

# Contemporary African Dance Theatre: Phenomenology Whiteness And The Gaze (New World Choreographies)

:

Contemporary African dance theatre is a captivating and innovative art form that seamlessly blends traditional African dance vocabularies with contemporary dance techniques and aesthetics. It is a genre that has gained increasing recognition and visibility on global stages, captivating audiences with its vibrant energy, mesmerizing storytelling, and profound cultural significance. This article delves into the world of contemporary African dance theatre, exploring its historical roots, unique characteristics, and the transformative impact it has on both artists and audiences.

## Historical Foundations and Influences:

Contemporary African dance theatre emerged as a distinct form in the mid-20th century, drawing inspiration from a rich tapestry of African dance traditions. These traditions include diverse movement styles, such as the sinuous undulations of West African dance, the dynamic leaps and spins of East African dance, and the ritualistic movements of Central and Southern African dance.



## Contemporary African Dance Theatre: Phenomenology, Whiteness, and the Gaze (New World Choreographies)

by Emma Svensson

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 5833 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 250 pages



As African nations gained independence, a new generation of artists sought to create dance forms that reflected the complexities of modern African society. Influenced by contemporary dance movements in Europe and the United States, these artists began incorporating innovative choreographies, theatrical elements, and social commentary into their work. Notable pioneers of contemporary African dance theatre include pioneers such as Germaine Acogny, Moses Pendelton, and Vincent Mantsoe.

### **Essential Features of Contemporary African Dance Theatre:**

Contemporary African dance theatre is characterized by several key features:

#### **1. Movement vocabulary:**

- Draws heavily on traditional African dance techniques, including isolations of the spine, pelvis, and limbs.
- In addition, contemporary dancers incorporate elements of ballet, modern dance, and other contemporary dance styles.

#### **2. Narrative and storytelling:**

- Often integrates storytelling, symbolism, and social commentary into its choreographies.
- Dancers use their bodies to convey narratives, emotions, and cultural experiences.

### **3. Connection to community:**

- Deeply rooted in the communities and cultures from which it emerges.
- Dance companies often work with local communities to share their work and engage in workshops and outreach programs.

### **Contemporary African Dance Theatre in the 21st Century:**

In the 21st century, contemporary African dance theatre continues to evolve and thrive. Artists are pushing boundaries, experimenting with new technologies, and exploring global collaborations. Notable contemporary African dance theatre companies include:

- **Akram Khan Company** (United Kingdom): Led by British-Bangladeshi choreographer Akram Khan, known for its powerful and evocative storytelling.
- **Farafina Kan** (Senegal): A company that blends traditional Senegalese dance with contemporary elements.
- **MoMo Dance Theatre** (Rwanda): A company that uses dance to address social and historical issues in Rwanda.

### **Social and Cultural Impact of Contemporary African Dance Theatre:**

Contemporary African dance theatre has a profound impact on both artists and audiences alike:

### **1. Empowerment of artists:**

- Provides a platform for African artists to express their unique perspectives and cultural heritage.
- Empowers dancers with the skills and confidence to create their own work.

### **2. Education and cultural exchange:**

- Educates audiences about diverse African cultures and traditions.
- Facilitates cultural exchange and understanding between Africa and the rest of the world.

### **3. Social commentary and activism:**

- Often serves as a powerful tool for social commentary and activism.
- Dancers address issues such as political oppression, gender inequality, and environmental conservation.

:

Contemporary African dance theatre is a vibrant and multifaceted art form that celebrates the rich cultural heritage of Africa while embracing contemporary aesthetics and techniques. It offers a unique and transformative experience for both artists and audiences, empowering dancers, fostering cultural exchange, and challenging societal norms. As

the genre continues to evolve, contemporary African dance theatre promises to remain a powerful force in the global performing arts landscape.

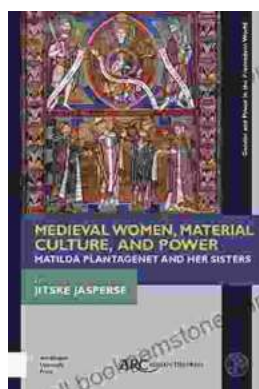


## Contemporary African Dance Theatre: Phenomenology, Whiteness, and the Gaze (New World Choreographies)

by Emma Svensson

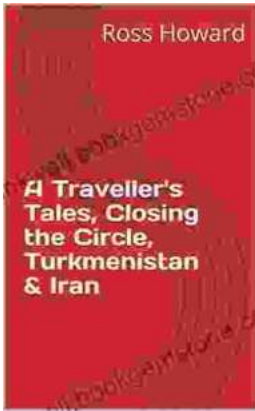
★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 5833 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 250 pages



## Matilda Plantagenet and Her Sisters: Gender and Power in the Premodern World

The lives of Matilda Plantagenet and her sisters offer a fascinating glimpse into the complex world of gender and power in the premodern world. As the daughters of one of the...



## **Traveller Tales: Closing the Circle in Turkmenistan and Iran**

In the summer of 2022, I embarked on a life-changing journey through two of Central Asia's most enigmatic countries: Turkmenistan...