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doi:10.1017/S0149767720000340

Conceptual Systems: The Dances, Music, and Drawings of Laura Dean

Elliot Gordon Mercer

Laura Dean's creative output in minimalist art spans interconnected and intertwined work in dance, music, and drawing. Since her early multidisciplinary solo loft events in the mid-1960s and emergence as an influential choreographer in the early 1970s, Dean has, by her own count, created 109 performance works. Like other dance minimalists working contemporaneously in New York, Dean's artistic work of the early 1970s undertook a compositional examination of space, time, and energy to directly address questions of choreographic structure and the experience of dance spectatorship. By imposing corporeal action and kinetic progressions on static geometric forms and pulse rhythms, Dean's choreographic works affect both the expected perception of space and the experience of linear temporality, tasking viewers to rethink their relationship to performance.

For nearly two years, beginning in 1968, Dean undertook an intensive period of solo exploration, generating a compositional strategy concerned primarily with the multiple ways circles and straight lines can be geometrically arranged and differently investigated in dance. Often layered with clapping, stomping, and vocal shouts, the sound accompaniment for Dean's early works mirrored her choreographic interest in utilizing austere structures, systematized patterning, percussive action, and forceful rhythms. Throughout the early 1970s, Dean consistently represented her compositional structures in minimalist geometric drawings that she included in her program notes, published alongside descriptions of her dances, utilized in print advertisements, and included in gallery exhibitions. An integral process in communicating her compositional ideas, Dean's use of drawing presents an expanded visualization of her artistic experimentation with color, symmetry, repetition, and form.

Dean's multimodal art practice during this period, and the interconnected artistic products she developed, collectively reveal her thought processes and aesthetic concerns, which were dominated by a preoccupation with clearly defined logic and highly ordered conceptual systems. While Dean is most often described and discussed as a choreographer, I recognize her creative work as expansive beyond choreography and additionally situate Dean in the context of visual art to reconsider her minimalist creative output alongside contemporaneous developments in serial and conceptual art. To examine Dean's minimalist works, I draw on Alexander Alberro's explication of conceptual art as foregrounding an engagement with ideas in which the realized artwork directly reveals the process of artistic thinking, and Mel Bochner's notion of serial art as a procedure for visualizing

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https://doi.org/10.1017/S0149767720000340 Published online by Cambridge University Press

systems processes. Through an analysis of Dean's compositional practice across artistic disciplines, I argue that her use of schematic models, numerical structures, and geometric forms exposes a primary concern with ideation and energy patterning.

Dean's dances existed as repertoire in both ballet and modern dance companies for several decades, and she previously authorized reconstructions of her pieces.[1] In 2004 Dean decided that she no longer wanted to travel for professional projects. Until this point, she had herself personally visited the schools and dance companies where her work was being staged to see her dances prior to their performance. Rather than continuing to undertake these trips, Dean instead requested that a video recording of the reconstructions be sent to her, which would allow her to observe the performances remotely. Through this, Dean believed she could manage her dances from afar, but she began to witness increasing and more noticeable incidences of stylistic inaccuracy, discrepancy in stage patterning, and choreographic divergence in the reconstructions of her dances. Dean also observed reconstructions in which significant changes to her choreography occurred. Reflecting on this experience, in January 2009 Dean stopped all reconstructions of her performance work as well as the use of her choreographic and music material in classes, workshops, lectures, panels, and in any other way whatsoever.

Asserting her own documentation as insufficient to preserving her dance works as performance pieces, Dean's decision about the future of her dances, or lack thereof, suggests that any attempt at recording dance constitutes an endeavor that produces a wholly different object from which the original dance can never be fully recuperated. Engaging Dean's suggestion, I explore issues of preservation and reproducibility in dance to reevaluate the practice of "seeing" her dances through their documentation. Dean's mode for archiving her dances as graph drawings foregrounds a visual experience of her work on paper rather than a visual experience of the body in performance, a practice that removes the spectatorial event in favor of a direct engagement with the conceptual systems and structures of her pieces.

In discussing her work, Dean cites the practice of Tibetan Buddhist sand mandalas, situating her current philosophy on choreography as an act wherein a letting go or destroying of the artwork is an integral component of the creative process. Following my framing of Dean's work as conceptual art, I propose that her minimalist dances do not require the body to be communicated or articulated, but rather her use of drawing de-emphasizes or even eliminates the perceptual encounter with the choreographic event and dancer-as-art-object. The de-emphasizing of live performance suggests a letting go of the moving body and a choreographic legacy of ideation that is perpetuated exclusively through Dean's archival material.

Dance—Music—Drawing

While often discussed as a choreographer, Dean's creative process and career work suggest a more appropriate label of choreographer-composer, or even composer-choreographer, alongside artists such as Meredith Monk and Alwin Nikolais. Dean first integrated her own vocal material into several solo performances during the 1960s, and in 1976 she began composing her own music. Over the following three decades, Dean created thirty musical scores specifically for her choreographic works, intrinsically linking these components of her creative process. Positioning Dean's work in music composition as equal to and inseparable from her choreographic output, as Dean does herself, emphasizes the ways she has actively approached artistic exploration interdisciplinarily, drawing from and influencing new developments in minimalism across multiple media.

Dean's early dance and music works foreground structure, pattern, and form. Her minimalist choreography presents simplified movement structures, uncomplicated gestural vocabulary, repeated choreographic phrases, canon forms, geometric floor patterns, and powerful pulse rhythms.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0149767720000340 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Reflecting contemporaneous developments in postmodern dance, Dean utilizes movement unrelated to ballet and modern dance techniques, including walking, stamping, jumping, running, skipping, hopping, and spinning. Her choreographic structures map these movements onto geometric floor patterns, with each dance engaging different combinations, juxtapositions, and layers of circles and/or straight lines. The intentionally restricted and extremely simplified movement vocabulary in Dean's work allows for a focused revelation of visual patterning—the underlying structural and compositional logic of her work—both through the body and in the use of stage space.

The steady pulse rhythms of Dean's pieces work to display how her choreographic patterns continuously shift and develop. Dean's geometric structures become clear as the dances progress, with variations in her restricted pattern forms unfolding with rhythmic concentration and control. Dean's precision movements highlight the nuances of her shifting musical and spatial systems, which utilize repetition and variation to draw attention to structure, sequence, ordering, and patterning. While the movement and musical material within Dean's systems remain the same, the structures change, producing steady swells of intensity that gradually increase and decrease. These shifts may happen slowly, with the dance morphing at what feels like a glacial pace, or quickly, as forms and positions that have been maintained at length suddenly break apart in precisely timed actions that move the performers into the next structural formation. Each transition is meticulously designed to reveal the complex logic of Dean's compositional structures. Dean's pieces both appear and sound mathematical, progressing through detailed rhythmic cycles and mosaic forms in highly ordered counting sequences. As the dances unfold in repetitive processes that slowly reveal difference, we are drawn into solving the equations and systems that comprise her work. Through a sustained introspection and steady progression of pattern, Dean's pieces are exceptionally focused and intimately meditative.

Dean's creative practice also includes work in visual art. The minimalist geometric drawings that represent her dances each illustrate the floor patterns and rhythmic structures of the piece. For Dean, the "graphic drawings were a way for me to help describe the love that I have for the strong symmetrical underlying structures in my choreography" (Dean 2017). Depicting her compositional ideas on paper rather than through the body, Dean's drawings graphically visualize her thought processes and minimalist concerns. Dean has also created additional drawings independent from specific choreographic works. These brightly colorful grid pieces, created with felt markers on large sheets of graph paper, present intricate symmetrical pattern formations that emanate from a central grid square. Dean utilized this drawing practice as a way to experiment with ideas of color, symmetry, repetition, pattern, and form in a way that was similar to her musical and choreographic explorations.

