

# Going Nowhere: Screendance and the Time of Dying

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## Abstract

This article considers a particular temporality—referred to as a state of moving stillness—within two different events: the screendance body that moves without appearing to get anywhere, and the dying body that moves but is not moving *to* anywhere. It focuses on *Singin' in the Rain* (1952) directed by Kelly and Donen and a practice as research screendance project, made by the author, entitled *Walk* (2016). By placing events from art and life together here, alongside contemporary philosophies of temporality, the article works to illuminate something of the complex relationship between movement, time, and progression in each one, throwing light on the role that art, and screendance in particular, can play in our relationship to mortality.

**Keywords:** screendance, time, dying, Deleuze, *Singin' in the Rain*, *Walk*



*Walk* (film still), Credit: Anna Macdonald

As Sherril Dodds points out in her discussion of the body onscreen, the screendance body is one that carefully constructs, and is constructed through, time.<sup>1</sup> It therefore offers a useful model for thinking through time in the living body, not as a homogenous given, but as a variable state operating in different ways during different parts of our lives. In this writing, I consider a particular temporality—that I call a state of moving stillness—within two different events: the screendance body that moves without appearing to get anywhere, and the dying body that moves but is not moving to anywhere. Placing these two events from art and life together here, alongside contemporary philosophies of temporality, works to illuminate something of the complex relationship between movement, time, and progression in each one, and has the potential to throw some light on the role that art, and screendance in particular, plays in our relationship to mortality.

Movement and stillness are the fundamental forms of life and death and as such, as Sutil and Melo point out when writing about the relationship of visual media and temporality, form the foundations of philosophical conceptions of time reaching from Plato to Deleuze.<sup>2</sup> It is not an achievable or desired aim to track these complex philosophical trajectories here. Instead I refer to a broad shift from stillness to movement within philosophical thought, which Kappenberg identifies as being significant to filmic constructions of time. Kappenberg describes this as a move “from classic philosophy that believed in the eternal order of things, to a new, modern philosophy based on the idea of mobility, the new, and the singular.”<sup>3</sup> This shift is described further by Brannigan (after Bergson and Deleuze) as a move from time as a series of spatialized, immobile instants (stillness) and time as one of undifferentiated and constant flow (movement).<sup>4</sup>

This temporal distinction between movement and stillness has been mined in the psychoanalytically underpinned work of film writers such as Mulvey and Doane, in their exploration of the spectre of still images within the forward moving apparatus of film.<sup>5</sup> Movement and stillness is also, arguably, the starting point of all dance and is focused on in the psychoanalytically and phenomenologically informed work of writers such as Phelan and Horton Fraleigh amongst many others.<sup>6</sup> This article, however, focuses on the possibility of a state that operates between these polarized positions of movement and stillness, a moving stillness as it were, as a way of understanding both screendance and dying as a state of in-between, distinct from that of life or death.<sup>7</sup> As such this article considers what certain examples of screendance might add to that which Røssaak refers to as “a turn to the *in-between*” (orig. emphasis) in the field of stillness and motion studies.<sup>8</sup>

The focus of this paper emerged when I heard the philosopher Alphonso Lingis talking at a conference in 2015 and he described the time of dying as, “the time that goes nowhere, not even into nothingness.”<sup>9</sup> There is a curious tension between movement and stillness, as well as space and time, in this evocative description of dying. At the

time that I heard Lingis speak, my mother was dying and I was struck by how his thinking connected with my experience of her dying. For what I had imagined was a natural or instinctive event seemed in fact to be a confusing process, where distinctions between movement, stillness, life, and death were strangely unclear. Huge labor was demanded from everyone involved and no small part of this involved the struggle to work out, how we could move forwards when there were no next steps? How could we progress to nowhere?

