PARIS8DANSE
SITE DES ÉTUDES ET RECHERCHES EN DANSE À PARIS 8

LOOSE ASSO CIA TION

Julie PERRIN

EMMANUELLE HUYNH AND TRISHA BROWN

in Noémie Solomon (ed.), *Danse : An Anthology*, les presses du réel, New York, 2014, p. 227-292.

PARIS8DANSE
SITE DES ÉTUDES ET RECHERCHES EN DANSE À PARIS 8

LOOSE ASSO CIATION

Julie PERRIN

EMMANUELLE HUYNH AND TRISHA BROWN[1]

in Noémie Solomon (ed.), *Danse : An Anthology*, les presses du réel, New York, 2014, p. 227-292.

Sparse Movements

Why put forward a parallel between Trisha Brown and Emmanuelle Huynh?[2] What kind of reduction will such a comparison lead to? Though looking at their respective work on release techniques enables us to trace common potentialities of movement and imagination, this in no way suffices to define the scope of an aesthetic, or even to wholly describe a movement style. From there, the paths these two artists have taken are as diverse as their gestural imaginations allow. Is it even possible to define, once and for all, Brown's style? The choreographer accustomed us throughout her career to move along a series of cycles that punctuated the evolution of her questionings. Therefore, we must instead consider her work as manifold form, if not of heterogeneity then of becoming, and irreducible to any rapid synthesis. But isn't this the very reason that Brown has had an influence that is so difficult to grasp? An influence that can express itself on many

[1] This text is an excerpt from "Une filiation déliée," which constitutes the second part of the book *Histoire(s) et lectures: Trisha Brown / Emmanuelle Huynh*, eds. Emmanuelle Huynh, Denise Luccioni, Julie Perrin (Dijon: Les presses du réel, 2012). The book opens with a series of conversations between the two choreographers between 1992 and 2006. The essay explores the stakes of this encounter for Emmanuelle Huynh, bringing up the question of heritage, its relationship with history, and the cultural circulations in dance.

[2] Emmanuelle Huynh was born in 1963. Her career as a dancer started at the end of the 1980s (notably dancing for Odile Duboc, Hervé Robbe, and the Quatuor Albrecht Knust). She made her first choreographic piece in 1984. The passage that precedes this excerpt describes the importance of release techniques in Emmanuelle Huynh's career, as well as somatic methods that she discovered through workshops, starting in 1992, with Trisha Brown's dancers. These practices shaped a solidly grounded posture, with a tranquility characteristic of any work dealing with postural balance and proprioception.

levels, and can concern only a moment or an aspect of Brown's work.[3]

When Huynh attends her first Brown performances in 1987, the company is in the middle of the Valiant Cycle, in other words, at a moment in which Brown has abandoned the fluid and undulating nature so characteristic of her earlier movement (starting with the Unstable Molecular Structures Cycle) in favor of creations built around the power [*puissance*] of bodies. The mischievous, sensual, quick, and elusive character, and the off-balance and swinging movements give way to a more geometric vocabulary in which the dancers seem to be like blocks propelled into the air, playing with counterbalances and abstract relations. There is thus a shift in the relationship with the audience: the spectators are no longer immediately drawn into the empathy of the continuous whirlwind produced by a "kinesthetic, outgoing, and flamboyant"[4] kind of dancing, as the choreographer describes it. Shifting from the unexpected and lively impulses a flow of barely fathomable movements springs from, Brown chooses to show clear forms that are outlined in the air, like the "flying warriors"[5] from *Newark*, as Huynh calls them. It is the gesture's point of impact—the effect of a determined and powerful decision—that is at the heart of this new approach to movement. The audience is most certainly impressed, but also in a way put at a distance by this power—the unknown of this virtuosity, the juxtaposition of events rather than their succession, the more interrupted rhythm and the colder abstraction that radiates from the dance.

