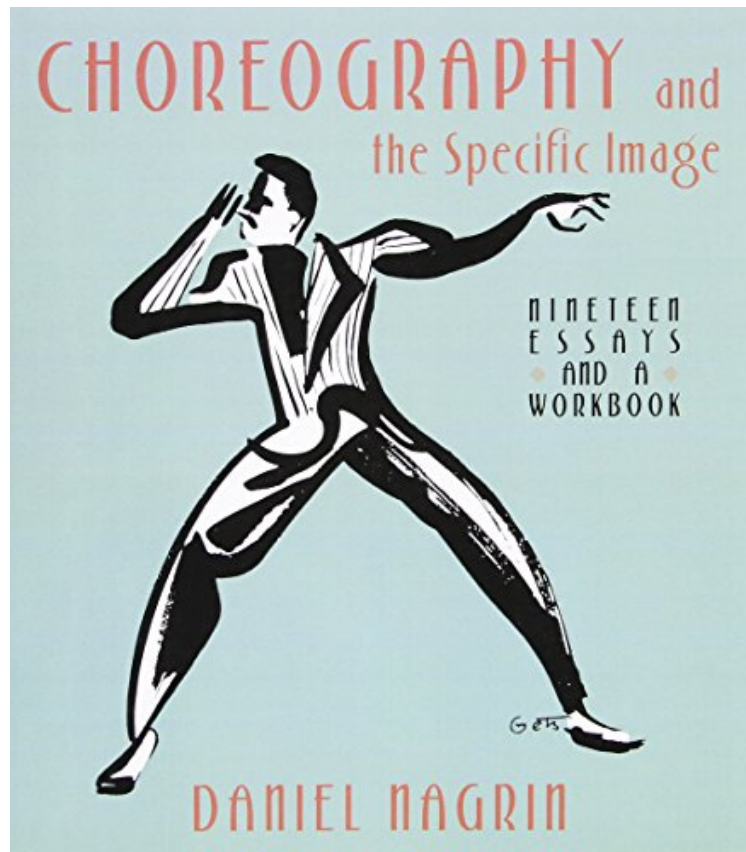


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Choreography And The Specific Image

Daniel Nagrin

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The world outside has burst into the studio, writes the influential dancer, teacher, and choreographer Daniel Nagrin. Many dancers want passionately to confront concrete, difficult subjects. But their formalistic training hasnt prepared them for what they need to say. This book, the first on choreography approached through content rather than structure, is designed with them in mind. Spiced with wit and strong opinions, *Choreography and the Specific Image* explores, in nineteen far-ranging essays, the art of choreography through the lifes work of an important artist. A career of performance, creativity, and teaching spanning five decades, Nagrin reveals the philosophy and strategy of his work with Helen Tamiris, a founder of modern American dance, and of Workgroup, his maverick improvisation company of the 1970s. During an era when many dancers were working with movement as abstraction, Nagrin turned instead

toward movement as metaphor, in the belief that dance should be about something. In *Choreography and the Specific Image*, Nagrin shares with the next generation of dancers just how that turn was accomplished. It makes no sense to make dances unless you bring news, he writes. You bring something that a community needs, something from you: a vision, an insight, a question from where you are and what churns you up. In a workbook following the essays, Nagrin lays out a wealth of clear, effective exercises to guide dancers toward such constructive self-discovery. Unlike all other choreography books, Nagrin addresses the concerns of both modern and commercial (show dance) choreographers. The need to discover the inner life, he maintains, is what fires the motion. This is Nagrin's third book of a trilogy, following *Dance and the Specific Image: Improvisation* and *The Six Questions: Acting Technique for Dance Performance*. Each focuses on a different aspect of dance: improvisation, performance, and choreography. Engaging the specific image as a creative tool. Part history, part philosophy, part nuts-and-bolts manual, *Choreography and the Specific Image* will be an indispensable resource for all those who care passionately about the world of dance, and the world at large.

Daniel Nagrin asks the right questions and offers insight and meaningful information to guide performers, teachers, and audience members toward a greater connection with the self and the art of dance. He is a master. Linda C. Smith, Artistic Director, Repertory Dance Theatre, Salt Lake City