

January 12 – March 3, 2007



## About the Artist

The most widely acclaimed choreographer to emerge from the postmodern era, Trisha Brown came to public notice in the 1960s as part of the “dance revolution” at New York City’s Judson Dance Theater. After founding her company in 1970, she continued pushing the limits of choreography and creating works for alternative spaces including rooftops and walls, and flirting with gravity – alternately using it and defying it, a theme that recurs throughout her work. She soon began exploring more complex movements within traditional settings. Her work with Robert Rauschenberg and Laurie Anderson, *Set and Reset*, established her as a leader among choreographers for the stage, launching the work that has followed: stagings of full operas and chamber pieces (*L’Orfeo*, *Luci Mie Traditrici*, Schubert’s *Winterreise*, *Da Gelo a Gelo*), as well as pure dances set to classical and contemporary scores. Recently, she has concerned herself with narrative in dance and with interactive media. The first woman choreographer to receive the MacArthur Foundation Fellowship, she has been awarded many other honors including Brandeis University’s Creative Arts Medal in Dance, two John Simon Guggenheim Fellowships, New York State Governor’s Arts Award, and the National Medal of Arts. In 1988, she was named a Chevalier dans l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the government of France. She was elevated to Officier in 2000 and then to the level of Commandeur in December 2004. *Set & Reset* is currently included in the baccalaureate curriculum for French students pursuing dance studies. She was a 1994 recipient of the Samuel H. Scripps American Dance Festival Award, has been named a *Veuve Clicquot Grand Dame*. She served on the National Council on the Arts from 1994 to 1997. She has received numerous honorary doctorates and is an Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

## Foreword and Acknowledgements

The College of Visual and Performing Arts at the University of South Florida has selected Trisha Brown as the 2007 recipient of the Distinguished Master Artist Award. We are pleased to offer our students and the Tampa Bay community the opportunity to see the work of this immensely talented choreographer, visual artist and opera director. Ms. Brown epitomizes the avant-garde with her fearless, innovative and at times revolutionary practice.

Her career began with her academic experience at Mills College with Ann Halprin and expanded with her collaborative and experimental performances at Judson Church in the 1960s. She has continued for more than four decades to invent new languages that break conventions and boundaries in multiple arts disciplines and has redefined our expectations about movement, collaboration and performance. As universities across the nation strive to encourage collaborative research across disciplines, the presentation of Ms. Brown’s work on campus will serve as a model for our students and faculty.

In order to honor, recognize and celebrate Trisha Brown’s gifts, the USF Contemporary Art Museum organized a solo exhibition of her drawings and recently completed etchings produced at Graphicstudio; the School of Theatre and Dance presents *Set and Reset/Reset*, the restaging for advanced modern dance students of one of Ms. Brown’s most acclaimed collaborations with composer Laurie Anderson and visual artist Robert Rauschenberg; and, finally, the Trisha Brown Dance Company performs on campus and at the Mahaffey Theater at the Progress Energy Center in St. Petersburg.

Her solo exhibition at the USF Contemporary Art Museum, titled *Trisha Brown: Drawing on Land and Air*, is a survey of her drawings from the mid 70s to the present. The exhibition is designed to set up conditions that invite viewers to make connections between Ms. Brown’s creative methodologies in drawing and choreography. Her conceptual systems and quirky gestures break down familiar body movements that are in evidence in both her drawings and choreography. Four monitors, clustered together, show dance videos titled *Accumulation* (1972), *Group Primary Accumulation* (1973), *Locus* (1975), *Glacial Decoy* (1979) and *It’s a Draw/Live Feed* (2003).

In the fall of 2006 Trisha Brown worked in residence at USF’s atelier, Graphicstudio. With master printers Tom Pruitt and Chris Creyts, she created a series of ten etchings, which are included in the exhibition. Her approach was pure and direct. She made an impression directly on the plate with the movement of her foot.

