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## LUCINDA CHILDS / SOL LEWITT

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PARIS PANTIN

24 Sep 2016 - 07 Jan 2017

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#### Opening: Friday, 23 September 2016, 7-9pm

The exhibition *Lucinda Childs – Sol LeWitt* is part of the Lucinda Childs retrospective due to take place this autumn at the Galerie Thaddeus Ropac, the Centre National de la Danse, and in the Festival d'Automne. The exhibition at our space in Pantin highlights the parallel development of the graphic methods of these two artists during the 1970s. Their collaboration in the piece *Dance* (1979) gained widespread attention, but their affinity had begun to grow at the beginning of the decade with ideas in common about drawing, seriality and movement.

In 1979, Lucinda Childs began rehearsals for *Dance* in New York. The piece was a turning point in the choreographer's career; it was a move away from the alternative spaces in which she had presented her pieces over the previous two decades. Working with Sol LeWitt and composer Philip Glass, she developed a show that explored the specificities of the theatre system. Sol LeWitt's contribution was to create the only film installation in his oeuvre. A 35mm film shot a few months beforehand was superimposed over the live dance, on a transparent screen covering the entire stage. In a complex, edited version of the same dance, this film multiplied the points of view of the choreography, while it was simultaneously executed in real-time by the dancers. The exhibition at Pantin has benefited from an exceptional loan from the Whitney Museum, New York, of one of the original choreographic scores of *Dance #4* (1979); it was donated to the Whitney Museum by Lucinda Childs.

The choreographer's archives, which have never been exhibited before, trace the development of her choreographic language in the 1970s, using more than a hundred pieces of graphic material. These documents operate as an echo to Sol LeWitt's *Wall Drawing #357*, which is a development of the arc motif on the walls of the gallery. The arc, along with the straight line and the diagonal, constitute the formal repertoire of Lucinda Childs's minimalist dances.

For the five dances that initially made up *Dance*, Lucinda Childs used a procedure, invented in 1973, involving a diagram from which she generated the choreographic score. In the 1960s, Childs had drawn sketches delineating pathways of movement, but in the 1970s she turned towards compositions involving ordinary movements strung together serially and repetitively. Walking and changes of direction thus became the essential raw material of her dances and, from then on, the pathways of movement sketches would be integrated into the score of the piece.

At their first meetings for the creation of *Dance*, Sol LeWitt and Lucinda Childs exchanged diagrams of the dances (probably by fax). The artist would then attribute a primary colour to them. The central place of diagrams in the elaboration of the dances stemmed from the methodology Lucinda Childs had begun to adopt in 1973. She no longer tried to work out the dancers' pathways beforehand; a graphic machine, a drafting tool, now generated the lines. It was only later, during rehearsals, that the performers' pathways were individualised. At the heart, then, of the construction of the choreography we find the same methodology as Sol LeWitt developed in his serial work of the 1970s and 80s. In LeWitt's wall drawings, and in Lucinda Childs's choreography, the notion of series enables them both to push the graphic logic of each motif to infinity.

Among the documents assembled in this exhibition, a great deal of the correspondence between Sol LeWitt and the choreographer is also displayed. It is possible to follow the drawn and stamped diagrams that the artist made in Murano, Rome and Beijing in response to the choreographer's diagrams of the dances. On the back of one of these postcards, there are some flicker-pictures; they are from a photographic plate entitled *Man performing headspring, a flying pigeon interfering*, part of Eadweard Muybridge's study of animal locomotion, in this case photos illustrating the different stages of a headspring. Photographed head-on, the movement looks incoherent, whereas, in profile, the photos reveal the sequential logic inherent in ordinary movements. The seriality of the two artists' work was thus constructed as much from graphical processes as from capturing the ordinary movements that animate human locomotion and, in this respect, Eadweard Muybridge is a reference shared by both of them.

The execution of *Wall Drawing #357: A 12" (30 cm) grid covering the wall*, which Sol LeWitt created in November 1981 in New York and which exploits the arc motif, will be realised by an artist from the Sol LeWitt Foundation, who will work for over three weeks on a white chalk realisation of the drawing on a black-painted wall nearly 25 metres long. The last day of drawing will coincide with the opening of the exhibition on Saturday, 24 September 2016. The *Wall Drawing* will be wiped off on 7 January 2017, the last day of the exhibition. This will also take place in the presence of an audience.

Curator: Lou Forster

Production: Galerie Thaddeus Ropac, CND Centre national de la Danse with the Festival d'Automne

In the context of the exhibition *Lucinda Childs, Nothing Personal, 1963 - 1989* organized with CND Centre national de la danse and Festival d'Automne in Paris

