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POETRY OF SENSES

BY

ANDREA CLEARY

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INTRODUCTION

This century has seen the most dramatic changes in the whole field of art. I want to show the importance that movement has in art in this century, and how it has become an art in itself. The Dadaists certainly had a large part to play in the recognition of movement as an art. Their spontaneity of movement became their art or as it became known as Dada. The entire perception and function of art this century has been dismantled or as the Dadaists put it "Art is going to sleep for a new world to be born". [Melzer, 1980, Pg 58]

Peoples perception of art has become an integral part of art itself. According to Duchamp "it is the Regardeurs who make the pictures". [Kuenzli, 1989 Pg.8]. Indeed one could say Duchamp is largely responsible for the revolution of an entirely new concept of Art, in which movement became an important part. I will return to this in Chapter one.

During the Dublin Theatre Festival 1992, I experienced the extraordinary value of the affect of movement. 'Macnas' are the group responsible for this experience. They are a young group of actors, artists, musicians, and many others with a variety of skills and talents. Their abilities are extensive and their success is not due to one or two individual talents, but rather in their fantastic ability to work together and fuse their talents to create a

language with no barriers. After my viewing of 'An Tain', an ancient Irish saga, (fully known as An Tain Bo Cuailgne) performed by Macnas, it became clear to me the value and importance of movement in the arts. As a designer of clothes, movement is a natural consideration in my work. However, it has other values of much greater importance - it's inspirational and experimental values.

At the beginning of this century a fascination with the concept of movement and increased momentum became an integral part of daily living especially due to technological developments which had a significant effect on all areas of life. The spirit of new age brought with it a great sense of excitement, and created an inherent desire for change. Movement emerged as the subject of most intriguing interest to a wide spectrum of people. As the whole pace of life accelerated so too did the development of art. The demand for change soon made it a basic requirement to continually come up with something new. Something that could reach the senses of the spectator, as Antonin Artaud indicated

that there is poetry of senses as there is poetry of language and that this concrete physical language is truly theatrical only to the degree that the thoughts it expresses are beyond the reach of the spoken language.

[Roose-Evens, 1984, Pg 3]

Artaud recognised the link between movement and the senses, the 'language' of movement. The affect of physical language on the senses is immediately more effective than

that of the spoken language. The directness of the medium of movement (physical language) has been developed and exploited by actors, dancers and artists and is a key factor in it's development as an art. This shall be discussed in further detail in Chapter II.

A contemporary of Isadora Duncan once said "as she danced, she evoked in her audience every last ounce of poetry in them. She did not startle or plead, she evoked." [Percival, 1971, Pg 9]. It is this very feature of movement, an almost involuntary reaction, that attracted me to it, and no doubt this is the feature that intrigued many artists, e.g. Duchamp's *Nude Descending the Staircase*. Dance has become a form of art to evoke emotion, demanding a response.

The most valuable aspect of any form of art is when the work is inspirational in the creation of movement. The dadaists captured and exploited the value of movement in the *Cabaret Voltaire*. This cabaret began as an informal meeting place for artists or any interested party and resulted in a spontaneous performance. This performance could be seen as a forerunner to performance art. The fact that artists came together, and their spontaneity resulted in performance, is of tremendous importance to my argument. It exemplified the whole feeling of anti-established academy art. This was the first step with the break with traditionalism and hence an openness toward the development

of 'New Art' in which movement played a vital role. However in this case development emerged from a spontaneous and informal gathering.

In a less spontaneous way, theatre has combined with contemporary artists and designers. However it remains an important step in breaking the barriers between the arts. I will look at the merging of the arts, through movement specifically. The strong link between theatre and dance, is a good starting point. The highly structured theatres of the 19th Century became less and less popular and "other theatres"¹ which were more experimental and more open to revolutionary ideas, evolved. Painters and sculptors became involved with the creation of stage sets e.g. Pablo Picasso with Ballet Russe and Suedois and later Andy Warhol in New York and here in Ireland Robert Ballagh at the Gate Theatre. The collaborative work of Martha Graham and Sculptor Isamu Noguchi for ten years, all show an openness and awareness to the world of art. Graham herself with her revolutionary dancing, often referred to as a form of dance drama, as the name suggests, incorporated both theatre and dance. The breakdown of formally structured theatres and ballet led to a move away from rules and regulations. This left room for the much needed experimentation where everything was questioned. Many different Companies emerged with contrasting styles of emphasis. New forms of dance emerged which involved emotions rather than technique, which had been the essence of the traditional



Plate 13B. Alwin Nikolais Imago (Nikolais) 1963.

dance form. This was developed by Graham, and was only one aspect of the whole spectrum of modern dance. Others such as Alwin Nicholais preferred to exploit the feature of motion as opposed to emotion, in dance. "Modern dance in it's traditional sense was an emoted dance; for instance Graham is as great an actress as she is a dancer. I was trying to get down to motion as a basis of art, not emotion". [Percival, 1971, Pg 53].

There is a similarity between painters and dancers in the way they expressed movement, in their breaking away from the traditional methods of representation which involved mainly technical considerations. This can be readily seen in the painting *Dynamism of a Dog on Leash* by Giacomo Balla, [Pl. 5] in which he depicts the dogs movement as a multi image sequence. It gives permanence to the continuous flow of movement. Similarly in the dance format, Nicholais was attempting to give more permanence to movement, so that it could be recaptured. This is not to say that Graham for that matter didn't have her own format, but hers was more concerned with the emotions and was, thus, ever changing.

Still, there are those people who are reluctant to include movement in the wider debate on art and culture. Although dance has been subjected to the same process of formal dislocation and experimentation that has been applied to text, canvas and music, dance, is often considered "the



Plate 12B. Martha Graham with her Company perform
Acrobats of God (1960).

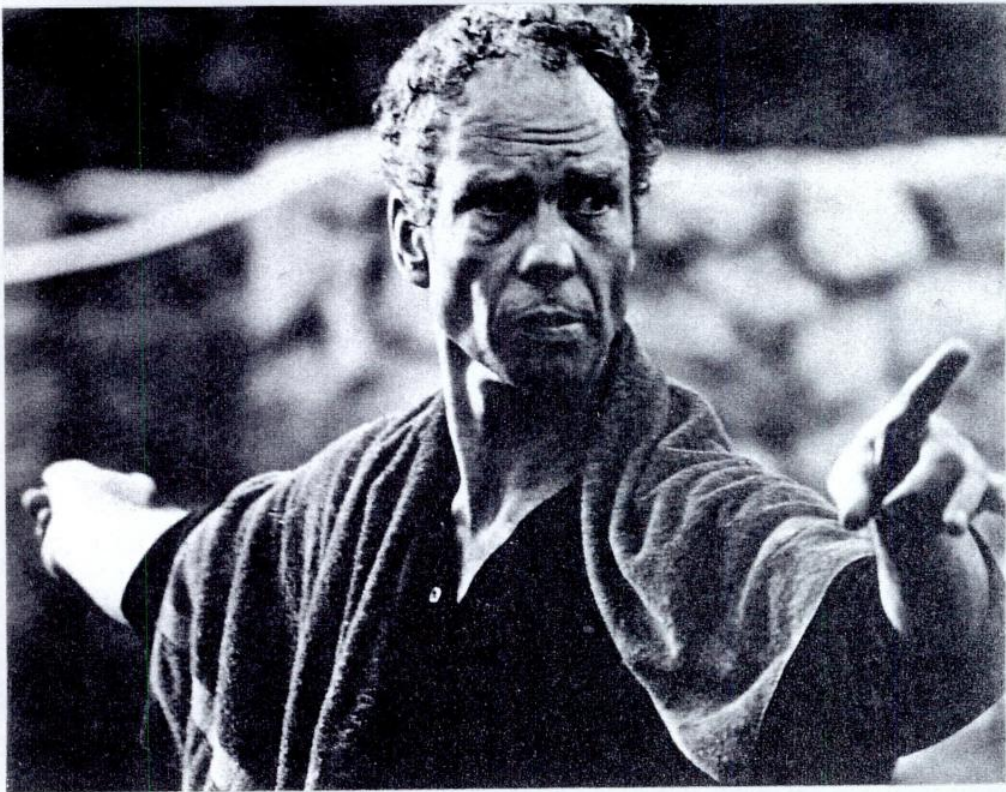
Cinderella of the Arts"² [Scott, Oct.1992, Pg 20].

The problem is that the development of dance and movement as an art has been too little talked about and rarely recorded. Movement leaves no trace of it's passage except in the senses of those it has touched and motivated by the movement. Therefore we are depending on reviews, writing, painting and photography to record the wonder and capture the essence of that movement. Therefore in my first Chapter I shall look at the evidence of movement in art of this Century.

But what sparks off the inspiration for movement? It is a format symbiosis on interdependency between many dancers, choreographers producers, performers etc. and art forms. Graham, for instance, in her choreography used depictions of the dancers on a Greek vase for inspirations in terms of pose and movement. [Pl. 12B]. The collaboration of other artists e.g. John Cage who was involved with music and sound and * Merce Cunningham who was linked with movement and dance, joined forces and influenced each other. Their use of the element of chance epitomises the openness and imagination allowed in this Century's New Art. This is another element I shall explore in further detail - the element of chance in movement and movement related art.

The apparent impermanence of movement has, in a way, lead to it's attraction and intrigue to artists. I think it is

fitting as we draw towards an end to this century to find the manifestation of movement in painting, and then place these findings on a path, the path that leads from movement in art (Boccioni, Severni, Duchamp, Balla) through dance to the development of movement as an art (Wigman, Laban, Graham, Cunningham). In this context I will set out to show the importance of movement as the vital link between the arts. Movement is a "Poetry of Senses", it is the poetry of tomorrow.



* Merce Cunningham, began as a straight forward entertainer. Martha Graham invited him to become a soloist in 1940. During this time he showed remarkable dance personality. But what is most interesting about Cunningham is that he constantly extends the dance to match new developments in the other arts and in life today.

Chapter I**MOVEMENT IN ART**

The many forms of movement in this and previous century's were often investigated. Such investigations were carried out by artists in the past. For example Leonardo De Vinci, is said to have used pigeons just to investigate their rapid wing action. Indeed it has often been said that de Vincis' inventions and way of thinking were far ahead of his time. If his idea's and designs had had the source of power that became available with the invention of the steam engine, he could possibly have been the greatest inventor of all time.

The rapid changes in our way of life particularly at the beginning of this century, is reflected in the world of Art. The development of painting, with the upsurge of many styles and movements such as Futurism, Constructivism, Cubism, Impressionism, Fauvism, Dadaism etc. portrays just how rapidly the change could take place. Each movement contributed in it's own way to the development of movement in art. There are a number of elements that catalyzed this rapid development. The main catalyst was the age of mechanism, especially in the case of the Futurist. The invention of the camera and photography challenged the whole area of representational art, laying the foundations for changes in methods of painting and subject matter. Thus an interest developed in presenting such things as

speed and motion. Duchamp was also a catalyst, through his revolutionary perception of the world around him. His persistent attempts to destroy frames of reference altered our thinking, established new units of thought, "A new thought for that object" as expressed by Jasper Johns. [Kuenzli, 1989, Pg.1]

Of all the movements of the early 1900's the Futurists, in my opinion, tackled the element of movement in an aggressive and rewarding manner, not only in the works they produced but also in the many avenues they opened for other artists, in achieving their goals.

Futurism, first of all, explains the methods by which artists showed motion. They accepted the new age of invention, glorifying a dawning age of high speed and mechanisation, and represented it in painting, sculpture, theatre, music and eventually architecture. Marinetti was, one could say, the Godfather of Futurism. He braced the new age with open arms and clenched fists. Technology, to him, was seen as the solvent to all social ills, it had created a new kind of man. To him machinery was power; it was freedom from historical restraints. "Marinetti's energy was the Past", he attacked history and memory with operatic zeal". [Hughes, 1980, Pg 42]. He opened doors for other movements, the Constructivists after 1913 in their worship of the machine and for the Dadaists in his simultaneous sound poems nonsense verse, confrontation and