To curate this exhibition I worked closely with Rebecca Davis, Assistant to the Artistic Director at the Trisha Brown Dance Company. We made a selection of early works previously shown in a

drawing exhibition organized by the Museums of Marseille, France in 1998. Displayed in sequence is a suite of 32 drawings from 1999 titled *Handfall* created in Geneva while the Trisha Brown Dance Company was performing. Susan Rosenberg, an art historian living and working in New York, has contributed an insightful essay to accompany the exhibition that describes the new drawings and prints and puts them in historical context.

I am pleased to acknowledge and express my appreciation for the contributions of the staff of the USF Institute for Research in Art. Alexa Favata followed up with all details of the organization of the exhibition; Don Fuller designed the invitations and publications; Nicki Kruszka managed the Distinguished Master Artist events; Randy West handled related contracts and accounting; Vicki Billig, Peter Foe and David Reutter assisted with loans for the exhibition; and Tony Palms designed the installation with the assistance of James Rodger, Amber Cobb and Denton Crawford. David Norr advised on the set design for the student performance of *Set and Reset/Reset* and assisted with related education programs.

The Distinguished Master Artist Series is a program of the College of Visual and Performing Arts. I thank Ron Jones, Dean, Barton Lee, Associate Dean, and my fellow directors: Wallace Wilson, Marc Powers and Wade Weast. Michael Foley, Assistant Professor of Dance, is recognized for his work with the students to produce *Set and Reset/Reset*. USF alumna Claudia Ryan designed a new set in the spirit of Ms. Brown’s original collaboration with Robert Rauschenberg. Stacy Spense, dancer from Trisha Brown Dance Company, has worked in residence with the students. Beau Edwardson is acknowledged for his work in managing the Trisha Brown Dance Company’s Tampa performance, Bill Brewer for costume design and

Jason Winfield for set production. We are pleased to have Chris Fahlman of the Mahaffey Theater at the Progress Energy Center as our partner for the Company’s performance in St Petersburg.

It has been a pleasure working with several staff at the Trisha Brown Dance Company including: Michele Thompson, Elizabeth Johanningmeier, Rebecca Davis, Nicole Taney, and Tricia Toliver.

Also thank Burt Barr for his continuing confidence in Graphicstudio and for his advice and support.

Most of all I express my deep and heartfelt gratitude to Trisha Brown. Because of her talents and generous contributions we have the great joy of presenting her work in the Tampa Bay area.

Margaret Miller  
Director, Institute for Research in Art  
Curator for *Trisha Brown: Drawing on Land and Air*



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IMAGES: Cover - *Set and Reset*, performed by members of the Trisha Brown Dance Company. Photo © Naoya Ikegami/Saitama Arts Foundation; Bio - Trisha Brown in the studio; Foreword - *Set and Reset*, performed by members of the Trisha Brown Dance Company. Photo © Naoya Ikegami/Saitama Arts Foundation; Inside left - Trisha Brown, *Revolution*, 2006. Edition: 35. Softground etching with relief roll, 25 1/2" x 22" paper size. Published by USF Graphicstudio, photo: Will Lytch; Inside right - poster from Commande de Montpellier Festival International, 1989, Theatre de la ville, France. photo: Will Lytch.

Trisha Brown Drawing on Land and Air



Contemporary Art Museum



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## Trisha Brown: The Signs of Gesture

by Susan Rosenberg

*Do my movement and my thinking have an intimate connection? First of all, I don't think my body doesn't think!*

— Trisha Brown

Trisha's Brown's drawings initially developed within the framework of choreographic invention. Today, dance is externalized within the activity of drawing and is its conceptual and kinesthetic motor. An improvisational, gestural process has supplanted Brown's use of drawing to diagram thought. Paper, partnering with charcoal, pastel, oil stick – and now printer's ink – telegraphs her ephemeral actions to the page. Drawing is redefined in the process. Typically identified solely with the hand, the gesture of drawing, cherished for its close link to the artistic idea, is dispersed across the body in democratic fashion, consistent with the logic of Brown's choreography. This exploration of ephemeral movement as materialized in a rich language of indexical marks – marks arising from physical cause, trace or clue<sup>2</sup> – culminates in Trisha Brown's new series of prints, her first, realized at Graphicstudio in 2006.

