

# 10 ARTISTS WHO USE DANCE AS A MEDIUM

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In the 20<sup>th</sup> century dance became a way to freely experiment and reflect upon the body as a medium. Artists started to include performance — which was seen as a 'non-traditional' art — in their work. Dance was perceived as similarly difficult to allocate within contemporary arts, as it was a much more liberated form of expression than traditional theatre and opera, but still associated with stage performances. It was therefore only natural that artists began to combine dance and performance art, introducing it as an independent, alternative notion of embodying ideas. Because of its non-traditional and immaterial structure, performance became associated with conceptual art. History has slowly proven this to be a misleading idea, as artists have used performance and dance to execute their physical works, such as sculpture, painting and video art. The following article introduces individuals and collective artistic groups who use performance, dance and choreography in their practice and address social, political, historical or environmental issues.

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## CAROLEE SCHNEEMANN

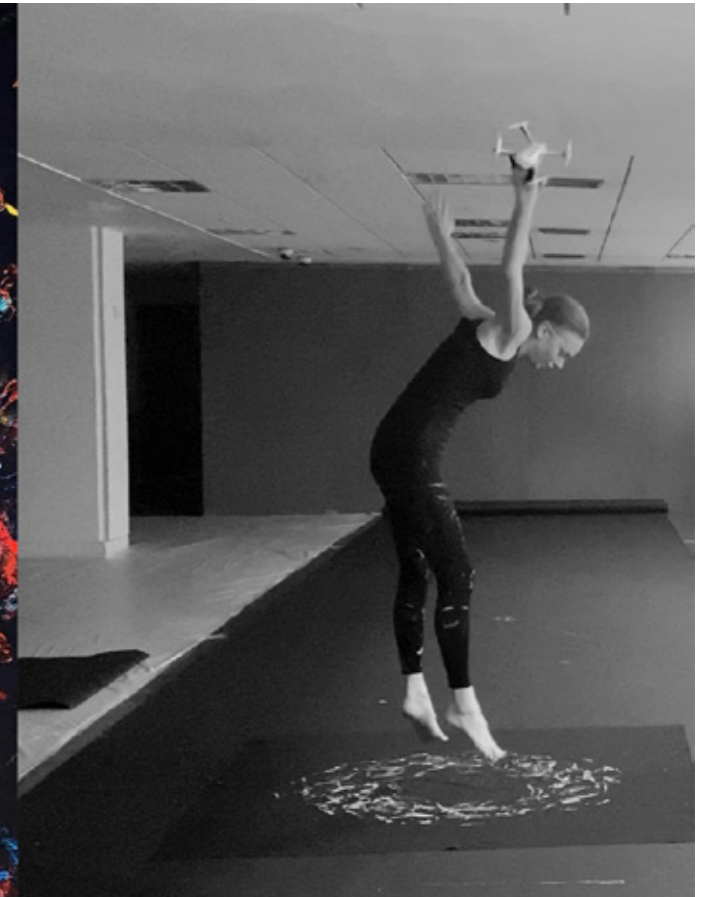
American artist Carolee Schneemann is known for her series of kinetic paintings, which activated the canvas, sometimes literally setting it in motion, as well as work with Judson Dance Theater. In later works she used her own body as material, and she saw these performative actions as a way to become both 'image and image-maker.' Schneemann moved away from classical choreography and addressed the issues of feminine individuality through her improvisations of abstract compositions and performance. Her oeuvre focused on the political meaning of the body, in the context of power. The artist explored this theme in response to the Vietnam War, the Lebanese Civil War and the 9/11 attacks, through performance, multimedia installations and films.

## ALICE

Alice Anderson, *GEOMETRIC DANCES, CAMERA DRONE*, 2022, mineral paint, rain drops on canvas, 160 x 140 cm, performance in Anderson studio and König Berlin 2022, courtesy of the artist and König Gallery



## ANDERSON



Alice Anderson, *GEOMETRIC DANCES, S-BAND GPS GROUND STATION DISH*, 2021, mineral paint, rain drops on canvas, 4000 x 320 cm, performance at La Patinoire Royale, Brussels 2021, courtesy of the artist



Alice Anderson is a London-based artist who locates her practice between movement guided by ancestral cultures and the world of technology and its algorithmic systems. Through dance, she questions our relationship with nature and the body in the era of AI. As an ecofeminist, she explores motifs and dialogue with the non-human world. During her performances, Anderson creates paintings, drawings and sculptures. Her physical works are therefore resolutions of performative expressions. Through this process she rethinks the connections between body and machine, an observation that she refers to as 'human/non-human interactions.' Anderson uses her body as a medium that commands her art.



# ALEXIS

# BLAKE



Alexis Blake, *Crack Nerve Boogie Swerve*, performance at KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin 2023, photo: Frank Sperling



Alexis Blake is a multidisciplinary artist working with visual art, performance and dance as her medium. Her practice engages with representations and the subjectification of women's bodies, while treating them as agents in socio-political matters. The artist works with the notions of resistance and liberation from the systems of power. Blake's performances are choreographed within site specific installations that are activated by the dancers. Working with dancers from a variety of backgrounds, she attempts to deconstruct the gestural associations that trigger gender codes, while making viewers contemplate the body as an individual and a collective.

