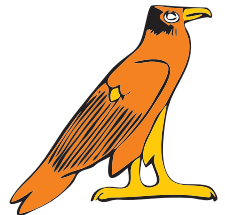


Kunsthalle Wien



Museumsquartier

BABETTE MANGOLTE



18/12 2016 – 12/2 2017

Booklet #Mangolte
www.kunsthallewien.at

Babette Mangolte

I = EYE

Babette Mangolte (*1941) is an icon of international experimental cinema. From the beginning, her early interests focused on the documentation of the New York art, dance, and theatre scene of the 1970s, and above all, on performance art. The adaptation of dance and choreography for the media of film and photography – and the concomitant question regarding the changes this transfer has on an event based on the live experience – play a central role in her work.

I = EYE not only presents an array of Mangolte's film and photo works from the 1970s, but also more recent projects, which explore the historicisation of performance art, and the differences between perceptions of contemporaneity past and present, as well as conceptualizations of time. All works are defined by a visual form that innovatively incorporates and reflects on a wide array of influences from silent and American experimental film to feminist film theory.

Babette Mangolte discovered her love for cinema in 1960 with the Nouvelle Vague. In 1964, she was the first woman to be accepted at Louis Lumière's École Nationale de la Photographie et de la Cinématographie in Noisy-le-Grand near Paris. In 1970, her interest in experimental works inspired her to travel to the USA, where she became acquainted with the contemporary avant-garde scene in New York.

In response to which films have influenced her the most, she cites Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) and Michael Snow's *Wavelength* (1967): "These two films literally changed my life. The first one made me decide to become a cinematographer, and the desire to see the second one led me to New York, where I settled down and eventually made my films."¹

Babette Mangolte was the cinematographer for Chantal Akerman's *Jeanne Dielman* (1975) and *News From Home* (1977), and also for Yvonne Rainer's *Lives of Performers* (1972) and *Film about a Woman Who...* (1974). In 1975, she completed her first film *What Maisie Knew*, which won the "Prix de la Lumière" at the Toulon Film Festival in the same year. Subsequently, other significant films from her filmography include *The Camera: Je or La Camera: I* (1977), *The Cold Eye (My Darling, Be Careful)* (1980), *The Sky on Location* (1982), *Visible Cities* (1991), and *Four Pieces by Morris* (1993).

Based on Mangolte's fundamental interest in the subjective camera, the exhibition at the Kunsthalle Wien follows an experimental approach employing space and time as media. Viewing time, the relation between photograph and film, the translation from one medium to another, and the resulting changes in the filmed or photographed event are further crucial topics of inquiry. *I = EYE* is centred around film sequences, which are interrupted by acoustic interventions and projected onto four separate screens to create a both cinematic and choreographic installation.

On a comprehensive level, this form of presentation enables one “to look at what it means to look.”² The fact that Mangolte’s films reflect the temporal aspect of the performance and translate this experience into cinematic time is also reflected in the installation which, in a sense, “performs” the films in their complete length.

One of the screens shows a variation of films and excerpts. These projections are interspersed with extracts from soundtracks derived from a selection of films, sound collages, and Mangolte’s reflections on her filmic practice. While the alternating languages in her films allude to the process of translation, the relation between language, sound, and imagination defines the acoustic level.

The sequence of films were choreographed especially for the exhibition. Beginning with storm noises from Mangolte’s film *Roof Piece on the High Line* (2011/2012), the score continues with a scene from *What Maisie Knew* (1975). A collaged soundtrack leads to the film *(Now) or Maintenant entre parenthèses* (1976), which shows the activation of various objects but also alludes to the temporal structure of the medium of film: in the light of the projector, events filmed in the past are enlivened in the present. The installation also includes *Water Motor*, *Steve Paxton at Dia:Beacon*, *The Camera: Je or La Camera: I*, *Patricia Patterson Paintings*, *Edward Krasiński’s Studio*, *Visible Cities*, *Yvonne with Tape*, *Four Pieces by Morris*, and *Roof Piece on the High Line* and *Je, Nous, I or Eye, Us*.

Documentation of artistic practice, filmic approaches to performances, studies of contemporary dance, and reflections on the way in which the camera claims reality and develops its own temporality while filming movements and people, interchange in this presentation.

