfast supporter of modern dance. In writings spanning the 1930s through 1960s, Martin laid the foundation for contemporary understandings of kinesthetic empathy (Reason and Reynolds, “Related Pleasures” 53). In *The Modern Dance* (originally published in 1933) Martin captures the experience of watching modern dance, elaborating upon its unique offerings as an art form. Martin stresses “movement as the substance of the dance” (14), and instructs

Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste). My intention is not to uphold Kant’s formulation, but rather to demonstrate how, despite its omission, kinesthetic empathy can operate within its legacy. By focusing instead on the important issue of sensory experience in museum spaces, I return to a broader understanding of the aesthetic, from the Greek *aísthēsis*, denoting sense perception, sidestepping debates about the essence of art.

¹⁰³ See foundational studies by Beatriz Calvo-Merino et al., “Towards a Sensorimotor Aesthetics” and Calvo-Merino et al., “Seeing or Doing?”

¹⁰⁴ Not surprising, dance is commonly deployed as the movement stimulus for these studies because of its heightened concern with human movement.

audiences acclimatized to ballet on how to appreciate dance evacuated of narrative structures.¹⁰⁵ For Martin, kinesthetic empathy was a major component of new dance spectatorship (11-13).

Although Martin uses a range of terminology throughout his writings to indicate the process of kinesthetic empathy in witnessing dance, including ‘muscular sympathy,’ ‘metakinesis,’ and even the term ‘contagion,’ his discussions are all focused on the transfer of movement feelings from the body of the dancer to that of the audience member (Reason and Reynolds, “Related Pleasures” 53). According to Martin, this *catching* of movement is an instantaneous, sympathetic response that occurs when witnessing choreography. “Through kinesthetic sympathy,” Martin argues, “you respond to the impulse of the dancer which has expressed itself by means of a series of movements. Movement, then, is the link between the dancer’s intention and your perception of it” (12). Martin thus concludes that movement “in and of itself is a medium for the transference of an aesthetic and emotional concept from the consciousness of one individual to that of another” (13). While Martin’s description essentializes dance and universalizes the subjective reception of art (Jola, Ehrenberg and Reynolds 20), he effectively captures the communication of movement sensations to the body of the spectator – a process we are still only beginning to understand.

The empathic experience of movement described by Martin was a regular occurrence during the reception of *20 Dancers for the XX Century*. As I witnessed Chen and Banu Ogan (both former members of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company) perform a duet from Cunningham’s *Changing Steps* (1973), I experienced embodied

¹⁰⁵ In the early twentieth century, across the arts, the expressive potential of each medium was stressed over its representational or narrative capacities (D. Reynolds 123).

responses to their dancing. Their bodies were expansive yet contained, powerfully in control despite the technical demands of Cunningham's choreography. I held my breath as they moved in silence – malleable yet precise, each change of direction and positioning of the limbs exact. Their bodies evoked in me a contradictory feeling of anticipation tinged with an eerie sense of calm. Chen contorted into a back arch and the entire room expanded.

As I watched Christopher Roman, my body became less solid; I became disjointed, a collection of moving parts. Roman, who assumed the role of Associate Artistic Director of The Forsythe Company in 2013, was performing solos excerpted from William Forsythe works. After a brief introduction in MoMA's atrium, his body began coursing with currents of movement. Alternating, his head, shoulders, elbows and hands led him through space with the rest of his body cascading behind. His joints swung in and out from his midline. His limbs folded and unfolded with the intricacy of origami. The articulations of his head appeared unearthly, surreal. As his weight dropped towards the floor, I too felt heavier in the pit of my stomach. His right knee and arm swung open like a door then rebounded inward sending him upwards. I ascended with him. I witnessed him twist and bend, gather into then veer off of his axis, and I took kinesthetic delight in his perpetual opening and closing, wrapping and unwrapping.

As I traversed through the museum, these performers, and other dance artists scattered throughout MoMA, had an affective impact, as the choreographies they shared stirred wide-ranging movement sensations in me. Feelings of buoyancy, weight, tension, and relaxation coursed involuntarily through my body. Through this mirroring or 'catching' of movement, my own subjectivity temporarily converged with that of the

dancers, intervening with the typically detached visual relationship assumed within the museum.

While the museal frame has the potential to reduce the dancer to the object of the gaze, kinesthetic empathy contrarily encourages the formation of inter-subjective connections.¹⁰⁶ As Dee Reynolds asserts, the empathic or inter-subjective connections dance forges between the audience member and the performer “interferes with visual distance and intensifies the spectator’s corporeal engagement” (124). While the viewer may initially apprehend the dancer through his or her sense of sight, the internalization of movement sensations allows the reception of dance to unfold “across senses,” potentially “confound[ing] boundaries between what the subject experiences as ‘outside’ and ‘inside’ the body” (124).

The inherently synesthetic experience of witnessing dance – its apprehension ‘across senses’ – contaminates the purified visual experience promoted in the modern art museum. However, as *20 Dancers for the XX Century* demonstrates, dance does not merely open up the range of sense experiences facilitated by modern art museums. Through kinesthetic empathy, dance also promotes inter-subjective connections and an intensification of corporeal engagement, which can overcome the detached and distancing effects of this ocularcentric space. In this context that typically overlooks the body in favour of the eye and mind, dance, an art based in human movement, is uniquely suited to heighten the visitor’s sense of embodiment. Furthermore, the affectual potential of kinesthetic empathy introduces a different approach to art reception, one that is rooted not in detachment or distance, but rather in empathy and convergence.

¹⁰⁶ This inter-subjective relationship was further enhanced by the interpersonal conversations discussed above.

4. Overcoming Distance

The modern art museum need not be an ocularcentric shrine for painting and sculpture. In fact, there is nothing in the title ‘modern art museum’ that limits these institutions to the visual boundaries set by the white cube. As my review of early modern art museum design has shown, these institutions can also be equated with sensory plenitude, acknowledging the visitor as an integrated body as opposed to a disincarnated eye. And, while sensory engagement can be built into the structure of the museum, museum content, such as dance, can reciprocally flood the ocularcentric space of the white cube with alternative sense experiences.

As *20 Dancers for the XX Century* demonstrates, the multimodality of dance effectively diversifies the range of media and sensory experiences offered within the ocularcentric space of the modern art museum. Through acoustic elements, Charmatz’s gesture combatted both the imposing sequencing and compartmentalization of the museum, encouraging visitors to form their own connections across non-linear pathways. Through voice and breath, dancers created intimacy with their audiences, overcoming the distancing effect of the white cube and the detached gaze it promotes. Distance was also eradicated through opportunities for visitors to step inside the art, experiencing it proprioceptively, while kinesthesia closed the gulf between the artist and the museumgoer by cultivating empathy and inter-subjective connections. Importantly, these examples of multisensory engagement were not restricted to a single performance area. Rather, through the takeover format, Charmatz’s gesture transformed MoMA, if only temporarily, into a sensory rich environment, where visitors were continually reminded

of their status as space-occupying bodies and encouraged to form intimate, multisensory connections with not only the dance artists but all of the museum's art.

As this chapter has shown, multisensory engagement can play a powerful role in the museum visit, providing insight into modes of sensation and cognition different from our own. Meaningful sensual engagement encourages empathy, which opens up new forms of understanding and exposure to different perspectives (Lippit in Axel and Feldman 291). By contrast, the unnatural separation and distillation of vision typical to the modern art museum, compromises the manifold experiences art is capable of provoking. The detached gaze promoted in the white cube encourages a limited relationship to the art on display, perpetuating the myth of a singular perspective. In the museum, vision, when isolated, can have a totalizing effect (Voegelin 120). Within the ocularcentric space of the modern art museum, the presence of dance provides a model of how these institutions can operate otherwise. Contrasting with the white cube, the process-oriented and collaborative art of dance offers an aesthetic experience that reintegrates the senses and re-acknowledges the embodiment of the visitor. As my discussion of *20 Dancers for the XX Century* has shown, the presence of dance floods modern art museum space with opportunities for compound aesthetic experiences. Collaborating with the white cube context and the bodies of museumgoers, dance encourages the interplay of vision, hearing and body feeling, thus providing alternatives to the distancing, objectifying default of modern art museum space.

FOURTH INTERLUDE

THE VISITOR EXHIBITED

As a form of cultural mediation, this choreographic experiment encourages participants not only to ‘confess’ aspects about their lives, or reveal political beliefs; it also provides the impetus for self-contemplation creating a deeper connection with the work. Are you a leader or a follower? How many years do you think you have left to live? How many hours do you spend a day on grooming? Expressing these answers through movement, it is near impossible to ignore how your responses stack up against those of other participants. Is my number of past sexual partners below or above the average? Do I spend too much time online? Do I work too much? Not enough? The project not only works as a ‘social barometer’ as the choreographers have stated, it is also a prod, encouraging self-evaluation and social comparisons. What happens when our interior landscapes are put on display in the museum alongside those of other visitors? How do we measure up?

In one experiment, the body becomes a point on a bar graph as the choreographers plot measurements along the X- and Y-axes. The collaborators hold up small dry-erase boards, with figures scrawled on their shiny white surfaces. They interrogate the visitors, instructing them to arrange themselves by lining up according to the size of their apartment. Then, by the size of their property. And then, by the size of their favourite restaurant or bar. The visitors are told to line up according to their preferred amount of personal space. Then, according to the amount of personal space typically experienced on

public transit. Not surprisingly, it is much less than they preferred, which elicits laughter over the claustrophobic conditions of commuting.

The choreographers instruct the visitors to form lines according to the amount of time they spend working each day. The results are tinged with sheepish looks from those who work very little and jealous longing by those who work long hours. This question is followed by inquiry into the number of jobs or projects the participants currently have on the go, which transitions into questions about leisure time.

“How many hours do you spend daily on social media?”

“How many books did you read last year?”

“How many hours of free time do you have in a week?”

“How many hours do you spend on your body per week?”

The questions then turn to relationships.

“How many people do you talk to on average per day?”

“How many people have you had sex with?”

This question creates palpable discomfort within the group. Some react to the question with a shameful posture, their eyes and heads turned downwards, while others giggle at the responses. Two young men, barely teenagers, march to the space reserved for the highest number of lovers. Their laughter suggests that their responses are inaccurate, a misplaced display of masculine bravado.

“How many foreign countries have you visited in your life?”

“What is the number of years you estimate you will still live?”

Contemplating one’s mortality in the museum is an interesting juxtaposition because the institution is designed to fight death, decay, and aging. Asking someone when they think

their time will run out is revealing. As they line up on the graph, I look at these strangers and wonder if they are cynics or optimists. What are they doing, or what do they know, that makes them estimate they have less than five years left?

“Do you want to continue?” the choreographer asks.

The graph is abandoned and a new set of questions is launched.

The experiment turns the museumgoers into an installation, which has interesting ramifications. Some visitors ham it up for onlookers (such as the two boys, who proudly ‘revealed’ their sexual prowess). Others treat the questions with dire seriousness, asking for clarification and carefully contemplating their embodied responses. Some complain to friends, “The questions are too black and white!” Others experience embarrassment when their response is unpopular. Participants grow flushed and fidgety when an honest response separates them from the herd.

“Line up lightest to darkest, according to eye colour.”

We stare each other in the face, examining the eyes of strangers, comparing their irises with memories of our own reflections. In a reversal we examine each other instead of the art on display. We line up according to hair length, skin colour, but the eye colour prompt in particular, lends a level of intimacy. You have to look into each other’s eyes.

CHAPTER FOUR

SETTING THE MUSEUM IN MOTION

Thus far, this dissertation has established the central ways purity and atemporality permeate the spatial organization of major modern art museums, and has introduced dance as a transformative force, contaminating these pristine environments. In the previous chapter, I analyzed how the acoustical and kinesthetic elements of dance diversify museumgoers' sensory experiences by encouraging time-bound, embodied encounters with art. By polluting the ocularcentrism of the white cube, dance was shown to interrupt the detached and distancing default of modern art museum space, offering an expanded sensory experience. And, while the multisensuality of dance contaminates the visual bias of the white cube, its status as a collaborative presence among modern art and its history has the potential to further disrupt the purity and atemporality of these institutions.

Through the accumulation, preservation, and decontextualized exhibition of static 'things' the museum is often viewed as an environment where space and time are suspended. For the most part, both the art and the art historical narrative it supports appear as purified, unchanging, 'objects', resistant to collaboration and change. In contrast, dance and performance-based arts are frequently conceptualized in terms of their inability to remain. As Rebecca Schneider notes, from the 1960s onwards, performance has increasingly been defined as "that which disappears, which is continually lost in time, vanishing even as it appears" (101). In accordance with this perspective, when dance, a performance and process-oriented art, enters the modern art

museum, it is often defined by its incapacity to contribute a “durable object” (Lepecki, “Zones” 155). The increasing presence of dance in these institutions thus produces an interesting point of tension: while the purified and atemporal spaces of the modern art museum are designed to ‘save’ art and its history, performance purportedly “saves nothing. It only spends” (Phelan 148).

But, in actuality, it is *a particular understanding of the act of ‘saving’*, modeled after a pure and atemporal view of the inanimate art object, which dance defies. Understandings of dance as pure presence and disappearance within the static space of the white cube underscore the seeming permanence of the museum, while simultaneously placing the onus on dancers to bring these spaces to ‘life.’ As André Lepecki contends, dance, when “exclusively displayed live in museum spaces...allows art to escape from its deathtraps” (“Zones” 157). But, what exactly is this death the museum inflicts upon modern art and its histories? And, what form of ‘escape’ or transformation might dance facilitate?

The museum’s prevailing formalist account of modern art sets up a problematic value-laden binary that opposes the live performance with the purified and atemporal art object. By weaving together theoretical frameworks from Rebecca Schneider and Catherine Wood and drawing upon my case study, *20 Dancers for the XX Century*, this chapter investigates dance’s potential to unsettle this dichotomy. I argue that performance dance, as a powerful contaminant, collaborates with not only the art on display but also with the history it represents. To conclude, I will focus on one pertinent area of transformation by illuminating how the feminized and female-dominated art of dance

intervenes with the masculinized and male-dominated history of art that is constructed, communicated, and reified in the spaces of these institutions.

1. Setting Objects in Motion

As I established in Chapter Two, the concepts of atemporality and purity pervade the organization of modern art museum space. Exhibited as a pristine product in the ‘neutral’ white cube, the art is decontextualized and the conditions of its reception are standardized. In this space, immaterial labour, creative processes, and collaborative networks are rendered invisible, as are the dealers, patrons, and critics who contribute to the ‘production’ of art. And, while purity and atemporality pervade the white cube and the treatment of the art object, these values are also evident in the *type* of work celebrated in the dominant narrative of western modern art.

1.1 The ‘Infinite’ Presence of Modern Art

The prevailing history of modern art is organized as a narrative of purification and progressive abstraction (Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals* 106-107). A close reading of two key art critical texts reveals both an underlying and overt hostility towards theatricalism inherent in this formalist account. In the seminal essay “Modernist Painting,” Clement Greenberg depicts modernism as a process of self-definition or *purification* in which each artistic discipline becomes secured “in its area of competence” (111). For painting, this purifying process necessitated an “antisculptural” turn (113), which involved embracing the “ineluctable flatness” of the picture plane (112). In so doing, painters were forced to reject representations of three-dimensional space, which led to increasing abstraction

(112-113). This also resulted in visual isolation,¹⁰⁷ since anti-illusionistic space could only be navigated optically (115).¹⁰⁸ In addition to celebrating the purification of the medium, this account of modernism also has a purifying effect on the history of art, consolidating the past into a master narrative of progress.¹⁰⁹ In Greenberg's telling, the self-definition (or *purification*) of painting, the isolation (or *purification*) of vision and the rejection of illusionistic space (in favour of the *purified* plane of abstraction) are historical inevitabilities within a (*purified*) master narrative of 'art'.¹¹⁰

This narrative represents but one way of organizing the plural aims of modernism, but it gained traction because it aligned with a broader modern propensity for specialization. It also corresponded with and reinforced the increasing bureaucratization of the senses and their subordination to vision during the mid-twentieth century (Jones 389). Following Greenberg, formalist approaches to art and criticism became increasingly optical and opponents "found themselves operating in the same discourse, if

¹⁰⁷ Despite the fact that painting has a haptic dimension and is experienced by bodies inhabiting space, Greenberg's criticism subsumes the tactility of the paint into the optical experience, conceptualizing the beholder as a disembodied eye (Jones 421).

¹⁰⁸ By contrast, the viewer could imagine entering the illusionistic space of pre-modern painting with his or her entire body.

¹⁰⁹ In Greenberg's retrospective telling, "*all* ambitious tendencies in painting were converging" by the mid-1800s "in an antisculptural direction" (113, emphasis mine). He also contends that "[t]he making of pictures has been governed, since pictures first began to be made, by all the norms I have mentioned" (116). And, despite the fact many modernists were preoccupied with the 'new' – their manifestos detailing deliberate and decisive breaks from the past – Greenberg claims that modernism "develops out of the past without gap or break, and wherever it ends up it will never stop being intelligible in terms of the continuity of art" (116). Thus, Greenberg imposes a single cohesive narrative on art's past as well as its unknown future.

¹¹⁰ By emphasizing vision and the abolishment of recognizable space, this narrative also suggests the rejection of the interrelated dimension of time. Greenberg's privileging of product over process is evident in his claim that aesthetic consistency is revealed "only in results and never in methods or means" (115).

dialectically” (Jones 391).¹¹¹ The popularization of any master narrative is problematic, but for the purposes of this discussion, I am specifically concerned with how Greenberg’s pervasive account of modernism implicitly dismisses arts that are inherently impure. Dance, a process-oriented, collaborative art consisting of visual, aural and kinesthetic elements is incommensurable with this story of progressive purification.

