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Sally McKay:
Chasing Shadows



Sally McKay (born 1961) works in two and three dimensions and exhibits widely across the UK and abroad. The moving figure, rhythm and energy are central to her practice.

Live performance, and in particular dance, are her inspiration. She draws the artists while attending rehearsals, training and performances and then creates paintings and life-size wire sculpture in her studio while the memory of movement is still strong. Her objective is not to make an accurate record of the dance but rather to create an impression of the movement, energy, rhythm and sensations she felt while drawing. A fine art and dance graduate of Goldsmiths College in the 1980s, Sally spent a decade working in film and publishing before returning to work as a visual artist and taking an MA in Fine Art at the City and Guilds of London Art School in 2002.

A series of residencies with contemporary dance companies followed: Siobhan Davies Dance, The Cholmondeleys and The Featherstonehaughs; the integrated dance company Candoco and the contemporary dance school Laban in London; WalkerPark in Oxford; and the Martha Graham Dance Company and the Martha Graham Ensemble in New York. Other career highlights include a residency with The Circus Space in Hoxton, following a commission of sculpture from the BBC; and Artist in Residence with Tamasha theatre company.

These projects have fuelled and developed Sally's fascination with the moving figure. Of 'Chasing Shadows' Sally says: "In Jungian analysis the shadow is the darker side of the 'ego complex', which the individual refuses to acknowledge so denying it expression. The loss and recovery of the shadow is a powerful metaphor in the quest for self-knowledge. The works on show are an exploration of what can be discovered when we are prepared to chase the shadows in our lives."

Robert Devčić, Founder and Director, GV Art, London

*"Sally creates from her very soul.
Her essence rings forth. In the work
you feel her and the subjects she
has captured, the totality of their
expression as well as her own."*

*Fin Walker, Artistic Director,
WalkerPark*

Cover: **Frantic Assembly** 1, Drawn in Sadler's Wells Studio B, 2009, Charcoal, 34x49cm

Choreographer: Javier de Frutos

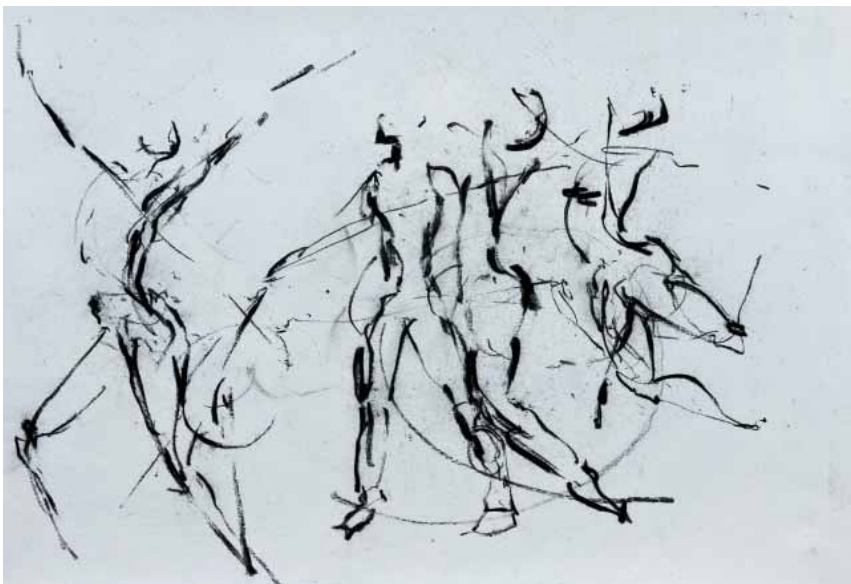


Study for Heart, 2008, Charcoal, 34x49cm

Dance: 5 2 10 · Choreographer: Fin Walker · Dance Company: WalkerPark

“You have a sense of the seconds before and after the moment. The moment itself has a sense of time that is not only of the present. An arriving and a leaving. The moment itself is full of everything that is.” Fin Walker, Artistic Director, WalkerPark

“The shift of weight, the so familiar and particular outline of a Graham dancer, the intensity of the movement, it is all there. What a beautiful way to immortalize the work of Martha Graham.”
*Virginie Mécène, Director,
Martha Graham School
of Contemporary Dance*



