

Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media : Exhibition

Steve Paxton “Phantom Exhibition”

[Video Installation + Dance Demonstration + Lecture + Talk + Gallery Tour + Film/Document displays]

May 24 (Sun) – August 31 (Mon), 2009 10:00–19:00

Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media / Studio B, Gallery 2F, Foyer Admission Free



A leading figure in American post-modern dance, dancer/choreographer Steve Paxton is visiting Japan for the first time in 34 years.

Steve Paxton has been integrating Aikido, Yoga, Vipassana meditation, and other Asian body techniques into dance. This exhibition introduces his understanding of the body, and his works based on that. At YCAM, Steve Paxton presents a new video installation, centered around which a variety of events including demonstrations by the artist himself, and lectures with invited experts, take place as a comprehensive introduction to Paxton's body philosophy. Through the experience of a video installation and other events explaining Paxton's methods and original artistic work, which keep influencing the current dance scene, this exhibition introduces Paxton's work from the contexts of social and historical circumstances in the 1960s, and looks at the present form of the new physical and spatial qualities discovered through media-based artistic expression.



Discover new physical sensations by abandoning yourself to a space completely filled with images

Steve Paxton liberated the body from conventional forms of ballet and dance, in order to carve out his own original dance style. In the 1970s, he advocated “contact improvisation” (*) as a new dance concept that would ultimately be introduced to the realm of contemporary dance as a groundbreaking new technique. This exhibition marks the first occasion in Japan to show a new video installation based on the “Material for the Spine” system that Paxton has been developing since 1986. Five large screens surrounding the exhibition space show images of Paxton and other performers moving according to that method, as well as dance moves simulated with computer graphics, along with poetically rhythmical explanatory narration. Within this overwhelming visual setting, the visitor perceives with all his senses the relationship between the human body and gravity.

■ Press preview May 23 (Sat) 15:30–

Official website: <http://phantomexhibition.ycam.jp/>

Organizer: Yamaguchi City Foundation for Cultural Promotion
 Support: Yamaguchi City, Yamaguchi City Board of Education
 Co-organizer: DANCE DOCUMENTS JAPAN COMMITTEE (DDJC)
 Co-sponsor: Japan-United States Friendship Commission,
 Asian Cultural Council, The Saison Foundation
 Produced by Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media [YCAM]
 Technical support: YCAM InterLab
 Curator: Kazunao Abe (YCAM)
 Design direction: Shun Kawakami (artless)

(*) Contact improvisation is a form of dance improvisation based on movement triggered by contact with other performers. It is a dance and communication method that enables the performer to experience new forms of movement beyond existing dance patterns, by entrusting his body to the generated energy.

INQUIRY

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山口情報芸術センター
 Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media

Steve Paxton

“Phantom Exhibition”

Introducing Paxton’s body philosophy reinterpreting the frameworks of various physical sensation and action in a fusion of contemporary dance and art.

Video Installation

“Phantom Exhibition”

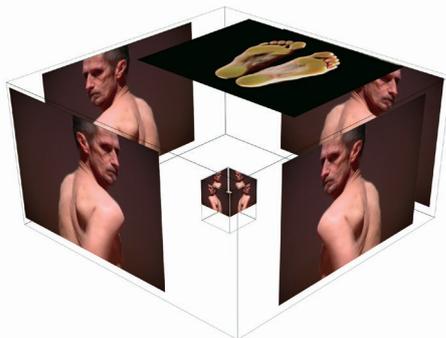
Steve Paxton, Florence Corin + Baptiste Andrien (Contredanse)

Originally produced by Contredanse with coproduction of Bozar Dance, Charleroi/danses, with the help of WBL.

Sound environment: Philippe Jelli

Steve Paxton has been developing “Material for the Spine”(*) as a method for exploring the center of the body since 1986. The installation consists of five large screens showing video footage of Paxton and other performers who move their bodies based on this system, as well as computer-generated images analyzing those dance moves. Within a space that is entirely surrounded by images, visitors will encounter a new form of physical sensation by perceiving with all their senses the relationship between the human body and gravity, the body’s interior and exterior, and the structure of its bones. The work was created by Paxton together with two Belgian video artists, and will be reproduced in a high-quality spatial installation as it can only be realized with the help of YCAM’s own studio equipment and technology. Unveiled in Belgium this April, the talked-about piece is now staged at YCAM (and nowhere else in Japan).

(*)“MATERIAL FOR THE SPINE, a movement study.” Steve Paxton. Contredanse Editions. Brussels 2008. DVD-ROM (PC-MAC) 240 min. English original version, English and French subtitles. www.contredanse.org



Phantom Exhibition,
Steve Paxton with Florence Corin and Baptiste Andrien (Contredanse).
Photo: Contredanse (Florence Corin and Baptiste Andrien)



Dance Demonstration

May 24 (Sun) 13:00–14:30 (the venue opens 30min before)

Venue: Studio B

Performance: Steve Paxton

This is one particularly noteworthy event held as part of this time’s exhibition. The artist himself gives a dance demonstration in the same exhibition space where the “Phantom Exhibition” is on view, so visitors will have the unique opportunity to witness how Paxton’s flesh-and-blood movement overlap with those on the screens.

