Iconographies: The Photographs of Margaretta K. Mitchell and dancer Lori Belilove

Over the years of my collaboration with photographer Margaretta K. Mitchell, one of the projects was made possible through a grant with Polaroid Corporation to use their rare 20x24 camera in Boston and New York. The unique, large-scale Polacolor images were stunning. We were both excited to create a series documenting the iconic gestures of Duncan Dance, a subject I had been exploring photographically in various ways for over twenty years.

In the studio process, Gretta opened the lens for 5-7 seconds that captured both the still moment and the blur of the movement. The size of the camera and the prints were so large we had to go to another room to watch the birthing of the photo. Like all Polaroids, these images are unique - there is no negative, and only one original of each exposure. This year Gretta received an invitation to exhibit in San Francisco Bay Area at PHOTO Gallery. There was an artist talk in September and the show ran until October 10th. The full-color catalogue book is now available (limited quantities) for purchase through us at the Foundation, or with Gretta, if you live in the Bay Area!

The images were inspired by Renaissance art and ideas, and include symbols such as the conch shell or calla lily. Some refer to well-known works of art, but include sly changes of perspective or gender. My photograph Nike that stood on the hand of the Athena statue in the Parthenon in Athens, Greece is a symbol of victory - neither feminine nor masculine - androgynous.

In Gretta's thrilling triptych "Adam and Eve", Eve is a sensual goddess who enlivens Adam with a gesture reminiscent of Michelangelo's God and Adam. I used the shell as a symbol in the hand of a standing female nude in Shell. The lily and the shell hold associations with the feminine in both Christian and pagan art.

Photo (top left): "Adam and Eve" by Margaretta K. Mitchell
Photo (top right): "Niobe" of Lori Belilove by Margaretta K. Mitchell

Upcoming Residencies and Performances

Peabody Dance
September 22-26

Manhattan College
September 29

Rutgers University
October 27

Marywood College
November 1

Randolph College
November 2-13

PS 112 Manhattan
November 9

Escola Contemporanea
Salvador Bahia, Brazil
November 10-24

The Creative Center
at University Settlement
January 4, 11, 18, 25

Gramercy Arts High
January TBA

IDDF Salon Series
February 12-14

Ongoing Dance Classes

Registration is still open!

IN THE NEWS!

Interview with Lori Belilove
Bottecelli Exhibitions in London and Berlin

As part of "Botticelli Reimagined", IDDF provided a video of Isadora Duncan dancing, circa 1905, in a private garden. The exhibition will run 3/5/16-7/3/16 at The Victoria & Albert Museum and 09/24/15-01/24/16 at The Gemaeldegalerie.

[Read more]

"Dance: Movement, Rhythm, Spectacle" an exhibition at the Philadelphia Museum of Art

Alastair Macaulay, senior dance critic of The New York Times reviewed the exhibition at the Philadelphia Museum of Art stating that it "vividly demonstrated how radical a century (1890s-1980s) brought change to social dance, dance theater, and ideas of dance in art." (May 18, 2015)

With a multi-media presentation, the likes of Pablo Picasso, Alexander Calder, Charles Searles, Pierre-August Renoir, Eadwaerd Muybridge, John Sloan, Bronislava Nijinska, Diaghalev and the Ballet Russe were represented.

Macaulay wonderfully remarked, "here's Loie Fuller on film in her "serpentine Dance", Isadora Duncan caught in three water colors by Abraham Walkowitz, and as reconstructed in dance by Lori Belilove in a 1987 film, and Martha Graham's 'Letter to the world'. These women - Fuller, Duncan, Graham, each from a different generation - did much to create American modern dance and to become breakthrough emblems of American womanhood."

In 2010 Alastair Macaulay's The New York Times review stated: "With Ms. Belilove's "Art of Isadora"... the style of Isadora Duncan is rendered honestly, without exaggeration...

Anna Juliar, then Curatorial Fellow envisioned the exhibition and followed through collecting the material. She requested video footage that would reflect the Walkowitz watercolors. We settled on performance clips of "Narcissus", "The Blue Danube Waltz" and "Dance of the Furies" featuring Lori Belilove in performance from the PBS documentary Isadora Duncan: Movement from the Soul. Since
the exhibit closed, please enjoy the clip below: https://youtu.be/iu8tRxNZ-X8.

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