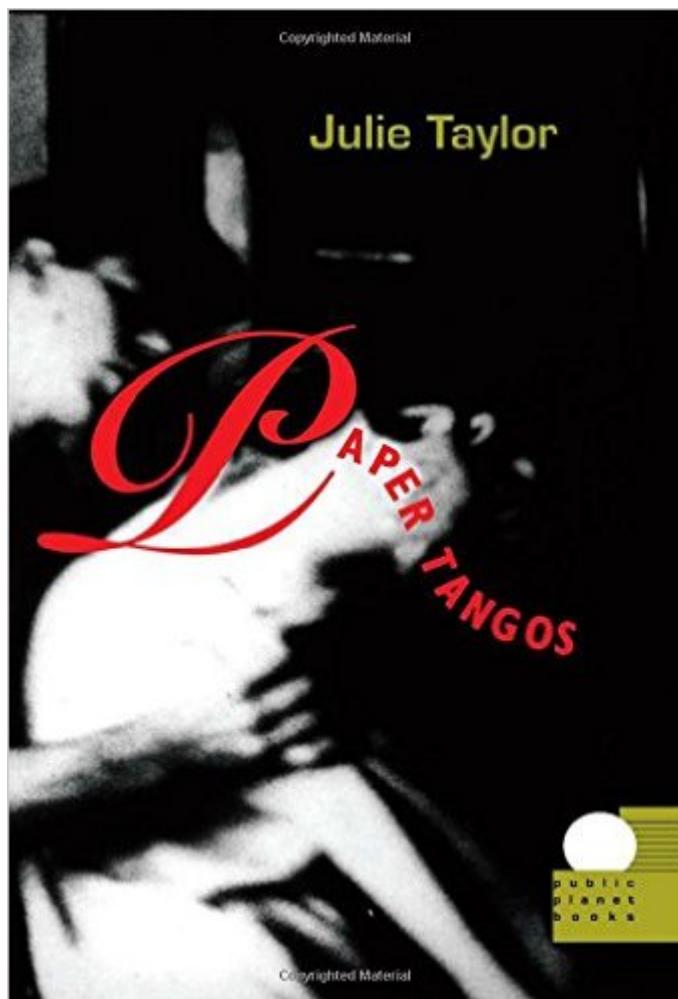


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Paper Tangos (Public Planet Books)



Synopsis

Tango. A multidimensional expression of Argentine identity, one that speaks to that nation's sense of disorientation, loss, and terror. Yet the tango mesmerizes dancers and audiences alike throughout the world. In *Paper Tangos*, Julie Taylor "a classically trained dancer and anthropologist" "examines the poetics of the tango while describing her own quest to dance this most dramatic of paired dances. Taylor, born in the United States, has lived much of her adult life in Latin America. She has spent years studying the tango in Buenos Aires, dancing during and after the terror of military dictatorships. This book is at once an account of a life lived crossing the borders of two distinct and complex cultures and an exploration of the conflicting meanings of tango for women who love the poetry of its movement yet feel uneasy with the roles it bestows on the male and female dancers. Drawing parallels among the violences of the Argentine Junta, the play with power inherent in tango dancing, and her own experiences with violence both inside and outside the intriguing tango culture, Taylor weaves the line between engaging memoir and insightful cultural critique. Within the contexts of tango's creative birth and contemporary presentations, this book welcomes us directly into the tango subculture and reveals the ways that personal, political, and historical violence operate in our lives. The book's experimental design includes photographs on every page, which form a flip-book sequence of a tango. Not simply a book for tango dancers and fans, *Paper Tangos* will reward students of Latin American studies, cultural studies, anthropology, feminist studies, dance studies, and the art of critical memoir.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Paper Tangos is an odd book. I'd give it 2 and a half stars. It's supposed to be a ballet dancer/anthropologist giving us her unique perspective on Tango on paper. An ambitious sounding goal and one which often falls short. As someone who is a social dancer and having taken a few classes with native Argentines, I was disappointed there was so little information about the form/structure of the body during the dance. As much experience as the author has had with Tango, it's clear she hasn't done much other social dancing. She describes how women dancers frequently talk to each other and point out leaders who are difficult to dance with, who rudely 'correct' woman dancers. This type of thing happens with both men and women at social dances often, it's not unique to tango. In my opinion what sets Tango apart from other dances is it's essential requirement for the dancer(s) to be physically and mentally present. Since unlike other dances where there is an emphasis on steps/routines/patterns, Tango's foundation rests upon improvisation. So to seriously study tango entails a close to "spiritual" presence. Because it also requires intense balance and partnering skills, learning tango can easily enhance any other social dancing skills. It was also hard to follow the stilted style in which the book is written. Convoluted sentences which are difficult to understand even upon rereading. Poor grammar... "They were disappeared." If you've been to Argentina and want to know more about the political violence there, it's history and effect on many people, this might be worth a read. I'd recommend, if possible, to read a few pages, before buying this one.

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