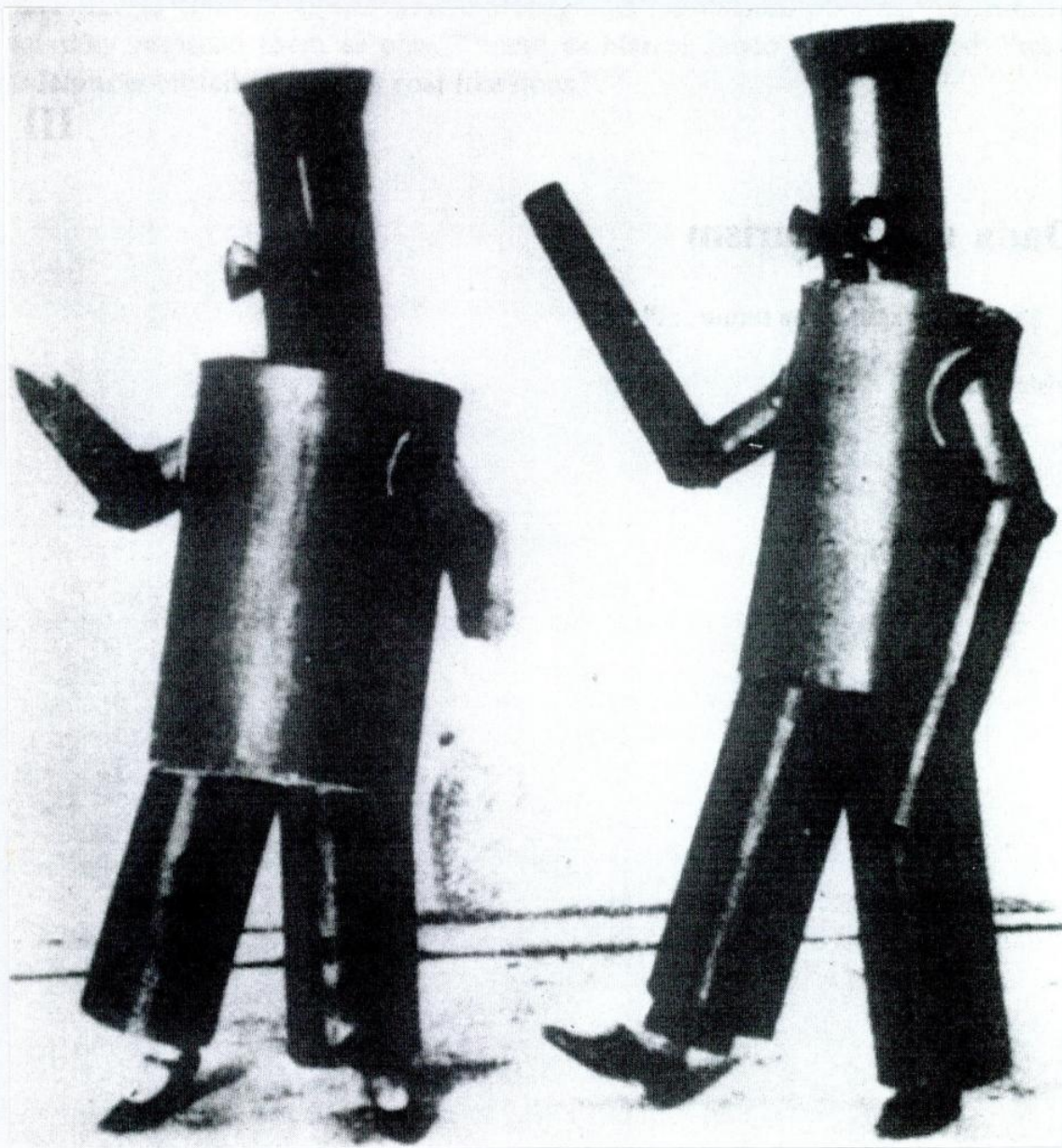


Plate 1. Costumes by the futurist Depero for Machine of 3000, a mechanical ballet.

pamphleteering - all became part of Dada after the war. Marinetti also devised a scenario of confrontation in which every kind of human behaviour could eventually be seen as 'art'. This indeed may be seen as a direct forerunner to Dada.

He used the new media^{UM} of film, to underline what a true Futurist should sleep, talk and walk like, featuring the neutralist walk, interventionist walk and Futurist march. The tendency towards a militant organisation is evident, the futurists were active supporters of Nazi Germany which aided their revolutionary art. Marinetti wrote sketches for one act ballets e.g. "Dance of the machine-gun".

[Pl. 1]. He conceived a variety theatre whose purpose was to wrap the audience in a "thunderous sensorium; a theatre of amazement, record breaking and body madness". [Hughes, 1980, Pg 23]. He evoked a sense of violence and eroticism, and gave the impression of frightening dynamism. His crude jokes and his enormous brutalities were the attraction of the avant garde of the 1920's especially those artists interested in projecting violence, iron and cinematic images of that great condenser of moral chaos - the city. In the Futurist Manifesto published in Le Figaro in 1909, the feelings of rejection of the past, confrontation, violence and eroticism, are underlined in one simple word Revolt ... "revolt will be the essential ingredient of our poetry". [Apollino, 1973, Pg 21]. It was through this revolt that "the beauty of speed"³ was adorned. The



Plate 2. Umberto Boccioni The City Rises 1910-11



Plate 6. Giacomo Balla Speeding Auto 1913

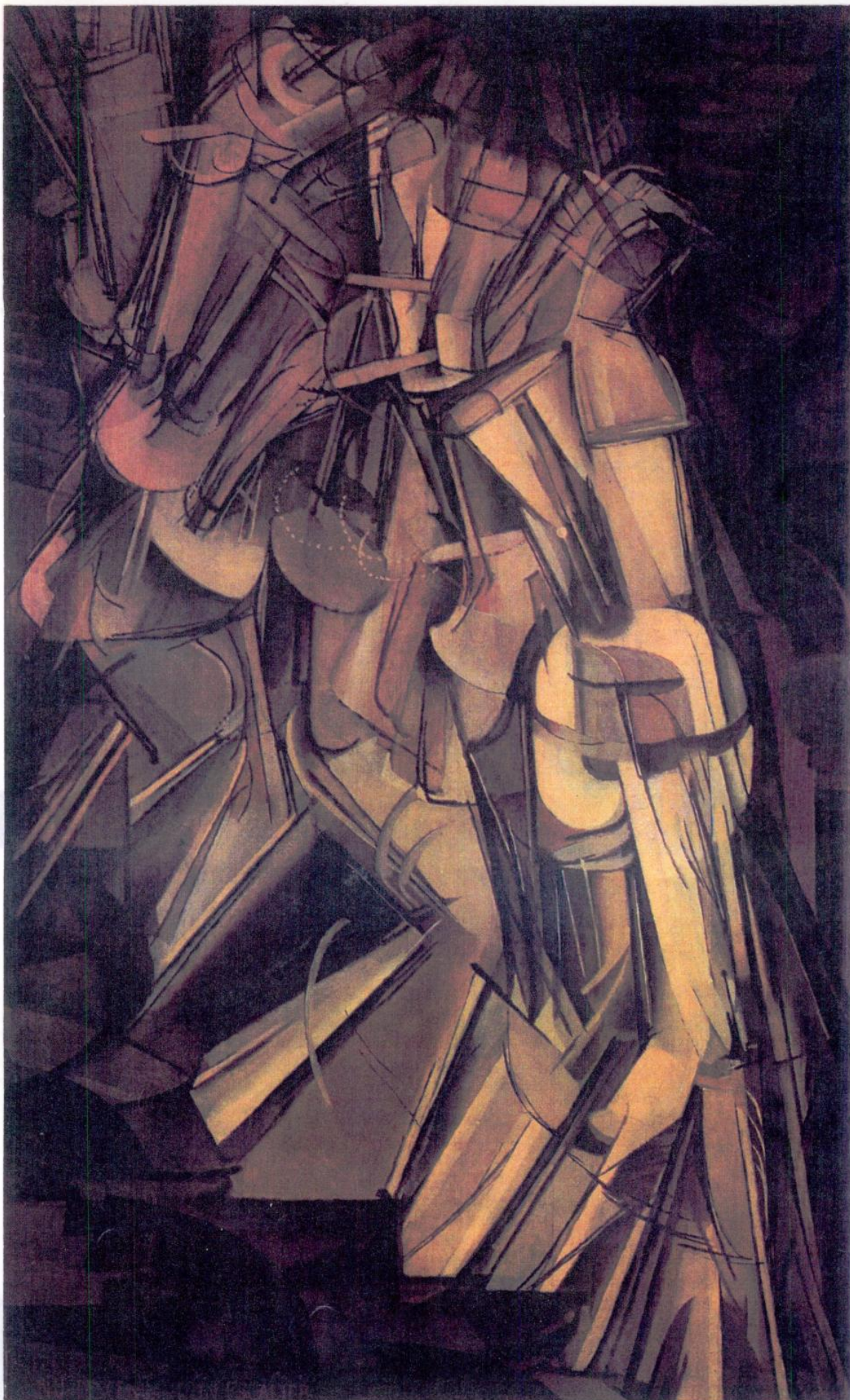


Plate 3. Marcel Duchamp Nude Descending a Staircase No. 2
1912.

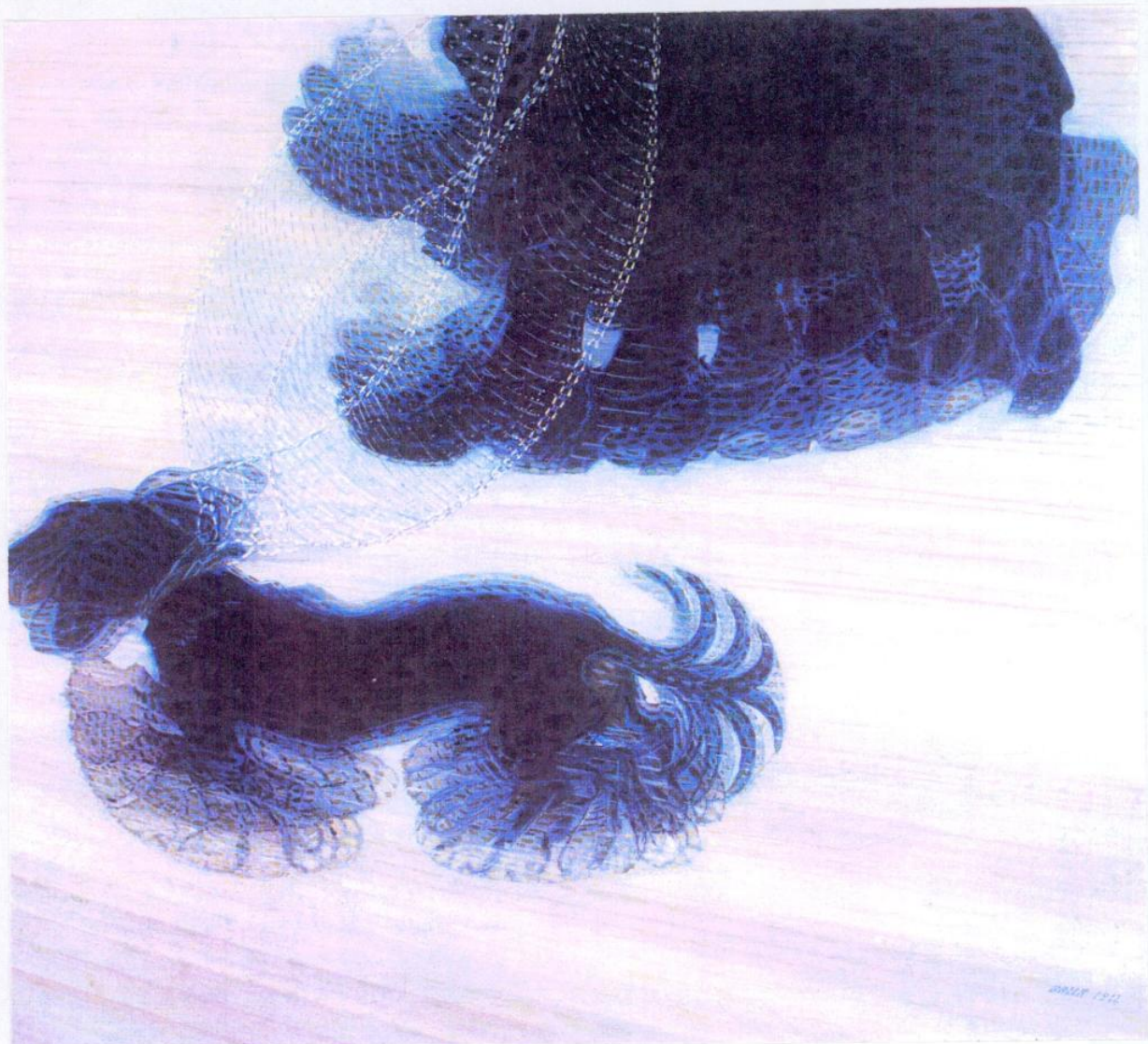


Plate 5. Giacomo Balla Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash 1912

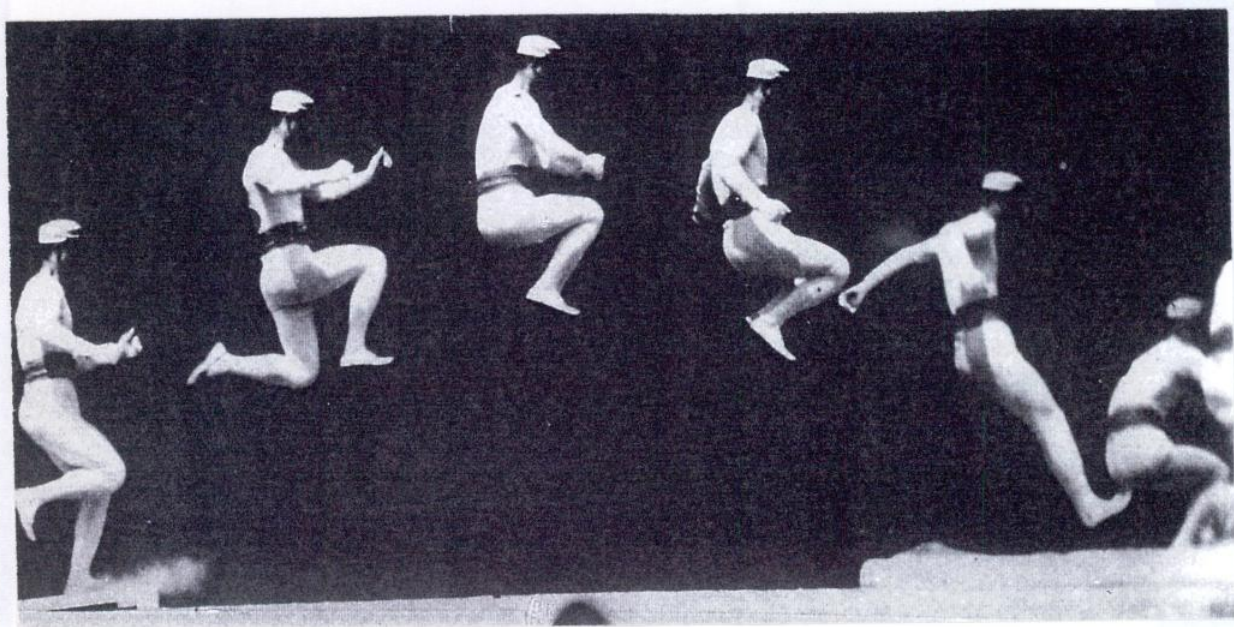


Plate 4. A High Long Jump By Monsieur...