Acts of Light 3, 2008, Charcoal, 34x49cm

*Choreographer: Martha Graham
The Martha Graham Dance Company, New York*



Diversion of Angels 1,
2008, Charcoal, 34x49cm

*Choreographer: Martha Graham
The Martha Graham Dance Company, New York*



▲ Detail of **Sketch Book, In Your Rooms**, 2009, Pencil, 14x9cm (extending to 135cm)
Company: Hofesh Shechter Company · Choreographer: Hofesh Shechter



▲ Detail of **Sketch Book, Steve Reich Evening at Sadler's Wells**, 2008, Pencil, 14x9cm (extending to 234cm)
Company: Rosas · Choreographer: Anne Teresa De Keesmaeker



In Your Rooms, 2009, Oil and acrylic on canvas, 91x128cm

Dance: In Your Rooms · Choreographer: Hofesh Shechter · Dance Company: Hofesh Shechter Company



“I am writing this while looking at the drawing ‘Exhale’. The lying figure is a presence next to me ready to move and breathe and it is giving me a good reason to get up and work. These few marks represent a lot of work from both of us and quite a bit of time. Nothing is easy but I remember Sally and those rehearsals with a good heart.” Siobhan Davies, Artistic Director, Siobhan Davies Dance

Drawing Breath, 2005, Charcoal, 30x47cm

*Dance: In Plain Clothes · Choreographer: Siobhan Davies
Dance Company: Siobhan Davies Dance*

Daybreak on The East Coast, 2009, Oil and acrylic on canvas, 77x96cm

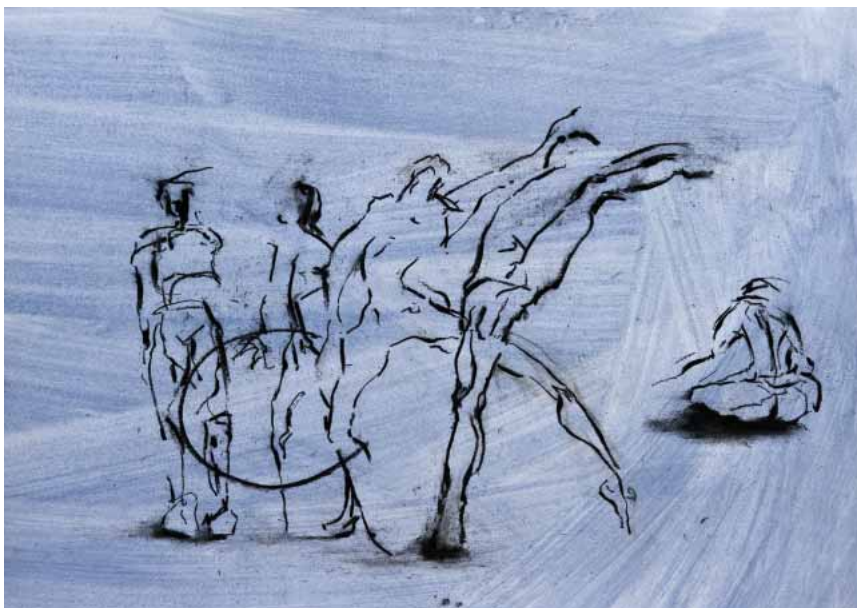
Dance: Two Quartets · Choreographer: Siobhan Davies · Dance Company: Siobhan Davies Dance





Don't Look Back, 2009, Oil and acrylic on canvas, 81x168cm

Dance: The Perfect Human · Choreographer: Hofesh Shechter



The Perfect Human 3, 2009, Charcoal, 34x49cm

Dance: The Perfect Human · Choreographer: Hofesh Shechter

“I am very pleased to develop our relationship with Sally McKay. It is wonderful to see images of the dancers’ moving bodies captured with so much dynamic movement.”