Transformations in the means and ends of drawing for Trisha Brown over more than three decades nonetheless leave untouched the fundamentally diabolical relationship between her visual and choreographic art. Diabolical because 1) the development of Brown's choreography is implicated in the visual art world of the 1960s and 1970s and its aesthetic practices, which include art's use of systems and rules, modules and seriality; a rejection of illusion and of the theater; the embrace of non-traditional art and dance contexts, for example, outdoor and abandoned sites as well as museums and galleries; the use of words and texts within nonverbal art forms, and as interchangeable with them; the search for conceptual machines to generate art or undo it, as one erases a drawing; the embrace of impersonality over expressive affect, and the refusal of conventional definitions of virtuosity.

And diabolical because 2) Brown's drawings of the 1970s, even considered as scores, documents or all manner of instruction, supplement or procedural record of choreography, plainly correspond to the appearance, intent and function of drawings by minimalist, post-minimalist and conceptualist artists, her contemporaries, and sculptors in particular.



achieve a similarly awkward virtuosity. Here, each foot's rendering of its opposite, with a pencil between the toes, engages the body as an accomplice, as well as an obstacle to drawing. Drawing the left foot with the right and vice versa is an act that sets mind and body at cross-purposes – and in a manner that recalls *Accumulation with Drawing Plus Watermotor* (1979), a remarkable work that is the result of adding two dances and two stories spoken aloud in performance. The drawings tease kinesthetic intelligence apart from the visual and perceptual, releasing unforeseeable results as the body steers drawing.

Over the years Brown has equated the body with a pencil, dance with scribbling, the eye with a pencil that draws on the body, and drawing with a verb that sits in the air between choreographer and dancer.<sup>3</sup> “I do the same thing in drawing as I do in dance, and I'm not sure which came first.”<sup>4</sup> She became this unity (this dilemma) of a line and drawing uncontained by boundaries of discipline, matter or function when she located paper on the floor, and initiated drawing with her entire body from a standing, dancing position in the series *It's a Draw*, began in 1999.

In these large-scale drawings, realized through performance on a stage, in a gallery, or in the privacy of the studio, signs written on the body through dance training, memory and improvisation, take the form of pictorial signs motivated by gestures traced on the page. In the *It's a Draw* series, the ground of drawing, paper, which is horizontal to the floor, becomes vertical when installed on a wall, a situation that recalls conditions Brown considered fundamental when shifting her work to the proscenium stage with its perpendicular and horizontal frames of floor and stage.<sup>5</sup> The motivation of matter by physicality echoes in relation to artistic traditions encompassing Jackson Pollock's “action painting,” Yves Klein's anthropometries, 1950s–1960s performance, as well as sculpture and video concerned with the body's phenomenological experience and with process.

Of course, Brown's singular drawing language depends on unprecedented kinesthetic articulation and memory, as well as a visual ordering that takes into account improvisation and composition that is simultaneously physical and visual. In the evolution of the *It's a Draw* series she first treated her choreography as a readymade and used its fragments to guide improvisation. *Locus*, her 1975 dance based on the twenty-seven points imagined on a three-dimensional cube was one touchstone, since its structure, a spatial container of movement, corresponds to the unassailable frame of the page. In anticipation of an act of drawing onstage, ordering principles sometimes trump a more freewheeling approach: “I'll carry my dancing down into the paper

draw in charcoal and pastel while I'm down and rise up and do a set form and an improvised form. Then I'll hit the paper again.”<sup>6</sup>

The *It's a Draw* drawings deflect form by investigating process, although over time her repertoire of indexical marks have become a versatile, dependable and autonomous visual language, an evolution that reveals the gradual differentiation, repetition, combination and invention of mark-making systems. This is reflected in two recent drawings related to the series, although smaller in scale. The first, made primarily with the feet grasping charcoal and pastel is a constellation of twirls, smudges, dashes and dots made by the “jump” of charcoal across the page. An archive of signs for unrecoverable actions, arrayed like a series of words on a white page with the empty white spaces suggesting the beat of time between drawing incidents or events.

