

Events and Parties

Ordovas Hosts Intimate Merce Cunningham Homage to Honor 'Artists and Lovers' Show

Rising star Jonah Bokaer worked closely with Ordovas on the unusual performance.

Christie Chu, December 16, 2016



Merce Cunningham's *Cross Currents* at Ordovas. Courtesy of John Calabrese.

Pilar Ordovas has re-opened her eponymous gallery on New York's Upper East Side with the exhibition "[Artists and Lovers](#)." Focusing on art from the mid-1930s to mid-70s, the show is on view from November 4, 2016–January 7, 2017.

"I've always been really interested in how love and friendship has really shaped the creative process," Ordovas told artnet News on Wednesday evening, noting that she tried to go beyond easy pairings. "I looked for couples who were artists in their own right." The exhibition housed in a polished townhouse includes works by the likes of Willem and Elaine de Kooning, Yayoi Kusama and Joseph Cornell, Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera, Merce Cunningham and John Cage, and more.



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As part of the exhibition program, the performance has been part of a series of music and dance events planned in conjunction with the show. In London, where the show was on view in September, Ordovas hosted an evening where pianist Annie Yim performed Cage's iconic *4'33* as well as lesser known works such as *In a Landscape* and *Dream*.



Merce Cunningham's *Cross Currents* at Ordovas. Courtesy of John Calabrese.

Last night in New York, dancers restaged Merce Cunningham's *Cross Currents*, a 1964 piece with music by Conlon Nancarrow and arranged by Cunningham's longtime partner and collaborator John Cage. In their over 60-year partnership, Cunningham and Cage revolutionized the discourse of music and dance.

"We see this performance with Cage and Cunningham and other artists from the Black Mountain College as part of this experience," Ordovas told artnet News about the program.

In his career, Cunningham was eager and open to breaking boundaries; Nancarrow is most well-known for using auto-playing musical instruments in his pieces.

Rising star Jonah Bokaer, who joined the Merce Cunningham Dance Company at age 18, worked closely with Ordovas on the unusual performance. Having worked with Cunningham from 2000 to 2007, Bokaer had a first-hand experience with the dance legend.



Merce Cunningham's *Cross Currents* at Ordovas. Courtesy of John Calabrese.

The piece, *Cross Currents*, choreographed by Cunningham, is about individual voices and rhythms that come together to create a larger whole. Three dancers from the New York Theatre Ballet sported white leotards and black leggings, and carried out the beautiful piece on the gallery's second floor.

One guest, Harrison Tenzer, a Sotheby's Contemporary art specialist, enjoyed the ad hoc mise-en-scene. "To see so much dynamic movement so close to the artworks makes the show more interesting and contextualizes the works more," he said, "they're not so sterile."



"Artists and Lovers" at Ordovas. Courtesy of the gallery.

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