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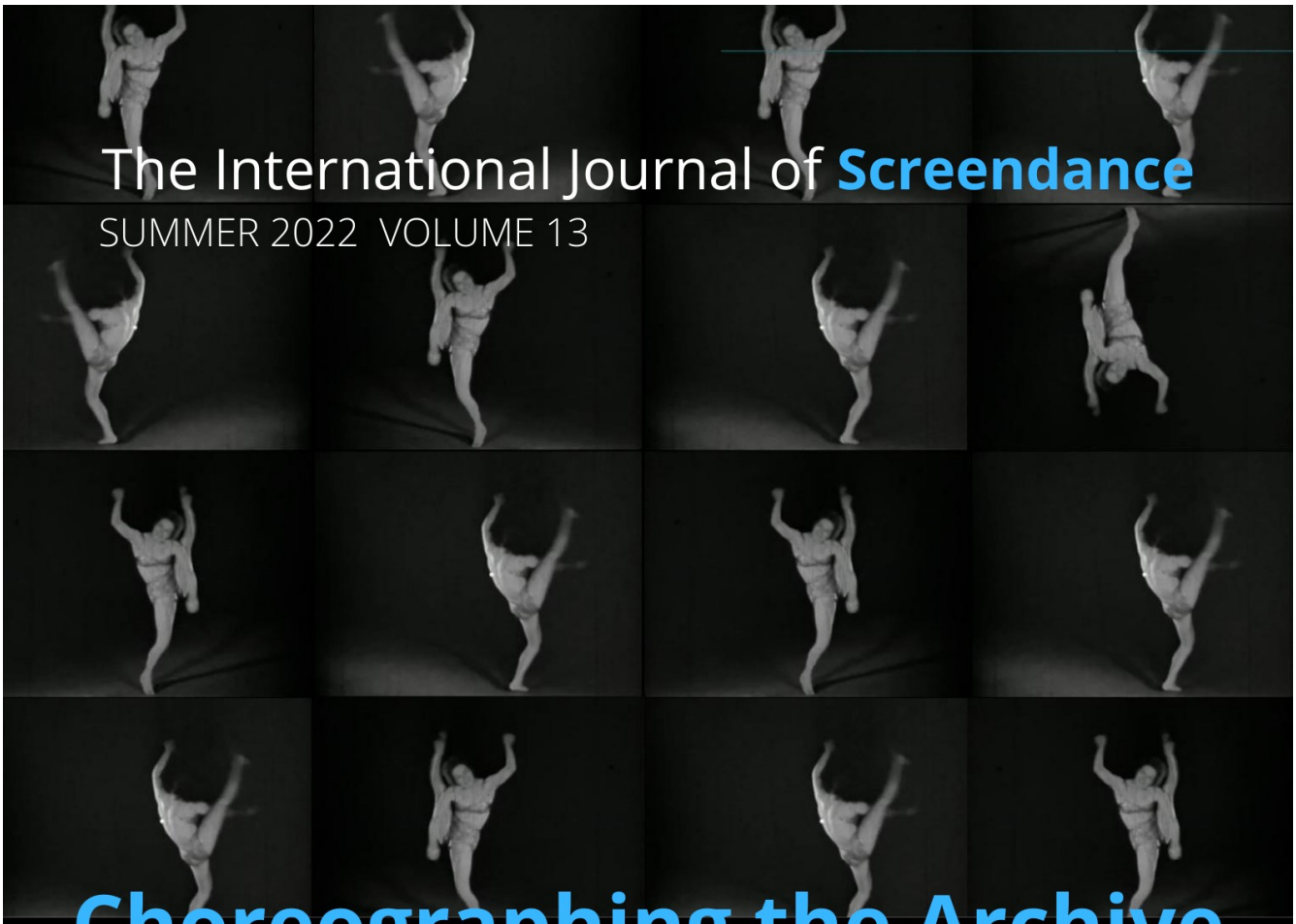

