Dancers: New Work by Borbála Kováts

Dance in California: 150 Years of Innovation

January 13—February 23, 2003

Hungrigian collage artist Borbála Kováts explores dance through computer-generated images and imagery alongside San Francisco Performing Arts Library & Museum (SFPALM) photo history of California Dance.

Please join us Thursday, February 20, from 4 to 5 p.m. for the Closing Reception featuring an improvisational dance performance by the USF Dance Program at 4 p.m.

Co-sponsored by SFPALM, USF's Visual and Performing Arts Department and Budapest, Hungary Cultural Immersion Program.

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Following studies in fine arts and experimentation with traditional graphic arts, I first turned to photography and then to digital techniques. In recent years, I have engaged in creating computer prints and have found that digital techniques are suitable for more than interpreting and perfecting photographic images of everyday life. I now use the computer to search for a language of representation that is unique to the digital medium. In my work I use photographic images, scanned material, or my own drawings, I create new images and shapes using the computer, so that the original image loses its meaning. Magnified fragments of the original images help to change the composition, providing that the final result is not noticeably different from the original. The images are also manipulated using digital programs, which create a virtual space, surcice to discover the boundaries existing reality from its illusion and virtual existence.

In the Danse Series, I was interested in movement as perceived in reality and art, creating non-figurative surfaces full of shapes representing movement. I transformed the silhouettes of the original figures into new shapes on a basis of the four limits, and their movements became less realistic. In the virtual space, unattainable poses would have reduced the graphic surfaces to ornamented motifs. However, my intention was to equalise the rules of the real form and the digital graphic medium to constant repetition and movement with our own visual perceptions.

The urge to examine contrasts even while I unify the various materials is my reaction to the particularities of our world. Today, people have access to such a wealth of information—from events and phenomena to personal perspectives—that it is difficult to sort through all of the information and select among those messages that are personally important. As we strive to integrate the information into our awareness and conduct, computer technology can be a great facilitator.

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The West has always been a region of expansion and cultural innovation in America, and this is particularly true for the art of dance. Here, on the edge of the Pacific, many of the nation's greatest dance iconoclasts crossed thresholds that are personally important. As we strive to integrate the information into our awareness and conduct, computer technology can be a great facilitator.

California is the birthplace of the matriarch of modern dance, Isadora Duncan, and home to the oldest ballet company in America. Many of the nation's leading dancers, choreographers and teachers view California's cultural climate and geography as the source of their inspiration. This exhibition, Dance in California: 150 Years of Innovation, samples the historical and artistic breadth of the state's dance world. It tells the story of a century and a half of dance in California, a story defined by the artists, organizations and institutions that are central to the development of dance in America.

The exhibition begins in the mid-nineteenth century when the raucous milieu of San Francisco became home to the boisterous theatrical personality of Lola Montez. At the fin de siècle, a fascination with Greek culture captivated the public rituals on her dance deck in Marin County. In addition, Halprin was one of the twentieth century. During the 1960s, Anna Halprin created and performed the San Francisco Lesbian and Gay Dance Festival, the nation's first, was started in 1997. While many dancers and choreographers have used dance as a focal point. All of the images, unless otherwise noted, are reproduced from photographs and documents from the collection of the San Francisco Performing Arts Library & Museum.