



H a r d w a r e
AT ISLAND HARDWARE

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Juli Brandano Outdoor Studies: In/Door

SEPTEMBER 1 – OCTOBER 31, 2026

In/Door is a video by dancer Juli Brandano from her series *Outdoor Studies* which explores movement inside and beyond the landscape. Brandano’s work is shown this fall at **HARDWARE** in conjunction with the project **59,411** at Lighthouse Works—a series of pithy, ambulatory, transient, and accumulative experiences with contemporary artists and art in, around, and through walking.

Juli Brandano is a dancer, teacher, choreographer, and interdisciplinary artist based in Brooklyn, NY. As a performer, she has collaborated with and learned from Phoebe Berglund, Jessica Cook, Ayano Elson, Amelia Heintzelman, Jodi Melnick, Cally Spooner, Alexandra Pirici, and others. Her work

LAUREL PTAK You describe yourself as both a dancer and interdisciplinary artist. Can you say more about these ways in which you work and how they interrelate for you?

JULI BRANDANO My first love is dance, and my deepest connection to art-making is through being a dancer. My work is rooted in studying the body and its material and theatrical possibilities. Even when I work in other mediums, I’m aware that my ideas emerge from years of working on technique in studios and engaging with dance history through my own physicality.

The other half of my life outside of the dance studio has been spent in museums working as an art handler. This time around visual art has seeped into my work in recent years, and I’ve begun working more regularly across drawing, video, sculpture, and installation. This work often supports, informs, or is embedded in a live dance performance—which still feels like my primary mode of making.

PTAK Can you tell us a bit about how, why, and when *In/Door* was made?

BRANDANO I made this video for a class in my first year of graduate school in Illinois a few years ago. At the time, I felt really disoriented in the Midwest after spending my entire life on the East Coast. I can’t remember the assignment, but I do remember that the most sustaining aspect of my improvisation practice at the time was taking place outdoors. This was because I was both trying to get to know my new environment and was in the process of researching “Dance as Land Reclamation,” an idea I repurposed from Robert Morris and Land Artists from the 1960s, for a project at the New York Public Library’s Dance Division. I was interested in thinking about dance outdoors, if it might offer an alternative and possibly less invasive method for making art in ecologically shifting or deteriorating sites.

In addition to dancing outside, I was doing a ton of walking, running, and driving around and was so drawn to the flatness of the landscape and the different farming architectures and tools that occupied the horizon line. The dance studio I worked

in most often was across the street from a bunch of greenhouses used by the university’s Crop Sciences department. I wanted to integrate their strange lighting and shape into a video, but as someone with little knowledge of what went on inside, the reference felt more about their geometric character, rather than an explicit reference to their ecological function.

I’m kind of Luddite when it comes to making videos and I typically use iMovie. This piece is embarrassingly edited to me, but the chopiness is also choreographic in a way I still like. During the pandemic, I started using the different distortion features of iMovie to double my body to make duets with myself. In general, I shy away from solo work: my interest in choreography is often in the social and spatial possibilities of groups in relation.

In this piece, I layered over a soundscape by the recently deceased French composer Éliane Radigue, whose work has been a touchstone for me for more than a decade. Her interest in repetition and duration, in the materiality of sound, in a spirituality found in minimalism, mirrored some of my own creative interests in choreographic and sculptural forms.

PTAK For me this video articulates compelling relationships between movement and landscape; inside and outside; physicality and interiority. It also negotiates doubling, walking, and the natural world all quite strikingly. Do these observations resonate? What were you thinking about when making this and what do you hope a viewer might take away from it?

BRANDANO Totally. My more recent work delves directly into repetition and the compulsion to double, which I think of as a method for exploring different ideas: repeating to make a movement or experience in time into an object; repeating to remember; repeating to generate rhythm; repetition as a reference to Minimalist sculpture’s insistence on materiality.

But I also made a few works (*Some Material*, *13 False Starts*) that attempted to use doubling the body to question ideas about individualism and subjectivity. I’m compelled by the idea that choreography

can propose a utopian idea of collectivity through unison and relationality, while just as powerfully displaying the impossibility of ever fully understanding or being someone else. This perhaps also touches on this idea of interiority/exteriority that you’re referencing.

Dance has an inherent relationship to imitation and doubling when it comes to dance education. In my work, often one dancer does a piece of material that another dancer does right after, replacing them, re-translating them. No choreography can be performed exactly the same way twice, even by the same



person, and putting that failure on display through various methods has led me to different choreographic structures.

PTAK This is one of a number of videos you’ve made that you call *Outdoor Studies*. I love how the title implies utilizing the medium of video as a kind of research for movement—like the way a painter might make a drawing first. It makes me curious to know more about your artistic process. How are you learning and what are you trying to make sense of when you create a video like this?

BRANDANO I don’t feel like this work is its own piece, but instead exists as part of a larger series of videos in which I’m putting my body in conversation with specific sites, surfaces, and landscapes. I often

improvise the same shot or idea over and over until a kind of logic or choreography emerges, and then I use the editing afterwards to learn what should happen either as a video or a live performance.

