

Paul Kahn /

THE STORY OF FROGWOMAN

"The Story of Frogwoman" has been excerpted from Changing Faces, a three-poem work by Paul Kahn. The accompanying photographs by David Lucal show Deborah Chassler as dancer and "second voice". The event was presented by the Institute of Contemporary Dance at 212 Stuart Street, Boston, Massachusetts on December 3, 4, 5, 1976. The version printed here has been improvised by the editors.

sit on it
the spine curves
mind
on the tip of the nose

Coyote says to Frogwoman
"you are the fourth woman I've seen today"
"no" she replies
"you are the man I am meeting for the fourth time"

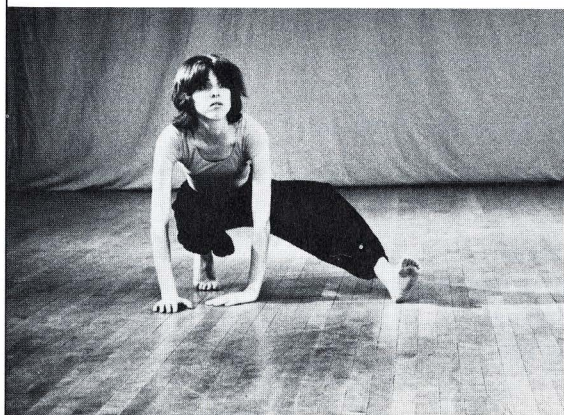
thinking falling

thinking sitting the world began
color speaking from the tips of tree branches
speaking of the world beginning
thinking with the breathing tips

sitting on the world
began the breathing
meeting Frogwoman Coyote got confused
he had never met another person
in the world
“you are the man I am meeting” she said
speaking with a clear mind

speaking of the world
beginning

sit



sitting falling

thinking with the breathing

thinking falling

mind

on the tip of the nose

"no" she replied



"you're the fourth woman I've seen today"
"no" she replied

the world began
colours speaking
from the tips of tree

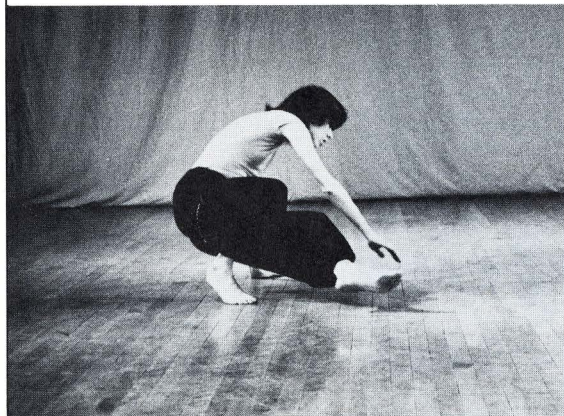
Coyote got confused
he had never met another person

falling

thinking falling

branches speaking of the world

"no" she replied



"you are the man I am meeting for the fourth time"