Film theorist Justin Remes offers the "Cinema of Stasis,"<sup>10</sup> with its emphasis on scenes that offer little or no easily perceived change, such as Michael Snow's seminal 1967 work *Wavelength*, as an example of moving stillness in film.<sup>11</sup> Here we can see stillness defined, not as an absence of movement but rather, resonating with Lingis' description of dying, in terms of an absence of progression. I am a dance and moving-image artist and my research into the relationship between movement, progression, and time within screendance began with the making of *Walk*<sup>12</sup> three months after my mother's death. My practice works both as a way of thinking through experience and embodying ideas, falling under the broad ambit of what Smith and Dean refer to as performative research<sup>13</sup> and I reflect here on the findings of *Walk* alongside another, rather more famous, dance for the screen called *Singin' in the Rain*.<sup>14</sup>

While it might be rather surprising to look at such disparate works in the context of dying, there are two key reasons for doing so. The first is that both works offer a distinct "aestheticization of time"<sup>15</sup> that invites comparison with the first temporal frame I draw on here, which is that of Deleuze's distinction between images that create movement and images that create stillness.<sup>16</sup> The second reason is that these films have a particular temporal relationship to my mother's time of dying, for one occupies the shared space of our past and the other a singular point in the, as it was then, future. The co-presence of both (as memory and projection) in this time therefore offers an interesting echo of the second key conceptualization of time that I draw on, which is philosopher Gary Peters' identification of the time of dying as an "intensified now" that draws the future and past into the present.<sup>17</sup>

I begin by exploring the idea of moving to somewhere, in relation to filmic constructions of linearity framed by and in relation to Deleuze's movement image with its causal sensory-motor schema.<sup>18</sup> I focus here on the continuity editing of *Singin' in the Rain* and the horizontal framing of *Walk*'s singular, static shot. Next I look at movement that does not appear to get anywhere. This section makes reference to Deleuze's "interval," a time that hovers between the 'has been' and the 'not yet,' which Brannigan, Hayes, and Kappenberg all cite in their examination of time and movement in screendance.<sup>19</sup> Within this discussion I look first at movement that does not arrive anywhere, focusing on the jump cuts in *Walk*. Then I explore movement that does not go to anywhere, movement that has the potential to offer a sense of permanence and

reliability, with reference to the physical and compositional acts of centering and balance in both works.

The final section, drawing on the work of palliative care specialist Ana Mendes, employs the image of a 'plateau' to articulate the sense of moving stillness that was so central to my experience of the time of my mother's dying. Here I describe a shift from Chronos (quantitative time) to Kairos (qualitative time) in the time before death,<sup>20</sup> and explore how this experience resonates with the temporality of both films. This leads to a final discussion of movement that is not about moving forwards (to the next step) but is rather about bringing the past and future into one temporal event combining both movement and stillness. Here, as mentioned above, I draw on Peters' philosophical consideration of the time of dying as one where the person dying consolidates a sense of themselves for the other through a condensing of past and future in a 'thickened' present. From this I consider the temporality of screendance, with its particular combination of movement and stillness, as a "structure of consolidation," a structure that is able to carry something of the lost event forward in time.<sup>21</sup>

### **Going somewhere: 'I walk down the Lane'**

There is a sense of movement in Lingis' description of dying as "the time that goes nowhere" for here time is still 'going' and has not yet stopped.<sup>22</sup> But this is a strange form of movement for it is a movement with no trajectory, movement that does not go anywhere. Moving to nowhere jars with bodily and cultural associations of movement with spatial/metaphorical progression. For when we need to solve a problem we ask, 'how can we move this forward?' When things happen, we ask, 'what now, what next?'—terms that imply the intrinsic possibility of a linear sense of progression. In fact, it can feel impossible to even conceive of moving to stillness such is the strong relationship between movement and the act of thought itself. As visual artist and theorist Yve Lomax writes, "[h]ow can I think stillness such that the movement of my thinking is not brought to a halt? (Would such a cessation be the death of me?)."<sup>23</sup>

Part of the desire to move forwards is to leave, or move on from, the situation you are in, even if it means that it will end. As the psychoanalyst Caroline Garland writes "[a]ll pain comes from living ... and [t]he wish to avoid that pain, to end the struggle, can become very powerful."<sup>24</sup> Another factor, in a culture where capitalism and Chronos (clock time) combine is that our achievements are often measured in terms of what we have done with 'our time' and, as Mendes notes, a sense of impotentiality can arise when little time remains or there is a sense that little can be 'done.'<sup>25</sup> Related to this is the strong desire for affective action, or indeed any action that might counteract the sense of a contingent universe, as revealed through crisis.

