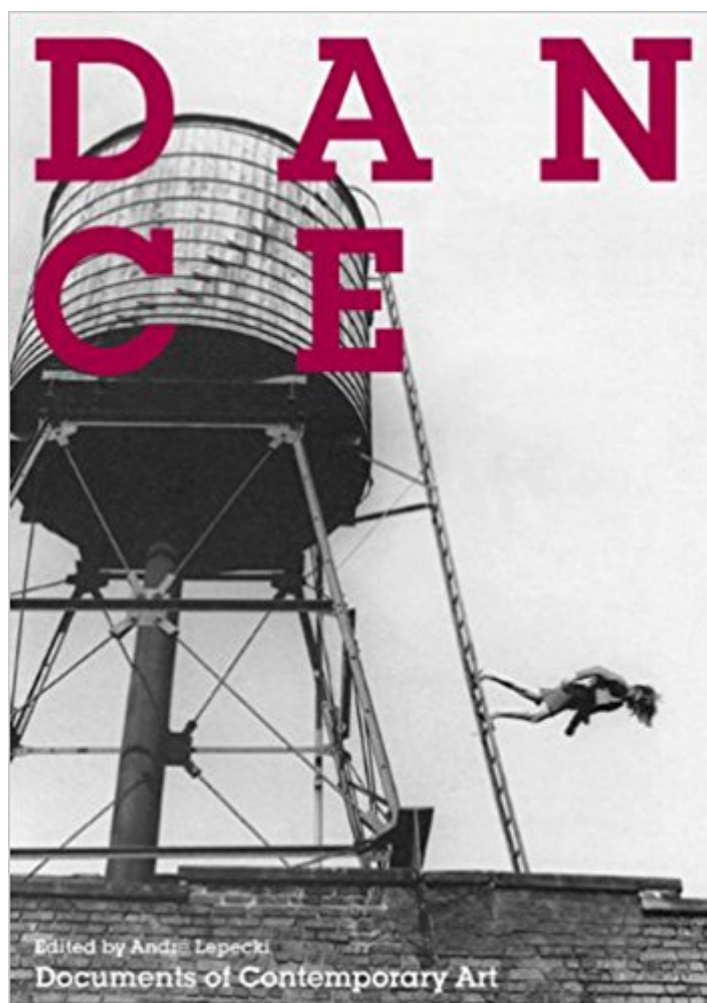


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Dance (Whitechapel: Documents Of Contemporary Art)



Synopsis

This collection surveys the choreographic turn in the artistic imagination from the 1950s onwards, and in doing so outlines the philosophies of movement instrumental to the development of experimental dance. By introducing and discussing the concepts of embodiment and corporeality, choreopolitics, and the notion of dance in an expanded field, *Dance* establishes the aesthetics and politics of dance as a major impetus in contemporary culture. It offers testimonies and writings by influential visual artists whose work has taken inspiration from dance and choreography. Dance -- because of its ephemerality, corporeality, precariousness, scoring, and performativity -- is arguably the art form that most clearly engages the politics of aesthetics in contemporary culture. Dance's ephemerality suggests the possibility of an escape from the regimes of commodification and fetishization in the arts. Its corporeality can embody critiques of representation inscribed in bodies and subjects. Its precariousness underlines the fragility of contemporary states of being. Scoring links it with conceptual art, as language becomes the articulator for possible as well as impossible modes of action. Finally, because dance always establishes a contract, or promise, between its choreographic planning and its actualization in movement, it reveals an essential performativity in its aesthetic project -- a central concern for both art and critical thought in our time. This title is published in collaboration with Sadler's Wells, London.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In her new collection, NYU associate professor of performance studies Lepecki begins by noting

that while dance has consolidated its themes and forms with other art forms, it remains overlooked in critical and theoretical art discourse. Lepecki captures international texts from the early 1950s through 2011, written by dancers, choreographers, and their collaborators, to explore the evolution and concerns of contemporary dance. Although much thematic overlap exists in the content, the documents are organized into five sections, to focus on choreographic shifts, movement theorizing, practices of embodiment, choreopolitics, and context and score. Conversations with groundbreaking artists, such as Pina Bausch, Bill T. Jones, and Eiko & Koma, reveal insights into individual process, and are collected along with tersely written dance scenarios and commentary. Short essays, from choreographers including William Forsythe and Boris Charmatz, question the very semantics referenced throughout the text ("Choreography is a curious and deceptive term," writes Forsythe). This variation in approach from humorous and cynical to conceptual and righteous and abstract, strengthens the collection. As he states in the introduction, Lepecki is trying to diminish misperceptions of dance and dance-makers "as non-verbal artists creating a supposedly 'visceral' art whose sole purpose is to move gracefully, flawlessly, to the sound of music.." His editorial choices help both to ground and to elevate the dialogue.

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The Whitechapel series is irresistible, if devoted to a single "curatorial" author's idiosyncratic view of a phenomenon. Lepecki's lens is quite philosophical, but acknowledges historical landmarks from dance's modernist roots and early postmodernism. Its full of discoveries he uncovers, but is not for those dancers for whom intellectualism is suspect.

Excellent selection of materials.

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