Michael Fried, a disciple of Greenberg and fellow advocate of formalism, makes this dismissal explicit in his essay “Art and Objecthood.” In it, he expresses a value-laden binary between purified and adulterated art, identifying the former as ‘modernist,’ and the latter as ‘literalist’.¹¹² Fried celebrates modernist art for its evocation of a “continuous and entire presentness,” which “one experiences as a kind of *instantaneousness*” (167). These works suggest that “a single infinitely brief instant would be long enough to see everything, to experience the work in all its depth and fullness, to be forever convinced by it” (167). Because these works provide the semblance of an infinite present through their conviction and completeness, Fried credits them with offering a reprieve from the ‘literalism’ of time, temporarily elevating the beholder to the purified realm of “grace” (168).

¹¹¹ Despite the prevalence of the formalist narrative, Jones remarks that “antiform dogged modernism from the beginning, sniffing and spraying its slippery emunctories where formalists most feared to tread” (398). However, as Jones notes, counter and revisionist histories to the dominant formalist narrative, “found their ruptures, and their opportunities for transgression within modernism’s *grand récits*” (398, emphasis in original). And, Postmodernists following in the wake of Greenbergian modernism, “wandered the boneyard looking for buried alternatives, often condemned to resurrect Greenberg’s categories in the process” (434). Jones argues that the ocularcentrism of Greenberg’s formalist narrative became so deeply entrenched that it provided the framework for both anti-Greenbergian postmodernism and antimodern French theory (398).

¹¹² Fried associates literalism with a disparate group of art makers whose works possess a theatrical quality (153).

In contrast to this conviction and completeness, literalist works are contingent and situational. Fried describes these works as “theatrical,” since they are “concerned with the actual circumstances” of their reception (153).¹¹³ According to Fried, this preoccupation with context lends these works an “inexhaustible” quality, not because they offer a robust aesthetic experience, but because their contingency renders them “endless,” as audiences and environments are ever-changing (166). As a result, these works are incomplete and, ultimately, impure. Fried disparages the theatrical for this adulteration, stating that “[w]hat lies *between* the arts is theater” and, more blatantly, that “[a]rt *degenerates as it approaches the condition of the theater*” (164, *emphases in original*). Fried thus declares the overcoming of the theatrical to be “the hallmark of high art in our time” (164). This statement reiterates Greenberg’s depiction of modernism as a process of purification while also excluding performance-oriented art from both the category of ‘high’ art and the museum that houses it.

Although I have focused on only two key critical texts, they exemplify a recurrent anti-theatricalism in western thought, in which mimesis, enmeshed with the performative, is “debased if not downright feared as destructive of the pristine ideality of all things marked ‘original’” (Schneider 102). Through their celebration of purified and atemporal art, Greenberg and Fried uphold the primacy of the ‘pristine original,’ and reproduce and reinforce an antithetical relationship between the art object and the performance event. What is significant is that the values they celebrate are not limited to art criticism; they pervade the modern art museum to such an extent that the modernist art object arguably functions as an organizational metaphor for the spaces of these institutions. And, while I

¹¹³ It should be noted that Fried’s formulation of literalism includes object-based works that are situational and experiential in their aims.

do not intend to imply that there is a causal relationship between formalist art and modern art museum spaces, the values of purity and atemporality undeniably permeate both the sanitized and static white cube and the dominant history of modern art, making these physical and discursive spaces resemble stable ‘objects.’

The primacy of the atemporal and purified work of art is demonstrated by the fact that works opposing the timelessness and completeness advocated by Greenberg and Fried are quarantined. Time-based film or video projections are generally contained within hermetic ‘black boxes’ (Klonk 216-217), while participatory, relational, and performance arts are typically confined to emptied white cubes, isolated from other object-based works. By separating out artworks that challenge the dominant values of the modern art museum, alternative interpretations of self-contained works arising from juxtaposition and coexistence are limited. Indeed, a view of art as purified and wholly manifest is resistant to fruitful collaborative exchange. Infinite presence offers no potential for transformation over time; conviction and purity suggest stasis. Contingency, by contrast, offers opportunities for exchange, change and growth.

1.2 Remaining ‘Differently’

The deeply entrenched, diametric treatment of the time-bound performance and the preserved art object resurfaces in recent literature addressing the current surge of dance in modern art museums. The object-centred preservational practices of museums are often equated with wresting an object from time and suspending it “in formaldehyde,” which “freezes it, arrests it, stops it” (Phelippeau 180). Dance, by contrast, is fetishized as “the art of transformation,” to such a degree that Mickaël Phelippeau maintains that

“[c]horeography already represents a wish to escape the fact of things getting away, of time passing” (180). Similarly, Mark Franko starkly contrasts the museum with dance, observing that while the former ‘accumulates’ time,¹¹⁴ the latter “‘spends’ time, ‘takes’ time, in a way that simulates the presence of being” (“Museum Artifact Act” 99). This fetishization of performance as an ephemeral act seems to serve a productive purpose. Within this theoretical framework dance becomes an antithetical response to object-centred museal practices, providing a counterpoint to the museal drive for visible permanence and order (Schneider 101).¹¹⁵

This diametric treatment of dance and the museum suggests a temporary intervention, but offers little by way of transformation, ultimately reproducing the performance-object binary promoted by Fried. Indeed, Schneider has argued that equating performance with “disappearance” or “ephemerality read as vanishment” is ultimately bound to dominant archival logic (100). The performance is defined by its inability to remain in the same manner as the seemingly fixed object (101). This move is ultimately counter-productive: it cements rather than disrupts the mythical stability of the object, while simultaneously obscuring and invalidating “other ways of knowing, other modes of remembering” (101). Thus, fetishizing the ephemerality of dance in the modern art museum does not destabilize the purity and atemporality of this space. It further entrenches it.

¹¹⁴ Here, Franko is referencing Foucault’s theorization of the museum as the “perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile place” (Foucault 234).

¹¹⁵ Notably, this formulation of performance as disappearance was adopted by the discipline of art history in the latter half of the twentieth century when performance began entering the modern art museum (Schneider 101).

While performance disappears, it also remains, albeit “differently” than the art object (Schneider 101). Schneider writes, “performance becomes itself through messy and eruptive reappearance, challenging...any neat antimony between appearance and disappearance, or presence and absence” (103). Through its “ritual repetitions” the performance is “simultaneously indiscreet, non-original, relentlessly citational, and remaining” (103). Thus, it is not the inability of dance to be ‘saved’ like the art object that has transformative potential within modern art museum space. Rather, it is the reiterative mode in which performance remains that questions the art museum’s prevailing purified and atemporal treatment of the art on display.

By accepting a different understanding of remains, this theoretical framework provides a more nuanced understanding of performance. Not limited to “that which disappears” in the museum, performance can be understood as “both the *act* of remaining and a means of reappearance” (Schneider 103). Such an approach forces the contention that “remains do not have to be isolated to the document, to the object, to bone versus flesh” (103). Applied to the current phenomenon of dance in modern art museums, Schneider’s theoretical lens thus provides a means to unsettle the diametric treatment of the time-bound performance and the preserved art object. As dance increasingly becomes part of core programming, occupying galleries, atriums or transitional areas during opening hours, its more consistent presence has an impact on the surrounding spaces of the museum. No longer isolated to special events after museum hours, this art that “remains differently” (Schneider 101) in modern art museum space, productively diversifies understandings of both the art objects on display and the histories they represent.

As a performance-based art, dance opposes the singularity of the museum object. Communicated through the “intermediary” of the dancer, choreographic “material is constantly rethought, reshaped, reinterpreted” (Cohen 7). With each performance, movements are executed anew, as the dancer’s interpretation may gain greater depth, suffer from waning interest, or be impacted by ‘offstage’ circumstances (7). And, just as no two performances are ever identical, the dancer is also continuously changing. The body is “[i]llusive, always on the move,” and “is at best *like* something, but it never is that something” (Foster, “Choreographing History” 4, emphasis in original). Joints stiffen or loosen; the body is always becoming, making each performance unique. Even when an isolated performance is ‘saved’ through documentation, the dance is never fixed, as new audience members approach the work with “different stores of knowledge and experience and values” (Cohen 7); however the same can be said of visitors encountering art objects within the museum.

Despite the fact dance works do not endure in a “pristine state,” they survive nonetheless (Cohen 10). Over time, “some continuing strain of recognizable identity has been *preserved*” (10, emphasis mine). Depending on the work, the ‘essence’ of what remains varies. Some choreographic works might be defined by sequences of movement, or patterns in time or space (145). Others may be defined by the mood they evoke or the visual elements they incorporate (146). In postmodern and contemporary dance, the “functionality of the movement” (147) or a set of “ground rules” shaping the outcome of the choreography may provide the essence of the work (148). Thus, although dance is continuously changing, it also endures, allowing styles of movement to be passed down,

codified techniques to be shared, and choreographic works to be remembered, repeated or restaged.¹¹⁶

In the museum, dance ‘remains’ both as a performance that repeats and reappears throughout opening hours, and as an art passed between bodies enduring over generations. Theorizations that diametrically oppose dance with the museum’s desire to ‘save’ simplify the contradictory reality of dance as an art that *both* changes and persists over time. As an art that remains, just in a different manner than the purified and atemporal art object, dance can be viewed as a transgressive act, inciting movement beyond the prevailing organization of modern art museums and encouraging more varied relationships to the art on display. Gestures leave room for contradiction. Performance allows for transformation. As a re-organizing principle for the modern art museum, dance has the capacity to unsettle the value-laden binarisms that privilege purified and atemporal art over contingent and ephemeral performances.

1.3 The ‘Slow Event’

In contrast to the diametric treatment of the live performance and the atemporal object, Catherine Wood proposes that the ‘choreographic’ may instigate “a more nuanced consideration of how subject-object boundaries are defined—and elaborated” in modern art museum space (113). Instead of opposing bodies and things, Wood calls for a “more complex ecology” in which “objects and actions are imperfectly co-existent, even

¹¹⁶ While Fried disparages this type of ‘endlessness’ in art, Selma Jeanne Cohen celebrates the tension that arises between dance’s contingent and constitutive elements. For Cohen, the interplay between “score” and “interpretation,” “tradition” and “individual insight” contributes to the vitality of dance (162). Contingency is ultimately what enables dance to act as “a repository for ever-new truths” (15).

inseparable, and certainly mutually influencing” (118). Through “new confrontations,” Wood suggests that the museum might “evolve beyond being a repository for dead things behind glass and barriers, towards a knitted-together social-material space” (121).

Building upon Wood’s proposal, I argue that the current integration of dance into modern art museum space can encourage a more ‘nuanced’ understanding of the art object, while unsettling the atemporal and purified framework of modern art museum space.¹¹⁷ If we can reinterpret the dance performance as an ephemeral art that is, paradoxically, accumulated in the flesh, we can similarly reimagine the art object as an event, just a *different* kind of event. Here, I draw upon Stanley Eveling’s assertion that “[a]n object is a slow event” (qtd. in Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “Intangible Heritage” 170).¹¹⁸ To understand the art object as a ‘slow’ event, is to transform it from a purified and preserved thing suspended in the “limbolike” space of the museum (O’Doherty 15), to a more porous and complex entity: an aggregate of materials, ideas, perceptions, and

¹¹⁷ Although dance cannot be stored in a vault, mounted on a wall, or preserved under glass, it should be noted that certain performance-based works do appeal to the dominant product-oriented value system of the museum. Notably, Tino Sehgal sells his works as limited editions, making them suitable to the acquisitional aims of the museum. Despite being “object-less,” this approach diverges from the “anti-institutional, anti-market” drives that characterized much of late 1950s and early 1960s performance art (Wood 114). In a way, Sehgal’s works conform to the conditions of the collectible object as well as the capitalist market through their commodification of immaterial labour and experience (114). While this ‘museumification’ of dance is a fertile area for further discussion, it falls outside the scope of this dissertation.

¹¹⁸ Stanley Eveling, professor at the University of Edinburgh, never published his view that objects are ‘slow events.’ Katherine Young, who studied with the existential philosopher during the sixties, reported it to Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (“Museum as Catalyst” 19 footnote 28). I am indebted to Marvin Taylor of New York University’s Fales Archive who introduced me to the phrase.

experiences unfolding in space and time.¹¹⁹ While the purity and atemporality of modern art museum space creates the overwhelming impression of time suspended, the fact of the matter is that “time is always produced, distorted, accelerated and compressed by the sheer presence of objects,” and that artworks “secrete a kind of time” (Lepecki, “Zones” 158). However, the primacy of the fixed object as an organizing principle for modern art museum space drastically limits the rich and varied experiences these environments might provide. It leads to a restricted view of the art on display and a limited perspective of the history it represents.

Although the museum makes great efforts to decontextualize art and halt the effects of time, both the meaning and materiality of “things” is always evolving. While preservational efforts create a suspended present, materials inevitably fade, age, or deteriorate over time. Beyond physical changes, the conceptual space surrounding the object is also always in motion. Museum objects are transformed through their physical and social contexts and perform multiple meanings based on their curation (Hein 56). New knowledge of past lives is uncovered, new histories are proposed, and new interpretations are always on the horizon. Rehangings, narrativizing docents, or changes in the surrounding soundscape, are among the many variables that can bring fresh perspectives to seemingly atemporal works. The object and its meaning are never fixed.

Also conflicting with an atemporal and purified understanding of the object is the fact that art is always experienced in space and time. Perception, and therefore aesthetic experience, “is always determined by movement” (Foellmer 113). The sensing body or

¹¹⁹ Lepecki has similarly observed “any object is never an inert entity—but carries potentials that bypass its mere functionality, purpose or instrumental value, and reveal any object as an unfolding event” (“thing:dance:daring” 96-97).

apprehending eye “moves back and forth before a painting, circulates around a sculpture, or perambulates the elements of an installation” (113). While the reception of art might dilute or accelerate time, or seemingly provide a reprieve from time by offering the semblance of grace, our encounters with objects are ultimately always rooted within a spatio-temporal context, despite the suspended ‘nowhereness’ of the white cube.

Instead of experiencing art as self-contained and completely manifest, dance encourages us to experience the artwork comparatively and in context. Dance transforms the art object into an element of a whole theatrical ‘situation’, which encourages, collaboration and ‘co-existence.’ Dance opens up space for multiple narratives, encouraging us to reinterpret individual works of art as well as the art-historical narrative they represent.¹²⁰ In so doing, this might encourage a more diverse construction of modern art museum space. Indeed, a view of the object as a ‘slow event’ might encourage us to reconceptualize the modern art museum from a refuge from time to a space offering myriad experiences *in time*.

By rejecting the primacy of the purified and atemporal art object and adopting a more nuanced understanding of *both* objects and performances, the visual apprehension of static things might become one orientation, equal among many within the modern art museum. This would lead to a museum of diverse, conflicting and complementary temporalities, offering museumgoers a greater breadth of experiences with, relationships to, and understandings of art. Boris Charmatz speaks to this possibility in his “Manifesto

¹²⁰ See Allana C. Lindgren’s forthcoming chapter “Dance as a Curatorial Practice: Performing Moving Dragon’s *Koong* at the Royal Ontario Museum,” which examines the unique potential of site-specific dance to ‘re-curate’ the museum through the introduction of new narratives that dialogue with the gallery, its objects, and their associated meanings and histories.

for a Dancing Museum” in which he proposes the merging of dance and the concept of the museum would give rise to “a museum of complex temporalities” (5). Instead of limiting the museum to either the “ephemeral” or the “perennial”, the “experimental” or the “patrimonial” (5), a ‘dancing museum’ would allow contrasting spaces with seemingly contradictory relationships to time to coexist.

1.4 Performing Objects

20 Dancers for the XX Century provided many opportunities for juxtaposition, collaboration and exchange to take place between dancing bodies and the art objects on display. Upon arriving at MoMA, my first encounter with John Sorensen-Jolink performing excerpts from Doug Elkins’ *Fräulein Maria* in the museum’s Agnus Gund Garden Lobby, already produced an interesting dialogue between bodies and things. On the wall hung a brightly coloured sextych consisting of canvases ranging from crimson to plum adorned with swirling, looping lines, and behind Sorensen-Jolink, the glass curtain wall formed a backdrop that provided vistas to the sculptures in the garden. The most notable object, however, was Auguste Rodin’s *Monument to Balzac* which presided over the lobby. Larger than life, the bronze cast sculpture towered over the already tall Sorensen-Jolink. The pillar-like sculpture depicted Balzac enshrouded in a jacket, sleeves hanging empty and lifeless at his sides. Except for shoes peaking out from beneath the coat, and ripples where the arms were presumed to be clutching the fabric, Balzac lacked the particularities of limbs.

Balzac’s bulking appearance starkly contrasted with the lightness of the curtain window and the intricate articulation of Sorensen-Jolink’s agile, long limbs. Unlike the

dark, motionless bronze, Sorensen-Jolink's skin transformed as it became flushed from exertion and heavy breathing. He moved even in his stillness, blood and oxygen pumping continuously. Next to him, Balzac was ever more heavy, immovable, lifeless. When Sorensen-Jolink ducked behind the figure, the sculpture was transformed into makeshift scenery, obscuring him as he scrolled forward to the next musical track. Sorensen-Jolink's performance urged a prolonged gaze in a museal space visitors normally pass through. It also encouraged the sculpture to be experienced in time and space through its unfolding relationship to Sorensen-Jolink's own body.

While Sorensen-Jolink's dancing offered new insights into Rodin's sculpture, it also highlighted the instability of the choreographic 'object.' Between bouts of dancing, Sorensen-Jolink addressed museumgoers, informing them that *Fraülein Maria* was not a solo even though he was performing it as one. He danced through the group sections, performing only his parts, and watched intently as though other dancers were present. He motioned to missing bodies and flung an arm over an imagined shoulder, gathering a missing dancer into his fold. As Maria sang about her 'favourite things', Sorensen-Jolink glided effortlessly to the floor—sitting on his hip, sinking into his shoulder and listening intently. Between the verses, he waltzed across the lobby with expansive movements, turned, and cartwheeled with one hand, before pausing to listen to Maria once again. What was being shared, then, was not a singular, stable choreographic object envisioned by Elkins; rather, it was Sorensen-Jolink's subjective position within the work—his memory of it. For three days he performed his part over and over, and the missing dancers became apparitions that I imagined filling the lobby. The choreographic 'object'

being shared was always in motion, countering the prevailing atemporal and purified understanding of the artwork.