Early on in my mother's illness there was comfort to be found in the feeling of doing or 'going somewhere next' created by the "rational metaphysics" of the patterns and percentages of medical knowledge.<sup>26</sup> For example, in a trial information leaflet my mother was given it said, 'over the course of your trial we will take seventy tablespoons of blood' and we were reassured at this stage by the thought of still having seventy spoons to go. The spatialized time of the medical diagrams and protocols created trajectories into the future. Lomax connects this spatialized time, this emphasis on Chronos, with processes of "controlling time and calculating security,"<sup>27</sup> and for my mother and I these structures created a sense of order that worked to offset the sense of contingency that terminal illness evoked.

As we were counting spoons my mother and I often watched films together that we had watched before such as, *Singin' in the Rain*, a film musical made in 1952 starring the actor, director, and choreographer Gene Kelly. I write here about its most famous routine, which comes after the leading man has fallen in love and chooses to dance for pure joy in the rain. After kissing his new love goodnight, Kelly tells his driver to leave. He starts to walk home under his umbrella and then closes it, giving in to his joy and beginning to dance on the sidewalk and then in the road itself. All the while the rain falls heavily onto him filling up the already large puddles on the ground.

The spatial framing of Kelly within this sequence, and the way its different shots are put together, appear to embody entirely what Hayes refers to as "the human desire to move forwards in time and space."<sup>28</sup> One example of this is found in the sense of progression generated by its editing. There are only six cuts in the entire sequence most of which move, from stillness to action and close-up to long-shot. They maintain the spatial and temporal flow of the activity, working to punctuate the end of one action before the beginning of another. This continuity editing creates a sense of time as a continuous flow of events emphasizing, what Mulvey calls the "[I]nlinearity, causality and the ... unfolding, forward-moving direction of film."<sup>29</sup> It creates a sense of time and space as a unified whole, as if we were in the street with Kelly watching him dance.

In Kelly's dance we see movement that is going somewhere rather than nowhere, for instead of leaving the frame Kelly appears to simply step from one frame to another. The edits spatialize and construct time according to narrative logic in a way that resonates with what Deleuze calls the sensory-motor schema of action—a form of the movement image that he identifies as operating within classical cinema—where time is constructed and perceived through action. The edits generate a sense of movement from *here* to *there* and in doing so reassure us that *this* will lead to *that*. They follow the temporal logic of what Herzog (after Deleuze) calls "the action of narrative, of cause and effect, of rationality."<sup>30</sup> Although not sharing the same narrative demand as film musicals, as Sutil and Melo note,<sup>31</sup> this sensory-motor logic is arguably just as prevalent in contemporary screendance editing. For example, in edited sequences

from influential works such as McPherson's *There is a Place* <sup>32</sup> despite the inclusion of overtly spatially and temporally distinct movement, a sense of forward trajectory is generated by the movement-based logic of force, flow, and response that hold them together.<sup>33</sup>

The causal reassurance of *Singin' in the Rain's* edits is echoed in its carefully constructed choreographic structures that set up future trajectories as one step leads to another (a point I return to later). We are left in no doubt that counts five and six will lead to seven and eight, there are no hesitations to remind us of our mortality, and all is well with the world. As Peters writes, projections that are "confirmed in the now make manifest a deeply harmonious temporality that, within the dominant aesthetic of the West, is experienced as pleasure."<sup>34</sup> Kelly is so certain about the world, and his place at the center of it, he even teases us by preparing to jump off the curb into a huge puddle before changing his mind, evoking a small fear, a nice fear, like throwing a child up in the air and catching them again.

<https://vimeo.com/155039926>

Causal forms are also found in *Walk*, which is shot around the corner from where my mother used to live on a Fenland lane in East Anglia that I have walked, run, and cycled down thousands of times. *Walk* consists of a single, wide shot of this dark flat landscape; a black frame at the top and bottom of the screen emphasizes the horizontality of the shot. In it I am wearing a black dress and holding some papers and I sit at the left edge of the shot on a piano stool. After a while I stand and walk along the field, in some difficulty due to wearing heeled shoes, towards to the other end of the frame. The horizontal frame of its single shot coupled with the horizontal movement of the walk, work to create what film theorist Jacob Potempski describes as a "threshold of expectation."<sup>35</sup> I move from left to right, from one edge of the frame to the other following a traditional—and irreversible—arrow of time which echoes the linear drive of film itself, where one image erases another as it leads to the next.

