

# *China Art Objects Galleries*

Public Fiction  
at China Art Objects  
June 6 - August 22  
2015

***This Sentence,***  
***Exhibiting Sascha Braunig, Becket Flannery,***  
***Ryan Gander, Tamara Henderson,***  
***Jibade-Khalil Huffman, Gregory Kalliche,***  
***Helen Marten, Emily Mast, and Pascual Sisto.***  
*Alongside a weekly program of screenings and performances.*



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***This Sentence***, is an exhibition of nine artists that will accumulate, weekly, over the course of the summer, paired with a program of performances and screenings, contemporary and historical “citations,” giving context to the ideas in the show.

The exhibition is about the space between choreography and language, as they exist on the screen and is inspired by two video works. The first, *Points in Space* (1986), is a dance made for television by choreographer Merce Cunningham, in which dancers play sculptures, alternating movement with stillness in front of a camera whose frame, motion (and rest) is a part of the “score”; the second, *Associations* (1975), is a short work by experimental filmmaker John Smith, which puns on semiotics by voicing an essay on linguistics, while setting images and text against one another, on screen.

*This Sentence*, quotes contemporary choreography as it draws from vernacular gestures, staging bodies like objects and replacing bodies with objects, to present an exhibition like a performance, framed in the proscenium of the gallery. Here, we might say that both language and choreography are alike in their economy, in how they build their fluidity on segue, on “association”: the articulation of ideas, through phrases structured to carry unexpected, and yet connected, turns. Connections that become stronger or clearer with repetition.

The space we are charting in this exhibition, proposes that movement and syntax have the ability to depict a certain kind of urgency, culling from the pedestrian and illustrating the political through allegory: the ineffable, made effable, ineffably.\* In this essay-like exhibition, introduced one paragraph at a time through weekly dispatches, we will look at the expression of language and movement both on screen and in space, from “pure presence”\* to redacted time.

In order of appearance, this exhibition will present the work of: **Becket Flannery, Gregory Kalliche, Sascha Braunig, Jibade-Khalil Huffman, Emily Mast, Ryan Gander, Tamara Henderson, Pascual Sisto, and Helen Marten.**

As well as a program of screenings including:

**John Smith, Merce Cunningham, Sophia Al-Maria, Charles Atlas, Ericka Beckman, Derek Boshier, Ohad Fishof, Joan Jonas, Tzion Abraham Hazan, Babette Mangolte, Sara Magenheimer, Shahryar Nashat, Rashaad Newsome, A. Michael Noll, Martine Syms,** and a few more to be announced soon...

There will be performances staged by **Ryan Gander**, and **Adam Linder**. As well as a conversation with writer **Alexander Keefe** on dancer/choreographer Viola Farber.

In short, this is an exhibition whose ambition is the illustration of language, the animation of objects, and the choreography of colloquialisms....All the while acknowledging, this could get complicated, like trying to stand in a moving spotlight, on stage after the curtain has lifted.

Yours, in comedy and error,  
– PF / Lauren Mackler

\* We are pulling from a few friends here... This thought on language originated with linguist Wittgenstein, and was most recently synthesized by Maggie Nelson in her brilliant new book “The Argonauts.”

\* And this... from the writing in progress of Alexander Keefe, on the topic at hand.

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***This Sentence,***  
Week 1

**Becket Flannery,**  
***Unfreedom***



*You push the brim of your felt hat from your eyes and look:  
past the flipping tail of your horse, a trail of detritus: whale  
meat seeping black fat, doggerel tracts; large bones, piles  
of cold spaghetti, a stain where a possum died. You try to  
reconstruct the narrative from the parts available to you: the  
remains, the road, the writer; and you, the rider, the reader  
-- BF*

& a screening of Merce Cunningham's  
*Points In Space* (1986)  
and John Smith's *Associations* (1975)  
*The Girl Chewing Gum* (1976)  
*Gargantuan* (1992)

For this first week of screenings we will present the  
two works that inspired the exhibition, *Points In Space* and  
*Associations* alongside a few select others.

Merce Cunningham's *Points In Space*, is a dance  
made for television, commissioned by the BBC in 1986. In  
7 parts, which Cunningham called "phrases", the dancers  
move around a panoramic set built within the London  
studios, alternating movement with stillness, playing  
sculptures, in front of a camera whose frame, motion (and  
rest) is a part of the score. At different times, by using  
depth of field, the foreground and background of the stage,  
bodies become frames for other bodies. Non-narrative

but fluid, the dance is titled after a statement by Albert  
Einstein that "there are no fixed points in space."

The choreography is layered with a work by John  
Cage, titled "Voiceless Essay," an abstract composition  
whose process is highly conceptual. Cage recorded  
his voice reading sentences pulled from a Henry David  
Thoreau poem, sentences selected by a computer  
program. Cage stretched the playback of his read, turning  
recognizable language to sound, further abstracting it by  
cutting anything which is not a consonne. The dance and  
the score, made simultaneously and independently, were  
brought together only at the very end. In order to make  
the two parts work together, both Cage and Cunningham  
structured their work on the same *Time*.

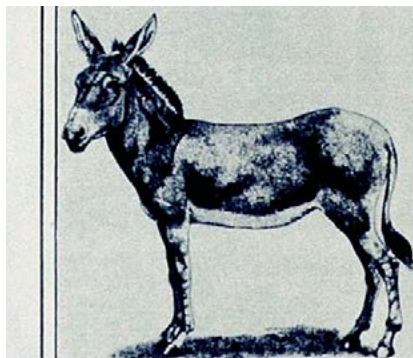
*Associations* is a short film by experimental  
filmmaker John Smith, from 1975, which puns on semiotics  
by voicing an essay titled "Word Associations and  
Linguistic Theory" by Herbert H Clark, over found images  
culled from magazines and other sources. The work sets  
images and text against one another, on screen, both  
forcing and expanding the image/word associations we  
make, as the pictures illustrate the phonetics of the read,  
not the meaning of the text.