Coyote got confused

speaking with a clear mind

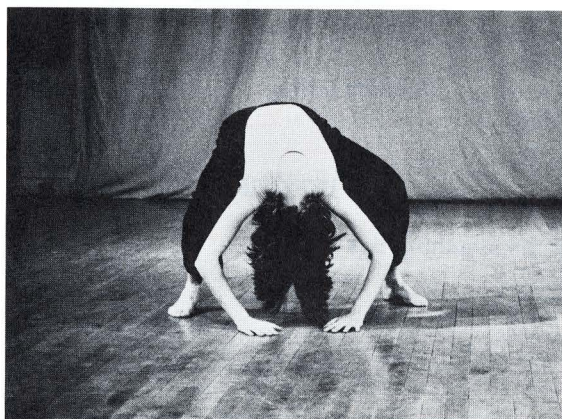
the world began

Frogwoman said

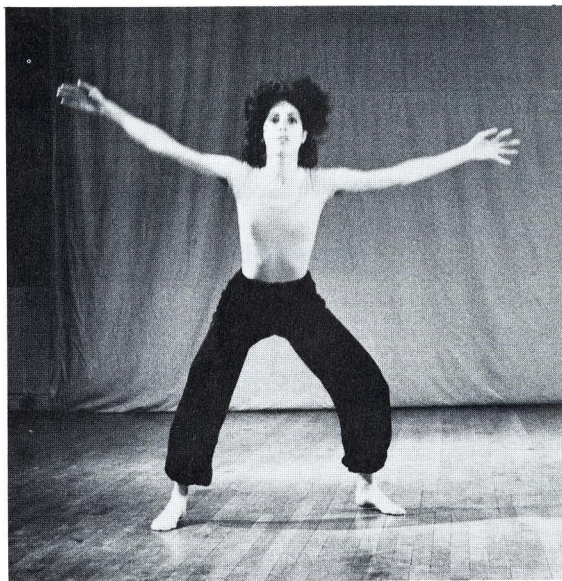
the spine curves

"no"

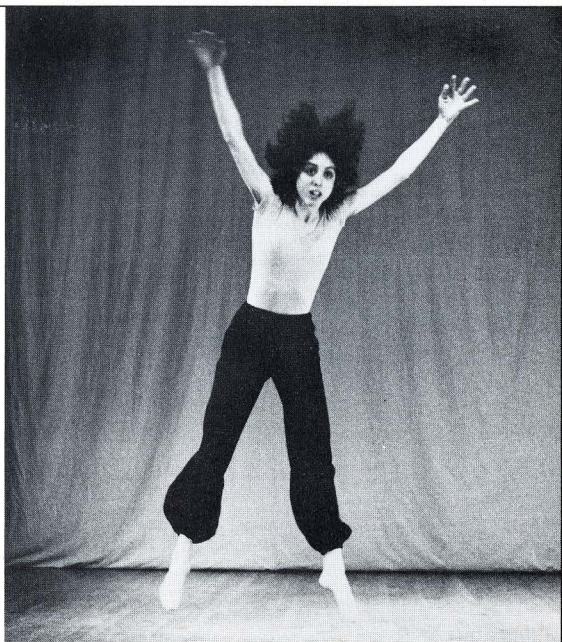
"I'm the woman you're meeting"



"I'm the woman you're meeting"
"for the fourth time"
"for the fourth time"
"you're the fourth woman"
the world began
"I've seen today"



thinking falling
breathing
breathing colors
speaking of the breathing tips



Coyote got confused
speaking with a clear mind

from Program Notes for CHANGING FACES

What had created the possibility of beginning for me was Deborah's use of talking in her Release classes, which I attended. In the process of this talking, which is one way of directing the internal perceptors of her students . . . she made use of imagery in a way that I felt was similar to the use I made of it in my own writing. This imagery is not an illustration; this is a way of perception; in Deborah's words a way of creating feeling/states, which thru memory, decidedly a physical process, can be called back by the dancer into the available vocabulary when needed. The use of verbs as pure actions (walking, running, falling, etc.) suggested to me a possible transformation process of language to movement and movement to language. . . .

I have come to see these pieces as an active discourse, based on the understanding that verbal imagery has a direct effect in kinesthetic activity and visa versa. The language results from movement observed; the movement results from language heard. These performances result from both simultaneously. . . .

The rules that we set down after the first run-thrus were these:

The text of the poems is fixed. The syntactical units, the coherence of the imagery with which the poems are composed is to be respected. The order in which they occur is to be determined by the interaction between the poet and the dancer. The possible juxtapositions of given material, both in relation to its own parts, and in relation to its statement and silence, is dependent on the dialogue established between sound and movement, as the piece is being performed. The dancer is allowed to speak at any point and say anything. She is familiar with the given text, and may call out particular lines from the text, paraphrase it, or even misquote it. Her intentions are irrelevant, in any case. The poet may not alter the text in any way other than the order and duration of the lines. The piece is over when the sound and movement is over. No set visual or verbal signals are used. The end should be an ending of shared attention.

— PAUL KAHN