



FORM

**& MANDINKA DANCE
MOVEMENTS**

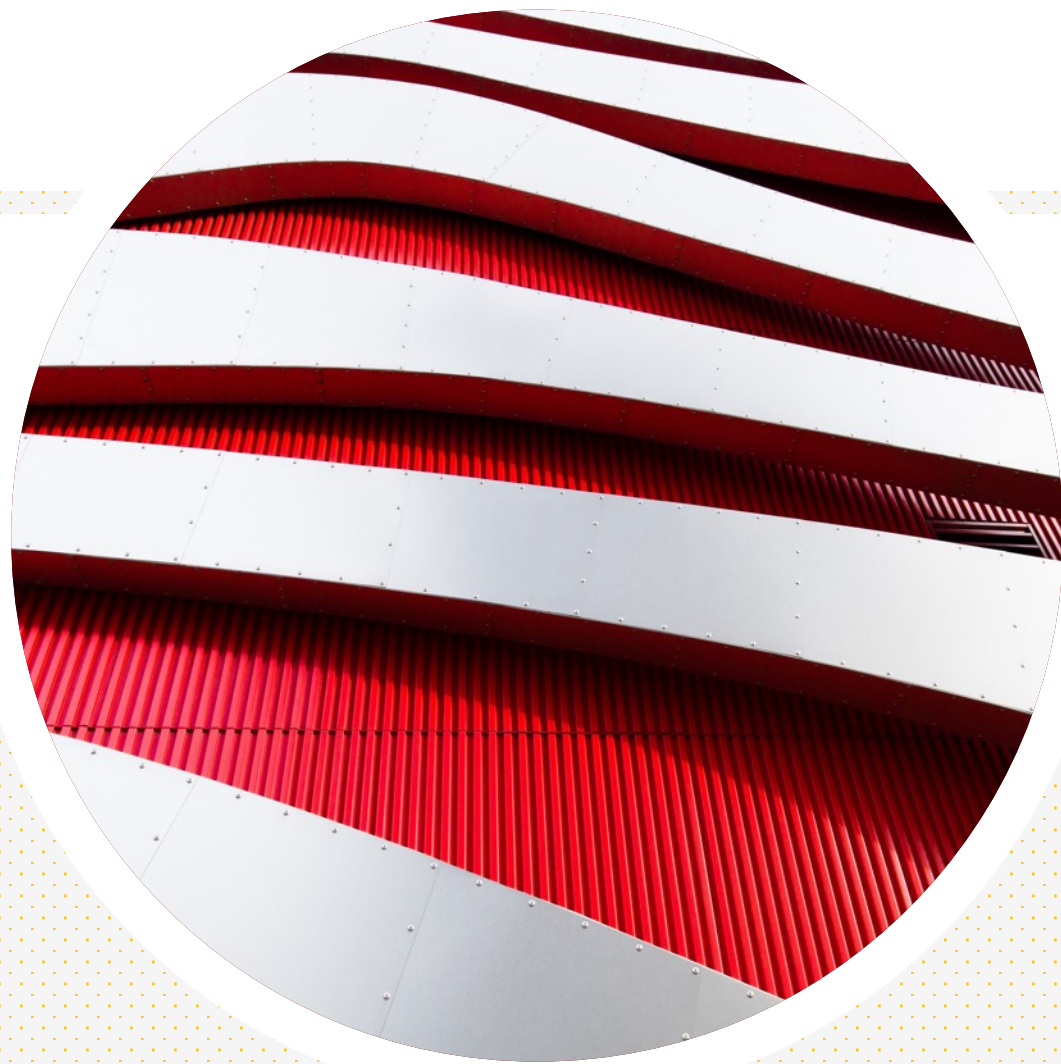
The following slides are designed to compliment readings from the book:

Abiola, Ofosuwa M. *History Dances: Chronicling the History of Traditional Mandinka Dance*.
London: Routledge, 2019.



