The Kitchen Center for Video and Music

press release

eleanora antinova

February 23 and 24, 1979 8:30pm
$2.50 / $2.00 members
The Kitchen Center, 484 Broome Street
Reservations: 925-3615

"Before the Revolution," a work from the Golden Age of the Ballet Russe, will receive its belated New York City premiere on February 23rd and 24th at The Kitchen Center. The work by the irrepressible Eleanora Antinova is presented in conjunction with a display of documentary artifacts (stage designs, costume sketches, character studies, scenario notes) at the Ronald Feldman Gallery, 33 East 74th Street in New York City.

Dance, the most ephemeral artform, is at last receiving its due in this decade of historical reconstructions. The work of Eleanora Antinova, celebrated in her day as a leading figure of the Ballet Russe, has been lost to posterity for well nigh fifty years. Critics taunted Antinova for decadence, inauthenticity, eclecticism and self-indulgence, but her provocative works transcend petty temporal barriers. A restless spirit, an artist between media, she moved freely among the visiual, literary and performing arts. One may think of her as the essential Diaghilev artist who achieved a complete (if idiosyncratic) fusion of genres. Alas, her achievement has fallen into oblivion; her accomplishments in choreography, decor and costuming have been eclipsed, as has her colorful role as the Black Ballerina of the Ballet Russe. Recent musuem exhibitions have done nothing to repair the neglect of decades. The Ronald Feldman Gallery exhibition (February 17-March 17) is indeed welcome.

As performed at The Kitchen Center, the revival of "Before the Revolution" will feature Antinova, the Black Ballernia, in the role of Marie Antoinette-as-Shepherdess. In this role, Antinova evokes for Russian emigré colleagues the bitter-sweetness of an ancien régime only an American could know. The Dramatis Personae include Sergei Pavlovich Diaghilev, Louis XVI, Olga Spessivtzeva, the Countess, Tamara Karsavina, Susanna, Igor Stravinsky, the Marquis, Vaslav Nijinsky, Sans Culotte and a Lamb. Marcia Goodman appears at the piano as Monsieur Mozart. No dedicated balletomane will want to miss this exciting revival of the full-length "Before the Revolution."

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Eleanor Antin is well-known for her work in the performing and visual arts: she is the person who exhibited 100 boots at the Museum of Modern Art. Other works have been featured at the Venice Bienale, P.S.1/Clocktower, the Museums of Contemporary Art of Houston and Chicago, the Long Beach Museum and the Whitney Museum of American Art. Antin's one-woman film and video exhibition "The Ballerina" was featured at the Whitney Museum in May 1978.

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For information on events taking place at The Kitchen Center, please call Joe Hannan, 925-3615.