

Dance Camera West Film Festival 2007 Final Report December 18, 2007

The 2007 Dance Camera West Film Festival followed the success of our previous five festivals and went beyond the scope of our past programming to bring an even more innovative and exciting festival of dance media to Los Angeles audiences. Among the inaugural events was our *Choreography Media Honors*, a dance video installation by visiting UK artists, and a four-day Dance Screen workshop taught by an international award-winning dance film director. We continued to pack sold-out houses throughout the festival, and we have enjoyed a notable increase in our membership and audience base.

To kick off the 2007 festival, we were once again highly favored as Critic's Pick by Lewis Segal of the Los Angeles Times. "No venue or series offers a more exciting array of major international choreographers. Works by or documentaries about such contemporary titans as Pina Bausch, William Forsythe, Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker and Angelin Preljocaj set the seal on a schedule filled with new adventure." A collection of this year's press is available on our website at www.dancecamerawest.org/press.htm.

We opened the festival on June 1 at the REDCAT in Downtown LA. We featured *Screen Dance: A New Visual Language*, which included 20 different short dance films with an opening reception in the REDCAT lounge on Friday and two more screenings on Saturday. Focusing on dance and cinema, these three programs showcased the most innovative examples of dance on screen from around the world. Our opening night sold out and the additional screenings were near full capacity. "The level of artistry and passion behind DCW's presentation is always at the highest level," said audience member Charles Carr.

On the heels of our successful opening weekend came the *Choreography Media Honors* on June 7th held at the Directors Guild of America. This newly formed event honored the craft of choreography in media. Selected from an international pool of work, the 90-minute program screened outstanding achievements in feature film, television, short film and documentaries. Although the commercial dance community was extremely enthusiastic about the event, the *Choreography Media Honors* continues to be an experiment for Dance Camera West.

Dance Camera West has developed a signature event of bringing people together outdoors to view dance film in a unique way. On June 9 we held such an event at the Cheviot Hills Recreation Park titled *Local Makers: Los Angeles Choreographers and Directors*. This community-focused event featured a variety of dance styles, covering everything from "Krumping" to musicals to provocative experimental shorts. The free event was funded in part by the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, and gave audiences a chance to appreciate local talent while mingling and discussing the work with the artists themselves. The success of this event was due to Dance Camera West's ability to identify an astonishing array of intriguing work being made by our local choreographers and directors.

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Halfway through the month-long festival, we presented a documentary program consisting of two films about German choreographer Pina Bausch at the Hammer Museum's Billy Wilder Theater. This one-night event featured Christiane Gibiec's 1998 documentary *Daz Tanztheater der Pina Bausch*, and the recently released 52-minute version of *Coffee with Pina* (2006), which chronicles Israeli artist Lee Yanor's ongoing twelve-year dialogue with Ms. Bausch. Unfortunately, we had to turn away 150 enthusiastic audience members after filling the 300-seat theater.

From June 20-30, Dance Camera West presented a dance video installation by UK artists Liz Aggiss and Billy Cowie. *Men in The Wall*, a four-screen, 3-dimensional stereoscopic experience, was viewed through stereoscopic glasses and projected onto the walls of the 18th Street Arts Center's gallery. This event was funded in part by the L.A. County Arts Commission InterArts program to bring international artists. A reception on opening night of the installation brought viewers of all ages, cultural backgrounds, and incomes. The free event gracefully merged art and social stimulation. Amy Bojanaoski, audience member, said, "I expected to see something very creative and unusual and Dance Camera West delivered again."

On June 23, back at the REDCAT Theater, international award winning dance film director Thierry De Mey from Belgium presented and discussed several of his films made in collaboration with choreographers Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker and William Forsythe. Featuring his newest film, *One Flat Thing Reproduced*, rightly considered one of William Forsythe's major choreographic works, Mr. De Mey discussed in great detail his process of adapting the stage work for the screen. Audiences were charmed by Mr. DeMey's passion for his filmmaking, and the beauty of the work itself. The question and answer forum went well past the scheduled ending because the audience wouldn't stop! This event was also funded in part by the InterArts Grant through the LA County Arts Commission.