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1. Merce Cunningham, *Points In Space*, (1986). 25 min



2. John Smith, *Associations*, (1975). 7 min

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***This Sentence,***  
Screening 06.06.2015



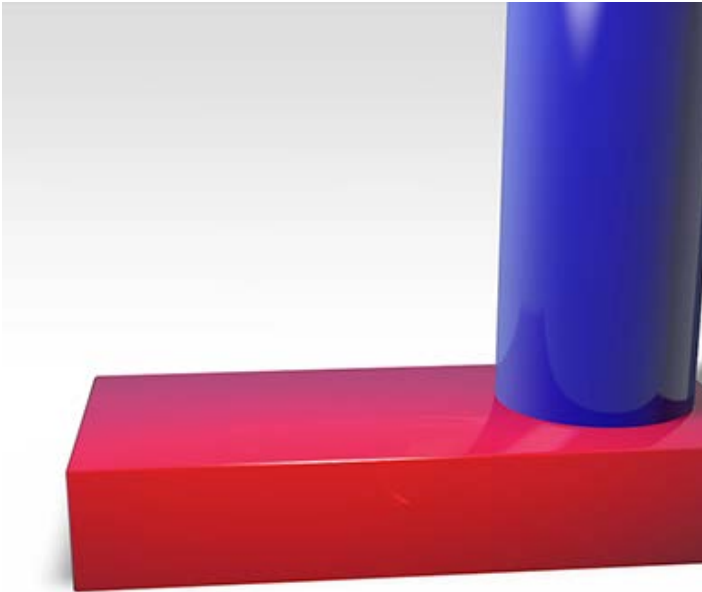
3. John Smith, *The Girl Chewing Gum*, (1976). 12 min



2. John Smith, *Gargantuan*, (1992). 1 min

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*[...] When upset, he wrote me emails in all red capital letters. He wrote to me about a cello note that ripped off the wind humming through the canyon. He wrote to me about that greedy sun that sucked all the pigment out of the lushly colored photographs. He wrote to me about a liquitex acrylic paint that ripped off the lilacs. He wrote to me about objects that spoke the language better than him. [...] -- GK*

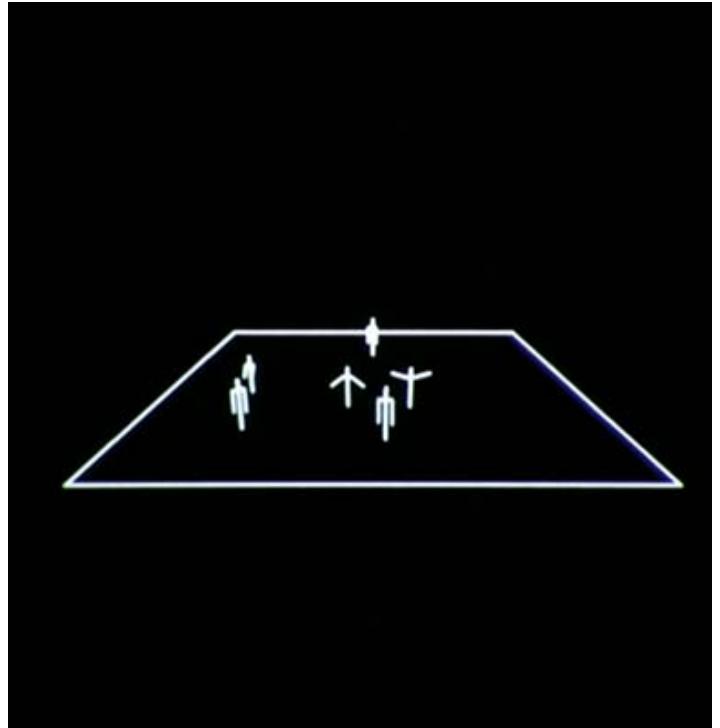
& a screening of the inanimate, animate.

**A. Michael Noll,  
A Computer Generated Ballet (1965)  
Merce Cunningham and Charles Atlas,  
SquareGame Video (1976)  
Ericka Beckman, Hit and Run, (1977)  
Rashaad Newsome, ICON (2014)**

On the second week of the show, we considered objects and animation, and animations as objects. We thought about the screen's likeness to the space of a stage. We did this first, with Gregory Kalliche's works *Find Something To Relate To* and *Filter Gallery*. These are two short animations, standing upright like sculptures, who riff on the film-essay genre by broadcasting nostalgic voiceovers, while panning over "still images" that turn objects into characters.

