

Lesley University

DigitalCommons@Lesley

Community of Scholars Day—Posters

3-30-2016

What You See Is Not Always What You Get: The non-WYSIWYG World of Performative Iconography

Donna La Rue

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.lesley.edu/community_of_scholars_posters

Recommended Citation

La Rue, Donna, "What You See Is Not Always What You Get: The non-WYSIWYG World of Performative Iconography" (2016). *Community of Scholars Day—Posters*. 37.

https://digitalcommons.lesley.edu/community_of_scholars_posters/37

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@Lesley. It has been accepted for inclusion in Community of Scholars Day—Posters by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Lesley. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@lesley.edu, cvrattos@lesley.edu.

What you See is not

The non-WYSIWYG

world of performative

iconography

Always What you Get:



What you see is not always what you get:
The non-WYSIWYG world of performative iconography

Donna La Rue
March 30, 2016
Lesley University
Day of Scholarship
Poster Session



Abstract

In the past two decades, interest has arisen in artworks whose subject matter or usage histories involve performance.

Heck's work, *Picturing Performance* (1999)^[1], describes such works field by field.

The College Art Association has held sessions on performative iconography since 2010.^[2]

In Spati's *Imaging Dance* (2011)^[3] cautionary studies deter uninformed misreadings.

But valuable as these are, they do not help readers see visual sources on their own terms. Even photographers' and videographers' works are never solely documentary.

[1] The 2010 Wash, D.C. conference had sessions on "Performance Art as Portraiture," sessions since 2010 have included one, and, in 2011, two, on music and dance and in art, etc. (<http://conference.colleart.org/schedule/session/>)
[2] Heck, T., ed., *Picturing Performance* (Rochester, NY: Univ. of Rochester Press) 1999.
[3] Spati, S., ed., *Imaging Dance: Visual Representations of Dancers & Dancing* (Hildesheim: Olms Verlag) 2011.

Abstract

Researchers in the expressive therapies, as well as arts educators, dance ethnographers, dance historians, dance and art history students and researchers will find this study of interest.

'Coding' visual zones with verbal tags in art therapy clients' drawings and movement therapy clients' filmed activities is a recent, technologically enhanced research technique.

Questions of leverage aside—this may simply assert a new interpretive hegemony of verbal over visual resources—recent dance iconographic studies like this one offer transferable learning opportunities

- 1) To enhance the depth of such readings, and
- 2) To prevent miscoding.

Abstract

Dance sources are particularly vulnerable to overinterpretation.

- 1) Representational conventions for depicting bodies, space, and movement-in-time can be misleading, and
- 2) Dance's ephemerality leaves no positive corrective.

This presentation offers a more felt interpretive strategy.

We will also discuss a more multivalent approach to gaze.

Much is made of colonizing gaze in critical circles

But few positive alternatives are offered for looking at visual sources that clearly, *by their own performative qualities*, were meant to be seen, studied and emulated by those who followed.

1. Body: Artists' Representations & Dancers' Descriptions

2. Space: Illusory Representations & Dancers' Uses of Space

3. Movement: Apparent Movement & Stillness in Art and Dance

Artistic Conventions

Positional Representations of the Body

Figures in representational works do not have the same access to their space. Classical Western representational conventions, creating figures or setting in the frame, to bring the figure from looking inside. Spaces for each positional type (standing, sitting, etc.) include (some but not all):

Challenge: Head bodies: The "4-6-8-10" pose of Greek/Roman art, a three-pointed line, "feet in three planes": separation of upper torso, midriff and legs to a 2-D plane. From within (head) and/or from the side, it shows, playing the face, or V-shape, in a certain orientation. (The body is not tilted into 2-D, as in Contemporary art.)

Conventions: (head) (head): The body turns on a central axis, the shoulder above directed to the public, slightest rotation upright but the figure has a certain amount of turn, reflecting its presentation.

Classical Representations: "torsoless torso": C. 400, 4th century, has raised these 400 years, but with more sophisticated than their counterparts. Probably used in earlier Greek and Roman art, but not discovered as 19th century. Common group was discovered in Rome and copied by Renaissance artists.

19th century: an extremely horizontal, fully turned position regarding all viewers on stage & audience. This was proportional to dancers' upper torso in "containing" (containing) towards the lower (L, R, & "back").

Artistic Conventions

Conventions for Rendering Draperies on the Body

Draperies (fabrics in contact with or suspended from the bodies) are rendered in many ways, by artists from different civilizations at various times. Six styles are listed by complexity:

- 1) Linear or Rhythmic draperies
- 2) Loose draperies
- 3) "Wet" or "functional" draperies
- 4) Volumetric ("blow-out") draperies
- 5) Windblown draperies
- 6) Draperies may then suggest movement, bodily form, or external conditions, often more than one of these at a time.

