



# Drawing a Circle in the Square: Street Performing in New York's Washington Square Park

*Sally Harrison-Pepper*

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This gratifying study of a phenomenon that has imprinted itself upon the folklore of big-city life, is a joyful book focusing upon the street performers in Washington Square Park in New York City.

While documenting the complex expressions of street performance in a specific outdoor environment over a period of four years, *Drawing a Circle in a Square* gives a broad examination to the relationship between outdoor performance and urban culture.

In this book we learn that most American cities prohibit street performance, charging such entertainers with vagrancy or soliciting, the performer--joyfully, cautiously, heroically--persists.

On sidewalks throughout the country, in theaters reduced to their barest essentials, the performer juggles, blows fire, performs magic, and tells jokes, appealing both to our sense of humor and to our longing for a moment of spontaneity in our city--structured lives.

*Drawing a Circle in a Square* is the first scholarly documentation and analysis of street performance. Based primarily upon original research, it makes a contribution that is as much toward a particular subject. Promoting the study of performance as an important and valuable vehicle for inter-disciplinary research and thought, it is a model of the kinds of research being developed in the emerging field of performance studies.

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