# ZHENG

# BO



Zheng Bo, *Pteridophyta 1*, 2016, video (4K, colour, sound), 17 minutes, courtesy of the artist



Zheng Bo, *Samur*, 2023, video (4K, colour, sound), 21 minutes, courtesy of the artist



Zheng Bo, *Le Sacre du printemps 1*, 2021-2022, video (4K, colour, sound), 16 minutes, courtesy of the artist

Zheng Bo is a Chinese artist who addresses the issues of kinship between nature, politics, ecology and eroticism through dance, video art and drawing. His art questions the human-plant correlation and coexistence. The artist addresses the possibilities of establishing eroticism between plants and humans, especially queer men. His works — such as 'Le Sacre du printemps,' presented during the 59th Venice Biennale — provoke and cultivate the idea of sexual play and intimacy in or with the natural landscape. Zheng Bo establishes a dialogue about sex and pleasure in connection to the natural world, and on the collective idea of desire confronted with the environmental crisis.



# LARA

# DÂMASO



Lara Dâmaso, *Echolocations*, 2022, video, 5.1 sound 15'56", loop, performers: Lara Dâmaso, Tamen Johnson, Titilayo Adebayo, courtesy of the artist



Lara Dâmaso, *Between the Veils*, 2023, performers: Lara Dâmaso & Tamen Johnson, photo: Milena Wojhan, courtesy of the artist

Lara Dâmaso is a Swiss-Portuguese performance and video artist who uses her body and voice as a medium. Her practice explores their expressive, therapeutic and political potential. Dâmaso's performances include a certain dose of intimacy and vulnerability, as she works with structured improvisation. The performances are therefore a certain surprise to her as well as to the public, creating an element of intimacy and spontaneity. She distinguishes between the dancing body and singing body, and the vibrations they produce and send to the audience. Dâmaso's oeuvre treats them equally as channels to convey the messages behind her performances. The singing body stands for the suppression of female voice and energy that she embodies with abstract, repetitive sounds.

# SIMONE

# FORTI



Simone Forti, *Zuma News*, 2014, video, courtesy of the artist, the BOX Gallery, Los Angeles, and Galleria Raffaella Cortese, Milano

The artist and writer Simone Forti, born in Italy in 1935, has been a leading figure in the development of contemporary dance and performance ever since the 1950s. Her work has reinterpreted the male-dominated narrative of conceptual art, with her feminine delicacy and emotion-driven movements exploring 'natural,' or nonformalist, movement and dance. Her seminal work, the 'Dance Constructions' (1961) have influenced many dancers and artists. She mastered her practice through constant improvisation and experimentation — her oeuvre spans from dance performances, video art and paintings, to drawings, photography and literature. Forti is an iconic female artist who reconfigured the concept of performance and dance by constantly engaging within the dialogue between visual art, dance and nature.



# LENIO

# KAKLEA



Lenio Kaklea, *Age of Crime*, 2021, photo: Maria Toulisa, courtesy of the artist



Lenio Kaklea is an artist, choreographer and writer, born in Greece and based in Paris. Kaklea's interdisciplinary practice oscillates around choreography, performance, text and video art. Her practice is inspired by feminism, psychoanalysis and post-colonial critique. She works with the issues of subjectivity through the organised repetition and transmission of movements in order to explore the intimate spaces in which we construct our identities. She develops work for both theatre, museum, and natural landscapes and creates intense choreographic scores that challenge the representation of the female body.

# GERARD

# &

# KELLY



Gerard & Kelly, *Panorama* (with Germain Louvet, Soc de Muse, and Guillaume Diop), 2021, 4K video, colour, sound, 22 minutes, courtesy of the artists and Marian Goodman Gallery



Gerard & Kelly, *Panorama* (with Guillaume Diop), 2021, 4K video, colour, sound, 22 minutes, courtesy of the artists and Marian Goodman Gallery

Gerard & Kelly is an American artist duo currently based in Paris. Brennan Gerard and Ryan Kelly started to form their artistic practice in 2003, and since then have engaged with transformations between dance and visual arts, through performance, video art and installation. Their oeuvre reflects upon time, memory, domestic life, gender, sexuality and queer subjectivity. Performances by Gerard & Kelly often take place in museums, galleries and domestic spaces — exploring aspects of intimacy within a variety of settings, as well as the relationships between architecture and the human body.



# OLA

# MACIEJEWSKA



Ola Maciejewska, solo dance performance *FIGURY (przestrzenie)*, Muzeum Susch, © Martin Argyroglo

Ola Maciejewska born in Poland and based in France, is an artist working mainly with dance, choreography and sculpture. Her work is anchored on frictions between materiality and ephemerality, movement and its conditions of appearance. In light of these questions, she produced critical reading of the history of dance. Through working on convergences between dance and visual art, her series of works focalised on serpentine dances invented by Loie Fuller engage the viewer in reflection on metamorphosis, synesthesia, and the hybrid nature of embodiment.

# ANDREA

# PEÑA



Andrea Peña & Artists, *UNTITLED I + II*, 2018, performers: Francois Richard, Jean-Benoit Labrecque, Kevin Delaney, photo: Vanessa Fortin, courtesy of the artist

Andrea Peña is a Colombian artist and choreographer, based in Montreal, Canada. She started her career as a professional dancer and then eventually found her artistic language as a movement designer and choreographer. With her creations, which she calls 'universes' she carves systems and frameworks for performers to find their individual expression and point of view through the building of a collective intelligence. As a choreographer with a Masters in industrial design she uses visual art practice and spatial qualities of creative making while questioning the body as a material that exists in relationship to space and time. In 2014, the artist founded Andrea Peña & Artists (AP&A) — a millennial company that creates queer choreographic encounters between dance and design aimed to disrupt our own humanes to craft new imaginaries in the choreographic and performing arts. AP&A's creations reflect on the values that shape us, our decisions, reflections and work, directing focus beyond our actions and returning to the essential vulnerabilities and strengths of the human essence. The company will be heading to premier its new work at the Venice Biennale this summer 2023. ●