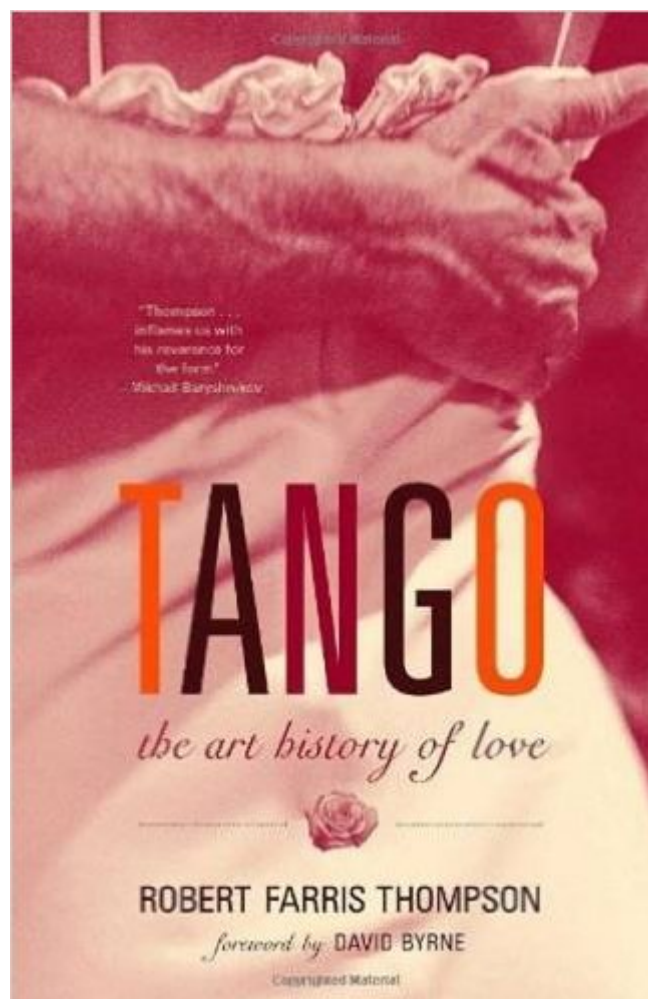


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Tango: The Art History Of Love



Synopsis

In this generously illustrated book, world-renowned Yale art historian Robert Farris Thompson gives us the definitive account of tango, "the fabulous dance of the past hundred years" and the most beautiful, in the opinion of Martha Graham. Thompson traces tango's evolution in the nineteenth century under European, Andalusian-Gauche, and African influences through its representations by Hollywood and dramatizations in dance halls throughout the world. He shows us tango not only as brilliant choreography but also as text, music, art, and philosophy of life. Passionately argued and unparalleled in its research, its synthesis, and its depth of understanding, *Tango: The Art History of Love* is a monumental achievement.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Although Thompson's book has a veneer of academic research, it is merely an attempt to promote the position advocated in his other books: Thompson alleges that much, if not most, of the elements of culture for which (mostly European) white societies are credited was "stolen" (that is, copied without credit) from black (in most cases, African) societies. In "Tango", Thompson, a professor of African art (he has no qualifications either in dance or in Latin American culture) makes two arguments: a general, deductive one and a specific, inductive one. His deductive argument is essentially "white men can't jump". That is, he reasons from effect and concludes that tango must have been stolen from blacks because it is improvised, and everyone knows that white people can't improvise. White people must have structure. That's why, Thompson says, just as classical music is "white" music and jazz is "black" music, ballroom and ballet are "white" dances, and tango is a

"black" dance. Thompson's inductive argument is based, in large part, on a list of people he has compiled, and who he claims are variously the world's greatest tango dancers, singers, composers and musicians. All of the people on Thompson's list are black. Thus, he alleges, he has "proved" that tango was co-opted from blacks. Assuming that Thompson's list of the "greatest" has some validity, that would not prove that white people stole the tango from the individuals he selected, much less from any other blacks who didn't make his list. If Thompson's argument were correct, that would also mean that golf was stolen by the Scottish from African-Americans, because Tiger Woods is black. (I suppose that's his next book.

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