

# *seeing while being seen*

DANCE PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE CREATIVE PROCESS

In the following pages, the dancers' words are italicized and all other text is written by the photographer.

2        *I had been dancing and performing for several years, expressing my  
deepest desires and passions, hoping to inspire the same in others.  
Then one day, all of those years of work came together in one image.*

*Bridget Morris*

BRIDGET MORRIS



16      Some dancers use a photo session to improve their  
performance technically.

*I was able to see in the proofs what lines and positions looked best  
on my body. The session also helped me to take a look at myself  
and make corrections in my dancing. Even the smallest detail in a  
picture can help you.*

*Heidi Strohl*

HEIDI STROHL



A photo session can be a way of developing dance for performance. As this dancer said:

*We began throwing around ideas based on the movement I had already been working with. Then there was this wonderful moment where something very clear was beginning to form in my head and enter my body. I was imagining using the props to convey transition and the photographer was seeing a rebirthing or an emergence. We knew where to go from there. I began to explore this idea as the camera went click, click, click.*

*Camille DeSantis*

C A M I L L E D E S A N T I S



I make a point of familiarizing dancers with all lights used in a shot, especially the main light (the light that creates the illusion of three-dimensionality), which in this image was flowing from downstage left. I ask them to stand, rotate slowly, and feel the lights on their bodies. Also, I suggest that they treat the main light as a partner, or as another character on stage. In this session, I asked the two dancers to treat the light as a powerful force that gripped them as they traveled through the air. Rather than specifying the nature of the force and how they should react to it, I left it to them to create through their movement and emotion.



I saw this dancer perform and knew that I had to photograph him. His performance, which involved an ornate Chinese fan, seemed to unfold as a kind of worship. The sense of reverence was blended with intense, passionate emotion. In the photo session, although we began with rather basic movements and shapes, this intensity soon reappeared.