***This Sentence,***  
Week 2

**Gregory Kalliche,  
*Find Something To Relate To...***



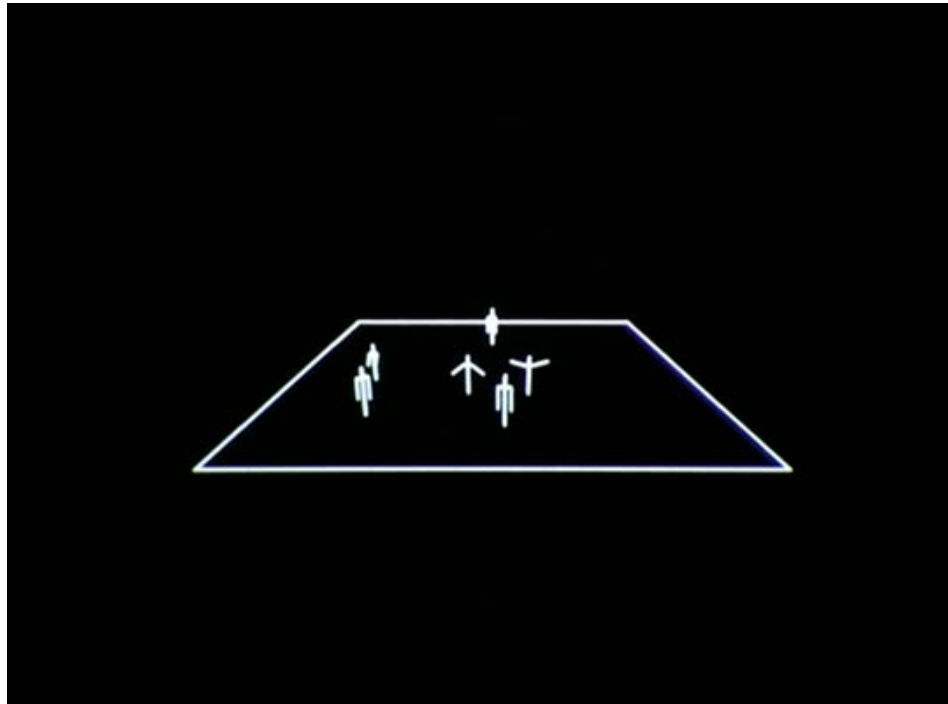
And this, followed by a screening on Saturday:

A *Computer Generated Ballet* (1965), is an early computer animation by A. Michael Noll, an engineer working for Bell Telephone Laboratories at the time, and one of the first digital artists animating the movement of pixels across the screen. Merce Cunningham and Charles Atlas' *SquareGame Video* (1976) is a dance piece set to the four points of the screen (as well as the stage), which uses props to delineate the rectangular performance-space in the perspective of the frame. It is a very early collaboration, the beginning of many, between Cunningham and Atlas. The work emphasizes play, as in "playing a game" with rules, teamwork and sportsmanship. Which is an easy segue to Ericka Beckman's *Hit and Run* (1977), a short work containing a series of double exposures that imply the continuity of movement through cause and effect, of pedestrian actions made symbolic. Finally, Rashaad Newsome's new work *ICON* (2014) stages real and digital bodies in digital space using the camera to play with scale and create patterns, both real and symbolic, out of objects and dancers alike.

**Image credit:** Gregory Kalliche, *Find Something To Relate To* (2015) and A. Michael Noll, *A Computer Generated Ballet* (1965)



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1. A. Michael Noll, *A Computer Generated Ballet* (1965) 4 min

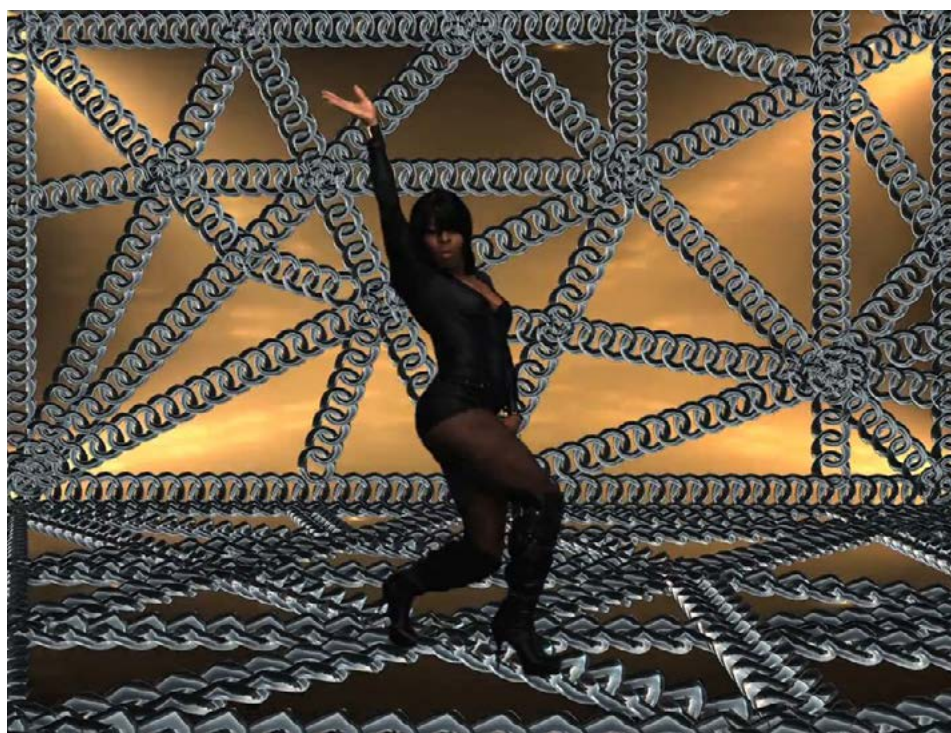


2. Merce Cunningham and Charles Atlas, *SquareGame Video* (1976) 15 min

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3. Ericka Beckman, *Hit and Run*, (1977) 8 min