Dean began producing these graph drawings in 1969, and during the early 1980s Dean's larger drawing works were included in gallery exhibitions, including the 1980 Venice Biennale, where she appeared as part of *Drawings: The Pluralist Decade* in the United States Pavilion.[2] With Dean's creative output situated between visual art and dance, her drawings moved between exhibitions of work by postmodern choreographers, and gallery shows wherein she was presented alongside visual artists working in minimalism. In the catalog for the group exhibition *Tracking, Tracing, Marking, Pacing* at the Pratt Institute in 1982, Dean provides a concise summary of her drawings: "Rhythm. Pattern. Color." (Schwartz 1982, 36). While the grid drawings have mistakenly been labeled as dance scores or choreographic studies, they do not correspond to any of Dean's dance works, nor are they the result of any movement composition exercise. However, the compositional concerns Dean engaged in the creation of these drawings are also reflected in her stage works; Dean's musical compositions and choreographic structures are intrinsically related to explorations of rhythm, pattern, and color. Viewed alongside her choreographic and musical works, Dean's drawings reveal her creative work in minimalism as part of an intrinsically linked multimodal artistic practice.

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Photo 1 Laura Dean, Untitled*, 2009. Felt marker on paper. Laura Dean Papers, American Dance Festival Archives, Duke University.*

Dean is explicit in articulating that she does not perceive her drawings, even those representational of her choreographic structures, as dance scores or even as notation (Dean 2017). This assertion serves to distance her drawing practice from the scoring work of other choreographers during the 1960s and 1970s, including Anna Halprin, Simone Forti, Yvonne Rainer, Trisha Brown, Lucinda Childs, and Deborah Hay. However, I situate Dean's drawings in relation to the conceptual concerns of minimalist visual art to explore how they might be considered notations, if not *dance* notations. In conceptual art, notation produces meaning by tasking the viewer to envision another visual form without the necessity of its materialization. While Dean's drawings present her choreographic structures in a way that is displaced from their enactment as live performance, these works on paper notate the conceptual ideas of her dances through the representation of time, space, and energy. The geometric and rhythmic systems articulated in Dean's drawings thereby contain a conceptual proposition for imagining multidimensional action, yet Dean's minimalist emphasis on reducing the drawings to the most essential structures of floor patterning and count systems simultaneously removes sufficient choreographic information to preserve the specificities of the dancing body and recuperate the dances as live performances. Examining Dean's work on paper in the context of drawing, rather than dance, allows for a reconsideration of how Dean worked to represent her structures and systems in different media as a way to foreground and forward concept.

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Early Dances

Born in 1945 on Staten Island, Dean attended the High School of the Performing Arts in New York, training in ballet, jazz, and modern dance. Additionally, she studied at several independent studios across the city, including the Third Street Settlement, School of American Ballet, Martha Graham School, and Merce Cunningham Studio. She joined the Paul Taylor Dance Company in 1964, where she danced for two years before joining the Paul Sanasardo Dance Company. In 1966 she began integrating herself into New York's avant-garde art scene, performing in Kenneth King's duet *Blow Out* (1966) at Judson Memorial Church and Meredith Monk's *Time Stop* (1966). Dean also began developing her own performance work in 1966. Working first as a solo artist, she had begun to create group pieces by the 1970s. As she intensified her choreographic work, Dean created a nonprofit organization, The Dean Dance and Music Foundation, and established Laura Dean and Dance Company in 1972.[3]

Dean's first choreographic works were two solo performances, *Medieval* (1966) and *3 Minutes and 10 Seconds* (1967), both presented at the Clark Center for the Performing Arts in New York as part of their New Choreographers series. Continuing to explore solo performance, Dean began composing small-scale theatrical work in late 1967, creating six pieces over the ensuing year: *Christmas Piece* (1967), *Hush Little Baby* (1968), *Life is All Around You* (1968), *Sitting-Stamping-Spinning (Red, White, Black)* (1968), *Farewell* (1968), and *No Title* (1968). Presented in loft spaces, these early works were interdisciplinary, mixed-means performance events that collectively engaged and variously integrated spoken word, whistling, singing, tape recorded text, movement actions, dance, prop drama, object theater, installation activities, and music. With the exception of *Sitting-Stamping-Spinning (Red, White, Black)*, Dean recalls that "none of these works were performed publicly—for which I currently am extremely grateful—but for a small group of friends" (Dean 1978, 95). These performances reflected cross-disciplinary trends in experimental performance that were being developed and presented in SoHo by an expanding coterie of young artists into which Dean had integrated herself.

Dean left New York in March 1968, expecting to be gone for only two weeks, but instead remained away from the city's avant-garde art milieu for the better part of two years. Dean first traveled to Texas, where she spent a few weeks in San Antonio and Austin, before arriving in San Francisco.[4] Dean believed her work *Sitting-Stamping-Spinning* "was total avant-garde kitsch" and decided to spend extended time in San Francisco to do some "mental housecleaning" (Dean 1978, 95). During this period, she utilized *Sitting-Stamping-Spinning* as a starting point for creating new work and clarifying her artistic intentions. Dean returned to New York in August 1968, but her stay was brief. After being in the city for fewer than three months and only presenting one new work, *No Title*, she traveled back to San Francisco, where she would stay from November 1968 until August 1969.

In San Francisco Dean rented an empty storefront on Hayes Street, which had an attached apartment in the back, where she lived with dancer-choreographer Andy de Groat. Using the empty storefront as a studio space, she continued to experiment with creating new choreographic material. During this time, Dean worked independently and in isolation, with the intention to "establish new inner connections with the dance" (Dean 1971, 2). In her introspective creative process, Dean actively worked to distance herself from the dance techniques and choreographic styles of her training, instead experimenting with simple motions, rhythmic structures, and geometric patterns. Exploring new movement possibilities, Dean began walking in circles in her studio while letting her body lean slightly in toward the center, utilizing gravity and momentum to partially direct her steps. This action eventually created a spiral, leading Dean toward the center of the pattern, making progressively smaller circles until her steps began to revolve her in place. This activity led to Dean's development of a choreographic action that she would continue to intensify: extended, nonspotted spinning. Dean considered spinning to be a breakthrough in her work.

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Reflecting on this choreographic development, Dean recalls, "I spin because I remember spinning and whirling as a child. These childhood memories of whirling came back to me when I was working on movement, by myself" (Dean, n.d.). Spinning, whirling, and turning became signature choreographic elements of Dean's new works, not only in the 1970s but also throughout her career. With Dean's spinning primarily an action of the feet, it allowed for intricate positioning and gestures of the arms and hands, as well as angling of the head and torso, to create new moving shapes in performance. The repetitive, rhythmic steps of Dean's spins also allowed for intricate stamping patterns wherein the dancer could produce sound during the performance. In her creative process, Dean often utilized stamping as an accompaniment to musical scores, while other times the stamping rhythms constituted the sole music for a choreographic work.