The multiplicity of the choreographic ‘object’ and its destabilizing effect on MoMA’s collection could be found throughout the museum. As I wandered through the upper galleries, I stumbled across Shelley Senter dancing a work by Trisha Brown in a room of Gerhard Richter paintings. Her movements were precise yet nonchalant—a postmodern style I had read about extensively in books, but had only witnessed a handful of times. “This is *Locus*, or at least how I remember it,” she stated as she moved. I joined a small group of visitors milling around the gallery. Her presence transformed us into an audience. She addressed us while she moved and we all became collaborators, as she encouraged us to dialogue with her and pose questions. This, in turn, guided her discussion, transforming the ‘exhibit’. As she moved she explained to onlookers that she was dancing fragments of choreography. She was careful to emphasize that she was not offering a performance in a traditional sense. Rather, she was exhibiting the dance archived in her body, as she remembered it. Periodically, she would consult an immaculately hand printed list of choreographic works and their creation dates. No movements were written out. It was all stored in Senter’s flesh.

We watched fragment after fragment of landmark postmodern choreography. At one point she informed us that she was supposed to snap her fingers, instead of actually snapping fingers. “I can’t snap because of arthritis,” she stated. While the dances are remembered in her body, the mechanics and facility of that body have changed over the last thirty years. Matter ages, changes, evolves. While dancing a work called *Branching*, she announced, “I can’t remember what happens after this...but then I remember...” Her

voice trailed off but her movements did not. Her running dialogue invited us into the thought processes of the dancer. In a different context, the glitch or the gap in Senter's memory would have been undetectable as her years of experience propelled her body seamlessly from one movement into the next. The glitch was a reminder of the distance between what is danced, what is remembered, and the choreographic work in a mythological stable state. As she continued to move, she confessed, "This is probably wrong. I'd probably get into trouble. But they're my memories from learning the dance twenty-five years ago. They're my memories and I get to keep them."

My eyes wandered back and forth between Senter and the series of Richter paintings that encircled us. The series, titled *October 18, 1977*, offers a diffuse re-working of the newspaper and police documents that (mis)represented the deaths of four members of Germany's Red Army Faction as suicides. The images, painted in monochrome grey, undermine the perceived veracity of the photographic document, which took on deeper complexity when contemplated in relation to Senter's performed remembering. The gallery became a meditation on the complexities of histories and their potential to be (un)intentionally clouded, and imperfectly sedimented in bodies and objects.

While dance sets the museum in motion by dialoguing with the objects on display, offering an alternative to atemporal and purified conceptions of art, it also significantly collaborates with the conceptual art historical spaces produced by these institutions. As dancers occupied MoMA they turned the museum's negative spaces into charged sites of performance. Moreover, in filling these physical gaps in the museum, dance also wedged open discursive gaps in the history of modern art. Appearing in between and alongside

the art, the presence of dance in modern art museums not only dialogues with the collection, it also destabilizes and decentralizes the ossified canon and history of modern art.

2. Setting the Canon in Motion

Exhibited in the modern art museum, the singular self-contained art object comprises and upholds the interdependent structures of the canon and the history of art. Acting as an incremental step within a larger narrative structure, each work of art points to “sources (ancestors) and consequence (descendants) beyond itself” (Fisher 97). According to Philip Fisher, this overwhelming tendency to consider art objects as part of a series not only affirms “the reality of the history of art,” but also suggests that this narrative structure has “a greater reality than that of the free-standing individual work” (97).

Public museums developed alongside modernity’s “grand developmental accounts of history” (Klonk 214), and the modern art museum evolved out of this legacy as a medium for producing, communicating, and reifying the history of modern art. As “prestigious and powerful engines of ideology” (Duncan, “Hot Mamas” 172), major modern art museums hold authority and influence over the past, making the dominant narrative they promote *seem* like a neutral account of what happened. And, while it has been claimed that imposing master narratives “are no longer tenable” (Klonk 213), ‘the’ history of modern art promoted by MoMA arguably remains well preserved as the “definitive story of ‘mainstream modernism’” (Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals* 102). Into the twenty-first century, the modern art canon and the art historical narrative that supports it

have remained relatively static, and while there have been additions, “almost nothing that was considered ‘art’ one hundred years ago has been demoted since” (Conn 28).

Indeed, the dominant formalist narrative and corresponding canon of modern art is so deeply entrenched within western high culture that it invariably impresses upon art and artists that falls outside of its trajectory. Alternative genealogies thus become deviations, extensions or offshoots from this central dominant path. Although dance has figured throughout the history of the modern art museum, it has, overall, been on the periphery of the dominant narrative communicated by these institutions.

2.1 Problematizing the Canon

Within this relatively stable narrative of artistic progress, certain works are elevated to canonic status, acting as landmarks within the history of art. These canonic works are believed to be exemplary, possessing enduring quality and sustained importance. Derived from the Greek ‘*kanōn*,’ meaning ‘rule’, modern usage of the term ‘canon’ broadly denotes “a general law, rule, principle, or criterion by which something is judged” (“canon”). Within artistic or literary milieus, the canon, as criterion, is “[t]he list of works considered to be *permanently established* as being of the *highest quality*” (“canon”, emphasis mine).¹²¹ This definition encapsulates two problematic assumptions about the canon: its presumed quality and perceived permanence. These assumptions not only contribute to the longevity and influence of the canon, but also reinforce the atemporality and purity of modern art museum space.

¹²¹ In the literary and artistic contexts the term canon also denotes the authentic works of a particular artist (“canon”).

The canon may certainly reflect some of the highest quality work produced within an artistic discipline; however, the false belief that artistic works are inducted into the canon, or museum, based solely on their intrinsic artistic merit obscures the politics of producing history. In celebrating certain artworks and artists, the canon renders others invisible. As culturally constructed systems, canons reflect and perpetuate the dominant values of the groups responsible for their creation (Citron 20). Until recently, the almost exclusive perspective of “privileged white, heterosexual, middleclass Western males” (Middelw 22) has resulted in an artistic canon purified of divergent points of view.

By supposedly representing the highest quality, canonic works define and embody artistic standards (Citron 22); these standards, in turn, have a powerful role in shaping public tastes¹²² and are reinforced and reproduced by the educational systems that produce future experts (Citron 31; Middelw 22). In addition to impacting the future of the art form, canonic works also take on “normative significance” (Middelw 22). Through their cultural entrenchment, canons normalize inequality under the guise of tradition (23) and the depictions of race, gender, sexuality, and class they perpetuate become normative views (Middelw 22-23).¹²³ Also troublingly, the presumption of quality can be used to justify the exclusion of marginalized artists, falsely suggesting that their works simply are ‘not good enough.’ Thus, the artistic canon, produced and promoted by the modern art museum has a purifying and stabilizing effect over the plural and diverse creative practices of the past.

¹²² For instance, a museumgoer may refrain from judging a work until they have read the accompanying label, trusting the canon, presumably determined by the experts, to dictate which artists ought to be enjoyed, or, barring that, ‘appreciated’ (Citron 31).

¹²³ I will return to the construction of sex and gender within the history of modern art below.

A second problematic assumption about artistic canons that contributes to the purity and atemporality of modern art museum space is their perceived permanence. While both the content and structure of the canon can be transformed, additions and adjustments to artistic canons generally occur as “overlapping modifications” over lengthy periods of time (Citron 15). This reinforces false perceptions of the fixedness, transcendence and ahistoricism of the canon (Citron 15; Midgelow 22), as well as the surrounding narrative of art history. Recently, however, work has been done to expose the specific political, cultural and artistic contexts of canonical works. These projects reveal the dynamism under the canon’s “gloss” of universality and permanence (Midgelow 22);¹²⁴ they expose how canons operate as “contingent entities” and “underscore their social constructedness and their powers of reconstruction” (Citron 16). The hegemony of the canon has also been challenged by efforts to uncover “the ‘lost’ works of women and non-Western artists” (Midgelow 24). The acknowledgement of a wider range of artists and artworks – specifically those in identity groups that have been rendered invisible by the canon – is a worthwhile endeavor. But, simply diversifying the canon “does not challenge the concept of canonicity,” which Vida L. Midgelow cautions ultimately “reside[s] in a patriarchal approach” (24). In this sense, it is not the content of the canon that needs to change; rather, it is the canon’s prevailing value system that must be exposed and interrogated (24).

In her investigation of choreographic reworkings of the ballet canon, Midgelow notes that the canon’s perceived permanence obscures the “process of constant change”

¹²⁴ Although Vida L. Midgelow is writing specifically about the ballet canon, this tendency to view canonic works as transcendent and ahistorical extends across artistic media.

characteristic of ballet repertoires (Midgelow 22). As I discussed in the previous section, this ongoing evolution is not limited to ballet, as all performance dance is impacted by its context of presentation, changing with each cast, venue, and performance. The mutability of choreography thus offers a productive entry point to question the seeming fixity of canonic works, while also encouraging the canon itself to be viewed as a dynamic structure as opposed to a purified and atemporal ‘thing’.

On initial examination, *20 Dancers for the XX Century* can be interpreted as the worthwhile – yet limited – project of (temporarily) expanding the range of works represented in the museum. Indeed, the dancers shared influential twentieth century choreographies and flooded the museum with the underrepresented art of dance. This project was particularly poignant within the context of MoMA because of the “crucial role” this institution has played “in defining the modernist canon and in shaping the way that modern art is looked at and understood” (Grunenberg, “The Modern Art Museum” 32). However, *20 Dancers for the XX Century* did not simply overlay MoMA’s narrative of modern art with ‘the’ canon for western modern and contemporary dance; it also set this purified and seemingly fixed structure in motion.

Although specific choreographic works were shared, the looseness of the presentation and the multiplicity of ‘voices’ (and bodies) in the museum prohibited the construction of a single, purified historical narrative. In fact, during a panel discussion organized by MoMA following *20 Dancers for the XX Century*,¹²⁵ choreographer Simone

¹²⁵ The panel, titled “An Evening with Boris Charmatz, Simone Forti, and Ralph Lemon” was held Monday October 21, 2013 at 7pm in The Roy and Niuta Titus Theatre 2 at MoMA in New York.

Forti likened the event to “surfing the web.”¹²⁶ Alessandra Nicifero similarly described the temporality of the event as “a chaotic, endless present” (38). At times, the event’s all-at-once structure incited a fragmentary or distracted relationship to the performances, however these ‘interruptions’ of dance also offered important interjections and diversions from MoMA’s narrative of art. Shown alongside and in-between other art works, *20 Dancers for the XX Century* disrupted the chronological succession of art in the gallery and the narrative of art it represents. Similarly, despite the retrospective theme of the event, the ‘all-at-onceness’ of the dance performances, simultaneously occurring in multiple locations at the same time, prevented *20 Dancers for the XX Century* from producing a cohesive, chronological or authoritative canon of twentieth century dance.

The singular authoritative effect of the museum was also destabilized through the agency given to the dancers – after all, the gesture was titled *20 Dancers* – not ‘*Dances*’ – *for the XX Century*. As I have previously noted, some of the dancers opted to share twenty-first century dance works, straying from the title that loosely ‘contained’ them as they roamed through the museum. This gave the impression that the dancers were free to make their own decisions, which, in turn, had a transformative effect on the event’s curatorial framework. The artists also shared works for a multitude of reasons. Some of the participants danced works related to their own current research: Lénio Kaklea had recently studied François Malkovsky’s interwar works with one of his disciples, while Adam Weinert was currently researching Ted Shawn’s early choreographic works as part

¹²⁶ For Forti, the gesture promoted “catching things on the fly” which she felt was best suited for younger generations and the work they are producing. Forti stated, “I need to see one thing, and look at it, and to spend time with that one thing, and to get into it,” which counters the disjointed, agile and fleeting form of attention required for cultural ‘surfing’.

of his master's degree at New York University. As I discussed in the previous chapter, other dancers selected works based on personal significance, such as Ashley Chen who framed some of the works according to events in his private life.

Charmatz commented upon the agency of the dancers during the discussion panel, defining his gesture as “a museum in the museum,” meaning the dancers acted as “curators” of their *own* museums, “responsible for saying what they are doing or not saying what they are doing.” These freedoms resulted in manifold approaches. “Some performers were super mobile,” Charmatz observed, while others had “chosen one specific space,” adding “each performer had a different manner, a different style, a different experience in how to try this gesture.” In contrast to the dominant history of modern art, which celebrates the subjectivity of the artist while ultimately advancing an omniscient narrative of progress, *20 Dancers for the XX Century* allowed art history itself to become subjective. During the event, the history and canon of art became fractured and decentralized, as multiple narrators shared it across multiple locations. This afforded the artists a degree of ownership over the ongoing construction and communication of dance's history.

As Charmatz remarked, this subjective structure supporting separate yet simultaneous narratives is “much more free” and “much more fragile also.” Arguably, the fragility of Charmatz's gesture taps into a heightened cultural interest in vulnerability and weakness. In the field of architecture, Juhani Pallasmaa has critiqued the modernist predilection for “heroic and utopian” design (“Hapticity and Time” 82), dictated by a totalizing conceptual image (81). Such a design process is hostile to time and intolerant to change (83), paralleling the seeming fixity of museum objects and the art history they

represent. Fragile design, by contrast, is “[c]ontextual and responsive”; instead of originating with an imposing concept, it grows outward (“Hapticity and Time” 81).¹²⁷ In applying these theories to museums and exhibitions, Pallasmaa has advocated the development of a design approach in which “the space, the objects, and the viewer are in constant, although mostly unconscious, interaction and dialogue” (“Museum as an Embodied Experience” 206). Rather than impose a singular static vision (or narrative) on the visitor, this would allow for the museumgoers’ “movements, sensory experiences, associations, recollections, and imaginations” (206) to all “contribute to the overall effect beyond what is explicitly presented and expressed” (207).

Indeed, the open and ‘fragile’ structure of *20 Dancers for the XX Century* facilitated questioning, contingency, adaptability and play. This allowed for imposing master narratives and chronological exhibition structures to be opened up and destabilized.¹²⁸ As the weekend progressed, I encountered a broader range of works.¹²⁹ The event thus did not (and also did not purport to) present ‘the canon’ of twentieth century dance. Although landmark choreography was shared, including *L’Après-midi d’un faune* by Vaslav Nijinsky, *Clytemnestra* by Martha Graham, *Changing Steps* by Merce Cunningham, and *Trio A* by Yvonne Rainer, these were interspersed with lesser-

¹²⁷ While Pallasmaa is specifically advocating the potential of a weakened or fragile architecture, his analysis of weak design is applicable beyond the built environment.

¹²⁸ Also writing about *20 Dancers for the XX Century*, Marcella Lista similarly observed that the event confronted “the slanted, monolithic, linear image of the history of art, as it is *designed*, and thereby suspended, in museum display time” (10, emphasis in original). Significantly, Lista notes that “the majority of historical exhibitions that have attempted to achieve an organic relation to dance have adopted configurations that were completely open, uncompartmentalized, and conspicuously contrary to the notion of the linear route which a viewer slips along, following a narrative from room to room” (Lista 7).

¹²⁹ This seemed to partially arise from the monotony of performing the same works over and over.

known works by lesser-known choreographers. The multitude of voices involved and the disparate reasons for the inclusion of works helped dispel any view of a single authoritative view of history. Instead, each dancer contributed a living museum, with their own ‘collections’ of choreographic works imperfectly archived within their bodies, effectively demonstrating that individual works of art and the art historical narrative they support are not fixed.

The dancers also destabilized the canon and the dominant individualistic narrative of modern art by encouraging visitors to think about conversations and networks of ideas coursing both ways not only among artists, but also across artistic disciplines. Lepecki, investigating ‘zones of resonance’ between dance and the visual arts, uses the term ‘correspondence’ to address common and concomitant experimentation across these fields (“Zones” 157). “Correspondence,” he writes, “is a back and forth that is unconcerned with claims of originary precedence” (157). In examining history as a lateral network of connection, dialogue and “co-formation” (“Zones” 157) instead of a lineage of causality and influence, *20 Dancers for the XX Century* opened up the dominant and limiting chronological default of the modern art museum.

Although *20 Dancers for the XX Century* offered a specific strategy for destabilizing the seemingly permanent canon, dance, in general, is well suited to question the authority of the museum. In performance dance, the dance artist is present, and, at times, so is the choreographer. Pre- or post-performance panels, or less formal opportunities for dialogue between the artists and museumgoers facilitate the decentralized exchange of ideas. A given performance work will contain as many viewpoints as there are cast members, and that is without taking into consideration the

choreographer and additional collaborators whose creative agency and decision-making all contribute to the final work. Used strategically, dance has great potential to acknowledge the collaborative structures involved in all art making, which are typically excluded from the museum in favour of the fully realized art object and the mythologized narrative of the lone genius.

Although dance sets the ‘canon’ of modern art in motion, its presence is far more complex when analyzed against the gendered context of the modern art museum. In discussing the merits of choreographic reworkings, Middelton advocates re-reading canonical works for not only what is included but also what is omitted (24). Deconstruction, she argues, leads “to radical new knowledge that undercuts its seemingly ‘ungendered’ and ‘universal’ domains and insists that sex and race is everywhere” (24). While attending *20 Dancers for the XX Century*, I was struck by how the presence of women artists wandering through the galleries and speaking directly to visitors contaminated the museum’s purified and comparatively fixed narrative of male genius. As a feminized and female dominated art form, dance provides ample entry points to explore, acknowledge and engage with the creative contributions of women within modern art museum space.

