

In the Mirror of Maya Deren

Christiana Galanopoulou and Alla Kovgan

Curators' texts

Christiana Galanopoulou is an art historian. In 2000 she founded the **VideoDance** festival, a festival on movement and the moving image in Athens (www.filmfestival.gr/videodance). She is the artistic director of this festival since. She lives and works in Athens as a freelance curator in visual arts, and as a dance and film programmer. She has written on visual arts, dance, film and videodance.

Alla Kovgan is a film/video maker, curator and teacher from Moscow (Russia) who has lived and worked in Boston (US) since 1996. Her 16mm films and her videos have been screened at film festivals and theatrical venues in the US, Canada and Europe. Besides films and videos, Alla's media of expression and exploration encompass multimedia performances, interactive video projections and other image/sound/body collaborations with dancers and musicians. With support of Dance Film Association (New York), Alla has founded and has been curating St. Petersburg International Dance Film Festival Kinodance in Russia (www.kinodance.com/russia)

The Mirror: Films by Maya Deren
Curated by Alla Kovgan and Christiana Galanopoulou

Dancer, ethnographer, philosopher, and visual poet Maya Deren (1917-1961) gave birth to the American avant-garde film movement of the postwar era in America, and her work remains key to our understanding of the modern cinema. Born Eleanora Derenkovskaya in the year of the Russian Revolution in Kiev, Ukraine, she emigrated as a child with her family to New York, where her father shortened the family name to Deren and set up his psychiatric practice. A student activist in college, Deren was briefly married to a socialist student of Russian origin. Her interest in dance led her to join the company of Katherine Dunham, the choreographer, dancer, and anthropologist whom she accompanied, as secretary, on a national tour. In Los Angeles with Dunham, Deren met the man who became her second husband: Czech émigré filmmaker Alexander Hammid. With his help, Deren turned to film and began her career with a modest, black-and-white psychodrama that would become the founding text of a new American cinema. She also introduced the feminist experimental cinema.

Deren's advocacy and the example of her own productions were catalytic to the critical recognition of experimental cinema in the US and to the emergence of an entire generation of young practitioners who, through the vitality of their work, expanded her singular vision and passion.

This tribute, which was mounted for VideoDance2003 festival in Greece, was born during a short discussion we had with Alla Kovgan when we first met at Monaco dance forum in 2002. Alla was (and still is) fascinated by this filmmaker and she was very much inspired by her work, so she thought that all people interested in dance and film should start from seeing Deren's films. A long discussion through e-mails followed, and through this discussion, we found we were communicating in a common language. As a result, this was the beginning of a series of tributes of early American experimental filmmakers we co-curated for VideoDance. Some of this work Alla curated first under a different concept for her Balagan series in Boston, but then we revised and repeated the curating work through the needs of a dance film festival. A tribute to Shirley Clarke followed in 2004 and one to Ed Emshwiller in 2005.

The retrospective includes a nearly complete survey of Deren's completed work as well as a new feature-length portrait of the artist. For the first time in Greece after many years of silence on Maya Deren, her six edited films were presented in **VideoDance2003** accompanied by live imaginary soundtracks by four young musicians of the new electronica scene: Coti, Lo-Fi, Paranormale, Voltnoi. It also includes a programme of 4 contemporary films echoing in a way Maya Deren's ideas about film and dance.

There is nothing to add on the poetic, unexpected way she could look at things – besides, a lot has been written. We have just tried to create the conditions in which her works can be presented as she would have liked to present them herself; in a poetic and innovative way.

Christiana Galanopoulou

The Films

Meshes of the Afternoon

Directed by Maya Deren
US 1943, 16 mm, b/w, 14'

In the striking psychodramas Deren created in the early 1940s with her cameraman husband, Alexander Hammid, she often placed herself in the frame, navigating a path through anxiety-laden Freudian environs, dreamscapes of the seemingly unphotographable. In this first and most famous work, a woman (Deren) dreams within a dream about suicide, about a phallic attack by her mate (Hammid), and about inanimate objects that assume threatening aspects. Finding innovative means to render states of mind visually and kinesthetically palpable, *Meshes of the Afternoon* drew upon an earlier, European artists' cinema and created the groundwork for a distinctly modern, personal, and proto-feminist film practice in America.