Returning to New York in 1969, Dean continued her choreographic investigations of spinning, repetitive structures, and geometric patterning. The first dance work she created after her intensive period of isolated artistic exploration was presented in February 1970 at the loft of postminimalist visual artist Alan Saret. Dean's solo was performed on a five-foot by three-foot rug, and she recalls that in this piece "I walked a straight line from stage right to stage left and did a repetitive dance phrase from stage left to stage right. This was repeated a number of times" (Dean 1978, 97). This choreographic section was followed by the work's second portion wherein Dean sang while sitting on the rug. The next solo Dean presented in 1970, *An Hour in Silence*, was a three-part work that involved stamping, spinning, and singing. Dean began the piece by stamping in a large square pattern, and then transitioned into an extended nonspotted spin that lasted approximately twenty minutes. The work concluded with Dean singing for about fifteen minutes, repeating only one note. Integrating dance and music, *At Alan Saret's Loft* and *An Hour in Silence* demonstrate Dean's process of conveying her compositional concerns and minimalist explorations through multiple media, a process she would continue to engage throughout her career.

These two private, one-night, invitation-only performance works allowed Dean to present her new creative material and compositional ideas to an audience for the first time. Following these events, Dean intensified her work with geometric patterning, choreographic repetition, and spinning for her first public performance piece in over three years, *Bach Preludes* (1971). Performed at the Merce Cunningham Studio, *Bach Preludes* includes "a set sequence of movement starting out with a large circle, an x pattern in the space, and a spiral leading into spinning" (Dean 1978, 97). Dean danced this choreographic phrase twice, once in silence and, after an intermission, a second time accompanied by a selection of ten Bach preludes played by pianist Steve Chambers.[5]

In her program notes for this performance Dean directly outlined her creative concerns and artistic efforts: "As a choreographer I am involved with dance, rhythm, repetition, and pattern" (Dean 1971, 3). Below this statement, she included definitions of these key terms, culled from *Webster's Dictionary*:

> dance: to move the body, esp. the feet, in rhythm, usually to music. n. 1. rhythmic movement, usually to music.
>
> rhythm: n. (Gr. rhythmos, measure) 1. movement characterized by regular recurrence, as of beat, accent. 2. the pattern of this in music, verse etc.
>
> repetition: 1. to say or do something again.
>
> pattern: n. 1. a person or thing worthy of imitation. 2. A model plan, etc. used in making things. 3. a design decoration. 4. definite tendency or characteristics. (Dean 1971, 3)

Focusing on these specific interrelated definitions, Dean constructs a manifesto-like statement that simultaneously defines and bounds the parameters of her choreographic work. In *Bach Preludes*,

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Dean utilizes regulated movement structures that progress rhythmically through space and time: "She skips in place, runs a big circle, turns a small circle waving her arms like windmills, steps with one foot to the back, side, front, or bends forward throwing one arm ahead and the other behind to parallel a stretched leg" (Jackson 1971, 13). Dean engages the most basic geometric forms in this minimalist work, employing circles, straight lines, and spiral patterns. Her continuously recurring steps and rigorously maintained cadence throughout the piece repetitively pattern into clearly defined geometric plans that eventually coalesce into a sustained spinning action. Changes in dynamics and tension throughout the work are minimal, and Dean visually reinforces her metrical framework through the use of beat and repetition. Dean distills her dance material to these most simple, structural limitations, and then works within this clearly defined system to produce numerous possible recombinant choreographic variations.

Two months later, in October 1971, Dean presented a reworked version of this piece under the new title *A Dance Concert*.[6] This performance work utilized the exact same sequence of movement as *Bach Preludes*. However, Dean eschewed the Bach music in favor of explicitly minimal rhythmic accompaniment, and presented the solo material three times rather than twice, again pausing between each iteration of her choreographic phrase. In *A Dance Concert*, Dean's solo was first danced in white with audible breathing, then in green with bells attached to her ankles, and a third time in black with an iron castanet in hand while accompanied by two musicians playing maracas, which were borrowed from minimalist composer Steve Reich. Dean had been teaching dance and yoga breathing at her Crosby Street loft studio, and the integration of this stylized breath in *A Dance Concert* allowed her to mark the work's rhythmic structures through forceful exhalations out her nostrils. The piece's second section shifts the auditory focus to Dean's feet as she stamps her rhythm, with the bells at her ankles reverberating her metric pulse. In the final section the two musicians shake their maracas in a steady 4/4 rhythm while Dean marks the one beat with a single clang of her iron castanet. Dean's integration of her own musical accompaniment in *A Dance Concert* produces three variations on the same choreographic phrase, sonically reinforcing her rhythmic structure through the use of breath, feet, and hand percussion. In repeating the same movement material three times without altering the work's physical or spatial patterns, Dean draws increased attention to her compositional system. The nonhierarchical juxtaposition of these three sections yields expanded revelation of concept through their relationship in serial succession.

After this solo project, Dean began creating her first group works, growing an early ensemble of four dancers including herself.[7] Dean had also begun a personal and professional relationship with Steve Reich. Dean and Reich shared a mutual interest in minimalist structures, and both engaged repetition, patterning, and forceful rhythms in their compositions. With Dean working in dance and Reich in music, each used simple processes to expose their complexly ordered conceptual systems. Together they embarked on a European tour in 1972 with their respective companies, Laura Dean and Dance Company and Steve Reich and Musicians, which received equal billing. Between 1972 and 1975, Dean produced twelve works: *Stamping Dance* (1972), *Quartet Squared* (1972), *Trio* (1972), *Circle Dance* (1972), *Square Dance* (1973), *Walking Dance* (1973), *Jumping Dance* (1973), *Changing Pattern Steady Pulse* (1973), *Spinning Dance* (1974), *Response Dance* (1974), *Changing* (1974), and *Drumming* (1975). With the exception of *Changing*, each of these works were either paired with Reich's musical compositions or performed to Dean's rhythmic musical patterns, which were created by the dancers in performance through stamps, shuffles, claps, yells, claves, and low vocal "ha" sounds produced by short, forceful exhalations.

Drumming, an evening-length, ninety-minute intermissionless work presented at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in April 1975, was the last piece Dean created with Reich. Reich's score for *Drumming*, composed several years earlier between 1970 and 1971, utilized phasing, a musical process that is achieved when two players produce the same short, repeated phrase simultaneously but with slightly altered tempi. While one player remains constant, the other gradually shifts further away from the first, and eventually the two players are a full beat or more out of sync. Linking

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multiple phasing arrangements together allowed Reich to layer and further develop this model for intricate musical patterning. Dean had begun to examine this structural model in her choreographic explorations: "I had worked on phasing dancers in the studio along with the phasing in the music. Choreographically I found it uninteresting" (Dean 1978, 101). Instead, Dean created a choreographic structure wherein the dancers held a steady pulse while the musicians phased, a process she found much more satisfying.

By 1975 Dean had become increasingly frustrated with creating her dances to the musical structures and systems of Reich's compositions. She reflects that phasing was not her creative process, but Reich's, and that she "needed both the music and choreography to be much more integrated" in her work (Dean 2017). This shift away from Reich's compositions to instead create her own music allowed Dean to examine processes for sonically representing her compositional structures in ways that expanded beyond the limited musical vocabulary of percussive and vocal accompaniment produced by the dancers. Through her own musical instrumentation, Dean could further articulate her compositional concerns with rhythm and pattern structures.

The fixed structures of Dean's early dances allow no improvisation or deviation, actively foregrounding the regulated processes and compositional logic that form the work, akin to processes of serial and conceptual art. While straightforward in form, the intricately challenging specificity of Dean's dance systems and numerical structures necessitate extreme concentration. In addition to the geometric floor plans and structured count cycles, Dean's intentionally limited vocabulary of formalized movements—stamping, stylized walks, shuffling steps, spinning, jumping in place, and abstracted semaphore-like gestures—allowed her to examine ongoing recombinant choreographic and sonic variations, mining the multiplicity of possibilities that could be constructed within a limited system.