Artistic Conventions

Artistic Means of Representing the Body: Space

Draperies (fabrics in contact with or suspended from the bodies) are rendered in many ways, by artists from different civilizations at various times. Six styles are listed by complexity:

1. 2-D Axis in Picture Plane: (e.g., Wang, 11th c., 12th century)

2. 3-D Axis in Picture Plane: (e.g., Wang, 11th c., 12th century)

3. 4-D Axis in Picture Plane: (e.g., Wang, 11th c., 12th century)

Artistic Conventions

Artistic Means of Representing the Body: Space

The first cluster of systems includes several non-Albertian strategies for representing apparent spatial regression. These include some patterns of background articulation (flat gold leaf, diaper patterns, rinceaux, etc.)

1. Non-gridded/Albertian:
 - Overlapping - Closer object is in front, covering more distant object
 - Diminution - Closer object is larger, more distant object is smaller
 - Vertical - Closer object is lower, more distant higher in picture plane
 - Diagonal - Closer object lower, to one side; distant above to other side
 - Atmospheric - Graded tints of ground and sky colors show distance
 - Hierarchical - Size/person obj = importance, alternative to consider
 - Intuitive - Non-mathematical regression; orthogonal don't meet
2. Divergent/Reverse - Orthogonals converge at front of picture plane
3. Albertian (rational; 1- or 2-pt) Alberti described, 1420, developed further by Brunelleschi, the geometric grid moved north c. 1500s.

?Intentional Prehistoric Animation

Two writers (Zurich, 2014) consider if the repeated figures were used to show serial (time-frame) animation. It also asks if the use of small all loops with a circular light spell forced the view of others, led through the view, like a spotlight, and if their flickering light, along with the variations in position, suggested further movement?

Chauvet, ~32,000 BCE (Avalon, Fr.) Lascaux, 24,000 BCE

Illusory Movement

Ways of showing motion:

1. Serial Narration: Full scenes; foreground changes vs. static background show movement
2. Juxtaposition: Freeze-frame animation; sequential depictions of same object or slight variations
3. Dynamic Movement in the flow of draperies
4. Off-center/angled body: man, legs bent with torso leaning forward
5. Additional limbs: The torso w/ legs may be meant to show movement! Or it could be meant to show one behind the other? Or it is a quick-sharsh w/ a reason?
6. Flexibility: "A body quiet" like that seen in the stillness of figures by Brontino and Velasquez. One might say, "Abruptness vs. Vapidity," if they were indeed to be distinguished.
7. Superimposition: One object is placed directly atop another



THE DANCE HISTORY... ORCHIDS... A DANCE THRU...