Marey was a physiologist interested in locomotion, who used photography to study the mechanics of the movements of the body. To this end, he would have a man dressed in white pass in front of a black screen, and would register his successive positions at regular intervals of $1/10$ of a second.

problem for artists was how to translate this vision to paint.

Umberto Boccioni achieved something of the sense of movement in his painting, "The City Rises" [Pl.2] mainly by use of divisionism. This is a method of painting which was derived from neo-impressionism. His subject, a muscular red horse dissolving under the power of its own energy is achieved through a shimmer of softly shining brush strokes. It is the apparent shimmer the strokes create, that give a hint of the ferocious strength of movement that comes from such a beast. However the problem of painting movement remained, and to solve it the futurists resorted to cubism and photography. The painting that best describes movement to me is Duchamp's use of cubism in "Nude descending a Staircase". [Pl.3]. The traces of movement of the figure are clearly expressed in an almost cartoon like manner. In reality the obvious influence is Marey's photography. [Pl.4] Marey himself made futurist sculpture - with a similar intrigue to de Vinci in a bronze model of a birds successive wing positions. Giacomo Balla has reference to a rather more literal transcription of the photographs. In his "Dynamism of a Dog on Leash" [Pl.5] I could imagine the picture being broken down into frames, one for each line of movement and putting them together to get a moving picture. Balla also created ambitious paintings of a moving cab in 'Speeding Auto' [Pl.6]. From this we get an example of the general imagery in his work of rapid

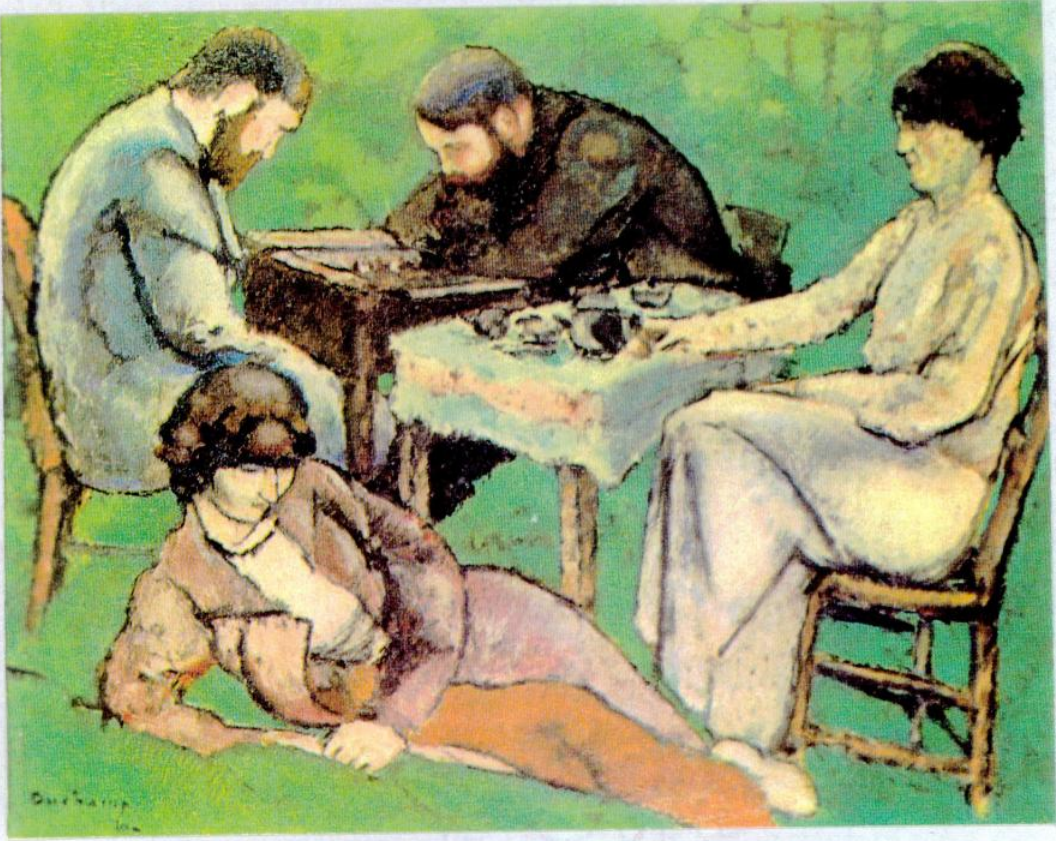


Plate 7. Gino Severini Dynamic Hieroglyphic of the Bal Tabarin 1912.

transit, of flints and spirals perspectives and staccato interruptions and cubist transparencies.

Futurism could not have realized itself without cubism, yet the difference between the emotional temperature of Cubism and Futurism was extreme. Gino Severini sums it up in his painting "Dynamic Hieroglyphic of the Bal Tabarin" 1912, [Pl.7]. which is filled with a kind of cold frenzy. The cubist influence is evident but the lines are hard and cold. It is charged with "intense evocative power". [Hughes, 1980, Pg.48]. It's elements taking in jagged shapes - snatches of lettering, twinkling of national pennants and slung in the background a Boschian sexual joke. It all looks like a machine out of control. Boccioni also reflected this image in his machine-like attitude to life and his view of war as a "hygiene of civilization" [Hughes, 1980, Pg.44] which was also supported by Marinetti. Thankfully not all artists partook in Futurism to such an emphatic degree. Duchamp was one who observed the achievements of Futurism, partook in it's revolution, and used it, as such, in his ongoing revolution of upsetting the traditional perception of art.

Duchamp through his art and theories in my opinion has had the most profound effect on a greater number of people than anybody else of his time. This is probably because of his intellectual as well as artistic approach to life. According to John Cage it was not merely his finished piece



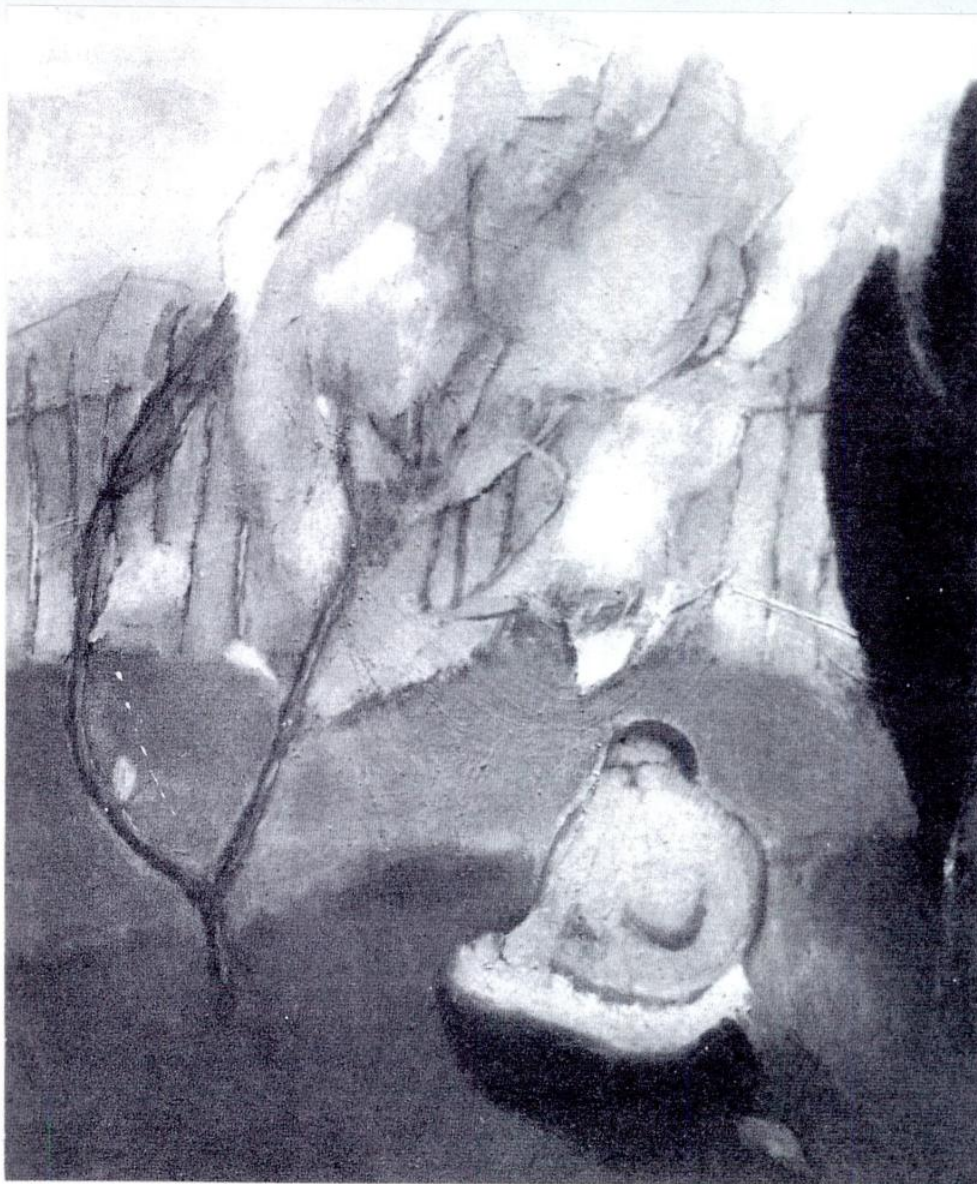


Plate 8B. 'Draught on the Japanese Apple Tree 1911'

Above Left 'Chess Game 1910', Plate 8A.

Below Left, 'Portrait Chess Players 1911'.
These show the obvious move away from pure
representation.

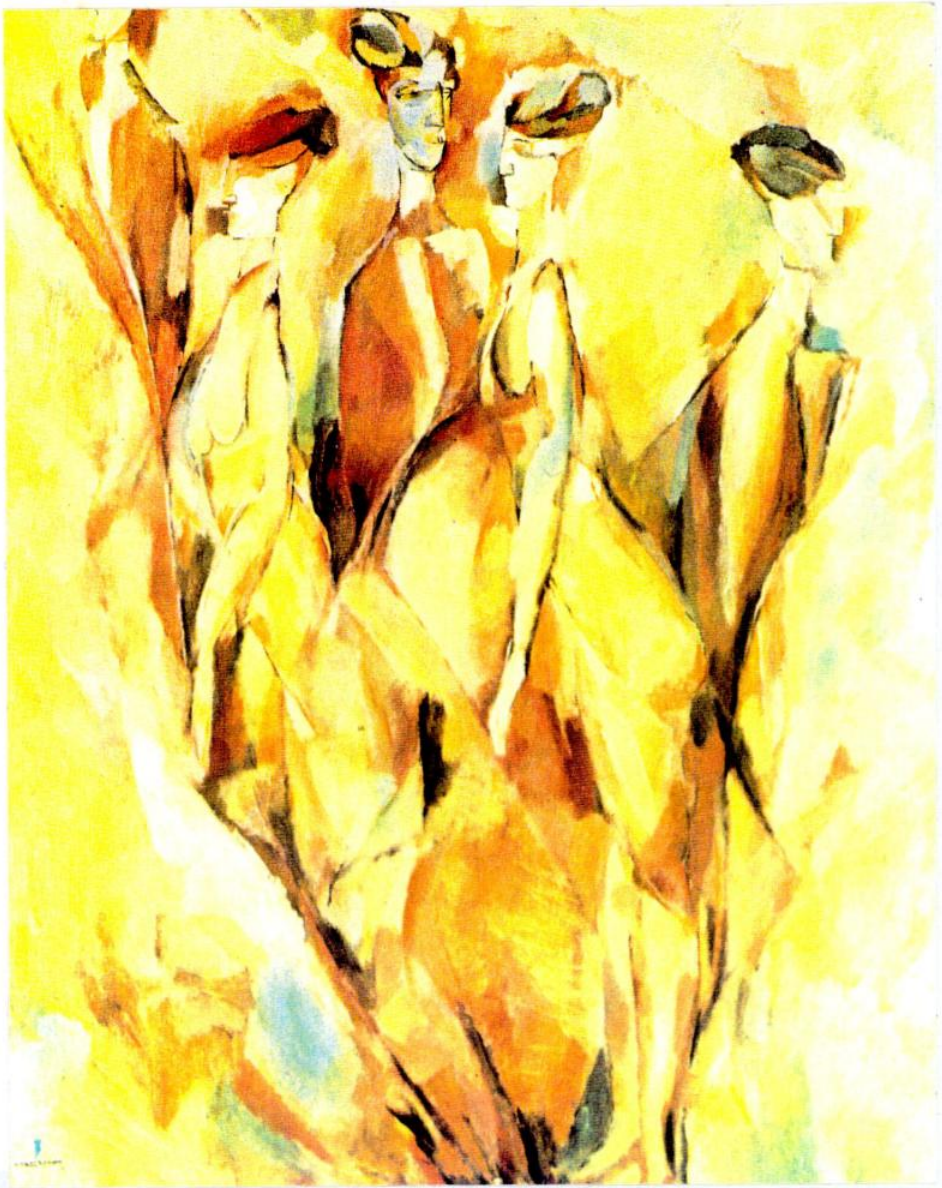


Plate 9. 'Passer by in Neuilly of Portrait 1911'

that was so controversial but rather his perception of life, of things, objects, of art. [Kuenzli, 1989, Pg.3]. One could say it was this perception that epitomised the change in art of this century. The emergence of Anti-Art or better, anti-aesthetic sentiments, and traditional values, began in the United States where pop artists attacked their too arty predecessor, the abstract impressionists and Duchamp became the chosen precursor for this new wave. This evidences the importance of Ducamp's influence of a new generation of artists.

