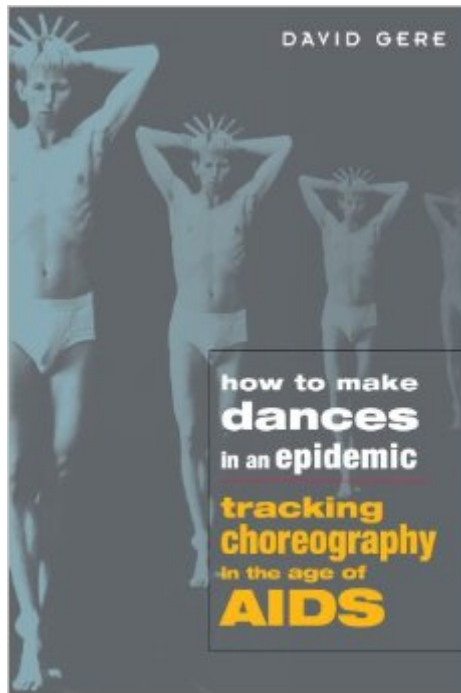


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How To Make Dances In An Epidemic: Tracking Choreography In The Age Of AIDS



Synopsis

David Gere, who came of age as a dance critic at the height of the AIDS epidemic, offers the first book to examine the interplay of AIDS and choreography in the United States, specifically in relation to gay men. The time he writes about is one of extremes. A life-threatening medical syndrome is spreading, its transmission linked to sex. Blame is settling on gay men. What is possible in such a highly charged moment, when art and politics coincide? Gere expands the definition of choreography to analyze not only theatrical dances but also ACT-UP protests and the unfurling of the NAMES Project AIDS quilt. These exist on a continuum in which dance, protest, and wrenching emotional expression have become essentially indistinguishable. Gere offers a gripping portrait of gay male choreographers struggling to cope with AIDS and its meanings.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Reading Professor Gere's book reminds me so much of Eve Sedgwick. Like her minoritizing/universalizing schema, he invents an equation for defining AIDS performances. He then goes on to describe seven aspects of this artistic contributing. Like Professor Sedgwick, he uses huge words and it would benefit the reader to have a dictionary near him or her as they read. Also, the two academics are dedicated to acknowledging and celebrating the works of gay artists. Unfortunately, like Sedgwick, you don't have to read beyond Gere's introductory chapters to get the point. The rest of the book is just lots of description. I highly doubt that professors will assign the whole book, rather than just the first part of it, to students. Only those who want to use the books

for specific examples would benefit from reading the whole thing. Additionally, some of the details are gross (drinking shakes made of junk, spilling liquids meant to represent distasteful bodily fluids, etc.) The book covers cutting-edge dancers, and believe me, they succeed at shocking their audiences (or at least this reader). Professor Gere is not only an academic describing performances after the fact, he was also a journalist who was covering AIDS and the dance community's response to it from the beginning. He must be exciting in the classroom given the multiple hats he wears as academic, journalist, and activist. AIDS has wreaked havoc upon gay males and many professional dancers. Thus, of course, they would respond to the epidemic in their art. I am glad that a person in the academy has recorded and is responding to this urgent work and action.

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