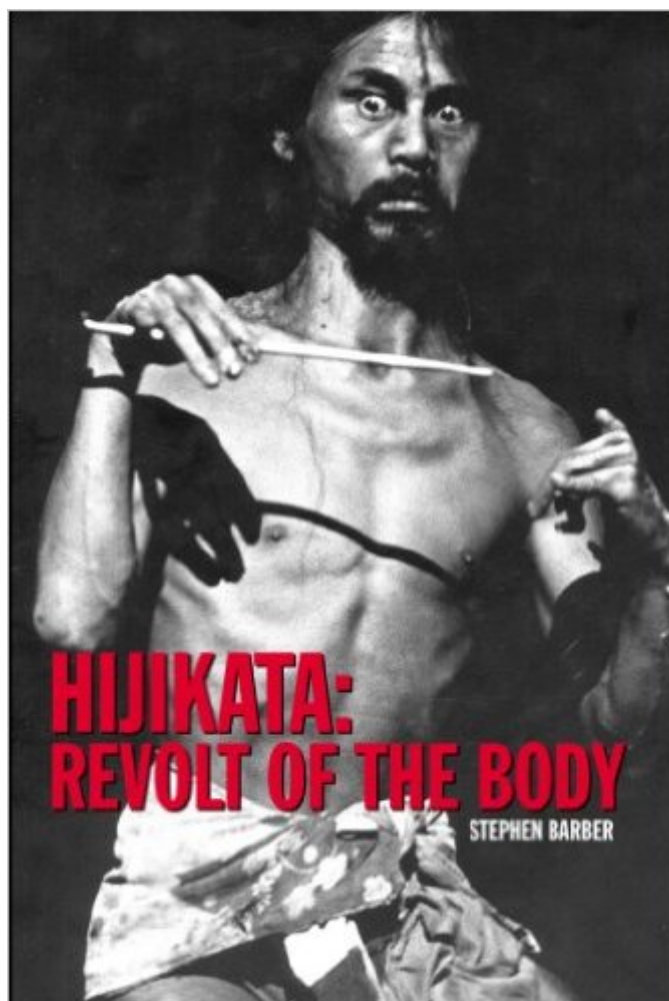


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Hijikata: Revolt Of The Body (Solar East)



Synopsis

Hijikata: Revolt of the Body examines the life and work of Tatsumi Hijikata (1928–86), who invented a revolutionary performance art and dance known as Ankoku Butoh, or “Dance of Darkness.” The Butoh style of performance and movement premiered in Japan in 1959 and developed in subsequent years in response to the student riots and the 1960s protest movement. Hijikata is the supreme figure in the last half-century of Japan’s experimental culture, and he remains a seminal and inspirational presence for Japanese artists, choreographers, film-makers, musicians, and writers. Based on extended interviews with Hijikata’s family and all of his surviving collaborators, this is the only book to focus exclusively on Hijikata and his work, including his interest in European art and figures such as Genet, Artaud, Sade, and Lautréamont, as well as the Japanese Surrealist movement. It also provides a unique, in-depth analysis of Japanese avant-garde culture of the 1960s—including film, visual art, and literature—in direct relation to Hijikata’s performance pieces. Butoh and Hijikata’s performance art continue to grow in popularity and appreciation around the world, and this text is the definitive study of Hijikata and his radical art. “A brilliant and illuminating study of Hijikata and the Japanese avant-garde” —Donald Richie

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Barber’s essay on Tatsumi Hijikata and his “ankoku butoh” does a fine job of situating this singularly intense artist within a larger milieu of social upheaval and literal devastation. Along the way, he unearths some shocking insights about that milieu (like the fact that some cultural outliers in wartime

Japan actually *welcomed* the Allied bombing of their cities as an annihilation of the old social order and a chance to create anew) and wisely makes no attempts to retrospectively portray Hijikata as being more renowned at the time than he really was. Those who know little about the cultural origins of Butoh's more extreme exponents will be caught right up to speed here; though the text can be plowed through in a day's reading it manages to set up a satisfyingly complete set of links between Hijikata and a greater 20th century avant-garde exploring madness and criminality (e.g. Genet, Artaud.) However, as is their wont, the people at Creation Books manage to cheapen the text with pointless proclamations of their stereotypical "extreme" aesthetic. I say "Creation" because Solar Books is merely another imprint run by the same parties responsible for the more renowned Creation flagship (and this book was previously published as a Creation title.) The similarity in "quality" between the two imprints is easily noticeable: cheap paper, lazy placement of photographs and hastily completed design work whose main distinguishing feature is the childish, unnecessary placement of would-be "shocking" icons. What, exactly, do menacingly hooked swastikas have to do with Hijikata's work, and why are they at the heading of each chapter in this book? All in all, Barber has done his job here, it's a shame that he had to sell this to a publisher who has no idea how to aesthetically frame the work. Here is hoping that future efforts of this type will find more reputable outlets for printing and distribution.

This book was the first one I read about Butoh, a dance form which has inspired me since I saw Sankai Juku in 1982. The story is arresting and some of the concepts / ideas give lots of food for thought. It's a bit too dark for my own style but I was glad to get this perspective and the background to the early development of Butoh. If one is interested in Butoh it is important to get the early story, the beginning with Hijikata.

Excellent read. Contextualizes Hijikata's work in the post-WWII climate.

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