

THE KITCHEN

NEW YORK CITY'S CENTER
FOR EXPERIMENTAL ART
AND THE AVANT-GARDE
SINCE 1971

For Immediate Release
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THE KITCHEN PRESENTS MARTHA FRIEDMAN AND SUSAN MARSHALL'S *TWO PERSON OPERATING SYSTEM TYPE 2*, FEBRUARY 3 & 4

Two Person Operating System Type 2 Continues Sculptor Martha Friedman and Choreographer Susan Marshall's Performance-Installation Series Examining the Intimate Relationships Between Moving Bodies and Objects

The Kitchen presents *Two Person Operating System Type 2*, a sculptural-choreographic work evolving the collaboration between **Martha Friedman** and **Susan Marshall**, February 3 & 4 at The Kitchen at Westbeth (163B Bank Street, 4th Floor Loft). Working with industrial objects and materials such as rubber and metal, dancers activate sculptures in complex patterns, probing preconceptions of the material boundaries of the body. The patterns of action and design explore the tensions between work and product, danger and intimacy, absurdity and purpose, soft and hard, in and out—complicating expectations of clear, binary contrasts often raised in gendered conversations about physical bodies.

Susan Marshall and Martha Friedman: *Two Person Operating System Type 2* is organized by **Matthew Lyons**, Curator, with **Angelique Rosales Salgado**, Curatorial Assistant. The performance (doors and sculpture viewing: 5pm; performance begins at 5:30 pm both days) is free with [RSVP](#). Reservations open today, January 12. Performers in *Two Person Operating System Type 2* include **Ching-I Chang**, **Miriam Gabriel**, **Paul Hamilton**, and **Luke Miller**.

In this iteration of *Two Person Operating System*, the second in an ongoing series of works from sculptor Friedman and choreographer Marshall, two towers of metal tubes are each capable of supporting metal spikes and rotating in place. Long, fleshy rubber ropes are inserted, spooled and twisted through the sculpture and to the surrounding architecture by dancers engaging with the objects and each other in a series of methodical tasks performed with workerly precision.

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Friedman's sculpture for *Two Person Operating System Type 2* abstracts the design used in the first part of the series, which centered around a grid of tubes referencing telephone switchboards. That sculpture's activation recalled the labor behind switchboards' operation, and evoked that particularly odd relationship between human and object: with women's bodies as conduits for information communicated between others through a machine. As the series continues, Friedman and Marshall envision varying elements always moving toward and away from the image of the switchboard and its connotations. While the sculpture in *Type 2* loosens this connection and enables its own set of systems, the location of the performance—The Kitchen's temporary space at Westbeth—draws it even closer to this history: it was the site of Bell Telephone Laboratories from 1898 until 1966.

Says Friedman, "We got very interested in how women switchboard operators in the late 19th century quietly became these bodies that connect information, networks, and energy; they were expected to work diligently and professionally as this strange and quiet bodily intermediary between nodes of information. That idea lends itself to Susan's very beautiful, rhythmic and arrhythmic technical choreography and what it can say about relationships."

Marshall says, "I had a strong visceral reaction to one of Martha's sculptures in her studio and it became the basis for our original piece; it was a grid of holes that seemed to be begging for activation. I've always been interested in and worked with task-based movement: tasks connected with work and functional actions that speak for themselves, and are rife with meaning. Efficiency came up in regards to work and as a beauty in and of itself, and has been at the heart of our collaboration."

Friedman and Marshall's work rearranges and equalizes the power dynamics both artists had perceived in many previous works hybridizing visual art and choreography. As Friedman explains, "A hierarchy often emerges between where meaning is found in a body versus meaning in an object; usually it defaults to the body." The sculptural works are constantly being made and unmade by dancers—and never exist in a finished form—while the dancers' systematic movements are simultaneously informed by the sculptures. This fluidity and equilibrium is mirrored in Friedman and Marshall's process, for which the sculptor participates in rehearsal with performers and helps guide bodily interactions with the object—and through which the sculptures' material components may be altered to most dynamically punctuate choreography.

About Martha Friedman

Martha Friedman (b. 1977, Detroit, MI), earned a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (1998) and an MFA from the Yale School of Art (2003). Her work has been featured in solo exhibitions at

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Art@Bainbridge, Princeton University Art Museum, NJ (2022); the Henry Art Gallery, Seattle, WA (2018); the Institute of Fine Arts Great Hall, New York, NY (2016–2017); and Locust Projects, Miami, FL (2015–2016), among others. She frequently collaborates with choreographers Susan Marshall and Silas Riener, reflecting her interest in the intersection of sculpture and dance. Friedman is currently a senior lecturer in visual art at Princeton University, and she lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. Martha Friedman is represented by Broadway, New York and Jessica Silverman Gallery, San Francisco. More at marthafriedmanwork.com.

About Susan Marshall

Choreographer Susan Marshall has collaborated with visual artists, scientists and composers on theater productions and gallery installations. Employing modest means to resonant effect, her movement vocabularies often include everyday gestures distilled to near abstraction. Interdependency, freedom within constraints and humor are constants in her work and process. Her collaboration with set designer Mimi Lien—grounded in conversations with members of the neurodiverse community—led to the recent performance-installation, *Rhythm Bath*. She has received MacArthur and Guggenheim Fellowships and three “Bessie” Awards. Her company has performed worldwide and at Brooklyn Academy of Music, The Kitchen, New York Live Arts, Baryshnikov Arts Center, Andrea Rosen Gallery, Kennedy Center, UCLA, Krannert Center, Walker Art Center and Montclair State University among many others. Her work is in the repertoires of Nederlands Dans Theatre, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Pacific Northwest Ballet and others. Marshall is a professor and the Director of Dance at Princeton University. More at studiosusanmarshall.org.

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This presentation of *Two Person Operating System Type 2* is also made possible by a grant to Studio Susan Marshall from the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.

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About The Kitchen

Founded in 1971 as an artist-driven collective, The Kitchen today reaffirms and expands upon its originating vision as a dynamic cultural institution that centers artists, prioritizes people, and puts process first. Programming in a *kunsthalle* model that brings together live performances, exhibition-making, and public programming under one roof, The Kitchen empowers its audiences and communities to think creatively and radically about what it means to shape a multivalent and sustainable future in art. The Kitchen seeks to cultivate and hold space for wild thought, risky play, and innovative and experimental making, encouraging artists and cultural workers alike to defy boundaries and sending them into the world to remake art history and catalyze creative change.

Among the artists who have presented significant work at The Kitchen are Muhal Richard Abrams, Laurie Anderson, ANOHNI, Robert Ashley, Charles Atlas, Kevin Beasley, Beastie Boys, Gretchen Bender, Dara Birnbaum, Anthony Braxton, John Cage, Lucinda Childs, Julius Eastman, Philip Glass, Leslie Hewitt, Darius James, Joan Jonas, Bill T. Jones, Devin Kenny, Simone Leigh, Ralph Lemon, George Lewis, Robert Longo, Robert Mapplethorpe, Sarah Michelson, Tere O'Connor, Okwui Okpokwasili, Nam June Paik, Charlemagne Palestine, Sondra Perry, Vernon Reid, Arthur Russell, Cindy Sherman, Laurie Spiegel, Talking Heads, Greg Tate, Cecil Taylor, Urban Bush Women, Danh Vō, Lawrence Weiner, Anicka Yi, and many more.

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