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Exhausting Dance: Performance And The Politics Of Movement



Synopsis

The only scholarly book in English dedicated to recent European contemporary dance, *Exhausting Dance: Performance and the Politics of Movement* examines the work of key contemporary choreographers who have transformed the dance scene since the early 1990s in Europe and the US. Through their vivid and explicit dialogue with performance art, visual arts and critical theory from the past thirty years, this new generation of choreographers challenge our understanding of dance by exhausting the concept of movement. Their work demands to be read as performed extensions of the radical politics implied in performance art, in post-structuralist and critical theory, in post-colonial theory, and in critical race studies. In this far-ranging and exceptional study, Andre Lepecki brilliantly analyzes the work of the choreographers: * Jerome Bel (France)* Juan Dominguez (Spain)* Trisha Brown (US)* La Ribot (Spain)* Xavier Le Roy (France-Germany)* Vera Mantero (Portugal) and visual and performance artists: * Bruce Nauman (US) * William Pope.L (US). This book offers a significant and radical revision of the way we think about dance, arguing for the necessity of a renewed engagement between dance studies and experimental artistic and philosophical practices. Â

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Customer Reviews

Lepecki's first Introduction: The Political Ontology of Movement and the following two chapters start this book on a strong note. As I was reading them I felt encouraged that Dance Studies was truly starting to come into its own as a serious discipline. Unfortunately he didn't end this short book (132 pages) sooner. His exegesis on Trisha Brown's "It's a Draw/Live Feed" and La Ribot's "Panoramix"

are truly painful - showing the worst excesses of academic b.s. writing - full of multiple citations of the entire canon of postmodern theorists (the fact that there is a postmodern canon is a paradox that one doesn't need to Derrida to deconstruct), he even goes out of his way to cite Foucault when citing a different author by claiming the author he is citing has a similar project as Foucault. And...of course you can't have academic artspeak without the requisite invocations of Freud and Lacan - the vertical dimension is, of course, phallic and the horizontal is "virgin territory". (I find it interesting that the photos of artists that challenge phallic representation are full-frontal nudes....)It is clear that Lepecki is well read and can cite famous philosophers with the best of them but I get more than a little wary of a constant stream of excerpted, decontextualized statements from varied philosophers parsed to make an rather strained point. Lepecki's exploration of modernism, movement and the definition of dance are quite interesting. However, I found it rather revealing that he was most successful in his exploration of choreographic works by performance artists. Perhaps "Dance Studies" isn't fully grown yet as an independent discipline when it is fully subsumed under the larger discipline of Performance Studies and, at least in this book, looks to artists who don't identify themselves as being within dance for its most cogent analysis.

Andr  Lepecki's Exhausting Dance: Performance and the politics of movement is a must read for the serious student of the contemporary dance/performance scene. Lepecki carefully analyzes the works of numerous choreographers and performance artists in the United States and Europe over the last 30 years, and their contributions to our understandings of the politics of movement. In particular, he addresses the issues of our linear concept of time, modernity's subjectivization of bodies through perpetual movement ('...severed from the world' • p. 11), naming and writing, the choreographic connection to solipsistic masculinity, and the perpetuation of the cages of colonial, racial and gender bias. In doing so, he upturns centuries of 'fantasy-based' notions of choreography, dance, and society. Exhausting Dance: Performance and the politics of movement is not an easy read and requires effort and concentration to follow Lepecki's choice of phrasing. Occasionally, his interpretations and insinuations reveal skeptical undertones, but he clearly evidences his thorough research and scholarship. His ideas are challenging, thought provoking and inspiring, and will certainly change the reader's understanding of history, art, dance, and our social condition.

Performance and the Politics of Movement by Andr  Lepecki is a dense scholarly work which explores the connection and interplay between dance studies, philosophy, colonialism, critical

theory, performance art, gender, racial bias, while placing Western dance in the realm of modernity. Throughout the book Lepecki delves into the works of European and American artists Bruce Naumann, Juan Dominguez, Xavier Le Roy, J  r  me Bel, Trisha Brown, La Ribot, William Pope.L and Vera Mantero. To me the text is lacking in the amount of direct accounting of intention from the artists themselves to support Lepecki's analysis of their works. However, I did find his description and analysis of Vera Mantero's *uma misteriosa Coisa disse e.e. cummings* (a mysterious Thing said e.e.cummings) powerful and thought provoking. Within this chapter Lepecki delves into a reading of her work as he rethinks postcolonial melancholia. If you are new to dance studies I recommend starting somewhere else since there is very little explanation of the essence of the elements which are at play within the contemporary dance/performance art realm.

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