Admission: ¥1,000 [Capacity: 70] (Day ticket only)

*Tickets will be available from 10:00 am on the day of the performance

*On the day of the event, the “Phantom Exhibition” will be open to the general public from 15:00.

Lecture + Talk

May 24 (Sun) 15:00–17:00

Venue: Foyer

Guest: Steve Paxton, Fujiko Nakaya (Artist)

Lecturer/moderator: Kikuko Toyama

(Professor for Aesthetics at Saitama University)

This event discusses Steve Paxton’s activities and their meaning against the social backdrop of the genre-straddling experimental endeavors in art, dance, music in the America of the 1950s-60s. The lecture will touch upon Blackmountain College, inter-media, and other important keywords in the current art and contemporary dance scenes, and will be followed by a talk session with the artist himself.

Admission Free *English/Japanese Interpretation

Material for the Spine

Steve Paxton

Dancer / Choreographer (Born 1939 in Phoenix, Arizona). He has researched the fiction of cultured dance and the 'truth' of improvisation for 40 years. He lives on a farm, and he has received grants from Change, Inc., the Foundation for Performance Arts, John D. Rockefeller Fund, and a Guggenheim Fellowship. He has been awarded two NY Bessie Awards, and is a contributing editor to "Contact Quarterly" dance journal. He was one of the founders of the Judson Dance Theater, Grand Union, Contact Improvisation, Touchdown Dance for the visually disabled (UK), and began his career studying modern dance techniques, ballet, Aikido, Tai Chi Chuan, and Vipassana meditation. He performed with the Merce Cunningham Dance Co. from 1961-65. He lectures, performs, choreographs and teaches primarily in the USA and Europe. Recently he collaborated Mikhail Baryshnikov, Trisha Brown, Lisa Nelson and etc. In 2008 he published a DVD-ROM "Material for the Spine" and book with Contredanse in Brussels.

Begun in 1986, it is a simple dancing system based in sensation and evolved self-imagery for the skeletal elements of head, spine and pelvis.

In other words, an exploration of the center of the body. The Material is abstracted from Contact Improvisation, which will be used in the class to some extent, but Material is more technical and meditative, with emphasis on breathing and precise exercises done solo.

Connections may be noticed to extant dance techniques, and their mostly unstated use of the pelvis. Material for the Spine cannot avoid the rest of the body: so far it has extended to the hip sockets and thighs, the shoulder blades and arms.

(2007/08 by Paxton)



Gallery Tour

June 7 (Sun), 14 (Sun), 27 (Sat), 28 (Sun)
July 5 (Sun), 11 (Sat), 18 (Sat), 25 (Sat), 26 (Sun)
August 1 (Sat), 2 (Sun)
14:00-15:00
August 29 (Sat), 30 (Sun)
11:00-12:00

This event aims to communicate the theme of this exhibition along with basic knowledge about contemporary dance. Through the experience of both lecture and displays, participants will discover together with YCAM's expert staff the central, most attractive features of the exhibition.

Admission Free

*Application: Please visit YCAM 1F Ticket Information 30 minutes before the gallery tour

Film and Document Displays

Venue: Foyer, Gallery 2F

Steve Paxton's work, as well as his "Material for the Spine" system of body movement, will be explained in visual documents. The program combines excerpts from his latest DVD-ROM, released in 2008, and video footage from the 1970s, to trace the history of Paxton's achievements.

Admission Free

Cooperation: Contredanse/Videoda

*This event is part of the "Touch, Contact, Bones Steve Paxton + Lisa Nelson Dance Project 2009.4.26 - 8.31" series co-hosted by art-related organizations and facilities across Japan.

Organizer: DANCE DOCUMENTS JAPAN COMMITTEE (DDJC)

Co-organizer: Hot Summer in KYOTO, Graduate School of Film and New Media, Tokyo University of the Arts,

Wacoal Art Center, The Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum, Global COE Programme,

Dance Research Course, Waseda University, Kinki University International Center for Human Science,

Yamaguchi City Foundation for Cultural Promotion

Cooperation: Aomori Public College Aomori Contemporary Art Centre AIR Committee (tentative), Contredanse, Videoda

Sponsor: Japan-United States Friendship Commission, Asian Cultural Council, The Saison Foundation

At the occasion of the Steve Paxton exhibition, YCAM hosts a special exhibition introducing the works of three up-and-coming artists as a further step in the Center's exploration of "art, media and physical expression." The "own body" and the "image of the body" have been rediscovered and exhaustively featured in media-based works of art. While focusing on the double quality of the body – the "Body as Interimage" – the event explores the possibilities and relationships between media technology and the human body today.