Huynh's early pieces carry the mark of this more distant relationship with emotions, this sculptural character of bodies. One might say that her dance is far from the image of the supple and silky movement that one generally recalls of Brown's style. Nothing in it flows, gushes, or swerves. And yet, no exacerbated virtuosity, no aerial prowess characterizes these pieces either. The solos *Múa* (1995) and *Passage* (1997) take risks with arduous balances; the positions and intentions are never glorious or "valiant." Refusing impetus and fluidity of movement, these dances principally take the form of slowness punctuated by interruptions and stillness. For instance, *Passage* is structured by a repetition of the same sequence of simple movements done in different orientations. We see a succession of figures at a standstill, not frozen or petrified but rather self-possessed; one might say, "he looks composed": calm, concentration, and gravity. And a play of supporting movements and extensions unfolds on the ground, on a low level. Two hands under a thigh support a leg while the body, half-lying, half-sitting, resting on the pelvis, comes to a halt. Accelerations, rolls on the floor, and repeat again. There is something determined, simple, and inevitable in the development of this choreography: something that in the end reminds us of the Accumulations Cycle of Brown and the quality of interpretation that it demanded of the dancers.

By the middle of the 1990s, Huynh is not yet familiar with Brown's first cycles beyond a description in a 1990 publication.[6] She therefore knows nothing of the particular quality of this Accumulations Cycle, which has also been called "mathematical"[7] (1971-1976), in which the dance seems to be able to continuously

[3] This excerpt reveals only part of the influence that Trisha Brown has had on the work of Emmanuelle Huynh.

[4] Marianne Goldberg, "Trisha Brown. All of the Person's Person Arriving. An interview by Marianne Goldberg," *The Drama Review* 30: 1 (Spring 1986): 160.

[5] In "Rencontres publiques avec Trisha Brown à Angers, 12-14 janvier 2006," *Histoire(s) et lectures: Trisha Brown / Emmanuelle Huynh* (Dijon: Les presses du réel, 2012), 111-165.

[6] Lise Brunel and Trisha Brown, *Trisha Brown*. Collection "L'atelier des chorégraphes" (Montreuil: Bougé, 1987).

[7] In Hendel Teicher, ed., T*risha Brown: Dance and Art in Dialogue*, 1961-2001 (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2002).

unroll, without inflection or psychology or dramatization, leaving the dancers "almost like solid objects."[8] Nevertheless, the question of simplification and of stripping down is very much at the heart of the young choreographer's interrogations, like a response to the necessity of pursuing a refusal of expressivity, already present in *Momentum*[9], like an echo of her interpretations of Cunningham and Cage in the 1980s. Ever since a workshop with Lance Gries in 1992, this set of problems gradually has pervaded her work.[10] They haunt her exchanges with Brown: the search for a simplicity defined less in terms of reduction than by going back to what is essential;[11] simplicity in its intrinsic power, like a form of purity that expresses itself outside of appearances or any extraordinary character;[12] the simplicity of movement that is sparse, rarified (rather than reduced, a term that refers to minimalism), and that makes room for silence, for stillness;[13] and finally, simplicity as the attempt to come back to movement only, to its performance in the least audacious or sophisticated manner possible, a simplicity that owes everything to bareness.[14] This interrogation also traverses the workshop given by Brown and Wil Swanson in Montpellier in July 1995, where what is often at stake is a "reduction to the essential" (Huynh's notebooks of the 8th and 9th of July 1995).[15] If such a theme obsesses Huynh in the 1990s, that is to say, in a context that was still very different from that of the 1970s in America, it is also in reaction to a certain kind of French dance that she denounces both for its spectacular aspect and its lyricism. This happens through a detour, a detour toward her origins so to speak: a Villa Médicis Hors les Murs grant enables her to go to Vietnam while she is making *Múa*. There she recognizes, and in a way renews, a body that perhaps bears this simplicity that she has been looking for: "(In Vietnam) I recognized a way to move the body that was at once nonchalant and discreet."[16]

