



# ON PERFORMANCE

ARCHIVAL PRACTICE AND ITS CHALLENGES



# Trisha Brown's “Homemade”

**Understanding the dynamic nature of performance is  
integral to its preservation**



**Performances are always transforming and reinventing themselves through the interactions that create them**





**Each one is a unique manifestation or expression and no two are identical**



**What makes  
performance archives  
different ?**

# Ephemerality

**“Performance’s life is only in the present.**

**Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations: once it does so it becomes something other than performance.”**

From Peggy Phelan’s “Unmarked: The Politics of Performance”



# Diversity of archival material

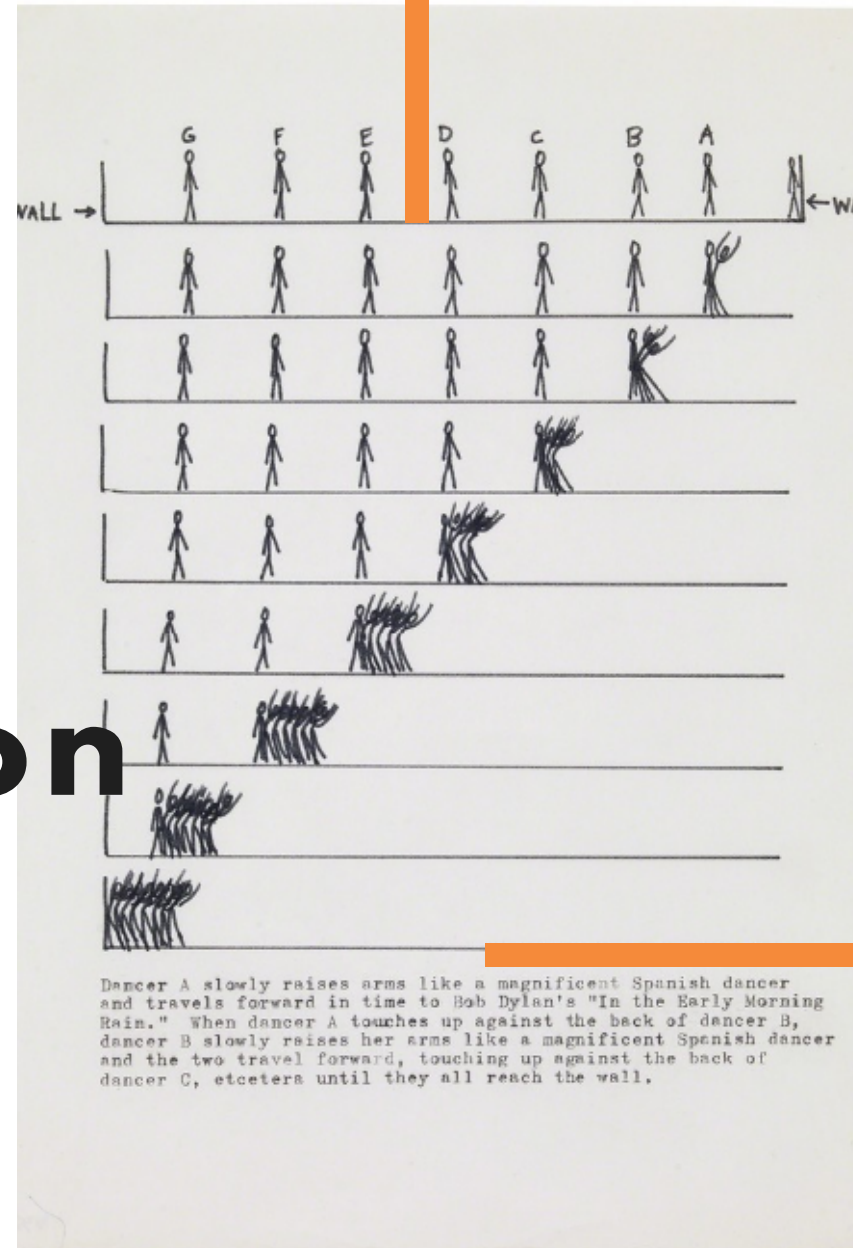
- photographs
- video and sound recordings
- performance logs
- notation scores
- artifacts