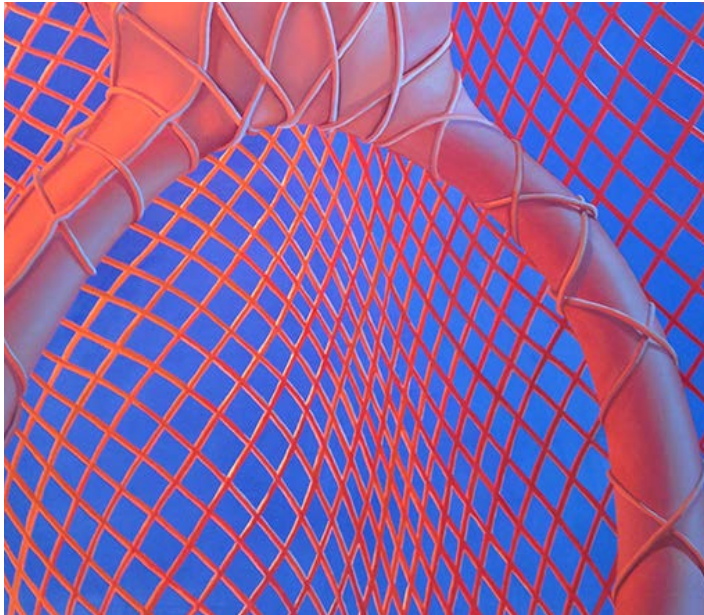


4. Rashaad Newsome, *ICON* (2014) 20 min



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This week, now additionally on view, Sascha Braunig, *Striders*, three works painted from sculpted forms, which depict human-like shapes protruding out of contrastingly unnatural patterns and palettes. In these, foreground and background are blended as subjects.

On Thursday evening, we will screen five works likening human forms and their movement to “things” and finding their thing-ness through motion and setting. All this, while keeping in mind the Cunningham-ian idea that “bodies in ordinary movement” are “the ready-mades of dance.”

Ohad Fishof's *One More Song* (2014) is a six-seconds-long choreography, on loop, showcasing the bodies of the dancers like machines on gears, utilizing the technology of editing to make the movement repeat, with impossible consistency.

Merce Cunningham with John Cage, David Tudor, Nam June Paik and Stan VanDerBeek, *Variations V* (1966), is an experiment with film. It is composed of the documentation of a performance, overlaid with found footage. This work is a predecessor to Cunningham's interest in dance for the screen, the performance and film were made as separate works. This piece is also unusual in its approach to sound: for it, Cage and Cunningham (along with David Tudor) invented triggering devices to connect the movement of the dancers to the score. These triggers illustrate an unusual synchronicity, a cause and effect relationship, between the different parts of the work.

Similarly causal, Joan Jonas' *Left Side Right Side* (1972) is an early experiment in conceptual and

***This Sentence,***  
Week 3

**Sascha Braunig, *Striders***



performative video for Jonas. One in which, she uses a monitor, like a mirror, to create a feedback loop of her own face and body.

And this, followed by Shahryar Nashat's *The Regulating Line* (2005). If regulating lines are a driving concept in architecture (famously adhered to by Le Corbusier), which repeat geometry in proportions to create aesthetic harmony in structures, in this short work by Nashat, a body, dressed casually, plays the role of a line.

Finally, Merce Cunningham and Charles Atlas' *Locale* (1977) is a work choreographed specifically for the screen. Its screen-ness is emphasized by the exaggerated play with the camera. Its fast movements in an out of rooms facilitated by dollies and steady cams, but also by the color-coded dancers in costumes designed by Atlas to emphasize each body's attributes, highlighting their reoccurring appearances and relationships. The colors themselves are a reference to television, pulling their solid hues from the standard color bars and their grey counterparts.

In short, this week, we are making an emphasis on “non-dance” which is further complicated by the disembodiment, time-traveling, time wrapping space of the screen... Or the painting.

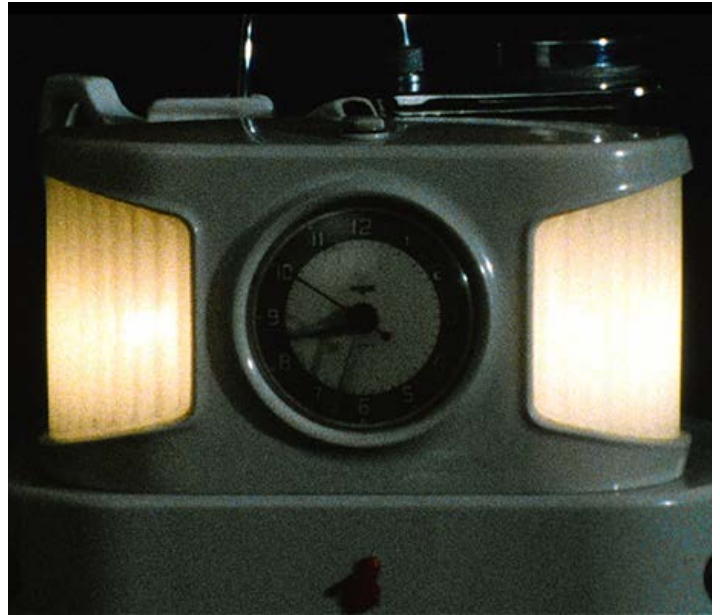
Image credit: Sascha Braunig, detail of *Strider 2* (2014), courtesy of the artist and Foxy Production. And Shahryar Nashat, *The Regulating Line* (2005), courtesy of Rodeo, London and Silberkuppe, Berlin.