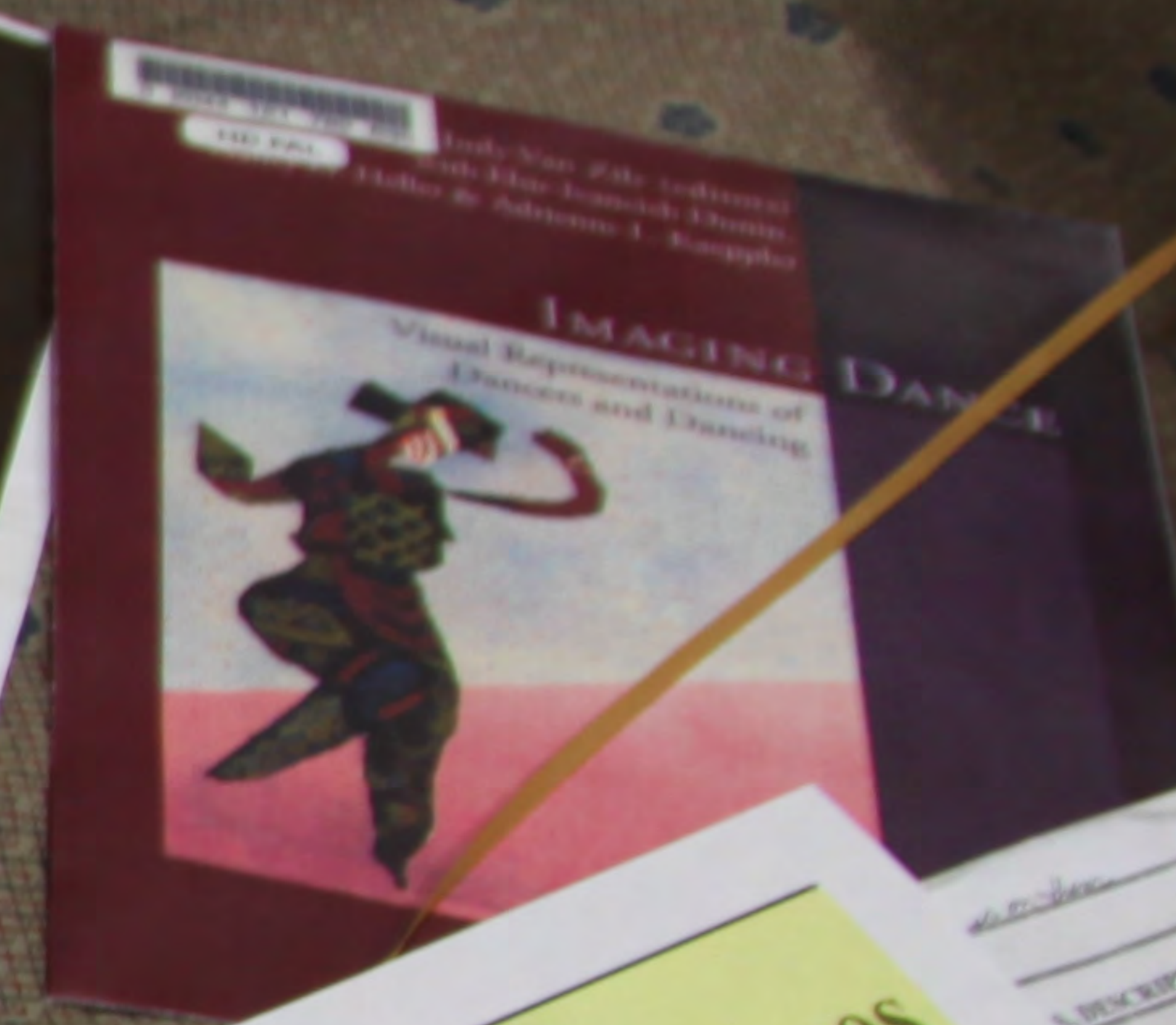
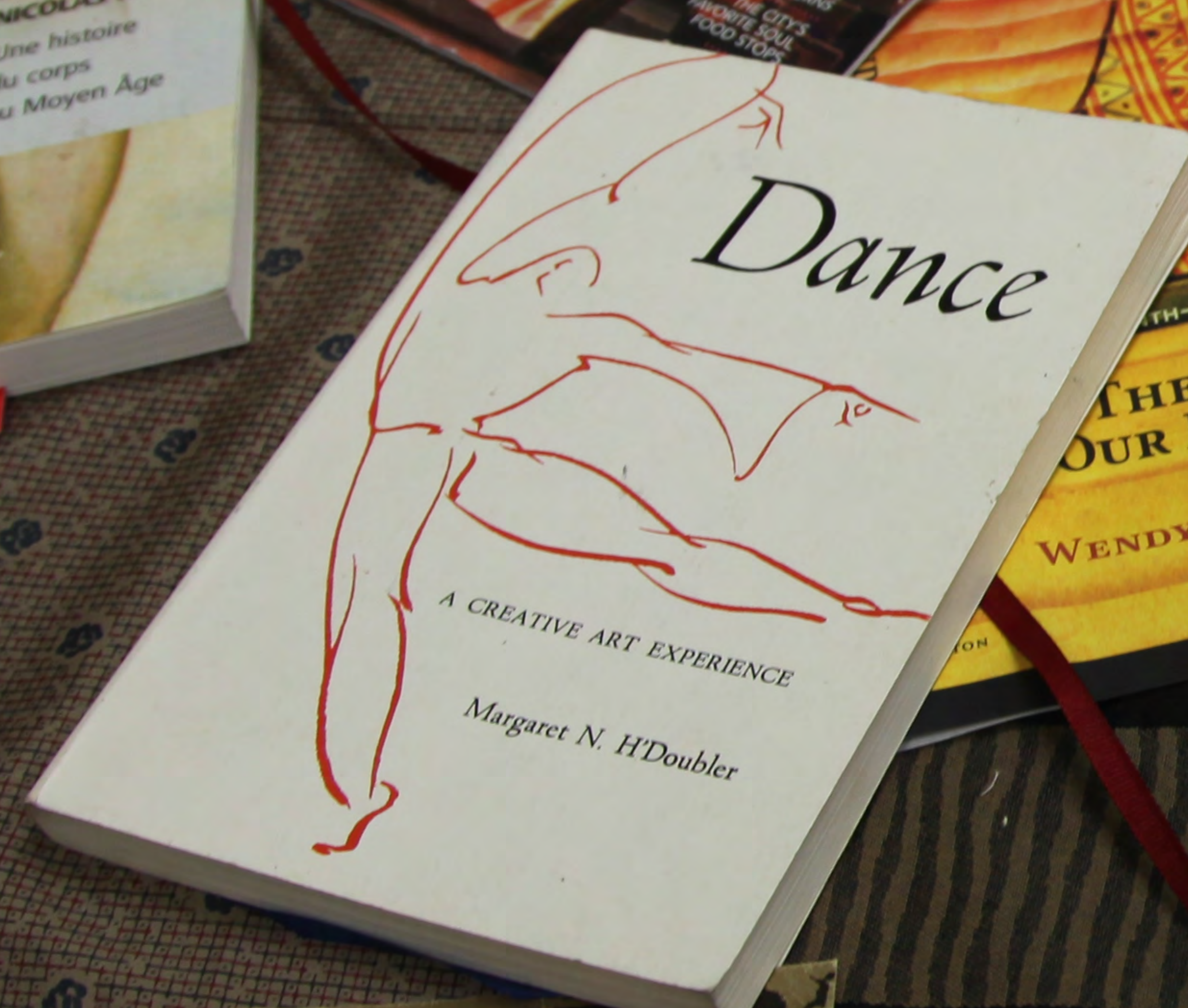


Table of Dance Iconographic Sources

- Compilation begun in 1992 -

In addition to studies made since, I have looked at visual dance imagery for some time for myself.