A piano stool marks the start of my walk and at the other end there is an edge waiting for me, a step to nowhere, just outside of the frame that remains in shot at all times.<sup>36</sup> Looking back at this work now, I feel this visible end point both as a threat and something that creates a future trajectory that shapes and holds my movement within clear parameters. This resonates for me with the time right at the end of my mother's life, when the future space created by her trial had failed; but the sense of having somewhere to go next was re-created by the reassurance (and threat) of a place in a hospice. Peggy Phelan, writing about her experience of the grey time between life and death during her partner's terminal illness, suggests that there is a physical and metaphorical need for movement in order "to transform the act of dying into the fact of death."<sup>37</sup> We all knew that the journey to the hospice would be too difficult but,

perhaps, this visible end-point was a way of metaphorically conceptualizing the movement needed, according to Phelan, to move towards stillness.

I wonder whether if the urge for progression is held by external structures, even if these structures move us further towards the end of the film or the end of our lives, then people can get on with not going anywhere. In this light, the still predictability of Deleuze's sensory motor schema allows, conversely, for time to be experienced qualitatively rather than quantitatively. I have thought elsewhere about the role the psychoanalytic notion of holding might play in this but for now to speak it would be something like, 'I have somewhere to go to next so I can be easier being where I am.'<sup>38</sup> This process can be found, perhaps, in *Walk* where its clear spatial trajectory with no other actions, other than walking from one edge of the screen to the other, allows the viewer to focus on the action of walking itself, rather than on where the walker is going. Because of the fixed parameters of the frame I imagine *Walk* to be an instance of, what Loy refers to as event time, where "the time of an activity is integral to the activity itself."<sup>39</sup> Here the walk in question will take as long as it takes to complete responding to the schema of my body, as opposed to being subsidiary to an external time structure such as Kelly's rhythmic counts.

### **Not going anywhere: 'Just singing and dancing in the rain'**

*(Not arriving)*

How does one move to nowhere? According to Lingis, the answer to this is the act of dance for he writes that "one goes somewhere to dance in order to move without getting anywhere."<sup>40</sup> Here Lingis appears to equate progression with the realisation of aims for he goes on to say that the "dancing the body-Axis is not orientated upon tasks and does not posit objectives."<sup>41</sup> A discussion of intentionality and movement is beyond the scope of this article, however, as Lingis himself notes, he is referring to recreational dancers rather than professionals who generally, even if working in improvised contexts, will have very clear intentions that they aim to realise. In *Walk*, for example, my physical score was to walk roughly twenty steps along the field before turning round to look back at my starting point. In the film, however, this aim is never realised as it continually jump-cuts back to earlier points in the trajectory and I am returned to the piano stool to begin the walk again. I move but do not get to anywhere. I never leave the frame and neither do I let go of the papers I am holding. The edit does not progress forwards in time and *this* does not lead to *that*, but rather back to *this* again. Even the apparent cut to a close-up reveals itself only to be a cut to a grainy expanded version of the original shot, rather than a progression to another point in time. In instances such as this, as film theorist Carl Wall writes, "[t]he sensory-motor link is broken and action becomes irrelevant. Movement no longer 'measures' time [as in Chronos] but is folded into time," an idea I will return to.<sup>42</sup>

In a sense, *Walk* operates like a long animated GIF—small loops made of a series of constantly repeating images taken out of their original sequential context.<sup>43</sup> In *Walk* the walker keeps on moving towards a future that continually eludes her. She is in what Lomax describes, with reference to the Deleuzian concept of the interval (a form of the time image), as a place between “what is ‘no longer’ and what is ‘not yet,’”<sup>44</sup> where all is moving but moving infinitely rather than moving to somewhere. It is this combination of movement and stillness, a moving stillness that I am drawn to here as a way of understanding my experience of the in-between space, the interstices of dying that I did not know existed before I encountered it.

