



The Place of Dance: A Somatic Guide to Dancing and Dance Making

By Andrea Olsen

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The Place of Dance is written for the general reader as well as for dancers. It reminds us that dancing is our nature, available to all as well as refined for the stage. Andrea Olsen is an internationally known choreographer and educator who combines the science of body with creative practice. This workbook integrates experiential anatomy with the process of moving and dancing, with a particular focus on the creative journey involved in choreographing, improvising, and performing for the stage. Each of the chapters, or “days,” introduces a particular theme and features a dance photograph, information on the topic, movement and writing investigations, personal anecdotes, and studio notes from professional artists and educators for further insight. The third in a trilogy of works about the body, including *Bodystories: A Guide to Experiential Anatomy* and *Body and Earth: An Experiential Guide*, *The Place of Dance* will help each reader understand his/her dancing body through somatic work, create a dance, and have a full journal clarifying aesthetic views on his or her practice. It is well suited for anyone interested in engaging embodied intelligence and living more consciously.

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Editorial Review

Review

“This title explores four movement themes: moving, making, collaborating, and living.... Olsen provides useful ideas, structure, and support for those interested in movement exploration.”—Barbara Kundanis, *Library Journal*

“This latest book offers dancers a way to explore their craft at a deeper level in a 31-day somatic guide. For every day, Olsen presents section prompts that push readers to do, to dance, to speak and to present—but also to write. She encourages them to explore a different discipline by placing the dance stories of their lives on paper, and suggests a number of angles from which to do so. Olsen’s book could be instructive to women’s memoirists as well. ... She employs global visual images, stories, and practices. ... Olsen’s style serves as an example of how to bring creativity to memoir, even though Olsen herself may not term her book a memoir.”—Lanie Tankard, *Women’s Memoirs*

“Olsen finds her fresh edge with a holistic vision with which to dance, make dances and move through life.”—Desirée Dunbar, *Dance International Magazine*

“This book provides contemporary dance makers with a guide for developing personal creative process. ... Well-chosen black-and-white photos and illustrations support the text.”—S.E. Friedler, *Choice Magazine*

Review

“The Place of Dance is a timely reminder of how available, delicious and essential movement is, for all of us. Andrea Olsen prompts us to go ahead, imagine, and do: sink to the floor, lean back and look at the ceiling, and enjoy the unexpected choreographic moment. This book is for our dancing selves, our collaborative selves, our entrepreneurial selves, and it offers strategies and inspiration to find?and keep?dancing in our lives.” (Bebe Miller, choreographer and artistic director, Bebe Miller Company, and professor of dance, Ohio State University)

“The Place of Dance is a gift to the world of dance and to the world at large. Anyone who has seen or been involved in a dance of any kind must read this book. It opens doors to the lovely visceral mystery of the art form. It will likely become a teacher’s guide as well. Andrea Olsen has created a literate reflective surface from which to envision the body in motion.” (David Dorfman, dance department chair, Connecticut College, and artistic director, David Dorfman Dance)

“The authors are visionaries, weaving environmental, evolutionary, and biological science into dance practice in terms that dancers use in their everyday studio work. Embodiment is key, for it is through embodiment that we learn to feel our environment and value our interrelatedness. The Place of Dance shows how to build a sustainable creative practice that includes the whole dancer through an interconnected modeling of the physical.” (Melinda Buckwalter, author of *Composing While Dancing: An Improviser’s Companion*)

About the Author

ANDREA OLSEN is a professor of dance and the John Elder Professor of Environmental Studies at Middlebury College in Vermont. She performs and teaches internationally and is a contributing editor to Contact Quarterly. CARYN McHOSE has a private practice in somatic movement therapy in Holderness, New Hampshire, and has taught creative movement internationally for more than forty years. She is coauthor, with Kevin Frank, of *How Life Moves: Explorations in Meaning and Body Awareness*.

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