Duchamp was influenced, as mentioned earlier, by cubism and fauvism. He did a few impressionist studies, a view of a cliff, a Cezanne, and Odilon Renon and so on simply to examine and work out how these works were achieved. He had an acute awareness, of a wide spectrum of subjects. Marey in photography was an obvious one, but there are many other influences less obvious in his work. However his individualistic approach, and growing originality soon produced his ultimate goal; "his goal of transparency, the dematerialization of the pigment and invisibility of the artistic gesture". [Bailly, 1986, Pg.22/23]. All these developements were cogs in the wheel of change and developing sense of movement.

Initially there was a move away from pure representation. In the "Chess Game" 1910 [Pl.8A] and the "Draught on The Japanese Apple Tree" (1911) [Pl.8B]. Duchamp moved from a

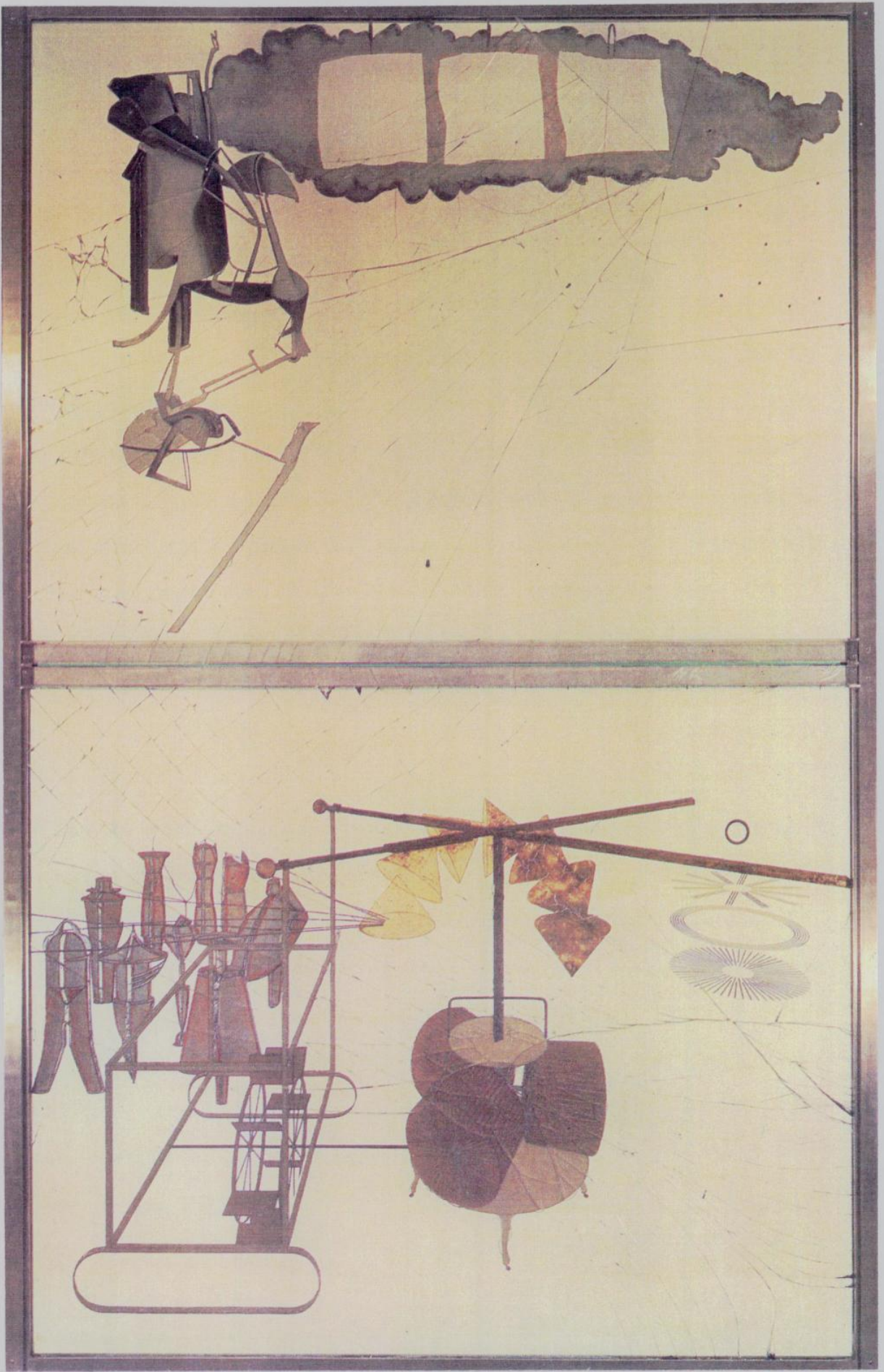


Plate 9B. 'The Great Glass'

solidly inhabited space to a kind of translucence that owes more to Odilon Redon, whose influence Duchamp has acknowledged. Duchamp's own positive development is the sense of movement, a blurring of the outlines, a feature further accentuated in "Spring", an allegorical painting given as a wedding present to his sister, Suzanne. His object of study was as Apollinaire has aptly described, "traces of being", [Bailly, 1986, Pg 22/23] as in *Passer by* in Neuilly of *Portrait*, 1911, [Pl 9]. The image is fleeting, tracing the elements of a moment that is almost forgotten. The image that remains, in my opinion, is a reality to Duchamp as he saw it. He captured the movement, movement being the element which had already begun to obsess Duchamp.

The age when Duchamp lived was exceptional, a time of rapid change and Duchamp seemed to develop faster than the rest. It is not surprising therefore that he wanted to portray speed in his work and to represent the fast disappearing images. His mind saw so much, he was striving for the ability to portray every detail. Speed was his ally, but much was sacrificed along the way. There were many of his paintings produced before "The Great Glass" [Pl 9B] but Duchamp attached no importance to them. They were "too stained with the effort that went into their making. His drive was toward insubstantiality and purity, essence and wit". [Bailly, 1986, Pg 18/19]

His individuality was no doubt, of tremendous advantage to him in a time when the demand for new and changing ideas was essential to success. It was his perception that was completely fresh and individual. He urged others to express themselves also. He wanted Americans to stop looking to Europe for the traditional conventional methods of doing things. He could not understand why they were looking for the constrictions of tradition when they had what he was striving to rid art of the oppression of precedence. Duchamp insisted on the rejection of European modernism very early when he stated at an interview in 1915 "if only America would realize that the art of Europe is finished - dead and that America is the country of the art of the future, instead of trying to base everything she does on European traditions". [Kuenzli, 1989, Pg 2].

Duchamp detested repetition. One of his aims in life was to progress and never to repeat himself in his work. "It was always the idea of changing of not repeating myself"... "Repeat the same thing long enough and it becomes taste" - a quantitative judgement, he had identified as "the enemy of Art" [F.M. Naumann, 1989, Pg. 20]. This in a way is similar to the Futurists but not in as militant a way.

The completely individual approach of his works and ideas played a liberating role for a more recent generation of artists after the second world war. The intermediary between Duchamp and these young Americans was undoubtedly

John Cage who began his dialogue with Duchamp and his works in 1942. Cage and his friends (Theorists and artists) saw Duchamp as 'a Zen Master, a great liberator from any traditional conception of art who creatively opened the way to new possibilities [Kuenzli, 1989, Pg 3].

"The truth and importance of the work of an artist lie in the truth and importance of what it permits you to do - in thoughts it helps you to think and in actions it helps you to perform. It follows moreover that the quality of a work of art lies in the quality of your reaction to it - which both begs the question and gives it personal urgency." [Martin, 1985, Pg. 6]

It is this element of Duchamp, his ability to evoke a reaction and a new perspective, that is of utmost relevance in this investigation. He is the spark - the catalyst for so many creative artists that followed. Duchamp was the inspiration to artists and performers, theorists friends and spectators. In fact he hoped to activate the viewers whose involvement he considered as important as his own "it is the Regardeurs who make the pictures". [Kuenzli, 1989, Pg 8]. And he once mentioned to Cabanne, "His is the product of two poles. There's the pole of the one who makes the work, and the pole of the one who looks at it. I give the latter as much importance as the one who makes it". [Kuenzli, 1989, Pg. 8].

This way of looking at art is directly contradictory to the Parisian method of exhibiting. Their almost tyrannical academic approval necessary to exhibit, entirely frustrated Duchamp as he described it as "Naively Foolish" [Kuenzli &

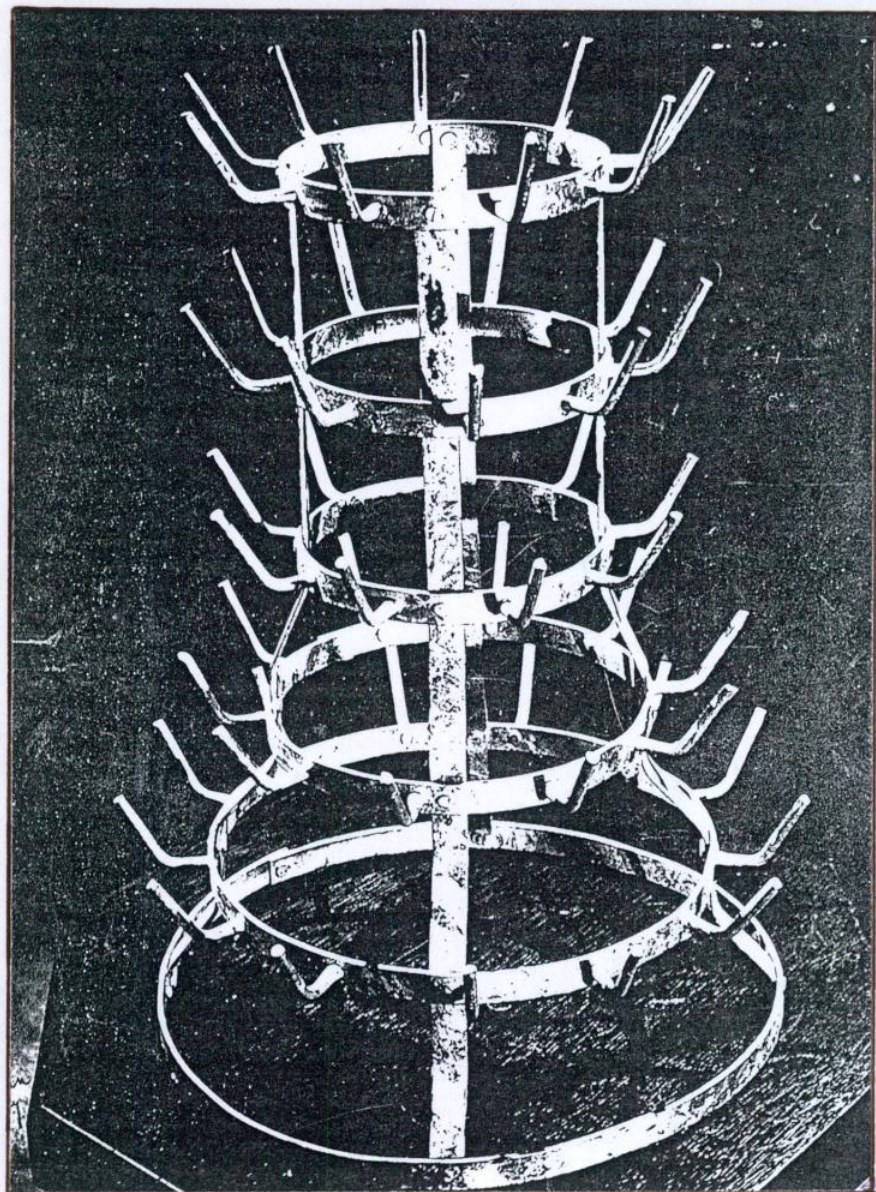


Plate 10 "Sculpture" Bottle Rack 1914

Naumann, 1989, Pg 27]. However his picture of the "Nude Descending Staircase, No. 2" [Pl 3] even though rejected in the Independents Exhibition in Paris 1912 was accepted in America and was rather a topic of controversy at the Armory Show, an (anti-academy exhibition) an exhibition which quite literally launched modern art in America. Duchamp's painting was rejected in Paris because it did not conform to established notions of Cubism. Thus the painting not only is a perfect example of movement in art but it also represents a definitive break from the previously established conventions of the art making process. It also led to the development that would represent a radical departure from his own earlier work.

The significance of this break, is most dramatically evident in Dada. Duchamp's influence was mainly in opposition to traditionalism in literature and the arts. "Dada was born of a need for independence, of a distrust toward unity!..." [Melzer, 1980, Pg 57]. The entire anti-Art campaign left its supporters faced with the problem of how to express themselves without art!, when all means of expression are potentially artistic. As an attempted solution a Duchamp "ready-made", such as his "Bottle Rack" (1914) [Pl 10] was a mass produced commercial object to which he conferred the status "Sculpture". At once this became an artistic yet an anti-Art gesture, at the "Premier Vendredi" matinee⁴ in Paris against art history and permanence. Dada would exist only in the present; it would

provide no models for the future. Spontaneity would be recognised as the basis for the creative act. The founding of the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich in 1916 allowed the audience participation that Duchamp advocated. And Henry Martins theory on the importance that a work of art should have space to breathe. "In the thoughts, it helps you to think and the actions it helps you to perform". [Martin, 1985, Pg 6]. The Dadaists rejected the past and they rejected the future. The Dada performers at the Cabaret Voltaire had taken up a path of deliberate provocation and inevitable scandal was to accompany their venture in theatre. The difference between Dada and ordinary theatre was that the avant-garde theatre person came to his work almost uniquely from the literary and art movements and not out of theatre itself. The beginnings of the Cabaret Voltaire, quite simply evolved from the following notice in a newspaper, on February 2, 1916,

"Cabaret Violtaire. Under this name a group of young artists and writers has been formed whose aim is to create a centre for artistic entertainment. The idea of the cabaret will be that guest artists will come and give musical performance and readings at the daily meetings. The young artists of Zurich, whatever their orientation, are invited to come along with suggestions and contributions of all kinds". [Melzer, 1980, Pg 12].