Choreographing the Archive

Interfaces between Screendance and Archival Film Practices

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Editorial: Volume 13

Kyra Norman

This volume of the International Journal of Screendance comprises material gathered in two ways: papers, and a curated gallery of images, responding to a given theme, and papers submitted in response to an open call. The intention, with this approach, is:

- to expand our editorial team, and the range of perspectives we share in these pages, by inviting guest editors to propose a topic that they feel has a relevance to the field, to put out a call for papers, and to then curate selected submissions around that theme, creating a lively, multi-voiced conversation

- to maintain a space for artists, researchers, curators and activists engaged in screendance to write on a subject of their choosing – without the need to fit a particular theme, other than - of course - relevance to screendance as a field of practices

The theme for this issue is Choreographing the Archive, and on the next pages I'll hand over to the editors of that section, Marisa Hayes and Luisa Lazzaro, to give their introduction.

Broad themes currently being discussed by the Editorial Board for future issues include Pedagogies, and Sound: if you would be interested in contributing on one or more of these topics, or helping to curate one of these sections, or proposing another potential theme for a future issue, get in touch.

If you would like to submit a paper for our Open section, simply follow the Submission guidelines online. For any support with this process, contact us.

Having been involved with IJSD since the start, for me the strength of this publication project has always been the sense of being engaged in collaborative thinking alongside one another, however far apart we (all contributors to each issue, in whatever capacity) may be - geographically, or even conceptually - enjoying the sometimes startling differences in our ideas, approaches and frames of reference as much as the happy convergences of thought and vision. I also really value the collective willingness within the Editorial Board and wider community of supporters to change course, question, rethink, and continually test new ways of making this work. This flexibility seems essential for the Journal to

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continue to be a space where individual lines of enquiry and thought meet, to be deepened, challenged and enriched through discussion and debate. Volume 12 of IJSD, *This is Where We Dance Now,* invited those engaged in the field of screendance to consider the potential of the particular 'now' of the Covid-19 pandemic – a lengthened moment that, in 2022, continues to invite us to rethink past assumptions and understandings, as well as to imagine and dream toward possible futures. The papers published here via our open submission process share a desire, and highlight the need, to rethink and to dream – in disparate ways. What new 'lenses' might we use to reconsider established ways of seeing?

Our Reviews for this issue reflect on new publications, *Dancing Women: Choreographing Corporeal Histories of Hindi Cinema* by Usha Iyer (2020) and *Screendance from Film to Festival: Celebration and Curatorial Practice* by Cara Hagan (2022): two valuable additions to the growing body of literature at the intersection of dance and screen cultures. This section also includes two reports from symposia, *Body And Lens International Screen(ing) Dance Festival and Seminar 2022* and *State of the Art: International Screendance Symposium 2022*, gatherings in India and USA respectively. Each of these documents summarises diverse offerings of thought on the current questions and priorities for our field, and also - in bringing people together - these events recognise our need to gather (in person and online) to share, discuss, challenge, puzzle over, propose, and even lie down alongside, ideas that might spark new ways of engaging with screendance practice.

In closing, we thank Ohio State University for their ongoing support and commitment to IJSD's digital platform and distribution. We thank the contributors to this issue for working with us and generating thought-provoking texts. On a personal note, I want to thank guest editors Marisa and Luisa for bringing their insight, focus and care to the editing process: it's been a pleasure to collaborate with them both on this volume. Lastly, I thank the Editorial Board for their encouragement and reliable presence through the life cycle of producing this volume, and indeed through the longer, ongoing cycle of my own journey as an artist and researcher. As I step down as Editor this year, I look back on the journey of this journal so far, and am reminded of an early meeting where a small typo briefly framed our nascent grouping as one of 'artists and researchers enraged in screendance'. This was hastily amended to the intended word, 'engaged', but not without some consideration that the original might sometimes be more accurate. I mention this because, from the outset, it has seemed to me to be a strength of the journal and the team that surrounds it that we work from a place of passion, and with humour; it feels appropriate to end this Editorial by reminding myself – and you, the reader – that we can take our subject, and ourselves as artists, scholars, curators, activists, both lightly and seriously at the same time.

