

YVONNE RAINERBiography

I was born in San Francisco in 1934. In 1956 I came to New York to study acting. Serious involvement in dance and choreography ensued when I started studying with Martha Graham and subsequently with Merce Cunningham. Also studied ballet with Mia Slavenska, James Waring, Peter Seil, and others, and composition with Robert Dunn and Ann Halprin. Began choreographing my own work in 1961. In 1962 Steve Paxton and I formed the workshop that spawned the Judson Dance Theater, a generative force behind the modern and "post-modern" dance activity in America in the 60's. In 1970 I helped form the Grand Union, a co-operative New York-based performing group.

My choreographic works have been seen throughout the United States and in many European cities. They have made use of large numbers of people - both skilled and inexperienced in dance techniques - and incorporated speech, objects, film, slides, and elaborate choreography to music. By 1972 my growing interest in film resulted in a 16mm feature-length narrative film entitled "Lives of Performers," which I wrote and directed. In recent work I have continued to explore the relationship of language and image. Film and slides play an increasingly important role in my performances as a necessary visual and fictional dimension. -Y.R.

Major performance works and places of initial presentation:

1963	We Shall Run)	Judson Memorial Church, NYC
	Terrain)	
	Room Service)	
1965	Parts of Some Sextets	Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Conn.
1966	Carriage Discreteness	Nine Evenings - Theater and Engineering, 69th Reg. Armory, NYC
1968	The Mind is a Muscle	Anderson Theater, NYC
	Untitled Work for 40 People	New York University
	North East Passing	Goddard College, Vermont
1969	Rose Fractions	Billy Rose Theater, NYC
	Performance Fractions for the West Coast	Music Conservatory, Los Angeles, Vancouver Art Gallery, Mills College
	Connecticut Composite	Connecticut College
1970	Continuous Project-Altered Daily WAR	Whitney Museum of American Art
		Douglass College, Smithsonian Institute, New York University
1971	Grand Union Dreams	Emanuel Midtown YMAA, NYC
1972	In the College	Oberlin College, Ohio
	"Performance"	Hofstra University, Whitney Museum
1973	This is the story of a woman who...	Theater for the New City, NYC

Films and film-centered performances:

		Camera:	
1967	Volleyball	Bud Wirschafter	Anderson Theater, NYC
	16mm, b/w, 10 minutes		
1968	Hand Movie	William Davis	Brandeis University
	8mm, b/w, 5 minutes		
	Trio Film	Phill Niblock	Billy Rose Theater, NYC
	16mm, b/w, 13 minutes		
	Rhode Island Red	Roy Levin	Billy Rose Theater
1969	Line	Phill Niblock	Paula Cooper Gallery, NYC
	16mm, b/w, 10 minutes		
1972	Lives of Performers	Babette Mangolte	"New Forms in Film", Guggenheim Museum, NYC
	16mm, b/w, sound, 90 minutes		

- 1974 Performance around a Babette Mangolte
film about a woman who...
16mm, b/w, with simultaneous 35mm
slides, sound, 120 minutes
- "Recent American Art",
National Gallery of
Victoria, Melbourne

Performances and screenings outside the United States:

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| 1964 | program for two performers
(Y.R. and Robert Morris) | Moderna Museet, Stockholm;
Kunstakademie, Dusseldorf |
| 1965 | same | Moderna Museet; University of Lund;
Odd-Fellow Palace, Copenhagen. |
| | Solo Concert | Commonwealth Institute, London. |
| 1967 | program for two performers
(Y.R. and William Davis) | Festival of Two Worlds, Sesto. |
| 1969 | program of films and one performer
(Steve Paxton) | Festival of Music and Dance, Rome |
| 1972 | program for two performers
(Y.R. and Phil Glass) | } Festival of Music and Dance, Rome |
| | Lives of Performers (film) | |
| | program for two performers
(Y.R. and John Erdman) | } Festival D'Automne a Paris |
| | Lives of Performers | |
| 1973 | Lives of Performers | Nova Scotia College of Art and Design
Projections Gallery, Dusseldorf
Festival of Avant-Garde Film, London |
| 1974 | This is the story of a woman who...
Performance around a film about a
woman who... | Contemporanea, Rome |
| | Lives of Performers | Recent American Art, Melbourne
Projects '74, Cologne
New Forms in Film, Montreux, Switz-
erland |

Awards and Grants:

- 1967 Harper's Bazaar "Woman of Accomplishment"
1968 Ingram-Merrill Fellowship, Lena Robbins Foundation grant
1969 John Simon Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship
1971 Experiments in Art and Technology grant for travel in India
National Endowment on the Arts grant
Ingram-Merrill Fellowship, Lena Robbins Foundation grant
1973 Creative Artist Public Service grant
1974 American Theater Laboratory grant
National Endowment on the Arts

Teaching: New School for Social Research, Goddard College, Connecticut
College, George Washington University, Vancouver Art Gallery,
School of Visual Arts, University of California-Fresno, Nova
Scotia College of Art and Design, Resources Center of the Whitney
Museum of American Art.

"There is a bit of insanity in dancing that does everybody a great deal of good."

Edwin Denby
Dancers, Buildings, People
in the Streets
New York, 1965

"The Performers have abandoned the rehearsal of their private dramas. They are part of another fiction, and we sense from the trajectory of glances and tension of bodies, the sudden changes of costume accessories, the extremely artificial studio lighting, that, in fact, they constitute another fictional world in which the impulses of cruelty, guilt, and violence are played out in an entirely different register of intensity."

Annette Michelson
Artforum, February 1974

1. Reacting to that "insanity", or the illusion of a weightless transcendent physical presence, I explored, with presumed rationality, a more elemental existence before the audience. Running. Spontaneous laughter. Watching a colleague perform. What performers do. What people do. The credulity of the spectator was a central "problem", which, once established, could sustain flights of fancy and, eventually, a return to illusion via film.

2. The whole body in a field delineated by the eye of the viewer is replaced by a head, a nose, a hand, a person in a field particularized and delimited by the eye of the camera. This potential for greater intimacy with, and control of, physical presence makes possible another shift in focus: the body merges with fictionalized character. Furthermore, filmic devices - such as intertitle and voice-over; slow-motion and close-up; the play between moving and stillness, between the camera and subject - offer a "permission" to investigate metaphor, cliché, and transition, as well as specific emotional incident. These have become increasingly difficult to deal with - at least for me - in live presentations. There is a bit of insanity in the movies that I now find liberating.

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