Together, the twelve films provide an all-embracing insight into Mangolte’s cinematic practice which focuses on the reflection of the subjective view of the camera as opposed to traditional identification with the actors. The installation itself also breaks with the established artistic practice of simultaneously projecting several films in one space: instead, all works are shown consecutively. However, since the entire loop is over six hours, a complete viewing would be challenging. In its totality, the exhibition itself resembles a choreography.

The film and sound montage is supplemented by film stills. These images derive from particular films shown projected on the walls. Spotlights illuminate them for brief moments, thus incorporating them as one part of the full performative presentation.

Photographs of performances by Trisha Brown and Lucinda Childs illustrate Mangolte’s longstanding dedication to modern dance. Over many years, she devoted herself to capturing the one moment that represents the whole movement, and to the relation between time, space, and image. In this collection of photographic documentation, the famous shots of Trisha Brown’s *Roof Piece* from 1973 (a performance involving dancers on the rooftops of

New York) exemplifies her depiction of complex choreographies.

The connections between the separate photographs – the possibility of creating sequences and the resulting changes in meaning – is another central theme in Mangolte’s oeuvre. For the exhibition, she developed *Touching IV*, an installation consisting of a large table with a display of digital prints from her archive of theatre photographs. Visitors are invited to touch, compare, and rearrange the pictures in varying formats, which are very different from her photos of dances and performances.

The focus in this selection is on Richard Foreman’s *Ontological-Hysterical Theater*, its actors, the costumes and sets, and on the performer Stuart Sherman, who promoted an abstract performative style. In theater, the actor’s expression is essential and often determines the shooting of a photo. In contrast to the photographs of dances and performances, most of the scenes in Foreman’s pieces confront one group of actors with another, thus providing a narrative that enables a connection between the pictures. Although they represent different productions, the prints on the table share common features. While examining and rearranging the copies, viewers are invited to discover subtle details in the variations.

The transfer of a filmic image to a photograph and the correspondence between the individual pictures provides the basis for *Play Card Set* from 1978. For this work, Mangolte altered a set of playing cards

by sticking stills from her film *The Camera: Je or La Camera: I* onto the faces of the cards. The slide projection of a selection of photographs was also inspired by the artist’s interest in transferring one medium to another. In this case, the perception of time and movement are the key aspects. One projection shows various photographs from plays and performances, while another is dedicated to the relation between colour photography and painting, between fragmented viewing and reproduction.

Landscapes and History (1997), a series of colour photographs the artist took in 1986, illustrates the emptiness and vastness of American landscapes: a storm over the Grand Canyon, a stormy sky in Montana, a lake in Colorado, a dark sky during a sunset in Utah, a hill in the Mojave Desert. These shots show landscapes of epic dimensions which seem to reflect a different concept of time.

1. Mangolte, Babette. “Life in Film: Babette Mangolte,” *Frieze Magazine*, Issue 117 (September 2008): 38-39.
2. Mangolte, Babette. “Artist Statement,” 2013. Features in forthcoming book, *Babette Mangolte: Selected Writings*, published by Sternberg Press.