Kyra Norman

Biography

Kyra Norman is a dance-trained artist and researcher working with movement, connection and place, on screen and in live contexts. She lives in Cornwall, UK. https://www.kyranorman.co.uk

Choreographing The Archive: Interfaces Between Screendance & Archival Film Practices

Marisa C. Hayes and Luisa Lazzaro

Introduction: Returns And Reinvention

"I believe that ghosts are a part of the future." – Jacques Derrida[1]

Over the last 20 years, with the advent of social media and online platforms, archives have taken a variety of forms and functions. Historically, archives were stored away, conserved and seldom seen, but today, thanks to online sharing, archives are more widespread and prevalent in daily discourse. Moreover, since the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdowns, it is by no means a coincidence that archives have enjoyed a renaissance within many artistic disciplines. Artists have had the time and mental space to look back at bodies of work and many have chosen to delve into past or unfinished projects while confined to domestic quarters.

The title for this section, "Choreographing the Archive - Interfaces between Screendance and Archival film practices," finds its origin in those screendance films which adopt a choreographic approach in their treatment of archival material. From this viewpoint, in the words of Anna Heighway, dance is perceived as "a flexible concept"[2] and "choreography as a transposable process."[3]

The thematic section explores a range of archival approaches and was initially imagined as a space for reflection on the growing number of international screendance projects created from archival and found footage[4]. However, the papers submitted here reflect a much wider framework of research beyond the archive as source material that inspire readers to question the very notion of the archive itself.

What is an archive? Dictionaries will tell us "the place where records are kept." The Western imagination will likely conjure images of great libraries where documents are classified and safely stored. But longstanding global traditions also demonstrate that sound, movement, thoughts and memories are powerfully lodged within the body as archive, serving as a site of cultural transmission and transformation. As a result, our understanding of the archive is currently undergoing a number of important shifts.

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First, the growing acknowledgement of how indigenous cultures and the African diaspora have contributed to archival practices and philosophy has guided our perception away from viewing the archive as a fixed object of the past. This replaces the rigid dichotomies of past/present and traditional/contemporary into a less linear approach that sees the body as a living archive where past, present and potential futures all intersect. Additionally, the present era continues to raise questions regarding the rise of media archeology and digital archives. How do electronic archival storage and access provide filtered returns to the past that result in new visions?

In the late 20th century, Jacques Derrida was one of the first Western thinkers to question the nature of the archive, underscoring that archives generate a practice of abandoning as much as they do a practice of conserving. In this sense, Derrida described how being and haunting converge to disrupt the present and remind us of possible futures. In a similar fashion, with editing at the heart of most screendance archival compositions, the tension between absence and presence enters into constant dialogue. Blas Payri provides an overview of editing techniques and effects that contribute to this temporal dislocation of the archive by returning to unscripted films of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. His article provides an overview of various movement motifs facilitated by early editing effects and how they continue to offer dynamic choreographic possibilities to archival filmmakers today.

Keeping within Derridean territory Luisa Lazzaro's article analyzes Miranda Pennell's use of deconstruction as part of the artist's compositional method, adopted in relation to personal archival images and those from the archive of the oil company British Petroleum (BP) in her film *The Host*. Pennell's perfomative and editing approach to archival stills allow her and viewers to shift among different temporal and spatial dimensions. The paper highlights opposites that Pennell explores within and outside of the images.