Hugo Ball undertook to seek out a venue, and he shaped the cabaret, he being the eldest participant at thirty. These artists and poets decorated the place, and performed, while Ball played the piano, and wrote poems. The involvement of the audience was valued and included in their act. The spontaneity of actions grew as the group grew together.

Their experiments with poetry and noise and the reaction of the audience altogether, produced their act.

The "Blaue Reiter Almanac", an essay, edited by Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc in March 1912, set forth an aesthetic philosophy which became the rallying point for modern artists and members of the avant-garde, as diverse in their fields as Hans Arp (painter, costume and stage designer for the cabaret) Arnold Schonenberg & Ball (organizer and artist). They felt the arts would move closer to each other with their common disposition to abstraction, their common concern for fundamentals and their common pursuit of inner nature. The impact Kandinsky's essay had on Ball was enormous. He saw Kandinsky as the "creator of a new Theatrical style", [Melzer, 1980, Pg 17] revolutionary and violently attacking the dramatic arts of the nineteenth century which had become so orthodox. Kandinsky moved towards a total work based on "Inner necessity". Art would function to express spiritual realities. Stage composition, drawing on this source would be based on three elements:

1. The musical sound and it's movement
2. The physical - physical sound and it's movement expressed through people and objects.
3. The coloured tone and it's movements.

The union would take place with all three elements playing equally important roles, subordinate only to the inner

goal. No mention is made of "characters". "Movement" is all important. Music sound voices, forms and coloured lights all would move, assemble and decompose. They would work their effects sometimes simultaneously, sometimes separately. Kandinsky himself underwent an experience of this sort at the Moscow Court Theatre in the 1890's. There he suddenly saw the music as colour and line which he expressed as

"The violins, the deep bass notes and particularly the wind instruments embodies for me the intensity of the sunset hour. I saw all the colours in my mind; they stood before my eyes. Wild, almost mad lines drew themselves before me... Wagner musically had painted "my lesson"... it became entirely clear to me that art is universally more powerful than it had seemed to me, that...a painting could develop the same strengths that music possesses." [Melzer, 1980, Pg 18]

After such an experience Kandinsky himself, with the aid of dancer Sacharoff, and his close working friend Von Hartmann, attempted his own experiments;

"From among some of my water-colours, the musician picked that which seemed to him to produce the strongest musical impact. In the absence of the dancer he played his watercolour. Then the dancer joined us; the music was played to him, he danced to it and then he pointed out the watercolour he had expressed in his dance". [Melzer, 1980, Pg 18]

These experiments and experiences all contributed to the essay the "Blaue Reiter Almanac" which influenced so many. It is this very manifestation of movement in art, that inspired me initially to write this thesis. My realization, through the experience of the production of

'An Tain' was that through the performance a picture was being painted before my very eyes, with the use of light, people, and most of all, movement.





This photograph of Isadora Duncan was taken about 1905 when she was at the height of her fame after touring Russia and the rest of Europe.

Chapter II

MOVEMENT AS AN ART

There is a direct quality of communication in movement, which was recognised for its own value in this century. The following chapter deals with movement firstly in the form of dance, where its development through experiment and freedom of expression, arrives at a pure form of movement. Similarly, the world of theatre experienced its own revolution. Theatre's development paralleled that of dance. The development of both resulted in a re-discovery of the value of movement, as the core of their communication. This realization is the result of thorough experimentation and development by talented revolutionaries in their fields. Martha Graham [Pl 12] and Isadora Duncan, [Pl 11] are, without any doubt two of the most revolutionary figures in the world of dance and have also influenced theatre.

Everything about them, their physique and their expression of dance, is what one might call, more natural in approach than that usually associated with Ballet. They also represent an evolution in dance parallel with that which happened in painting. There was a break from the traditional, a revolt against rules and technical restriction. Spontaneity and experiment followed and movement wasn't long developing its own status as an art. The significance of movement as an art through Dada, was



Plate 12. Martha Graham "divine expression of the human spirit through body movement".

discussed in the previous chapter. Bearing this in mind, it was therefore natural for people looking for artistic expression other than through painting and sculpture, to turn to movement. Why have artists painted movement, and attempted to portray a sense of movement?

My answer to that question is that the effectiveness and impact of movement is so profound, that it touches our senses. It is a language with no barriers. Dance is a language primitive, elementary and direct. There is a direct quality of communication in movement, that cannot be equalled through the brush stroke or the chisel without first consulting the intellect. My point is that the 'Regardeur'⁵ as Duchamp put it, reached his own meaning via the intellect. Movement on the other hand is more primitive and direct, as with Isadora Duncan in her dancing she evoked a direct emotional response rather than an indirect intellectual reaction in her audience.

Duncan's brilliance as a dancer, allowed her to win acceptance for some revolutionary and invaluable ideas. Dancing could now use great music, and could express serious themes. Her greatest influence, however, was her tremendous ability to inspire. Her inspiration being the power of dance to move human feelings, and of the artists right to claim complete freedom in finding her own way to achieve this. This "Free Dance" was later institutionalized, a contradiction it seems, but still this



Plate 11. Isadora Duncan Pan and Echo (dance without music)
Drawing by Valentine Lecompte. Echoes Duncans
"Free Dance"

form of dance is more free in terms of personal expression than that of Ballet.

It is relevant at this point to remind ourselves of the status of dance through the centuries. It is interesting to note that professional dancers in earlier centuries were always men as the church and society, to a certain extent, condemned women who dared to appear on stage.

Later the role of the ballerina within the ballet gradually became more important but it was not until after the first world war, that her position in society as a dancer improved.

"In this new society, where respect was said to be a forgotten word, dance became a respected art and the fine salons opened their doors even to dancers".

[Hager, 1990, Pg 7]

This is a perfect example of the type of traditional snobbery that was attached in attitude to the art of theatre or dance. It is a significant acknowledgement to elevate these talented genius' rather than to scorn what was beautifully talented. There was another advantage to this change in status. It gave the freedom to dancers to express themselves in dance. This in turn resulted in experiment and development, and led to an openness of vision, breaking with tradition and looking from Italy to the other alternatives in the world of art. "After working on a Ballet for a considerable time one loses it's



Above Martha Graham
(left) is shown here
with her former teacher,
Ruth St Denis.

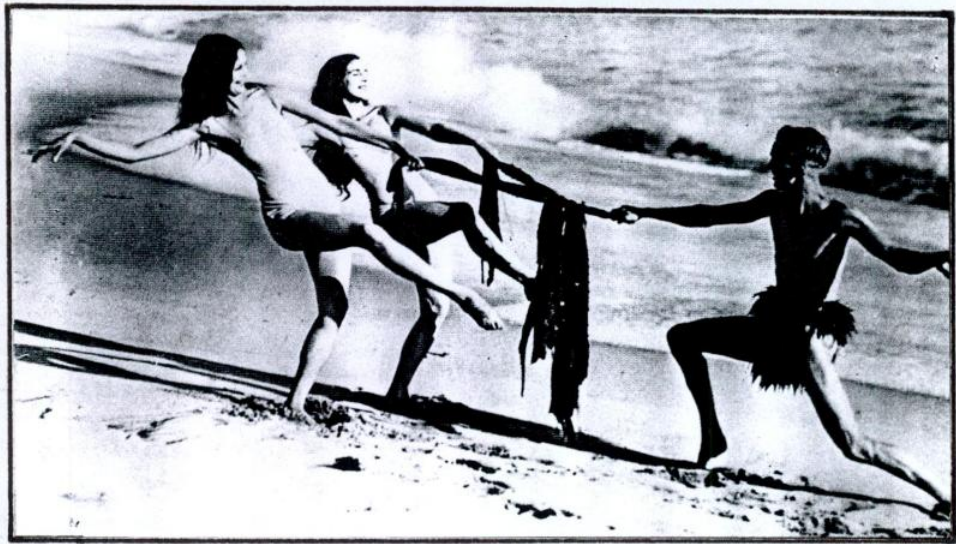


Plate 12C.
Ruth St Denis.

theatrical perspectives". Peter Darrell [Percival, 1971, Pg 52]. Thus he invited playwrights and engaged a theatrical producer. However this loosening of one form of tunnel vision and placing it under more complicated restrictions was not the platform from which modern dance took off. Experiment was this platform, and the results of experiment depended very much on the type of dance foundation that preceded.

"Experiment is most likely to be found where some form of dance is already well established. If you are trying to start activity where none existed before, either you are likely to model your work after traditional examples or else the experiments you try will probably be of limited interest and success for lack of a fixed starting point. When there is plenty of traditional dance to revolt against, plus a creative atmosphere, experiment stands most chance of succeeding". [Percival, 1971, Pg 12]

Ruth St. Denis [Pl 12C] a contemporary of Isadora Duncan developed a free form of dancing barefoot in costume that allowed ease of movement, or sometimes without clothes and using just movement to express an idea instead of a set vocabulary of steps. It seems almost like a return to primitive life, and to a point, it probably was the recognition of the basis of the medium, as already mentioned - primitive and direct. Martha Graham in turn, learned under St. Denis, but left, taking with her "an



Above These dancers are members of the Denishawn Company which was set up by Ruth St Denis and Ted Shawn.

almost philosophic belief in dance as a means of communication". [Percival, 1971, Pg 10]. Graham, just as Duncan had a deep and fresh response to music, Graham's attention to rhythm a natural breathing rhythm developed. It changed from the impressionist feel of St. Denis, (or as it became known as Denishawn), to driving percussive works beautifully and powerfully shaped, but without the delicate prettiness of earlier dances. Where Duncan had sought 'to dance a divine expression of the human spirit through body movement', [Percival, 1971, Pg 10]. Graham's interests were in mythology and philosophy, and she allowed her dance to reflect these interests. In the 1930's she concerned herself with American folk culture, traditions and feelings. In 1940, her production of "Appalachian Spring" was practically a dancing documentary on a homesteading couple. "Frontier", is another work which continues to show Graham's deep interest in human development. Her investigations resulted in statements on social issues. All her experiments were personal and her portrayals though movement, were based on emotional and philosophical beliefs.

Concurrently a modern dance movement was developing in Europe, mainly in Germany. Rudolf Van Laban was a main figure. His however was an intellectual approach, as opposed to the emotional approach of Duncan, St. Denis, and Graham. Laban's study of movement was carried through art and painting to actual living. To earn his living in his

formative years, he directed performances for holiday festivals. Rehearsing large numbers of exuberant amateurs Laban recalls:

"When at last the time came, we could not stand on ceremony very much, but simply called out "shoes off" "Ladies! corsets off" "Bend your Knees" "Walk" "Run!" [Melzer, 1980, Pg 90.]

According to Melzer, in these simple directions, quietly lurks a revolution in dance. Bare feet would make contact with the stage and there discover new grounding. Bent-Knees, the exploration of walking and running, all led away from movement as a means of expressing character and place. This brought about a consideration of movement for it's own sake. Laban had to create the dance and the dancer as well. Unlike the other modern dance contributions so far, Laban is more detached not only emotionally but physically also, as his works were developed through his instruction to another person. The 'feet' of Laban's theories and ideas was Mary Wigman. With Wigman demonstrating, Laban would repeatedly design and reject movements, occasionally exploding at Wigman's intense self expression with "you clown, you grotesque monster, with your terrific intensity you ruin my whole theory of harmony". [Melzer, 1971, Pg 94]. This exemplifies Laban's desire for a detached attitude when dealing with movement. This however foreshadowed the rupture between Wigman and Laban. I find it most interesting that neither Wigman nor Laban ever composed a dance to a piece of existing music. Any music which was



Plate 13 Mary Wigman, ca. 1916

used was produced in collaboration with the dance. Wigman, [Pl 13] strange as it may seem, was almost categorically anti-music, and in the new relationship that emerged between music (or non music) and dance, rests one of her most radical changes and innovative contributions. The new emphasis was on rhythm and dance, often called "forms", used gongs, clappers and rattles as accompaniments. Dance increasingly became an individual independent art form. "Getting down to motion as a basis for the art as opposed to emotion" [Percival, 1971, Pg 53]. This very reference to dance as an 'art' or describing it as a "form" underlines it's ongoing development. The Futurist manifesto's of 1913, also refers to dance as a Form - a physical form incorporating sound and it's movement expressed through people and objects.

"The variety theatre offers the healthiest of all spectacles in it's dynamism of form and colour, a simultaneous movement of jugglers, ballerinas, gymnasts, colourful riding masks, spiral cyclones of dancers spinning on the points of their feet. In it's swift, overpowering dance rhythms, the variety theatre forcibly drags the slowest souls out of their torpor and forces them to run and jump." [Appollino, 1973, Pg 126]

This dynamism of form and colour, as referred to by the Futurists, particularly Marinetti, could be seen as an apt description for that which first inspired me to investigate movement as an art. Though the language of Macnas was mainly that of dance, it would be more correctly referred to as 'dance-drama'. The above description of the Futurists Variety Theatre, was highlighted essentially because it was new and revolutionary. It leads to the

impression that it forces a response. There is no room for apathy or passiveness. Considering that all this is new, one wonders just how banal theatre was prior to this revolt. Obviously one didn't go to Theatre to be an active participant but rather a viewer.