*(Not leaving)*

Mendes describes the time of dying as “[t]he dimension of time where eternity can be touched in the here-and-now.”<sup>45</sup> Considering the possibility of a sense of permanence, within the context of immanent loss is interesting when considered in light of Lingis’ movement to nowhere. For although his assertion implies that the dying person is leaving, there is an equally present sense of permanence in his statement for if one is ‘moving to nowhere’ then one is also not going anywhere. Indeed, these are the very words I use to reassure my children when they ask me whether I am going to die. “Don’t worry,” I say, “I’m not going anywhere.” To return to *Singin’ in the Rain*, until the dance number ends Kelly is also not going anywhere. For as each edit comes he simply steps from one frame to another, moving without leaving us for a moment. Despite the forward motion of the film, Kelly’s movement never appears to get him anywhere. He moves but he moves nowhere, staying resolutely in the middle of the frame as the camera relentlessly tracks him through the space. Even when the camera pulls back and up to reveal the studio ‘street’ Kelly remains central—just dancing in a wider frame. The central framing throws attention on the form of his movement rather than its trajectory through space, in a way that I find reminiscent of the event time of *Walk*.

But of course Kelly’s character does move, so what do I mean here by *it feels as if he doesn’t*? Lingis writes of the indeterminacy of the body when he describes it as being “always on the verge of departing, about to move, to fall.”<sup>46</sup> Here he alludes to the strong association between life, movement, and contingency. In *Singin’ in the Rain* Kelly’s body does not look indeterminate, it looks determinate, secure, predictable; we know where he is going and we trust that he will not fall. In this sense it creates a feeling of stillness. For example, watching Kelly dance is like watching the bubble in a spirit level. His centered form echoes his position in the center of the screen and he seems unable to be off-balance. His low center of gravity is accentuated by the horizontal pathways of his movement, his near-constant *plié* accentuating his relationship to the earth. The rain does not appear to make the pavement slippery and interestingly, there is no wind to accompany the rain, as it falls directly down, not once blowing into Kelly’s face. The only reference to imbalance we see is when Kelly



pretends to wobble his way along the curb, towards the end of the sequence, only to suavely balance on one leg directly afterwards.

There is considerable movement of the camera in this sequence but again, this movement tracks Kelly through space reinforcing a feeling of pattern, intention, a god, or at the very least a director, which reduces the sense of movement as an embodiment of contingency or liveness. Here we know exactly what we need to look at and all other life is not our concern as Kelly dances. This lack of progression is comforting and disturbing for Kelly is both a man at the center of the universe (a universe with a still, eternal order of things perhaps) and a butterfly moving just enough within the frame to avoid looking as if he is pinned to the wall.

Unlike the movement in *Singin' in the Rain* where part of the joy of the movement is the way it appears to transcend contingency, in *Walk* I am interested in the emotional affect of the contingent movement in the work. It was shot in a place that was emotionally significant rather than easy to film in, I was there on my own, it was freezing, and there happened to be a storm. As a result I struggle to maintain my balance, as I negotiate the uneven grass under my feet and the high buffeting winds. Looking back, despite the spirit level like horizontality of the shot, this movement has a vulnerability that I did not realize I was experiencing at the time. The film shares the compressed spatial centrality of *Singin' in the Rain* but here the dancer is framed within a static shot, the dead eye of the static camera drawing attention to itself as machine. This is the single static shot, where the camera appears to simply point at the world, that Doane describes as being the embodiment of contingency.<sup>47</sup> As I have mentioned, in *Walk* there is an edge of the frame that the dancer can leave, fall out of or exit through. Unlike Kelly, whose edges and limits are constantly moved around him so that his movement appears limitless, here the constant possibility of an ending or exit remains clear.

### **Plateaus and acts of consolidation**

As my mother's health declined, and the idea of death intensified, my sense of time changed and I began to experience each moment more as a horizontal landscape rather than a step on a linear descent. Each stage had a strangely reassuring sense of permanence, and we occupied it as if we were not going anywhere, as if we would stay there forever. As we ran out of time our experience began to feel more timeless. I was eight, it was after her death, I was twenty and I was also there in that moment. Mendes writes that during the end of life "one's commitment to Chronos (clock time) lessens and one seeks Kairos (lived time) and may begin to see time running backward as well as forward, with life spread out as on a landscape."<sup>48</sup> Later, I remembered thinking about a stabilizing image from Alexander technique, of a landscape running across my sternum as I walked to the front of the church at the funeral and later across the field in the film.