An interview with Astero Styliani Lamprinou offers insights into the integration of archival images featuring the city of Brussels from the 1900s with purposely filmed footage in her screendance work, *Secret City* (2020). The archival stills in Secret City empahsize the element of non-chronological time and provide a new perception of the past. Similarly, choreographer Jacopo Jenna provides a new return to images and footage he amalgamates from different web sources and periods of time as explained in Ariadne Mikou's in-depth study of his choreographic practice. Mikou also reflects upon the wider question of ownership and copyright of archival materials in the act of "borrowing" as part of choreographic process.

As co-editors of this section we too have "borrowed" images to create a gallery of archival stills from films by various international artists. We have featured a number of contemporary artists (Camille Auburtin, Franck Boulègue, Billie Cowie

and Gabriela Alcofra, Becky Edmunds, Salvatore Insana, Stuart Moore and Kayla Parker, Rapahel Montañez Ortiz, Carla Oppo) who approach archival material in different ways: exploring autoethnographic memory, news and historic archival footage, integrating archival material form different sources, time frames and formats, as well as experimentation with cutting archival material. We would like to express our gratitude to the contributing artists for their collaboration and the permission to publish their images here.

Shifting towards a wider understanding of the archive and the roles it plays in contemporary screendance, Sonia Yorke-Pryce's paper investigates the aging body as a site of archival material and challenges aesthetics of western dance culture by revisiting her own stage work, *Tristesse* leading to the development of the film *Does the Dancing Have to Stop?* Jeannette Ginslov provides additional insights into new approaches to archival material in screendance by describing a collaborative research practice that focuses on creating an archive of dancers' emotive states and embodied memories, which are further expanded via interactions with software technology.

Finally, Kaixuan Yao applies French philosophy to broaden our understanding of the archive and its potentialities in an analysis of the nostalgic affect of cine-choreographies within two narrative films and their "corporeal" access to specific historical events (the Cold War and the German Autumn).

While dance is often mislabeled as an ephemeral art form, gone within an instant; images tend to be considered on the opposite end of the spectrum, as a lasting resource capable of freezing time. While both of these commonly held assumptions are oversimplified and often overturned by dance and visual studies scholars, use of the archive further complicates the temporal relationship between artistic media. As a result, creative processes and temporality in relation to archival material are shared elements among all contributions to this section. The papers published here reveal the interconnectivity between time and archival material in unexpected ways that demonstrate diverse relationships to circularity, ephemerality and permanence that amplify what the present, past and future may look or feel like. True to the nature of the archive's capacity to question the nature of time, the films discussed within this section provide additional layers of movement, both within and of the image, interweaving potential futures amidst their embodied and embedded historicities.

We would like to extend our warm thanks to the board of the *ISJD* for their support of this thematic section, with particular gratitude to Kyra Norman for her generosity and assistance as journal editor.

Biographies

Marisa C. Hayes is an interdisciplinary Franco-American maker and thinker based in Paris. Currently, her research explores ecology and the Anthropocene within the

performing arts and moving images. She has contributed articles and chapters to *The International Journal of Screendance*, *Alternatives Théâtrales*, *The Oxford Handbook of Screendance Studies* (ed. Douglas Rosenberg), *La Septième Obsession, Dance Magazine,* and *Dance International*. A chapter from her master's thesis on screendance pedagogy at La Sorbonne was also published in the book series *La creación híbrida en videodanza* (Mexico).
the book *Art in Motion: Current Research in Screendance* (Cambridge Scholars, 2015). Since 2016, Marisa has served as editor in chief of the dance research journal *Repères, cahier de danse* at La Briqueterie, National Choreographic Development Center. Her first monograph was published by Liverpool University Press in 2017 and analyzes the use of Butoh dance and Japanese theatre in Takeshi Shimizu's film, *Ju-on.* She is the founding co-director of the Festival International de Vidéo Danse de Bourgogne, which is currently preparing its 14th edition. Marisa travels regularly to teach and speak about screendance at art institutions and within higher education (the Louvre, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Theater Freiburg, the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, Inchicore College, Dublin; and the Hanoi Cinematheque, Vietnam; among others.). Her own films, created in collaboration with Franck Boulègue, have been screened internationally.