Furthermore, when Christophe Wavelet makes a connection, in his critique of *Múa* in 1999, between the piece and the New York avantgarde, he acknowledges these references as what now shapes Huynh's artistic culture. "Closer to the *neutral doer* dear to the New York avantgarde in the 1960s than the character, the quality of expressivity that is played out in *Múa* is a nod in the direction of a desublimation of the dancing body and the spaces, symbolic and real, that it opens up for the benefit of each viewer."[17] Huynh also claims in retrospect, in 1998, with regard to *Múa*: "It is urgent to recognize the legacy of the artists of the Judson

[8] "The inexorably repeated sequences in Brown's early work were grounded and predictable to the point of making the dancers seem almost like solid objects," in *Marianne Goldberg*, "Trisha Brown," 157.

[9] *Momentum, essai chorégraphique sur le balancement*, co-created with José Besprosvany, is Emmanuelle Huynh's first piece, created in Brussels in 1984 when she was a student at the Mudra school (directed by Maurice Béjart) focusing on expressionist dance.

[10] The workshop was taken by Emmanuelle Huynh at the Théâtre contemporain de la danse in Paris: "Lance Gries clears the way for French dancers to find a corporeality that will completely change their physical imagination," Emmanuelle Huynh in *Histoire(s) et lectures: Trisha Brown / Emmanuelle Huynh*, 7.

[11] "Je nage quand je danse," Conversation, La Ferme du Buisson, Noisiel, 24 November 1992, trans. Denise Luccioni, in *Histoire(s) et lectures: Trisha Brown / Emmanuelle Huynh*, 27-31.

[12] "J'ai dû travailler très dur pour comprendre," Conversation, Montpellier, 10 July 1995, trans. Denise Luccioni, in Histoire(s) et lectures: Trisha Brown / Emmanuelle Huynh, 59-67.

[13] "Je ne prends rien à la légère," Conversation, New York, December 1994, trans. Denise Luccioni, in Histoire(s) et lectures: Trisha Brown / Emmanuelle Huynh, 45-58.

[14] "J'en restais là jusqu'à ce que je puisse avancer," *Conversation*, Bruxelles, 21 April 1998, trans. Denise Luccioni, in *Histoire(s) et lectures: Trisha Brown / Emmanuelle Huynh*, 68-79.

[15] *Histoire(s) et lectures: Trisha Brown / Emmanuelle Huynh*, 220-222.

[16] Emmanuelle Huynh, "Corps sous-exposé, corps sur-exposé," in *Le Corps tabou, Internationale de l'Imaginaire* 8 (1998), 9.

[17] Christophe Wavelet, "Expeausée: sur *Múa* d'Emmanuelle Huynh-Thanh-Loan," in *Danse et Utopie* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1999), 191. The *neutral doer* corresponds to only one of the modes of engaging in activity practiced by the avantgarde. It must be distinguished, for example, from the *effervescent body* that Sally Banes describes. The expression *neutral doer* is used by Yvonne Rainer in the famous text "A Quasi Survey of Some 'Minimalist' Tendencies in the Quantitatively Minimal Dance Activity Midst the Plethora, or an Analysis of *Trio A*," in Gregory Battcock, *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology* (New York: Dutton, 1968), 263-273.

Church and I attempted to express a necessity in this stripping down and the reduction of effects."[18] In spite of the scarce documentation then available in French or even just accessible, and the near absence of video documents, a certain idea of *postmodern dance* took shape for Huynh. During her stay in New York in 1990, she was able to see the film *Man Walking Down the Side of a Building* (1970) from the Equipment Pieces Cycle at Lincoln Center. The workshop in Montpellier in 1995 allows her to first approach the notion of the "task," with which she will experiment further in 1996 when performing *Continuous Project – Altered Daily* by Yvonne Rainer, and Steve Paxton's *Satisfyin Lover*, recreated by the Quatuor Albrecht Knust, and then later, *Parades and Changes*, Replays by Anne Collod and Anna Halprin in 2009. She familiarizes herself with the attitude the task entails—detached, without affect, but also at times playful—and how the task has been an ever-recurrent theme throughout the period of *postmodern dance*, from its conception at the end of the 1950s with Anna Halprin in California, up to its metamorphosis for the stage and its multiple reinterpretations in New York City with the Judson Dance Theater. Here, the term "task" always signals a gap with regard to an average trend in the economy of danced movement and its methods of stage representation—a gap that can be measured in terms of increasing scarcity.