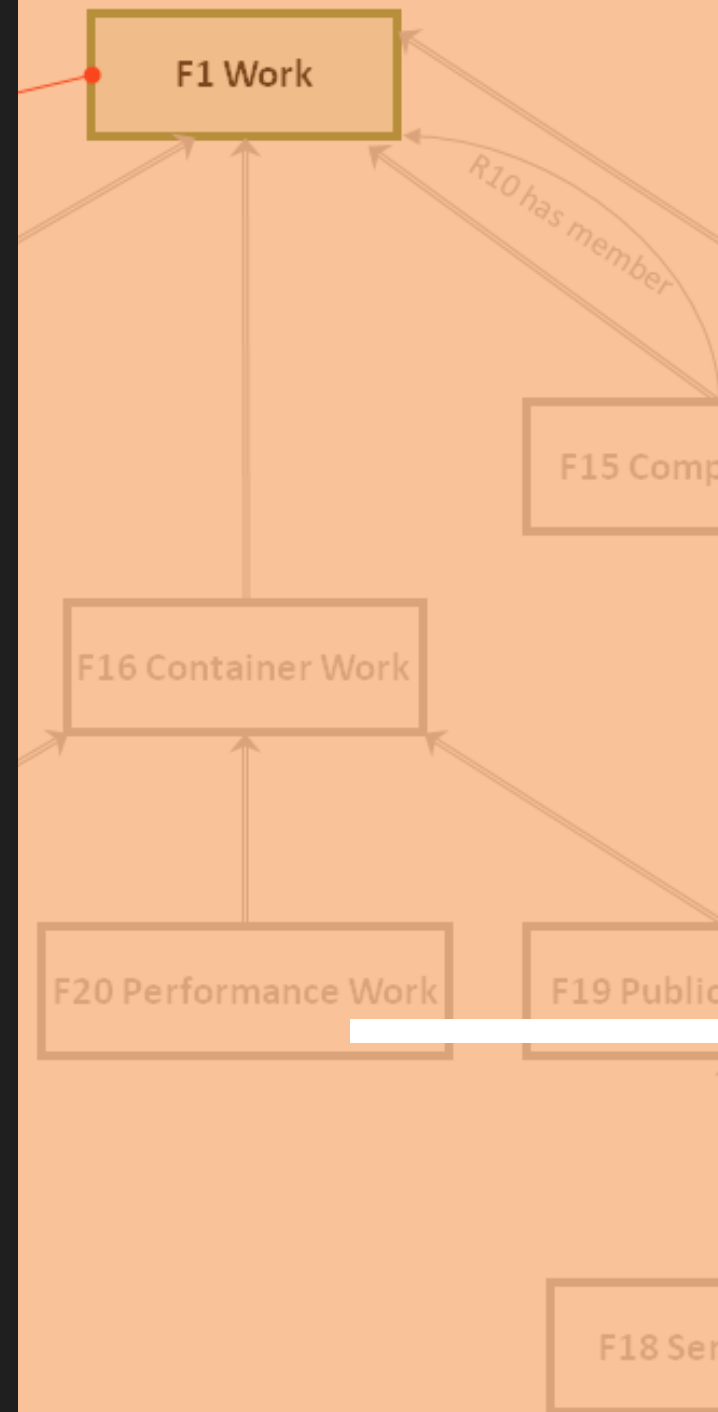


# Resistance to Standardization



# Lack of Conceptual Models

- European Network of Information Centres for Performing Arts (ENICPA)
- International Association of Libraries Museums, Archives and Documentation Centres of the Performing Arts (SIBMAS)
- Spanish Theatre Documentation Centre
- Digital Theatre
- Digital Dance Archives





