

Aspen Art Museum
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Educator Notes

Lost Without Your Rhythm

November 16, 2018–February 24, 2019



Installation view: *Lost Without Your Rhythm*, 2018. Photo: Tony Prikyrl

About the Artists

Helena Almeida

Helena Almeida was born in Lisbon, Portugal, in 1934, and lived and worked in Lisbon. The artist recently passed away in September 2018. Best known for performance and conceptual art, she often used her body as a canvas and wore her paintings. The artist declared in 1969, "My work is my body; my body is my work." *Dentro de Mim\Inside Me* (1998) are black-and-white photographs depicting the artist in varying positions.

Simone Forti

Simone Forti was born in 1935 in Florence, Italy. She lives and works in Los Angeles. A pioneer of postmodern dance, she embraces pedestrian, task-based, and animal movements. *Solo No. 1* (1974) is a video work that suggests the artist's interest in animal movements as she performs an improvised animal-impersonation study.

Felix Gonzalez-Torres

Felix Gonzalez-Torres was born in 1957 in Guáimaro, Cuba, and died in 1996. The artist is known for communicating the sociopolitical realities of the AIDS crises through his practice. The work presented in this exhibition, "*Untitled*" (*Orpheus, Twice*) (1991), calls upon memory, mortality, and loss as they relate to the body. It consists of two mirrors hanging side by side. When only one of the two mirrors is filled, the artwork provokes personal memory, emphasizing the impermanence of life.

EJ Hill

EJ Hill was born in Los Angeles in 1985. He lives and works in Los Angeles. Due to his strong personal convictions, the artist creates works that serve to elevate marginalized bodies through movement, emphasizing their value and resilience. *Black Joy* is a swing that faces the piece *Midnight Summit* (both 2017), an installation constructed on-site. The artist asks visitors to complete it by using their body to ascend a staircase.

Bruce Nauman

Bruce Nauman was born in 1941 in Fort Wayne, IN, and lives and works in Galisteo, NM. His artworks put emphasis on situations that provoke tension. *Body Pressure* (1974) is a takeaway poster with textual instructions. Visitors are invited to take the printed instructions and perform the action elsewhere.

B. Ingrid Olson

B. Ingrid Olson was born in 1987 in Denver, CO, and lives and works in Chicago. Many of the artist's works suggest her interest in fragmenting the body and framing it in a completely different way. *Projection, Body Parsed* (2018) consists of sculptural objects based on her own body (small of back, cinched torso, thighs, and crotch) and arranged on the gallery wall at the height at which they fall on her own body.

Yvonne Rainer

Yvonne Rainer was born in 1934 in San Francisco, CA, and lives and works in New York. One of the founding members of the Judson Dance Theatre, Rainer reveals the groundbreaking change in performance art and dance at that time through her work: the interest in people engaged in various kinds of ordinary activities. *Hand Movie* (1966) is a silent 8mm film transferred to video in which a hand assumes the role of performer. Fingers float, turn, bend, and straighten in a tightly framed space.

Oscar Tuazon

Oscar Tuazon was born in Seattle, WA, and lives and works in Los Angeles. The artist builds structures for people to occupy with a “useful uselessness,” providing shelter or connecting people. These structures can be seen as an artwork or having been designed for a function not yet known. *Another Person* (2015) is an installation resembling a revolving door through which visitors can walk.

About the Exhibition

This group exhibition juxtaposes the groundbreaking history of the Judson Dance Theater with the work of five contemporary artists. Judson Dance Theater was formed by young choreographers, artists, composers, and filmmakers in the early 1960s in Greenwich Village who were interested in challenging traditional ideas about dance. Their work focuses on movements taken from everyday life, incorporated through improvisation and chance. The title of the exhibition comes from Johanna Billing’s *I’m Lost Without Your Rhythm* (2009)—featuring looped video footage of dancers’ everyday actions. Many of the artworks in this exhibition celebrate ordinary gestures and movements, such as ascending stairs, swinging, or walking through a revolving door. Viewers are invited to complete some of the artworks by interacting with them. For example, EJ Hill invites viewers to complete *Black Joy*, by elevating their body upward toward another artwork, *Midnight Summit* (also created by the artist), through the simple act of swinging.

Questions for Discussion

- | The performances that evolved from the Judson Dance Theater workshops incorporated everyday movements drawn from the street or the home or were based on games, simple tasks, and social dances.
- | What inspires you to move?
- | Explore the differences between spontaneity, improvisation, and choreography.
- | Make a list of ways a body can be elevated through movement.

Suggested Activity

Art in Motion

Gather objects that can move, such as toy cars, marbles, string to pull, etc. Have students study each object and think about how they can create art using the materials while in motion.

Provide students with pieces of paper, plates with various paint colors, and the moving materials for them to use for their paintings. Encourage students to dip the objects in paint and move them across the paper to create abstract pieces. Have students experiment painting and moving objects with their hands, their arms, or maybe even their feet!

After finishing their artwork, have students gather together to share their paintings with one another and discuss how it felt to paint with moving objects and different parts of their bodies. Encourage students to guess which objects their peers used to paint certain marks.

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