These horizontal plateaus towards the end of my mother's life created a peculiar feeling that past and future were balanced in both directions, creating a place for us to rest in-between. They were both moving and still. Looking back, I now feel this place resonating with Deleuze's interval as a place of "becoming [which] never stops where it is but always goes in two directions at once."<sup>49</sup> I also recognise connections between Deleuze's interval and Mendes' articulation of a sense of time moving forwards and backwards in the time of dying. Both images are potentially alive in the flat, Fen landscape in *Walk* that gives the impression of going on unendingly beyond the frame in both directions. I also see them in the strange 'already there already' feel of the centered world of *Singin' in the Rain*, where we see no sky and have no sense of where the rain comes from as it falls heavily into puddles that are already full.

The image of a horizontal plateau, like Kelly's dancing perhaps, has a sense of balance to it that offers no gradient, and therefore no pull towards the next step. However, balance is a form of stillness that is only achieved through constant responsive movement, and the experience of being in these plateaued temporal states, although peaceful, was one of great intensity rather than effortless flow. It was more resonant of the twenty-four hour pumps that are required for the flat, calm of the reclaimed Fens to be maintained and the complex and intense effort needed to remain balanced, concealed or otherwise, within both dancers' movement. For as Peters writes, when we are facing imminent death there is an "intensification of internal time consciousness" where the retention of the past and future into the present produce a "complex (and singular) knot of loss, gain, regret and hope."<sup>50</sup>

Peters' image of intensified temporal compression before death, of time being drawn in rather than flowing out, as the Deleuzian image of the interval suggests, feels closer to my experience of this time. This drawing in is present in the state of Kairos, the "supreme moment," which Mendes in her description of immanent death articulates as "[e]verything that you are, you must be it now."<sup>51</sup> I suggest that both screendances evoke this sense of singular effort, of bringing everything to one moment, not least through showing the whole body of the dancer onscreen for the majority of the work, a choice that is relatively unusual in contemporary screendance. In *Walk*, we see the woman's entire body small and overtly heroic against the wide landscape.<sup>52</sup> In *Singin' in the Rain* we see Kelly bring his whole body to a life-affirming moment of joy, and as his whole body smiles it is hard for me not to smile back.

However, screendance, like film—with their ability to be shot and re-shot—can offer "a distorted sense of effort" and continuity edits can cut out the "dead" time that must be endured in its entirety during the lived time of dying.<sup>53</sup> As Peters goes on to note, the temporal intensity of the time of dying is "only practicable in the short term" and the difficulty in life of course is that Chronos and Kairos must co-exist.<sup>54</sup> Looking back I wonder about a less heroic version of the film in which I stop my walk to answer emails and get some washing done. During the time of my mother's dying we all longed for

chronological certainty because we needed to know how long we needed to be supreme for?

*(Not going anywhere)*

For Bergson, time, in the sense of pure duration as opposed to spatialized time, "is change or it is nothing at all."<sup>55</sup> If all is change then this raises the question of what if anything can be relied upon or carried beyond the present moment, a question that becomes more pressing in the time of dying. This question also forms the basis of what philosopher Daniel W. Smith identifies as the two key trajectories of contemporary philosophy that I began with, that of transcendence and immanence.<sup>56</sup> A significant difference between Deleuze's interval in film and Mendes' articulation of a sense of time moving forwards and backwards in the time of dying, as Lomax is quick to assert, is that Deleuze rejects any notion of eternity for "when you invoke something transcendent you arrest movement."<sup>57</sup> And yet there was a sense of 'forever' in the moments near to my mother's death that seemed to transcend time but not at the expense of us being in time together. We were in life but we were 'still' and time passed without leading anywhere. I wonder now whether the sense of transcendence I experienced here emerged, not from being outside of the present moment, but rather precisely from the in-timeness of a shared sense of time with another. Time shared in this time before death seemed to create a pool of time that we could rest in.

