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FLEETING INSTANTS

MARION-VALENTINE

Text by Daniel Dobbels and Manuela Binaghi

Marion-Valentine's first love was dance, which for her represented human perfection. When she developed an interest in photography at the age of sixteen, she very soon got in touch with a magazine in order to learn how to capture the art that had bewitched her: Her first dance photographs were published in the magazine *La Danse* in 1957. Since then, she has photographed most of the dance shows staged in Paris, concentrating first on classical dance and then broadening her scope to include all forms of dance.

The object of this book is to put before the reader the photos that Marion-Valentine herself considers the most dynamic of all the shots she has taken during a forty-year career; the ones that most perfectly seize the instant when a pose is at its most expressive, the movement at its most harmonious. The photos are arranged in the book so as to maintain a certain tension, for instance by juxtaposing pictures of dancers from different schools or from different periods. Photography is by definition the art that manages to capture the fleeting moment, a flashing vision that moves the "watcher" emotionally to the point of wanting to repeat the wonder of his experience.

Marion-Valentine finds these revelatory instants of emotion above all in dance shows, when the dancers' bodies trace perfect, subtle lines in space, when a movement is stretched taut or a leap appears totally effortless for the time it takes a shutter to snap. And of course among these photos are shots of some of the great stars of post-War dance—Rudolf Nureyev, Sylvie Guillem, Nicolas Le Riche and Jorge Donn—and of renowned dance companies, like the Forsythe, Béjart, or Pina Bausch.

Marion-Valentine was born in Paris and has been photographing dance in one way or another since the 1950s.

Daniel Dobbels was born in 1947. After working in the theatre for a time and training as a mime artist, he took up contemporary dance with the Danse Théâtre Expérience company. In addition to his work as a choreographer, he also pursued parallel careers as a writer, art critic, speaker, and dance theorist and historian.

Manuela Binaghi was born in Milan in 1963 and worked for several years as a journalist for *Panorama*, *Lo Specchio*, *Marie-Claire*, and *Carnet*. She currently contributes dance columns to *La Repubblica*, *Tutto Milano*, *La Repubblica delle Donne*, and *Donna Moderna*.