Following his public screening, Thierry De Mey conducted a four-day intensive workshop for choreographers, directors, filmmakers and dancers. This workshop created an opportunity for both established and emerging artists to interact through discussions, screenings, and lectures for creating dance on screen. The workshop was originally planned to include 20 participants, but was expanded to 45 in order to accommodate pleas from many people also wanting to experience this engaging and ingenious artist. Participants came from as far as Israel and Japan and from all around the United States including many local artists.

Dance Camera West also co-presented film programs with the American Cinematheque and the Los Angeles Film Festival. At the American Cinematheque's Aero Theatre, we featured *Mathilde Monnier*, a documentary by Claire Denis, known for offering contemplative examinations of moments and body-sensitive images neglected in typical storytelling. After that, closing the DCW festival, the feature film *Razzle Dazzle* screened twice at the Los Angeles Film Festival.

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The 2007 Dance Camera West Dance Film Festival succeeded in bringing quality art experiences to the L.A. community in order to address the need for introducing innovation, such as the *Men in The Wall* installation; creating community collaborations through the Thierry De Mey workshop; and re-establishing the cultural heritage of Los Angeles as a center for dance through the *Choreography Media Honors* and the *Local Makers: Los Angeles Choreographers and Directors* screening. We helped to make the arts accessible to all Angelenos by offering at least half of our programming events free to the public, with the remaining events priced reasonably for most incomes. The non-verbal quality of dance films created cross-cultural accessibility, and as we look to the future the festival will incorporate a more conscious focus, exploring the dance of diverse communities that call Los Angeles home.

In summary, Dance Camera West's 2007 festival benefited the Los Angeles dance community and the film community at-large. During the festival, we created a channel for artists and art lovers of all genres to come together around their excitement or curiosity about dance film. This community-building spanned generational, cultural, and artistic lines, and helped to form connections among those who were new and those who were more seasoned to the art form of dance film, or even dance of any kind. We also brought a great educational opportunity to the blossoming dance film artists of L.A. by providing the Dance on Screen workshop, which served as both a learning tool and a networking opportunity for dance film artists to work together. The workshop brought both choreographers and film directors together, creating opportunities for artistic collaboration, and from that new working partnerships have already started.

Since the festival ended in June we have been fundraising, developing the Dance Camera West board of directors, and preparing for next year's festival. In September we were invited by the Music Center to host a reception for Dance Camera West members and friends at the *Slow Dancing* exhibit by portrait photographer David Michalek. Most of our members came out to enjoy the reception at the Music Center Plaza with giant screens of slow moving dancers. One member commented that, "this event is in the caliber of quality I've come to expect from Dance Camera West."

Also in September, Executive Director Lynette Kessler joined the Executive Arts Leadership Forum to engage within a group of executive leaders from major L.A. cultural institutions. The current focus was to welcome Olga Garay, the new Executive Director of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, and to exchange perspective on the role the arts play in Los Angeles and the opportunities and challenges facing the LA arts community.

This fall, Lynette was invited to sit on the 2008 selection panel of the EMPAC (Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center) Dance Movies Commission. The awards, funded by the Jaffe Fund, are up to \$50,000 for the creation of new works in the field of experimental dance for the screen.

Finishing the year, we were surprised to learn that we received for the second year Best of Dance in 2007 from the Los Angeles Times. Lewis Segal wrote, "Always crammed

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with unusual goodies, the festival this year showcased big guns in international choreography...” The article appeared December 16, 2007 in the LA Times Calendar section and can be viewed on our website’s Press section.

Dance Camera West would like to express our profound gratitude to all of our funders for the 2007 DCW Dance Film Festival. A full list of 2007 contributions can be found on our website under Community Partners (www.dancecamerawest.org/partners.htm). Your support has led to greater funding from foundations and individual donors, and has helped to broaden our board of directors and member/audience base. We look forward to the opportunity to bring more intriguing dance media to Los Angeles, dedicating ourselves both to the genre of dance media and to our community.