The Oxford Handbook of Screendance Studies edited by Douglas Rosenberg. 2016. New York: Oxford UP. 816 pp, 107 b&w screen stills. $150 hardcover. ISBN: 9780199981601.

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The publication of *The Oxford Handbook of Screendance Studies* edited by Douglas Rosenberg, a pioneering figure in the field, can be seen as the culmination of the ever-increasing visibility gained by dance on screen throughout the years. An established art form, its theoretical framework though sitting at "the intersections of performance, media, film and dance studies"[1] has been slower to develop, which is the reason for Rosenberg's enterprise. Taking as a point of departure Yvonne Rainer's words about "the voice of the artist simultaneously framing her practice in theoretical and historical spaces,"[2] Rosenberg invited 36 contributions by international curators, researchers, and makers, all involved first hand in the creation and production of dance films, to debate ontological and epistemological issues about screendance. The book's resulting kaleidoscopic views are grouped for convenience into three categories: history, theory, and practice, which Rosenberg acknowledges as "porous and flexible,"[3] showcasing the methodological richness and diversity of the field. Seen as a stepping-stone rather than the definitive guide to screendance, the book initiates an interdisciplinary dialog on dance and screen technologies to determine where the field is coming from, what it is doing and where it is going.

The chapters in the historical section focus on several aspects: from the development of screendance in a specific country to the relation with preceding media, such as photography and film, to synchronic studies of one particular point in time. Instead of discussing mainstream films, the contributions focus on more experimental works associated with silent films and visual art. These are works that in the words of Laszlo Moholy-Nagy "create rather than capture images."[4] Of particular interest is Ana Olenina's contribution on filmmakers Lev Kuleshov's and Dziga Vertov's studies of movement in the choreological laboratory at the Russian Academy of Artistic Science during the 1920s. Non-Western traditions are also included: Pallabi Chakravorty, for example, elegantly writes on the homogenization process occurring in Indian music video industry, and music and dance reality shows under the influence of the Bollywood industry, explaining the different connotation that desire and choreography have in the country. Conversely, Nicolás Salazar Sutil and Sebastián

Melo explore the origins of the Western scopic tradition in the thinking of Zeno of Elea and Aristotle, and the implications for ways of thinking about and subsequently capturing movement. They further discuss how Henri Bergson's thinking, the development of Italian Photodynamism, and Marcel Duchamp's works challenge the scientific chronophotographic approach of Eadweard Muybridge and Étienne-Jules Marey.

Interestingly, in the middle section on theory, most chapters concentrate on single elements of screendance rather than on general methodological questions. These approaches consider the moving body as a site for resistance questioning assumptions about gender, different corporealities, politics, and postcolonial identities. For example, Frances Hubbard argues that screendance works are "practices of freedom."[5] Other authors address questions of kinaesthetic empathy and of the influence of sound in reception. All contributors point to screendance as creating a new understanding of dance, of the body, and of the moving image. Of particular interest in this section are Pia Tikka and Mauri Kaipainen's neuroscientific study of Maya Deren's *At Land*, which determines that the film elicits shared viewing experiences similar to mainstream storytelling, and Susana Temperley's reintroduction of aesthetics as a critical term, which allows her to discuss screendance as a practice that creates bodily experiences of aesthetic (dis)pleasure bypassing Romantic or Formalist fixation on the object's aesthetic form.

The third section, on practices, is the most heterogeneous. Some contributions concentrate on the work of influential artists, while others discuss aspects of filmmaking such as editing as a choreographic tool, the long-overlooked importance of preproduction scripts, or the different types of mixed reality that a performance incorporating screens can create. The section also encompasses questions related to the representation of racial and social issues in popular dance on YouTube and in mainstream films. Underlying all chapters is the desire to challenge the apparent transparency of filmmaking technologies and representations to better understand contemporary dance and screendance. Ann Cooper Albright's suggestion that Loïe Fuller's work and reception foreshadows current debates about representation and the body points to the fact that dance and technologies have always been closer than usually considered. Sita Popat shifts the site for future dance works to mixed realities created in live performance as new computing interfaces change our ways of perceiving and engaging with physical reality. Naomi Jackson underlines the subtle power that social media such as YouTube can have in generating social justice and in the future of screendance.

The handbook is definitely a great resource for students as well as seasoned researchers looking for a new approach to screendance. This compendium contains many inspiring contributions, from experimental Soviet film in the 1920s to Brazilian video dance history to the challenge of racial norms in Shirley Temple and Bill

Robinson's film duets of the 1930s and the (mis)representation of black female sexuality in winnin' dance-videos. The expansiveness of Rosenberg's volume is possibly also its limitation. In its effort to be comprehensive, the book loses cohesion. The hybridity of works listed and theories used gives a well-rounded but merely sketched impression of the screendance field. A necklace of differently shaped pearls, its heterogeneous format allows only for an imbalanced view of specific topics. The book raises awareness of the omnipresence of new technologies and how under-analyzed these are. The wealth of examples stimulates discussion of new modes of understanding our being-in-the-world as viewers and dancers "beyond linguistically-centered performance conventions and representation,"[6] bringing into question what we understand as dance and screendance. The book might not yet create a new mode of (collective) thinking as it promises, but it succeeds in advocating for screendance as a site of resistance to gender, racial, and social normalization in contemporary society.

Biography

Katja Vaghi, Ph.D., is a Swiss dance maker, movement educator, and researcher. She is specialized in intermediality and the neo-baroque (University of Roehampton) and has worked associated Lecturer at the Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance and at the University of Northampton. Her performances encompass the use of traditional and non-traditional spaces. She is recipient of the Selma Jeanne Cohen award (2014) and makes regular contributions to the *Bachtrack* online magazine.

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Notes

[1] Douglas Rosenberg, *Oxford Handbook*, 1.
[2] Quoted in idem, 2.
[3] Idem, 1.
[4] Quoted in idem, 6.
[5] Frances Hubbard, "Privileging Embodied Experience," 384.
[6] Susan Kozel quoted in Andrea Davidson, "Extending the Discourse of Screendance," 412. Here, Kozel is referencing French feminist philosopher Luce Irigaray.

References

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