Dean chose to represent most of these early compositions through simple geometric diagrams and concise structural descriptions that were included in her program notes as a means of elucidating her minimalist choreographic forms for her audiences. Additionally, she produced expanded drawings of at least three choreographic works from this period: *Stamping Dance*, *Circle Dance*, and *Walking Dance*. These drawings articulate Dean's minimalist compositional structures, communicating her ideas in a mode distanced from the dancing body. Through these drawings Dean explicitly foregrounds her conceptual systems, directly presenting her choreographic works as the result of precise numeric processes and highly ordered serial progressions.

Stamping Dance, 1972

Stamping Dance is one of Dean's earliest ensemble works, composed in 1971 and first presented in 1972 alongside *Quartet Squared* and *Trio* at Pro Musica Nova in Bremen, West Germany.[8] The piece is for four dancers and set on a pattern of four identical circular paths, one for each dancer, which are symmetrically layered over a larger circular path for the whole group. The entire movement vocabulary of the dance is restricted to a single repeated motion: a stylized walking action along the circular floor pattern—stamping down on the outside foot and pushing off with the inside foot—which the dancers perform continuously. This piece marks one of Dean's earliest uses of a highly structured numerical system for ordering step progressions in her work. The dancers begin evenly spaced, traveling on the larger circular pattern. Throughout the piece, they follow a progressive count cycle that dictates a series of 180-degree changes of direction, reversing the circle at precisely determined moments. This patterning continues until another specified moment in Dean's count structure when each dancer simultaneously separates from the group to begin moving on their own individual yet identical circular path. Although the floor pattern shifts, the patterned rhythmic stamping movement is meticulously maintained: "After the break-off from one circle to four individual circles, one of the dancers has three rhythm patterns with the feet interlocked with the stamping of the other three dancers" (Dean 1978, 97). Dean's count cycle of stamps begins at

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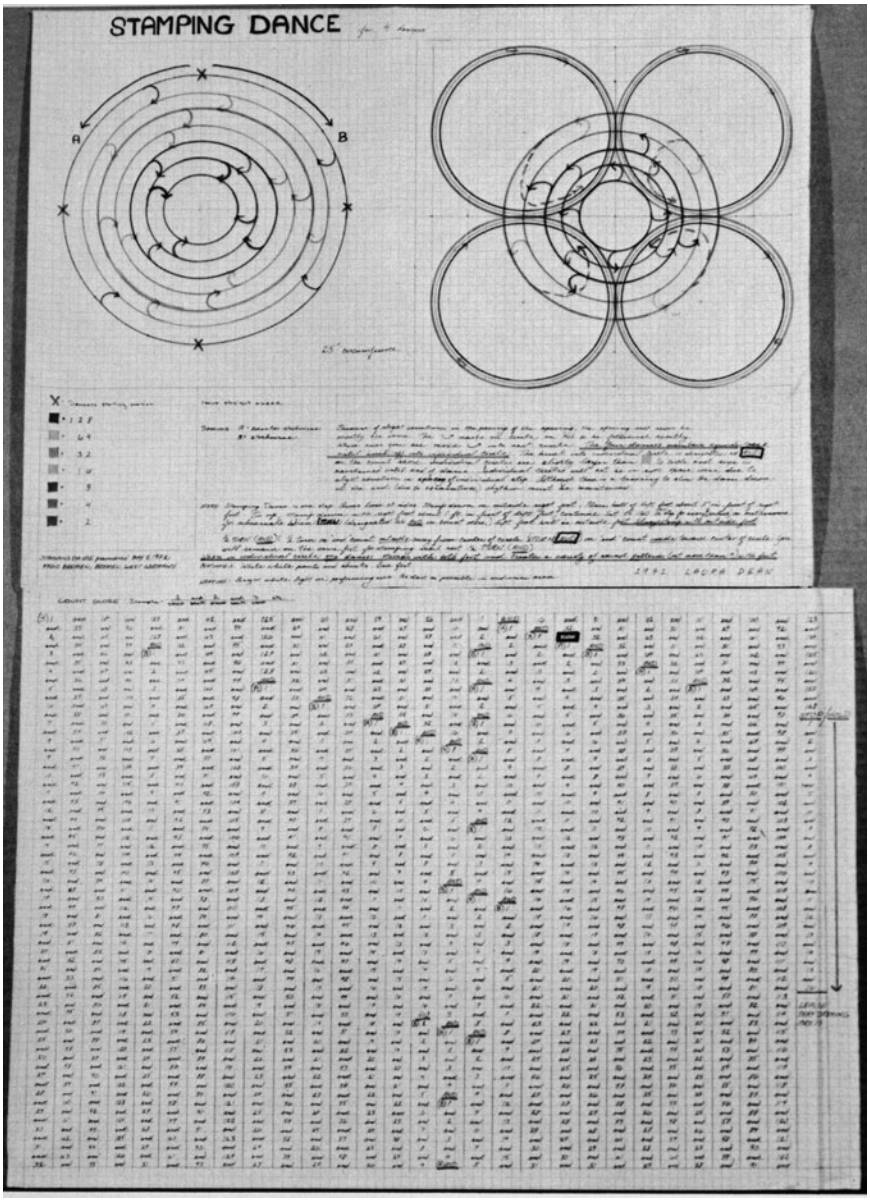

Photo 2 Laura Dean, Stamping Dance*, 1971. Felt marker, pen, pencil on paper. © Laura Dean.*

128, progressing the dancers forward counterclockwise. Then the dancers simultaneously turn and repeat their action in the opposite direction, traveling clockwise for 128 counts. The number is then halved: 64 stamps counterclockwise and then clockwise. This numerical diminution pattern continues: 32, 16, 8, 4, 2. Then the whole counting pattern inverts: 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128. However, this additive progression of Dean's count cycle is punctuated by a change in floor patterning, segueing the dancers onto their new pathways. In *Stamping Dance* Dean establishes her count structure, but rather than simply reversing the system, she inserts a structural variation that expands the work's geometric complexity while maintaining its rhythmic specificity.

Dean's drawing of *Stamping Dance* maps the geometric floor patterns of the piece, articulates its count system, and describes the pacing and stepping actions for the dancers. Utilizing two large sheets of graph paper, Dean visualizes her compositional structures and symmetrical forms as

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conceptual system processes. The layout of her count cycle, ordered in a table, draws clear attention to the operational diminution and accumulation that occurs throughout the piece. Representing this dance's mathematical logic and numerical seriality, Dean emphasizes her minimalist exploration of pattern formation and regulated rhythmic energy.

Circle Dance, 1972

Circle Dance is Dean's first work for a larger cast.[9] The piece premiered in December 1972 at the LoGiudice Gallery, a venue known for exhibiting works by minimalist painters and sculptors, including Richard Serra, Mary Corse, and Jo Baer. This situated Dean in the context of New York's visual art scene, garnering her a review in *Artforum* that located her choreographic concerns as "similar to contemporary work in the plastic arts which makes use of archetypal forms—circles, spheres, and processes of numbering—in an attempt to rediscover essences or sources" (Borden 1973, 83). Designed for ten dancers, Dean's piece is set on four evenly spaced concentric circles. Two dancers move along each of the inner two circles, and three dancers move along each of the outer two circles. All the dancers are equidistant within their respective circles and move at the same speed throughout the piece. Dean notes that the work's geometric structure of "four concentric circles interested me because the size of one circle in relation to another circle appears to be moving slower or faster" (1972, 4). Although the dancers all move at the same pace and maintain the spatial relationship within each of the four circles, the combined spatial arrangement of the work as a whole produces a visual effect of shifting patterns. The four varied circumferences result in different distances of travel, continuously morphing the appearance of the figure while steadfastly regulating the unison speed of each dancer. This concentric circular floor pattern is maintained until the end of the piece, when the formation gradually dissolves as each circle of dancers successively breaks away into spinning.