*Stine Nilson,
Co-Artistic Director,
Candoco*



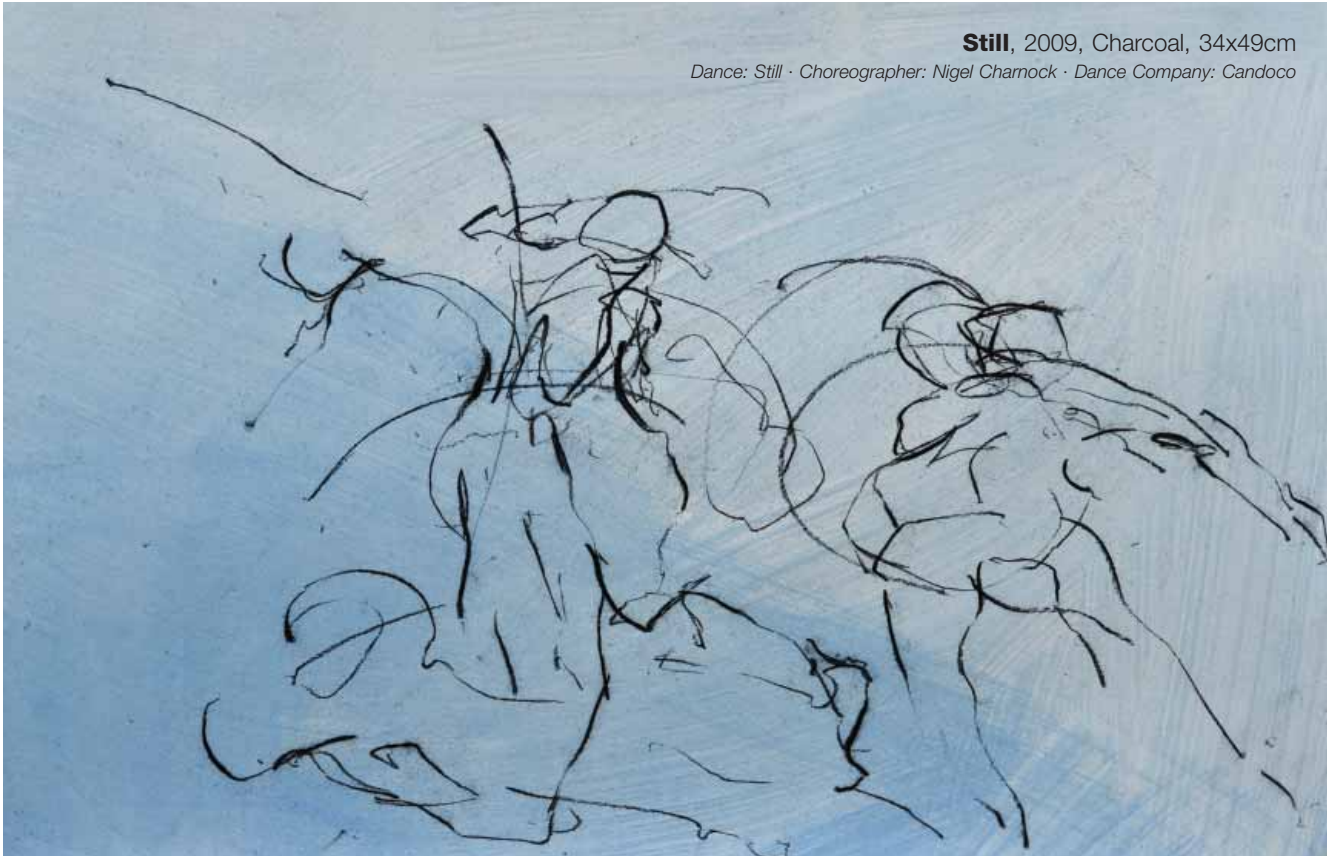
▲ Detail of **Sketch Book, Still**,
2009, Pencil, 14x9cm (extending to 279cm)
Company: Candoco · Choreographer: Nigel Charnock

Detail of **Sketch Book, The Perfect Human**,
2009, Pencil, 14x9cm (extending to 252cm)
Company: Candoco · Choreographer: Hofesh Shechter ▼



Still, 2009, Charcoal, 34x49cm

Dance: Still · Choreographer: Nigel Charnock · Dance Company: Candoco



“Sally’s strong, energetic drawings have stimulated discourse after the classes she has joined amongst the dancers and teachers at Laban. Her observations as a visual artist have frequently made a contribution to our work here at the school. Perhaps it is her background in contemporary dance that gives her that extra sensitivity.” Anthony Bowne, Director, Laban



Primitive Mysteries 5, 2009, Charcoal, 34x49cm
Choreographer: Martha Graham · Danced by Laban BA2 students
in the Historical Project 2009 reconstructed by Susan Sentler