Luisa is an Anglo-Italian artist and a movement professional with a keen interest in film. Following a career in performance she began experimenting with film in 2009 and pursued this interest, obtaining an MA screendance from London Contemporary Dance School in London in 2020. During the MA she became particularly interested in editing archive material, a historical screening as part of the student-led screendance festival Frame Rush 2019, and edited a series of archive-based films to mark The Place's 50th year anniversary. Luisa collaborates as a film maker with dancers and choreographers, filming and editing a series of short films that have been exhibited internationally in festivals and galleries. Recently Luisa was invited to guest co-edit (together with Marisa Hayes) the section "Choreographing the Archive - Interfaces between Screendance and Archival Film Practices" for The International Journal of Screendance. Luisa is currently completing a Netflix-led training course (via Safe Sets) for the position of Intimacy Coordinator for Italian TV and film, and is relocating to Italy to start working on a series. She will also be continuing her independent research in Screendance.

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1 Jacques Derrida in *Ghost dance*, director Ken McMullen, Channel Four Television,1983.

2Heighway Anna, "Understanding The "Dance" In Radical Screendance", *The International Journal of Screendance*, Vol.4 (12-03-2014): p.51

3 Heighway Anna, "Understanding The "Dance" In Radical Screendance", *The International Journal of Screendance*, Vol.4 (12-03-2014): p.46

4 Following volume 7 of the *IJSD* dedicated to David Hinton and Siobhan Davies' film *All This Can Happen* (2013), created entirely from archival photographs and film footage.

Erratum
9/13/2022: Corrected author's name to Kaixuan Yao.

‘Meta-Choreographies’ Between The Desktop And The Stage

Ariadne Mikou

Abstract

How does one re-use pre-existing material in order to form an expanded choreographic practice of relating to audio-visual archive without being considered of stealing or lacking originality? Copying, re-using and appropriation, not innocent from copyright implications but often entrapped in the modernist myth of originality, are practices that have been enhanced by the growth of the digital archive available on the internet and the expansion of the online public space. In light of this surge that challenges the body-to-body dance transmission, this text analyzes copying, re-use and appropriation as forms of citation, both audio-visually and corporeally, through the work of the Italian choreographer, performer, educator and filmmaker Jacopo Jenna who connects fragments of pre-existing works to create unexpected visual and corporeal associations that prompt us to re-think the dance canon. His work, based on a meta-choreographic and meta(dance)cinematic technique, moves between screen and stage, two-dimensional and three-dimensional space and brings into dialogue immaterial bodies and gestures stored in our collective memory with flesh bodies on stage. But, what issues and possibilities does this practice of disembodied transmission from screen-to-body entail?

Keywords: appropriation art, body archive, citation, copyright, disembodied transmission, found choreography, found footage, imitation, meta-art

Introduction

Since the burgeoning of appropriation art in the 1980s, mixing and re-contextualization of existing objects, images, and sounds have gained recognition as a legitimate practice with the potential to produce counter-narratives, institutional critique, political and cultural subversions. Furthermore, the advent of the internet around the 1990s, besides radically changing communication and information sharing processes, had a profound impact on the culture of distribution, archiving, accessing and often appropriating the content of pre-existing audio-visual material through free online circulation or even pirate techniques. In the performing arts, social media and video sharing platforms like YouTube and Vimeo offer storage for audio-visual artefacts, changing how dance can circulate, be promoted and travel across time and distant geographic locations.

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Archival footage, trailers, full-length and excerpts of dance performances, choreographies adapted for the screen or dance films, documentaries and music videos, all inhabit public online space. Dance classes, choreographic routines, dance and movement tutorials found on the internet further trouble the body-to-body transmission of dance by circulating dance from the screen to dancing bodies and vice versa. This digital library[1] of audio-visual material is the toolbox and the point of reference for a number of artists including the Italian choreographer, performer, educator and filmmaker Jacopo Jenna, who engages with it through a practice of creative and playful appropriation.