Photo 3 Laura Dean's drawing Circle Dance*, 1972 on exhibition alongside two of Dean's untitled grid drawings. Laura Dean Papers, American Dance Festival Archives, Duke University.*

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Like *Stamping Dance*, *Circle Dance* is methodically counted, and the dancers maintain unison timing through a steady pulse. In this piece, Dean introduces a new stylized movement element in her work—a quick, even-tempo, shuffling step—that emerged from her exploration of walking. While she rejected simply walking in circles, noting that it did not hold her interest, she "took the inherent rhythm in walking and double timed it" (Dean 1972, 4). This shuffling also produces a continuous, driving rhythmic musical accompaniment to the work. The dancers shuffle along their circular paths, moving clockwise or counterclockwise, and each circle changes direction at given intervals determined in Dean's count cycle for the work. While each turn (one and a half revolutions in place) takes four counts, their location in the count cycle is different for every circle; each circle changes direction independent from one other. "The counts are not in logical conclusion from each individual circle but are in sets of twos to the second circle from the center circle. The count cycles are progressions of over 500 down to 2 and back up to over 500. The center circle has the largest count cycle. The outside circle has the smallest count cycle" (Dean 1972, 5). Although the four count cycles do not progress in response to one another, each is mathematically ordered in its internal logic:

> Circle Four:
> 504, four count turn, 504, four count turn
> 252, four count turn, 252, four count turn
> 124, four count turn, 124, four count turn
> 60, four count turn, 60, four count turn
> 28, four count turn, 28, four count turn
> 12, four count turn, 12, four count turn
> 4, four count turn, 4, four count turn
> A series of 24 two-count turns, four count turn
> 4, four count turn, 4, four count turn
> 12, four count turn, 12, four count turn
> 28, four count turn 28, four count turn
> 60, four count turn, 60, four count turn
> 124, four count turn, 124, four count turn
> 252, four count turn, 252, four count turn
> 504
> Break away from the circle into high-speed spinning for 300 counts
> Sudden stop (Dean 2020)[10]

While Dean maintains the circular pattern formations and unison speed of her dancers, she juxtaposes four variations on structured time systems to continuously shift the work.

In *Circle Dance* Dean utilizes a stylized movement vocabulary and simple geometric pathways to draw increased focus to her experiments with visual patterning and numerical systems. The regimented uniformity of action and regulated processes of *Circle Dance* expose Dean's minimalist concerns while producing new possibilities for structuring dance. Working within these restrictions, Dean produces a highly complex work that both reveals and obscures the dance's conceptual design.

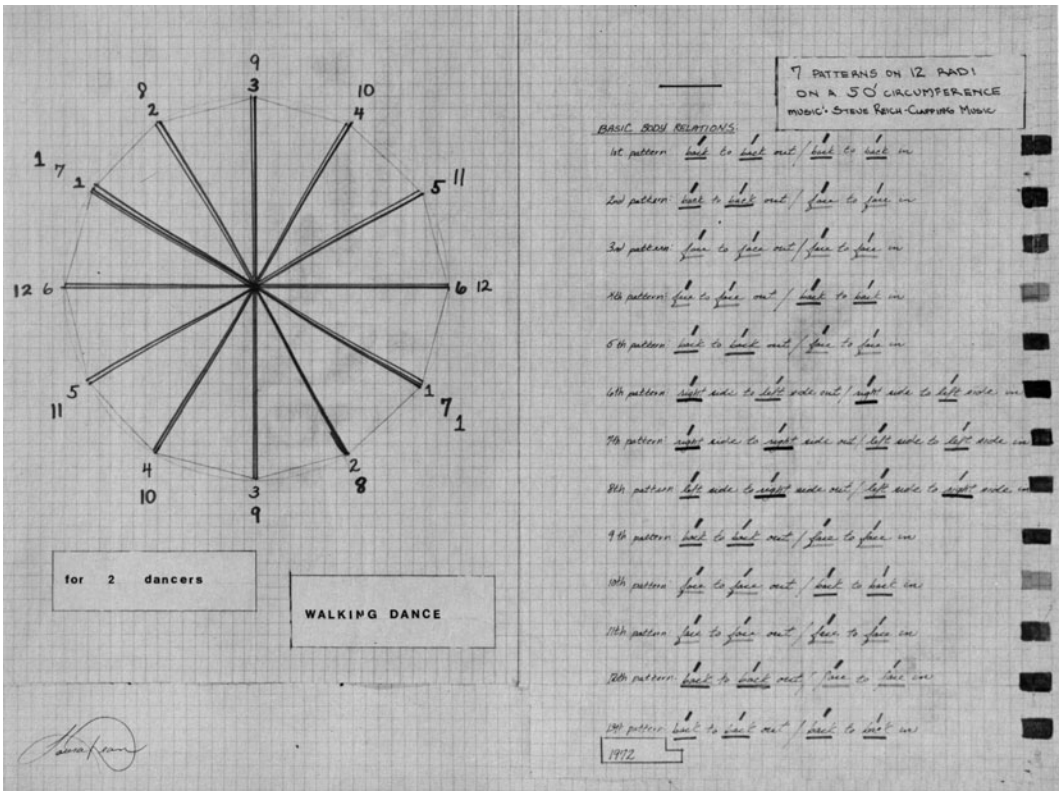
https://doi.org/10.1017/S0149767720000340 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Walking Dance, 1973

First presented in April 1973 at New York University's Loeb Student Center, *Walking Dance* is a piece for two dancers accompanied by two musicians performing Steve Reich's *Clapping Music* (1972).[11] Dean's work is modeled on the compositional structure of Reich's piece, which includes thirteen sections: twelve different repetitive clapping patterns in succession, with the thirteenth pattern the same as the first. In Reich's musical structure, one performer remains fixed throughout the work, repeating the same basic twelve-beat clapping pattern. The other performer begins in unison with the first, but after a number of repetitions, shifts the pattern's downbeat over one beat. "This abrupt change of down-beat position makes it difficult to hear that the second performer is in fact always playing the same original pattern as the first performer in each of the 12 sections of the piece" (Reich 1973, 4). Reich's twelve-beat structure allows for the entire system to progressively shift by one beat until it eventually realigns, returning to the original, unison clapping pattern. When Reich's work is notated, the visualized serial pattern and conceptual structure of the piece become mathematically and logically apparent, whereas in performance the structure regulating the gradual shifts is challenging to discern.

Dean's *Walking Dance* follows Reich's thirteen-part structure, with the opening pattern repeating itself at the conclusion of the work, both choreographically and spatially. Dean situates the two dancers back-to-back at the center of a circle with a fifty-foot circumference. The dancers travel in opposite directions from the center to the edge of the circle, then back to the center, along straight lines, spatially mirroring one another. Dean segments this circle, demarcating twelve evenly spaced radii. For each progressive pattern phrase the dancers move out on the next demarcated line clockwise. The circular spatial pattern of the work maps out over time, with the formation of the

Photo 4 Laura Dean, Walking Dance*, 1973. Felt marker, pen, pencil, press type, white-out on paper. © Laura Dean.*



https://doi.org/10.1017/S0149767720000340 Published online by Cambridge University Press

piece as a whole only becoming apparent as the dance progresses. Like Reich's musical patterning, Dean's twelve-part geometric segmentation of space is constructed so that the dancers return to where they began the work at the conclusion of the twelfth section, allowing for the pathway of the dance's first pattern line to repeat as the work's final section.

