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Karen Barbour, Victoria Hunter and Melanie Kloetzel
(Re)Positioning Site Dance
Bristol, UK and Chicago, USA: Intellect, 2019. 323 pages. £74.00.
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Barbour, Hunter and Kloetzel discuss the ethical and political dimensions of site dance through discussions of a wide range of works by current and historical dance and performance practitioners, as well as their own respective repertoires of dance and choreographic practice. Rather than presenting an overview of the field, they focus on themes including localised activist and resistant practices, the affective potential of dance as part of cultural shaping, and the relationship of site dance to wider ecological imperatives. Within this framework, socio-cultural politics play a large part in the overall discourse and Barbour, Hunter and Kloetzel foreground their positionality as part of the discussion. The most substantial content within each chapter focuses on each author's own extensive practice-research. This provides a level of detailed discussion that is both critically situated and highly engaging. The book aims to re-position the field toward a consideration of the 'implications' of site dance – ethically, politically and ecologically. The analysis of dance events offers a range of meanings, feelings and socio-political impacts of the work, which do not necessarily ripple beyond the experience of the maker(s) or intended audiences. Barbour, Hunter and Kloetzel highlight the need for further research as they point toward the possibilities of recognising site dance as a form of critical action; and as a method for raising awareness, fostering debate and affecting change. Throughout the book, discussion of methods used in creating dance events are particularly strong and would be useful for students, academics and practitioners alike. These include initiating performance processes within different communities, developing and structuring dance works, reflexively responding to specific contexts, and dealing with problematic and challenging aspects of site

and relationships. Each chapter of the book contains one or more ‘excursions’, which are instructions for the reader to explore practical site-based activity aligned to the themes and issues discussed. These excursions are enticingly written with the same critical awareness offered throughout the book. They would likely be useful to academics and students of dance and performance, as a way of deepening an individual’s or a group’s understanding of the intersection between the personal, place, and broader social politics.

Dani Abulhawa