# Internship at a Performance Archive



**TRISHA BROWN COMPANY Inc.**

**BROOKLYN ACADEMY of MUSIC-Lepercq Space**

**JANUARY 8 at 7:30 P.M.**

**JANUARY 9, 10 at 8:00 P.M.**

**JANUARY 11 at 2:00 P.M.**

**The Trisha Brown  
Archive in NY**

**Further Information:**

**Tel. 636-4100**

**TICKETS \$4.00**

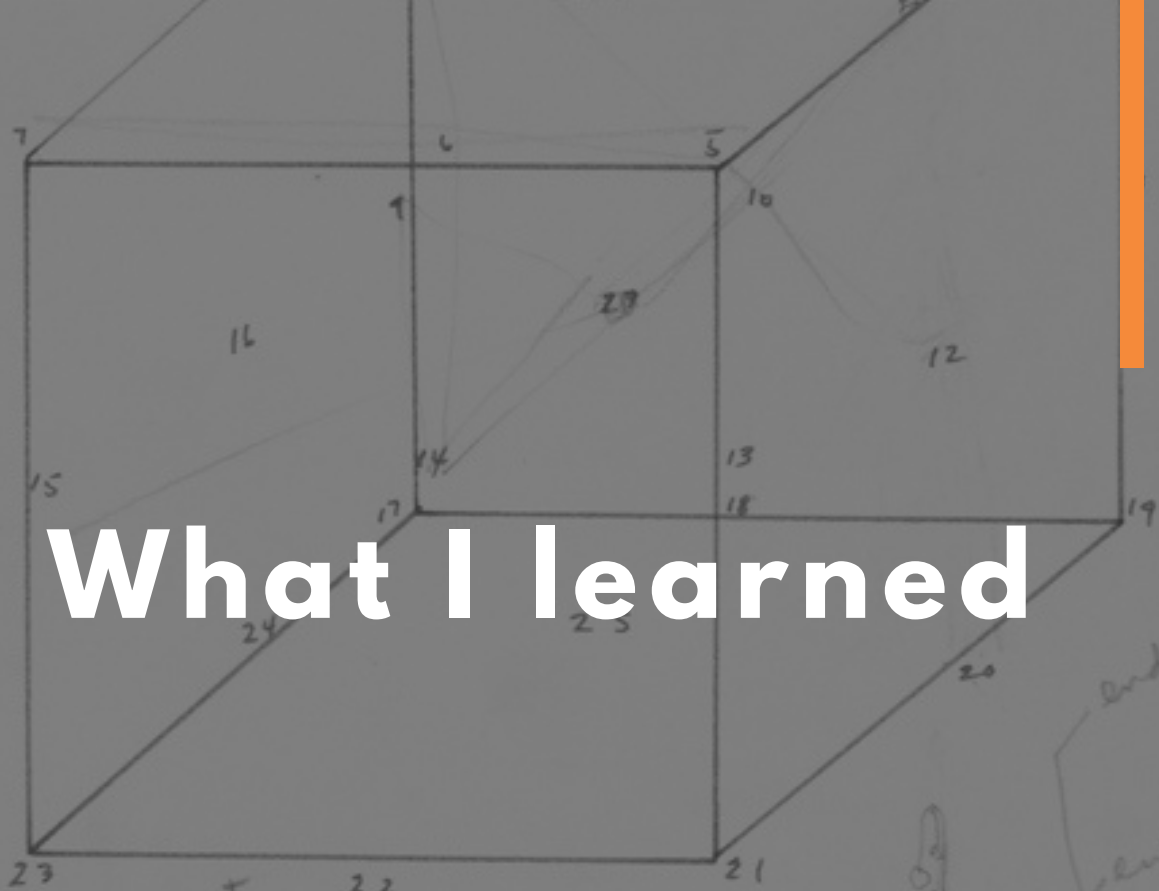
MANAGEMENT: ARTSERVICES NEW YORK — PHOTO CREDIT: BABETTE MANGOLT

A grayscale photograph of an office space. In the foreground, a desk is cluttered with a computer monitor displaying a website, a water bottle, and other items. A black office chair is positioned behind the desk. The wall behind the desk is decorated with several framed posters. The most prominent poster in the center is for the Trisha Brown Dance Company, featuring the text 'TRISHA BROWN DANCE COMPANY' and 'OPAL LOOP SET & RESET LATERAL PASS'. To its left is a poster with the Japanese text '知の覚醒' (Chino no Kakusei) and 'TRISHA BROWN COMPANY'. To its right is a poster for 'THE FORT WORTH ART MUSEUM' showing a person in a dynamic pose. The overall scene is dimly lit, with a soft glow from the computer monitor. Two thick orange horizontal bars are overlaid on the image: one on the left side and one on the right side, both partially cut off by the frame.

# Expectations and experiences



# What I learned



end of II and I  
end of III  
end of II solo

145	150	155	16	15	170
A	Reed	College	IN	Portland	
27	3	15	17	5	7
5	27	9	14	27	16
15	18	20	12	1	14
27	14	27	16	15	18
20	12	1	14	27	14

**Some solutions to  
documenting &  
archiving performance  
that I found**

# Conceptual

- Trisha Brown Dance Company's "kinetic oral history project"
- Merce Cunningham's Dance Capsules







# Technical

- Motion capture technology
- 3D Modeling

# Practical

"The mission of the Performing Arts section is to encourage the exchange of information on historical and contemporary documentation of music, dance, theater, motion pictures and other performance media."



SOCIETY OF  
**American  
Archivists**

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**Performing Arts  
Section**

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# **Some final questions about performance archives**



**THANKS!**

**MENESECA@GMAIL.COM**