

SLEEP WALKING 1971

choreography by David Gordon

performed by Valda Setterfield, David Gordon

Sleep Walking is based on the co-existence in time of two progressions.

1. Walking, running, some few conventional dance references.
2. A series of ambiguous escalating sounds.

The two final images of sleep and death, when combined with the two progressions, produce what appears almost as a dramatic narrative piece. The direction that the drama takes is heavily influenced by the numbers of performers and, interestingly, what they wear.

Sleep Walking was performed a number of times during 1971, 1972 and 1973. At the Crosby Project, the performers lined up waiting to be shot, wearing 1940's gangland style coats and hats, like victims of the St. Valentine's Day massacre. At the Walker Art Center, they wore tan poplin raincoats and pale hats (spies, perhaps, or English gangsters wearing Burburries.) At Oberlin College in Ohio, they wore army uniforms and hats, and Nancy Lewis was a nodding-out Statue of Liberty. The performers changed into their uniforms at her base and became soldiers to be shot and killed. For the American Dance Marathon, Trisha Brown and Nancy Lewis wore wired fat-woman dresses and Valda Setterfield and Douglas Dunn performed together inside one huge overall and shirt. There have been as many as thirty people doing it at once, although it is constructed as a solo activity. In 1973, I performed it as a half-hour solo at the Walker and in N.Y. During the summer of 1975 Valda Setterfield taught it to 40 students at the University of California at Santa Cruz. They performed the piece in front of the theater as well as inside so that the audience entered through one group of sleepwalkers to discover another group beginning the piece on stage. Like much of my work, Sleep Walking seems to reappear at intervals in a new guise. This is the first performance as a duet.