

# THE KITCHEN VIDEO MUSIC DANCE PERFORMANCE FILM

512 West 19th St. (Btwn 10th & 11th Aves) New York, NY 10011

Reservations: 255-5793

# ROBERT WHITMAN

## BLACK DIRT

May 10-13 & 16-19

8:30 pm; \$12

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On May 10-13 and 16-19 The Kitchen will present Black Dirt, a new large-scale performance work by internationally recognized artist Robert Whitman.

Along with Claes Oldenburg, Jim Dine and Allan Kaprow, Whitman was one of the key figures associated with Happenings, the phenomenon that revolutionized public notions of art and performance in the early 60's. Since then, he has been a pioneer in the development of a type of theater work rooted in psychologically charged images and poetic restructuring of time and space in lieu of more traditional elements of narrative and character.

Whitman's work characteristically challenges the rational mind; it is both disturbing and beautiful in a fantastic, unearthly way. Describing a previous work in The Village Voice, Sally Banes has written: "As in a dream, all sorts of things from daily life combine in impossible ways ... Yet Whitman's work is even more marvelous than dreams, since his images live outside of consciousness; they are real events, concrete arrangements of things, taking place in time -- gliding by our wide-open eyes."

Born in 1935 in Manhattan, Whitman was a literature major at Rutgers University in the mid-1950's when he first became involved in a small artistic circle that included, among others, George Brecht, George Segal and Kaprow (inventor of the term "Happenings"). Against a backdrop of Abstract Expressionism's challenge to modern painting (and Kaprow's pronouncement that painting had ended with Jackson Pollock), Whitman and others began experimenting with real-time collages of objects and actions in new, unexpected environments and contexts.

In 1960, Whitman performed his first piece, Small Cannon, and since then has produced more than two dozen works in a wide variety of settings and media. His two latest full-length performance works, Northern Dark (1987) and Fast Cloud (1989), were produced by the Moderna Museet in Stockholm (a more complete biography is available).

Black Dirt is a co-commission of the MIT List Visual Arts Center/The Arts Company, Cambridge; The Kitchen, New York; The Fabric Workshop/Painted Bride Arts Center, Philadelphia; and Walker Arts Center, Minneapolis. Black Dirt premiered at MIT's Experimental Media Facility in Cambridge. It will tour to Painted Bride Arts Center June 22-24 and June 29-July 1 and to the Southern Theater October 24-27.

Funding for the commission, performances and tour is being provided by The Pew Charitable Trusts, the Lannan Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities, the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, and the Lila Acheson Wallace Theatre Fund at Community Funds, Inc.

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