

## BABETTE MANGOLTE

Trisha Brown's choreography showed important changes between *Line Up* (1976) and *Glacial Decoy* (1979), with different spatial contexts transforming the way it could be seen.

*Line Up* was choreographed for an open space with no stage and no standard seating.<sup>1</sup> Brown has said it was organized around “the making, remaking, or unmaking of horizontal lines, resulting in clarity, disorder, clarity, disorder, clarity, order, disorder, and so on.” She has described it as a series of negotiations: “The line appears and is nudged into straightness, you are allowing change, being stable and flexible, talking to others, helping someone else, anticipating, warning, disconnecting, reconnecting, doing two incompatible activities at once, circling with the body, maintaining contact.”

Choreographers map spacing by lines drawn on the floor. In *Line Up*, Brown uses shifting imaginary lines to provoke and constrain her dancers improvisation. Those lines have no point of origin and appears in suspension between the constantly moving dancers. Bodies float in space. White pants and long-sleeved tops unify the dancers' bodies and lead the viewer to perceive an abstract design rather than each dancer's expressivity.

*Glacial Decoy* was Brown's first choreography for a theatrical stage. It is performed before a constantly evolving backdrop, designed by Robert Rauschenberg, of photographic projections timed to shift left to right every four seconds. Costumes of transparent off-white silk reveal and mask the bodies beneath. The tempo of the slides creates a beat, and the verticality of the set gives the movement an orientation and spacing: movement can be measured against the uniform width of the slides, and bodies against their flatness. Constant entrances and exits open an infinity of possible dancer configurations. You see only two or three dancers at any given time, and it is not until the end of the dance that you really know how many dancers are involved.

It was through improvisation that Brown and her dancers invented a new vocabulary of movement in both choreographies, but *Glacial Decoy*'s rigid background space and the floating freedom of *Line Up* do a lot to affect the way that movement is perceived.

1. Trisha Brown in *Trisha Brown: Dance and Art in Dialogue, 1961–2001*, ed. Hendell Teicher (Andover, Mass.: Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, 2002).

*Trisha Brown. Line Up. 1976. Dancers: Trisha Brown, Elizabeth Garren, Terry O'Reilly, Steve Paxton, Wendy Perron, Judith Ragir, Mona Sulzman. Photographs by Babette Mangolte.*















*Trisha Brown. Glacial Decoy. 1979. Dancers: Trisha Brown, Nina Lundborg, Lisa Krauss, Elizabeth Garren. Photographs by Babette Mangolte.*









*Yvonne Rainer. The Mind Is a Muscle, Part I (Trio A). 1973.*