Process, the idea of drawing as a record of the physical act of its making, is moderated by Brown's inimitable visual intelligence and penchant for structure. Comparing a group of drawings from the *It's a Draw* group will underscore how decision-making moderates the random. One recent drawing incorporates a record of procedures and edits as a further layer of (choreographic and graphic) notation such as directional arrows, writing and color. Of course, only the choreographer can read the visual signs of dance that are a presence behind each drawing's realization, now evaporated, absent.

Technically the *It's a Draw* drawings are not “blind” drawing: the eyes are open, although constantly in motion in all directions. As is the case in the hand and foot drawings of 1980 and 1995, the occlusion of sight releases the body's graphic intentions from the grip of vision – a situation Brown appreciated and repeated, as if in preparation for her leap to drawings of a significantly larger scale: “I couldn't draw it with my eyes open because I would make it too orderly. I would know too well what I'm doing... and I worked a lot with my eyes closed for four or five years in order to interrupt my common behavior.”<sup>7</sup>

A different attitude informs drawings that originated to test the behavior of new papers. In two examples paper and oil stick acted on and altered movement choices. As measured in the floor's response to pressure on it, a raw application of frottage,<sup>8</sup> the textured imprint of an oil stick's side records both the direction and the uneven exertion required to push the device across the page. The strategy revisits an *It's a Draw* performance in London, where drawing was motivated by the simple act of running and briefly touching down with charcoal on the page. In these drawings materials exist (like equipment) for experimental manipulation according to unadorned movement tasks, the graphic results of which are accented with contrasting, delicate meandering lines.

These drawings are part of a group in which two or four sheets of paper are joined to make one with the paper seams playing a role in the processes or compositions. For example, in an elegant drawing of concentric, irregular circular lines, the gap between papers jars the rhythmic, circular gesture used to make them, a deliberate addition of discontinuity to the process of making continuous lines. In a contour drawing of great economy and restraint, partial renderings of thigh and knee, heel, toes and feet are layered across the seam where two sheets meet. Brown's techniques here (and her use of contour in other larger-scale works) remarkably suggest unhinged and floating movement of the body hovering above the page, as well as layered on it. Looping, interlacing lines – evocative of a butterfly and of pelvic bones, whose shape arose in Brown's abstract drawings of 1994-5 – occupy the drawing's central axis, the core around which limbs are centrifugally suspended.

In Trisha Brown's new etchings the choreographic and graphic are further integrated with the body, which coheres as an index and image in printed representations of footprints. The contraction of the scale of movement and of drawing's attenuated time-frame, necessitated by the printing technique and plate dimensions, discloses the foot's exquisite articulation and topography with greater specificity and resolution than in drawing. Process, vividly distilled, describes weight shifts, turns in space, and the sensuous and supremely liquid movement quality for which Brown is so well-known. The etchings, even more than the large-scale drawings, occupy artistic terrain between Andy Warhol's 1962 *Dance Diagram* paintings and Jasper Johns' 1975 *Skin* drawings, imprints of the artist's charcoaled face, hands and torso pressed to paper.

With a profound difference, for sure: Trisha Brown's unprecedented experience of the line's mobility of application and form accompanies her exploration of the physical (ephemeral) and material trace of gesture. This indivisibility of drawing and dance, as unfamiliar as a body that thinks or a foot that draws, is a matter of language, and of the indelible presence of “graph” in “choreograph.” Trisha Brown's stunning mastery of these two artistic languages, their unity and difference throughout her work as a whole, recognizes in the space between drawing and dancing signs of an unarrested continuity of kinesthetic and visual thought.