Not all imagery listed here is directly dance-inspired or documentative of known dance, but all listed items have something to do with how one looks at dance imagery.

Beginning with prehistoric samples and moving to the present, I have looked at elements that show **body, space, and movement-in-time** to discover how and when dance is meant to be shown when it is shown, and when it



MUSIC-DANCE-THEATER-ART HISTORY
 Donna La Rue - Liturgical Consultant
 The Place of the Arts in the Life of Faith
 Liturgical Dance Choreography
 Historic Liturgical Reconstruction
 Practical Applications of the Arts
 02474

Various small informational cards and notes pinned to the wall above the table.

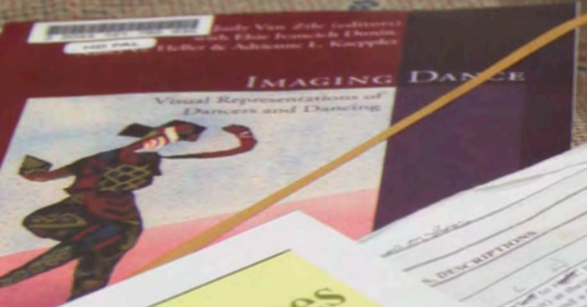




Barbara Simon, 2008 - Ballet Theatre Studios
 Modern photographs only
 for a local dance studio
 emulate the atmosphere
 & romanticized ambience
 of Diaghilev's studios 150 yrs. later

Artists Copy
 Each Other

La Classe de Danse - Paris (184-1913)
 Still the same! articles on the
 ballet studios by Simon are



Graphic Sources

in 1992 -
 I have looked at visual
 or myself.

is directly dance-inspired or
 dance, but all listed items have
 few one looks at dance imagery.

historical samples and moving to the
 look at elements that show body, space,
 few-time to discover how and when dance
 shows when it is shown, and when it is not.



