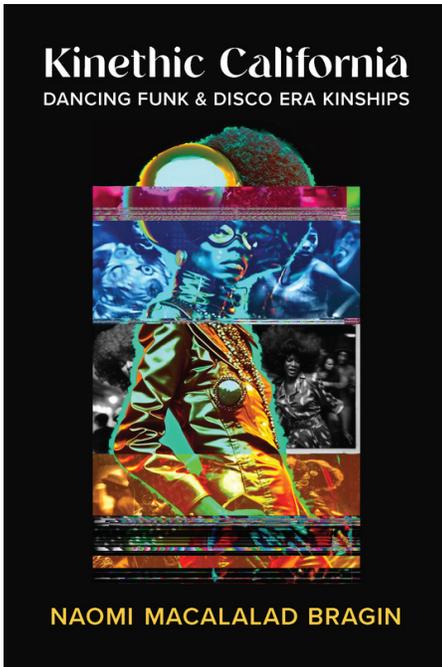




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KINETHIC CALIFORNIA

DANCING FUNK AND DISCO ERA KINSHIPS

By Naomi Macalalad Bragin

Studies in Dance: Theories and Practices

Kinethic California: Dancing Funk and Disco Era Kinships documents the emergence of new forms of black social and vernacular dance in 1970s California, forms embedded in local cultural histories but connected to the contemporary global culture of hip hop/streetdance. The book weaves interviews and ethnographies of first generation (1960s-70s) dancers of strutting, boogaloo, robotting, popping, locking, waacking, and punking styles, as it advances a theory of dance as kinetic kinship formation, through a focus on techniques and practices of the dancers themselves. The term given to these collective movement practices is kinethic, to bring attention to motion at the core of black aesthetics that generate dances as forms of kinship beyond blood relation. Kinethics reorient dancers toward kinetic kinship in ways that give continuity to black dance lineages under persistent conditions of disappearance and loss. As dancers engage *kinethics*, they reinvent gestural vocabularies that describe worlds they imagine into knowing-being.

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The stories in *Kinethic California* attend to the aesthetics of everyday movement, seen through the lens of young artists who from childhood listened to their family's soul and funk records, observed the bent-leg strolls and rhythmic handshakes of people moving through their neighborhoods, and watched each other move at house parties, school gyms, and around-the-way social clubs. Their aesthetic sociality and geographic movement provided materials for collective study and creative play. Bragin attends to such multidirectional conversations between dancer, community, and tradition, by way of which California dance lineages emerge and take flight.

Naomi Macalalad Bragin is Associate Professor at University of Washington Bothell.



"Because Black social dancing has been theorized and documented in exceedingly limited forms, *Kinethic California* arrives with the fresh promise of catapulting the area into welcome relief as a valid and valuable area of inquiry. Urgent and provocative, it brings streetdance into conversation with Black feminist theory and Black Queer theory in important ways. The book's structure and its pauses for poetic explorations are compelling, and confirm that Bragin dances well with words, translation, and those who have shared their stories with her."
—Thomas F. DeFrantz, Northwestern University

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