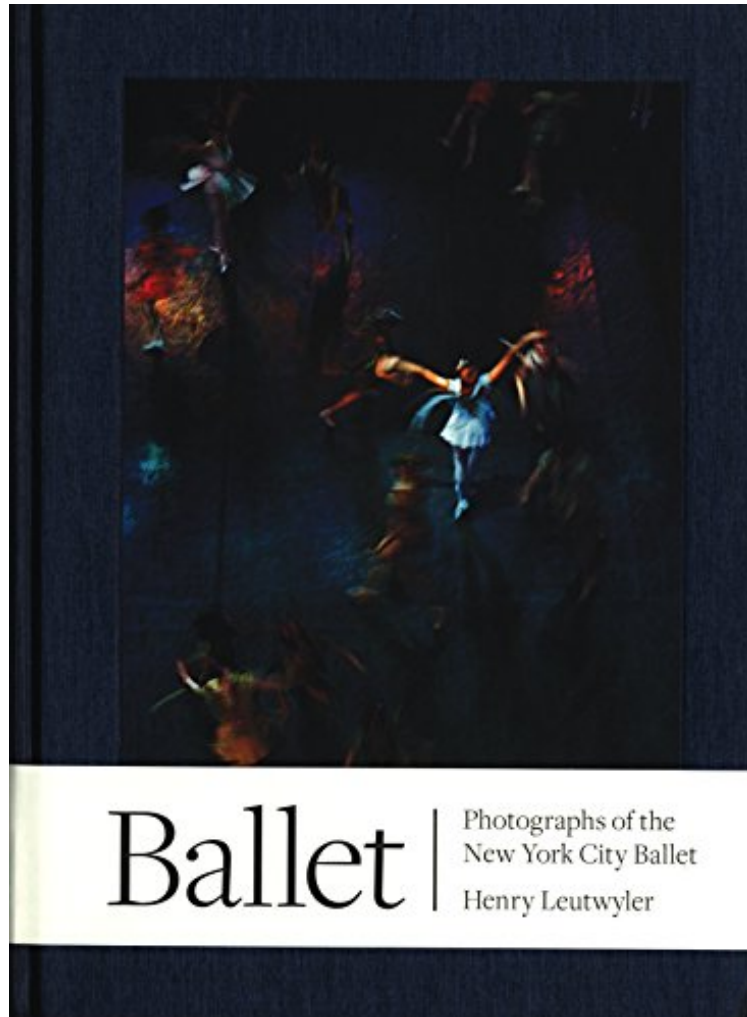


(Download) Henry Leutwyler: Ballet: Photographs of the New York City Ballet

Henry Leutwyler: Ballet: Photographs of the New York City Ballet

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From Steidl : Henry Leutwyler: Ballet: Photographs of the New York City Ballet before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Henry Leutwyler: Ballet: Photographs of the New York City Ballet:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. She said it was beautiful and very comprehensive in it's coverageBy Jay ClarkGiven to my sister, who's been into Ballet since she was 2, on her 64th Birthday. She said it was beautiful and very comprehensive in it's coverage.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Donna GregoryBeautiful pictures.4 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Big book, big disappointmentBy J. L. WilliamsI really, really wanted to love this book. I almost felt I owed it to Leutwyler; his iconic photos of ballerinas' feet, one pristinely clad in a pointe shoe and the other revealing all the blisters and bloodstains within, are surely among the most plagiarized images on Facebook, and I felt I should support the original. And the 32-picture portfolio

of his images in the December 3, 2012, issue of New York Magazine had been so promising... straightforward, clear-eyed, observant, and yet full of feeling and atmosphere. So it was disappointing to receive the actual book. It's like one of those cheesy comedy films in which all the good gags are in the trailer. For all practical purposes, tapping into this massive 488-page volume is like getting the 32 good pictures from the New York Magazine feature, plus a big box of out-takes and "similar." There's an occasional flash of interest, but for the most part it's just page after page after page of murky, blurry, resolutely reticent pictures. I'm not against blurry dance pictures per se, but there's no way around the fact that this territory already has been thoroughly pioneered -- more dramatically and much more concisely -- by graphic design genius Alexey Brodovitch in his epic 1945 insider study of the Ballets Russes, also titled "Ballet" (like Leutwyler's book.) Brodovitch staged a frontal attack on EVERY convention of 1940s photography -- sharpness, composition, narrative, etc. -- with brilliant effect. His book is rare now, but the pictures are well-known by people with an interest in ballet photography -- there's simply no excuse for Leutwyler, or his publisher, not to have been aware of them. That awareness should have made clear to them that blurred imagery is fine when there's a reason for it, as there always is in Brodovitch's work, but it can't be the result of simply not caring. Leutwyler often seems not to care; it's especially evident in the classroom photos that lead off the book that many of the photos are simply mis-focused. Why? NYCB boss Peter Martins says in the introduction, that Leutwyler's "...portrayal of our world" is "one that is experienced first-hand by a rare few." That's also almost exactly what he said in his foreword to NYCB dancer Kyle Froman's 2007 photo-and-text book "In the Wings." Meanwhile, former ABT dancer-turned-photographer Rosalie O'Connor tilled the same ground in her 2004 book "Getting Closer: A Dancer's Perspective." Then there's Pierre Petitjean's still-charming 1978 collection "Backstage", and... well, you get the idea: backstage/insider ballet photo books are not exactly unprecedented. To extend the genre, you have to make a dramatic break, the way Brodovitch did. I had hoped Leutwyler's book would do this, but it comes up short. It's strange, though; in researching this review I visited Leutwyler's portfolio website, henryleutwyler.com, and found it filled with photos that are just as straightforward, incisive, and appealing as the New York Magazine collection that got me interested in buying this book in the first place. Maybe I'm just not "getting" his work in book form. But I don't think so. Tread warily.

After four years of collaboration with choreographer Peter Martins and the New York City Ballet, Swiss portrait photographer Henry Leutwyler was granted unprecedented backstage access to the Company during the winter of 2012. The resulting book, *Ballet*, reflects 30 years of his passion for the art form, realized in 30 days of photographing. Leutwyler inhabited the shadows of the stage and became "invisible," recording images of the dancers using nothing more than his 35mm Leica. He was able to explore the performers' immediate space, affording a more abstract portrait of their frenzied existence in an art form predicated on perfection. This clothbound masterpiece is an homage to the gritty world behind the curtain. With impresario Lincoln Kirstein, George Balanchine co-created the New York City Ballet in 1948. What followed is arguably one of the most revolutionary periods in ballet history as he redefined the art form, introducing abstract works performed with a signature speed, musicality and precision. Under the leadership of Peter Martins, these are the hallmarks of the Company to this day, and this book with its candid, impressionistic action shots and exquisite use of color serves as a beautiful tribute to the New York City Ballet's cultural and artistic presence. This new, slimmer edition of *Ballet* excludes the section of additional performance documentation. Born in Switzerland in 1961, Henry Leutwyler moved to Paris in 1985, where he apprenticed with photographer Gilles Tapie and rapidly established himself as an editorial photographer. A decade later, he moved to New York City. Today, Leutwyler's celebrity portraits can be found in the pages of *Vogue*, *Vanity Fair*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *The New Yorker*, *Esquire Magazine* and *Time*. He has photographed the likes of Michelle Obama, Julia Roberts, Tom Wolfe, Rihanna and Martin Scorsese, to name only a few. Leutwyler lives and works in downtown Manhattan.

...this is a penetrating and unique achievement that pushes the art of dance photography in new directions. (Lew Whittington *New York Journal of Books*)