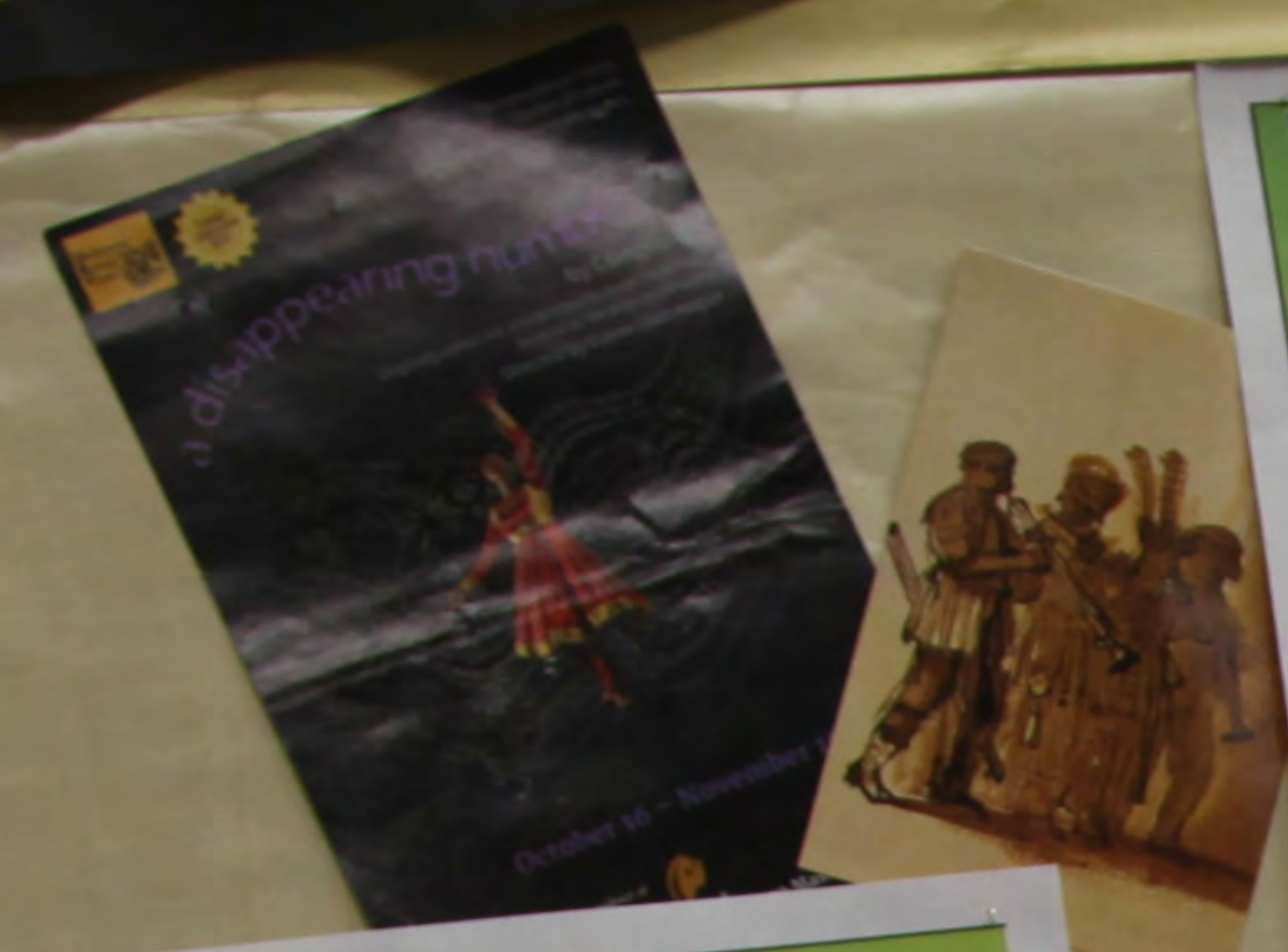
What you See is not

The non-WYSIWYG

world of performative

iconography

Always What you Get:



What you see is not always what you get:
The non-WYSIWYG world of
performative iconography

Donna La Rue
March 30, 2016
Lesley University
Day of Scholarship
Poster Session



Abstract
In the past two decades, interest has arisen in artworks whose subject matter or usage histories involve performance.

Heck's work, *Picturing Performance* (1999)^[1], describes such works field by field. The College Art Association has held sessions on performative iconography since 2010.^[2] In Sparti's *Imaging Dance* (2011)^[3] cautionary studies deter uninformed misreadings.

But valuable as these are, they do not help readers see visual sources on their own terms. Even photographers' and videographers' works are never solely documentary.

Abstract
Researchers in the expressive therapies, as well as arts educators, dance ethnographers, dance historians, dance and art history students and researchers will find this study of interest.

'Coding' visual zones with verbal tags in art therapy clients' drawings and movement therapy clients' filmed activities is a recent, technologically enhanced research technique.

Questions of leverage aside—this may simply assert a new interpretive hegemony of verbal over visual resources—recent dance iconographic studies like this one offer transferable learning opportunities

- 1) To enhance the depth of such readings, and
- 2) To prevent miscoding.

Abstract
Dance sources are particularly vulnerable to overinterpretation. 1) Representational conventions for depicting bodies, space, and movement-in-time can be misleading, and 2) Dance's ephemerality leaves no positive corrective. This presentation offers a more felled interpretive strategy. We will also discuss a more multi-valent approach to gaze. Much is made of colonizing gaze in critical circles. But few positive alternatives are offered for looking at visual sources that clearly, by their own performative qualities, were meant to be seen, studied and emulated by those who followed.

1. Body: Artists' Representations & Dancers' Descriptions

Artistic Conventions
Positional Representations of the Body
The body is represented in various ways in dance photography and video. This section explores the conventions used to represent the body in dance photography and video. It discusses the use of the body in dance photography and video, and how these conventions are used to represent the body in dance photography and video.

