

Atlas has been commissioned to produce works for television in Great Britain, France, Spain, Ireland and the United States; these works have been broadcast internationally. Atlas' artworks have been exhibited around the world, at institutions including Centre Pompidou, Paris; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; World Wide Video Festival, The Hague, Netherlands; the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; and Participant, Inc., New York. In 1989, the Museu de Arte de São Paulo and FestRio in Brazil presented a major retrospective of his work. Since then, retrospectives have also been presented at the video gallery Galleriet in Copenhagen, Denmark (1991), which toured to institutions throughout Scandinavia; La Cinémathèque Française, Paris (1992); Tate Modern, London (2006), and Vilma Gold, London (2008). His work was recently included in the 2012 Whitney Biennial. Atlas is the recipient of numerous awards, including a Foundation for Contemporary Arts Biennial John Cage Award, a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, and three Bessie Awards, as well as grants from the Jerome Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts, among others. Atlas lives and works in New York.

About MCT

The Merce Cunningham Trust was established in 2000 to hold and administer the rights to the work of Merce Cunningham, which encompasses more than 150 dances and over 800 "Events" created over the course of his sixty-five year career. In 2002, the Trust was recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation, with the mission to preserve, enhance and maintain the integrity of the choreographic and other artistic works of Merce Cunningham, and make such works available for the benefit of the public.

Based at New York City Center as of April, 2012, the Trust today offers a wide range of programs conceived to preserve and enhance Cunningham's legacy, including Cunningham Technique™ classes at locations throughout New York City and the Cunningham Fellowship, which supports the restaging of Cunningham dances. The Trust also licenses Cunningham works to leading dance companies and educational institutions worldwide, supports scholarship on Cunningham and his work, and partners with cultural institutions to mount special exhibitions, performances, and projects that celebrate Cunningham's artistic achievements.

www.mercecunningham.org

About EAI

Founded in 1971, Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI) is one of the world's leading nonprofit resources for video art. A pioneering advocate for media art and artists, EAI fosters the creation, exhibition, distribution, and preservation of video art and digital art. EAI's core program is the distribution and preservation of a major collection of over 3,500 new and historical media works by artists. EAI's activities include viewing access, educational services, extensive online resources, and public programs such as artists' talks, exhibitions and panels. The Online Catalogue is a comprehensive resource on the artists and works in the EAI collection, and also features extensive materials on exhibiting, collecting and preserving media art: www.eai.org

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CHARLES ATLAS + MERCE CUNNINGHAM EXCHANGE

Premiere Screening + Artist Talk



February 7, 2013

ELECTRONIC ARTS INTERMIX



CHARLES ATLAS + MERCE CUNNINGHAM: EXCHANGE

Premiere Screening + Artist Talk

PROGRAM

Nevada

Charles Atlas

1973, 2:52 min, b&w, silent

More Joints

Charles Atlas

1972, 2:48 min, color, silent

Exchange

Merce Cunningham, Charles Atlas

1978/2013, 40:19 min, color, sound

This program is presented in collaboration with the Merce Cunningham Trust.

EAI proudly presents the premiere screening of *Exchange*, artist Charles Atlas' newly completed film based on the 1978 dance piece of the same name by legendary dancer/choreographer Merce Cunningham (1919-2009). Atlas—one of the foremost interpreters of dance, theater and performance on video and film—created the new film *Exchange* from never-before-seen footage that he shot in 1978 and that was only recently rediscovered by the Merce Cunningham Trust (MCT). The film captures a performance of *Exchange* by Cunningham and his company, with costumes and backdrop designed by Jasper Johns and music by David Tudor.

Two of Atlas' earliest short films will precede *Exchange: More Joints* (1972), featuring Cunningham's ankle in a starring role; and *Nevada* (1973), in which dancer and choreographer Douglas Dunn performs. Atlas will introduce the screening and speak about his long collaborative relationship with Cunningham.

Atlas' 2013 film *Exchange* completes a collaboration between the two artists, who worked together closely for over four decades. Atlas began working with Cunningham in 1971, eventually becoming the Merce Cunningham Dance Company's (MCDC) filmmaker-in-residence from 1974 to 1983. Later, as an independent artist, Atlas worked on projects for Cunningham from 1999 until Cunningham's death in 2009.

