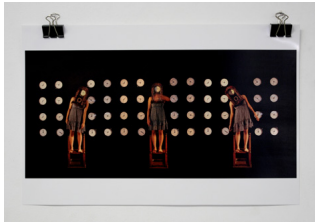


Local Students 'Imagine Dance' at SMOCA

Written by Written by David M. Brown

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Valley high school students are participating in *Imagining Dance*, an exhibition organized by the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art's young@art gallery.



Gretta Wallace
Untitled, 2010
archival ink jet print
11" x 16"

The visual-art students from the Metropolitan Arts Institute, 1700 N. 7th Ave., in Phoenix, worked with the school's dance students to create artworks celebrating the elegance of modern dance. The show takes place, through May 1, at the Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts, adjacent to SMOCA on the Scottsdale Mall.

Metropolitan Arts Institute is a college prep performing and visual arts charter high school. Its teachers are also working artists and collaborated with the students and SMOCA staff to produce the exhibition.

The young artists' exhibition, which opened Feb. 3, coordinates with a variety of ongoing programs at SMOCA and SCPA, including *Dance with Camera*, through May 1 at SMOCA, the final appearance of the legendary Merce Cunningham Dance Company and other events and presentations at both Scottsdale Civic Center Mall venues.

Opened Jan. 15, *Dance with Camera* is an exhibition and screening program exploring the relationship between artists and dancers who make choreography for the camera and illuminating how video and still cameras changed our experience of dance.

Screenings range from Busby Berkeley's Hollywood musicals to Maya Deren's avant-garde films, featuring works by artists such as Bruce Conner, Bruce Nauman, Eleanor Antin as well as Charles Atlas' collaborations with Merce Cunningham. Initiated by the Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania, the traveling exhibition is curated by Jenelle Porter, with Claire Carter the implementing SMOCA curator.

"*Imagining Dance* is thematically related to both *Dance with Camera* and our other programs at the museum and the arts center," says Laura Hales, associate curator of education at SMOCA who also curates all young@art gallery exhibitions. In an award-winning building designed by the Phoenix architect Will Bruder, SMOCA showcases the work of significant contemporary artists, local, national and international.

"The students' work in *Imagining Dance* suggest to me that they were very comfortable working with this theme," Hales adds. "Much of it shows humor. It is easy to see when teens are grappling to make sense of something: The work looks angst-y, dark, emotional. This work looks light, humorous and inventive. I think working with dance as a subject was a good fit, met their interests and really did inspire them."



Matt Rutt
Leaping Lotus, 2010
relief print
6 3/4" x 8 1/4"

She notes as examples Sydney Kaye's relief print, *Pachydermis Epidermis*, Matt Rutt's *Leaping Lotus*, also a relief print, and Gretta Wallace's *Untitled* archival ink jet print. Other mediums the students provided to SMOCA include drawings, charcoals, paints, pen and inks and linoleum block prints, video, photography and sculpture.

and all young@art gallery presentations, are created by children as part of the SMOCA education program, Hales explains. The program has continued for 21 years, although not always at the same location. "Its mission is to showcase, celebrate and inspire the artwork of youth and also promotes strong youth art-education programs around the Valley."

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In conjunction with *Dance with Camera* and *Imagining Dance*, other events at the facilities have included a recital by Metro dance students, Feb. 11, who performed two pieces choreographed for a gallery setting: "5x5" and "Combined in Color"; *A Dancer's Perspective*, Feb 24, with dancer Clare Keane Banchs reminiscing on performing works of great modern choreographers; a Gallery Talk, Mar 10, with Curator Jenelle Porter discussing *Dance With Camera* and Tacita Dean's film, *Merce*; and, also March 10, the final Valley appearance of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, which performed *Event* (2010) with choreography by Cunningham, décor by Robert Rauschenberg and music composed and performed by John King and Takehisa Kosugi. With Cunningham's death in 2009, the troupe disbands at the end of this year.

On April 14, 7 p.m., at the Stage 2 Theater, SMOCA will screen three films: *Beehive* (1985), a cult dance classic which *The New York Times* described as a "giddily delightful short film," directed by Frank Moore and Jim Self, choreographed by Self, with cinematography by Barry Shils; Peter Glushanok's *Martha Graham: A Dancer's World* (1957), with the 20th-century performer, choreographer and teacher discussing dance and members of her famous troupe displaying a number of techniques in performance; and Natalie Bookchin's *Mass Ornament* (2009), which presents hundreds of clips from YouTube of anonymous individuals dancing alone in their rooms, recalling popular films of the 1930s and 40s which presented many people in choreographed movement.

In helping coordinate activities at SMOCA and SCPA, Hales contacted Metro Arts last spring to talk about the concept of *Imagining Dance*. "I wanted the dance students to work closely with the visual arts students to inspire work relating to dance," she recalls, noting that she also met with the faculty who would participate.



Sydney Kaye
Pachydermis Epidermis, 2010
relief print
6" x 9 1/2"

These instructor/artists included Sue Chenoweth, painting, drawing and mixed-media instructor, Koryn Woodward Wasson, arts department head; Nicole Olson, director of dance; and Dana Buhl, a photography instructor, who interned at the SMOCA curatorial department for the recent *At the Crossroads of American Photography: Callahan, Siskind, Sommer* photography exhibition.

"Because Metro has so many visual arts classes, we received a good variety of possible entries," Buhl says, noting that she saw much of the work in progress at Metro Arts. These were juried at the school as well as by Hales at SMOCA.

Olson coordinated not only the dance performances at SMOCA but also ensured that the art and dance students worked with each other for mutual inspiration. "The visual and film art was to all be based on how dance inspired and helped create the images for their work," she says.

The Metro dance program, she explains, is structured for college prep. "If a student finishes our entire program, he or she is prepared for a college dance program," explains Olson, who performs in the Valley with Scorpius Dance Theatre and the Phoenix Opera. Metro offers its students opportunities to choreograph and perform in many venues in addition to SMOCA: the Herberger Theatre, Celebration of Dance and SCPA, among others, she adds.

Metro Arts is pleased with the outcomes both at the school and at SMOCA: "We feel lucky to see both our visual and performing artists working so closely together to understand each other and challenge each other's concepts of art making," Buhl says.

Adds Hales: "This exhibition showcases the exuberant energy and passion of Metro Arts students. I have been impressed to see their creative processes take shape over this year. The dancers worked in original ways with the visual artists and vice versa — and the end result is a show that beautifully captures the dynamics of dance."

For more information about the two exhibitions and related programs visit www.SMOCA.org.