



NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Lori Tuominen
413-545-3672/ltuominen@admin.umass.edu
Please Post Until End Date
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 23, 2011

THE INSTANT OF COMBUSTION: Barbara Morgan Dance Photography

September 9 to October 16, 2011

Opening Reception, September 9, 5:00 – 7:30 pm, including

In Conversation: Paul Dennis, Guest Artist of the UMass Dance Program, and Norton Owen, Director of Preservation, Jacob's Pillow Dance at 6:00 pm followed by

Book Launch: Signing and Reading with Peggy and Murray Schwartz, co-authors of the new book *The Dance Claimed Me: A Biography of Pearl Primus*. Books will be available for sale at the UMCA provided by the University Book Store.

... I am after the instant of combustion, when all the energies of the spirit are wonderfully coordinated with the action of the body. – Barbara Morgan

When Barbara Morgan, protégé of Edward Weston, moved to New York City in 1930 she soon became the premier photographer who documented the fervent years of American modern dance. Her focus was the fusion of reality, art, and time when she photographed the dance works of Martha Graham and many modernists of the period – Pearl Primus at the 92nd Street Y; Doris Humphrey, or Charles Weidman. In arrested motion the photographs validate the power of the dancing spirit and confirm the power of dance to inspire, heal, and create a deep sense of community – and they confirm Morgan's deep and enduring love of dance, dancers and dancing. Her photographs are portraits of energy; energy of imagination and energy of motion transfixed by light energy.

The 38 historic dance images by Barbara Morgan on view in the exhibition were donated to the UMass Dance Program by Nils Morgan, the artist's grandson, and are now part of the UMCA permanent collection. These vintage photographs are the first American archive documenting the development of modern dance and will be used in multidisciplinary education, including the prominent UMass Dance Program and a variety of departments of the Five Colleges. *We are confident*, said Nils Morgan, *the Barbara Morgan images will be put to thoughtful creative educational uses at UMass*. The donation includes storyboards from the Bennington College Dance Festival in the 1930s, a seminal event in the development of modern dance.

Part of the opening reception will be the UMCA series *In Conversation* with Paul Dennis, Guest Artist of the UMass Dance Program and former member of the Jose Limon Dance Company, and Norton Owen, Director of Preservation at Jacob's Pillow.

Concluding the evening will be a reading with Peggy and Murray Schwartz from their new book *The Dance Claimed Me: A Biography of Pearl Primus* and a book signing to follow. Primus, a modern dance pioneer and African American dance icon, is a subject of Morgan's photography and was a member of the faculty of the Five Colleges during the 1980s.

Related Event: Wednesday October 5, 4 - 5:30 PM: Lecture by Camille Brown

Ms. Brown is one of the most talented young dancers in the U.S. today, and has performed nationally and internationally to enthusiastic acclaim. She will talk about the influences in her career as a dancer.

Ms. Brown ... mixes modern dance techniques with West African dance elements. But her personal physical style, with its focused bursts of energy and frozen images that explode into motion, colors her group works very differently. – Roslyn Sulcas, The New York Times

Watching Camille A. Brown dance in person for the first time is like observing a hummingbird in nature for the first time...What is striking is that this rising star of New York City's hip downtown scene is somewhat old-fashioned: Brown is a storyteller, with many tales to tell...Brown has gathered a company of earthy movers, deft at giving her dances the physical weight needed to carry serious themes... – The Boston Globe

-end-

University Museum of Contemporary Art
UMass Fine Arts Center
151 Presidents Drive
Amherst, MA 01003-9331

413-545-3670
www.umass.edu/fac/umca

Tuesday – Friday, 11:00 AM – 4:30 PM, Saturday/Sunday 2 – 5 PM
Closed Mondays, holidays, summer, winter, and spring breaks