

BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART

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INNOVATIVE BLANTON EXHIBITION UNITES ART, DANCE, AND TECHNOLOGY

Perception Unfolds: Looking at Deborah Hay's Dance
February 23 - May 18, 2014



AUSTIN, Texas—November 21, 2013— *Perception Unfolds: Looking at Deborah Hay's Dance*, on view at the Blanton Museum of Art at The University of Texas at Austin February 23 - May 18, 2014, presents an innovative union of art, dance and technology within a museum setting. Making its debut at the Blanton, the site-specific video installation combines the groundbreaking choreography of dance pioneer Deborah Hay with new software technologies created to study and inform movement and dance. The resulting artwork—four suspended translucent screens on which multiple versions of a single dance are projected—offers visitors an opportunity to observe how their individual perceptions of the dancers' performances, the setting, and their own choices as viewers provide insight into the art of choreography.

Hay has likened the experience of looking at contemporary dance to that of regarding contemporary art, as both can be challenging to new audiences. With this in mind, Hay approached the Blanton about the possibility of creating a project that would provide museum visitors with a dynamic new point of entry for engaging with both disciplines. This resulting collaboration builds upon

the Blanton's history of experimenting in the galleries with multidisciplinary programming like its critically acclaimed *SoundSpace* series; here Hay brings together a cadre of cross-disciplinary talent, which includes dancers and a choreographer, software developers, a composer, an architect/videographer, a filmmaker, and multi-media experts, along with the museum's own creative staff.

"We are very pleased to collaborate with Deborah Hay on such an important new project," says Blanton Director Simone Wicha, "This interactive and engaging presentation responds to the most exciting new models in museum programming and furthers our goal of providing innovative and surprising experiences for our visitors. The project's collaborative spirit also beautifully aligns with a concurrent exhibition of works by Eva Hesse and Sol LeWitt, both contemporaries of Hay, and pioneering innovators in their own right. "

The genesis of *Perception Unfolds* was a three-year collaboration between Deborah Hay and Motion Bank, an experimental technology research project run by the German-based The Forsythe Company, which was founded by American choreographer William Forsythe. Hay worked with Motion Bank's team of digital engineers, alongside filmmaker Anna Berger and dancers Ros Warby, Jeanine Durning, and Juliette Mapp, to enact multiple performances of one of Hay's solos, *No Time To Fly*. Through the process, all participants gained new perspective on the work's notation and presentation and on the nature of collaboration itself. Hay also discovered the inspiration for a new kind of work, one that could utilize multiple versions of a filmed dance to engage viewers more deeply with her choreography.

Further fueling Hay's interest in new technologies, interactive software developer Eric Gould Bear (Austin) and artist/videographer Rachel Strickland (San Francisco) approached Hay with a new app they had developed that allows users to experiment with roving perspective, engaging spatial memory, and navigating and orienting oneself among multiple video streams. In the resulting creative collaboration at the Blanton, visitors choose how to frame the dance by actively varying their own perspectives on it. As they move in and around the installation, beckoned by its sights and sounds, they perceive overlapping images, gestures that seem to respond to one another, and the effective dematerialization of the boundaries between dancer and viewer.

Annette DiMeo Carlozzi, Blanton curator at large and curator of the exhibition, remarks, "Hay's choreography is radical for the ways in which it makes visible the perceptual process, the infinite incremental realizations of movement and response the dancer makes while addressing the choreographer's enigmatic directions. Never performed the same way twice, Hay's works are

unique and unexpected, at their very best a revelation of our most complex human intelligences. In this new project, designed specifically for an art museum, the audience is invited to gain a much more direct understanding of the dance as they choose how to approach it, both literally and figuratively; its immersive experience up-ends all traditional “viewing” methods. We are delighted to bring this examination of perception by one of its leading artistic practitioners into the art museum, and how appropriate it is that we can offer this important contemporary thinker a prominent site for an experimental new work of art.”

Deborah Hay, the Blanton, and the *Perception Unfolds* project is the subject of an upcoming episode of the Emmy Award-winning series, *Arts in Context* on PBS. Look for it in winter 2014.

Perception Unfolds: Looking at Deborah Hay’s Dance is organized by the Blanton Museum of Art.

Funding for the exhibition is provided in part by Jeanne and Michael Klein in honor of Annette DiMeo Carlozzi and by the Berman Family Foundation.

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About Deborah Hay

Deborah Hay was born in Brooklyn in 1941. In the early 1960s, she moved to Manhattan where she trained as a dancer with Merce Cunningham and Mia Slavenska and was a member of the Judson Dance Theater, one of the most radical and explosive postmodern 20th-century art movements. By 1967 Hay had already achieved prominent status as a young choreographer, and her unique style began to emerge as a distinct voice within the aesthetics of Judson. She left New York in 1970 to live in a community in northern Vermont; six years later, Hay relocated to Austin, Texas and has been based here ever since. Over the past dozen years in particular, her teaching and choreography have been celebrated worldwide. She has toured extensively in Europe and Australia, has choreographed for the White Oak Dance Project and been commissioned by The Forsythe Company, among others, and has performed her works at the Museum of Modern Art, The Menil Collection, and Walker Art Center. Hay is the recipient of the prestigious BAXten Award as well as a Bessie award, among others. In 2009, she received an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Dance from the Theater Academy in Helsinki, Finland and in 2012, she became one of 21 American performing artists to receive the inaugural and groundbreaking Doris Duke Artist Award.

About the Blanton Museum of Art:

Founded in 1963, the Blanton Museum of Art is one of the foremost university art museums in the country and holds the largest public collection in Central Texas. Recognized for its modern and

contemporary American and Latin American art, Italian Renaissance and baroque paintings, and encyclopedic collection of prints and drawings, the Blanton offers thought provoking, visually arresting, and personally moving encounters with art.

The museum is located at the intersection of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Congress Avenue and is open Tuesday through Friday from 10 AM - 5 PM, Saturday from 11 AM - 5 PM, and Sunday from 1 - 5 PM. Thursdays are free admission days and every third Thursday the museum is open until 9 PM. Admission Prices: Adults \$9, Kids 12 and under FREE, Seniors (65+) \$7, Youth/College Students (13-21) \$5. Admission is free to members, all current UT ID-holders. For additional information call (512) 471-7324 or visit www.blantonmuseum.org.

Image: Deborah Hay's *A Continuity of Discontinuity* 2013 plan, performed by Jeanine Durning, Ros Warby and Juliette Map and filmed by Anna Berger. Screenshot courtesy of Eric Gould Bear and Rachel Strickland.