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Envisioning Dance On Film And Video



Synopsis

Virtually everyone working in dance today uses electronic media technology. *Envisioning Dance on Film and Video* chronicles this 100-year history and gives readers new insight on how dance creatively exploits the art and craft of film and video. In *Envisioning Dance*, fifty-three essays, choreographers, filmmakers, critics and collaborating artists explore all aspects of the process of rendering a three-dimensional art form in two-dimensional electronic media. Many of these essays are illustrated by ninety-three photographs and a two-hour DVD (40 video excerpts). A project of UCLA's Center for Intercultural Performance, made possible through The Pew Charitable Trusts (www.wac.ucla.edu/cip).

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Customer Reviews

I love that many of the essays offer nitty-gritty analyses of techniques and their effects. Even the lesser writings contain one or two thought-provoking insights into process..

Judy Mitoma is Director of the UCLA Center for Intercultural Performances. She has taught dance and world arts for over 2 decades at UCLA, and is one of the leaders in the study of dance on film. The text editor is Elizabeth Zimmer, a dance writer and editor for the Village Voice, and the DVD editor is Dale Ann Stieber of UCLA.

I love this book and used a friend's copy in grad school. In January of this year, I finally bought a copy for myself. The 2002 edition came to me, but I only just now tried to play the disc. To my

sadness, the disc is not playable in my computer, OR two other DVD players I've tried. I confirmed with the publishers that there was an issue, but they said I had to go through to get a replacement. When I attempted to replace my copies, they continued to send me defective DVDs that were burned incorrectly. They did not seem to take it off their website for sale, and they gave up on helping me, so they just gave me a refund and told me to keep everything I had received. I complained to the publisher one more time, and they finally just send me a good copy, HALLELUJAH. So, my advice is to (1) buy this book and DVD set -- there is no other like it, but (2) buy it directly from the publisher's site.

Hard to believe this important book came out 10 years ago. The publication of Judy Mitoma's *Envisioning Dance on Film and Video* in 2002, collecting fifty essays accompanied by a DVD featuring excerpts of forty films and videos, presented an important moment for the field of performance media studies. It offered the first comprehensive and illustrated reference guide to the history of dance on camera/screen choreography, providing an invaluable pedagogical tool for teaching the history of the collaboration between dance makers and filmmakers. Although there is no doubt that today virtually everyone working in dance uses video to record rehearsals, document performances, promote new works or submit samples for funding requests, and although dance historians and theorists like to include dance films in their teaching, there is a surprising dearth of scholarly publications and critical reflection on dance's relationship to motion pictures. The rise of videodance festivals in the 80s and 90s indicated that the alliance of choreographer and filmmaker had generated a new genre, and with the widespread accessibility today of digital cameras and computers, along with the global resources of the Internet and its digitized databases (and daily uploads to YouTube), it is unimaginable that dance education in universities, academies and studios would miss the opportunity to integrate dance and video more thoroughly. Theatre education has much to learn from this and could have turned to the published resources which enable a systematic study of the aesthetic, technological and theoretical issues in the historical relations of dance and media over the past 100 years, and specifically in the development of cine-dance or videodance as an independent cross-over artform. A similar study of "videotheatre" is needed, while video art is receiving more and more attention that is justly deserved. This book should be discussed in great detail (and I tried to do so in one of the chapters in *"Performance, Technology and Science"*, 2009), and encourage others to follow suit. It is essential for libraries to have this book along with the DVD. *Envisioning Dance on Film and Video* essentially focuses on the United States (and thus the U.S.-based traditions of ballet and modern dance), with Hollywood movies,

public and commercial television programs, and film festivals such as DFA's Dance on Camera dominating the selection of examples and case studies. Deirdre Towers, the veteran director of Dance Films Association, draws the titles of her annotated Filmography mostly from entries of her recent festivals and her own Dance on Camera: A Guide for Dance Films and Videos. It is a good selection but among its 190 titles are only a handful of Australian, Asian, Latin American, Eastern European and Scandinavian dance videos. No reference is made, for example, to the burgeoning videodance scenes in Brazil and Slovenia; the one Indian entry, *Circles-Cycles Kathak Dance* (1988), was produced by Robert Gottlieb in the U.S. The emphasis on American film, film musicals, and broadcast television (with scarcely a reference to MTV and the use of video in contemporary techno and club cultures, except in Larry Billman's essay on "Music Video as Short Form Dance Film") is understandable, once we look at the origins of the book. For Judy Mitoma (UCLA Center for Intercultural Performance) and her dedicated team of co-editors, the primary spring-board for the creation of this compendium was an effort by American media and dance professionals, especially producers and directors, to assess the history of mainstream dance on film and video and to gather the evidence of production, technical and creative, that could continue to foster the training of artists in the filming of dance. Mitoma combined funding resources (from The Pew Charitable Trusts and NIPAD, particularly) to generate the UCLA National Dance/Media Project in 1996 and to initiate a series of Fellowship Programs with the help of a "Leadership Group" to which she invited distinguished practitioners, many of whom had been instrumental in creating dance for public television programs in the 1970s and thereafter (e.g. *Dance in America*, *A Time to Dance*, *Arts USA*). Jac Venza, executive producer of *Great Performances*, writes about this experience in "Setting the Record." He contributes a listing of all the dance programs that were aired during the past decades. Alyce Dissette adds the dance program list of *Alive from Off Center*, a more experimental video series that was funded by an NEA initiative between 1988-1996 and included performance artists like Laurie Anderson and Meredith Monk. Other very helpful surveys include Virginia Brooks's historical timeline ("A Century of Dance and Media"), Madeleine Nichols's chapter on copyright issues, and Leslie Hanssen Kopp's "Resource and Preservation Guide." As these surveys and testimonies indicate, along with the involvement of NIPAD (National Initiative to Preserve America's Dance), the book's primary objective is an emphasis on creating a historical record of the significance of dance on film and the continuing need for preservation, on the one hand, and on motivating new generations of dancemakers to consider "best practices" for the recording of dance and the production of specialized choreographies for the camera on the other.

finding this book on the shelf of my local uni. was a great joy. the dvd is worth the price alone. finding good documentation of video dance is hard in israel. outside of the standard library this has some very important work. footage length is about 3-6 minutes long, some pieces of footage could be longer but mostly the editing was genteel.

If the interaction of dance and film/video intrigues you, you will want this book and DVD. It's not an encyclopedia or a textbook on the topic. On the contrary, it's more like a college symposium; most of the chapters are designed to convince you that the writer is an authority, without giving away the whole store. Use this book as you would an atlas or a National Geographic article before going on your own journey.

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