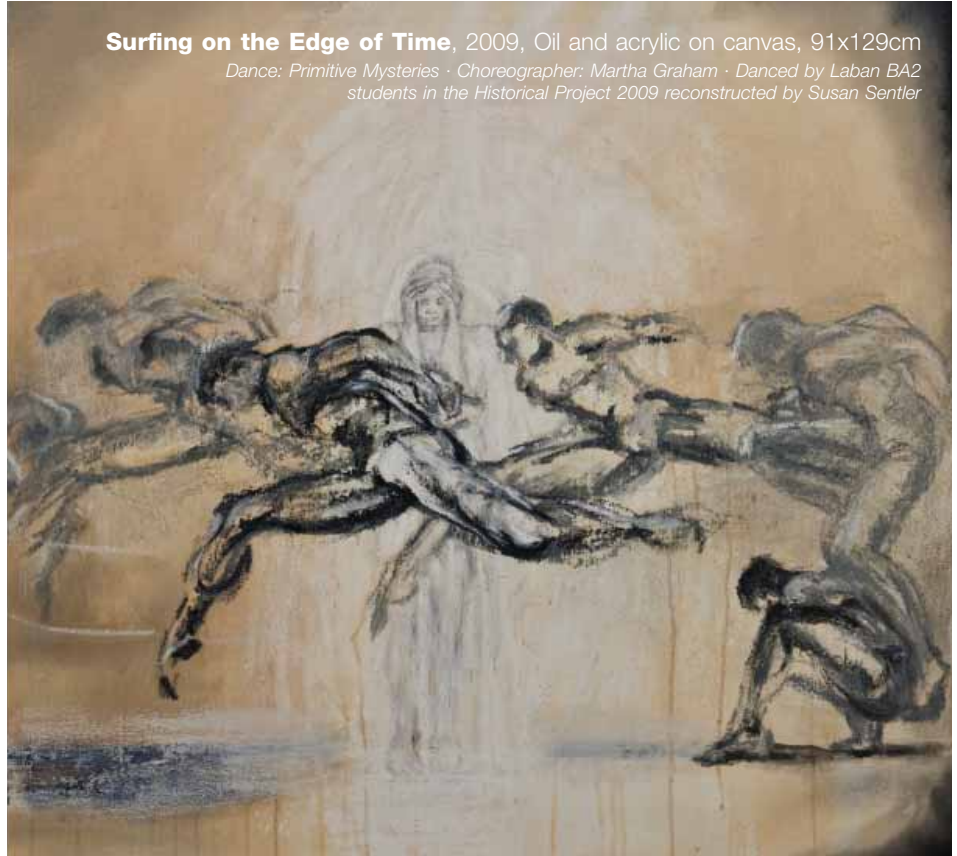
“Sally becomes an organic and interwoven part of the class or rehearsal. The students and I are inspired by her energy and the way she is able to capture the essence of the moment.”

*Susan Sentler, Senior
Lecturer, Laban*



Surfing on the Edge of Time, 2009, Oil and acrylic on canvas, 91x129cm

Dance: Primitive Mysteries · Choreographer: Martha Graham · Danced by Laban BA2 students in the Historical Project 2009 reconstructed by Susan Sentler





Be Still My Soul, 2008, Oil, acrylic and pencil, 106x143cm

Dance: CRWDSPCR · Choreographer: Merce Cunningham · Company: Merce Cunningham Dance Company

“Having Sally McKay as artist in residence during a rehearsal process adds another layer of texture which all assists in the making of a work. Somehow the tangible drawings produced by observing a very untangible process lend weight and seriousness to the creation of a new work. Sally works with great sensitivity – the drawings she produces are acute observations and her flair often suggests hidden meanings to scenes and moments which are otherwise invisible. I found looking at Sally’s drawings during rehearsal hugely inspirational, they evoked responses in me and my acting company that assisted us in very subtle ways in the making of our work. Her own deep understanding of artistic process and practice bring so much to any rehearsal room.” Kristine Landon-Smith, Artistic Director, Tamasha



Detail of **Sketch Book, Wuthering Heights**, 2009, Pencil, 14x9cm, (extending to 216cm)

Director: Kristine Landon-Smith · Company: Tamasha



The River, 2008, Charcoal, 34x49cm

*Dance: Dancing On Your Grave · Choreographer: Lea Anderson
Company: The Cholmondeleys and The Featherstonehaughs*