Theatre like dance, experienced it's own period of revolution and experimentation. However, like the world of Ballet - After changes developed, some theatres stayed with their own ways, having undying faith in the traditional format. Tradition is an obvious and interesting element at each level of art that we have discussed this far. Though in most cases it is the revolt against it that produced the elements that are of most value in this argument. Traditional theatre still has a tremendous following. But it is the move away from this verbal theatre that developed the interest and exploitation of movement as a means of communication - just like the Dadaists resorted to movement as their form of communication as an anti-art statement.

Antonin Artaud expressed this concept of a non-verbal theatre (as mentioned earlier) "that this concrete physical language is truly theatrical only to the degree that the thoughts it expresses are beyond the reach of the spoken language" [Roose-Evans, 1984, Pg 3]. However this realisation did not spring up over night. It was rather achieved through the awareness of many great people.

Stanislavsky probably was one of the greatest instigators of such significant changes in the theatre leading towards the concept of "modern theatre". Constantin Stanislavsky is the great patriarchal figure not only of Russian theatre but of theatre throughout the Western world, an actor, director, and co-founder of the Moscow Art Theatre. His most important contribution lay in his technique of good acting. His 'system' was based upon his observation of good acting practice. It has been developed and adjusted according to the needs of different temperaments and nationalities. The greatness of Stanislavsky lies as much in his own flexibility as in the adherence to "the cardinal principle of inner truth on stage" [Roose-Evans, 1984, Pg 6]. Like Duchamp he had tremendous vision in anticipation of major developments in the theatre but he always retained his belief in the essential creative power of the actor as the only source of vitality for the theatre.

Diaghilev (probably best known for his founding of Ballet Russe) writing on the originality of the Moscow Art Theatre in his publication "THE WORLD OF ART", observed that because of its proven success, and popularity, this company could risk innovations in the theatre which with any less well established group would have been condemned to ridicule. In spite of their success, however, Stanislavsky was aware of the development of other arts, in new painting music and sculpture. Theatre in comparison seemed antiquated. True to form, through his keen awareness

of others, Stanislavsky came in contact with a former member of the company, Vsevolod Meyerhold. Like Stanislavsky he was seeking something new in art, something more contemporary and modern in spirit. The difference being Stanislavsky was striving for something new and didn't know what it was, whereas Meyerhold believed he had it but didn't have the means or opportunity. This Stanislavsky provided when he opened a Theatrical Studio where Meyerhold was free to carry out his ideas. They were left uninterrupted for a summer, after which Stanislavsky went to view a dress rehearsal of Maeterlinck's "The Death of Tintagels". Stanislavsky, was acutely aware of the gulf between the director's vision and the actors realization - since only the actor could fulfil this vision: FOR NEW ART NEW ACTORS WERE NECESSARY, ACTORS OF A NEW SORT WITH AN ALTOGETHER NEW TECHNIQUE. [Roose-Evans, 1984, Pg.9]

The actors' importance in the development of modern theatre is absolute. Copeau exemplified this in his dealing with theatre. Jacques Copeau was a theatre critic in Paris and came late to the practice of theatre. In 1913 Copeau founded the Theatre du Vieux-Colombier. He was intent on freeing the stage from cumbersome machinery and showy effects. He did not however, work within certain set boundaries, instead he recognised the limitations of such boundaries as he set forth in his essay, "de Renovation Dramatique" "Without belittling the achievements or it's director, Andre Antoine, to whom we owe so much.

These fell into the imprudent and unconscious mistake of limiting their field of action by a programme of revolution". [Roose-Evans, 1984, Pg 54]

It was Copeau's own amazing perception of theatre that allowed him to see the broader value of the actor and his space. This perception is reminiscent of Duchamp especially when described by Antoine ... "The public is no longer seated in front of a picture, but in the same room alongside the characters". [Roose-Evans, 1984, Pg 55]

In 1913 Copeau ended his manifesto with these prophetic words "Pour l'oeuvre nouvelle quior nous laisse in tretan nu! A bare stage, an empty space". [Roose-Evans, 1984, Pg 55]. Fifty years later the search was to continue in the work of Peter Brook and others. And in one of Brook's most famous productions, "Maliere's Les Foberies de Soapin", the action was set on a bare platform built of wood, isolated in the centre of the stage, the setting called for movement and speed from the actors acting of a really physical kind". [Roose-Evans, 1984, Pg 55 par. 2]

Copeau had a strong sense of choreography, but it was not imposed from without, as the invention of the dazzling showman, or not even from within as in the case of Martha Graham but it developed organically from the text. His text provided the rhythm which kept the action in time - the element in drama which was similar to music. Thus the

need for lyric's was not important so much as the rhythm it created. Copeau's development from such structured text-related theatre to improvisational form was vital to the training of an actor, followed after his visit to Gordon Graig in 1915-16. He laid greater stress upon the physical and technical expertise of an actor (as Alwin Nicholais in dance) and wanted his students to go free to use mime, dance, acrobatics, improvisation as a means of dramatic expression. His new young group of actors travelled which allowed them to play in any setting. Usually his work of performance started as they set about setting up the stage, to the time they dismantled it. They dismantled it, it all became an integral part of the performance. Copeau became more and more of the view that theatre was a way of life as well as a way of work. Vincent Vincenti a Lausanne critic wrote of their work at this time.

"They have definitely detoxicated the theatre of it's lyrical verbiage, They have done work of surgeons. They have enlarged the field of expression..."

Copeau started what was further developed by other visionaries. The path of revolt was founded and their (Copeau and others) various routes intersected at points. Gordon Criag forms a most significant intersection both in terms of the growth of Copeau's results and is relevant to my argument in the development of action as an art. Craig dreamed of a theatre that would appeal to the emotions through movement alone. There would be no play or plot but

simply correlated movements of sound, light and moving masses. The audience would have a kinetic experience. The Bauhaus of the 1920's was to experiment with a similar theatre, plays whose 'plots' consisted of nothing more than the pure movement of forms, colour and light.

The actor, was of no interest to Craig. This in itself was a concept in pure contrast to any description of theatre. "The actor is for me only an insuperable difficulty and an expense" [Roose-Evans, 1984, Pg 41] "If actors were to be used then they must cease to speak and must move only, if they want to restore the art to it's old place. Acting is action - and Dance is the poetry of Action". Craig's short book, The 'Art of the Theatre', protested that the theatre had become overburdened with words, it's origins being in dance and mime. He defined a good dramatist as one who knows that the eye is more swiftly and powerfully appealed to than any other sense.

Craig however was a visionary. His mind's eye composed many pictures, and conjured up many images. His contribution is valued as inspirational in the development of movement as an art. His proposition of this type of art whether it involved human movement or not, was concerned with visual movement of elements.

It is this entire rethinking of dance and acting by Craig, Stanislavsky, Copeau and Laban, that was of such

inspirational value to their contemporaries and indeed to art today. It has given movement as an art, a chance to develop. They proposed the possibilities of such a 'new art'. Just as Duchamp's ready made and everyday objects in chance positions and locations became works of art, in a similar manner Craig, Laban, Stanislavsky in their perception of what new art should be, produced through their 'new actors'⁶ and new dancers⁷ (their readymades) a 'new art'. Duncan, Graham and Wigman used their human spirit through body movement to achieve their art. Wigman continued the experiment and development of her predecessors Graham and Duncan; their common ground being expression of their human spirit through body movement. The most significant step she advanced in my opinion, towards movement as an art is paralleled by Copeau and Craig.

Wigman freed movement, she stripped it bare of music - letting it find its own natural rhythm: Similarly Copeau stripped the stage bare of props, as Craig of words, freeing it from cumbersome unnecessary making movement for it's own sake: getting down to movement as an art.

Chapter III

COMBINATION OF ARTS

"All barriers between the media are breaking down and these media are often coming together under the general heading of theatre". [Percival, 1971, Pg 145] Peter Dockley. This was a referral by Dockley, a Sculptor, to the combining of the arts. Kandinsky however foresaw the emergence of interest in portraying a universal element, that is not specific to any one medium but is rather open to interpretation of any media. This universal element is the stimulating power of the unconscious. Each person's unconscious is individual, but the expression of these individual thoughts however has moved closer together in terms of the media used to portray these thoughts. Ball, the initiator of the Cabaret Voltaire, was very influenced by Kandinsky. Through him Ball found the inspiration for an art "which through the union of artistic media and potentialities would bring about the rebirth of society". [Melzer, 1980, Pg 16]

I see this change in people's perception, not only of art but of life, as the crux of the combining of the arts. The change was inspired and catalysed by people such as Duchamp, Kandinsky, and Marinetti. Kandinsky, at the beginning of the Dada movement felt that the arts would move closer together, with their common disposition towards abstraction, their common concern for fundamentals and

their common pursuit of inner nature. As we have seen in Chapters I and 2 the world of art; Fine Art, Dance and Theatre, have, through experiment reached a climax where movement is of prime importance as a medium and as an art in itself; in the communication of inner nature. This was, so expressed through the Dadaists' manner of living. Their concept of art was a continuity with life rejecting both past and the future. Laban⁸ also sought this integration of art as a way of living in his attempt at artists living communally and of course the Futurists for the most part tended towards Fascism - which had a very rigid form of existence in comparison to Dadaism which was spontaneity personified.

"It is when people take their art seriously that every inch of their life becomes a significant part of their work".

Isamu Noguchi [Threlfall, 1992, Pg 37]

It is evident that all the arts paralleled each other in their way of thinking and increasingly through experiment and development, moved toward the true meaning of contemporary art. It is because of the recognition of their own continual similarities of conclusions and the apt media of movement that the arts combined. This development was almost an involuntary reaction to the demands for a new art. The involvement of their fellow arts became the essential ingredient in producing this new art.

My aim in this chapter is to show the importance of one art to another in the development of contemporary art and the importance of movement in this symbiosis. Firstly I shall look at the initial stages of the combination of the arts in terms of sculpture and dance, painting and dance, painting and theatre, which was new at that time. But I shall also look at the merging of the arts to become a new statement in terms of contemporary art.

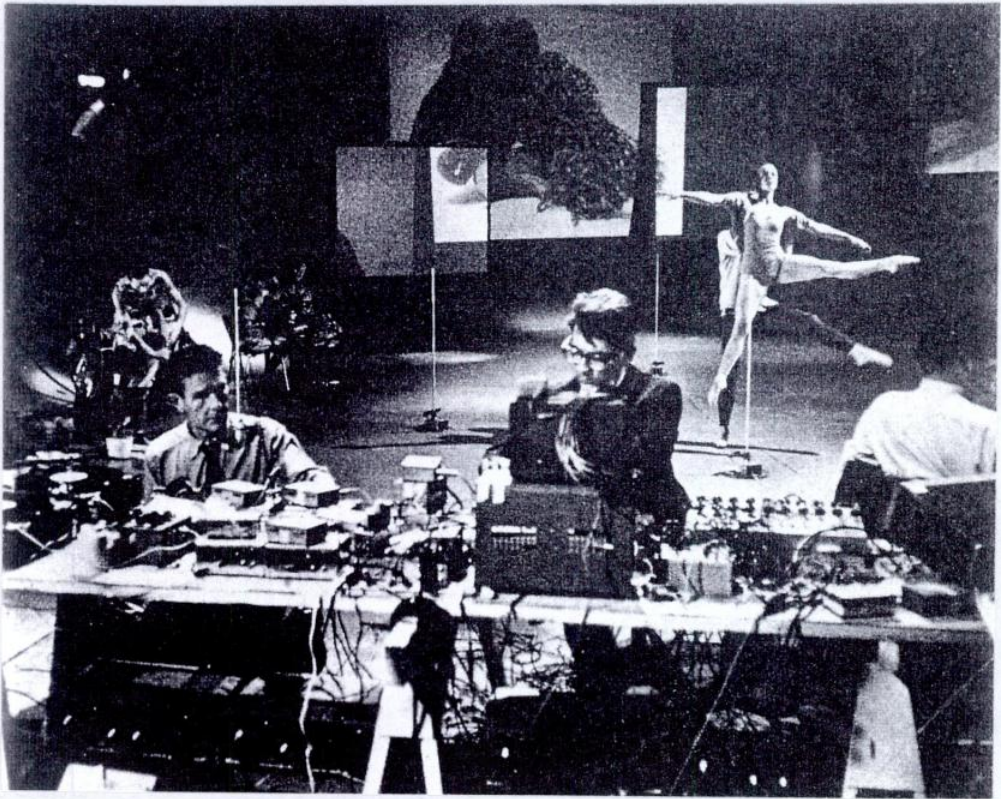
First in the combination of dance and art - painting and sculpture, there is nothing new about someone painting a set for a ballet or theatre production, but what is of value is the involvement of contemporary artists in set design for Ballet. This involvement was a stimulus, to choreographers in many instances by a setting which provides an environment within which dancers move, rather than merely a background. For example, the Ballet Russe was one of the first Dance companies to employ contemporary artists of ~~their time~~, Pablo Picasso was one of many great artists that designed for Ballet Russe. This was only the start of a growing relationship between performance and art. Indeed Isadora Duncan sought inspiration from Greek classical dance, therefore she used sculpture and painting in her dance. Kandinsky wrote about spiritual art, "Isadora Duncan forged a link between Greek dancing and the future. In this she is working parallel to those painters who are looking for inspiration in the primitives... In both mediums we are on the threshold of a 'future art'". [Melzer, 1980, Pg 21].



