

BIO

Simone Forti is a dancer/choreographer and writer. Born in Florence, Italy in 1935, she came to the United States with her family at the age of five. In 1955 she began dancing with Anna Halprin, a pioneer in dance improvisation. After studying and performing with Halprin in the San Francisco Bay area for four years, Forti moved to New York where she studied composition at the Merce Cunningham Studio with musician/musicologist Robert Dunn who was introducing dancers to the scores of John Cage. In these classes she met and began to work informally with choreographers like Trisha Brown, Yvonne Rainer, and Steve Paxton. In the winter of 1960 she presented two pieces at the Rubin Gallery, sharing an evening with Claes Oldenburg and Jim Dine. In the spring of 1961 she presented a full evening of what she called dance-constructions, at Yoko Ono's loft. It was a seminal event in contemporary dance; and her work in these years was a critical component in forging the initial directions fellow choreographers were to take as they began to perform their work at the Judson Dance Theater.

In the early 1970s she returned to improvisation, anchoring her work in observations of animals' movements, abstracting their gaits and their movement games. Often her performances were made in collaboration with musicians, including Charlemagne Palestine and Peter Van Riper. In the 1980s Forti started speaking while moving, developing a performance form she calls Logomotion. Working with newspapers, she began "dancing the news," solo performances called News Animations. These gave expression to images, memories and speculations sparked by the news media's flickering views of the world. In 2005 she formed a group of artists from a variety of performance media, with whom she has presented theatrical productions in Los Angeles at REDCAT Theater, Highways Performance Space and the Unknown Theater.

Throughout the years, writing has been part of her process. Her book *Handbook in Motion: an ongoing personal discourse and its manifestations in dance*, was published in 1974 by The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design as part of their Source Materials of The Contemporary Arts series. Her book, *Oh, Tongue*, published in 2003 by Beyond Baroque Books, is a varied collection of writings including experimental essays, transcripts of Logomotion improvisations, an imaginary political/historical conversation with her father, poetry, articles about dance and a postscript by the poet Jackson Mac Low. In 2006 Beyond Baroque Press published *Unbuttoned Sleeves*. Edited by Forti, it is a weave of texts by her and her collaborators, generated while working on her productions.

Forti currently teaches improvisation in the Department of World Arts and Cultured at UCLA, and is a recipient of a 2005 Guggenheim Fellowship.