At Land

Directed by Maya Deren
US 1944, 16 mm, b/w, 15'
With: Maya Deren, John Cage, Alexander Hammid

This experiment in time and space features Deren as an alienated figure, unable to integrate with the social milieu that surrounds her. Like *Meshes of the Afternoon*, it is an oneiric tale that exhibits a dreamlike portrayal of psychosexual anxiety.

Ritual in Transfigured Time

Directed by Maya Deren
US 1945-46, 16 mm, b/w, 15'
With: Maya Deren, Anais Nin

Deren's exploration of female sexuality and the human psyche is given form here through figures inspired by Greek mythology. This elaborate choreography for the camera transforms everyday movements into dance-like passages with the assistance of slow-motion effects.

A Study in Choreography for Camera

Directed by Maya Deren
US 1945, 16 mm, b/w, 4'
With: Talley Beatty

A dancer unfurls his body, runs, and leaps into the air. Through Deren's ingenious camera work, this simple gesture becomes a testimonial to the glory of movement.

Meditation on Violence

Directed by Maya Deren
US 1948, 16 mm, b/w, 12'
With: Li Chi

This lyrical film chronicles the ritualistic training exercises of three increasingly aggressive styles of Chinese boxing Wu-Tang, Shao-lin, and Shao-lin with a sword. To emphasise the gradual shift from tranquility to violence, Deren's soundtrack and editing patterns grow ever more frenetic.

The Very Eye of Night

Directed by Maya Deren
US 1952-59, 16 mm, b/w, 15'
With: Patricia Ferrier, Bud Brady

In the final film Deren completed before her untimely death, the night sky comes to life as dancers from the Metropolitan Opera Ballet School re-enact the ancient dramas of constellation mythology. The original score of the film was by Japanese composer Teiji Ito, the director's third husband.

The Documentary

In the Mirror of Maya Deren

2002 / 104' / documentary

Director: Martina Kudlacek

Photography: Wolfgang Lehner

Editing: Henry Hills

Music: John Zorn

Production: Navigator Film, Dschoint Ventschr, Tag / Traum

Austria, Czech Republic

The feature-length documentary *In the Mirror of Maya Deren* reconstructs the exciting biography of the legendary artist Maya Deren. Born in Kiev 1917, she was to become a central figure of the American avant-garde in the Forties and Fifties. She is best known for her groundbreaking work in experimental film and as a Voodoo devotee. She died in New York in 1961.

We are in search of Maya Deren's personality, focusing on the major themes of her life: film art, choreography, dance, ritual and voodoo. Following the traces of this important woman pioneer of the 20th century, the film visits the places and people of her life drawing the picture of a modern myth.

Martina Kudlacek's portrait of Deren is not so much a biography as a thoughtful introduction to the artist's mesmerising body of work. Using footage from Deren's stunningly beautiful films of the 1940s (including the seminal *Meshes of The Afternoon*, *At Land*, and *Ritual In Transfigured Time*) along with archival audio interviews and observations from Deren's contemporaries such as experimental filmmaker Stan Brakhage, actress and Living Theatre cofounder Judith Malina, and critics Amos Vogel and Jonas Mekas, Kudlacek provides a fascinating glimpse into the mind and life of this groundbreaking and influential artist.

Maya Deren and film-dance

By Alla Kovgan

Some kind of gypsy, dancing for hours on end with wildness and excitement and also total seriousness,"ⁱ "a legendary figure...a pioneer of American Avant-Garde and feminist inspiration," "a cinematic Prometheus, stealing the fire of the Hollywood gods for those whom the gods refused to recognize,"ⁱⁱ a founder of the Creative Film Foundation that promoted and supported emerging film artists, the conceptualizer of the dance film genre, ethnographer, philosopher and dancer, **Maya Deren** (Eleanora Derenkovskaya) was born in Kiev on April 29, 1917. By 1922, pogroms, the economy and her father's political proximity to Trotsky forced her family to flee Russia and settle in Syracuse, New York. Deren studied journalism and literature and became a personal secretary to the Black dancer, choreographer and anthropologist Katherine Dunham. With Dunham she also took dance classes and got exposure to Vodoun dances of Haiti. In 1943, her husband Alexander Hammid, a Czech émigré and a filmmaker, chose for Deren a new name: Maya (the name of Buddha's mother, as well as an ancient word for "water" and the "veil of illusion" in Hindu mythology).