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***This Sentence,***  
Week 4

**Jibade-Khalil Huffman, *Untitled (Everytime)***



& a screening:

**Gregory Kalliche, Trailer (2014)**  
**John Smith, The Black Tower (1985),**  
**The Kiss (1999)**  
**Sara Magenheimer, Seven Signs That Mean**  
**Silence (2013)**  
**Sophia Al Maria, A Whale Is A Whale: Swan Song**  
**For The Arabian Humpback (2014)**  
**Derek Boshier, Best Foot Forward (2014)**  
**Did You See.....That (2014)**  
**Sometimes I Feel Like That (2014)**

On the fourth week of the show, we focused on language, sentences and syntax. In particular, the arrangement of words, to and against each other, as well as the images they are married to on-screen. Culled from varied means of appropriation, these sentences and pictures build oblique but pointed narratives which overall involve: disembodied voices, a sense of dread, a little paranoia, a play on symbols, an associative set of ideas and an overarching search for meaning...

Image credit: Jibade-Khalil Huffman, *Untitled (Everytime)* (2015), video still courtesy of the artist & John Smith, *The Black Tower* (1985) film still courtesy of the artist.

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***This Sentence,***  
Screening 07.02.2015  
6 - 8pm



1. Gregory Kalliche, *Trailer* (2014) 2 mins



2. John Smith, *The Black Tower* (1985) 24 mins



3. John Smith and Ian Bourn, *The Kiss* (1999) 5 mins



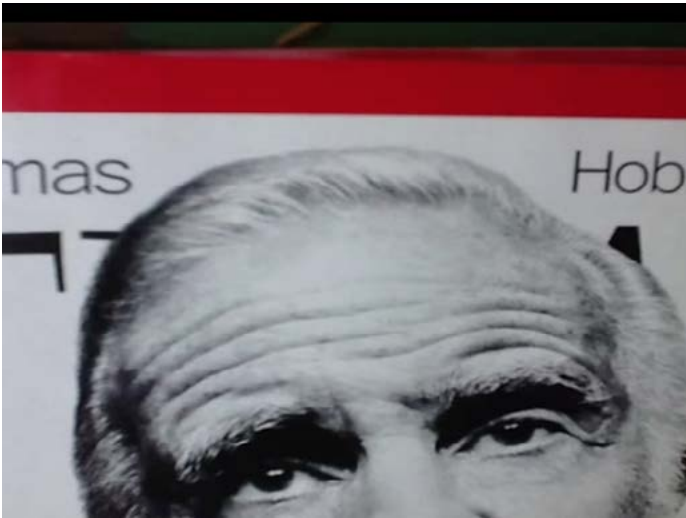
4. Derek Boshier, *Best foot forward* (2014) 5 mins



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**This Sentence,**  
Screening 07.02.2015  
6 - 8pm



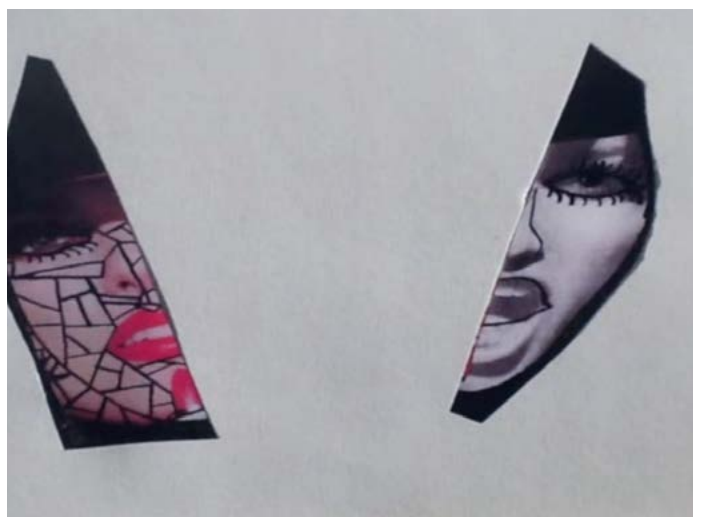
5. Derek Boshier, *Did you see.....that?* (2014) 6.20 mins



6. Sophia Al Maria, *A Whale Is A Whale Is A Whale : Swan Song for the Arabian Humpback* (2014) 3 mins



7. Sara Magenheimer, *7 signs that mean silence* (2013) 11 mins



8. Derek Boshier, *Sometimes I feel like that* (2014) 6 mins

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## ***This Sentence,***

Week 5

Performance 07.11.2015

1 – 6pm

## **Emily Mast, INDEX**

Performed by Gregory Barnett & Davie Blue



On the fifth week of the show we present “sculptures” made of bodies in the space. Emily Mast’s new work, INDEX is a procession, a series of live vignettes, masking themselves as a performance by taking place one day, within the gallery, and mingling with the other objects on display. The bodies, coated in paint, alternate the exercise of becoming inanimate, non-verbal and seemingly immune to time.

The work is deceptive. While delineating its own complicated space between performance and exhibition, the temporary and the durational, it eliminates starts and finishes, challenging performance’s predictable beginning, middle and end. The sculptures Mast creates are culled from a range of her other performances. They are citations of past works, and construct an inexact and unfinished INDEX of her choreographies. They are a glossary of signals, a modular set of tools, like a new alphabet.

Over the course of the day, the work will take place on a loop, bodies sweating, paint fading and with the loss in translation inherent to any repetition. Utilizing different spaces in the galleries, the work smudges the line between the artifice of the carefully staged (i.e. exhibition), and its very human unraveling.

Viewers are invited to come at anytime and stay for as long as they want.

### **Image credits:**

Emily Mast, INDEX (2015),  
performed at the Mona  
Bismarck American Center  
in Paris, France, June 2015.  
Courtesy of Martin Diccio  
and the artist.