Commenting on her pieces *Distribution en cours* (2000) and *Bord, tentative pour corps, texts et tables* (2001), Huynh insists on the importance of the ideas of scarcity and a simplification of interpretation.

> *I try to make it so that what happens is only what happens. I am absolutely not interested in seeing something get amplified, in the facial expression or in the movement, without there being a reason. All the work on sensations (postural yoga, Feldenkrais and Alexander methods, etc.) means that one is already engaged with a certain number of events. Leaning on a table, pushing it, pulling it, I feel like that's already a big event. Fundamental and simple movements, performed like the tasks that they are—the inversion of gravity, touching another person's skin—are maxi-events, to be protected from any parasites. […] In* Distribution en cours*, the dismantling of the object is a sort of metaphor for it: it's the removal of layers, of strata, and the taking away of certain choreographic attitudes that require us to invade the empty space with exacerbation, to blow off steam energetically.*[19]

Exposing performers as they are, entirely involved in the activity to be done, without emphasis—states of presence that are reserved or held back, rather than expansive. Other pieces show this. It is a calm and methodical quality of concentration (*Passage*); concentration necessary for the ordering of objects (*Distribution en cours, Numéro*[20]); necessary for the construction game with tables, conceived by visual artist Nicolas Floc'h, that the dancers tip over and move, whose tops they dismantle, that they stack to make a sculpture or to create a new stage design configuration (*Bord*). This is also an exploratory quality of concentration, in connection with the activity of discovering the materiality of the other the interstices that imply possible circulations: clearing a path between the bodies and the tables in *Bord* in order to test the materials and their resistance, as if to slide between the words of *Anachronismes* by Christophe Tarkos, pronounced with caution, while preserving intervals of silence, pronouncing all of the syllables distinctly. Decomposing, giving the audience time to see, resisting getting carried away, calmly persevering in one's idea. Might what is being outlined here also be a method of addressing others and of paying attention in a particular way?

When working on the piece *Le Grand Dehors, conte pour aujourd'hui* (2007), the writer François Bon and

[18] Emmanuelle Huynh, "Corps sous-exposé, corps sur-exposé," 143.

[19] Gérard Mayen, "Nous esquissons un en-commun possible. Entretien avec Emmanuelle Huynh," *mouvement.net*, 9 July 2001.

[20] This is a piece by and with Emmanuelle Huynh and Nicolas Floc'h that was created in 2002.

Huynh collaborated in text. A passage written in 2006 evokes this key question of simplicity:

> *Returning to the simplest things of the body.*
>
> *Sitting, lying down, walking. Just turning one's head, standing up.*
>
> *Working on paths, lengths, runs, walks, explorations.*
>
> *Bringing everything to life: the hand can tempt the foot, it can make the foot want to move. A hip summons a shoulder. A knee has a life of its own.*
>
> *I am attached to things that I cannot see, things that I can only see when I am dancing.*
>
> *Ordinary movements: walking, sleeping, that can be seen as dances—that are dances. All you have to do is look at them as such.*
>
> *Sleeping inhabitants of a town as one big nocturnal dance.*
>
> *Running, walking, backing up, climbing: that's dance, that should be part of dance. Lots of time and many years before dance touches you in your ordinary gestures.*
>
> *Before a gesture is dance. […]*
>
> *It's the body that's going to find it. It's not my head that will find it. I'm waiting to be surprised by my body that will find it. For my body to find what it hasn't yet felt, what I haven't yet wanted, what I haven't yet seen. […]*
>
> *And that changes the way of thinking, acting, behaving.*
>
> *Sorting out, knowing why it happened. Try to send the world over to the side of other gestures. Dance is the place of the act. To fight for it to happen.*
>
> *Dancing changes ways of thinking so much. […]*
>
> *I have always started my work by emptying, emptying, emptying.*[21]