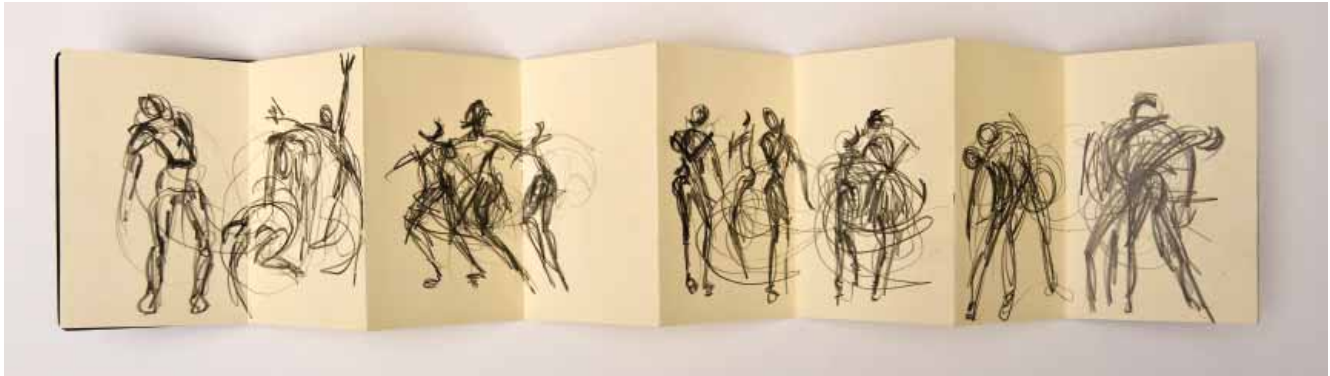
“The magic of working with dancers in a studio is the strange but exquisite juxtaposition of intimacy and elusiveness; these works capture that duality. They give physical weight, individuality and permanence to the dancers’ bodies, capturing the presence and immediacy of the movement whilst also giving the impression of this moment being momentarily fleeting.”

*Rosemary Lee,
Choreographer,
Performer, Director*



Dancing on Your Grave, 2009, Oil and acrylic on canvas, 77x96cm

Dance: Dancing On Your Grave · Choreographer: Lea Anderson · Company: The Cholmondeleys and The Featherstonehaughs



▲ Detail of **Sketch Book, Dancing on Your Grave**, 2009, Pencil, 14x9cm (extending to 261cm) ▼

Choreographer: Lea Anderson · Company: The Cholmondeleys and The Featherstonehaughs