Susan Rosenberg



1 "Trisha Brown," in Joyce Morgenroth, *Speaking of Dance*, New York and London: Routledge, 2004, p. 64.  
2 Rosalind Krauss, "Notes on the Index: Part 2" *The Originality of the Avant-garde and Other Modernist Myths*, Cambridge MA and London, England: MIT Press, 1985, p. 211.  
3 Lise Brunel, Trisha Brown. Paris: Editions Bouge, 1987, p. 74; Marianne Goldberg, "Trisha Brown's Accumulations," *Dance Journal* Vol. 9 No. 2 (Autumn 1991): 6; Jordan Levin, "Pursuing the Unimaginable: since childhood Trisha Brown has been fascinated with the possibilities of—and the challenges to—the human body. A life of inventive dance just had to follow," *Los Angeles Times* (April 27, 1997): 7; Trisha Brown, "Dancing and Drawing: Trisha Brown interview with Hendel Teicher," Trisha Brown: *Dance, poésie de liberté*. Réunion des musées nationaux: Musées de Marseille, 1998, p. 21.  
4 "Trisha Brown in conversation with Vanessa Manko," *The Brooklyn Rail: Critical Perspectives on Arts, Politics, Culture* (May 2005), see <http://www.thebrooklynrail.org/dance/may05/trishabrown.html>.  
5 "Trisha Brown in conversation with Vanessa Manko," n.p.  
6 "Trisha Brown," in Joyce Morgenroth, *Speaking of Dance*, p. 62.  
7 "Trisha Brown: Motion of Thought," comments by Trisha Brown, "Creator Act Volume One (April 15, 2006): n.p. Yotsuya Art Stadium, Kinki University International Center for Human Sciences, Tokyo Community College. These methods participate in a tradition of process art that includes artists who use the body to supplant the central role of vision in drawing, such as Robert Morris (*Blind-Time drawings*, 1973-2000) and Carolee Schneeman (*Up to And Including Her Limits*, 1976), both of whom intersected with Trisha Brown in the world of performance in the late 1960s and early 1970s; William Anastasi (whose *Subway Drawings*, 1968 were inspired by John Cage), and before them Gutai artists such as Kazuo Shiraga, who used the feet and body to impart life to materials such as paint and mud.  
8 A surrealist technique, invented by Max Ernst, of creating a design by rubbing (as with a pencil) over an object placed underneath the paper.