Alexander Hammid introduced Maya Deren to *film* which became Maya's passion, philosophical quest and an artistic exploration for the rest of her life. This was a great relief for Maya, because before discovering *film*, she was a poet and as she pointed out, "not a very good poet, because [her] mind worked in images which [she] was trying to translate into words. [Undertaking cinema, she could] work directly so it was not like discovering a new medium so much as finally coming home into a world whose vocabulary, syntax, grammar was [her] mother-tongue."ⁱⁱⁱ By the time, Deren learnt about *film* in the 1940s, cinema has been around for a little bit over 40 years and formed a number of both mainstream and experimental movements that Deren was acutely aware of. However, Deren did not join any of them, on the contrary, she "galvanically launched a new one,"^{iv} the one that treated film as unique art form. Maya wrote:

Film is so useful for recording nature, reality, and all the other art forms, that very few people realize that film form, as such has not yet been found. By film form I mean the creation of something which could not be accomplished by any other medium, just as a ballet is something which a novel cannot do and vice-versa.^v

She ardently criticized both Hollywood filmmaking for its attachment to the literary form as the departure point for making a film, and abstract experimental filmmaking as "it denies the special capacity of the film to manipulate real elements as realities, and substitutes, exclusively, the elements of artifice (the method of painting)."^{vi} Jonas Mekas, director of Anthology Film Archive in New York and filmmaker, remembered that "any reference, in the press, or in real life discussions, to her work as containing elements of surrealism made Maya mad... When Maya began making her own films, she turned toward ritual and away from surrealism. Although she was educated in Europe, in the classical tradition, in her films after "Meshes [in the afternoon]" she was searching desperately for an alternative, trying to get away from that crowd [surrealists and dadaists] that was still surrounding her."^{vii}

According to Deren, this alternative could be in understanding film as "the product of a completely unique complex: the discovery of an instrument that can function, simultaneously, both in terms of discovery and in terms of invention."^{viii} Maya avidly studied this magic instrument – camera and editing, and to her great excitement, kept identifying more and more possibilities that *film* had to offer. Slow-motion photography was one of the major areas that drew Maya's attention. She believed that "slow-motion is the microscope of time" and discovered that in the most casual activities, it revealed "a texture of emotional and psychological complexes."^{ix} Another area of her interest was the movement created by the reversal of a motion. Deren wrote, "by simply holding the camera up-side-down, one can photograph the waves of the ocean and they will, in projection, travel reverse. Such film footage not only reveals a new quality in the motion of the waves, but, creates, to put it mildly, a most revolutionary reality."^x Deren meticulously described her findings in both technical and

philosophical terms in her book “An Anagram of Ideas on Art, Form and Film” and in numerous articles she published.

Each of Maya’s films was “built as a chamber and became a corridor, like a chain reaction.”^{xi} Although Maya was proud of her first film *Meshes in the Afternoon* that to these days is named among the treasures of the Avant-Garde cinema, she favoured her later films much more. In her later films, she freed herself from the influences of the surrealists, and could devote her artistic explorations to *ritual* – something that she was fascinated with since early childhood and later on while working with Katherine Dunham. Her interest in *ritual* guided Maya away from portraying the personal internal to conveying collective external reality and its relationships to other realities. The human being is the central transcending force of the multiple realities and rituals that Deren created in her films. They silently move, dance, gesticulate, act, acquire and destroy their personalities under the constant manipulation of film technology, only existing in the reality of each particular film.

“Meshes [in the afternoon]” is, one might say, almost expressionist, it externalizes an inner world to the point where it is confounded with the external world. “At Land” has little to do with the inner world of the protagonist; it externalizes the hidden dynamic of the external world, and here the drama results from the activity of the external world. It is as if I had moved from a concern with the life of a fish, to a concern with the sea which accounts for the character of the fish and its life. And “Ritual [in transfigured time]” pulls back even further, to a point of view from which the external world itself is but an element in the entire structure and scheme of metamorphosis: the sea itself changes because of the larger changes of the earth. “Ritual...” is about the nature and process of change... “Meditation on violence” tried to abstract the principle of on-going metamorphosis and change which was in “Ritual...” And finally, “The Very Eye of Night” [the coolest and most classicist film] was larger than the loving attention to a life.”^{xii}

From an early age, Deren was drawn to the mysteries of the human psyche. In Russia, her father Solomon Derenkowsky studied trance, and its applications in medical therapy at the Psycho-neurological Institute of Vladimir Bekhterev. Maya followed her father’s path that grew out of his scientific work but she approached it differently – from her passionate interest in dance and ritual. Her passion for dance and film naturally prompted Maya to ruminate about the union between the two and, as a result, a concept of *film-dance* or *dance film* was born. She stated:

If I did not live in a time when the film was accessible to me as a medium I would have been a dancer perhaps or a singer. My reason for creating them is almost as if I would dance except this is much more marvelous dance. It’s because in film I can make the world dance.”^{xiii}

Deren was first to articulate the principles of creating dance films in her essay *Choreography for Camera* written based on her four-minute film *A Study of Choreography for the Camera*. Within this film “a dance is so related to camera and cutting that it cannot be “performed” as a unit anywhere but in this particular film.”^{xiv} Most certainly, “A Study...” was not the first dance film ever made but it was the first most purposeful attempt to bridge between the dance and film media and to identify their relationships. Dance and film had non-utilitarian, non-subservient relationships when Deren amalgamated them into one “for the purpose of conveying a meaning” or “making a statement.”^{xv}

Maya Deren was not interested in preserving *dance* itself. She freed *dance* from its geographical, spatial and real time dependencies and at times, even from body movement. In her films, oftentimes, she created dances of non-dance elements. Deren used film photography techniques and editing to devise choreographic patterns, movements and spatial areas in which they occur. But the true product of *dance* and *film* interaction was time, not space. So that in *Choreography for the Camera*, the ballet leap of Talley Beatty lasts one and a half minute, in *Ritual of Transfigured Time*, there is a death by time – the girl is getting slower and slower until she stops while the widow changes into a bride.

Deren often worked with professional dancers such as Rita Christiani and Talley Beatty among others. However, the personality of the dancer is never the source of dramatic action in her films but “somewhat depersonalized element in a dramatic whole. The intent of such depersonalization is not the destruction of the individual; on the contrary, it enlarges [the dancer] beyond the personal dimension

and frees him from the specializations and confines of personality.”^{xvi} This aspiration of Deren to depersonalize is most vividly manifested in her last complete film *The Very Eye of Night* wherein free of gravity, white body shapes float in the black star universe. This aspiration also directly relates to Deren’s experience and studies of the ritual during her multiple trips to Haiti where she participated in Voudoun ceremonies and was ordained as a Voudoun priestess. Maya’s desire to unite her artistic interest in *film* with her ritualistic practices is the basis for her philosophical and artistic journey.

Deren’s life stopped unexpectedly at the age of 44. Stan Brakhage, the most renowned filmmaker of American Avant-Garde cinema and Deren’s close friend, thought that Maya was killed by her own creative powers and the powers of Voudoun that got outside her work process. Life never gave Maya a chance to finish her film *Divine Horseman* about ritualistic dances of Haiti. However, she left numerous writings and six films that reveal clues to understanding her philosophy and aesthetic. Her legacy became subject matter of articles, monographs, and debate around the world. Maya also left her great hopes for the future of *dance film* that for years have been an inspiration for a growing number of filmmakers, choreographers, dancers, anthropologists falling into the realm of its possession:

it is my true hope that film-dance will be rapidly developed and that, in the interest of such a development, a new era of collaboration between dancers and film-makers will open up – one in which both would pool their creative energies and talents towards an integrated art expression.^{xvii}

ⁱ Jonas Mekas, “A Few Notes On Maya Deren,” *Inverted Odysseys*, ed. Shelly Rice (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), p. 130.

ⁱⁱ Bill Nichols, “Introduction,” *Maya Deren and the American Avant-Garde*, ed. Bill Nichols, (Berkeley: University of California Press Los Angeles, 2001), pp. 3-20.

ⁱⁱⁱ Maya Deren, “Two Letters,” Letter to James Card, *Film Culture* 29 (Winter 1965), p.29.

^{iv} Bill Nichols, “Introduction,” *Maya Deren and the American Avant-Garde*, ed. Bill Nichols, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), p.5.

^v Maya Deren, “Film Medium as Muse and Means,” *Film Culture* 29 (Winter 1965), p.39.

^{vi} Maya Deren, *An Anagram of Ideas on Art, Form and Film*, (New York: The Alicat Book Shop Press, 1946), p. 45.

^{vii} Jonas Mekas, “A Few Notes On Maya Deren,” *Inverted Odysseys*, ed. Shelly Rice (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), p. 131.

^{viii} Maya Deren, *An Anagram of Ideas on Art, Form and Film*, (New York: The Alicat Book Shop Press, 1946), p. 46.