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***This Sentence,***  
Week 6

**Ryan Gander, *This Consequence***



**As well as performance & a screening :**

**5pm**

**Babette Mangolte, *Four Pieces by Morris* (1993)**

**6:30pm**

**As Loose As it Were performance staged  
by Ryan Gander**

**7pm**

**Babette Mangolte,  
*Watermotor* (Trisha Brown) (1978);  
Sophia Al Maria,  
*Your Sister* (2014) & *How Can I Resist* (with  
Fatima Al Qadiri) (2012);  
Merce Cunningham & Elliot Caplan,  
*Beach Birds for Camera* (1993);  
Tzion Abraham Hazan,  
*Study of a Man Dancing* (2014);**

By the sixth week of the show, we had not yet spilled blood. “His dancers move like well-assembled collections of body parts, powered by the force of nature or mechanics but without will or desire of their own”, said the critic mistaking the chillingly unemotional, with the inexpressive. This week’s screening is a bit about fetish, a bit about the kind of violence and politics that makes bodies become allegories for the things we want or believe in.

Alongside these seven videos, Ryan Gander’s *This Consequence* is now on display in the exhibition.

And for one night only, we will stage Gander’s “As loose as anything” (a performance), in which a classically trained ballerina is asked to imitate a choreography by watching the video of the last time it was performed. Like a game of telephone, her own calculated movements will be recorded by two cameras, and will become the model for the next iteration of the work.



**Image credit:** (top) Ryan Gander, *This Consequence* (2005) courtesy of the artist; Merce Cunningham & Elliot Caplan *Beach Birds for Camera* (1993), video still. (below) Ryan Gander, *As Loose As it Were*.



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***This Sentence,***  
Screening & Performance  
07.18.2015  
5 - 8pm



1. Babette Mangolte *Four Pieces by Morris* (1993) 90 min



2. Ryan Gander *As Loose As it Were (Performance)* 12 min



3. Babette Mangolte, *Watermotor (Trisha Brown)* (1978) 7 min

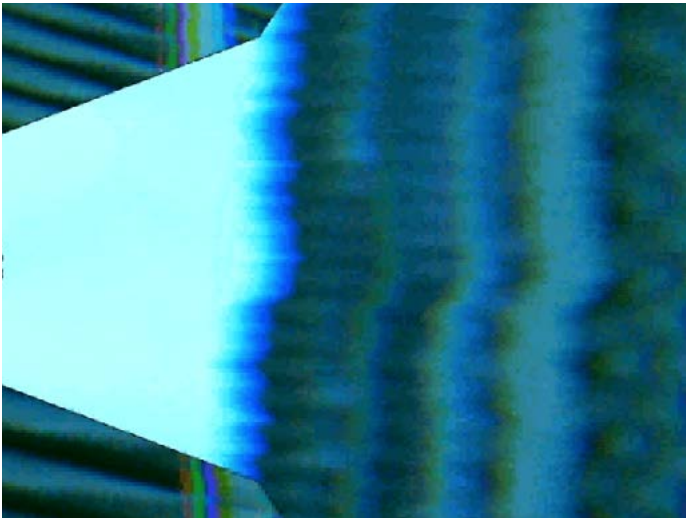


4. Sophia Al Maria *Your Sister* (2014) 3:40 min

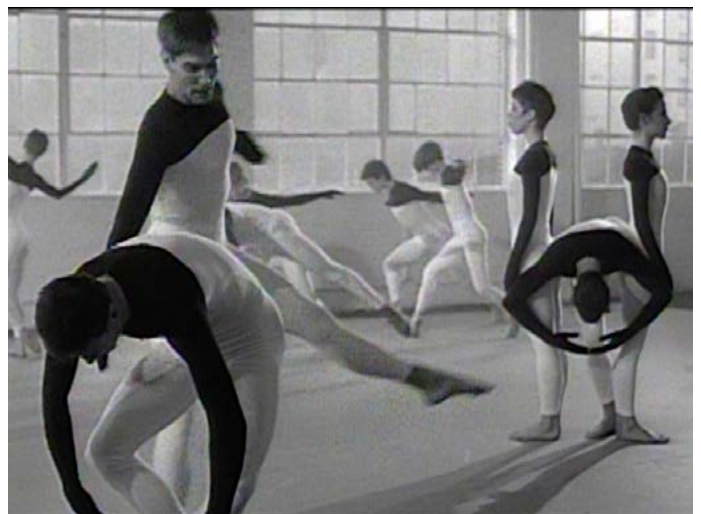
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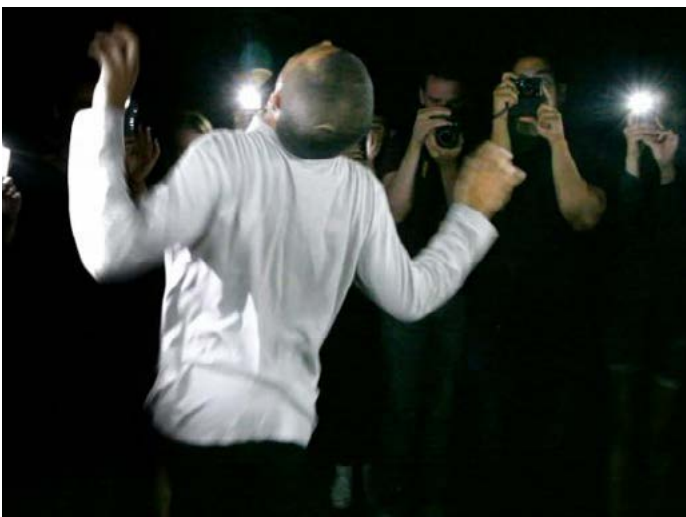
***This Sentence,***  
Screening & Performance  
07.18.2015  
5 - 8pm