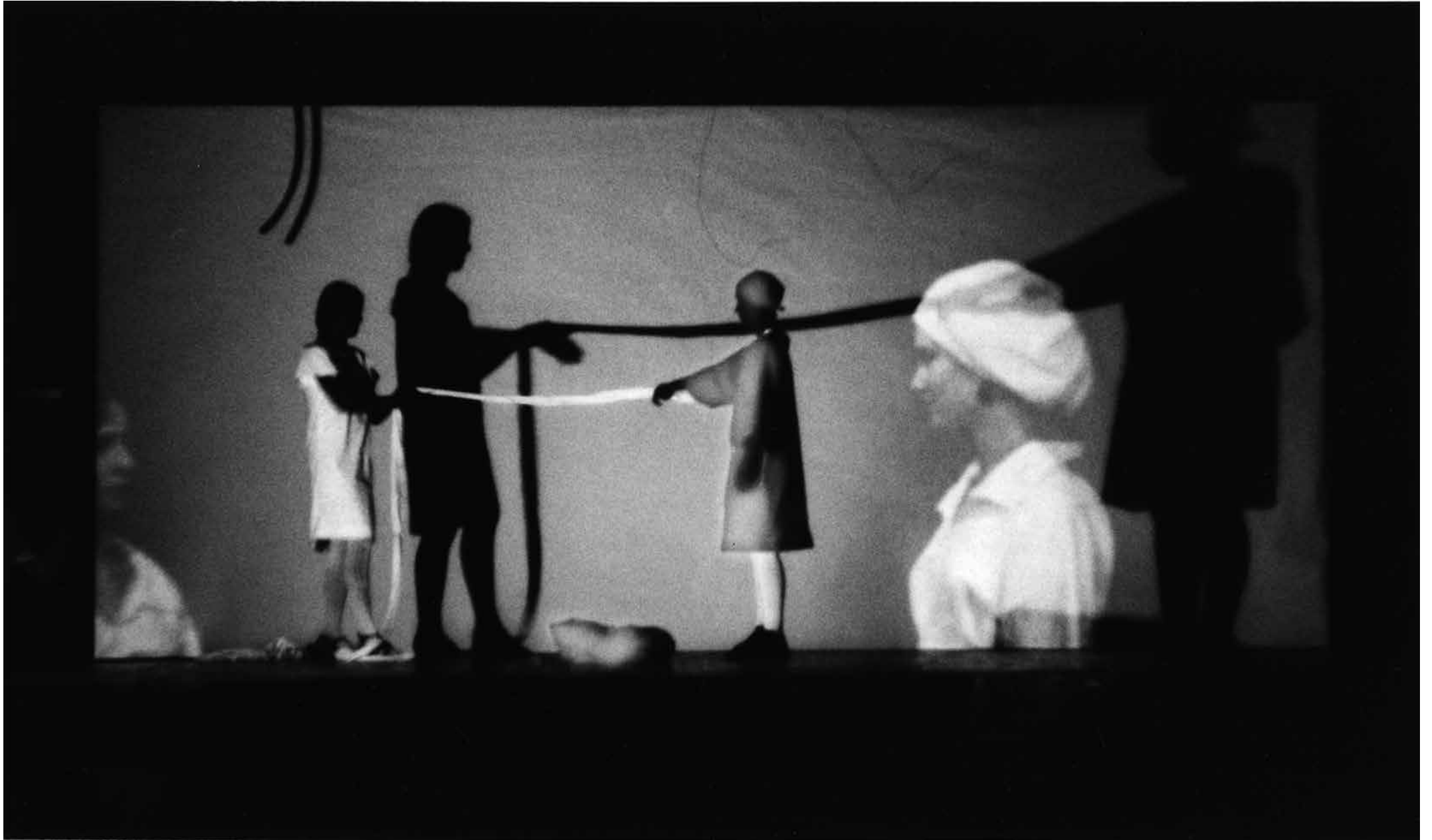
Babette Mangolte, *Arizona* film still *Four Pieces by Morris*, 1993. © Babette Mangolte, Courtesy of the artist and Broadway 1602 Uptown & Harlem, New York



Babette Mangolte, *Diptych "Jimi"* from *"The Camera: Je, La Camera: I"*, 1977, © Babette Mangolte, Courtesy of the artist and Broadway 1602 Uptown & Harlem, New York



Babette Mangolte, *Diptych "Stuart"* from *"The Camera: Je, La Camera: I"*, 1977, © Babette Mangolte, Courtesy of the artist and Broadway 1602 Uptown & Harlem, New York



Babette Mangolte, *Robert Whitman's Prune Flat*, 1965 (Photo from reconstruction in 1976),
© Babette Mangolte, Courtesy of the artist and Broadway 1602 Uptown & Harlem, New York



Babette Mangolte, film still *Edward Krasinski's Studio*, 2012, © Babette Mangolte, Courtesy of the artist and Broadway 1602 Uptown & Harlem, New York



Babette Mangolte, film still *The Camera: Je or La Camera: I*, 1977, © Babette Mangolte, Courtesy of the artist and Broadway 1602 Uptown & Harlem, New York



Babette Mangolte, *Site* film still from *Four Pieces by Morris*, 1993, © Babette Mangolte, Courtesy of the artist and Broadway 1602 Uptown & Harlem, New York



Babette Mangolte, film still *Visible Cities*, 1991, © Babette Mangolte, Courtesy of the artist and Broadway
1602 Uptown & Harlem, New York



Babette Mangolte, *Four Pieces by Morris at Guggenheim Museum in 1994, 1994*, © Babette Mangolte, Courtesy of the artist and Broadway 1602 Uptown & Harlem, New York

Films

What Maisie Knew

1975, 16mm, b/w, 58 min.