This text says a lot: about the vocabulary implemented, about the ways of thinking about movement that can motivate a coordination, about stage crossings, about the slowing down of bodies and of viewing, about an increasing scarcity, about a research starting with the body, about a thought born from and through movement. In this overlapping of thinking and dancing, we find almost word for word one of the pursuits of Simone Forti, Brown's mentor,[22] who wrote: "I realized that we think differently when we are in motion. And this is the form of thinking I try to access."[23] "The body solves problems before the mind knows you had one,"[24] Brown would add. In the slowness and simplicity of Huynh's dance, what kind of thought, formed in the movement, shows on the surface? A space of thought also opens up for the viewer, in the silences or the pauses; in the interstices of the gestures, it slips in, wanders, or develops. It is an audacious aesthetic choice, that of contemporary art. Because there is a sort of risk and courage in presenting oneself in this way to the public: "Having the courage to not do. Just stand," answers Brown[25]—to abandon all excellence of the danced movement, to be simply there with nothing to hide—this is a "terrifying" quality of presence for the dancer who feels as if they were "put under a microscope."[26] She adds, "Simplicity is very hard to perform. You have to have the courage to be there when you are not concealed by a flurry of gorgeous actions. That kind of 'being there' makes my heart beat double just talking about it."[27] This

[21] François Bon, Emmanuelle Huynh, *Le Grand Dehors*, 2006. See full text: http://www.tierslivre.net/spip/spip.php?article379/

[22] Trisha Brown, interviews with Klaus Kertess, *Early Works* 1966-1979, DVD Artpix, 2004.

[23] Simone Forti, "Danse animée. Une pratique de l'improvisation en danse," 1996, trans. Agnès Benoit-Nader, in Simone Forti, Patricia Kuypers, Laurence Louppe, eds., *Manuel en mouvement, Nouvelles de danse 44/45* (Fall-Winter 2000): 222.

[24] Trisha Brown, "How to make a modern dance when the sky's the limit," in *Trisha Brown: Dance and Art in Dialogue*, 290.

[25] "J'en restais là jusqu'à ce que je puisse avancer," Conversation.

[26] Trisha Brown, interviews with Klaus Kertess, *Early Works*.

[27] Trisha Brown, in Marianne Goldberg, "Trisha Brown," 170.

speaks to the fear of the dancer when she takes the risk of becoming scarce, the risk of not being able to sufficiently captivate the audience's attention or satisfying expectations.

Between Presence and Absence

Simplicity produces a paradoxical interpretation, oscillating between presence and absence. Just being there is to appear fully, completely, yet without shining. Being there, present to oneself and one's action. To concentrate all of the attention, to become the object of focus and of an intensification of the gaze onto oneself and one's action. Just 'being there' is at the same time accepting to become the medium of thoughts that only the viewer has control over. The dancer consents to a sort of letting go of herself. Huynh's modality of being on stage perhaps lies at the heart of this paradox. Since *Múa*, a line of questioning runs across (almost all of) the works in her career, weaving this performance paradox: how to be visible and invisible? How to both appear and disappear in front of an audience? It is not a question of doing a magic trick (even though the choreographer played with such references in *Numéro*) but rather of working on the qualities of performing or weighing its paradoxes.