^{ix} *Ibid.*, p.47.

^x *Ibid.*, p.48.

^{xi} Maya Deren, “Two Letters,” Letter to James Card, *Film Culture* 29 (Winter 1965), p.31.

^{xii} Maya Deren, “Two Letters,” Letter to James Card, *Film Culture* 29 (Winter 1965), pp.31-32.

^{xiii} *In the mirror of Maya Deren*, a film by Martina Kudlacek, Austria, 2002.

^{xiv} Maya Deren, “Choreography for camera,” *Film Culture* 29 (Winter 1965), p.4.

^{xv} Maya Deren, “Film Medium as Muse and Means,” *Film Culture* 29 (Winter 1965), p.45.

^{xvi} Maya Deren, *An Anagram of Ideas on Art, Form and Film*, (New York: The Alicat Book Shop Press, 1946), p. 20.

^{xvii} Maya Deren, “Choreography for camera,” *Film Culture* 29 (Winter 1965), p.4.

Echoes in the Mirror

Curated by Christiana Galanopoulou

Maya Deren's influence on the American experimental filmmaking is not easy to document, as generations of artists have related to her work in manifold ways. *Echoes in the Mirror* is a small tribute to all those who have been contaminated by her six films.

Alla Kovgan's *Arcus* clearly echoes the aesthetics of *The Very Eye of Night*, Maya Deren's most unexpected film, and explores the relationship of the camera with a neoclassical kinesiological approach.

Eric Koziol's *The Duchess*, with its marvellous key figure, preserves the surrealist succession of images and roles based on psychoanalytic chains of thought reminiscent of *Meshes of the Afternoon*.

Danièle Wilmoth's *Curtain of Eyes* evokes the psychological tension of the ambient Maya Deren's early films, their evocative scenes, limited to the minimum and without any resort to technical means.

Sean O'Brien's *Sunrise at Midnight*, has been included not only because it shows how far the echoes in Maya Deren's mirror have gone, but also because it is cast in the form of a Japanese ghost story, demonstrating how close oriental fairytale narrative structures are to the associative psychological structure of Maya Deren's poetic visual fairytales.

It is strange, and a measure of a small discovery – although an expected one -, that in three of the aforementioned films, echoing Maya Deren's visual aesthetics, Butoh has been selected as form of kinetic expression: Maybe because it is a crude psychological expression bereft of superfluous elements, maybe because it allows for associative narrative, maybe for its ritual element, or because of the fact that it suggests a specific relation between the body and space, the two aesthetics seem to fully complement each other. Besides, Maya Deren herself had turned her attention to oriental martial arts and had an entirely personal relationship with ritual through her introduction to Voodoo.

All four films are made according to Maya Deren's choices: with minimal financial resources and maximal personal investment – resulting in a different kind of relation with magic and visual poetry. The three American artists come from the experimental academic filmmaking community, which Deren supported wholeheartedly.

Christiana Galanopoulou

The Duchess

2002 / 16'

Director:

Eric S. Koziol

Choreographer:

Shinichi Momo Koga

Music:

Allen Willner & Joshua Kohl

Photography:

Eric S. Koziol

Editin

Eric S. Koziol

Performers

Cassandra Terman, Shinichi Momo Koga, Haruko Nishimura, Tanya Calamoneri, Leigh Evans, Paige Sorvillo

Production:

Eric S. Koziol, Film Arts Foundation

USA

The Duchess is a psychological portrait of a lonely aristocrat. Specters of death invade her mind and materialize within her sanctuary. Her personality fractures into multiple animalistic forms. Past and present collide launching sonic shards and psychic debris. Visually exquisite, the action is set in Germany amongst the opulent Prussian palaces of Sans-Souci and the textured ruins of the Fabrik Potsdam. The experimental photography aesthetics match with Butoh dance to create a nightmarish surprising and dazzling world.

Director Eric Koziol makes music videos for big companies, but also his own experimental films and videos. He also creates interactive live video performance environments for theatre and dance and live video-installations.

Choreographer Sinichi Momo Koga has been influenced by his training in Butoh dance and his work aims to break down dance, theatre and film forms restructuring and extracting the essence of each.