Plate 14. Merce Cunningham "Rainforest" 1968
Cunningham Set Design by Andy Warhol.

Nijinsky for that matter, also used depictions of dancers on Greek vases as inspiration in terms of pose and movement. His use of art in dance resulted in his work being referred to as art. His defender was Rodin, who announced that "Nijinsky's art was the perfect personification of the ideals of the beauty of the old Greeks". [De Marly, 1982, Pg 100].

Martha Graham worked in collaboration with the sculptor Isamu Noguchi. Again it was their common disposition that makes their collaboration such an ideal and perfect arrangement. Noguchi, a sculptor who has set precedents for much of modern movement in sculpture, showed the true meaning of contemporary art through his manner of living. His interest in mythology is similar to Grahams involvement on mythology, in that they both carry it through their work. Merce Cunningham was obviously influenced by Graham. He, after studying under Graham, worked in collaboration with John Cage and various contemporary American painters. Among them was Andy Warhol whose silver balloons provided the stage set for "Rainforest". The balloons were pillow shaped, a bit more than pillow-sized, filled with Helium. Some floated just at stage level, others higher. As the dancers in their ragged costumes moved among those objects, a bump or a breeze was enough to set the silver balloons bobbing gently about, forming sometimes new obstructing patterns in the dancing area, to be set moving again by their next contact with the dancers. At Cunningham's



Merce Cunningham "Variations V" (John Cage) 1965
John Cage, David Tudor, Gordon Mumma in foreground.

performances the audience can also see and hear the work of leading American painters, sculptors and musicians. When he played in Paris in 1970, only two London newspapers reviewed his performances; one sent it's ballet critic, the other it's art critic. This may be seen as literal evidence of the combining of arts through movement.

Cunningham's involvement with Cage, is of more significance than his fleeting associations with other contemporary painters and sculptors. Cage had a tremendous influence on Cunningham and vice versa. Their collaboration resulted in a merging of their visions to bring the world of art one step closer together. "Separately, Cage and Cunningham would each have made a mark on contemporary music, theatre and dance. Together, the effect of their work has not so much doubled as squared". [Percival, 1971, Pg 40].

Cage's use of technology in sound making would have been intriguing to the futurists. However Cage's involvement with sound technology was combined with people, movement and light. For example for "Variations V" Cage used prerecorded elements of music or speech. The 'electronic gadgetry',⁹ as Cage puts it, was actuated by the movements of the dancers. When a dancer came into a certain radius of a series of poles within the set, a sound would result. "The general principle, as far as I was concerned was like the doors opening when you go to the supermarket". [Percival, 1971, Pg 40]. According to Cunningham, the kind

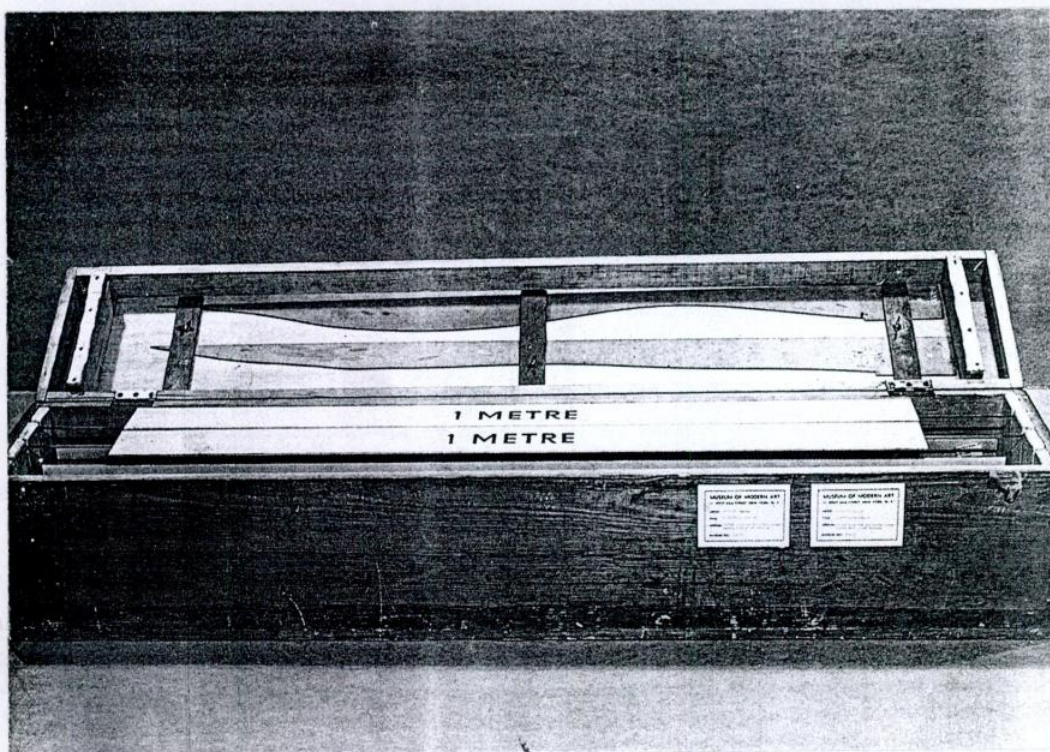


Plate 15. Three Standard Stoppages 1913-14
Duchamp.

of sound, it's duration or repetition, was controlled by musicians with various machines. [Percival, 1971, Pg 40]. This whole concept in a way is the opposite format to conventional use of sound and dance. It is almost like an electronic version of Wigmans use of Rhythm. The rhythm was created by movement of the person, not dancing to the rhythm of anything but oneself.

It was probably Cage who influenced Cunningham to introduce chance elements into choreography as he himself was doing with music. This factor in Cunningham's work is often over-emphasised and misunderstood. Many of his dances, once created are absolutely set. "Chance indeed can be used in the creation of a work which is then suitable [Percival, 1971, Pg 42]. For one soloist piece, Cunningham used the chance of tossing coins to select movements, movements of different parts of the body. Unfortunately, as Caroline Brown recorded "he discovered that the execution of the resulting movement was nearly impossible as it took months of rehearsal to accomplish it". [Percival, 1971, Pg 42].

John Cage himself had been influenced by Duchamp. Duchamp used chance philosophically, in that he was questioned a theory, the theory of the "Three standard stoppages". He practically challenged it through art - his central aim was to throw into question the accepted authority of the metre. His joke about the metre' consisted of dropping three

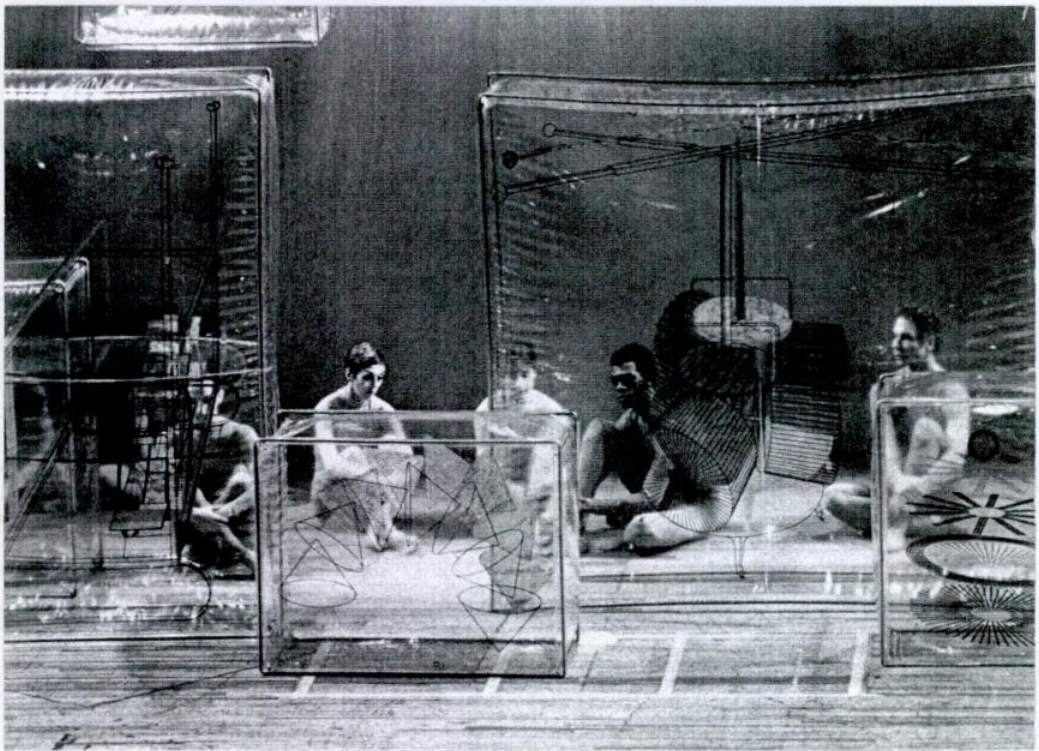


Plate 16. "Walkaround time" - Cunningham and Dance Company 1968.

pieces of string, individually. Each piece measured one metre in length. The way it fell became the new measure of the metre - as he drew up templates of them and recorded it! Cage's admiration of Duchamp's perception and humour is evident as he said "The check. The String he dropped.... the things he found. Therefore everything seen - every object, that is, plus the process of looking at it, is a Duchamp". [Kuenzli, 1989, Intro]. Yet again Duchamp's influence has pioneered, and his inspiration has triggered off multiples of possibilities for the future of art in the hands of other talented artists. Cunningham again indirectly draws upon Marcel Duchamp, because an adaptation by Cage of Duchamp's Large Glass is part of "Walkaround time" Duchamp's patterns are reproduced in the form of hollow transparent plastic blocks which are set about the stage. Cunningham seems positively, to welcome the artist not just onto but into the dance area involving the work of designers and artists in the dance. Movement of the dancers always seems to be of the utmost importance and is utilized and challenged by contributions of artists. As John Percival wrote "What is so stimulating about Cunningham is that he constantly extends the dance to match new developments in other arts and in life today". [Percival, 1971, Pg 48].

The Judson dance theatre, in the 1960's had a marvellously liberating effect on the young generation of American modern dancers. In Judson, painters and sculptors began to

be involved in dance, not only as designers but as producers and performers. At a concert given by the group in State University College New Platz, New York, in January 1964 a programme note declared, that

"In the curious way in which the art world changes, painters have made inroads into theatrical performances. Artists find that there are no acceptable sources for material. The Judson theatre reflects the latest of this recent tenancy to allow freer play. Dancers mixed with painters on the stage, point out how there is another quality to bodies than, just the arrived-at differences dancers have discovered in themselves - there is the whole look of the body, which knows a lot on it's own and whether "trained" or not, relays much of it's history with action". [Percival, 1971, Pg 14]

This integration and merging of artists together allows for a cross fertilization of ideas. A sculptor by the name of Peter Dockley, said once 'I moved away from sculpture because it didn't enable me to explore as many ideas as I wanted to. I think this is becoming a common situation with artists everywhere in all branches" [Percival, 1971, Pg 145]. Dockley turned to using sculptural ideas in a context involving dancers and others. One of his early experiments with dancers was an event called "4 Sounds 4 Structures", in which four differently shaped structures of tubular metal were set up in the four quarters of a large hall. A dancer occupied each of these and there was a musician in each corner of the hall. The audience was free to move around or between the structures. The aim was to make the audience more aware of space. The separate activities within each structure were entirely uncoordinated and the dancers were still developing

movement during the performance, on the principle that 'the audience is very much aware of something which is set, finished, and from which they are creatively excluded! Dockley suggests that these new forms are embodying a new audience performance. [Percival, 1971, Pg 146].

This type of performance brings another theatre to mind - A young contemporary, The Prism Theatre Company. In September 1992, this group presented 'Faust' which I attended and the production also was very much oriented toward audience participation. It's opening began in a type of foyer where the actors stood as though having a well projected conversation. Loud enough to command your attention but subtle enough to make one question. They led the audience into the theatre where everyone was asked to sit amidst the set, which happened to be the entire theatre. It was demanding a physical as well as a mental reaction from it's audience. The participation, continued until the end where the audience was led to three separate locations, for each individual scene. There was a rather small number in the audience which made it even more intimate but the affect was astounding, a definite interaction of ideas had taken place. The actual physical movement of people from scene to scene played a very important role in this interaction just as in Peter Dockley's experience.

The conventional method of audience participation is of

MACNAS



Plate 17A. Tain Dublin Theatre Festival '92.



Macnas participating in St. Patrick's Day Parade '91.
"The performance is the parade".

course the clapping of hands. It involves movement and sound, but doesn't necessarily involve the audience in the true context of what's happening. Once again, I am going to make reference to that theatre company that inspired me to investigate the relevance of movement in art. Macnas,¹⁰ in their production of an 'Tain', started the evening of their production by involving the audience in creating the mood of the place, to which we were about to depart. The production had a much larger audience than that at 'Faust', therefore it was not physically possible to deposit us in another place. But nevertheless a mental journey was made. This was achieved by the use of sound. The audience was divided into three sections from the back to the front. Each group had to make separate sounds, when put in quick succession, was made to sound like a wave crashing against stones and drifting back out to sea. It was simple and yet more effective than simply clapping.

