

Kent Academic Repository

Full text document (pdf)

Citation for published version

Vass-Rhee, Freya (2018) Book review: Choreographies: Tracing the Materials of an Ephemeral Art Form by Jacky Lansley. Review of: Choreographies: Tracing the Materials of an Ephemeral Art Form by Lansley, Jacky. Dance Research, 36 (2). pp. 274-275. ISSN 0264-2875.

DOI

<https://doi.org/10.3366/drs.2018.0245>

Link to record in KAR

<https://kar.kent.ac.uk/66302/>

Document Version

Author's Accepted Manuscript

Copyright & reuse

Content in the Kent Academic Repository is made available for research purposes. Unless otherwise stated all content is protected by copyright and in the absence of an open licence (eg Creative Commons), permissions for further reuse of content should be sought from the publisher, author or other copyright holder.

Versions of research

The version in the Kent Academic Repository may differ from the final published version.

Users are advised to check <http://kar.kent.ac.uk> for the status of the paper. **Users should always cite the published version of record.**

Enquiries

For any further enquiries regarding the licence status of this document, please contact:

researchsupport@kent.ac.uk

If you believe this document infringes copyright then please contact the KAR admin team with the take-down information provided at <http://kar.kent.ac.uk/contact.html>

Choreographies: Tracing the Materials of an Ephemeral Art Form; Jacky Lansley; Bristol/Chicago; intellect; 2017; 183pp.; 92 ill.; ISBN 978-1-78320-766-4; £28.50, \$38

Reviewer: Freya Vass-Rhee (University of Kent)

Jacky Lansley's archival memoir provides a lovingly curated and richly fleshed out view into the independent UK New Dance Movement and community from the 1970s through the current era. Lansley's work as a choreographer extends across this period, from her earliest experimental works in 1972 while a member of Richard Alston's company Strider, through her founding of Limited Dance Company in 1974 with Sally Potter, her 2002 establishment of the Dance Research Studio and shift to a slower production cycle, and up to the current day.

The volume's central seven chapters, named after works Lansley created between 1977 and 2012, are bracketed by a brief survey of the emergence of minimalist dance in the UK and two closing chapters, one dedicated to other key choreographic contemporaries and the other a reflection on the work of choreography and its place in the world. Between these, Lansley lucidly describes the organisations that supported her and changes in both her modes of work and the field's interests and focus. The author's interviews and reminiscences with collaborators, including Sally Potter, Rosemary Lee, Tony Thatcher, Matthew Hawkins and Miranda Tufnell amplify the volume's context and perspective, while images and written scripts of Lansley's scores offer deeper insight into her influential practice. Reviews and commentary gathered from performers and audience members further illuminate the production and reception of her work, while also reflecting postmodern choreography's emergence and reception in the UK over four decades.

Following chapters describing her early work with Limited Dance Company and as part of the influential X6 Dance Space collective, Chapter 3 finds Lansley moving through a "hybridisation" in the 1980s, as she shifts from experimental choreography to a more postmodern strategy. Here, the timeline makes a conceptually logical jump from *Les Diabes* (1988-89) to *Bird* (2001), curiously eliding numerous collaborations between 1988 and 1997 as it does. In Chapter 4, a stylistic excursion into what Lansley terms "Writing Choreography," Lansley uses "present time to describe and reflect on the visceral reality" of her 2004 work *Holding Space*. This chapter, like those that follow, also includes sections detailing her research and the performers, music, and locations in/for which the works were made, including the Cornwall coast (*View from the Shore* (2007)), cathedrals in York and Glasgow (*Standing Stones* (2008)), and The Hall in Cornwall (*Guests* (2010), *Guest Suites* (2012)). Each of the volume's chapters concludes with extensive, largely biographical endnotes to facilitate understanding of the backgrounds and independent work of the collaborators and referents named. All in all, *Choreographies* is an intimate, generous portrait and history of this seminal artist and her community in its time and spaces that will engage and benefit readers interested in the emergence of experimental and postmodern dance in the UK.