## Exhibition Checklist

	43.) <i>Untitled</i> , 2006 Charcoal, oil stick, pen, pencil on paper 44 ½ x 60 inches	4.) <i>Untitled (Set Three)</i> , 2006 Softground etching with relief roll Suite of 3 prints, 25 1/2 x 22 inches	8.) Mercat de les Flors, 1986 France
<b>Drawings</b>		All prints Published by and Courtesy of Graphicstudio   Institute for Research in Art	9.) National Theater, 1996 Asia
1-6.) <i>A's</i> Pen on paper 14 x 11 inches each	44.) <i>Untitled</i> , 2006 Charcoal, oil stick, pen, pencil on paper 60 x 34 inches	<b>Videos</b>	10.) New York-Downtown Manhattan: Soho Academie de Kunte, Berlin Festival, Germany
7.) <i>Accumulation</i> Ballpoint on graph paper 8 ½ x 11 inches	45.) <i>Untitled</i> , 2006 Charcoal, oil stick, pen, pencil on paper 60 x 44 ¾ inches	1.) <i>Aeros</i> , 1990 By: Burt Barr 32:14 minutes Color and sound	11.) Set and Reset, Opal Loop, Newark, Lateral Pass Asia
8.) <i>Defense</i> , 1980 Pencil on paper 15 x 12 inches	46.) <i>Untitled</i> , 2006 Charcoal, oil stick, pen, pencil on paper 44 ½ x 60 inches	2.) <i>Glacial Decoy</i> , 1979 Set: Robert Rauschenberg Costumes: Robert Rauschenberg 18 minutes Sound: silence	12.) Teatr I Taniec Nowoczesny Z Nowego Jorku I Warszawy, 2000 Centrum Sztuki Współczesnej Zamek Ujazdowski, Poland
9-11.) <i>Eyes Closed</i> Pencil on paper 17 x 14 inches each	47.) <i>Untitled</i> , 2006 Charcoal, oil stick, pen, pencil on paper 60 x 52 inches	3.) <i>Group Primary Accumulation</i> , 1973 Sous legide de Conseil Regional Provence Alpes Cote d'Azur, France	13.) Theatre de la ville, 1991 France
12.) <i>Feet</i> Pen on paper 22 x 29 7/8 inches	48.) <i>Untitled</i> , 2006 Charcoal, oil stick, pen, pencil on paper 60 x 52 inches	<i>Primary Accumulation</i> , 1972 5:03 minutes	14.) Trisha Brown Company, 1983 Sous legide de Conseil Regional Provence Alpes Cote d'Azur, France
13.) <i>Handfall</i> , Geneva, 1999 Pen on paper 32 Drawings, 14 x 17 inches each	49.) <i>White Out</i> , 1980 Pencil on paper 18 x 16 inches	4.) <i>It's a Draw</i> , 2002 20 minutes approx. per drawing Color and sound	15.) Trisha Brown Company, 1986 Giugno International, Italy
14-19.) <i>It's a Draw</i> Charcoal and oil stick on paper 8 ½ x 10 feet each	50.) <i>Windows</i> , 1986 Pencil on paper 11 ¾ x 9 ¾ inches	5.) <i>Locus</i> , 1975 6:26 minutes Sound: silence	16.) Trisha Brown Dance Company, 1986-87 Teatro di San Carlo, Italy
20.) <i>Left hand drawn by right hand</i> Pencil on paper 11 3/8 x 15 15/16 inches	51.) <i>Windows</i> , 1986 Pencil on paper 12 x 9 ½ inches	All videos Courtesy of the Artist	17.) Trisha Brown Dance Company, 1987 Festival d'Automme, France
21.) <i>Locus Cube</i> Pencil and felt-tip pen on paper 12 x 9 inches	52.) <i>Windows</i> , 1986 Pencil on paper 10 7/8 x 13 15/16 inches	<b>Posters</b>	18.) Trisha Brown Dance Company, 1993 City Center, USA
22-25.) <i>Locus Cube</i> Ink and pencil on paper 12 x 9 inches each	53.) <i>Windows</i> , 1986 Pencil on paper 11 x 13 5/8 inches	1.) Art danse, 1996 Espace des art Chalons, France	19.) Trisha Brown Company, 1994 Hungary
26.) <i>Locus Cube</i> Ink and pencil on paper 17 x 14 inches	All drawings Courtesy of the Artist	2.) Claudio Monteverdi's L'Orfeo, 1998 La Monnaie, Belgium	20.) Trisha Brown Company, 2000 Festival d'Automme, France
27-32.) <i>Music: Schmoos &amp; A's</i> , 1994 Pencil on paper 14 x 16 15/16 inches each	<b>Prints</b>	3.) Commande de Montpellier Festival International, 1989 Theatre de la ville, France	21.) Trisha Brown Company De Singel, Belgium
33-37.) <i>Music: 4's and Schmoos</i> Pen on paper 11 x 14 inches each	1.) <i>Revolution</i> , 2006 Softground etching with relief roll 25 1/2 x 22 inches	4.) Festival International de Theatre Bruxelles, 1979 Festival International de Theatre Bruxelles, Belgium	22.) Trisha Brown Company East Coast Tour, USA
38.) <i>Sololos/Oct 80</i> Pencil on paper 15 11/16 x 11 7/16 inches	2.) <i>Untitled (Set One)</i> , 2006 Softground etching with relief roll Suite of 3 prints, 25 1/2 x 22 inches	5.) Glacial Decoy, Opal Loop, Newark, 1987 National de danse Contemporaine d'Angers, France	23.) Trisha Brown Company Asia Tour Japan
39-41.) <i>Straight Lines &amp; Curves</i> Pencil on paper 23 x 29 inches each	3.) <i>Untitled (Set Two)</i> , 2006 Softground etching with relief roll Suite of 3 prints, 25 1/2 x 22 inches	6.) "I never repeat myself...," 1995 Capezio, USA	24.) Trisha Brown Company, First British Tour Dance Umbrella, England
42.) <i>Untitled</i> , 1976 Pencil on paper 13 ¾ x 9 3/8 inches		7.) Maison de la danse France	25.) Trisha Brown from New York Saddlers Wells, England
			26.) Yvonne Rainer and Trisha Brown Wexner Center, USA
			All posters Courtesy of the Artist