© Babette Mangolte, Courtesy of the artist and Broadway 1602 Uptown & Harlem, New York

A film about the subjective camera, a child's perspective, and a rereading of the novel of the same name by Henry James. The subject is not reality and its appearance, but its composition through our perception.

(Now) or Maintenant entre parenthèses

1976, 16mm, colour, 10 min.

© Babette Mangolte, Courtesy of the artist and Broadway 1602 Uptown & Harlem, New York

A linear sequence of activities/ manipulations of objects.
Film = now/projected film = (now)

The Camera: Je or La Camera: I

1977, 16mm, b/w and colour, 88 min.

© Babette Mangolte, Courtesy of the artist and Broadway 1602 Uptown & Harlem, New York

The film is about the connections between seeing and the power generated by the act of creating images. Despite its didactical intention, the first part of *The Camera: Je or La Camera: I* is rather disconcerting. The viewer is confronted with photo models who are being filmed and told how to pose. The fear we see on the models' faces and bodies (which reflects our role as viewers) visualizes the fear of being more than a mere spectator.

It is as though we were watching ourselves being photographed, photographed by the screen we are looking at.

Water Motor

1978, 16mm, b/w, 7 min.

© Babette Mangolte, Courtesy of the artist and Broadway 1602 Uptown & Harlem, New York

The image fades in. For two seconds, Trisha Brown stands motionless before she starts dancing her solo *Water Motor* as fast as flowing water. Her movements are almost too rapid and complex to follow. After the dance, Trisha Brown is as motionless as she was at the beginning, only now she is closer to the camera and the picture turns to black. Once again, the picture fades in to show Trisha Brown who performs the same dance, but this time in slow motion (recorded with 48 frames per second). This new quality of movement enables the viewer to see the details missed during the first performance.

Visible Cities

1991, 16mm, colour, 31 min.

© Babette Mangolte, Courtesy of the artist and Broadway 1602 Uptown & Harlem, New York

Two women are searching for a house in Southern California. They stand outside peering into a detached house which reveals itself to be a place of exclusion. It is also prohibitively expensive. Feeling like invisible citizens, they witness the transformation of the architectonic landscape in the Californian desert into a reversion of nature, where exclusive living, gated communities, and segregation go hand in hand.

They dream of escaping. The film enlivens the landscape and explores off-screen presence and subjectivity.

Slide Show

2010, slide projection, 5 min.

© Babette Mangolte, Courtesy of the artist and Broadway 1602 Uptown & Harlem, New York

The DVD projection *Slide Show* is a selection of series of dance photographs from Mangolte's archive which illustrate the repertoire of movements developed by the choreographers of the Judson Dance Theater's era. Instead of showing each slide for the same length of time, the projection of each image varies between three and nine seconds. The result is more reminiscent of a silent movie than a slide show.

Four Pieces by Morris

1993, 16mm, colour, 94 min.

© Babette Mangolte, Courtesy of the artist and Broadway 1602 Uptown & Harlem, New York

"The film is a reconstruction of the most important performances by the sculptor Robert Morris from the early sixties. For me, the challenge was to make a film in the nineties which conveyed a sense of the aesthetics of another generation without changing them in the process. In the 1960s, the performance artists' and dancers' interest in Modernism was concentrated on incidental gestures and the length of time. Some of these subjects have become established in the repertoire of contemporary dance. Others, however, remain unfathomable, such as the concept

of theatrical time, which, under the great influence of John Cage, was completely rethought during that period in performance history. Film is a medium based on duration. Our concept of the length of time, however, is historically determined. Viewers' expectations change fundamentally from one generation to the next. The greatest challenge I faced was to portray another generation's sense of time. I played through the idea of giving the performers on screen the feeling of an intensified presence by using the acoustic space to restructure the images. I realised I could use the expansive length of time of the sixties to my advantage and emphasise the significance of the performers' bodies. The project is based on the preservation of the concept of art as transfer/art as framework. In my opinion, this defined the effect of the performances which revolutionised dance in the New York art scene of the early sixties." (B.M.)