Works in the exhibition



scopic measure #09

newClear + Alessio Silvestrin

"skinslides" (new installation work) [commissioned by YCAM]

Sound: Otomo Yoshihide Programming: Satoshi Hama (YCAM InterLab) Technical support: YCAM InterLab

Venue: Foyer

Conceived as an "interface for a permanent preservation of the dancer's movements," this video dance piece is based on the novel idea of producing images and sound first, and subsequently programming a data-choreography out of the single elements. Three displays are embedded in the venue's floor, while sensors detect the visitor's movements. The displays show vivid projections of the contact points with the floor of an improvising dancer, and by moving around in the exhibition space, the visitor adds an element of chance to the generated sequences of footage on the displays. The soundtrack is composed of the sounds of the body movements and of their contacts with the floor, and music performed by Otomo Yoshihide based on footage of body movement.

newClear

A group of artists around video artist and system designer Richi Owaki, who produce works involving a variety of creators including musicians, dancers and architects, depending on the respective project. In 2004, the group unveiled "Crackers #1-#3", a series of video pieces exploring the theme "fissures in spaces" from three different perspectives. One of them, "Crackers #2" was conceived and realized as a video dance piece featuring Alessio Silvestrin and other dancers. <http://newclear.jp/>

Alessio Silvestrin

Graduated from Académie de Dance Classique Princesse Grace in Monte-Carlo and studied at the Ecole Atelier Rudra Béjart in Lausanne as well. Studied at the Music Conservatory "A. Pedrollo" in Vicenza and at the Académie de Musique Prince Ranier III in Monte-Carlo. Danced and worked as choreographer with Béjart Ballet Lausanne directed by Maurice Béjart, Ballet de l'Opéra National de Lyon directed by Yourgos Loukos and with Ballet Frankfurt directed by William Forsythe. He works as guest dancer, choreographer and associated artist of The Forsythe Company. <http://www.alessiosilvestrin.com/>



scopic measure #10

Shinichi Takashima

"Pascal pass scale" (new installation work)

Venue: Gallery 2F

This new video piece was specially created for this exhibition out of four separate elements. Compared to Takashima's previous works, it marks an enhanced change in terms of filmed subjects, which now include also occurrences that aren't directly visible, such as the motion of air and wind, as well as optical phenomena. The intention behind this is to direct the viewer's senses toward the physical existence behind the camera.

Shinichi Takashima

Artist. Born 1978 in Tokyo. Graduated from the Department of Painting, Musashino Art University in 2002, and finished the B semi Learning System of Contemporary Art in 2004. Creates video installations and does performances. Received a Maestro Guant (Yotsuya Art Studium Competition) in 2008. A researcher at Kinki University, International Center For Human Sciences.

"One foot on the moon part 4"
2005 Video installation

Screening



Video Dance

Saburo Teshigawara

"Friction of Time - perspective Study vol.2" (2008)

Co-produced by KARAS, YCAM

Venue: Gallery 2F

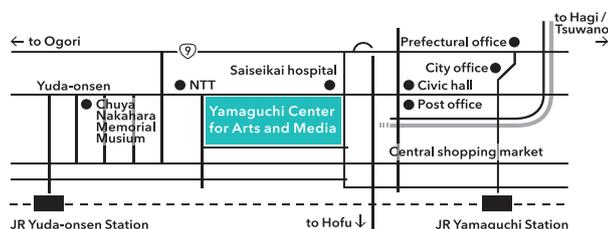
Saburo Teshigawara, a world-renowned dancer and plastic artist who has also been involved with filmic art since the 1990s, produced a video piece in collaboration with the YCAM InterLab staff. Recorded with high-speed cameras as used in sports engineering, car safety experiments and space exploration among others, the artists produced a dance video that focuses on the human body from a new perspective, capturing in a beautiful way and down to the subtle motion of the muscles the movements of Teshigawara's dance.

Saburo Teshigawara

Began his unique creative career in 1981 in his native Tokyo after studying plastic arts and classic ballet. In 1985, he formed KARAS with Kei Miyata and started group choreography and their own activities. Since then, he and KARAS have been invited every year to perform in major international cities around the world. <http://www.st-karas.com/>



山口情報芸術センター
Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media



Hours: 10:00-22:00

Closed: Tuesday (If Tuesday is a holiday, then Wednesday),
Winter holiday season (December 29–January 3)

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<http://www.ycam.jp/> information@ycam.jp

by airplane:

- 1 hour 30 minutes from Haneda Airport (Tokyo) to Yamaguchi Ube Airport
- 30 minutes from Yamaguchi Ube Airport to Shin-Yamaguchi station by shuttle bus

by Shinkansen Line (train) · from Tokyo to Shin-Yamaguchi; 4 hours 28 minutes

- from Shin-Osaka to Shin-Yamaguchi; 1 hours 57 minutes
- from Hiroshima to Shin-Yamaguchi; 33 minutes
- from Hakata to Shin-Yamaguchi; 37 minutes

from Shin-Yamaguchi station to YCAM:

- by Taxi:
 - about 30 minutes (about ¥3,000)
- by JR Yamaguchi line:
 - 18 minutes to Yuda Onsen station and 20 minutes walk
 - 20 minutes to Yamaguchi station and 20 minutes walk or 5 minutes by taxi
- by JR Yamaguchi line (Yamaguchi liner):
 - 10 minutes to Yuda Onsen station and 20 minutes walk
 - 13 minutes to Yamaguchi station and 20 minutes walk or 5 minutes by taxi