The movement of *Walking Dance* is percussive and rhythmic, reflecting the clapping of Reich's score. Dean outlines that the stylized stepping in this work "is a hard down on the left foot on the one of the twelve-beat clapping pattern. This is maintained throughout the dance" (Dean 1978, 99). A simple hand pattern is also integrated, which serves the functional purpose of coordinating with the musicians, signaling a change into the next pattern phrase. While the rhythmic pulse of the steps in *Walking Dance* do not change, and the spatial progression of the work consistently unfolds throughout the piece, Dean shifts the facings of the two dancers for each of the work's thirteen patterns. Dean's systematized arrangement of facing relationships in *Walking Dance* variously move the dancers forward, backward, and sideways along their straight pathways during the work. At the end of each linear passage one or both of the dancers walk a small circle as necessary to achieve the appropriate facing in the pattern:

> Basic Body Relations
> 1st pattern: back to back out / back to back in
> 2nd pattern: back to back out / face to face in
> 3rd pattern: face to face out / face to face in
> 4th pattern: face to face out / back to back in
> 5th pattern: back to back out / face to face in
> 6th pattern: right side to left side out / right side to left side in
> 7th pattern: right side to right side out / left side to left side in
> 8th pattern: left side to right side out / left side to right side in
> 9th pattern: back to back out / face to face in
> 10th pattern: face to face out / back to back in
> 11th pattern: face to face out / face to face in
> 12th pattern: back to back out / face to face in
> 13th pattern: back to back out / back to back in

As in Reich's score, Dean's use of variation is straightforward but visually complex, producing a seeing difficulty in performance wherein the conceptual logic of the work is challenging to perceive. When Reich shifts his musical phrase, Dean shifts her dancers' facings. However, Dean's dance includes seven rather than twelve patterns, arranged in an almost palindromic structure. Dean's first five patterns present each combination of forward and backward facing symmetrical relationships for the two dancers. The sixth pattern introduces sideways stepping, with the dancers facing the same direction, and the seventh pattern progresses with the dancers facing opposite directions. Then, Dean's structure for the facing of the dancers begins to invert itself: the eighth pattern is a retrograde of the sixth, and the ninth through thirteenth patterns are in reverse order to the first through fifth patterns.

> **(A)** 1st pattern: back to back out / back to back in
> **(B)** 2nd pattern: back to back out / face to face in
> **(C)** 3rd pattern: face to face out / face to face in

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(**D**) 4th pattern: face to face out / back to back in

(**E**) 5th pattern: back to back out / face to face in

(**F**) 6th pattern: right side to left side out / right side to left side in

(**G**) 7th pattern: right side to right side out / left side to left side in

(**H**) 8th pattern: left side to right side out / left side to right side in

(**E**) 9th pattern: back to back out / face to face in

(**D**) 10th pattern: face to face out / back to back in

(**C**) 11th pattern: face to face out / face to face in

(**B**) 12th pattern: back to back out /face to face in

(**A**) 13th pattern: back to back out / back to back in)

Similar to *Stamping Dance*, *Walking Dance* engages serial development of a conceptual compositional relationship, then inverts the whole system, providing an additional overarching variation within the logical evolution of the minimal form. While Dean's thirteen sections in *Walking Dance* align with Reich's thirteen sections in *Clapping Music*, Dean presents a different structural exploration. Working within the same constraints, Dean and Reich each present unique variations on patterning and concrete progressional procedures.

As works on paper, *Stamping Dance*, *Circle Dance*, and *Walking Dance* each depict Dean's minimalist compositional structures and visualize her choreographic ideas without the necessity of the work's embodied realization as a live performance work. Through these three drawings, Dean directs explicit focus to her use of arithmetic systems and serial processes, exposing her preoccupation with explorations of the ways complex, yet clearly ordered, patterns, structures, and forms can be deployed in the presentation of choreography as a regulated energy system.

Impermanence as Legacy Practice

Dean no longer allows for the reconstruction of any of her dances. This decision was announced in January 2009, and over the course of that year she informed, in writing, "all the reconstructors, dance companies, universities, and organizations that had a dance work of mine in their repertory that I was not doing any further reconstruction projects.. . . I also told these organizations that I was not renewing any licenses that they had" (Dean 2017). Dean honored each of the outstanding licensing agreements she had contracted, with the final agreement culminating in 2012. This event was the final performance of Dean's work, and there have since been no approved activities of any kind using Dean's choreography or music.

Dean connects her rejection of reconstructing her dances to traditions in sand painting, the art of pouring colored sands and powdered pigments onto a surface to make a graphic design. Dean specifically locates her work as being done in the spirit of the Tibetan Buddhist sand painting tradition of dul-tson-kyil-khor. After the sand mandala is completed, the image is ritualistically destroyed, and the symbolic dismantling of the mandala begins once accompanying ceremonies and viewings of the piece come to a close. This destructive act is as philosophically important as the initial creative act. "The construction and subsequent destruction of such artworks is an overt expression of the Buddhist belief in the impermanence of all phenomena, in contrast to the more Western understanding of works of art as hallmarks for posterity" (Glowski 2000, 1364). Symbolizing the Buddhist doctrine that all things are transient and ever changing, the dissolution of the material life of the mandala foregrounds notions of ephemerality. The ceremonial vanishing of the creation marks an end to the physical form, but the essence and intention carries on. Rather than working to preserve the object, the destruction marks a giving in to and

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acceptance of the transitory nature of life and the world. The destructive process works to emphasize an embrace of moving on and a detachment from the self-interest of accumulation and legacy.

Dean highlights that this philosophy has directly shaped her experience of her career work in dance. Connecting to this Buddhist tradition, Dean emphasizes that "part of the artistic creation (not separate from) is the destruction of the work" (Dean 2017). The destruction is a potent and very important part of the practice, an integral component of the philosophy of impermanence. When I asked Dean about the original drawings of works such as *Stamping Dance*, *Circle Dance*, and *Walking Dance* that she created in the 1970s, she asserted, "I destroyed those drawings about 10 years ago" (Dean 2017). As with the sand mandalas, the viewings of these dances were complete, the purpose fulfilled, and thus began the symbolic destruction of the physical form. Dean had not created the drawings for the purpose of reconstructing her dances and "did not want them being used in the future by some 'reconstructor' who thought they could reconstruct my original work from these drawings. They could not" (Dean 2017). Recognizing the impulse in contemporary dance practice to restage historical dances that have been deemed canonically important, or to reconstruct lost works of choreography from archival records, Dean systematically destroyed her drawings to prevent them from being misinterpreted as documents that could be used to authentically restage her dances.

While Dean had allowed for reconstructions of her work until her 2009 announcement, the choice to destroy her materials and symbolically end the continuation of her work in a performance context evolved over recent decades. Dean explains, "Although I did not set out from the very beginning of when I started to choreograph, in 1965, that I was going to destroy everything that I had created, it seems to be working this way. And I am fine with this" (Dean 2017). Reconsidering her terminology, Dean shifts away from the use of the word "destroy" to rearticulate her philosophical intentions and experience of this action. She remarks that "perhaps the word is not 'destroy' but 'release.' To let go. To not hang onto. To not possess. To not own" (Dean 2017). The idea of release, of letting the dances go, highlights her philosophy of choreographic impermanence.