Roof Piece on the High Line

2011/2012, HD video, 35 min.

© Babette Mangolte, Courtesy of the artist and Broadway 1602 Uptown & Harlem, New York

Trisha Brown's choreography *Roof Piece* has become the emblem of modern dance in the 1970s. It steered the viewers' concentration and attention to performers on faraway rooftops in the New York skyline. The version from 2011, on the other hand, was filmed within the compact architectonic space of the High Line, thus requiring the spectators to move around to see the dancers. The performance shows how

the improvised movement of a dancer watched from across rooftops gradually changes through distance and fragmented visual axes. The line of dancers runs southwards and reverses after the second half.

Patricia Patterson Paintings

2012, 16mm, HD video, 22 min.

© Babette Mangolte, Courtesy of the artist and Broadway 1602 Uptown & Harlem, New York

The film examines the brushstrokes and colour palette of the figurative painter Patricia Patterson, whose subjects are defined by her Irish heritage and the observational methods of a "documentary" painter. This portrayal was shot on 16mm film between 1989 and 1991, and cut as a digital video in 2012.

Edward Krasinski's Studio

2012, HD video, 30 min.

© Babette Mangolte, Courtesy of the artist and Broadway 1602 Uptown & Harlem, New York

The 30-minute film recalls a day in the life of the Polish artist Edward Krasinski. In 1960, the Constructivist Henryk Stazewski invited Krasinski to share his studio in Warsaw with him. After Stazewski's death, Krasinski created a series of meticulously detailed objects in situ, which not only became a shrine for his friend, but also an example of his own installations.

Steve Paxton at Dia:Beacon

2014, HD video, 8 min.

© Babette Mangolte, Courtesy of the artist and Broadway 1602 Uptown & Harlem, New York

Steve Paxton is shown improvising his reactions to works by Robert Irwin, Fred Sandback, Richard Serra, Carl Andre, Dan Flavin, and John Chamberlain at the Dia:Beacon. The music was inspired by David Tudor, the musical quotation alludes to a piece by Max Neuhaus.

Je, Nous, I or Eye, Us

2014, HD Video with sound, 4:3, 6:30 min.

© Babette Mangolte, Courtesy of the artist and Broadway 1602 Uptown & Harlem, New York

The film *Je, Nous, I or Eye, Us* is a mini essay that replies to a question about subjectivity in the 1970s while Mangolte was making her film *The Camera Je, La Camera: I* that reflects on the process of taking photographs. The new film from 2014 uses footage shot at the time of *The Camera: Je, La Camera: I* but never used and adds to the 16mm film a series of titles about a photographer's subjectivity then and now.

Yvonne with Tape

1972–2012, 16mm transferred to Video, b&w, 2:47 min.

© Babette Mangolte, Courtesy of the artist and Broadway 1602 Uptown & Harlem, New York

The short film shows Yvonne Rainer in close-up while she sticks a piece of tape first to her chin, then to her nose and then over her eyes. The absurd action is carried out with the camera frontally directed at the face, registering every movement in minute detail.

Installations

Fragments and Filmmaking, 2016
Installation with film projection
Variable dimensions

Touching IV, 2016
Installation
Variable dimensions plus Slide Show (theater)

Landscapes and History, 1997
10 colour c-prints made in 1986
Variable dimensions

All works © Babette Mangolte,
Courtesy the artist and Broadway
1602 Uptown & Harlem, New York

Slide Shows

Staging in Space Slide Show (theater), 2016
Projection digitized slides, loop

Framing as a Method for looking Slide Show (paintings), 2016
Projection digitized slides, loop

All works © Babette Mangolte,
Courtesy the artist and Broadway
1602 Uptown & Harlem, New York

Individual Works

Group Accumulation (Trisha Brown), 1973 (Later print 2007)
B/w gelatin silver print
27.94 x 35.56 cm

Roof Piece (Trisha Brown), 1973
(Later print 2003)