This haunting question finds echo in the work of Brown. Hasn't the American choreographer ceaselessly played at making her dancers disappear, or at disturbing the impression of a mastery of the visible that the stage procures? Whether one thinks of her dance experiences in offstage, unusual spaces where the dancer competes with the site (Joseph Schlichter in the New York architecture of *Man Walking Down the Side of a Building*, 1970), where the dancer disappears, camouflaged and still as a sculpture of fabric (the dancers suspended in the structure of *Floor of the Forest*, 1970), where dancers are invisible to passers-by (in *Roof Piece,* 1971), or drift away from the audience (the dancers on rafts in *Group Primary Accumulation*, 1973). Or whether one recalls different processes of erasure and disappearance onstage: the overlapping of one dance on top of another, as if it erodes or interrupts the unfolding of a dance (*Accumulation with Talking plus Watermotor,* 1979); certain instructions in *Set and Reset* (1983) that involve remaining on the edges of the stage and being invisible, for example, by lying down, exiting the stage, turning one's back – or doing secret movements, imperceptible to the viewer because they are so tiny (two little fingers that intertwine) or hidden behind another dancer. The choreographer has also choosen to go beyond the boundaries of the stage, like in *Glacial Decoy* (1979), a dance that extends into the wings. And choosen to strictly forbid the face-to-face, in her famous solo, back turned toward the audience, *If you couldn't see me* (1994).[28] And finally perturbed any attempt at grasping gestures in her cycle *Unstable Molecular Structures* in which movement escapes, deviates, and resists any controls on the way it is seen.

Huynh's strategies are different. Although they call for simplification in performing, like in the mathematic cycle of Brown, they also involve stage practices of covering up. Darkness is inserted between the viewer and what is on the stage, or, just the opposite, the light dazzles and blinds (*Múa*, with lighting by Yves Godin). Caty Olive's lighting is sporadic for *Distribution en cours*. The dancer disappears behind an enormous mobile sculpture, a sort of "combines" à la Rauschenberg, a quasi-grotesque conglomerate of disparate objects, piled up on a stand with wheels: the movement of the object has little to do with the solo that is going on and regularly obstructs the view, according to the principles of autonomy between dance and set design dear to Cunningham (*Nothing to Say About…*, 2000). Creating obscurity also means

[28] "Tout ce que je vis me transforme," Conversation, Grenoble, 23 November 1994, trans. Denise Luccioni, in *Histoire(s) et lectures: Trisha Brown / Emmanuelle Huynh*, 32-44.

making the dancer disappear under a piece of cloth or paper. "We had the idea of making a piece in which everything would be covered up all the time."[29] After *Numéro* and *La Feuille* (2005), also conceived with Nicolas Floc'h, in which one or the other are hidden under a big leaf—becoming the creators of a surprising sculpture, shifting and bumpy—Huynh covers the dancers up under a big piece of cloth for *Le Grand Dehors*, and stretches a dance out into a panoramic space, which makes grasping the whole thing difficult, in *Distribution en cours*. Finally, the choreographer just simply empties the stage, as if to scoop out the presence of the dancers, while the soundtrack continues. This is the case in *Passage*, in which the stage is deserted for a period of time between two sequences of movement, and at the beginning of *A Vida Enorme/ épisode 1* (2003).

From the 1960s in the United States to the 1990s in France (and more widely in Europe), one can observe the extension or reactivation of a question: that of the mode of a dancer's presence in front of an audience. How does one present his/her body to another? The stakes are those of the relationship to and consideration of the subject: dancer-subject and viewer-subject. In the middle of the 1960s, this question was formulated in a debate on narcissism and voyeurism, of which Brown appears to be, once more, the heir in a November 1994 conversation about her solo, *If you couldn't see me*.[30] Different processes are imagined for resisting the temptation to seduce and flatter the viewer, such as moving away from a traditional practice of the face-to-face situation: no longer facing the audience (not looking at them any more like in *Trio A* [1966] by Yvonne Rainer, or turning your back on them like in Brown's solo) is like taking away its role of mirror, tearing away the narcissism of the performer, and breaking up all alienating reciprocal identification. The narcissism-voyeurism couple appears then in the discourse as an indissociable equation. This is why, according to these artists, not seeing the audience does not amount to putting a form of voyeurism into place, even though actually, this enables the audience to see without being seen. Not seeing means undoing the mirror effect and the identification between audience and artist. It is the first step toward undermining the exhibitionistic and narcissistic nature of the gesture.