3. Gendering Museum Space

In order to consider how dance might intervene with the androcentrism of modern art museum space, I adopt Judith Butler’s theorization of gender as a performative achievement, “constructed through specific corporeal acts,” sustained over time (521).¹³⁰

¹³⁰ Butler’s theory extends Simone de Beauvoir’s important contribution that gender is a historical construct (45). As such, woman is “not a fixed reality but a becoming” (45) and

While the verb ‘to gender’ commonly refers to the act of coding someone (or something) as male or female, it also means “to generate” (Kirkham and Attfield 4). As a generative force, gendering can thus “be applied to the act of producing meaning” (4). Following Evelyn Hankins’ investigation of the (en)gendering of modern art museums, I treat ‘gender’ as a verb, actively producing meaning, not only through performing bodies, but also through objects, physical spaces, and dominant cultural narratives. In so doing, my aim is not to reinforce a binary view of gender, nor is it to suggest that there is such a thing as a stable, homogeneous, or polarized categorization of gender. Rather, I argue that the dancer’s entry into – and contamination of – the gendered space of the modern art museum also upsets the hegemonic masculinity perpetuated by its purified art historical narrative.

Since the mid-nineteenth century, museums have been the subject of feminist critique on the grounds of gender disparity. Women are typically under-represented or colonized by a masculine gaze, and their contributions are oversimplified within historical narratives (Marstine 18). Despite the fact women played a critical role in the founding of the earliest modern art museums these institutions, too, evolved into masculine and male-dominated environments. This arguably had a ‘legitimizing’ effect on their activities. It has been claimed that the re-gendering of these institutions was deliberate, and that the adoption of the masculinized white cube was intended to wrest

this *becoming* is historically situated in relation to the dominant concept of man (Beauvoir 45-46). Since gender identity is not a universal fact, it cannot be the outward expression of a stable internal “essence,” or the emulation of a permanent, trans-historical ideal (Butler 522). Rather, as a *becoming*, gender identity is “the process by which the body comes to bear cultural meanings” (Butler 520). Importantly, Beauvoir notes that this process of signification has taken place within an androcentric framework, meaning that woman’s difference from man is equated with lack. This has resulted in ‘her’ *lesser than* status (45-46).

“modern art from its common association with decadence, insanity, sensuality and *feminine* frivolity” (Grunenberg, “The Politics of Presentation” 205, emphasis mine).

These unornamented, industrial galleries were designed to declare the “seriousness and relevance of modern art,” while simultaneously celebrating “the inherent *masculinity* and authoritarian character of formalist aesthetics” (205, emphasis mine).

Modern art museums further purified themselves of their feminized origins by deliberately aligning themselves with the masculinized public sphere. For instance, during the 1930s MoMA began to strategically identify as a rational and objective business to liberate modern art from its previous relationship to “*feminized* private spaces” (Klonk 8, emphasis mine).¹³¹ Of course, the masculinization and male-domination of these institutions extends beyond the white cube and its rational and objective associations. The monolithic modern art narrative is a limiting, ossified and purified one, which is overwhelmingly populated by white male artists and under-acknowledges the contributions of women.

3.1 Masculinization and Male-Dominance in Art

The masculinization and male-dominance of modern art museum space is representative of the art world at large. Throughout the history of western art, women have encountered barriers thwarting their success. In the landmark 1971 essay “Why Have There Been No

¹³¹ During Modernism, women played an important role in art making as well as the surrounding apparatuses that supported it. Notably, female salonières, including Mabel Dodge in New York and Gertrude Stein in Paris, played influential roles in supporting literary and artistic modernisms and female patrons of the arts were responsible for the foundation of both MoMA and the Whitney, two of the earliest museums devoted to modern art. Significantly, as Evelyn Hankins has argued, the public profile of the Whitney’s female founders paired with its original domestic design hindered this institution from being taken seriously in its early years (165).

Great Women Artists?” Linda Nochlin contends that social and institutional supports, ranging from simple encouragement to access to the highest echelons of training, have bolstered the success of male artists. These supports, however, are usually depicted as secondary to the narrative of a lone genius in possession of exceptional talent (Nochlin 7-8). For Nochlin, this dominant narrative, forms a convenient syllogism: “If women had... artistic genius, it would reveal itself. But it has never revealed itself” (8). While systemic barriers prevented success, women were also impacted by the gendering of genius. Indeed, connections between genius and male biology are as old as the word itself (Battersby 26),¹³² and we continue to “associate the great artist with certain (male) personality-types, certain (male) social roles, and certain kinds of (male) energies” (23).^{133, 134}

¹³² Our modern usage of ‘genius’ has its origin in two separate terms. The Latin *genius*, “referring to the divine forces associated with, and protective of, male fertility” (Battersby 26), and the Latin *ingenium*, which “was associated with good judgment and knowledge” (26) as well as “talent, and...the dexterity and facility essential to the great artist working in the mimetic traditions” (26-27). By the eighteenth century, these terms had merged, providing the foundation for the modern conception of genius.

¹³³ During the Renaissance, when rational judgment and mimetic art were in favour, women were considered “*too* creative, *too* original, with much *too* much subjectivity” to be artists (Battersby 33). During the Romantic period, however, a reversal occurred. As the individual subjectivity of the artist became valued, genius was redefined to celebrate a man in possession of “qualities previously downgraded as ‘feminine’” (23). This Romantic conception continues to underlie modern notions of creative genius and remains damaging to women (5).

¹³⁴ Although Battersby’s gender-based analysis of genius was first published in 1989, the persistent underrepresentation of women in museums (and the broader art world) indicates that these cultural biases continue to shape popular conceptions of artistic genius.

The sex-based make-up of the professional art landscape has changed since Nochlin wrote this landmark essay,¹³⁵ however systemic issues limiting the exposure and recognition of women artists persist (Reilly para. 1). In a recent article for *ARTnews*, Maura Reilly, director of the National Academy Museum in New York, observes that “despite decades of postcolonial, feminist, anti-racist, and queer activism and theorizing,” (para. 3), sex-based discrimination remains “so insidiously woven into the institutional fabric, language, and logic of the mainstream art world that it often goes undetected” (para. 3). In fact, Reilly argues that ongoing gender inequality in top tier art museum directorships continues to influence the make-up of museum collections, which remain overpopulated by male artists.¹³⁶

This persistent under-acknowledgment of women artists gave rise to the National Museum of Women in the Arts (NMWA). Founded in 1987, the museum, located in Washington D.C., distinguishes itself as the “only major museum in the world solely dedicated to recognizing women’s creative contributions” (NMWA). For Women’s History Month in 2016, the NMWA launched the social media campaign “Can You Name Five Women Artists?” Using the hashtag #5womenartists, the campaign urged both museums and members of the public to promote women artists. Through raising awareness, the campaign encourages greater engagement with women artists and their

¹³⁵ Women artists are recognized in greater numbers than they were in the past and have equal access to art education, making up roughly 60 percent of students in professional training programs in America (Reilly para. 1).

¹³⁶ Reilly adds that this gender-disparity also affects the art world at large, impacting the number of women artists shown in commercial galleries, the value of women’s art at auction, the inclusion of women in private collections, and the proportion of exposure, promotion and reviews women receive in art publications.

legacies. The need for such a campaign, the NMWA, and a Women's History Month in general, speaks to the continued underrepresentation of women's cultural contributions.

While sex-based discrimination has had a purifying effect on who is represented in *the* history of art, the narrative constructed in modern art museum spaces is also highly masculinized. As I introduced in Chapter Two, the dominant account of modernism consists of the artist's increasing rejection of matter and visual representations of the physical world. As Carol Duncan observes, this narrative is heavily reliant on the female nude, which represents the world the male artist intends to escape. Frequently depicted as monstrous through physical disfigurement or moral corruption, these "sexually accessible" ("Hot Mamas" 172) anonymous women (or female body parts) are what propel the artist-hero away from the material realm on his flight to the plane of transcendence (171-172).

Duncan argues the preponderance of objectified female bodies in the modern art museum presumes a heteronormative male gaze, effectively excluding women from "the central arena of high culture," masculinizing these public spaces and the histories they construct ("Hot Mamas" 176).¹³⁷ In contrast to the abundance of female nudes, the artist is overwhelmingly depicted as male. And, when represented in the works, men appear as "active beings who creatively shape their world, ponder its meanings and transcend its mundane constraints" (Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals* 114). As a result of twentieth century

¹³⁷ Although Duncan's argument does not encapsulate the plurality of viewing positions among those apprehending modern art (asking, for instance, how a queer gaze may disrupt the gendering of this narrative), it does successfully capture how the dominant narrative produced by the canon remains an exclusionary one, depicting narrow expressions of gender.

identity politics, the art historical narrative is less closed than it once was, however the inclusion of women remains tokenistic (113; “Hot Mamas” 172).¹³⁸

Significantly, this narrative is also gendered by virtue of the recurring association of matter with femininity and femaleness in western thought. Although women are not inherently more connected to the body, the gendering of matter and nature as feminine domains is deeply entrenched (Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals* 113), exemplified by the fact the words ‘matter’ and ‘material’ originate from the Latin ‘mater,’ meaning ‘mother’ (“matter”). Within this cultural framework then, even art that approaches pure abstraction is gendered, as “the very act of fleeing the realm of matter (*mater*) and biological need” represents an escape from “woman’s traditional domain” (Duncan, “Hot Mamas” 172).¹³⁹

3.2 Feminization and Female-Dominance in Dance

In contrast to the masculinization of modern art museum space, dance’s migration into these institutions brings with it a feminized and female-dominated legacy. As a collaborative body-based art, dance does not readily conform to the dominant ascension narrative of the solitary male genius, which has arguably affected its status within the arts. As Selma Jeanne Cohen observes, because of dance’s physicality and the western “compulsion to exalt the spirit over the flesh, the mind over the body” (22-23), it has frequently been “treated as a lesser art, its values considered minor manifestations of

¹³⁸ As Duncan suggests, the works of women artists, such as Kiki Smith, Cindy Sherman, and Barbara Kruger, offer a critical contribution that is not readily assimilated (and depoliticized) by the ritual of the modern art museum (*Civilizing Rituals* 127).

¹³⁹ The escape from the world of matter is not limited to an ascent to abstraction – in the latter twentieth century, the rejection of the material world is also arguably supported by the privileging of conceptual work, and more recently, the ‘immateriality’ of performance. However, as I will argue below, performance dance constructed through the body never fully submits to dematerialization and abstraction.

qualities better exhibited by some other, more spiritual medium” (23). Doug Risner similarly notes that feminization of dance stems from culturally constructed mind-body dualisms established along gendered boundaries.¹⁴⁰ The feminization (and resulting denigration of dance) is thus partly attributable to the feminization of “intuition, nature, [and] the body,” and masculinization of “the intellectual, culture, and mind” (Risner 59). The dancer, it can be argued, embodies the material world the male modern artist supposedly flees.

While the materiality of dance has resulted in its feminization, its gendering and gender make-up have also been impacted by shifting notions of masculinity. Specifically, the Romantic era was particularly damaging for the male dancer. At this time, male dancers came to represent undesirable expressions of masculinity to the typical bourgeois theatregoer.¹⁴¹ Although, men continued to perform during this period, their presence was greatly reduced and they were valued for technical skill as opposed to their ‘feminine’ capacity for artistic expression (Burt 24). During this period, men were also “nervously dismissed” (13) from the stage because of a growing discomfort in viewing the male body as spectacle.¹⁴² The presence of the male dancer on the stage blurred the boundary

¹⁴⁰ While it is impossible to trace these recurring divisions in depth within the scope of this discussion, it is important to note that intellectual pursuits have been separated from the physical body.

¹⁴¹ Through an analysis of nineteenth century criticism Burt has noted that by 1840, the male dancer was either derided for evoking nobility or disparaged for possessing a physical prowess associated with the working class (24-25). While men did not disappear from the stage entirely during this period, their presence was greatly reduced, and, at times, their roles were danced by women (13).

¹⁴² This historical discomfort in looking at men was not limited to dance; rather “anything that might draw attention to the spectacle of the male body” was suppressed (Burt 14). Burt has argued that transformations to masculinity during the Romantic era served to divert attention away from men as the target of the gaze. The decline of representations of the male nude from the visual arts and the trend toward simplified, uniform black dress

between homosociality and homosexuality by interfering with the gaze directed at the performing women (Burt 27). Indeed, to look at the male body in an erotic way poses a threat to hegemonic masculinity, which is partially founded on homophobic attitudes and a fear of effeminacy (Burt 70). Not surprisingly, dance, an art created through the human body, became associated with the bodies of women. This anxiety surrounding the male dancer is historical, but it continues to impact contemporary performance dance. There are plural viewing positions and the male body can certainly be the focus of an erotic gaze, yet prevailing conventions continue to presume the ideal viewing subject is “male and his dominant gaze a heterosexual one” (Burt 70), just as in the modern art museum.

Although the feminization of western performance dance originates with the romantic ballet, these nineteenth century cultural transformations continue to influence the perception of dance as a feminized, women’s art. Since women were historically restricted in terms of what artistic fields they could participate in as ‘serious’ artists, dance, as a feminized art, offered a platform where they could make major contributions. Consequently, the pioneers of modern dance were, aside from a few exceptions, exclusively women (Burt 3).¹⁴³ The contemporary sphere of dance has evolved out of this legacy and continues to be perceived as a feminized, women’s art, with a high proportion

(in the form of the bourgeois suit) contributed to the construction of masculinity as an invisible default (13). Significantly, Burt notes that men’s participation in social dance did not change at this time (14).

¹⁴³ Prior to this, women were limited to the role of dancer, with the positions of choreographer or director occupied by men. Burt claims the exclusion of women dancers from authoritative positions in existing dance forms resulted in a lack of “vested interests in upholding specialist traditions” freeing them to break with the past and experiment with new choreographic approaches (Burt 3).

of participating men self-identifying as gay or bisexual (Risner 57).¹⁴⁴ In his study of gender in dance education, Doug Risner notes that dance students remain overwhelmingly female (58), meaning the persistent sex-based disparity will likely be perpetuated in the future demographics of the professional field. Moreover, male youth participating in dance continue to be stigmatized and face “narrow definitions of masculinity”, “internalized homophobia in the field,”¹⁴⁵ and “heterosexist justifications”¹⁴⁶ for their participation (Risner 57). Combined, the above socio-historical factors and continued prejudices help account for the ongoing feminization and female-dominance of dance, as well as its ‘lower’ status in the art world.

3.3 Re-gendering Art History

By introducing dance, a culturally feminized body-based art form, into the museum, and by showcasing the work of female choreographers and female dance artists, *20 Dancers for the XX Century* unsettled the purified and seemingly fixed androcentric history of modern art. Dance, as an art that *creatively shapes* the world – literally using space, time

¹⁴⁴ Until relatively recently, writing produced within the field of dance tended to bypass discussions of sexual identity and gender make-up. It has been suggested that this was a strategic move stemming from dance’s “relatively low positioning in the arts world” (Fisher and Shay 5). It has been suggested that the under-acknowledgement of stereotypes in dance writing is “perhaps because the dance world’s struggle to become established as a viable art form was already deemed difficult enough without admitting gender stereotypes existed as a barrier for men” (Fisher and Shay 11).

¹⁴⁵ The suspicion placed on the sexuality of male dancers is recognized as a major deterrent for male participation in dance, which contributes to the imbalanced gender make up of the field (Burt 29).

¹⁴⁶ In order to encourage the involvement of young male dancers, dance is frequently framed in terms of athleticism. Dance is promoted as a mode of cross-training for athletes, or framed as a ‘sport’ in itself as opposed to a mode of artistic expression. These justifications for male involvement, according to hegemonic masculine ideals, suggests that male participation in and self-expression through this art form continues to be viewed as unacceptable (Risner 63).

and bodies as its materials – offers a significant alternative to the prevailing representations of women in the canon of modern art. Diverging from typical inclusions of the female body in the museum, all the dancers in *20 Dancers for the XX Century* were athletic, powerful, in control, and in possession of creative agency. Speaking with visitors, they communicated their histories directly to the public circumventing the monolithic narrative of the museum. And while the gender make up of *20 Dancers for the XX Century* was not quite equal (8 out of the 20 dancers included were women artists, which translates to 40 percent), this representation of women artists far exceeded the norm at MoMA. Indeed, Reilly completed a tally of the permanent collection in April 2015, and determined a mere 7 percent of the exhibited works were created by women (para. 13).¹⁴⁷ In addition to incorporating women as dance artists, *20 Dancers for the XX Century* shared the works of influential female choreographers. There were the expected representations of well-known ‘genius’ male choreographers, such as Vaslav Nijinsky, Ted Shawn, Merce Cunningham, William Forsythe, and Jérôme Bel. However there were many women choreographers represented in the gesture as well, including Martha Graham, Trisha Brown, Sarah Rodner, Simone Forti, Carolee Schneeman, Yvonne Rainer, and Meg Stuart (who, notably, was performing her own choreographic works), among others.

Although *20 Dancers for the XX Century* celebrated the work of both men and women artists, Richard Move’s gender-bending performance as Martha Graham paid homage to one of the most influential figures in modern dance. Interestingly, Move’s

¹⁴⁷ It should be noted that this is an improvement from MoMA’s 2004 reinstallation in which a mere 16 of the 410 artworks in the upper floor galleries were completed by women (para. 13).

entire stay at MoMA functioned as a work of performance art, during which he suspended his own identity to inhabit Martha's. For the duration of Charmatz's gesture, Move had taken over a contemporary gallery on the museum's second floor. The room was empty except for Douglas Gordon's *Play Dead; Real Time* (2003), a work consisting of two screens and a monitor, displaying the video of a capsized elephant—a pile of wrinkly grey flesh on the floor of an empty gallery-like room. Placed on diagonals, the screens formed a backdrop for Move's theatrical performance in the darkened gallery. Between choreographic re-enactments the performance continued, as Move as Martha sat off to the side and summoned a make-up artist to touch up black eyeliner, repaint red lips or pat away glistening beads of sweat. Always staying in character, Move would also pull out a flask, taking swigs of its mystery liquid in front of the audience. While this elicited some laughter from the audience it was a reference to Graham's well-known alcoholism.

