

# THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF PERFORMANCE

UDC: 39

DOI: 10.33876/2311-0546/2025-4/159-171

Original article

© *Tatyana Samarina*

## THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF PERFORMING ARTS. HOW AND WHY STUDY PERFORMANCE?

*The article considers performing arts as a way of transmitting social norms, values and identities through collective bodily and cultural experiences. Performative practices in this case are not just a form of artistic expression, but also a key tool for social organization and communication, ensuring the continuity of traditions and the development of society. For a long time, the humanities have studied performance using an external approach — an art-historical, critical view from the outside, from the perspective of the audience. Modern social anthropology helps to reveal the insider experience of a researcher included in the communities they study, focusing on how the researchers' performing experience influences their academic texts. In this paper it is proposed to use both of these approaches and to examine the current theoretical and methodological trends in the anthropology of performing arts.*

**Keywords:** *performing arts, choreology, music, cinematography, performance, dance and movement studies, theatre*

**Author info:** Samarina, Tatyana N. — Junior Researcher, the Russian Academy of Sciences N. N. Miklouho-Maklay Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology (Moscow, Russian Federation). E-mail: [tatyana.samarina@iea.ras.ru](mailto:tatyana.samarina@iea.ras.ru) ORCIDID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-5138-3580>

**For citation:** Samarina, T. N. 2025. The Anthropology of Performing Arts. How and Why Study Performance? *Herald of Anthropology (Vestnik Antropologii)* 4: 159–171.

**Funding:** The study was carried out as a part of the research plan of the Russian Academy of Sciences N. N. Miklouho-Maklay Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology.

### References

- Buckland, T. 1999. All Dances Are Ethnic, but Some Are More Ethnic Than Others: Some Observations on Dance Studies and Anthropology. *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research* 17 (1): 3–21.
- Glazovskaya, A. A. 2024. Tanec kak pamyat'. Opyt Irlandii [Dance as a Memory. The Case of Ireland]. *Vestnik antropologii* 1: 71–88.
- Goffman, E. 2000. *Predstavlenie sebya drugim v povsednevnoj zhizni* [The Presentation Self in Every Day Life]. Moscow: “KANON-press-C”, “Kuchkovo pole”. 304 p.
- Koks, K. 2023. *Zvukovoj potok. Zvuk, iskusstvo i metafizika* [Sonic Flux: Sound, Art, and Metaphysics]. Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie. 304 p.
- Krasnukhina, E. K. 2014. Telesnye formy istorii [The Bodily Forms of History]. In *Arkhetipy telesnosti (rossiiskii i zapadnyi konteksty)* [Archetypes of Embodiment (Russian and Western Contexts)], ed. by I. V. Kuzin. Saint Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo RHGA. 80–87.

- Laban, R. 1966. The Educational and Therapeutic Value of the Dance. In *The Dance Has Many Faces*, ed. by W. Sorell. New York, London: Columbia U.P. 113–127.
- Lifar, S. 2014. *Tanets: osnovnye techeniia akademicheskogo tansta* [Dance: The Main Trends of Academic Dance]. Moscow: Rossiiskii universitet teatral'nogo iskusstva — GITIS. 232 p.
- Mashino, A., and E. Seye. 2020. The Corporeality of Sound and Movement in Performance. *The World of Music* 9 (1): 25–45.
- Narskii, I. S. 2018. *Kak partiia narod tantsovat' uchila, kak baletmeistry ei pomogali, i chto iz etogo vyshlo. Kul'turnaiia istoriia sovetskoi tantseval'noi samodeiatel'nosti* [How the Party Taught People to Dance, How Ballet Masters Helped It, and What Resulted. Cultural History of Soviet Dance Amateur]. Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie. 752 p.
- Ryzhakova, S. I., and I. E. Sirotkina. 2016. Performance Studies: Kontsepsiia i issledovatel'skie podkhody [Performance Studies: Concept and Research Methods]. *Observatoriia kul'tury* 13 (6): 726–735.
- Ryzhakova, S. I., and R. R. Sultanova (eds.). 2020. *Zrelischnye iskusstva: kontakty i konteksty: Sbornik statei i esse* [Spectacle Arts: Contacts and Contexts: A Collection of Articles and Essays]. Kazan': IYaLI. 272 p.
- Samarina, T. N. 2024. *Kak narisovat' vals: khoreograficheskie illjustratsii v sovetskikh uchebnikakh bal'nykh tantsev* [Drawing a Waltz: Choreographic Illustrations in Soviet Ballroom Dance Textbooks]. *Vestnik antropologii* 1: 178–197. <https://doi.org/10.33876/2311-0546/2024-1/178-197>
- Schechner, R. 1994 (2003). Ritual and Performance. In *Companion Encyclopedia of Anthropology* ed. by T. Ingold. London, New York: Routledge. 613–647.
- Shemiakina, E. V. 2014. Zhest kak sposob konstitutsirovaniia myshleniia [Gesture as a Way of Constituting Thought]. In *Arkhetipy telesnosti (rossiiskii i zapadnyi konteksty)* [Archetypes of Embodiment (Russian and Western Contexts)], ed. by I. V. Kuzin. Saint Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo RHGA. 70–79.
- Sirotkina, I. E. 2019. Antropologicheskii piruet. Issledovaniia dvizheniia: ot “brachnykh tantsev” zhivotnykh do epistemologii breika [Anthropological Pirouette. Studies of Movement: From Animal Courtship Dances to Break-Dancing Epistemology]. *HSE University*. Online Resource. <https://iq.hse.ru/en/news/287216259.html> (Accessed on October 20, 2025).
- Unruh, K. 2020. May We Have this Dance?: Cultural Ownership of the Lindy Hop from the Swing Era to Today. *Atlantic Studies: Global Currents* 17 (1): 40–64. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14788810.2019.1698241>
- Yurchak, A. V. (2014) 2024. *Eto bylo navsegda, poka ne konchilos' . Poslednee sovetskoe pokolenie* [Everything Was Forever Until It Was No More. The Last Soviet Generation]. Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie. 664 p.