B/w gelatin silver print
40.64 x 50.80 cm

Shooting "Lives of Performers", 1972
(Later print 2007)
B/w gelatin silver print
27.94 x 35.56 cm

Line Up (Trisha Brown), 1977
(Later print 2004)
B/w gelatin silver print
20.32 x 25.40 cm

Line Up (Trisha Brown) – Trisha bisecting the group, 1977 (Later print 2004)
B/w gelatin silver print
20.32 x 25.40 cm

Line Up (Trisha Brown), 1977
(Later print 2004)
B/w gelatin silver print
20.32 x 25.40 cm

Line Up (Trisha Brown) – Improvisation with Steve Paxton, 1977 (Later print 2004)
B/w gelatin silver print
20.32 x 25.40 cm

Dptych "Jimi" from "The Camera: Je, La Camera: I", 1977
Digital print on paper
25 x 20 cm

Dptych "Mimi" from "The Camera: Je, La Camera: I", 1977
Digital print on paper
25 x 20 cm

Dptych "Stuart" from "The Camera: Je, La Camera: I", 1977
Digital print on paper
25 x 20 cm

Film Still from "What Maisie Knew", 1975
Digital print on paper
18 x 23 cm

Water Motor (Trisha rehearsing the solo in her studio), 1978
Digital print on paper
20 x 25 cm

Film Still from "Steve Paxton at DIA", 2014
Digital print on paper
13 x 20 cm

Film Still from "Steve Paxton at DIA", 2014
Digital print on paper
13 x 20 cm

Film Still from "The Camera: Je, La Camera: I", 1977
Digital print on paper
25 x 20 cm

Film Still from "The Camera: Je, La Camera: I", 1977
Digital print on paper
25 x 20 cm

Film Still from "Patricia Patterson Paintings", 2012
Digital print on paper
13 x 18 cm

Film Still from "Patricia Patterson Paintings", 2012
Digital print on paper
13 x 18 cm

Film Still from "Patricia Patterson Paintings", 2012
Digital print on paper
13 x 18 cm
Film Still from "Visible Cities", 1991
Digital print on paper
20 x 25 cm

Film Still from "Visible Cities", 1991
Digital print on paper
20 x 25 cm

Film Still from "Visible Cities", 1991
Digital print on paper
20 x 25 cm

Guggenheim Museum from "Four Pieces by Morris", 1994
Digital print on paper
20 x 25 cm

"Site" from "Four Pieces by Morris", 1993
Digital print on paper
20 x 15 cm

Film Stills from "Je, Nous, I = Eye, Us", 2014
Digital print on paper
20 x 51 cm

All works © Babette Mangolte, Courtesy the artist and Broadway 1602 Uptown & Harlem, New York

Program

Babette Mangolte is an iconic figure of international experimental film. *I = EYE* covers a wide range of works stemming from early cinematic and experimental films to her documentary photography of the theatre, dance, and performance of the New York avant-garde in the 1970s with the addition of two remastered historical sitespecific installations as well as recent projects.

The Sunday tours in German introduce visitors to the exhibition and the multifaceted work of Babette Mangolte.

Free with admission

Sun 18/12 2016, 4 pm
I = EYE
With Daniela Fasching

Sun 25/12 2016, 4 pm
The medium-specificity of performance
With Martin Pfitscher

Sun 1/1 2017, 4 pm
The art, dance and theater scene
of New York in the 1970s
With Wolfgang Brunner

Sun 8/1 2017, 4 pm
Cinematic influences on the work
of Babette Mangolte
With Daniela Fasching

Sun 15/1 2017, 4 pm
I = EYE
With Wolfgang Brunner

Sun 22/1 2017, 4 pm
The medium-specificity of performance
With Wolfgang Brunner

Sun 29/1 2017, 4 pm
The art, dance and theater scene
of New York in the 1970s
With Martin Pfitscher

Sun 5/2 2017, 4 pm
Cinematic influences on the work
of Babette Mangolte
With Martin Pfitscher

Sun 12/2 2017, 4 pm
I = EYE
With Martin Pfitscher

Curator's Tour
Wed 11/1, 6 pm
Curator's Tour with Luca Lo Pinto,
in English

Colophon

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