In contrast to the other contributors, Move did not simply share choreography; rather, he acted as a storehouse for Martha Graham's history – a body within a body. After originating the performance project in 1996, Move, who was not connected to Graham, quickly began attracting the attention of dancers associated with her company. They shared movement insights and personal items connected with the legend (Lepecki, "The Body as Archive" 43), which transformed Move into a "corporeal archive" (44). His interpretation of Graham thus has been "perceived not only as a drag impersonation but also as a kind of haunting" (41).

Presenting as a woman in order to share her contributions in a space where women artists have been historically underrepresented is a political act. There is no history of dance without the contributions of women. Move took every opportunity to

introduce visitors passing through the gallery to Graham—the bulk of which were unfamiliar with her work. Moreover, Move’s theatrical performance in a historically anti-theatrical space was also impactful when considered in terms of gender. Move was originally drawn to Graham because of her presence and “the outrageous theatricality” of her choreography, which “by the early 1990s had become completely outmoded, derided, and neglected by contemporary dance” (Lepecki, “The Body as Archive” 41). While the theatrical is often dismissed and feminized for its associations with spectacle, Move’s performance during *20 Dancers for the XX Century* asserted Graham’s right to take up territory within MoMA’s masculinized and male-dominated walls.

Indeed, when incorporated into the physical and discursive spaces of the museum, dance is a powerful strategy for opening up the purified canon and re-choreographing the androcentric narrative of modern art. In the museum, dance encourages the recognition of women artists and the celebration of feminized art, while unsettling the gender-based binaries of these institutions and the purified art historical narrative they promote. By showcasing an art that is innately linked to matter, dance also counters the dominant, masculinist narrative of ascension within the gallery. If gender is “[t]he act that one does, the act that one performs,” as Butler asserts (526), then dance, as a performing art, is particularly suited to interrupt or diversify the gendering of modern art museums. In formulating this argument, I do not want to reinforce a two-valued scale, which opposes the culturally constructed parameters of masculinity with those of femininity. I am not suggesting that dance provides an inversion of the existing binary; rather, I argue that dance encourages the opening up of the gender and sex-based conventions of the canon, acknowledging a greater range of both art and artists.

Instead of further entrenching the dichotomy between ephemeral performances and material things, this chapter has argued that the current trend of performance dance in the modern art museum can encourage a richer museum experience, by unsettling the atemporal and purified default of these institutions. Through ‘co-existence’, I contend that the contingent art of dance incites re-interpretations and re-readings of the museum’s objects, which invariably become part of the performance event. Dance also destabilizes the larger conceptual framework of art history the objects support. As a dynamic, collaborative, feminized and female-dominated art, dance productively collaborates with the purified and (relatively) fixed androcentric history of modern art, disrupting the patriarchal structure of the canon and the gendered narrative it upholds.

FIFTH INTERLUDE
THE PERFORMANCE ROOM

I enter the staff entrance of Tate Modern, up a curved asphalt drive, secluded by greenery. Inside the unremarkable entrance, a security guard mans a reception desk in a plain vestibule. Behind him, a glass wall overlooks Turbine Hall. A curatorial intern leads me down flights of stairs, through a tunnel-like hallway that feels cramped, especially in comparison to the expansive gallery spaces beyond the staff's quarters. We gather in a cafeteria-like room, separated from Turbine Hall by a wall of greenish glass. This gathering room is down the hall from a non-descript white cube on the lower level of the museum. With matte white walls and a light wooden floor, the curatorial team inform us that it represents a gallery from any place.¹⁴⁸

Is the use of a white cube for the Performance Room an example of the deeply entrenched 'neutrality' of this design, or simply an accurate observation of its universality in museums and galleries throughout the world? More contained than the postmodern gallery, this white cube in the bowels of the museum is modern in its intimate scale and hermetic design. There are no windows, no vistas. Even the door opening onto Turbine Hall is obscured as part of the smooth white wall. It is literally a white box. Why is the 'Performance Room' a gallery? Not needing to accommodate museum visitors, and containing only performance-based works, this backdrop could take on wildly different forms, however the white cube is employed here as a 'neutral' space.

¹⁴⁸ This echoes Brian O'Doherty's description of standardized white cube context as "everywhere the same place" (87).

Now filled with forty-seven performing bodies, a cameraperson, collaborators and staff, the gallery is cramped and humid. Bodies are clustered in the doorway or wedged against a wall. As we file through the doorway, the room fills and the temperature begins to elevate steadily.

When we return two days later for our next rehearsal, the room has been repainted a vibrant, almost abrasive, green—the colour used for green key in film. Could this gallery literally be any place? The painted walls could be digitally replaced with any backdrop. Bojana Cvejić assures us that this is not the case. The green was selected to ‘clarify’ our bodies in the space. Crammed with performers, the particularities of our movements were lost against the bleached out backdrop. Against the green, the flesh stands out.

We gather as a group and Cvejić and Christine De Smedt inform us that they have learned a lot from watching the raw footage from our last rehearsal. Although similar to the experiment staged in Turbine Hall, the Performance Room version of *Spatial Confessions* has its own set of concerns. In the museum, visitors could watch over the railing, seeing patterns emerge as the participants reoriented themselves, digesting the experiment as a whole. In the Performance Room series, it is impossible to behold the entire structure. The camera, entrenched in the crowd, moves through the experiment, forcing viewers to complete the pattern in their minds.

Eager to maintain the spontaneity of the experiment, we rehearse with different questions each time; however, Cvejić shares the dramaturgical structure of the work, giving us a sense of what types of arrangements the questions will provoke within the space. Will we be answering through the distance between our bodies? In clustered

groupings? Or, arranging ourselves to form points on a graph? Cvejić and De Smedt specify directions (north, south, east, west) in the room to simplify the prompts.

They instruct us to “be with yourself and with others.” We are to avoid directing our gaze at De Smedt who is reading the instructions. We are not supposed to look directly at the camera. There is no downstage or upstage in the space, no fixed front and back to the work. They inform us “it’s fine to be part of the ornament and to observe the ornament.” We are to take time to consider our answers. While the work is a choreographic experiment, and not a ‘work of art,’ it is part of the Performance Room series, and there is a specific set of artistic directives we are instructed to follow.

CONCLUSION

WHEN FLESH BECOMES BONE

Thus far, this dissertation has investigated how live dance collaborates with and contaminates the social and conceptual spaces of the modern art museum, polluting the visitor's default ocular orientation and diversifying understandings by setting objects and their histories in motion. In so doing, it has argued that dance makes a significant impact on the experiential and epistemological spaces cultivated by these high-profile institutions. Diverging from the prevailing purified and atemporal organization of the museum, these live performances can have an immediate impact on existing spaces. In adopting and adapting Lefebvre's unitary theory of space, however, another aspect of the modern art museum remains to be directly investigated: its physical organization.

Although at times I addressed the dimensions of museum space separately for the sake of clarity, these domains are inextricably interrelated; changes in one area of museum space do not occur in isolation from the others. In addition to concluding this dissertation, and making suggestions for future research, this chapter will offer a preliminary assessment of the current physical transformations happening to the permanent infrastructure of modern art museums. As these shifts are presently underway, it is not possible to neatly tie up this discussion. However, by chronicling the emergence of new performance venues in major modern art institutions, I aim to end this dissertation by looking forward to the possible futures of dance in this ever-evolving space.

1. Summary of Contribution

Dance is a dynamic performance-based art that uses space, time, and bodies as its materials. It is not surprising, then, that the dimension of time has figured prominently in existing literature documenting, analyzing, and interpreting the current trend of dance programming in the museum. In this environment designed to produce a suspended present, dance appears as a contradictory force. While I do not intend to suggest that the emerging body of literature addressing dance in museums is limited to considerations of time, it is a common thread woven through several existing sub-topics. For instance, it has been suggested that dance's migration from the black box to the white cube transforms the museumgoer into a spectator. This is depicted as a temporal shift in which the open-ended temporality of the museum visit is disrupted by the integration of time-bound, ephemeral performances. Dance is also frequently framed as "the figure par excellence of immaterial labor itself" (Franko and Lepecki 2), well suited to the experience economy of our late capitalist context. This, too, is a temporal analysis, as the performance, incapable of producing a stable material product, is associated with pure process. Dance is seemingly always disappearing, evading the dominant museal practices of collection, preservation and exhibition. Indeed, the conflictual relationship between the temporality of dance and that of the art museum has been a fruitful area of discussion and productively contextualizes dance within the broader experiential turn that has characterized museum practices since the mid-1990s. As an ephemeral, processual, and experience-centred art, dance can readily be associated with time-based media, such as film and video, as well as participatory and relational artworks, which are relatively new additions to the modern art museum.

The temporality of dance in the museum is a worthwhile area to investigate, as this art offers a counterpoint to the suspended present and prevailing product-orientation of these institutions. However, because dance is an art composed by bodies moving through space, I contend that its most potent and distinctive contribution to the modern art museum lies in its positive *collaboration with* and *reorganization of* museum space. In contrast to other time-based arts found in the museum, dance is unique in terms of its intensified relationship to space. Advancing from this assertion, this dissertation has analyzed the current phenomenon of dance in modern art museums as a spatial intervention. While other authors have commented upon the interaction between dance and fragmented elements of museum space, this dissertation offered an in-depth analysis of dance's transformative impact across the spaces of these institutions, which necessitated an expanded, multidimensional definition of modern art museum space.

Drawing upon a Lefebvrian conception of space, this dissertation has proceeded from two key assumptions. First, space is socially produced and therefore mutable; and second, space is organized physically, socially and conceptually, meaning it is not restricted to the built environment. Extended by Suzanne MacLeod, Henri Lefebvre's theoretical framework leads to a malleable understanding of museum space that is transformed by the activities of occupants. Taken up by Arabella Stanger, Lefebvre's theories provide a basis from which to argue that dance is an art that actively produces space. By weaving together Lefebvre, MacLeod, and Stanger, this dissertation analyzed the current heightened presence of dance in modern art museums from the theoretical premise that dance has the capacity to re-choreograph the physical, social, and conceptual spaces of these institutions.

The interventional and transformative potential of dance, I argue, derives from its conflictual relationship with the museum context. Through a critical analysis of art, museum, and architectural theory, further supported by architectural criticism, I identified purity and atemporality as core values, influencing the modern art museum's white cube design, prevailing art historical narratives, exhibition formats, and sensory experiences. These values cohesively organize the multiple dimensions of modern art museum space. In contrast, the transformative potential of the impure and ephemeral art of dance emerged from my close reading of Boris Charmatz's "Manifesto for a Dancing Museum" and an analysis of his artistic practice. Consequently, dance can be understood as a contaminant within the sanitized and suspended space of the museum. While purity and stasis are resistant to transformation, the adulterated and time-bound art of dance is well suited to catalyze change.

In addition to framing dance as a form of productive contamination across the spaces of these institutions, this dissertation used case studies to investigate dance's key interventions. *Spatial Confessions*, which took place at Tate Modern in May 2014, was incorporated as a series of evocative interludes interspersed between my chapters. These interstitial vignettes highlight themes and observations without delving into in-depth analyses. Methodologically, these descriptions are intended to spark discussions about dance in the modern art museum through ongoing questioning and investigation, complementing the claims made within the analytical chapters of this dissertation. My chapters drew upon Boris Charmatz's *20 Dancers for the XX Century*, which took place at the Museum of Modern Art in October 2013. As the starting point for my dissertation research, this case study consisted of fieldwork conducted as an observer and occasional

participant, which also included the review of archival documents as well as discourses surrounding the event, and the production of ‘thick’ evocative writing. From this fieldwork, key themes emerged that were supported by existing theoretical frameworks to analyze the spatial impact of dance in modern art museums. This dissertation thus used fieldwork and descriptive writing as both the points of origin and illustrative examples for my discussions in an attempt to avoid privileging theory over practice.

It must also be acknowledged that for the scope of this dissertation it was only possible to complete fieldwork for two case studies. However, because my research addressed spatial transformations in major modern art museums, MoMA and Tate Modern—two institutions at the forefront of the current dance trend and also two of the most influential and high profile museums in the world—were carefully selected. The decision to use *20 Dancers for the XX Century* in my analytical discussions was influenced by Boris Charmatz’s prominent role in the current wave of dance in museums.¹⁴⁹ Although *20 Dancers for the XX Century* represents just one example of the integration of dance into major modern art institutions, its deployment in my analytical chapters was strategic. In contrast to earlier instances of dance in art museums, which

¹⁴⁹ In addition to his series of gestures at MoMA, Charmatz also contributed the choreographic work *Flip Book* to Tate Modern in 2012, which was followed up with his massive two-day takeover of the museum when he returned in 2015. His *Expo Zéro*, an exhibition made of people inhabiting an emptied white cube space, has had many editions, including the visual arts context of Performa 11 and the 2015 takeover of Tate Modern. In 2012, Charmatz co-curated *Moments. A History of Performance in 10 Acts*, a live exhibition incorporating dance and performance at the ZKM Center for Art and Media in Karlsruhe. Moreover, Charmatz’s “Manifesto for a Dancing Museum,” re-imagining one of France’s National Choreographic Centres, thoroughly investigates the relationship between dance and museums. As this short sampling has aimed to demonstrate, Charmatz has emerged as an influential and ubiquitous figure within the current phenomenon of dance in museums.

were often framed as special secondary events, the current trend is characterized by dance's increased incorporation into the exhibition spaces and opening hours of these institutions. Chartmatz's programme followed this 'takeover' format, making it representative of the recent tendency to curate dance as core programming presented alongside the art. With dancers appearing throughout the day in galleries and transitional spaces, the event exemplified the manifold ways dance is currently occupying the museum. Thus, while this dissertation focused on investigating one case study in depth, it provided a useful entry point to speak more generally about how dance is currently dialoguing with the spaces of modern art museums.

The interventional and transformational potential of dance as a multisensory art is evident when analyzed within the visually oriented context of the modern art museum. Sight allows an entire field to be apprehended cohesively, in an instant and at-a-distance. Contributing to the purity and atemporality of modern art museum space, vision, when isolated, encourages a sensory experience that is detached and totalizing, and characterized by a weakened sense of time. The multisensory art of dance thus has a demonstrably disruptive impact on the ocularcentric design, exhibition strategies and social protocols that shape modern art museum space. As Chapter Three made clear, sounds produced by music or arising from the live performance are sequenced in time, countering the suspended present of the museum. The fugitive effect of sound—its ability to seep past visible boundaries and impose upon listeners—counters the visual containment of these institutions, while the aural contribution of conversation overcomes the distancing effect of sight, by encouraging direct communication between art makers and museumgoers. Kinesthetic stimulation arising from the dance performance also

diversifies the atemporal and purified effects of eyesight alone, encouraging visitors to have an empathetic, visceral reaction to the movements being performed. And, because dance is constructed through bodies, it offers exciting opportunities for museumgoers to temporarily inhabit the art.

In addition to intervening with the museumgoers' sensory experiences, dance dialogues with the art objects on display and the dominant art historical narratives they are used to reify. Through close readings of art critical texts, Chapter Four established a parallelism between the qualities valued in modernist art and the museum's dominant treatment of art objects. Extending theoretical frameworks by Rebecca Schneider and Catherine Wood, I contend that dance—an art that is both ephemeral and enduring—encourages a more complex understanding of the museum object as both a thing and event. Moreover, I argue that dance's presence alongside inanimate things impacts the visitor's spaces of experience and understanding, as the performance encourages re-readings of the objects in the gallery turned performance venue.

While I maintain that dance might lead to a more dynamic relationship to the art object on display, it also affects the conceptual spaces of these institutions by setting both art history and the canon in motion. Like the art on display and the white cube gallery that houses it, these ingrained structures also take on the characteristics of purified and seemingly atemporal 'objects'. Overwhelmingly reflecting the work of white western male artists and remaining relatively static into the twenty-first century, the androcentric canon and the history it upholds reaffirm the dominant values of modern art museum space. The feminized and female-dominated art of dance diversifies the purified space of

art history and counteracts previous deliberate attempts to cleanse modernism of its feminine associations by containing art within a masculinized space.

In sum, through my investigation of the transformative effect of dance across modern art museum space, this dissertation has claimed that dance is a disruptive force, contaminating the prevailing atemporal and purified organization of these institutions and, ultimately, the modern values they continue to perpetuate. While Lefebvre's conception of space as a social product is no longer a novel idea, it continues to exist in tension with dominant treatments of the white cube as a 'blank' space into which art is inserted. These galleries remain the standard context for exhibiting modern, postmodern and contemporary art within museums, reinforcing their perceived neutrality as an empty container as opposed to a thoroughly modern medium culminating from a specific design, set of practices and constellation of ideas. Although context plays an integral role in the reception of art, it tends to be diminished or overlooked in the discourse surrounding exhibitions. Detailed descriptions and analyses of space tend to be reserved for exhibitions that stray from the white cube or are explicitly framed by the artist or curator as site-specific (R. Greenberg 246).

By opening up sensory experiences, expanding encounters with objects, and diversifying the history of art, dance, I have argued, significantly re-shapes the spaces of major modern art museums and brings their underlying values into question. Dance thus is not a benign curatorial trend; it is a productive intervention re-choreographing the medium of the museum and the manner in which it produces epistemologies, guides perceptions and engages with users in the twenty-first century.

2. Avenues for Future Research

In choosing to focus on one case study throughout my analytical chapters, this project has benefitted from a sustained, in-depth investigation of how a particular dance event dialogued with and had a transformative impact on modern art museum space. In turn, this comprehensive case study gave rise to my general theoretical discussions about the relationship between dance and these institutions. However, in analyzing a single case study in detail, I inevitably compromised the breadth of museum dance that could be addressed within these pages. Acknowledging this limitation, my second case study, *Spatial Confessions*, was deployed to open up discussions. In developing this dissertation for a future publication I aim to expand upon this text to include a wider range of examples of dance in museum space. This could include incorporating illustrative examples from *Spatial Confessions* among other works into my analytical chapters. Because of the nature of this subject matter, and the diverse approaches artists take with their art making, the trend of dance curation offers no shortage of starting points for investigating the relationship between dance and museum space.