Dean gifted her archive to the American Dance Festival in 2008 and created a website that went online in 2010. Reflecting on this archive collection, Dean notes, "I, at one point, was going to throw everything out. I did not spend a great deal of time putting together the materials" (Dean 2017). The photos, ephemera, and other materials in her archive are mostly ordered chronologically by performance work. Throughout the collection, Dean has annotated items and documented detailed information about the original production history of her works. For Dean, compiling her materials for ADF and composing her website "were not to 'create a legacy' or even to create an archive for posterity" (Dean 2017). Instead, Dean intended these repositories to present factual history and correct mistakes that appear in written accounts of her work.[12] Dean's website details numerous instances of misinformation and chronological errors that appear in both journalism and academic publications. The compiled materials of her archive and collected information uploaded onto her website serve as sources to which she can easily direct students and scholars who contact her with an interest in writing on her work. Dean admits, "I wanted to stop responding to individuals so I put together what I did have in my files" (Dean 2017). Dean's meticulous attention to repetitively correcting the scholarship on her career history is correlative to her position on the reconstruction of her dances. For Dean, personally ensuring her dances achieved both the look and feel of her original intention was critical to maintaining the works, and following her choice to authorially disengage from the reconstruction process, she observed that her works diverged from how they were envisioned in a way that misrepresented her creative output.

Dean continues to assert she has no interest in a choreographic legacy plan premised on preserving her performance works for reconstruction or circulating her works on paper. However, I argue that this rejection of reconstruction and circulation in favor of an acknowledgedly curated and closely

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monitored archive collection, combined with the compiled information articulated on her personal website, in itself constitutes a choreographic legacy plan. Dean's decision about the organization, accessibility, and use of her materials explicitly mediates the perception of her work and directly shapes public interaction with her artistic output, intrinsically revealing her intentioned choices about the futurity of both her creative work and artistic philosophies.

Serialism, Structures, and Choreography as Conceptual Art

While Dean created the graphic drawings of *Stamping Dance*, *Circle Dance*, and *Walking Dance* after the dance works were complete, these drawings are not an artistic afterthought to Dean's choreographic process, but rather are demonstrative of her ongoing practice of representing her compositional ideas across multiple media. For Dean, dancing, music, and drawing are intricately connected. These visual representations of the symmetrical floor patterns and count systems that Dean engages in her work were produced not for the intention of documenting the dances for reconstruction, but instead for communicating the dances' concepts and ideas. Dean asserts that "I spent a great deal of time on these drawings so that I felt they emulated … what my dance and music works were about" (Dean 2017). Fulfilling this function, Dean's drawings have been variously used in advertisements, program notes, publications, and gallery exhibitions.

Dean maintains that these drawings are not dance scores, asserting that they leave out too many aspects of her choreography and the precise movement stylization that is characteristic of her work. According to Dean, "There is no way the actual dance could have been reconstructed from those drawings.… There was no (or at least very little) information about the actual steps" (Dean 2017). While these drawings work to convey Dean's choreographic systems and structures, the physical nuances of her minimalist dances as performance works are more intricately particular and meticulously designed than depicted in the diagrams and notes she puts onto the page. If not functional as working dance scores, Dean's drawings can be interpreted instead as a complimentary visual art practice that is adjacent to her choreographic work. In highlighting her numerical processes and geometric systems rather than her choreographic specificities, Dean's works on paper align with practices in conceptual art, suggesting that the primacy given to dance-as-performance is misplaced and instead providing a different model for viewing choreography.

Conceptual art foregrounds an engagement with ideas, deemphasizing or even wholly eliminating the perceptual encounter with an art object. As a result of this focus, highly schematic structures, process models, and serial production emerge, with conceptual artworks directly revealing the processes of artistic thinking. In moving toward reductivism in art, conceptual artists "push the conventional objectness of the artwork toward the threshold of a complete dematerialization" (Alberro 1999, xvii). By positioning greater emphasis on concept over the production of a permanent art object, such practices challenge the institutionalization of art, especially with regard to the perception and production of value; conceptual art functions in a way that negates the manifestation of commodity fetishism. Through a focus on communicating *idea*, within conceptual art "the prominence of text expands, and the degree to which viewing is dependent upon the integration of contingent and contextual elements becomes a focal point" (Alberro 1999, xvii). When produced, the object always directly and explicitly points back to the conceptual model that ordered its production; the art object is not meant to exist separate from the explication of its system function process.

Dean's drawings deemphasize the material aspect of the body in favor of communicating the numerical systems and geometric patterning of her work. The drawings serve to articulate her thinking process rather than the aesthetic content of her dances. In this way, Dean's drawings dematerialize the dances they reference and thereby task the viewer to rethink their relationship to performance. However, when Dean's dances of the early 1970s were first staged, extensive program notes presented the geometric diagrams for the floor plans alongside textual descriptions of count structures and choreographic models. Through this practice, Dean positions the concept-idea

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0149767720000340 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of each dance and the materialized performance event as contingent and contextual elements in her artistic output. Following the work of conceptual artists in painting and sculpture, in Dean's choreographic work "the process of conception stands in a complementary relation to the process of realization, mutually supplying each other's lack, and thus [are] of equal importance" (Alberro 1999, xx). Dean's drawings are simultaneously and intrinsically connected to and distinct from her performance works, holding equal importance to the revelation of artistic intention.

In conceptual art, by communicating the art idea textually, the artist produces "an increased emphasis on the possibilities of publicness and distribution" (Alberro 1999, xvii). In addition to distributing her geometric diagrams and count systems as program notes, Dean compiled her work into a series of journal articles and book chapters in the 1970s, which further disseminated her conceptual creative models and ideas for choreographic structuring.

Dean's use of numerical structures and progressional procedures in her work also reflects compositional developments and philosophical concerns in serial art. Theorizing on seriality in the visual arts, Mel Bochner examines works characterized by the use of mathematical or arithmetic systems that produce external constraints on the conceptual ordering or production of the composition. Works of serial art organize internal parts in uninterrupted, logical succession.

> Systems are characterized by regularity, thoroughness, and repetition in execution. They are methodical. It is their consistency and the continuity of application that characterizes them. Individual parts of a system are not in themselves important but are relevant only in how they are used in the enclosed logic of the whole. (Bochner 1968, 94–99)

Bochner forwards that serial ordering in art is a compositional procedure or method rather than a style, and he locates the use of seriality among several artists working within conceptual art, specifically Sol LeWitt, Carl Andre, and Dan Flavin. For these artists, the serial or systematic processes in their work are explicitly revealed as a means of directly communicating their compositional logic, thus exposing their artistic thinking.

Produced through strict and narrowly delimited systems, works of serial art present the structural and computational variations that can exist under a fixed circumstance.

> Seriality is premised on the idea that the succession of terms (divisions) within a single work is based on numerical or otherwise predetermined derivation (progression, permutation, rotation, reversal) from one or more of the preceding terms in the piece. Furthermore the idea is carried out to its logical conclusion, which, without adjustments based on taste or chance, is the work. (Bochner 1968, 100)

In this way, the resulting composition is a serial composite of procedural outcomes, a functionalization of the data set as art object. Often highlighting the system idea or concept as constitutive of the work and proposing that no form is intrinsically superior to another, serial artists suggest that the physical execution of the object is unnecessary to communicating the concept.