Like I mentioned, I’ve spent a lot of time with 1960s and 70s Land Art and the choreographers who were working during that time with outdoor settings, like Simone Forti, Anna Halprin, and Trisha Brown. Forti’s work, in particular for me, offers a way into the environment that is expansive: ecological, aesthetic, experiential; oriented toward architecture, form, rhythm, gravity, animals.

Digesting this research from outdoors into my theatrical work directly presents challenges about relocation, site-unspecificity. The *Outdoor Studies* offer an intermediary space to study how the body reacts to a specific site that can then be translated into more compositional senses of time and site in an indoor work. Working in the landscape can offer a sense of patience and duration, as well as an affirmation of certain rhythmic ideas that I attempt to represent though dancing bodies.

PTAK I am grateful to be showing *In/Door* while a project that considers walking is also unfolding at Lighthouse Works. In your video I love the way your body is so casual yet so articulate in the way you walk and traverse the landscape. It made me think that you might have a much more nuanced awareness, relationship, or set of ideas to think about walking than, say, I do? How have you considered walking inside your own work? In your field are there any compelling vocabularies, histories, discourses, etc around walking that you can share?

BRANDANO Perhaps it’s a less theoretical idea, but I do think about the basic Judson Dance Theater-era idea of pedestrian movement when it comes to walking: a return to the simplified body and everyday task, and a democratic orientation to what kinds of movement can be performance. A video comes to mind by Simone Forti titled *Solo 1* from 1974 in which she moves between “banking” or walking in a circle and utilizing the force of gravity to emulate

for better or worse, tiny and collaborative and underfunded. The work that I make is in conversation with my peers and mentors and there is a great deal of exchange.

I dance for people who dance in my work, I ask for feedback from people I give feedback to. I’m involved with a space called Pageant where I’ve been lucky to show work since 2022. This community has encouraged my work aesthetically and theoretically since then.

Jodi Melnick was my teacher in college, whose pure love of dancing steered me back towards the form. Around the same time, I studied with dancers from the Trisha Brown Dance Company and that sense of gravity, falling, athleticism also allowed me to see a path forward. I think Trisha’s *Newark* might be my favorite dance.

PTAK You’ve also collaborated as a performer with a number of interesting contemporary artists, including Alexandra Pirici and Cally Spooner as well as past Lighthouse Works fellows Phoebe Berglund and Alina Tenser, to name only a few. Can you talk about this way of working with others, and often alongside others’ artistic works? What is it like to interpret through movement in this way and how do these collaborations inform your own practice?

BRANDANO The work I do as a dancer and performer for other artists is often collaborative, but my contributions are in service to their own artistic vision and desires. This can feel separate from my making practice at the moment, but I learn so much about how to make dances by watching others in rehearsal.

Working with Phoebe, Cally, Kim Brandt, and right now, Sarah Michelson, has encouraged me to think about dance in the museum or in outdoor settings more concretely, and the sense of time that visual art spaces demand that is different then the theater, particularly when it comes to the passerby audience and that specific sense of attention.

PTAK You were a Lighthouse Works fellow back in 2020. What did you work on then and what impact did the island have on your work?

BRANDANO It was a strange time to be on the island: we were the first post-Covid cohort and arrived in November 2020. Because of the pandemic and the off-season, I spent a lot of time alone, which I know is atypical of the residency. It really was inspiring to explore such a specific island landscape. It encouraged my solo-duet work on video, which I did on Isabella Beach and at the Skeet Shooting range. I created a collection of written and drawn improvisation scores for both dancers and non-dancers that I turned into a collection, allowing me to imagine dances on paper with more clarity during a time when working with other people was impossible. It really shifted me toward interdisciplinarity and landscape-oriented choreography. For that, I’m so grateful.

PTAK What are you working on now?

BRANDANO I created a series of choreographies that focused on intensive patterning using simplified movement vocabularies, in an attempt to create a meditative sense of nonstopping: an unfolding of new forms without the viewer seeing the change explicitly occur. This took the form of walking, running, and simple line dancing and jazz steps that changed slowly over time. Now I’m thinking about how this material might translate into a kind of compendium of movements, where each individual has their own version of different materials. I want to expand my sense of duration and time for this new work and think about a simplicity of vocabulary through repetition—including walking.





HARDWARE is a year-round exhibition space for film and video by contemporary artists located in the loose screw section of Island Hardware on Fishers Island.

Every two months a new moving-image work appears, inviting unexpected encounters with contemporary art where the everyday rhythms, textures, and temporalities of a hardware shop frame the work.

Inside Island Hardware at 741 The Gloaming on Fishers Island, **HARDWARE** is programmed by Lighthouse Works and open to the public during business hours, Monday–Friday 8am–3:30pm or by appointment.

HARDWARE is curated by Laurel Ptak with support from Claudia DeSimone and Eliza Schmidt. Exhibition guide designed by Eric Nylund. Special thanks to Dave Beckwith and the entire team at Island Hardware for their ongoing support.

For further information about these exhibitions contact Nate Malinowski: nate@lighthouseworks.us or (631) 788-7713.

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