

European Dance Since 1989: Communitas And The Other

Dance has always been an essential form of expression, allowing people to communicate their thoughts and emotions through movement. In Europe, after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, a new era of dance emerged, characterized by a sense of communitas and the exploration of the "other." This article delves into the evolution of European dance since 1989, exploring how it has transformed as a medium of artistic expression and a tool for social change.

Exploring Communitas:

Communitas refers to the shared experience of intimacy and togetherness within a community. In the context of European dance since 1989, communitas has become a central theme, with choreographers and dancers aiming to create immersive experiences that connect performers and audience members on a deeper level.

One prominent example of this is Pina Bausch's Tanztheater Wuppertal, a German dance company that gained international recognition for its unique approach to dance. Bausch's works, such as *The Rite of Spring* and *Café Müller*, explored themes of love, desire, and vulnerability, creating a space where both performers and spectators could engage in a collective experience of catharsis.

European Dance since 1989: Communitas and the Other

by Elisa Leonelli (1st Edition, Kindle Edition)

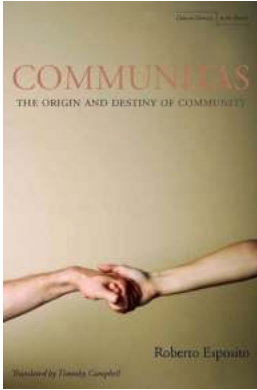
★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

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Another significant contributor to the *communitas* in European dance is Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, a Belgian-Moroccan choreographer known for his collaborative works. Cherkaoui combines elements from different cultures and dance styles, creating performances that celebrate diversity and challenge traditional notions of identity and belonging.

The rise of community-based initiatives has also played a vital role in fostering *communitas* within the European dance scene. Projects like Dancing Museums, which brings together dancers and museum professionals, aim to spark dialogue and collaboration between different art forms, encouraging a sense of togetherness and shared purpose.

Embracing the "Other":

European dance since 1989 has also been marked by a fascination with the concept of the "other." Dancers and choreographers have been actively exploring the boundaries of dance, incorporating elements from other artistic disciplines and cultural traditions.

One notable figure in this regard is Akram Khan, a British-Bangladeshi choreographer who has been redefining contemporary dance by blending classical Indian Kathak with modern styles. Khan's works, such as Gnosis and DESH, embody the meeting point between different cultures, challenging preconceived notions and highlighting the richness of cultural diversity.

The exploration of the "other" extends beyond cross-cultural influences, with many European choreographers seeking inspiration from unconventional spaces and subjects. For instance, companies like Ultima Vez, based in Brussels, have been known for their site-specific performances in abandoned buildings, public parks, and even industrial sites. By taking dance out of traditional theaters and into the unknown, these choreographers push the boundaries of what dance can be, inviting the audience to reconsider their surroundings and question societal norms.

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European dance since 1989 has undergone significant transformations, fueled by a deep exploration of communitas and a fascination with the "other."

Choreographers and dancers have been pushing boundaries, creating immersive experiences that connect performers and audience members on a deeper level.

By celebrating diversity, embracing unconventional spaces, and incorporating elements from different cultures, European dance has become a powerful medium for artistic expression and a tool for social change.

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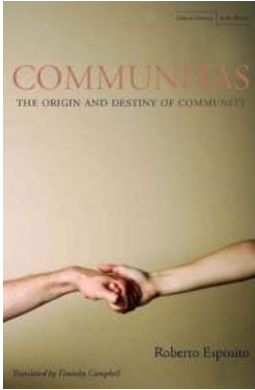
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This edited collection charts the development of contemporary dance in Central and Eastern Europe since the literal and symbolic revolutions of 1989.

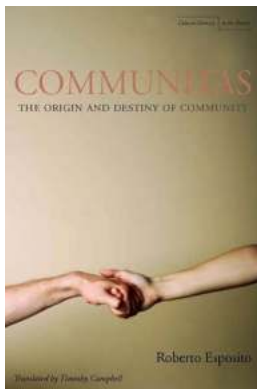
Central Europe and the former Soviet Bloc countries were a major presence in dance – particularly theatrical dance – throughout the twentieth century. With the fragmentation of traditional structures in the final decade of the century came a range of aesthetic and ideological responses from dance practitioners. These ranged from attempts to reform classical ballet to struggles for autonomy from the state, and the nature of each was influenced by a set of contexts and circumstances particular to each country.

Each contribution covers the strategies of a different country's dance practitioners, using a similar structure in order to invite comparisons. In general, they address:

- Historical context, showing the roots of contemporary dance forms
- The socio-political climates that influenced emerging companies and forms
- The relationships between aesthetic exploration and institutional patronage

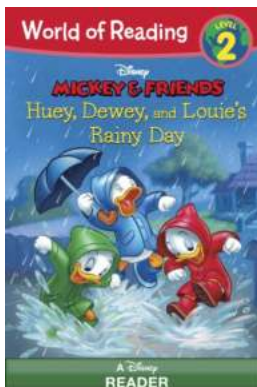
- The practitioners who were central to the development of dance in each country
- A diagnosis of the current state of the art and how it has come about

The book's main through-line is the concept of community, and how all of the different approaches that it documents have in some way engaged with this notion, consciously or otherwise. This can take the form of oppositional relationships, institutional formations, or literally, in identifiable communities of dancers and choreographers.



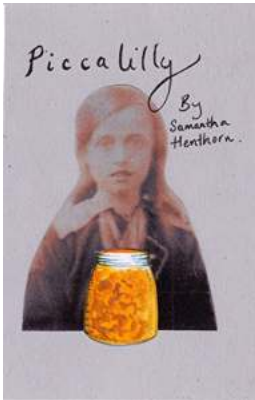
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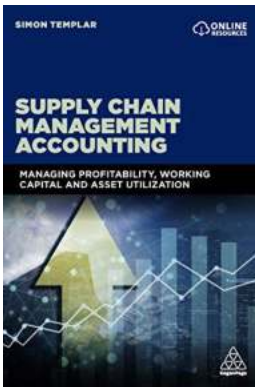
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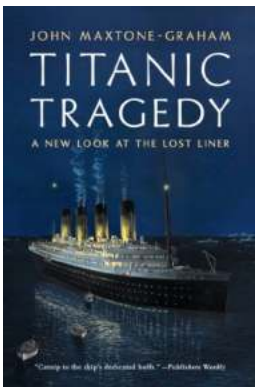
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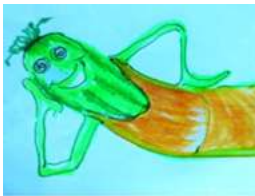
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C. STRAKER