Reading Dean's work through Bochner's explication of serial art, Dean's drawings show an explicit engagement with simple arithmetical forms and formalized systems of logic that are used to produce complex, multipart compositions. Her dances follow an organizing set of structural decisions from which variable combinations are produced through a fulfillment of the work's regulating processes. The interior divisions of *Stamping Dance*, *Circle Dance*, and *Walking Dance* are predicated on numerical patterning and systematically predetermined sequences. These pieces exhibit arithmetic progressions, geometric permutations, regulated rotations, and structural reversals. The latter of the three works, *Walking Dance*, presents a further system exhaustion by carrying out the ordering of

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0149767720000340 Published online by Cambridge University Press

facings between the two dancers to its logical conclusion, presenting each derivation of this simple conceptual ordering.

In performance, the ordered regularity, logical thoroughness, and insistent numerical repetition that characterize Dean's conceptual systems are choreographically enacted over space and time, revealing seriality through the action of the body. The structural arrangement of Dean's works articulate a precisely specified spatialization to her stage patterns and traveling formations, as well as a steady, driving pulse rhythm that regularizes the progression of time in her choreographic structures. For Dean, repetition "makes it possible to have a non-linear experience and makes it possible to experience an infinite variety of simultaneous occurrences" (Dean 1978, 101). While the physical actions of the dancers in Dean's minimalist pieces are often repetitious, her structural choreographic progressions continuously shift to challenge the experience of repetition, thereby simultaneously layering a linear and cyclical experience of time.

In *Walking Dance*, Dean's defined fifty-foot circumference for the floor pattern further orders the appearance of the work by setting the distance of step in the repetitive linear walking patterns. This specific distance is ordered out of practicality, decided so as to produce the dance in such a way as to effectively reveal the work's idea and facilitate understanding in the viewer. In this piece, Dean engages space as a metric time element, regularizing the traveling distance of the dance in a way that visually reveals the standardized progression of time intervals in the work. The regularization of rhythmic pulse in Dean's dances also serves to expose the metric time structures of her count cycles.

In *Circle Dance*, a consistent pulse energy allows for the viewer to discern the irregularity of the count cycles between the four concentric circles as patterned by individually defined mathematical systems, thereby tasking the audience to decipher the count cycles as the piece progresses in space and time. In Dean's dances, the strictly timed changes of direction and precise shifts of geometric floor patterns highlight important developments in her conceptual compositional systems. Through a steady pulse rhythm and specific considerations of spatial measurement, Dean elucidates her choreographic experimentation with the serialization of pattern and energy.

Dean maintains that her drawings for *Stamping Dance*, *Circle Dance*, and *Walking Dance* are not dance notation, an assertion that logically follows when examining the drawings through the lens and processes of dance. In describing and articulating her work, Dean often utilizes definitions of key terms and concepts, pulling directly from *Webster's Dictionary*. Drawing from this practice, to further examine the relationship between Dean's dances and drawings, I myself bring in the *Webster's Dictionary* definition of notation:

> a : the act, process, method, or an instance of representing by a system or set of marks, signs, figures, or characters
>
> b : a system of characters, symbols, or abbreviated expressions used in an art or science or in mathematics or logic to express technical facts or quantities (1988, 231)

Dean's drawings demonstrate clearly defined systems that employ sets of marks, signs, figures, and abbreviated expressions to present the technical facts and numerical logic of her works. The drawings also reflect accepted mathematical formulas, direct attention to determined quantities, and reveal a schematized process. Not enough choreographic information is included in any of Dean's drawings to recuperate the fullness of the dances they represent, and for this reason I follow Dean's suggestion that they are not *dance* notation. However, I argue that when analyzing Dean's work as constitutive of a practice of conceptual and serial art, the graphic renderings of her creative models as works on paper *do* function as notations through their ability to functionally communicate concept and idea.

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In destroying her original drawings and rejecting the reconstruction of her dances, Dean posits a distinctly different notion of choreographic legacy. To clarify her terminology, Dean again returns to *Webster's Dictionary*, citing that legacy is "something handed down from one who has gone before or from the past" (1988, 231). Legacy can be interpreted materially, such as a bequest of property, or socially, as in the cultural transmitting of an embodied act by an ancestor. Dean is firm in her belief about rejecting the ongoing material or embodied bequeathing of her creative output as art objects or performance products: "I do not wish to 'hand down' my dance and music works" (Dean 2017). However, what Dean does hand down is a philosophy about dance reconstruction, a notion of dance as something to be eventually let go, released, destroyed. Dean's legacy practice is that of impermanence and intentional disappearance of the art object in favor of perpetuating ideation and concept.

Notes

1. In addition to composing solo dances for herself and group works for her own company, Dean utilized her postmodern choreographic structures to produce work for ice skating companies and commissions by such notable ballet companies as New York City Ballet, Royal Danish Ballet, and Joffrey Ballet.

2. A catalog for the exhibition *Drawings: The Pluralist Decade* was first produced in conjunction with the 39th Venice Biennale. This publication included Dean's drawing of *Stamping Dance*. A second edition of the catalog was published for subsequent showings of the exhibition at the University of Pennsylvania Institute of Contemporary Art and Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. In this later edition of the catalog, the drawing of *Stamping Dance* was replaced with Dean's drawing of *Walking Dance* (Kardon 1980a, 1980b).

3. Dean's company underwent several name changes: Laura Dean Dance Company in January 1976, Laura Dean Dancers and Musicians in October 1976, and Laura Dean Musicians and Dancers in 1992. The final shift in the company's name, reversing "dancers" and "musicians," was done in response to Dean's experience having presenters, dance writers, and critics drop "musicians" in their printed materials. Shifting it before dancers, she was able to ensure they included this important title. Laura Dean Musicians and Dancers toured across the United States and internationally for nearly thirty years, until 2000 when Dean created her last new work for the ensemble and disbanded the group. Dean's final choreographic work was created in 2004 at Duke University, and she dissolved her foundation in 2007.

4. *Sitting-Stomping-Standing* premiered April 28, 1968, as part of HemisFair in San Antonio, and *Farewell* premiered May 30, 1968, in Austin.

5. Framing her choice of Bach's music for this piece, Dean's program notes include a quote from Indian spiritual leader Paramahansa Yogananda: "Bach, among Western composers, understood the charm and power of repetitious sound slightly differentiated in a hundred complex ways" (Yogananda 1946). Through this quote, Dean further emphasizes her minimalist approach to choreography by locating an explicit interest in repetition and expanded variations on a single theme.

6. *A Dance Concert* premiered at American Theatre Laboratory in New York, October 21–23, 1971.

7. Dean's original company included Dana Reitz, Suzanne Wasser, and Catherine Kerr.

8. Pro Musica Nova was a biennial festival of contemporary music sponsored by Radio Bremen. *Stamping Dance* premiered on May 7, 1972 at Fernsehstudio Osterholz.

9. *Circle Dance* was first performed by Janis Beaver, Judith Benari, John Brewer, Judy Clark, Beverly Crook, Laura Dean, Kathy Johnson, Pamela Kekich, Edward Marsan, and Lee Wasserwald (Dean 1972).

10. This count cycle for *Circle Dance* was published incorrectly in the anthology *Contemporary Dance* (Dean 1978). The count cycle appears correctly in a 1975 article by Dean published in *The Drama Review: TDR* (Dean 1975). The text used here was confirmed by Dean during the editing of this article (Dean 2020).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0149767720000340 Published online by Cambridge University Press

11. *Walking Dance* was first performed by Dean and Judy Clark, with *Clapping Music* played by Reich and Russ Hartenberger (Dean 1973).

12. In this article, the premiere dates for performances and other chronological information on Dean's career respond to her corrections and were corroborated by performance programs and newspaper clippings contained in her archive.

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