Peters argues that the fear of the effect of their immanent loss, on the one left behind, "compels the dying to consolidate their lives."<sup>58</sup> Hence the person who is dying often tries to retain the future and present within the present time of dying in order to create a "substantiality that both assuages and intensifies fear, as memory and loss, presence and absence respectively."<sup>59</sup> He calls this temporal summing up a "structure of consolidation" for the one that remains.<sup>60</sup> Now, when I watch *Walk and Singin' in the Rain*, I sense something permanent, that moves through time with me and I can rely on. A structure of consolidation, perhaps, which is both moving and still. This is partially to do with the layers of memories that each film accumulates with each viewing, for although each film remains bound to their time of production, I (and the way I see) continue to move forward in time. This is true of all films however. What is particular to screendance though, and the specific examples I discuss here, is that they allow me to return not simply to movement but to dance, as an already consolidated moment of time.

Rosenberg writes that "screendance is predicated on the erasure of live performance's linearity and temporality."<sup>61</sup> However, from a phenomenological perspective, arguably dance is a form of movement that, even as it emerges within it, already exists beyond a simple temporal linearity. For example, Horton Fraleigh writes that

[w]hen I consider the unrepeatability of my life in relation to the near repeatability of a dance I have learned ... I see how my dance marks time. It marks time because it leaves a mark, a momentary mark, mar and wound. My dance marks time and signs it with my being.<sup>62</sup>

In this Horton Fraleigh indicates that dance, as a form of movement that can be returned to, has the capacity to remain both in and through time. Horton Fraleigh's description is reminiscent of Mark Johnson's phenomenological notion of bodily 'schema,' which he describes as ways of being or physical patterns of experience that are both long known and immediately experienced, both moving and still.<sup>63</sup> Movements that are performed in the present but offer something that goes beyond that moment, drawing the past and future into the present.

I see examples of Johnson's movement schema in the symmetry and clarity of Kelly's patterns of movements that begin, peak and end in ways that feel both immediate and long known. Kelly's dance resembles a classical ballet with its sights, as Horton Fraleigh writes, "set beyond everyday existence and painful realities" but this is combined with an emphasis on the ground, on presence, and on noise.<sup>64</sup> His dance is both still and moving, performed by and yet transcending the transient body with its irregularities, and unplanned movement, just as love conquers the rain. The act of walking also embodies this dual temporality as each step brings the past with it and informs the next. Walking offers a space of interstices; a point of falling between past and future as the weight shifts forwards and simultaneously remains in the center. As I walked to the front of the church and along the field, I was both there, in every other step I had taken before this and also taking my place in a line reaching into the future. I watched my daughter watching me walk to the front of the church and much later I thought of schema forming and repeating and things moving without changing.

If, in dying, we bring the past and future into the present to give a consolidated whole to the other then this consolidation, perhaps, is not simply a "snapshot of a multiplicity" as Bergson would have it.<sup>65</sup> It is not a reduction of time to space or of movement to stillness. It is a process that offers a sense of the movement, or life, of that person that remains after they have gone just as much screendance offers a consolidation of movement, movement schema perhaps, rather than aiming "to record moments arbitrarily stolen from the performance."<sup>66</sup> The temporality of moving stillness is true of any dance perhaps, but screendance, unlike live dance, holds up the body *in* time, rather than creating a still picture of a body *in a* time, for us to experience again. In this sense screendance can be said to offer a structure of consolidation, like that that can occur in the time of dying, for it holds still a moment of moving time that can go beyond the time of its showing.

## Biography

Anna Macdonald is a moving image artist and scholar from the UK. She specialises in working directly with the public, finding ways to intensify and articulate people's experiences in ways that can be understood by others. Influenced by Mark Johnson's (2008) notion of bodily 'schema,' she is interested in using film to expose the emotional and conceptual resonance of simple actions such as, moving from 'here to there', 'unfolding' or 'getting slower'. Anna's work has been shown at galleries and festivals such as Athens Video dance project, Muestra Movimiento Audiovisual, Mexico, Home, Manchester, Art Currents, New York, Somerset House, London, Lightmoves, Ireland, Dascamdans, Belgium, Miden Festival, Greece, and VideodanzaBA, Argentina, and was nominated for the International Video Dance awards in Barcelona. Her work was selected as a flagship project for AHRC funded research into socially engaged art and she has published several articles about the body, time, and film.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Sherril Dodds, *Dance on Screen*, 33

<sup>2</sup> Sebastián Melo and Nicolás Salazar Sutil, "Exposed to Time," 144.

