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Memorable Discourses

Lynn Garafola, a professor of dance at Barnard College and a noted dance scholar, critic and frequent commentator on dance for The Nation magazine and other periodicals, will give The Jody & John Arnhold Distinguished Lecture at UC Santa Barbara on Tuesday, Nov. 3.

Her lecture, "Discourses of Memory: The Marginalization of Bronislava Nijinska," will begin at 5 p.m. in the campus's McCune Conference Room, 6020 Humanities and Social Sciences Building. It is free and open to the public.

"Garafola is one of the greatest historians of dance in the world," said Ninotchka Bennahum, a professor of dance at UCSB. "Her many publications over the past three decades have solidified the place of dance in the wider academic historical discourse.

"Rather than assuming that art — dance — is driven by larger historical currents," she continued, "Garafola has proven through painstaking research and analysis that art, as in the case of Diaghilev's Ballets Russes or Lincoln Kirstein's New York City Ballet, becomes the catalyst for large bodies of intellectual and social ideas and can, in a given circumstance, drive political and economic change."

An important factor in Garafola's contribution to historical thought, according to Bennahum, is her interdisciplinary weaving of aesthetics, philosophy, art history and dance history into, for example, a new way of seeing European modernism as intricately connected to specific performance events.

"Garafola's scholarship has given dance history a seat at the table," said Bennahum. "No longer relegated to education, dance scholarship now exists within undergraduate and graduate programs throughout the country because we have serious books to read. She has stood her ground through culture wars, keeping her focus on history as an act or recovery, of analysis and of critical discourse.

"Never does Garafola make the mistake of using theory for itself," she added. "She always locates any kind of critical discourse within the dance itself and ensures that from the art work itself emerges theoretical and historical methodology."

A member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Garafola is a former Getty Scholar and a recipient of fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, the Social Science Research Council and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Editor for several years of the book series "Studies in Dance History," Garafola is the author or editor of several books, including "Diaghilev's Ballets Russes"; "Legacies of Twentieth-Century Dance"; "The Diaries of Marius Petipa," which she also translated; "André Levinson on Dance: Writings from Paris in the Twenties"; "Rethinking the Sylph: New Perspectives on the Romantic Ballet"; "José Limón: An Unfinished Memoir"; and "The Ballets Russes and Its World."

Among the many exhibitions Garafola has curated are "Dance for a City: Fifty Years of the New York City Ballet" at the New-York State Historical Society. At the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts she curated "500 Years of Italian Dance: Treasures from the Cia Fornaroli Collection"; "New York Story: Jerome Robbins and His World"; and "Diaghilev's Theater of Marvels: The Ballets Russes and Its Aftermath."

Garafola's lecture is co-presented by the UCSB Department of Theater and Dance and by the Hemispheric South(s) Research Initiative of the campus's Interdisciplinary Humanities Center.

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