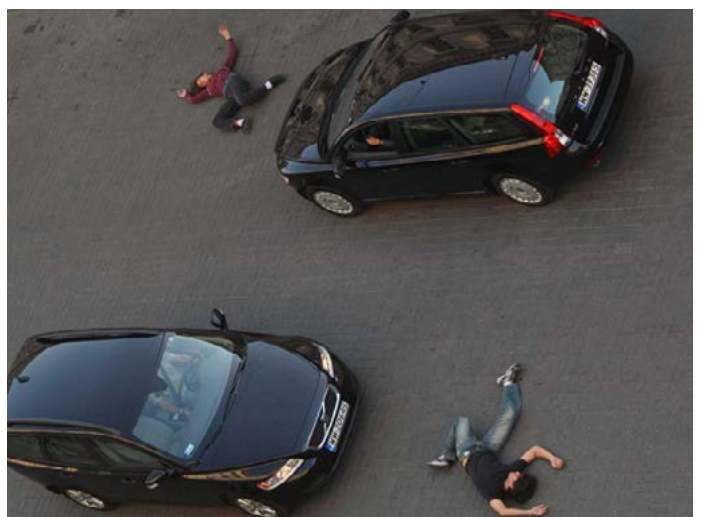
5. Sophia Al Maria *How Can I Resist* (with Fatima Al Qadiri)  
2:30 min



6. Merce Cunningham & Elliot Caplan  
*Beach Birds for Camera* (1993) 30 min



7. Tzion Abraham Hazan *Study of a Man Dancing* (2014) 10 min



8. *Public Movement Accident* (2006) 1:40 min

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**This Sentence,**  
Week 7

**Tamara Henderson, *The Scarecrow's Holiday***



On week seven, Tamara Henderson introduces a new sculpture, a scarecrow, a decoy. A large figure, mid-motion, part-human part-architecture, a totem extending into the exhibition.

Alongside it's entrance, on Saturday July 25th, writer Alexander Keefe will give a public talk on Merce Cunningham company dancer (and Black Mountain College student) Viola Farber, accompanied by screened excerpts of her films and performances. This talk will focus on *Crises*, a tense tangle of a dance, choreographed by Cunningham in 1960 and performed with Farber. In 1961 this piece was translated into film by Helen Priest Rogers, co-founder of the Dance Notation Bureau and a compelling figure important to any discussion of dance on film, as well as the history of attempts at "preserving" dance (via notation, film and photography). Lastly, sometime between 1960 and 1961, Jasper Johns produced a mysterious painting titled *Portrait - Viola Farber*, one which, we might suppose, is his own translation of the physical, emotional and creative knot that Viola Farber found herself at the center of, as a dancer and a witness.

And so, through *Crises* (the dance, the film, the painting), and Farber's story, Keefe's talk will bring up the question of how much of a dance (and a time) can be captured or preserved, if any, and what does it mean to flatten dance onto a screen (or a painting), to steal its temporality?

**Tamara Henderson** is an artist based in Vancouver with recent solo shows at the ICA Philadelphia, the Konsthalle Stavanger in Norway and Rodeo Gallery in London. Later this year, she is will be a participating artist to the Glasgow International in Glasgow, Scotland.

**Alexander Keefe**, a freelance writer based in Claremont CA, writes about art, media, aesthetics and Indology for Bidoun, East of Borneo, ArtForum.com and others. Recent articles include "Lord of the Drone: Pandit Pran Nath and the American Underground" in Bidoun 20, "Whirling in the West" in Bidoun 23, and "Aleph-Null" in Bidoun 27. Keefe studied Sanskrit and Indian studies at Harvard University and was an assistant professor at Ohio University. In 2010 he was the recipient of the Warhol Foundation Art Writers Grant.

Image credit: Merce Cunningham and Viola Farber in a 1970 performance of *Crises* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, photo by James Klosty. Tamara Henderson's *Scarecrow's Holiday* at the beach, photo by Willie Brisco.



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**This Sentence,**

A conversation with Alexander Keefe  
07.25.2015  
6 – 8pm



On Saturday July 25th, writer Alexander Keefe will give a public talk on Merce Cunningham company dancer (and Black Mountain College student) Viola Farber, accompanied by screened excerpts of her films and performances. This talk will focus on *Crises*, a tense tangle of a dance, choreographed by Cunningham in 1960 and performed with Farber. In 1961 this piece was translated into film by Helen Priest Rogers, co-founder of the Dance Notation Bureau and a compelling figure important to any discussion of dance on film, as well as the history of attempts at “preserving” dance (via notation, film and photography). Lastly, sometime between 1960 and 1961, Jasper Johns produced a mysterious painting titled *Portrait - Viola Farber*, one which, we might suppose, is his own translation of the physical, emotional and creative knot that Viola Farber found herself at the center of, as a dancer and a witness.