This however was typical of the innovative thinking behind the production that took place. Macnas is not a group of actors, as already mentioned in the introduction, but rather a collection of artists, carpenters, technicians, people of different trades, with an interest in combining their efforts to produce an art with a difference. As in the Judson theatre company, their members are brought together with a desire to work together and merge to become a body of colour, talent, innovation, excitement and most importantly motion. It is interesting to note that Macnas

have taken part in the Arts Festivals around Ireland, in the form of participation in parades. This element of their foundation is of vast importance when given the significance of movement in their participation in parades, portraying their themes as they pass by and cajole the expectant onlookers. Their participation in the Galway Arts Festival parade '91 involved - as one part, an old double decker bus completely covered in greenery and scattered on the outside, clinging on were people also dressed in camouflage. Every now and then the bus stopped and these bodies of greenery jumped down into the crowd screaming and demanding and receiving instantaneous reaction - mostly in the form of hysterical screams both of fear and laughter.

But the basis of Macnas has remained unchanged. They provide a visual communication of ideas through movement and their display through movement of costume and innovative ideas such as using a bus as a Leprechan headquarters! This feature of movement as a means of communication, may not have the same impact on people of all nationalities, but like anything else, it is the context in which it is placed that gives it impact. Ireland is best known for verbal communications. Therefore records of traditional Irish or mythical Irish stories, are verbally communicated through verbal theatre, and literature. However Macnas have combined this ancient Irish myth, with colour, sound and movement in order to



Plate 17B. Tain - For Expo '92 - Rod Goodall

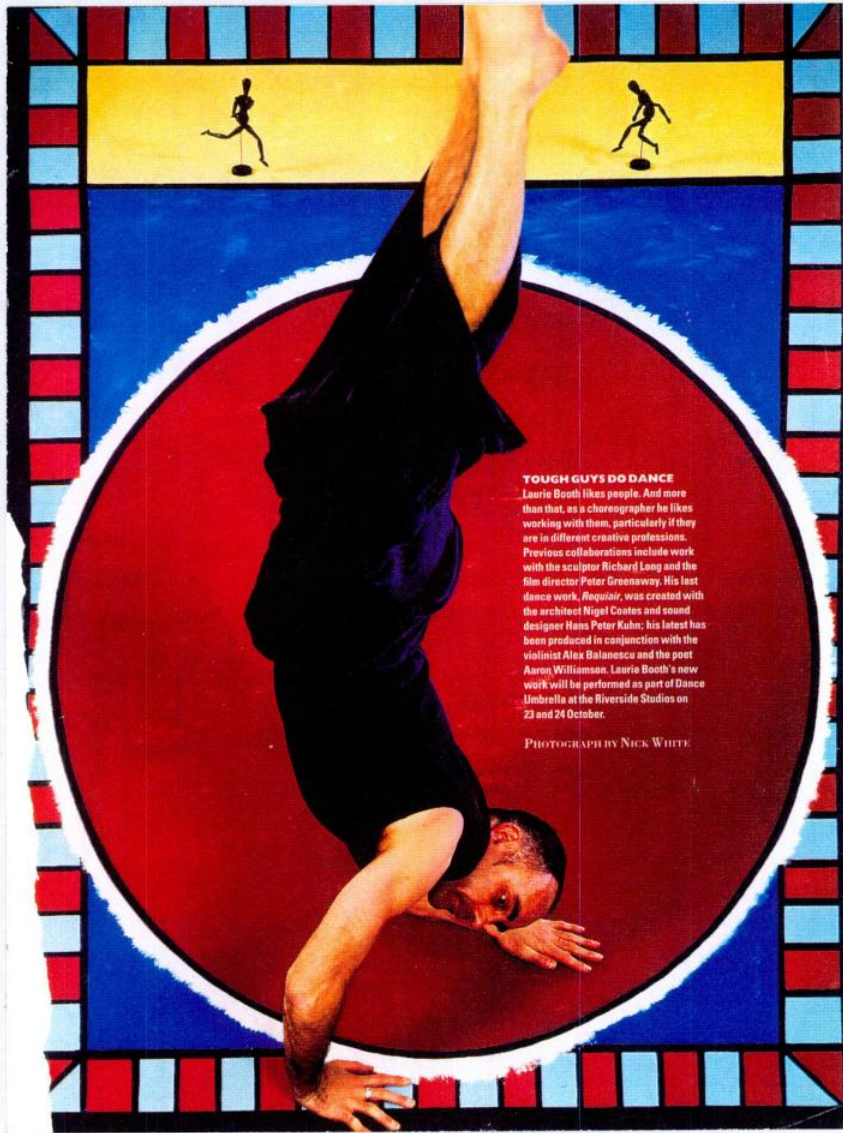


Plate 17C. Tain, Medb Warrior Queen.

communicate the story. Their beauty is that they capture, in my eyes 'ar aon nos', the beauty of the Irish language without actually using it. This is perhaps one of the reasons why they were chosen to go to Seville to represent Ireland in Expo '92. The rhythm of the language was carried through the lilt of the music and sounds of both voices and instruments but all without words. The clashing of props - for example two characters in the performance fought with spears and shields, the clang of metal and wood, the sheer weight of the instrument not only gave a real and authentic feel, but added to the rhythm and beat, as every move marked a phrase of language. The instruments for Battle were made heavy, and from original materials but more importantly the skill of those who made the props and costumes were present and participating on the set. It combines the continuity with life of which Kandinsky and Noguchi, Laban and others had spoken. The communal dependency is in fact an echo of the traditions of ancient Ireland. They return to the primitive for inspiration, as Duncan and Graham had done previously. These are all elements - whether stumbled upon by Macnas, or calculated in the case of Nijinsky using Greek sculpture. The combining of the art into one new art, seems a natural and feasible step now. But this has happened, only because each art has realized, through it's own individual experimentations, their own limitations, the values as art in themselves. Movement as an art, has bloomed and enhanced it's own value, through it's combination with

painting, sculpting, design and craftsmanship and of course technological advances in sound and movement.

The combination of the arts, is evidently most successfully achieved with the medium of movement. Each art, dance and painting (Duncan) sculpture and dance (Dockley, Cunningham) sound and dance (Cage and Cunningham) Philosophy and movement (element of Chance Duchamp, Cage and Cunningham), has achieved a certain level of respect in themselves and for each other. Their realisations paralleled at a climax where, the natural progression has become modern art. To me movement is the element or ^{um} media which links the arts and has become the vital link in the combining of Art.



TOUGH GUYS DO DANCE

Laurie Booth likes people. And more than that, as a choreographer he likes working with them, particularly if they are in different creative professions. Previous collaborations include work with the sculptor Richard Long and the film director Peter Greenaway. His last dance work, *Raquel*, was created with the architect Nigel Coates and sound designer Hans Peter Kuhn; his latest has been produced in conjunction with the violinist Alex Bateman and the poet Aaron Williamson. Laurie Booth's new work will be performed as part of Dance Umbrella at the Riverside Studios on 23 and 24 October.

PHOTOGRAPH BY NICK WHITE

An example from Vogue Oct. '92 of the "merging of creative professions".

CONCLUSION

Movement has become the link between the arts. The development of performance art through, art movements such as Dadaism and Futurism, has evidenced the natural progression towards a new art. Kandinsky recognised, early in this century, how the arts were coming together under the heading of theatre.

We have seen artists collaborate, from areas as various as sculpture with dance and painting and dance, because of their common interests in creating this new art. It has involved, an extension of art to a way of life. This continuation of art with life also emerged as a parallel between various artists such as Copeau, Laban, Noguchi and Graham to name but a few. The continuation of art with life has become an integral part of the new perception of art this century. It is responsible for the creation of elements such as the chance element used by Duchamp, Cage and Cunningham. Cunningham and Warhol in Rainforest exemplified the use of movement in art and as an art.

The merging of creative professions in this way is an ongoing process. This is evidenced across the spectrum of arts because it has emerged as one of the most successful manifestations of art. This, in my opinion, is because movement is such a tangible medium, people can relate directly to it. Macnas awakened my realization of the

importance movement plays in communication and expression. It is obvious I am not alone in my opinion. Macnas awakened my realization of the importance movement plays in communication and expression. It is obvious I am not alone in my opinion. Macnas has become a leading theatre and community spectacle company founded in Galway six years ago. Demonstrating the international appeal of Irish community arts movement, this year Macnas has performed at Amersfoort, the Netherlands as part of the European Cities Festival. In June the group, as already mentioned, premiered it's dramatic new version of 'Tain' at Expo 92 in Seville, Spain. At Expo 92, Macnas had been nominated as the Irish contender for the U.N. Cultural Prize. Their major street spectacle for 1992 is 'Capall', already seen during the summer at Galway Arts Festival. In recognition of Macnas's importance, the Arts Council this year raised it's grant by over 60 per cent. This is indeed, solid proof of the impact this group have had both nationally and internationally.

It is also proof of the change in perception of art and theatre. It's success and acceptance in Ireland, is alone a tribute to movement and it's success as an art, since Ireland is predominantly a verbal nation. Of course Macnas are only one example, of the change in art. Course structures in colleges are another simple example of the demand for change in Art. Many Fine Art courses include dance, theatre and music. Performance art has become an

enormously interesting and diverse form of art. In my opinion movement is the art of the Future. It is the language understood by all nationa^s. This fact alone has already opened the door for Macnas in Seville, it is of tremendous relevance at this time, as Europe moves closer together. Movement is a physical language, it is the 'Poetry of Senses', it is beyond the reach of the spoken language; Movement is the Art of tomorrow.



Macnas: Táin "Warp Spasm" Cúchlainn.

APPENDIX

INTRODUCTION

1. 'Other Theatres', The Development of Alternative Theatres. From: Experimental Theatre, 1984.
2. 'The cinderella of the arts', Sunday Times Magazine Art. 'In Step with the Times', 25th Oct, 92, Pg. 20.

CHAPTER I

3. 'The Beauty of Speed', Manifesto of Futurism Futurist Manifesto, 1973, Pg. 21.
4. 'Premier Vendredi' de Literature: Paris Dadists had a literature group which decided to take their material more directly to the audience. Thus, they planned a series of matinees beginning January 23, 1920. To distinguish them from other such poetic afternoons, some avant-garde painting and sculpture and musical selections would be played. Le Premier Vendredi de Literature: Chap 1., Latest Rage Big Drum, 1980, Pg. 3.

CHAPTER II

5. Duchamp, Marcel; From: Marcel Duchamp Artist of The Century, 1989, Pg. 8
6. 'New Actors', 2 Stanislavsky's Life in Art Experimental Theatre, 1984, Pg.9
7. 'New Dancers' Melzer Latest Rage Big Drum Chapter VI Pg.90

CHAPTER III

8. Laban From 1912-14 Laban and his pupils summered on a dance-farm in Ascona (Ticino Switzerland). This is recorded by Melzer in Latest Rage Big Drum, Pg. 91.
9. Cages own expression 'the electronic gadgetry'. Experimental Dance. A chance for dance. para. 4.
10. Macnas Interview with Rod Goodall, Theatre Director.

INTERVIEW SYNOPSIS

INTERVIEWEE: Rod Goodall, Managing Director of Macnas.

Rod Goodall himself has always been involved in theatre. He worked with the Theatre Company Footsbarn for twelve years and gained extensive experience in theatre management. He was asked to join Macnas, as they were missing an important link, a good organizer. The group managing Macnas at the time were friends, mostly stemming from "UCG Drama Society Class of '79".

Rod came from France to Ireland to take over, he "got paid well and worked hard as a result". He was "one of the first, paid professionals" to come and work for Macnas. That Summer - '87 they produced 'The Game'. They were now being funded under FAS and ACE scheme and later with Arts Council aid. "It started off in community arts, thereby having a lot of people, who were not professionals. One made up in numbers what one lacked in performance skills". The football game was "a scripted version, so there was no dialogue involved in there it was all very visual gags based on football. That was a huge success". I asked Rod if the fact that those involved were not particularly professional actors, dancers, artists or designers, made a difference. He replied "I think it's one of the vital parts of the success of Macnas - it's not become so specialized, it's not a union situation". "There are

amazingly talented people walking about the streets, it's fantastic to be able to give them a vehicle like Macnas, to express themselves and go and make more professional work for themselves afterwards ... we certainly provide a great opportunity in Macnas to develop in all ways, whether it's musically, acting or Design or making". But Macnas does involve people both in design and acting and making. "Very much so, it's very much a collective, although everybody had their certain responsibilities".

I asked Rod also about the part movement plays in the productions. He replied "it's based on movement really, it all comes from movement, our style of theatre is evolved from a certain style of street entertainment". "Movement has become more and more important because being outside vocals don't work. We don't tell stories by using words, we tell stories by making pictures, ^eimagry, I suppose you could almost call it iconoclastic!".

He also went on to speak about 'Tain'. "We wanted to approach 'Tain' particularly in a non verbal style". "We've never taken on a full length show without dialogue - in a sit down audience". I asked about the sound and atmosphere. The use of sound was "a major step forward, music being a vital part of the action. They had done shows before, always with music, but never to such a degree of inter-dependancy". One of the things we were replying on was the music, and the music couldn't get going until

they saw a scene". This emphasised the whole way of working together. The celtic theme was the choice of Paraic Breannach the Manager of Macnas, who "had been toying with the idea, in the back of his mind for some time. What really clenched it (choice of theme) was the invitation by the Taoiseach to come up with a new show for Seville in Expo '92. "And we wanted to provide something that was Irish, fresh, and celtic". Rod admits it was a great chance to do the show, but they went into great debt to produce the show; "it was a very ambitious step".

Now because of the enormous debt, it is impossible to come up with a new programme until the Autumn. Now they "are obliged to do a lot of work, but not to make any losses". There are seven full-time staff with Macnas, and they are being grant aided which is taking a little of the burden away. Their next major work is for the Galway Arts Festival in July, it promises to be another wordless scenario, and quite a spectacle. Macnas, are continually being fueled by Irish unemployed people. I don't wonder at their success, as Rod Goodall said Macnas is a "vehicle to express themselves". It is interesting to note that it is essentially expressed through movement.

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