

DISCUSSION



DANCE IN AFRICA

“Western perceptions of dances of African origins”

Dancing is a universal concept and exists wherever a community of human beings is, it is part of the identity of a population and it evolves with the society to which it pertains to.

Nowadays, African dances are presented as exercise routines, one has to jump all over the place, one has to be physically strong to try this dance form!! It is exotic; Africans are dancing all the time... This is what has been offered, by the African artist, overseas. But, African dances can be very subtle.

Dancing is a means of communication, and even today, in certain non western civilizations, messages are still given by the population to the chief or the king through coded dances.

Dances are performed for different occasions. They are as diverse as the population on earth. Unfortunately, it seems that some dance styles don't receive the respect they deserve because they come from specific areas of the world.

The appreciation of dance cannot be based on universal criteria as it is part of the identity of a community.



In the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, Article I, it is stated that:

“Cultures differ one from another. They have changed over time and are still evolving. When we look around the world we see that each culture is distinct and unique. Experiencing different cultures, interacting with people from other countries, listening to different opinions is one of the joys of being alive. Different cultural expressions of the people of the world and their relationship with each other make up our one common heritage. It is something that we are all a part of. Just as nature needs a variety of animals and plants to sustain itself, the humanity requires all forms of culture to maintain its vitality. We should therefore understand and recognise the role of cultural diversity for the benefit of present and future generations.”

Prescriptivism in the arts has been proved to be unsuccessful, history has shown that diversity will always prevail; diversity is part of humanity.