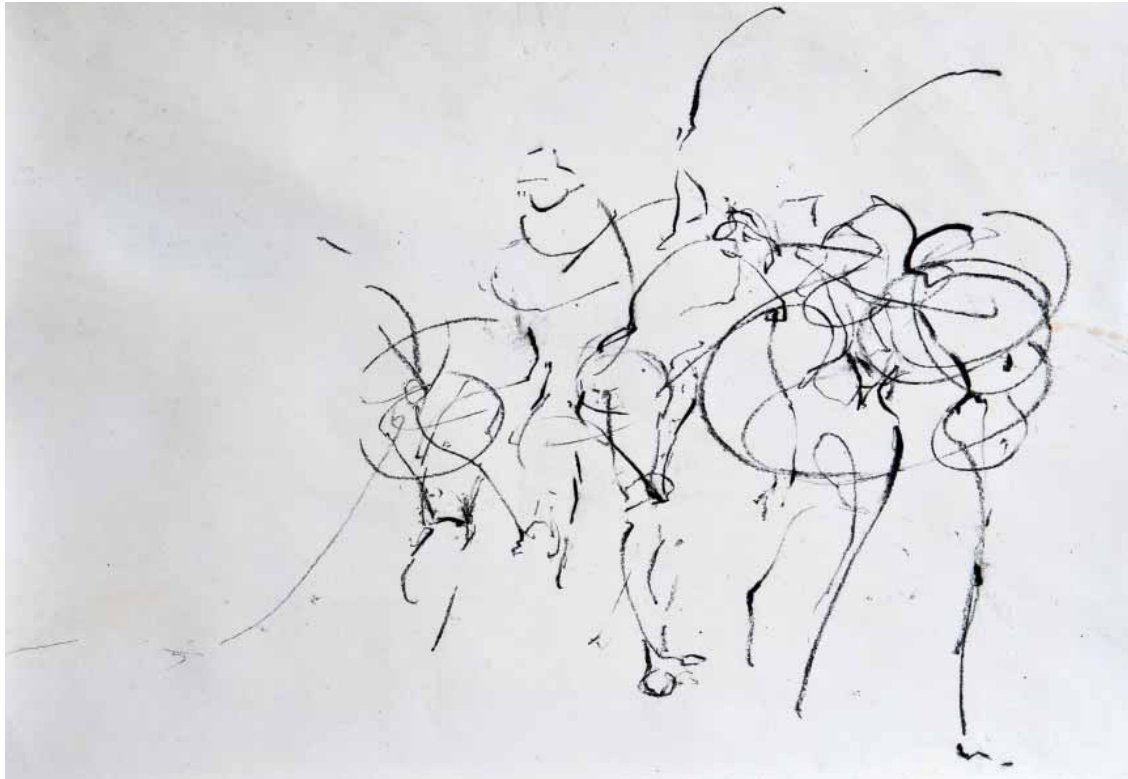


Detail of **Mary Neal Day 3**, 2009, Charcoal, 34x49cm

“Having Sally at an event adds a very particular quality to the proceedings. You will look up from what is going on – dancing, singing, people exchanging skills, stories and ideas – and see Sally taking it all in and transferring what she sees to paper. Her pictures capture what Mary Neal would have referred to as ‘the general dance’: spirit, pleasure, life.” Lucy Neal, co-founder of the London International Festival of Theatre and Director of the Mary Neal Project

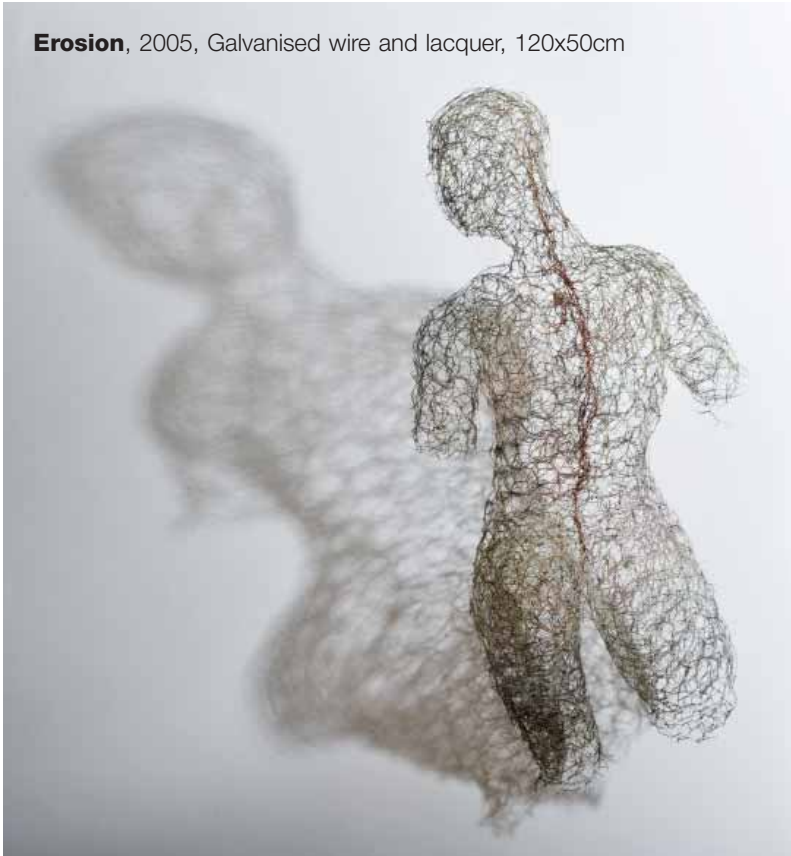


Frantic Assembly 1, Drawn in Sadler's Wells Studio B, 2009, Charcoal, 34x49cm
Choreographer: Javier de Frutos



Frantic Assembly 6, Drawn in Sadler's Wells Studio B, 2009, Charcoal, 34x49cm
Choreographer: Javier de Frutos

Erosion, 2005, Galvanised wire and lacquer, 120x50cm



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Acknowledgements:

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LABAN
'Laban dancers'