Although by the 1990s the terms of this interrogation have shifted, it is still a matter of thinking about the hold that a performer can have on a spectator. In the case of Huynh, this paradox of a performance between presence and absence attests to a need for questioning ways of being on stage. Her experience as a performer has given shape to this reflection, whether with regard to the traditional frontal arrangement of the stage (in particular, with Hervé Robbe[31]), or in her experiences of situations offstage, which have confronted her with the proximity of the viewer and multiple points of view (as in *Chambre. Étapes chorégraphiques en chambre d'hôtel* (1997-1999) by Catherine Contour). In addition are the improvisations in the context of exhibitions and collaborations with visual artists: these are all situations in which the performance must be thought of as in dialogue with another work of art, uncomfortable and difficult situations where the dancer takes the risk of being outdone by the power of another work. It is also about understanding the delicate equilibrium that will enable the viewer to find his place inside this back-and-forth between dance and visual artwork. Though it is more on stage that Huynh assumes, in this kind of withdrawal toward discreet performance, one cannot simply compare a presence on stage and a presence in the context of an exhibition. The tension at work in this contrast is perceptible throughout Huynh's career.

[29] Emmanuelle Huynh, unpublished interviews with the author, July-September, 2008, CNDC Angers.

[30] "Tout ce que je vis me transforme," in *Histoire(s) et lectures: Trisha Brown / Emmanuelle Huynh*.

[31] Huynh danced with Hervé Robbe (Le Marietta Secret Company) from 1990 to 1995.

It must be understood that along with what I have called the paradox of a performance between presence and absence, intensification and divestment, there is an entirely other way of being on stage that owns up to the pleasure and exhilaration of movement. Thus, *Tout contre* (1998), *A Vida Enorme, Heroes* (2005), *Futago (Monster Project)* (2008), *Cribles. Légende chorégraphique pour 1000 danseurs* (2009) and *Spiel* (2011) let the pleasure of expenditure burst forth. Huynh, like Brown, starting with the Unstable Molecular Structures Cycle and then the Musical cycle, seem to savor physical expenditure—which is what makes Brown say that at the end of *Watermotor* she felt like an American football player at the end of the game with his helmet falling down over his eyes.[32] This is the same expenditure that leaves the ten dancers in *Cribles* out of breath. Most often it is non-demonstrative expenditure, but it is nevertheless absolutely real. The performers are thoroughly pierced through by movement, leaving them in the state of alertness and receptiveness required for improvising, even though the dance is actually set. This state of paying attention to the present moment is what Huynh is looking for: to always dance as though one were improvising, "thinking about the form as improvisation."[33]

Huynh and Brown also seem to share a desire to fly. One famous anecdote recounts how Brown was sweeping the studio floor with a broom and, by propelling her body horizontally one meter above the floor, looking exactly like Anna Halprin taking flight. "I think that I dance because I would like to fly!" she says during the public encounters in Angers in January 2006. As for Huynh, she writes:

> *To be hanging in space.*
> *Trying to make myself feel something other than what I know about myself and about the world. Dreams in which I dance-fly. A very simple dance. I'm lying on my stomach, I feel the speed of the air like when you put your head out the window and there's air. Dreams in which I'm not touching the ground. I take off, I do a dance.*[34]

In the end it seems that the main reservation expressed by Huynh in regard to the work of the American choreographer concerns the quality of performance, or more precisely, the place of the performer in certain works. Even though Huynh is immediately passionate about this search for another type of dancing body and recognizes the contribution of release techniques in their capacity to lead one to rethink form and get back to sensations and gravity, some reluctance has emerged. Interviews with Huynh and Guillaume Bernardi attest to a concern about the place of the subject in performance and signal a gap in the direction taken by Brown's work. In the interview of February 26, 1997,[35] both evoked the consequences of the work of Susan Klein[36] on the body of Brown's dancers and what they call a "white dance." At that time (this will be later contradicted by the evolution of Brown's work), work on alignment and on movement initiated by the skeleton seemed to them to be a form of de-motivation of movement. In other words, if the performers reach perfection and efficiency in the accomplishment of a gesture, they no longer seem to be touched by what they are doing. The spectator then loses the sense of what motivates movement. "It's anatomically

[32] Trisha Brown, interviews with Klaus Kertess, *Early Works*.

