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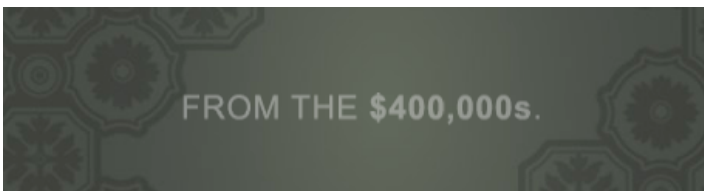
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Dance Film Revolution



REDCAT Festival Focuses on Movies and Dance

by Julie Riggott

Dance Camera West, a film festival devoted to dance and choreography, began in 2002 with two nights of screenings at the Getty Center. Lynette Kessler, a dancer and choreographer with an ardent interest in

dance media, thought she was putting together a one-time event, but the turnout surprised her. The 500-seat theater was booked 24 hours after the invitations went out.

“After the screening, people had me cornered, saying, ‘Why haven’t I seen this work before, and where can I see more?’ I mean they were just adamant,” she said.

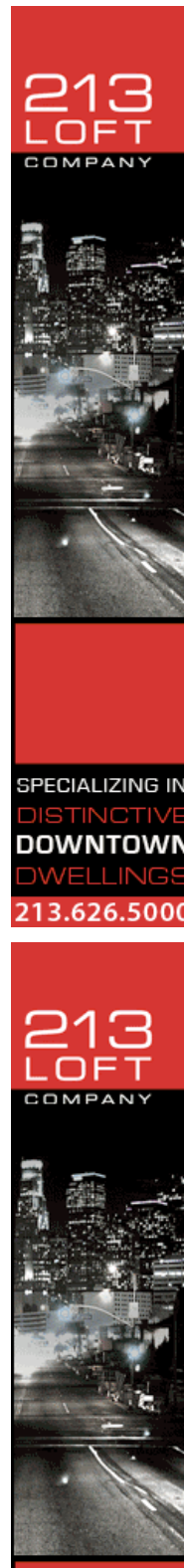
Kessler has since grown the festival into a month-long event with screenings, symposiums, an award ceremony and parties at various Los Angeles venues.

The seventh annual festival, which launches with a party at REDCAT in Downtown Los Angeles on Friday, June 6, is the only one of its kind on the West Coast, and one of a handful across the world. Twenty-four experimental shorts from a dozen countries will be screened during three separate programs, starting at 8 p.m. on Friday and 6 and 8 p.m. on Saturday at REDCAT. The opening weekend is titled *Screendance: A New Visual Language*.

Kessler stayed at her Koreatown office late one evening last week (she said she has a habit of working into the wee hours) to talk with the *Los Angeles Downtown News* about Dance Camera West.

Los Angeles Downtown News: *What can audiences expect at the festival?*

Lynette Kessler: Screen dance is dance that is created to be seen on the screen compared to on





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stage. That's what sets it apart. We're not showing documented stage performance. This is actually a new art form that's been developing over the last hundred years - since Edison created the movie projector. That's why all the films in the REDCAT series are called *Screendance: A New Visual Language*. It's where cinema and choreography intersect. It's like silent movies in a sense. The language is movement. The vehicle is the body.

Q: *So there is no dialogue in the films?*

A: There is music, ambient sound, sound effects. The music is fascinating. It could be full orchestral or experimental sound, but it's always very different.

Q: *What film do you consider a highlight of the festival?*

A: Rain, from Sweden, is a very poetic dance drama, very visual. All 26 minutes is filmed in the rain - I don't want to say outdoors because sometimes it's interior shots - and it's raining constantly. It's about relationships forming and finishing. It has one of the hottest duets I've ever seen, and it's between two men. It's just amazing. I've known Pontus Lidberg, the choreographer and director, for five years now, and I've seen him just flourish in this medium. Pontus used to dance with the Swedish ballet, so he's a very strong technician, and five years ago I screened his first film at REDCAT. He'll be joining us for that screening [on Friday].

Q: *Who is the audience at the festival?*

A: People might assume it's strictly a dance audience, and it's not. It's kind of like the young culture hipsters. A lot of people come from the entertainment industry, like directors, producers, cinematographers, because they want to see what's going on in the noncommercial world where people are hashing out new creative ideas. We have a lot of designers and a lot of dancers and filmmakers.

Q: *Why dance and film?*

A: I was making films before there were any dance film festivals. I would submit my work to regular video and film festivals and they would get accepted and played, but the festival people would say, "This is really interesting, but why so much dance?" And the dance world would look at the work and say, "That's not really dance," because they needed to see what Great Performances used to do on TV - that full body shot, basically documentation of a stage performance. And dancers were really stuck on that perception of having to see the whole body, and here I was editing and showing an elbow that filled the whole screen and just knocked you off your chair it was so poignant and powerful.

Screendance: A New Visual Language runs June 6-7 at REDCAT, 631 W. Second St., (213) 237-2800 or redcat.org. Tickets for opening night are \$15 (\$10 for CalArts or DCW members), \$10 for Saturday's screenings (\$7 for CalArts or DCW members). For tickets and information, (213) 480-8633 or dancecamerawest.org.

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