Cunningham's *Exchange* is divided into three parts. One half of the company appears in the first part, the other half appears in the second, and the entire company dances in the third. Cunningham alone dances in the entire work. Cunningham used chance operations to create the order of movements for each section, and again to decide what movements would reoccur in the second and third sections. Whenever a series of movements were repeated, they would occur in a different context, in a different space and time, with different dancers. Cunningham himself remarked, "I've often been struck by the idea of recurrence, ideas, movements, inflections coming back in different guises, never the same; it's always a new space and a changed moment in time. So I decided to use it in *Exchange*."

Jasper Johns, another long-time collaborator of Cunningham's and the MCDC's former artistic advisor from 1967-1980, designed the moody set and striking costumes for *Exchange*. Johns clothed the company in a range of pollution inspired colors, all mixed

and juxtaposed with grays, a palette intended to convey in his own word "smoldering coals, covered by ash." The electronic soundtrack is by David Tudor.

The footage that comprises Atlas' film was shot at a special session on October 21, 1978 at Zellerbach Hall, University of California Berkeley, less than a month after its September 1978 premiere in New York City.

Cunningham's early interest in video is an often-overlooked cornerstone in his career. In the 1960s, the choreographer worked with several experimental filmmakers to integrate their work into his dance performances. In the 1970s, Cunningham invited Atlas to collaborate on investigating ways to combine video and dance. The choreographer intentionally entwined dance with video, creating pieces for the camera.

EAI is honored to be working with the MCT to announce the distribution of selected films and videos featuring Cunningham's work, for exhibition and educational use. For more information, please visit www.eai.org.

Mercier Philip Cunningham was a leader of the American avant-garde throughout his seventy-year career and is considered one of the most important choreographers of our time. With an artistic career distinguished by constant experimentation and collaboration with groundbreaking artists from every discipline, Cunningham expanded the frontiers of dance and contemporary visual and performing arts. Cunningham's lifelong passion for innovation also made him a pioneer in applying new technologies to the arts.

Born in Centralia, Washington on April 16, 1919, Cunningham began his professional dance career at 20 with a six-year tenure as a soloist in the Martha Graham Dance Company. In 1944 he presented his first solo show and in 1953 formed the Merce Cunningham Dance Company as a forum to explore his groundbreaking ideas. Together with John Cage, his partner in life and work, Cunningham proposed a number of radical innovations, chief among them that dance and music may occur in the same time and space, but should be created independently of one another. They also made extensive use of chance procedures, abandoning musical forms, narrative, and other conventional elements of dance composition. For Cunningham the subject of his dances was always dance itself.

An active choreographer and mentor to the arts world throughout his life, Cunningham earned some of the highest honors bestowed in the arts, including the National Medal of Arts (1990), the MacArthur Fellowship (1985), Japan's Praemium Imperiale (2005), and the British Laurence Olivier Award (1985). Always forward-thinking, Cunningham established the Merce Cunningham Trust in 2000 and developed the precedent-setting Legacy Plan prior to his death, to ensure the preservation of his artistic legacy.

For more information about the works of Merce Cunningham, please visit: www.mercecunningham.org

Charles Atlas was born in St. Louis, Missouri in 1949. Atlas, a pioneer in the development of media-dance, has worked in film, video, installation, theater and performance for four decades, creating works for screen, stage, gallery, and television. In a series of iconic video works, Atlas has created an original new form, a provocative and ironic collusion of the narrative and fictional modes with performance documentary. Collaboration is a major aspect of Atlas' expansive practice. He has collaborated with important figures from the worlds of dance, art, performance, music and theater, including Michael Clark, Leigh Bowery, Antony Hegarty, Yvonne Rainer, John Kelly, Marina Abramovic, Karole Armitage, Fennesz, New Humans (Mika Tajima and Howie Chen), and Bill Irwin. His groundbreaking early works, including the seminal *Blue Studio: Five Segments* (1975-76), evolved from a unique collaboration with Merce Cunningham. In 2011, he completed a feature-length documentary film on his collaborative performance with Antony Hegarty, *Turning*.