[33] "Je ne prends rien à la légère," in *Histoire(s) et lectures: Trisha Brown / Emmanuelle Huynh*.

[34] François Bon, Emmanuelle Huynh, *Le Grand Dehors*.

[35] Guillaume Bernardi is a stage director and assistant to Trisha Brown for L'Orfeo (1998). Conversation with Guillaume Bernardi, "Parler à la sensibilité de Trisha," New York, 26 February 1997, in *Histoire(s) et lectures: Trisha Brown / Emmanuelle Huynh*, 98-101.

[36] The Susan Klein technique (http://www.kleintechnique.com) was taught within the Trisha Brown Dance Company from the 1980s onward by Diane Madden and others. It insists on an awareness of posture and an alignment of the bones, and mobilizes the deep muscles in order to develop the potential of the dancer with a consciousness of her anatomical reality.

perfect. The dancers have integrated the technique and the release, but their dance has become white; the aspect of a voracity in doing things, the vitality of the impetus, has been erased. It's not a question of denouncing Susan Klein's technique, which has enabled the dancers to do unbelievable things, but of fully considering the uses of it in the different phases of the company. At the time we made these interviews, the dance had maybe lost the humor that characterized the previous period with pieces like *Newark*."[37] It remains true that this conception of the body, shaped by these alignment and release techniques and, in the case of some dancers, coupled with Eastern philosophies and practices (Zen, Tai-Chi), is not insignificant as far as the interpretative posture of the dancer is concerned. Eva Karczag, a dancer in the Brown Dance Company from 1979 to 1985 says: "One of the images that I use when I'm dancing is that I want to be transparent in order to transmit the flow of energy that dance is. […] I want to be entirely malleable, while at the same time knowing that I have a strong core. […] I dissolve when I dance."[38] This outlines a form of erasure of the subject that removes one of the sides of the performance paradox previously defined. Huynh resists such a definition of the performer-subject: "being transparent" or "dissolved," acting to serve the "flow of energy that dance is." And though Brown herself steers clear of this, the question still preoccupies her. She explains that when she started, "in the early dances, when I subjected myself to a formal structure, what one saw was the dance and not the dancer."[39] Here the two choreographers debate a concern for the dancer as a person, as an individual whose very personality, colors and gives body to performance and gives meaning to dance. Also, at the time, Huynh committed herself to inventing a graduate level program for choreographic artists within the CNDC in Angers, and so all of these reflections came to inflect the training program that began in 2005.[40]

Julie PERRIN

MUSIDANSE (E.A. 1572)
Équipe « Discours et pratiques en danse »
Université Paris 8 Saint-Denis

To quote from this article : Julie Perrin, « Loose Association : Emmanuelle Huynh and Trisha Brown », in Noémie Solomon (ed.), Danse : An Anthology, les presses du réel, New York, 2014, p. 227-292. Taken from a digital version published on the website Paris 8 Danse: www.danse.univ-paris8.fr

[37] Emmanuelle Huynh, unpublished interviews with the author, July-September, 2008, CNDC Angers.

[38] In Aileen Crow, "Une entrevue avec Eva Karczag," in *Nouvelles de danse* 46/47 (Spring-Summer 2001): 56-66.

[39] Brown, in Marianne Goldberg, "Trisha Brown," 160.

[40] Emmanuelle Huynh directed the CNDC in Angers and its graduate school from 2004 to 2012.