While this dissertation has examined the spatial impact of dance on major modern art museums, this current phenomenon in curatorial programming also should be considered from the inverse perspective. As I have investigated throughout this dissertation, bodies shape space; however, as Lefebvre outlines in his socio-spatial dialect, space reciprocally shapes bodies. Thus, it is equally important to interrogate how the museum influences dancers and their broader artistic field. As a concept and performance venue, the museum urges an investigation into the potential ‘museumification’ of dance. It is crucial to consider what impact the historicizing

medium of the museum is having on the legacy of dance, and critically examine what narratives are being produced and which artists are being represented. Moreover, although scholars have begun to investigate the potentialities and risks of dance's entry into museums¹⁵⁰ there is opportunity to delve deeper into the politics of this migration. What do dance artists gain or lose through their occupation of the museum context? How are dance artists adapting to this space? And, are new choreographic approaches arising in response to the distracted and transitory audience the museum offers up?

A limitation of the current study is that in focusing on the transformative impact of dance on museum space, I was unable to adequately address the changes in the field of curation that accompany this trend. Alongside these shifts in museum 'content' we are witnessing the reconfiguration of existing curatorial departments and the development of new ones. With curators, departmental funding, and high profile sponsorships now supporting the production of performance programming, the reorganization of the departmental 'spaces' of these institutions arguably plays a significant role in the heightened presence of dance and is an area ripe for further investigation.

Instead of being treated as a venue for retrospectives or re-stagings of existing works, a new pattern is emerging of artists using the art museum as a site-specific venue, creating choreography that dialogues directly with the particularities of the environment. In this genre of museum dance, the 'museum' does not function as a general category of venue like the 'theatre.' Rather, these works engage directly with the particularities of an individual institution. There is certainly a precedent for this type of practice. For instance,

¹⁵⁰ See Claire Bishop's "The Perils and Possibilities of Dance in the Museum: Tate, MoMA, and Whitney" and Shannon Jackson's "The Way We Perform Now."

in 1960, Merce Cunningham's museum events produced unique performances created by arranging existing movement sequences for the specific venue.

Both case studies featured in this dissertation bore a relationship with site. *Spatial Confessions* was developed for Tate Modern's Turbine Hall and *20 Dancers for the XX Century* shared movement in dialogue with the surrounding artworks on display, showing a heightened awareness of space. Such projects differ from more conventional approaches of incorporating dance into the museum, which simply set up a theatre within the museum's walls. For example, Boris Charmatz's *Flip Book*, which took place two weeks after *20 Dancers for the XX Century*, transformed MoMA's atrium into a theatrical venue through the addition of a dance floor, frontal audience seating, and lighting and sound equipment. While working on this dissertation, however, I have observed a new pattern emerging with choreographic works that make the relationship between dance and the particularities of the art museum site explicit. This emerging trend of site-specific museum dance is a fertile area for future research. Analyses of these projects, which are not limited to modern art museums, could extend discussions beyond how dance dialogues with the spaces of art museums to also address how individual works negotiate and engage with the idiosyncrasies of individual institutional sites.

Recent examples of this type of practice include Maria Hassabi's *PLASTIC* (2016) and Pablo Bronstein's *Historical Dances in an Antique Setting* (2016). The former, co-commissioned by MoMA, the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles and the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, was a slow-moving choreography that unfolded over exhibition hours and was altered according to each site. For MoMA, Hassabi adapted the work to unfold over exhibition hours in the central atrium, main lobby staircase and

staircase connecting the museum's fourth and fifth floors. Staged in this major tourist hub, Hassabi aimed to offer a moment of 'pause' or reprieve from the hurried pace in which visitors typically navigate the museum. The latter, a Tate Britain commission, was created for the museum's Duveen galleries and responded to the unique conditions of the museum. Bronstein not only created a work designed to occupy museum hours, through its circuit-style structure and ongoing cast changeovers, his satirical baroque-inspired movements also dialogued directly with the neo-classical grandeur of the Duveen galleries, while the choreographic floor plan complemented the galleries' rectangular and octagonal layouts. Progressing lengthwise through the space, the choreography was designed specifically for Tate Britain, while giant printed images of the museum's exterior, located at each end of the galleries, formed theatrical backdrops for the work, continuing the dialogue between dancing bodies and the architecture they inhabit.

Although dance has a capacity to dialogue with the particularities of existing museum spaces, the current phenomenon of dance in museums is unique in that it is leading to the production of new spaces. Thus, in addition to actively transforming the modern art museum's existing spaces, the art of dance is also carving out new ones. Recent architectural transformations to major modern art museums at the forefront of dance programming indicate that an infrastructural shift is occurring, as these institutions produce spaces specifically designed to house dance, performance, and performing arts. As this process is currently underway, only time will tell how it will impact the relationship between dance and museum spaces, making this a key area for future research. To conclude this dissertation, I would like to comment upon some initial observations about the current infrastructural transformations.

4. Building New Spaces

A significant aspect of the rise of dance programming in major modern art museums is the range of space this art form currently occupies. It not only colonizes museum galleries, but also the atriums, lobbies, and transitional areas. As a mobile art, dance is being inserted into the gaps within these institutions, occupying the spaces between the art works, next to ticket counters or even in stairways. In some cases, dance has even been staged on the exterior spaces of these institutions, such as Trisha Brown's *Man Walking Down the Side of a Building* (1970), which was re-enacted on Tate Modern in 2006, the Walker Art Centre in 2007 and the Whitney Museum of American Art in 2010.

Claire Bishop, who has done foundational work tracing the histories of dance at MoMA, the Whitney, and Tate Modern—the three high-profile modern art museums that have proved most influential to the current dance trend—argues that recent debates surrounding the current phenomenon of dance in museums will soon be seen as “a brief blip” (“The Perils and Possibilities” 73). For Bishop, a recent wave of infrastructural transformations involving the creation of “flexible, hybrid spaces both for visual art performances...and the performing arts” will alleviate the practical concerns accompanying the current wave of dance in modern art museums (“The Perils and Possibilities” 73). Over the course of researching and writing this dissertation, the Whitney moved into a new building in Manhattan's Meatpacking District; Tate Modern officially opened its Switch House, more than doubling its exhibition space; and MoMA has announced and embarked upon a renovation and expansion project. As Bishop has noted, what ties these infrastructural developments together is that they feature spaces designed to ‘house’ performance (“The Perils and Possibilities” 73).

4.1 The Whitney

May 1, 2015, the Whitney's new building in the Meatpacking district was opened to the public. The \$422 million structure marks the museum's fourth location, and its first move since settling into the iconic Breuer Building in 1966. The purpose built structure in steel and glass, designed by 'starchitect' Renzo Piano, offers a unique take on white cube design. Its galleries offer extensive views of the New York skyline providing vistas and changes in natural light, breaking from the conventional hermeticism and timelessness of the white cube. Most notably, however, the new building includes a 170-seat multi-use theatre on the third floor offering views of the Hudson River. The flexible, black box space is intended to accommodate live performance as well as screenings ("The Building"). Equipped with diffusion and blackout curtains, a screen for film and video, "a sprung floor, acoustic paneling, full lighting grid, projection booth, and retractable risers," the theatre can be reconfigured to offer "open loft or fixed proscenium seating" and readily adapts to house different types of art (Bishop, "The Perils and Possibilities" 71).

The 2017 Whitney Biennial will be the first held at the museum's new home. In the past, the event has included strong showings of dance and other performance works, with the standout year being 2012. Described at the outset of this dissertation, the 2012 biennial devoted the Breuer Building's fourth floor to dance and other performance events, and Sarah Michelson became the first choreographer to win the Bucksbaum Award. Following the success of the 2012 Biennial, co-organizer Jay Sanders was hired on as the museum's first Curator of Performance (Bishop, "The Perils and Possibilities" 71). With the 2017 biennial rapidly approaching, it will be interesting to see how dance

figures into the event and how this year's curators, Christopher Y. Lew and Mia Locks, make use of the new building. Beyond the biennial, it will be important to examine how Sanders curates dance within the new building. Will dance ever displace visual art from the gallery as it did on the fourth floor of the Breuer Building? Or, will Sanders' programming be predominantly restricted to the Whitney's first theatre?

4.2 Tate Modern

Beneath the twisted structure of Tate Modern's new Switch House building three pre-existing cylindrical concrete tanks have been refurbished to house new art, with one devoted to performance ("The Tanks"). Soaring over seven metres high and spanning more than thirty metres in diameter, the tanks were originally built to store oil during the building's previous life as the Bankside electrical station. The re-appropriated spaces, according to Tate Modern, now represent "the world's first museum galleries permanently dedicated to exhibiting live art, performance, installation and film" ("The Tanks"). Upon the public unveiling of the Tanks in 2012, Chris Dercon, the then-Director of Tate Modern, noted that these "raw, versatile, circular and unique" structures are "neither white cube nor black box," and thus offer "an entirely new type of space for Tate Modern and for museums internationally" (2). Dercon also emphasized the role of the public as 'audience,' acting as "a central component of what happens in the Tanks" (2). According to Dercon, "it is the meeting of artworks and audiences that will establish what the Tanks are" (Dercon 2).

Prior to the Tanks, Tate Modern had predominantly presented dance and performance in Turbine Hall, including a large-scale adaption of William Forsythe's

Nowhere and Everywhere at the Same Time featuring 19 dancers and 200 suspended pendulums (Bishop, “The Perils and Possibilities” 68). Nicholas Serota, then director of Tate’s group of galleries, noted that, prior to Tate Modern, the Tate group “didn’t have experience presenting live works,” and he credits Turbine Hall as the origin of this practice, providing “a basis for performance and action of different kinds, which has formed a foundation for the Tanks” (“New Spaces for Art” 37).

As part of Tate Modern’s broader expansion project, the Tanks were initially opened from July to October 2012 as part of *Fifteen Weeks of Art in Action*, a festival consisting of critical symposia, participatory events and live programming, including choreographic contributions by Charmatz and Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker. Following the festival, the Tanks were inaccessible while construction of the Switch House was underway. They were re-opened alongside the grand opening of the new building on June, 17, 2016.

The Tanks are undeniably unique in their round structure, and Tate Modern has already begun experimenting with performance formats. For instance, De Keersmaeker’s adaptation of her 1982 work *Fase* was performed in the round with informal seating provided by floor cushions (Bishop, “The Perils and Possibilities” 69). However, in visiting the new space I noted that there is something inherently theatrical about this performance venue. From the main floor the Tanks are accessed by a sweeping spiral staircase, and, despite the fact it is constructed in grey concrete, its form is reminiscent of the grand entry of an opera house. Near the base of the stairs, the floor steadily ramps downwards towards what appears to be a series of black stage doors, reminiscent of the descent towards orchestra level seating. Once inside, the scale and mood of the tank, with

its high ceilings and darkened surfaces evokes the theatre. Moreover, aside from one entrance from Turbine Hall, the Tanks are somewhat isolated from museum's other exhibition spaces. If one ascends from the subterranean structures via the winding staircase, one will find the Switch House's street level entrance flanked by a massive gift shop and a Terrace Bar—a commercial oasis separating the Tanks from the rest of the art on the upper floors. In this sense, the Tanks feel segregated from the museum's exhibition spaces.

4.3 MoMA

Early 2014, architecture firm Diller, Scofidio + Renfro revealed much-awaited renderings of MoMA's current expansion and renovation project. While MoMA's departments were traditionally siloed in the past, the multipurpose design proposed by Diller, Scofidio + Renfro is aligned with the museum's more recent practices (Pogrebin, "MoMA Trims Back"). This is reiterated by the museum's vision statement for the construction project which claims that "[w]orks from all mediums, including architecture, design, drawings, film, media, painting, performance, photography, prints and sculpture, will be brought together in carefully *choreographed* sequences that present the creative frictions and influences that spring from seeing all of these disciplines together" ("Building for the Future," emphasis mine).¹⁵¹ Reflecting the museum's increased interdisciplinarity, the original design shared with the public included a multipurpose 'Art Bay' on the main level with a glass garage-style door that would open the space up to the street. Linking

¹⁵¹ It is interesting to note that despite the recent presence of dance at MoMA, this artistic medium is not included in the museum's somewhat exhaustive list (though, it can be subsumed under the heading of 'performance'). Significantly, however, the same statement that overlooks dance appropriates the choreographic as a curatorial gesture.

inside and outside, this space was intended to house exhibitions and performances (Pogrebin, “Ambitious Redesign” and “MoMA Trims Back”). The fourth floor of the design included a ‘Gray Box,’ outfitted with acoustic absorption panels, and was intended to marry “the attributes of a white box gallery with a black box performance space” (Pogrebin, “Ambitious Redesign”). This space, too, would be visible to passersby on the street below, thus putting performers ‘on display’.

In January 2016, however, MoMA announced major changes to the renovation plan affecting the intended performance spaces. Both the street level ‘Art Bay’ and the fourth-floor ‘Gray Box’ had been nixed (Pogrebin, “MoMA Trims Back”). In lieu of these spaces, the south gallery on the fourth floor would be designed to house both performance and media (Pogrebin, “MoMA Trims Back”). Arguably, these revisions suggest that although dance and performance are experiencing an increased presence in modern art museum space, they continue to be allotted fewer resources than the visual and plastic arts. As the performance spaces of the design are scaled back in favour of one multipurpose space also housing media art—another relatively recent addition to the museum—it will be interesting to see what areas of MoMA dance will be permitted to occupy when the renovations are complete in 2019. On the other hand, with only a single multipurpose gallery space, dance may continue to occupy other spaces within the museum, clogging up stairwells like Hassabi, or taking up territory alongside the art like Charmatz.

4.4 When Flesh Becomes Bone

Overall, these architectural transformations point to the widespread reconceptualization of modern art museums as arts centres in the twenty-first century. The inclusion of fully equipped theatres and flexible multipurpose performance venues as part of multi-million dollar renovation, expansion and construction projects, signal that the increased presence of dance (and performance) is anticipated to be a lasting trend. However, these architectural transformations also suggest the ossification of recent experimental practices. This raises an important question: how will the integration of theatre venues and flexible performance settings into the ‘bones’ of these institutions impact the current transformative dialogue occurring between dance and the pre-existing spaces of these institutions?

Although museums are experimenting with multi-purpose and unconventional performance spaces (The Tanks being a notable example), the result of these new structures may have the effect of separating dance and performance out from the visual and plastic arts. If these architectural transformations are any indication, the current moment of dance infiltrating the white cube is likely to be a temporary one, as this period of contamination is superseded with one of containment. Following the nineteenth century epigram ‘a place for everything and everything in its place,’ these renovation projects suggest that dance will be relegated back to the theatre from whence it came.¹⁵²

During a period in which dance in non-theatrical venues is quite prevalent, do artists want

¹⁵² This impulse to separate dance from the visual arts is not unlike the segregation of time-based media into their own empty, darkened, white cubes. Often outfitted with a single, hard bench, these spaces for film and video installations are typically an extension of the overall white cube organization of major modern art museums.

to return to designated performance spaces?¹⁵³ Does this defeat the purpose of performing in the museum?

As I have demonstrated, the white cube is hardly a neutral backdrop for showing art. It is an ideologically charged context that promotes a specific set of modern values and encourages a particular relationship to art and its histories. As such, it can be viewed as a ‘period room’ as opposed to a ‘blank space’. And yet, regardless of its clear historical origins, the white cube remains the default for modern art museum space. Even institutions that diverge slightly from standard design practices continue to reproduce the white cube in key ways. For instance, despite being a former power plant, the bulk of Tate Modern’s exhibition spaces are refurbished as white cube galleries. Although Turbine Hall is distinctive in its gargantuan scale, it ultimately remains a giant industrial box finished in neutral colours, hard surfaces, a polished concrete floor, and a noticeable lack of seating. It is a supersized modern gallery for supersized art. Arguably, its scale promotes the same sort of sacred reverence that Brian O’Doherty identified in the white cube (15), and perhaps even more so, because of its cathedral like dimensions.

As a disruptive presence in major modern art museums, dance temporarily questions the ongoing supremacy of the white cube and draws attention to the resilient modern values that continue to underlie the organization of these spaces. Despite postmodern shifts in interpretative approaches and a greater awareness and inclusion of diverse publics (Hooper-Greenhill 28), major modern art museums continue to offer

¹⁵³ Dance does not necessarily have to take place in a theatre, and lighting and a musical score are not compulsory elements of a choreographic work. While sprung floors may be required for the well being of dancers performing physically taxing works, there is nothing to say that they must be integrated as an elevated stage or a rectangular performance space.

disproportionately visual, object-oriented experiences, and the dominant narrative represented within these institutions remains an androcentric one. Its historical resonance and persistent modern values are also evidenced by the fact that—despite exhibiting postmodern and contemporary art—the bulk of these institutions are designated as ‘modern’ right in their names.^{154, 155}

For these reasons, I suggest that the modern art museum remains an inherently *modern* institution, guided by principles and concerns that emerged in the first half of the twentieth century during the early years of its evolution. Moreover, the separation of dance into its own specialized home within the museum’s expanding dominion merely speaks to the museum’s endless accumulation. However, in addition to “indefinitely accumulating time” as Foucault described (234), these expansion projects incorporating performance venues also speak to the endless accumulation of space. Alongside its enduring white cube galleries, the museum can also contain a gift shop, a bespoke bar, a lecture hall, and a theatre, all offering specialized experiences.