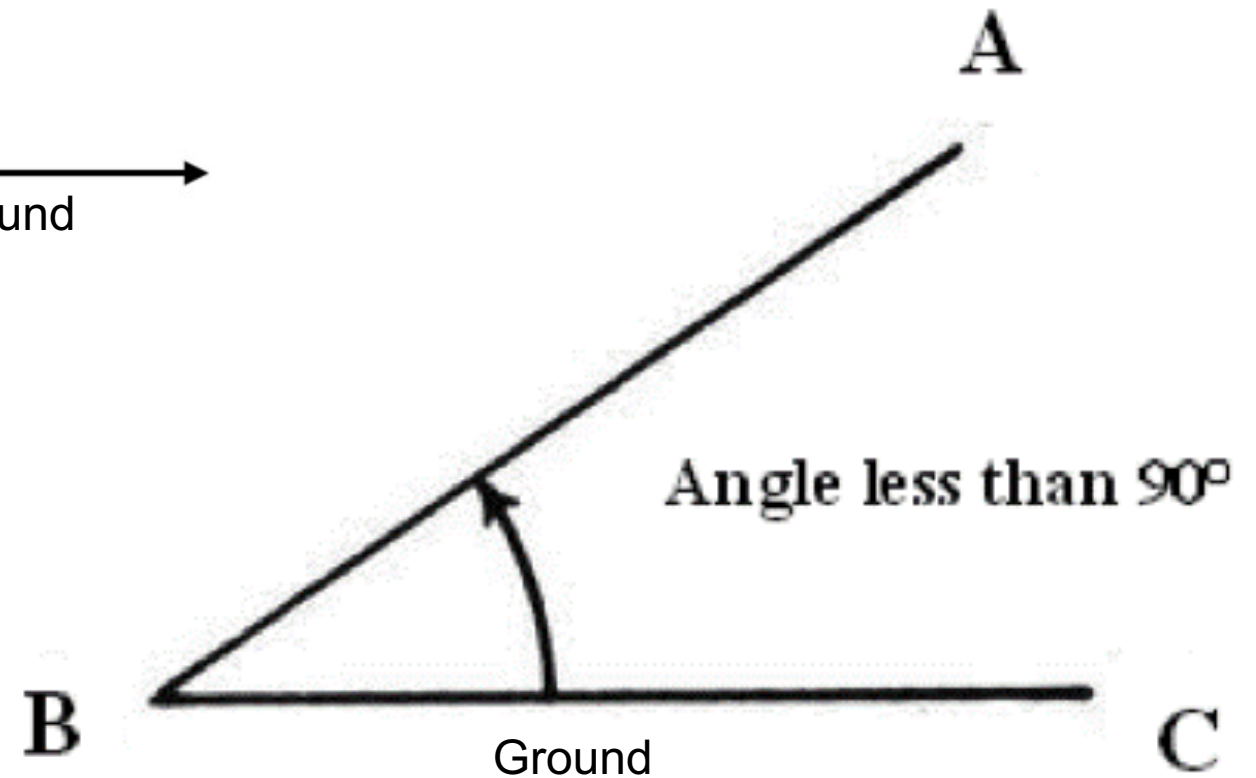
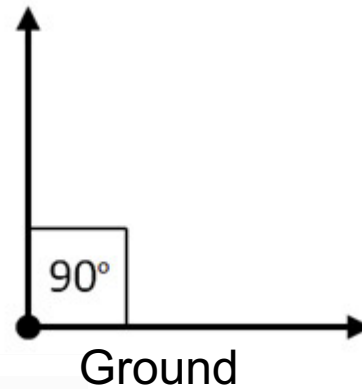
Movement ▶ **Vocabulary**

FOR AFRICAN DANCE



TORSO

- Placement on the body – rib cage area including the back
- In many (but not all) West African dances, the torso makes an acute angle (less than 90 degrees) with the earth
- There are three positions of the acute angle:
 - High
 - Medium
 - Low



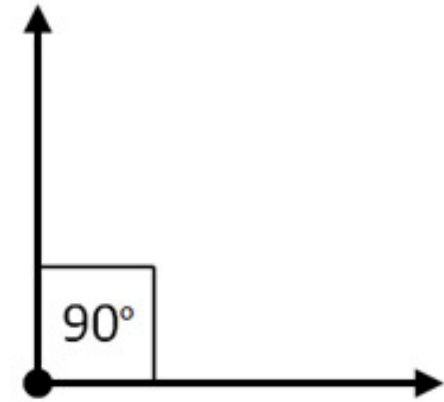
TORSO

- In the photos, notice the torso's:
 - Placement on the body
 - Acute angles
 - High
 - Medium
 - Low



LOW TORSO

Compare the stances in the pictures with the 90 degree angle.



CONTRACTIONS

- There are 3 types of contractions
- Torso contractions
- Pelvic contractions
- Semi/partial contractions
- Hip and torso movements from side-to-side are not contractions





CHARACTERISTICALLY AFRICAN MOVEMENTS

- Contractions (torso, pelvic, semi or partial)
- Movements emanating from bent knees with legs parallel to each other.
- Hip movements from left to right
- Rapid head movements (in a multiplicity of directions including circular movements)
- Movements executed with torso at acute angles to the earth including jumps and leaps.

DANCE STEP VS DANCE MOVEMENT

- Dance step is comprised of more than one body movement.
- For example, a dance step can require bent knees, acute torso, arms waving, and head bobbing simultaneously.
- Dance movement is one basic element.
- For example, the head bob only.
- It can be one sole element in the example of a dance step in the bullet point to the left.





THE DANCE

- A dance is comprised of a series or a combination of steps.
- A step is comprised of a sequence of movements.

ROOT STEPS



- Languages are founded on a few root words or sounds.
- Mandinka and most other African dances are founded on one or two root steps.
- Root steps do not change throughout time.
- In contrast, auxiliary steps are constantly added and change.

NATURAL BODY MOVEMENTS



- Assuring everyone has access.
- Age-grade dances.
- Natural body movements imitate the positions and stances performed by the body during everyday tasks.
- Natural body movements also imitate stances and gestures subconsciously performed during everyday activities.
- In the videos that follow this slide, there are examples of traditional dances from Central, West, and East Africa.
- Can you identify natural body movements among the other dance steps?