Sunrise at midnight

2002 / 15'

Director:

Sean O'Brien

Choreographer:

Yumi Umiumare

Music:

Satsuki Odamura, Anne Norman,

Kazumichi Grime

Photography:

Sean O'Brien & Simon Von Wolkenstein

Editing:

Nick Meyers

Performers:

Yumi Umiumare & Tony Yap Yumi Umiumare & Tony Yap

Production:

Sean O'Brien

Australia

Sunrise at Midnight is both a documentary portrait of Yumi Umiumare, a contemporary Japanese / Australian Butoh dancer, and a Japanese Ghost story set in the Australian Desert. Filmmaker Sean O'Brien and Butoh Dancer Yumi Umiumare make an expedition into the desert to experience and exorcise Noriko's lost soul.

"The film is inspired by an historic photograph of a troupe of Japanese female performers who toured outback towns at the turn of the 20th century, and the tale of one of those performers, Noriko, who wandered into the desert and never came back. The photograph captures an unusual moment in Australian history when Japanese culture unexpectedly touched it. The photo is a formal portrait of four Japanese women who toured outback towns in the early 1900s. The women are known as karayuki-san, "women who work in a foreign land", imported to entertain locals and itinerant Asian workers. Fascinated by this weird blend of Japanese exotica and Australiana, Yumi and I used this photo as a creative key, integral to the establishment of the character, the choreography, and the imagined story which takes place beyond the edge of the tableau. Influences include Japanese ghost stories, and Australian tales of naive innocents lost in the bush.

Both Yumi and I are drawn to the Australian landscape, Yumi as a performer and myself as a photographer, and the film's narrative gave us the chance to journey inland. The landscape is used as a vast theatre for the performance, with Yumi carefully blocked within the "natural ikebana" - strange and abstract arrangements of wood, earth, stone, and sand.

While Yumi's background is in Butoh, the performance also refers to the restrained minimalism of Noh theatre, and traditional Japanese folk dance.

The stylized nature of the drama and the stark quality of the locations lent itself to black and white. A primary influence was the work of Eikoh Hosoe, one of the first photographers to collaborate with Butoh performers in the field. Reflecting the cross cultural nature of the project, the filmic style pays reference to both Japanese cinema, specifically the films of Mizoguchi, and local cinema of the 1940s & 50s, ("Back of Beyond", "Jedda" etc), particularly in its tonal depiction of the distinctive Australian light in the landscape."

Sean O'Brien

Arcus

2003 / 4'

Director:

Alla Kovgan, Jeff Silva

Choreographer:

Nicola Hawkins

Music:

Seth Barger

Photography:

Alla Kovgan, Jeff Silva

Editing:

Alla Kovgan, Jeff Silva

Performers:

Erin Gottwald, Maggie Husak, Carey McKinley, Walter McLean, Jessica Reed, Jes Shuford

Production:

Alla Kovgan, Jeff Silva

USA

Arcus is a video collage of dance movements and motion frames. The title *Arcus* is derived from Latin - a bow or arch -like shape. Its name was inspired by the manner in which the frames of the video image move and emerge from within each other while the dancers bodies bend and twist inside the frame.

The black and white fluidity of the image reminds one of *The Very Eye of Night* by Maya Deren.

Curtain of eyes

1997 / 13'

Director:

Danièle Wilmouth

Choreographer:

Danièle Wilmouth and the dancers

Music:

Adrian Freedman

Photography:

Ian Powell

Editing

Danièle Wilmouth

Performers:

Okyon, Lee, Izuru Mori, Takechiyo Mariya (The Saltimbanques)

Production:

Danièle Wilmouth, Hairless Films

USA

Curtain of Eyes is an experimental film which combines Japanese Butoh dance with psychological imagery and choreographed cinematography. Over a six-month period, director Danièle Wilmouth collaborated with the Kyoto-based dancers Katsura Kan, Okyon, Lee, Izuru Mori and Takechiyo Mariya, to create movements for both dancers and camera. The film strives to cinematically fuse the two disciplines of dance and film, by reflecting each medium's characteristics on the other. The result is an exploration of intimate relationships and bi-cultural identity. Ian Powell, the editor, comes from New Zealand and Adrian Freedman, who composed the original score, is British.

Danièle Wilmouth is a North American film & video maker working primarily in movement / dance for the camera. In 1990 she moved to Osaka, Japan. During her six-year residency abroad, she studied Japanese Butoh dance, and performed with The Saltimbanques dance troupe, directed by Katsura Kan. In 1993, she became the co-founder of Hairless Films, an independent filmmaking collective. She is currently teaching in the film and video departments of The School of the Art Institute of Chicago and Columbia College.