Ultimately, this dissertation is critical of the modern propensity for ocularcentrism, specialization, and master narratives, which continues to underlie the dominant spatial organization of these institutions, despite decades of interventional artistic and curatorial practices. Recent architectural transformations intimate that the current moment of experimentation may be stamped out, and the white cube may be restored to its purified and atemporal default, with other sensory experiences, art forms,

¹⁵⁴ The case studies selected for this dissertation, Tate *Modern* and the Museum of *Modern Art*, are but two examples. While MoMA predates the rise of postmodern and contemporary art, Tate Modern is a twenty-first century institution.

¹⁵⁵ Significantly, the majority of dance I witnessed while investigating this topic consisted of postmodern and contemporary choreography from the second half of the twentieth century to present day.

and histories expunged from the space. If this is the case, the pristine and timeless white cube will ultimately remain unchallenged, with dance quarantined, removed from the galleries it contaminates.

5. Concluding Remarks

I believe the migration of dance into the museum ultimately benefits this art community. As tourist destinations, museums allow artists to engage with a broad cross-section of the population and connect with a more diverse audience base. For instance, while it is relatively commonplace to take students on a class trip to the art museum, a school excursion to see live dance is a far less common outing. Moreover, unlike other site-specific performance venues, the museum connects dance with a sympathetic audience primed to look at art. The museum also introduces new economic prospects for the dance community. The sale of choreographic works, opportunities for museum residencies and eligibility for prizes like the Bucksbaum Award introduce new sources of income or financial support for dance artists. In addition to these economic gains, the museum can have a positive conservational effect. Performances are written about by curators and documented on museum websites, in catalogues and in archives, and the restaging of acquired works all help keep the history of dance alive. While the theatre tends to be present-oriented, the museum seeks to preserve the past so it can be appreciated in the future.

There are, however, significant drawbacks and areas of concern. Not all choreography enters the museum. Conceptual works are often easier to ‘stage’, meaning more ‘theatrical’ or physically demanding choreography may be neglected. By migrating

into modern art museum space, there is also the threat that dance will be inserted into its established histories of visual art. There is the distinct possibility that works that correspond with existing art historical narratives will be accepted while others will not. We can already see a trend of certain choreographers experiencing a lot of exposure in the museum world, such as Charmatz, Michelson, and Ralph Lemon, as well as former Judsonites, such as Trisha Brown and Yvonne Rainer, who both had a presence in the museum in the twentieth century and whose works speak to a former porous moment between dance and the visual arts. The bulk of choreographers, however, are not being represented. Although the theatre world is hierarchical, with certain venues having a legitimizing effect on artists, the museum world is arguably even more so. Moreover, through its role in (re)producing the canon of art, the museum may have undue influence in constructing and popularizing a particular history of dance, which may not accurately represent the activities of this arts community.

This dissertation has had two key aims: to both document and analyze what I perceive to be a temporary trend within the museum. The recent rise of dance programming in modern art museums has been part of a period of rapid transformation, in which curatorial departments have been restructured, new curatorial roles have been established, and best practices for the collection and exhibition of dance and performance continue to be investigated. However, these transformations are already beginning to manifest in more permanent change, as the physical infrastructures of these institutions are being reconfigured. As major institutions add better-equipped (and potentially more conventional) performance venues, the exciting experimentation, disorganization, surprise and friction between dance and other museum practices might disappear as dance

is relegated back to its traditional home in the theatre. This may lead to a reversion to traditional practices, such as ticketed events with clear-cut performance times, as the theatre is subsumed by the ever-expanding domain of modern art museum space.

COMPLETE WORKS CITED

- Alpine, Alyssa. "Devotion Study #1 – The American Dancer." *Culturebot: Maximum Performance*, 9 March 2012, culturebot.org/2012/03/12656/devotion-study-1-the-american-dancer/. Accessed 5 Oct. 2015.
- Axel, Elisabeth, and Kaywin Feldman with Yukio Lippit, Ann Hamilton, Peter Sellars, Julián Zugazagoitia, Frederick John Lamp, Lawrence Rinder and Jan-Lodewijk Grootaers. "Multisensory Art Museums and the Experience of Interconnection." *The Multisensory Museum: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Touch, Sound, Smell, Memory, and Space*, edited by Nina Levent and Alvaro Pascual-Leone, e-book, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014, pp. 290-297.
- Balzer, David. *Curationism: How Curating Took Over the Art World and Everything Else*. Coach House Books, 2014.
- Battersby, Christine. *Gender and Genius: Towards a Feminist Aesthetics*. The Women's Press Limited, 1989.
- Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Second Sex*. Translated by Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier, Alfred A. Knopf, 2010.
- Bennett, Tony. *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*. Routledge, 2013.
- Birringer, Johannes. "Dancing in the Museum." *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art*, vol. 33, no. 3, Sept. 2011, pp. 43-52. *Project Muse*, doi:10.1162/PAJJ_a_00054. Accessed 9 June 2016.
- Bishop, Claire. *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*. Verso Books, 2012.

- . "The Perils and Possibilities of Dance in the Museum: Tate, MoMA, and Whitney." *Dance Research Journal*, vol. 46, no. 3, Dec. 2014, pp. 62-76. *Project Muse*, doi:10.1353/drj.2014.0031. Accessed 9 June 2016.
- "BMW Tate Live: If Tate Modern was Musée de la danse?" *Tate Modern*. 2015, www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/performance/bmw-tate-live-2015/bmw-tate-live-if-tate-modern-was-musee-de-la. Accessed 17 July 2016.
- "BMW Tate Live: Spatial Confessions (On the Question of Instituting the Public)." *Tate Modern*, 2014, www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/bmw-tate-live-spatial-confessions-on-question-instituting-public. Accessed 17 June 2016.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Harvard UP, 1984.
- Bourriaud, Nicholas. *Relational Aesthetics*. Translated by Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods with Mathieu Copeland, Les Presses du Réel, 2002.
- Brandstetter, Gabriele. *Poetics of Dance: Body, Image, and Space in the Historical Avant-Gardes*. Translated by Elena Polzer with Mark Franko, Oxford UP, 2015.
- Brannigan, Erin. "Dance and the Gallery: Curation as Revision." *Dance Research Journal*, vol. 47, no. 1, April 2015, pp. 3-25.
- "Bucksbaum Award." *Whitney Museum of American Art*, 2015, whitney.org/About/BucksbaumAward. Accessed 13 April 2015.
- "Building for the Future: A Work in Progress." *Museum of Modern Art*, January 2016, <https://www.moma.org/about/building>. Accessed 7 February 2017.
- Burt, Ramsay. *The Male Dancer: Bodies, Spectacle, Sexualities*. 1995. e-book, Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005.

- Butler, Judith. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." *Theatre Journal*, vol. 40, no. 4, Dec. 1988, pp. 519-531. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3207893>.
- Cabañas, Kaira M. "Yves Klein's Performative Realism." *Grey Room*, no. 31, 2008, pp. 6-31. *JSTOR*, doi:10.1162/grey.2008.1.31.6. Accessed 7 Oct. 2015.
- Calvo-Merino, Beatriz et al. "Seeing or Doing? Influence of Visual and Motor Familiarity in Action Observation." *Current Biology*, vol. 16, no. 19, 2006, pp. 1905-1910. *Science Direct*, doi:10.1016/j.cub.2006.07.065. Accessed 16 Dec. 2015.
- . "Towards a Sensorimotor Aesthetics of Performing Art." *Consciousness and Cognition*, vol. 17, no. 3, 2008, pp. 911-922. *Science Direct*, doi:10.1016/j.concog.2007.11.003. Accessed 16 Dec. 2015.
- "canon." *Oxford Dictionaries*. 2016. en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/canon. Accessed 13 Dec. 2016.
- Caws, Mary Ann. "The Poetics of the Manifesto: Nowness and Newness." *Manifesto: A Century of Isms*, edited by Mary Ann Caws, University of Nebraska Press, 2001, pp. xix-xxxi.
- Celant, Germano. "A Visual Machine: Art Installation and its Modern Archetypes." *Thinking about Exhibitions*, edited by Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne, e-book, Routledge, 1996, pp. 260-270.
- Charmatz, Boris. "Interview with Boris Charmatz." *Dance Research Journal*, vol. 46, no. 3, 2014, pp. 49-52. *Project Muse*, doi: 10.1353/drj.2014.0043.

- . "Manifesto for a Dancing Museum." *Boris Charmatz*, 2008,
www.borischarmatz.org/en/lire/manifesto-dancing-museum. Accessed 20
May 2013.
- Charmatz, Boris, Simone Forti, Ralph Lemon, and Ana Janevski. "An Evening with
Boris Charmatz, Simone Forti, and Ralph Lemon." *Musée de la danse: Three
Collective Gestures*, 21 October 2013, The Roy and Niuta Titus Theater II,
Museum of Modern Art, NY. Discussion Panel.
- Cherix, Christophe. Preface. *A Brief History of Curating*, by Hans Ulrich Obrist.
JRP/Ringier, 2008, pp. 4-9.
- "Choreography Across Disciplines." *Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity*, 2016,
banffcentre.ca/programs/choreography-across-disciplines. Accessed 23 Jan 2017.
- Citron, Marcia J. *Gender and the Musical Canon*. 1993. University of Illinois Press,
2000.
- Clark, Nick. "Tate Acquires Martin Creed's Controversial Turner Prize-winning Piece
Work No 227." *Independent*, 2 Sept. 2013, [independent.co.uk/arts-
entertainment/art/tate-acquires-martin-creeds-controversial-turner-prize-winning-
piece-work-no-227-8795204.html](http://independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/tate-acquires-martin-creeds-controversial-turner-prize-winning-piece-work-no-227-8795204.html). Accessed 15 Jan. 2017.
- Classen, Constance. *Studies in Sensory History: Deepest Sense: A Cultural History of
Touch*. e-book, University of Illinois Press, 2012.
- Cluett, Seth. "Ephemeral, Immersive, Invasive: Sound as Curatorial Theme, 1966-2013."
*The Multisensory Museum: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Touch, Sound,
Smell, Memory, and Space*, edited by Nina Levent and Alvaro Pascual-Leone, e-
book, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014, pp. 104-122.

- Cohen, Selma Jeanne. *Next Week, Swan Lake: Reflections of Dance and Dances*. Wesleyan UP, 1982.
- Conn, Steven. *Do Museums Still Need Objects?* University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010.
- Copeland, Mathieu. "Choreographing Exhibitions: An Exhibition Happening Everywhere, at all Times, with and for Everyone." *Choreographing Exhibitions*, edited by Mathieu Copeland and Julie Pellegrin, Les Presses du réel, 2013, pp. 19-24.
- Copeland, Roger. *Merce Cunningham: The Modernizing of Modern Dance*. Routledge, 2004.
- Cramer, Franz Anton. "Experience as Artifact: Transformations of the Immaterial." *Dance Research Journal*, vol. 46, no. 3, Dec. 2014, pp. 24-31. *Project Muse*, doi:10.1353/drj.2014.0035. Accessed 9 June 2016.
- Creed, Martin. "Works." *Martin Creed*, martincreed.com/site/works. Accessed 15 Jan. 2017.
- Daly, Ann. "Dance History and Feminist Theory: Reconsidering Isadora Duncan and the Male Gaze." *Critical Gestures: Writings on Dance and Culture*, edited by Ann Daly, Wesleyan UP, 2002, pp. 302-319.
- Denzin, Norman K. *Interpretive Interactionism*. 2nd ed., Sage, 2001.
- Dercon, Chris. "An Open Manifesto: 15 Weeks of Art in Action." *The Tanks at Tate Modern: Fifteen Weeks of Art in Action*. [programme notes] Tate Modern, 18 July – 28 October 2012, p. 2.
- Drobnick, Jim. "Volatile Architectures." *Crime and Ornament: In the Shadow of Adolf Loos*, edited by Bernie Miller and Melony Ward, YYZ Books, 2002, pp. 263-282.

Duncan, Carol. *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums*. e-book, Routledge, 2005.

---. "The MoMA's Hot Mamas." *Art Journal*, vol. 48, no. 2, 1989, pp. 171-178. *JSTOR*,
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/776968>.

Ellis-Petersen, Hannah. "Tate Modern Set for Two-Day Dance Takeover." *The Guardian*,
10 Feb. 2015. [theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/feb/10/tate-modern-museum-](http://theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/feb/10/tate-modern-museum-of-dance-takeover)
[of-dance-takeover](http://theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/feb/10/tate-modern-museum-of-dance-takeover). Accessed 17 July 2016.

Epps, Philomena. "Performance at Tate: Into the Space of Art." *Tate Modern*.
October 2015, [http://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/performance-at-](http://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/performance-at-tate/case-studies/bojana-cvejic)
[tate/case-studies/bojana-cvejic](http://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/performance-at-tate/case-studies/bojana-cvejic). Accessed 1 March 2017.

Etchells, Tim. "Tim Etchells on Performance: A Lifetime of Movement in Two Days of
Dance." *The Guardian*, 2 Oct. 2009, [theguardian.com/stage/2009/oct/02/tim-](http://theguardian.com/stage/2009/oct/02/tim-etchells-performance-dancers)
[etchells-performance-dancers](http://theguardian.com/stage/2009/oct/02/tim-etchells-performance-dancers). Accessed 5 Oct. 2015.

Feidelson, Lizzie. "Michelson Returns to the Whitney with "Devotion Study #4." *Art in
America*, 23 Jan. 2013, [artinamericamagazine.com/news-](http://artinamericamagazine.com/news-features/previews/michelson-returns-to-the-whitney-with-devotion-study-4/)
[features/previews/michelson-returns-to-the-whitney-with-devotion-study-4/](http://artinamericamagazine.com/news-features/previews/michelson-returns-to-the-whitney-with-devotion-study-4/).
Accessed 13 April 2015.

Ferguson, Bruce W. "Exhibition Rhetorics: Material Speech and Utter Sense."
Thinking About Exhibitions, edited by Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson and
Sandy Nairne, e-book, Routledge, 1996, pp. 126-136.

Fisher, Jennifer and Anthony Shay. Introduction. *When Men Dance: Choreographing
Masculinities Across Borders*, edited by Jennifer Fisher and Anthony Shay,
Oxford UP, 2009, pp. 3-27.

- Fisher, Phillip. *Making and Effacing Art: Modern American Art in a Culture of Museums*. Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Foellmer, Susanne. "Re-Cyclings: Shifting Time, Changing Genre in the Moving Museum." *Dance Research Journal*, vol. 45, no. 3, Dec. 2014, pp. 101-117, *Project Muse*, doi: 10.1353/drj.2014.0040.
- Foster, Susan Leigh. "Choreographing History." *Choreographing History*, edited by Susan Leigh Foster, Indiana UP, 1995, pp. 3-21.
- . "Choreographing Your Move." *Move: Choreographing You*, edited by Stephanie Rosenthal, The MIT Press, 2010, pp. 32-37.
- Foucault, Michel. "Of Other Spaces." *The Visual Culture Reader*, translated by Jay Miskowiec, edited by Nicholas Mirzoeff, 2nd ed., Routledge, 2002, pp. 229-236.
- Franko, Mark. "Museum Artifact Act." *Tanz und Archiv*, no. 5, 2014, pp. 94-103, www.academia.edu/6680600/Museum_Artifact_Act. Accessed 21 Feb. 2017.
- Franko, Mark and André Lepecki. "Editor's Note: Dance in the Museum." *Dance Research Journal*, vol. 46, no 3, Dec. 2014, pp. 1-4. *Project Muse*, doi:10.1017/S0149767714000424. Accessed 9 June 2016.
- Fried, Michael. "Art and Objecthood." *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews*, edited by Michael Fried, The University of Chicago Press, 1998, pp. 148-172.
- Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. Fontana Press, 1973.
- Gordon, Douglas. *Play Dead; Real Time*. 2003, three-channel video (color, silent), two projectors, two screens, monitor, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

- Gore, Georgiana and Laurence Louppe with Wilfride Piollet. "Effervescence and Tradition in French Dance." *Europe Dancing: Perspectives on Theatre Dance and Cultural Identity*, edited by Andrée Grau and Stephanie Jordan, Routledge, 2000, pp. 28-54.
- Greenberg, Clement. "Modernist Painting." *Art Theory and Criticism: An Anthology of Formalist, Avant-Garde, Contextualist and Post-Modernist Thought*, edited by Sally Everett, McFarland & Company, 1991, pp. 110-118.
- Greenberg, Reesa. "The Exhibited Redistributed: A Case for Reassessing Space." *Thinking About Exhibitions*, edited by Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson and Sandy Nairne, e-book, Routledge, 1996, pp. 246-259.
- Grunenberg, Christoph. "The Modern Art Museum." *Contemporary Cultures of Display*, edited by Emma Barker, Yale UP, 1999, pp.26-49.
- . "The Politics of Presentation: The Museum of Modern Art, New York." *Art Institutions and Ideology Across England and North America*, edited by Marcia Pointon, Manchester UP, 1994, pp. 192-211.
- Guggenheim, Peggy. *Out of This Century: The Informal Memoirs of Peggy Guggenheim*. e-book, The Dial Press, 1946.
- Haines-Cooke, Shirley. *Frederick Kiesler: Lost in History: Art of this Century and the Modern Art Gallery*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009.
- "Hand-drawn Chart Illustrating the Development of Modern Art, c. 1936." *MoMA*, 2016, www.moma.org/research-and-learning/research-resources/archives/archives_highlights_02_1936. Accessed 11 Jan. 2017.

- Hankins, Evelyn C. "En/Gendering the Whitney's Collection of American Art." *Acts of Possession: Collecting in America*, edited by Leah Dilworth, Rutgers UP, 2003, pp. 163-189.
- Harper, Douglas. "kinesthesia." *Etymonline.com*, 2016, www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=kinesthesia. Accessed 22 July 2016.
- Harries, Karsten. "Building and the Terror of Time." *Perspecta*, vol. 19, 1982, pp. 58-69. *JSTOR*, doi:10.2307/1567050. Accessed 28 Nov. 2015.
- Heidegger, Martin. "The Question Concerning Technology." *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, translated by William Lovitt, Harper & Row, 1977, pp. 3-35.
- Hein, Hilde S. *The Museum in Transition: A Philosophical Perspective*. Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000.
- Hetherington, Kevin. "Foucault, the Museum and the Diagram." *The Sociological Review*, vol. 59, no. 3, 2011, pp. 457-475. *Scholars Portal*, doi:10.1111/j.1467-954X.2011.02016.x. Accessed 22 February 2017.
- Hooper-Greenhill, Eilean. "Changing Values in the Art Museum: Rethinking Communication and Learning." *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2000, pp. 9-31. *Scholars Portal*, doi:10.1080/135272500363715. Accessed 2 March 2017.