<sup>3</sup> Claudia Kappenberg, "An Interdisciplinary Reading," 187.

<sup>4</sup> Erin Brannigan, *Dancefilm*, 26.

<sup>5</sup> Laura Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second*; Mary Ann Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time*.

<sup>6</sup> Peggy Phelan, "Trisha Brown's Orfeo," Sandra Horton Fraleigh, *Dance and the Lived Body*.

<sup>7</sup> I have looked elsewhere at the idea of a moving stillness concerning the temporality of grief in an article called "Things that start slowly."

<sup>8</sup> Eivind Røssaak, *Between Stillness and Motion*, 14.

<sup>9</sup> Alphonso Lingis, speaking at *Risk and Regulation: Arts and Medical Humanities Conference*, Dartington Hall, Falmouth, June 2015.

<sup>10</sup> Justin Remes, *Motion(less) Pictures*, 11.

<sup>11</sup> *Wavelength* involves a static camera shot of a loft room where the camera continuously zooms forwards over 45 minutes.

<sup>12</sup> *Walk*, Macdonald.

<sup>13</sup> Smith and Dean, *Practice-led Research*, 6.

<sup>14</sup> *Singin' in the Rain*, Donen and Kelly

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- 15 Inma Alvarez, "Time as a strand of the dance medium," 10.
- 16 Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, and *Cinema 2*.
- 17 Gary Peters, "Time to Die," 224.
- 18 Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 155.
- 19 See Brannigan, *Dancefilm*; Marisa Hayes, "Brief thoughts," and Kappenberg, "An Interdisciplinary Reading."
- 20 Anna Mendes, "The Time that Remains," 166.
- 21 Peters, 224.
- 22 Lingis, *The Community*, 178-179.
- 23 Yve Lomax, "Thinking Stillness," 55.
- 24 Caroline Garland, *Understanding Trauma*, 25.
- 25 Mendes, 166.
- 26 Robert Mackay, *The Medium of Contingency*, 1.
- 27 Lomax, "Thinking Stillness," 56.
- 28 Hayes, "Brief thoughts," n.p.
- 29 Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second*, 69.
- 30 Amy Herzog, "Images of Thought and Acts of Creation," 4.
- 31 Melo and Sutil, 161.
- 32 *There is a Place*, McPherson.
- 33 Pearlman, *Cutting Rhythms*, 52.
- 34 Peters, 5.
- 35 Jacob Potemski, "Revisiting Michael Snow's *Wavelength*," 10.
- 36 I am aware here of the resonance this has with Heidegger's subject as it "looks ahead to its own death" (Brent Adkins, *Death and Desire*, 6).
- 37 Phelan, 17.
- 38 Anna Macdonald, "Holding and Curation," 53.
- 39 David Loy, "Saving Time," 275.
- 40 Lingis, "Bodies that Touch Us," 164.
- 41 *Ibid.*
- 42 Thomas Carl Wall, "The Time-Image," 2.
- 43 Hayes, n.p.
- 44 Lomax, 30.
- 45 Mendes, 166.
- 46 Lingis, "Bodies that Touch Us," 166.
- 47 Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time*, 140.
- 48 Mendes, 165.
- 49 Lomax, 60.
- 50 Peters, 10.
- 51 Mendes, 166.
- 52 Michele Aaron notes "the spectre of heroism, grandeur or ineffability" that often accompanies films about dying. *Death and the Moving Image*, 158.
- 53 Dodds, 34.

- <sup>54</sup> Peters, 14.  
<sup>55</sup> Richard Rushton, *Cinema After Deleuze*, 5.  
<sup>56</sup> Daniel Smith, "Deleuze and Derrida," 123.  
<sup>57</sup> Deleuze quoted in Lomax 55.  
<sup>58</sup> Peters, 17.  
<sup>59</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>60</sup> Idem, 13.  
<sup>61</sup> Rosenberg, *Inscribing the Ephemeral Image*, 28.  
<sup>62</sup> Horton Fraleigh, *Dancing Identity*, 146.  
<sup>63</sup> Johnson, *The Meaning of the Body*.  
<sup>64</sup> Horton Fraleigh, *Dance and the Lived Body*, xxxv.  
<sup>65</sup> Melo and Sutil, 152.  
<sup>66</sup> Idem, 159.

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