CALL FOR PAPERS:

Foundations and Futures of Dance Scholarship in French

special issue of *Dance Chronicle*

edited by Carrie Noland and Gretchen Schiller

book review editor: Olivia Sabee

This special issue is intended to make available to a broader Anglophone public a wide range of essays on dance originally written in French.  The editors aim to include both foundational essays representative of earlier—and sometimes contested—approaches, as well as recent works that showcase new voices and perspectives.  Of special interest are essays that enter into dialogue with foundational texts in French and Francophone Dance Studies or discuss the institutional structures (and philosophical or political underpinnings) of dance cultures in francophone regions, but we will also consider essays that break out in new directions.

In the French context, Dance Studies (*Recherches en danse*) found its first promoters in the disciplines of Somatics and Philosophy; accordingly, dance was approached from the start as an “embodied” art form (as opposed to an offshoot of Visual Studies or Art History). Founding theorists such as Michel Bernard and Hubert Godard studied movement from the angle of phenomenology, focusing on anatomy, perception, the nervous system, and the epiphenomenon of expressivity.  As a result, the body—and, of course, “dance”—were largely defined by conceptions developed within the French philosophical tradition and examples were drawn exclusively from modern Western dance (known as “*la danse contemporaine*” in France).  Similarly, Laurence Louppe’s ground-breaking work on notation and the poetics of dance focused primarily on modern and postmodern American choreography, movements that had a disproportionate impact on conservatory curricula and thus on definitions of what the terms “contemporary” and “dance” might mean.

Since at least the millennium, however, these initial approaches have been challenged and refreshed by theorists and practitioners from all over the French-speaking world.  “Foundations and Futures of Dance Scholarship in French” thus hopes to introduce readers not only to seminal texts in French Dance Studies that have not yet been translated, but also to new ways of understanding dance and its relation to cultural constructions of race, ethnicity, and gender, as well as explorations of the somatic experience of movement.

Possible topics for submissions:

--What are the theoretical commitments of today’s dance scholarship in French and how have these changed over time? Which foundational texts or ideas remain significant, and which have been revised or rejected?

--How have the methodologies of French dance scholarship evolved? What is the relationship between the practice of dance and the practice of dance scholarship?

·--There exists a dynamic circulation among the various venues where today’s dance takes place.  Dance styles move from the street or ceremonial setting to the concert stage, the tourist venue, and the international festival.  How does scholarship in French account for what dance is, how it is differently embodied, as it moves from site to site?

--Dance scholarship in French has expanded its purview since the 1990s to include dance practices in South and East Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, West and East Africa, the Maghreb, South America, various regions of Canada, and Eastern Europe.  How does scholarship in French contribute to our understanding of dance in these regions?

--How has the colonial past of the French Empire influenced the nature of dance scholarship in French, both in its earlier years and more recently?

 --What is the future of Dance scholarship in French?  How is it evolving?  In which direction(s) will it go?

Submissions may be in either French or English. Only full papers will be reviewed, not proposals.

DEADLINE: June 15, 2025.