- Howes, David. "The Secret of Aesthetics Lies in the Conjugation of the Senses: Reimagining the Museum as a Sensory Gymnasium." *The Multisensory Museum: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Touch, Sound, Smell, Memory, and Space*, edited by Nina Levent and Alvaro Pascual-Leone, e-book, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014, pp. 238-250.
- Huxtable, Ada Louise. "Art: The Whitney Museum Shows What It Can Do...In the Right Building." *New York Times*, 2 Oct 1966, pp. D23, D25. *ProQuest Historical Newspapers*,
<http://ezproxy.lib.ryerson.ca/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/117394143?accountid=13631>.
- . "Harsh and Handsome: The New Whitney is Superbly Suited for an Art that Thrives on Isolation." *The New York Times*, 8 Sept. 1966, pp. 49, 57, *ProQuest Historical Newspapers*,
<http://ezproxy.lib.ryerson.ca/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/117598319?accountid=13631>.
- . "Skyscraper Art Rides High." *On Architecture: Collected Reflections on a Century of Change*, edited by Ada Louise Huxtable, Walker and Company, 2008, pp. 139-142.
- "Intervention: Yves Klein - Le Vide." *Kunstmuseen Krefeld*, 2009,
www.kunstmuseenkrefeld.de/e/ausstellungen/ausstellung/hl20090920.html.
 Accessed 7 Oct. 2015.
- "Isadora Duncan (1877-1927)." *Isadora Duncan Archive*, 2017,
www.isadoraduncanarchive.org/dancer/1/. Accessed 26 Jan. 2017.

- Jackson, Shannon. "The Way We Perform Now." *Dance Research Journal*, vol. 46, no. 3, Dec. 2014, pp. 53-61. *Project Muse*, doi:10.1353/drj.2014.0028. Accessed 9 June 2016.
- Jay, Martin. *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*. University of California Press, 1994.
- Jola, Corinne, Shantel Ehrenberg, and Dee Reynolds. "The Experience of Watching Dance: Phenomenological-Neuroscience Duets." *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2012, pp. 17-37. *Scholars Portal*, doi:10.1007/s11097-010-9191-x. Accessed 7 July 2016.
- Jonas, Hans. *The Phenomenon of Life: Toward a Philosophical Biology*, Harper & Row Publishers, 1966.
- Jones, Caroline A. *Eyesight Alone: Clement Greenberg's Modernism and the Bureaucratization of the Senses*. The University of Chicago Press, 2005.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of the Power of Judgement*. Translated by Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews, Cambridge UP, 2000.
- Kirkham, Pat and Judy Attfield. Introduction. *The Gendered Object*, edited by Pat Kirkham, Manchester UP, 1996, pp. 1-11.
- Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage*. University of California Press, 1998.
- . "Intangible Heritage as Metacultural Production." *Museum International*, vol. 66, no. 1-4, 2014, pp. 163-174. *Wiley Online Library*, doi: 10.1111/muse.12070.

- . "The Museum as Catalyst." *Museums 2000: Confirmation or Challenge*, ICOM Sweden, the Swedish Museum Association and the Swedish Travelling Exhibition/Riksställningar, Vadstena, 29 Sept. 2000. Keynote Address. www.nyu.edu/classes/bkg/web/vadstena.pdf. Accessed 23 Feb. 2017.
- Klonk, Charlotte. *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000*. Yale UP, 2009.
- Kondo, Dorinne K. *Crafting Selves: Power, Gender, and Discourses of Identity in a Japanese Workplace*. University of Chicago Press, 1990.
- Lacey, Jennifer. "In Conversation with Mathieu Copeland, Gare de l'Est, Paris, 16 October 2010." *Choreographing Exhibitions*, edited by Mathieu Copeland and Julie Pellegrin, Les Presses du réel, 2013, pp. 123-128.
- Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith, Blackwell Publishing, 1991.
- Lepecki, André. "The Body as Archive: Will to Re-enact and the Afterlives of Dances." *Dance Research Journal*, vol. 42, no. 2, Winter 2010, pp. 28-48. *ProQuest*, <http://ezproxy.lib.ryerson.ca/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.ryerson.ca/docview/839146807?accountid=13631>. Accessed 3 Feb. 2017.
- . "thing:dance:daring:(proximal aesthetics)." *Choreographing Exhibitions*, edited by Mathieu Copeland and Julie Pellegrin, Les presses du reel, 2013, pp. 94-103.
- . "Zones of Resonance: Mutual Formations in Dance and the Visual Arts Since the 1960s." *Move: Choreographing You*, edited by Stephanie Rosenthal, The MIT Press, 2010, pp. 152-163.

- Licht, Alan. "Navigating Time and space in the Exhibition of Sound." *Choreographing Exhibitions*, edited by Mathieu Copeland and Julie Pellegrin, Les Presses du réel, 2013, pp. 151-154.
- Lindgren, Allana C. "Dance as a Curatorial Practice: Performing Moving Dragon's *Koong* at the Royal Ontario Museum." *Setting the Stage: Cultural Diversity and Dance in Canada*, edited by Batia Stolar, Allana C. Lindgren, and Clara Sacchetti. Wilfred Laurier UP, forthcoming.
- Lista, Marcella. "Play Dead: Dance, Museums, and the "Time-Based Arts." *Dance Research Journal*, vol. 46, no. 3, Dec. 2014, pp. 4-23. *Project Muse*, doi:10.1353/drj.2014.0032.
- Loos, Adolf. "Ornament and Crime." *Crime and Ornament: The Arts and Popular Culture in the Shadow of Adolf Loos*, edited Bernie Miller and Melony Ward, YYZ Books, 2002, pp. 29-36.
- Louppe, Laurence. *Poetics of Contemporary Dance*. Translated by Sally Gardner, Dance Books, 2010.
- Lubar, Steven. "Timelines in Exhibitions." *Curator: The Museum Journal*, vol. 56, no. 2, 2013, pp. 169-188, *Scholars Portal*, doi:10.1111/cura.12018. Accessed 17 Oct. 2016.
- MacLeod, Suzanne. *Museum Architecture: A New Biography*. e-book, Routledge, 2013.
- Marstine, Janet. Introduction. *New Museum Theory and Practice: An Introduction*, edited by Janet Marstine. Blackwell Publishing, 2006, pp. 1-36.
- Martin, John. *The Modern Dance*. 1933. Dance Horizons, 1965.
- Matisse, Henri. *Dance (I)*. 1909. Oil on canvas, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

“matter.” *Oxford Dictionaries*. 2016. en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/matter.

Accessed 13 Dec. 2016.

McEvelley, Thomas. Introduction. *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, by Brian O’Doherty, 4th ed., University of California Press, 1999, pp. 7-12.

Midgellow, Vida L. “Reworking the Ballet: (En)countering the Canon.” *Reworking the Ballet: Counter Narratives and Alternative Bodies*, edited by Vida L. Midgellow, Routledge, 2007, pp. 9-35.

Mitchell, W. J. T. “There are no Visual Media.” *Journal of Visual Culture*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2005, pp. 257-266. *Sage Journals*, doi:10.1177/1470412905054673. Accessed 21 July 2016.

Montero, Barbara. “Proprioception as an Aesthetic Sense.” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 64, no. 2, 2006, pp. 231-242. *Wiley Online Library*, doi:10.1111/j.0021-8529.2006.00244.x. Accessed 7 July 2016.

Moreno, Inés. “Opening Hours.” *Dance Research Journal*, vol. 46, no. 3, Dec. 2014, pp. 77-99. *Project Muse*, doi:10.1353/drj.2014.0034. Accessed 9 June 2016.

“museum.” *Oxford Dictionaries*. 2016. en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/museum. Accessed 15 Jan. 2017.

Nicifero, Alessandra. “OCCUPY MoMA: The (Risks and) Potentials of a Musée de la danse!” *Dance Research Journal*, vol. 46, no. 3, Dec. 2014, pp. 32-44. *Project Muse*, doi:10.1353/drj.2014.0038. Accessed 9 June 2016.

NMWA. “About.” *National Museum of Women in the Arts*, <https://nmwa.org/about>. Accessed 13 Dec. 2016.

- Nochlin, Linda. "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" *Art and Sexual Politics: Women's Liberation, Women Artists, and Art History*, edited by Thomas B. Hess and Elizabeth C. Baker. Macmillan, 1973, pp. 1-43.
- Obrist, Hans Ulrich. *A Brief History of Curating*. JRP Ringier and les Presses du reel, 2008.
- Obrist, Hans Ulrich with Terry Smith. "Curating as Medium." *Talking Contemporary Curating*, edited by Terry Smith, Independent Curators, 2015, pp. 114-138.
- O'Doherty, Brian. *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*. 4th ed., University of California Press, 1999.
- Oldenberg, Claes. *Floor Burger*. 1962, canvas filled with foam rubber and cardboard boxes, painted with acrylic paint, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.
- Oliver, Mary. *Rules for the Dance: A Handbook for Writing and Reading Metrical Verse*. e-book, Houghton and Mifflin, 1998.
- O'Reilly, John. 1995, www.martincreed.com/site/words/john-oreilly, Accessed 18 Jan. 2017.
- Pallasmaa, Juhani. "Hapticity and Time: Notes on Fragile Architecture." *The Architectural Review*, vol. 207, no. 1239, 2000, pp. 78-84. *ProQuest*, <http://ezproxy.lib.ryerson.ca/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.ryerson.ca/docview/201144624?accountid=13631>. Accessed 9 Aug. 2016.
- . "Museum as an Embodied Experience." *The Multisensory Museum: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Touch, Sound, Smell, Memory, and Space*, edited by Nina Levent and Alvaro Pascual-Leone, e-book, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014. 113-112.

- Pape et al. "Welcome to This Situation: Tino Sehgal's Impersonal Ethics." *Dance Research Journal*, vol. 46, no. 3, Dec. 2014, pp. 89-100. *Project Muse*, doi:10.1353/drj.2014.0037. Accessed 9 June 2016.
- Peggy Guggenheim: Art Addict*. Directed by Lisa Immordino Vreeland, Dakota Group, Fischio Films, and Submarine Entertainment, 2015.
- Phelan, Peggy. *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*. Routledge, 1993.
- Phelippeau, Mickaël. "Erase Your Trace." In *Choreographing Exhibitions*. 179-181.
- Plato. *Philebus* Translated by Benjamin Jowett, EPUB, Project Gutenberg, 1999.
- Pogrebin, Robin. "Ambitious Redesign of MoMA Doesn't Spare a Notable Neighbor." *The New York Times*, 8 Jan. 2014, nytimes.com/2014/01/09/arts/design/a-grand-redesign-of-moma-does-not-spare-a-notable-neighbor.html. Accessed 7 February 2017.
- . "MoMA Trims Back Some Features of Its Planned Renovation." *The New York Times*, 26 Jan. 2016. nytimes.com/2016/01/27/arts/design/moma-trims-back-some-features-of-its-planned-renovation.html. Accessed 7 February 2017.
- Ponterotto, Joseph G. "Brief Note on the Origins, Evolution, and Meaning of the Qualitative Research Concept 'Thick Description'." *The Qualitative Report*, vol. 11, no. 3, Sept. 2006, pp. 538-549.
- Reason, Matthew, and Dee Reynolds. "Kinesthesia, Empathy and Related Pleasures: An Inquiry into Audience Experiences of Watching Dance." *Dance Research Journal*, vol. 42, no. 2, 2010, pp. 49-75. *ProQuest*, <http://ezproxy.lib.ryerson.ca/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.ryerson.ca/docview/839147160?accountid=13631>. Accessed 21 July 2016.

- Reilly, Maura. "Taking the Measure of Sexism: Facts, Figures, and Fixes." *ARTNEWS*, 26 May 2015, artnews.com/2015/05/26/taking-the-measure-of-sexism-facts-figures-and-fixes/. Accessed 4 Mar. 2016.
- Reynolds, Dee. "Kinesthetic Empathy and the Dance's Body: From Emotion to Affect." *Kinesthetic Empathy in Creative and Cultural Practices*, edited by Dee Reynolds and Matthew Reason, Intellect, 2012, pp. 121-136.
- Reynolds, Dee, and Matthew Reason. Introduction. *Kinesthetic Empathy in Creative and Cultural Practices*, edited by Dee Reynolds and Matthew Reason, Intellect, 2012, pp. 17-25.
- Reynolds, Nigel. "Turner Prize won by man who turns lights off" *The Telegraph*, 10 Dec. 2001, telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1364860/Turner-Prize-won-by-man-who-turns-lights-off.html. Accessed 15 Jan. 2017.
- Richter, Gerhard. *October 18, 1977*. 1988, oil on canvas, fifteen paintings, Museum of Modern Art, New York.
- Risner, Doug. "What We Know about Boys Who Dance: The Limitations of Contemporary Masculinity and Dance Education." *When Men Dance: Choreographing Masculinities Across Borders*, edited by Jennifer Fisher and Anthony Shay, Oxford UP, 2009, pp. 57-77.
- Rodin, Auguste. *Monument to Balzac*. 1898 (cast 1954), bronze, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

- Roux, Céline. "The Centres Chorégraphiques Nationaux: A Label, Venues, Temporalities, Stories..." 2015,
http://ballet-de-lorraine.eu/files/settings/PIECES/ART%20CCN%20MASTER-2_ang%20MASTER.pdf
- Rybczynski, Witold. "The Bilbao Effect." *The Atlantic*, September 2002,
theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2002/09/the-bilbao-effect/302582/. Accessed 17 Jan. 2017.
- Sacks, Oliver. Foreword. *Pride and a Daily Marathon*, by Jonathan Cole, e-book, MIT Press, 1995, pp. ix-xiv.
- Sayers, Lesley-Anne. "Re-Discovering Diaghilev's 'Pas d'Acier.'" *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research*, vol. 18, no. 2, 2000, pp. 163-185. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1290850>. Accessed 26 Jan. 2016.
- Schaefer, Brian. "Sarah Michelson and the Infiltration of Dance." *Out*, 30 Jan. 2014,
out.com/entertainment/theater-dance/2014/01/30/sarah-michelson-whitney-museum. Accessed 13 April 2014.
- Schneider, Rebecca. "Archives Performance Remains." *Performance Research*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2001, pp. 100-108. *Scholars Portal*, doi:10.1080/13528165.2001.10871792. Accessed 2 Feb. 2017.
- Seibert, Brian. "Artwork on Foot Attracts New Vantage Points: In MoMA's '20 Dancers for the XX Century,' Intimacy Reigns." *The New York Times*, 20 Oct. 2013,
nytimes.com/2013/10/21/arts/dance/in-momas-20-dancers-for-the-xx-century-intimacy-reigns.html. Accessed 17 July 2016.

---. "Five Figures Circling Backward, Across a Blueprint of the Whitney."

The New York Times. 6 March 2012, nytimes.com/2012/03/07/arts/dance/sarah-michelsons-devotion-study-1-at-whitney-museum.html. Accessed 13 April 2015.

Serota, Nicholas. *Experience or Interpretation: The Dilemma of Museums of Modern Art*. Thames and Hudson, 1996.

---. "New Spaces for Art." *The Tanks at Tate Modern: Fifteen Weeks of Art*

in Action. [programme notes] Tate Modern, 18 July – 28 October 2012, pp. 36-37.

Smith, Roberta. "A Survey of a Different Color: 2012 Whitney Biennial." *The New York Times*, 1 March 2012, nytimes.com/2012/03/02/arts/design/2012-whitney-biennial.html. Accessed 13 April 2015.

Stanger, Arabella. "The Choreography of Space: Towards a Socio-Aesthetics of Dance."

New Theatre Quarterly, vol. 30, no. 1, 2014, pp. 72-90. *Scholars Portal*, doi:10.1017/S0266464X14000098. Accessed 7 Oct. 2015.

"The Building." *Whitney Museum of American Art*, 2017,

<http://whitney.org/About/NewBuilding>. Accessed 7 February 2017.

"The Tanks." *Tate Modern*, <http://www.tate.org.uk/visit/tate-modern/tanks>. Accessed 7 February 2017.

Thea, Carolee. *Foci: Interviews with Ten International Curators*. ApexArt Curatorial Program, 2001.

---. *On Curating: Interviews with Ten International Curators*. Distributed Art Publishers, 2010.

Tomažin, Irena. "Voice's Empty Spaces: Some Fragments of Notes About the Voice."

Choreographing Exhibitions, edited by Mathieu Copeland and Julie Pellegrin, Les Presses du réel, 2013, pp. 76-82.

Voegelin, Salomé. "Soundwalking in the Museum: A Sonic Journey through the Visual Display." *The Multisensory Museum: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Touch, Sound, Smell, Memory, and Space*, edited by Nina Levent and Alvaro Pascual-Leone, e-book, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014, pp. 113-112.

Weitemeier, Hannah. "With the Void, Full Powers." *Klein*, Taschen, 2001, pp. 31-35.

"What is the Turner Prize?" *Tate*, www.tate.org.uk/turner-prize/about. Accessed 15 Jan. 2017.

Wood, Catherine. "People and Things in the Museum." *Choreographing Exhibitions*, edited by Mathieu Copeland and Julie Pellegrin, Les Presses du réel, 2013, pp. 113-122.

Wookey, Sara. *Who Cares? Dance in the Gallery & Museum*. Siobhan Davies Dance, 2015.