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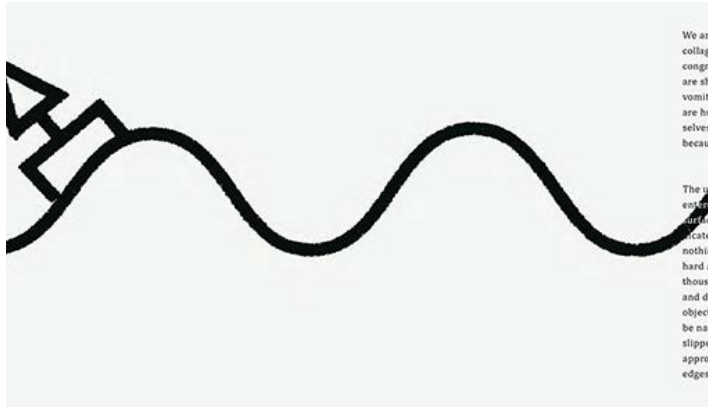
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**Image credit:**

Merce Cunningham and Viola Farber in a 1970 performance of *Crises* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, photo by James Klosty.

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*the tattoo looked like an alphabet.*



&

A screening of, Martine Syms, *A Pilot for a Show About Nowhere* (2015), 25min

As well as a few select reruns, from our summer's program.

On the penultimate week of the show, we introduce an ongoing work by Helen Marten, visible online, on your personal devices, and at your leisure. In her words: "Skin is one surface and of one plane. It is dimensionally intelligent, wraps around us and stops blood from leaking out - like enamel or glaze on a bathtub, it is an encasement, an enclosing, a layer." [...] "But substance is not really substance when we observe it through the screen."

And on the topic of leisure (or leisure-like activities) we choose this week, like a commercial interruption, to think more specifically about the screen's role in this summer's episodic program, the screen itself as a mediator, a record and a witness, contending with the problem of documenting the "pure presence" of live performances or the slippery forms of language.

Martine Syms' recent work is a video in essay-form that thinks about our relationship to television as well as television's role as an unintentional archivist of its time. In her words: *A Pilot for a Show About Nowhere* uses three key moments-the premiere of Mary Tylor Moore in 1970, the primetime schedule of 1988, and Google's acquisition of YouTube in 2006-to explore the privately-felt public imagination. *A Pilot* reveals the sitcom as a comic

***This Sentence,***  
Week 8

**Helen Marten, *Collage vs InLay***



*performance structure with a style and subject matter inextricably linked to the production of identity. It collages text, screencaps, Scandal gifs, and excerpts ranging from Amos 'n' Andy' to Girlfriends, alongside archival footage to tell a story about language, symbol and narrative in American culture.*

We will also be screening reruns from our summer's program, requests welcome...  
We will do our best to accommodate them.

Image credit: Detail from Helen Marten's *Collage vs InLay*;  
Video stills from Martine Syms' *A Pilot for a Show About Nowhere*.

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***This Sentence,***

Screening:

Martine Syms *A Pilot for a Show About Nowhere*

08.02.2015

7pm



COMMERCIAL BREAK

*A Pilot for a Show About Nowhere* uses three key moments-the premiere of Mary Tylor Moore in 1970, the primetime schedule of 1988, and Google's acquisition of YouTube in 2006-to explore the privately-felt public imagination. *A Pilot* reveals the sitcom as a comic performance structure with a style and subject matter inextricably linked to the production of identity. It collages text, screencaps, Scandal gifs, and excerpts ranging from Amos 'n' Andy' to Girlfriends, alongside archival footage to tell a story about language, symbol and narrative in American culture.

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Public Fiction  
at China Art Objects  
June 6 – August 22  
2015

***This Sentence,***  
Week 9

**Pascual Sisto, *Bells and Whistles***



On Saturday August 8th, please join us for the “opening” or the culmination of *This Sentence*, as the final piece, Pascual Sisto’s *Bells and Whistles*, enters the scene. Right before the opening, promptly at 5pm, we will be presenting a preview of Adam Linder’s *Some Riding*, a new choreographic service for hire.

While articulating the different elements of a performance (the choreography, the set, its lights and its resulting screen-image) Pascual Sisto’s contribution is a synchronization of light, video and sound. It is an exercise in scenography that isolates the different elements of an animation or a performance typically used to enhance the main subject. It is the background made foreground. With a \*poof\* of smoke, a splash, a swoosh, Sisto plays on the supporting lines, the transition effects and the in-between space of a stage set.

Image credit: Video stills from Pascual Sisto’s *Bells and Whistles* (2015).

Rehearsal of Adam Linder’s *Some Riding*



Prior to the “opening” reception, from 5-6pm, Adam Linder has been hired to present a one hour preview of *Some Riding* a new choreographic service performed with Frances Chiaverini, with texts by Catherine Damman and Sarah Lehrer-Graiwer. In Linder’s own words: “*The writers [...] have written two texts that individually address choreographic embodiment and an economy of servicing. The dancers [...] will vocally and physically RIDE these texts, generating a contextual understanding from within the embodied productivity.*”



*China Art Objects Galleries*

Public Fiction  
at China Art Objects  
June 6 – August 22  
2015

***This Sentence,***  
Performance  
Adam Linder *Some Riding*  
(a choreographic service for hire)  
  
08.08.2015  
5pm

Prior to the “opening” reception of the exhibition, on Saturday August 8th from 5 to 6pm, **Adam Linder** will present a one hour preview of ***Some Riding*** a new choreographic service performed with **Frances Chiaverini**.

With texts authored by **Catherine Damman** and **Sarah Lehrer-Graiwer**.

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In Linder’s words: *“The writers, Catherine Damman and Sarah Lehrer-Graiwer, have written two texts that individually address choreographic embodiment and an economy of servicing. Dancers, Frances Chiaverini and Adam Linder, vocally and physical RIDE these texts—generating a contextual understanding from within the embodied productivity.”*