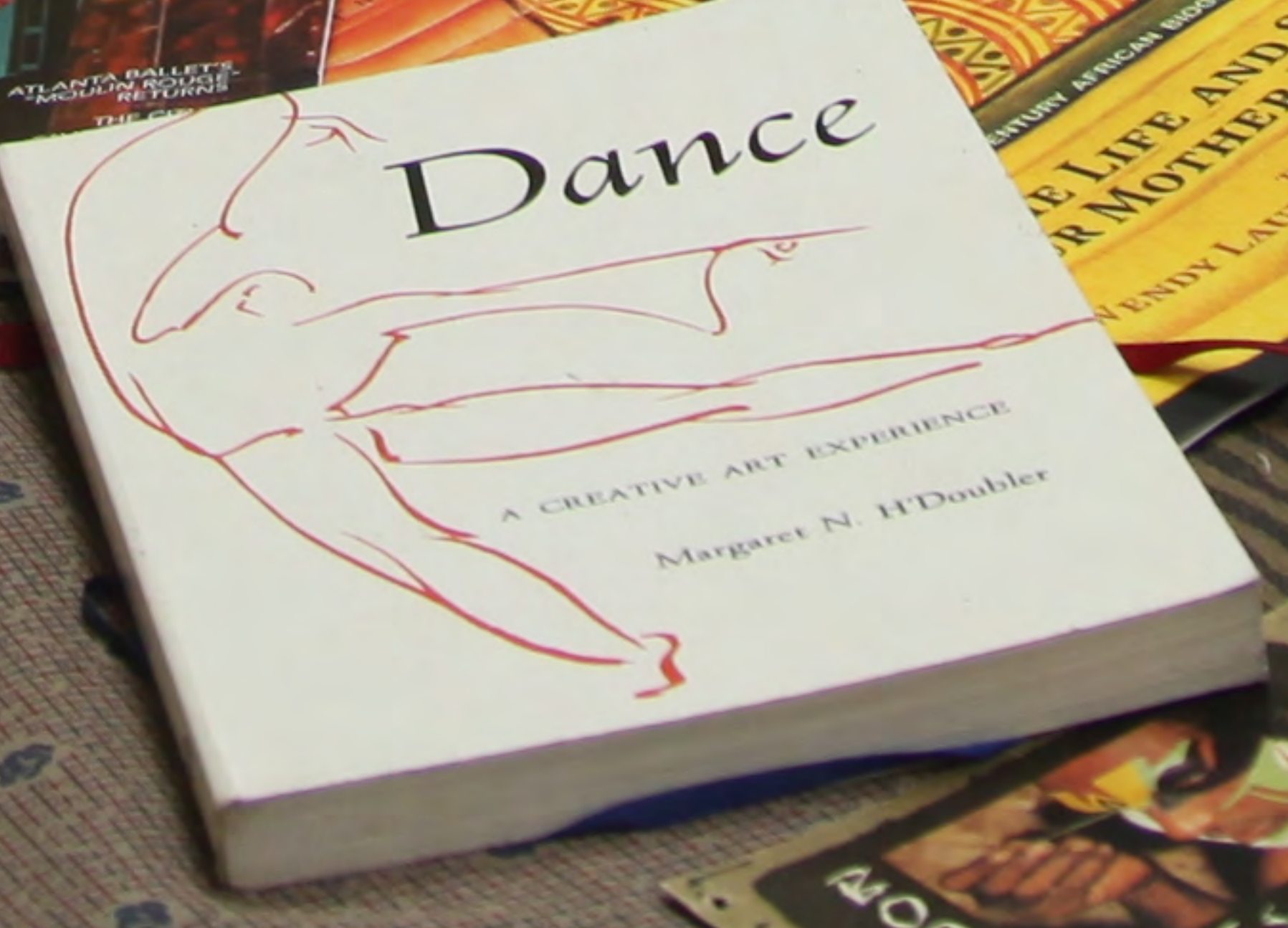
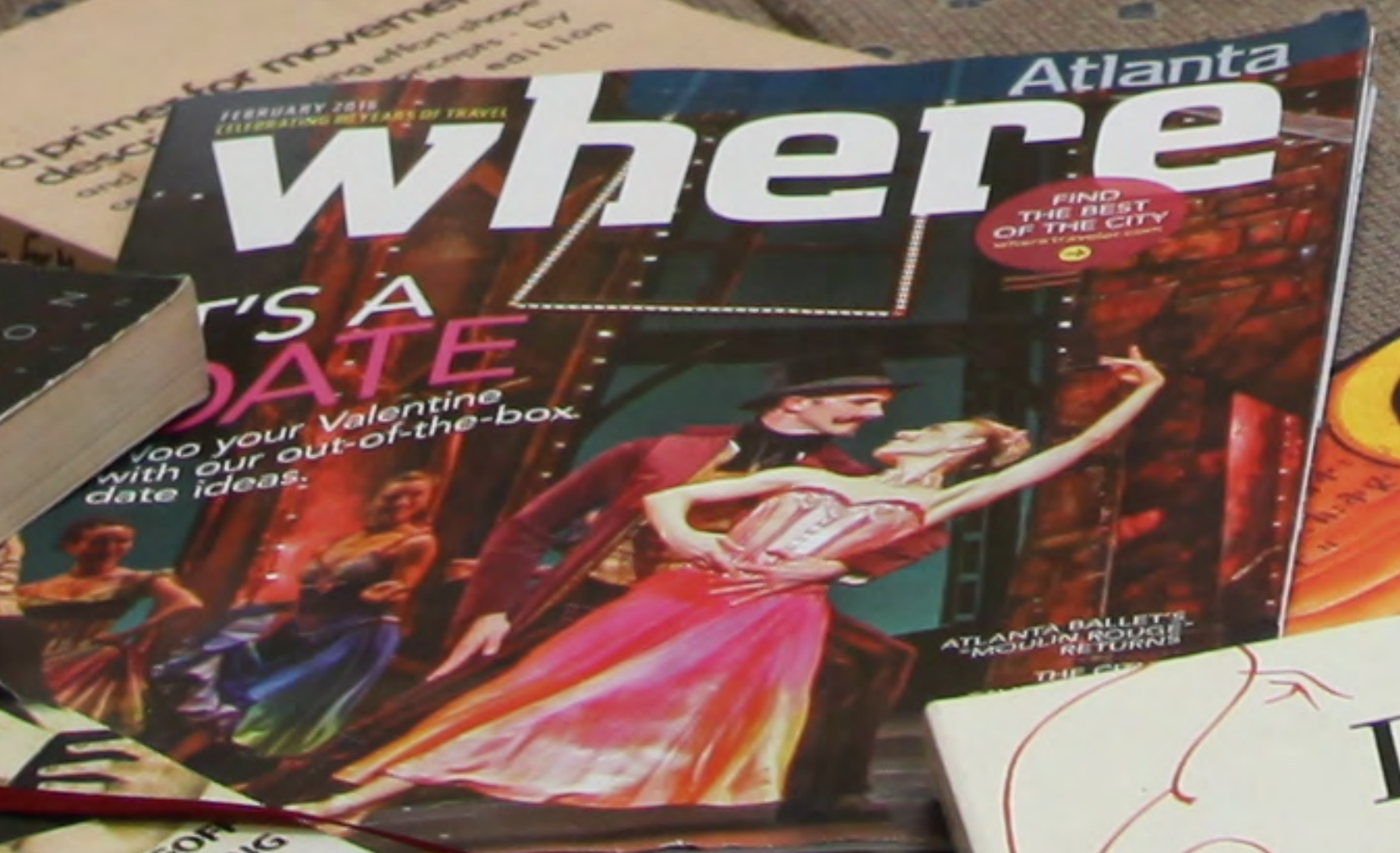
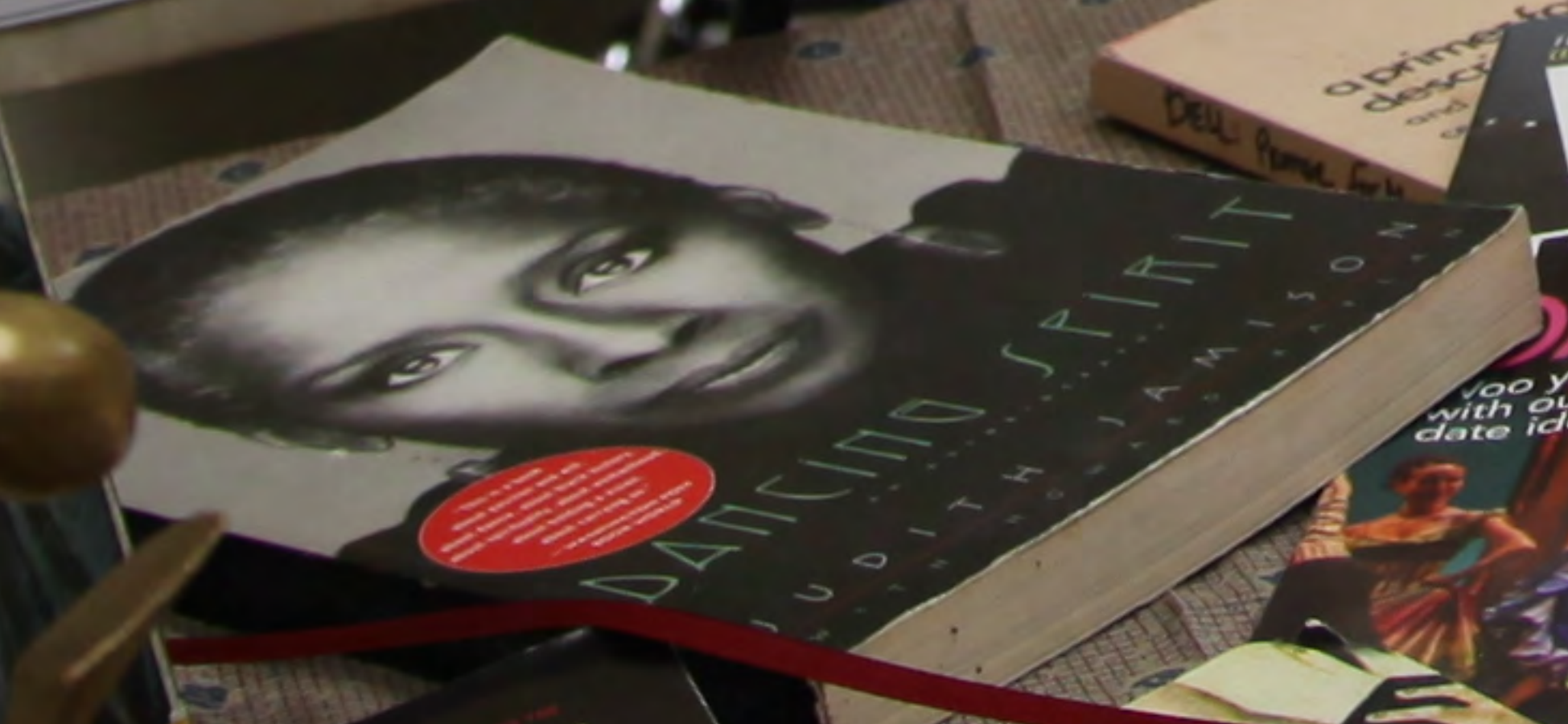
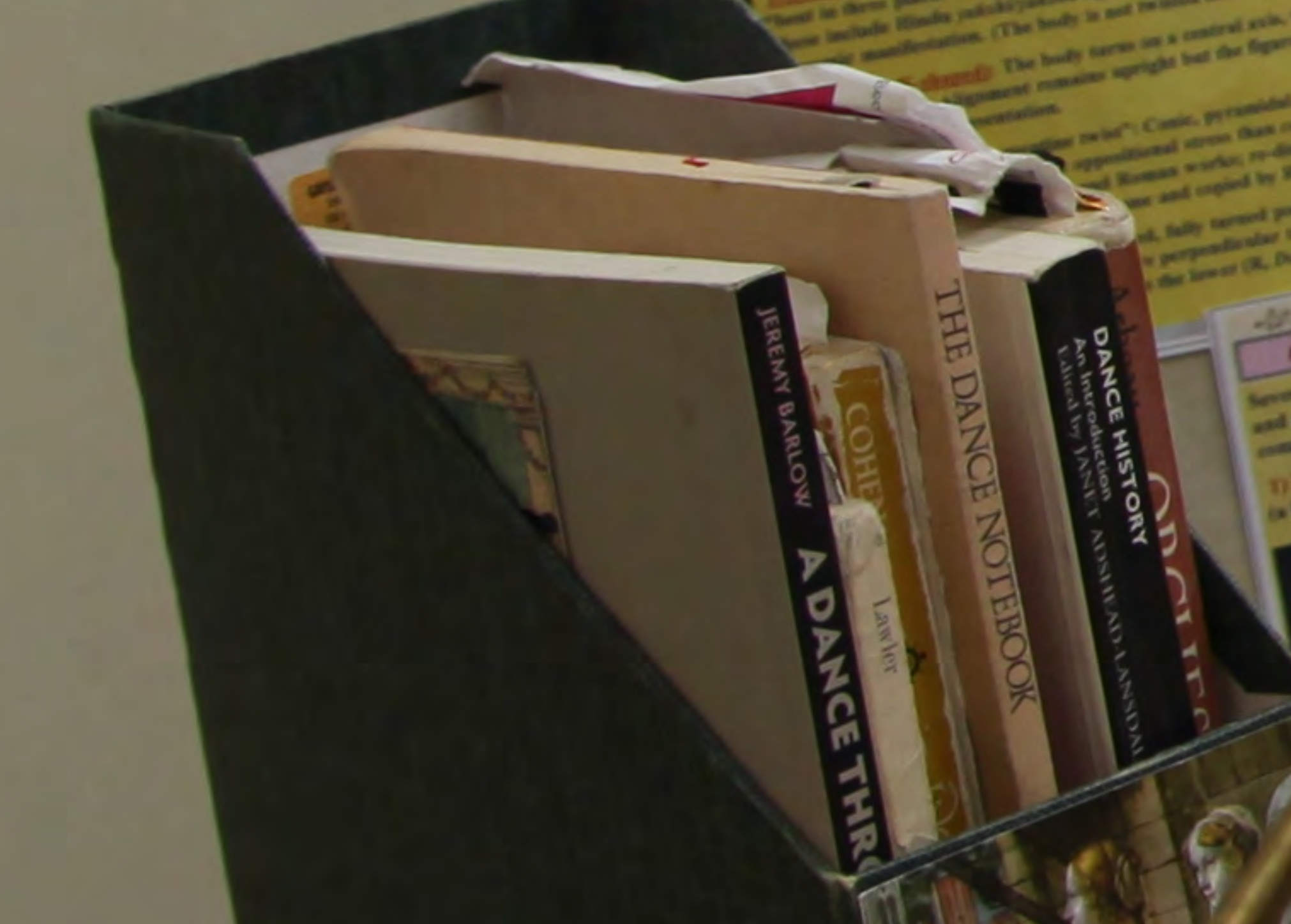
Artistic Conventions
Conventions for Rendering Properties of the Body
The body is represented in various ways in dance photography and video. This section explores the conventions used to represent the body in dance photography and video. It discusses the use of the body in dance photography and video, and how these conventions are used to represent the body in dance photography and video.

2. Space: Illusory Representations & Dancers' Uses of Space

Artistic Means of Representing the Body-Space
The first theme of this section is the use of space in dance photography and video. It discusses the use of space in dance photography and video, and how these conventions are used to represent the body in dance photography and video.

3. Movement: Apparent Movement & Stillness in Art and Dance

Intentional Prehistoric Animation
The second theme of this section is the use of movement in dance photography and video. It discusses the use of movement in dance photography and video, and how these conventions are used to represent the body in dance photography and video.



Public of Dance: A Creative Art Experience
This section discusses the public of dance and how it is represented in dance photography and video. It explores the conventions used to represent the body in dance photography and video, and how these conventions are used to represent the body in dance photography and video.