I first came across Jenna's work towards the end of the first quarantine back in 2020 through an online viewing dedicated to the outcome of the educational workshop *Lo Spettacolo Più Bello del Mondo*[2]. I immediately appreciated his skills in creatively assembling into an uninterrupted audio-visual conversation fragments of existing discourses as well as found footage, movement material purposely made or adapted in response to it, and excerpts from the workshop that took place entirely through the video communication software Zoom. The choreographic thinking and the research process that are exposed in *Lo Spettacolo Più Bello del Mondo* have been refined in *Some Choreographies* (2020)[3], a two-part solo performance in which contemporary dancer Ramona Caia builds a dialogue with audio-visual material of found choreography and footage projected on a large screen. A section of the screened work may also stand alone under the name *Found Choreographies*[4] and together with *Some Choreographies* that exposes issues of choreographic authoriality, as I will analyze later in the text, are the main works I will focus on.

Image 1: Ramona Caia re-producing a tutting sequence from a tutorial

in *Some Choreographies.* Credit: Photo by courtesy of Jacopo Jenna.

Kinetic Experiments: *Found Choreographies* And *Some Choreographies*

The creative technique behind *Found Choreographies* lies in the association of fragments from found moving images of different dance styles and genres, movement "languages" and movement-based practices, that are linked into a continuity of movement; into a "kinetic matter" as Jenna claims[5]. The footage is composed of excerpts that derive from early modern dance pioneers (for instance, Loie Fuller, Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn) and several postmodern choreographers. It is combined with ballet, ethnic and popular dance forms, and it expands into emblematic scenes from cinema and recent footage from the pandemic. These moving images are juxtaposed through association and continuity and build up to a visual escalation that begins with a hand gesture from Ingmar Bergman's film *Persona*, gradually and fluidly passing into the primordial collective pattern of circularity and human sculptings before reaching an energetic sequence of movements. It ends symbolically through the transportation of the lying body in the savasana pose and the rituals of death (mourning, procession and cremation).

The well-organized bricolage of *Found Choreographies* highlights striking similarities between different dance genres or choreographies. This *quasi* universality of movements, evocative of Alan Lomax's controversial ethnographic film *Dance and Human History* (1974), may be considered a result of both the limitations and the richness of the imagination and the moving body, as well as a repercussion of the *body techniques*[6] that are unconsciously inherited through social, cultural and digital interactions and that are nowadays enabled and expanded through social media. In *Found Choreographies*, the movement progresses from one clip to another and from one body type and identity to another – identities of gender, race and ethnicity, and bodies with different levels of acquisition of a dance technique. As a consequence, cross-cultural and cross-genre influences are revealed between aesthetically distant dance genres that are usually considered in friction (theatrical dance versus commercial dance or ritual practices). This becomes more evident, for instance, through the sequential and almost provocative association between Vaslav Nijinsky's *L'Après-midi d'un Faune* and voguing through the connection of flexed hands and angular arms. As Jenna claims, in the editing process, there is also an ethical side that questions "how to build associations without offending a culture, a community or an individual by the very act of association?"[7].

Technically speaking, the editing process is a reminder of Maya Deren's choreographic editing based on movement continuity between different locations, as exemplified in *A Study in Choreography for Camera* (1945), which is also included as a fragment in *Found Choreographies.* Following this paradigm, the

editing takes advantage of shared gestures among different dance styles and the continuity that may emerge in terms of the flow of dynamics, energy, space transitions, floor patterns and group formations. Jenna does not merely place different clips one after the other, but he probes an inquiry into the uninterrupted flow of movement both visually and corporeally. Creating continuities between video fragments enables him to compose a choreography for the stage that is afterwards given to the dancer to be embodied; much like Merce Cunningham used to do with the Lifeforms software or the 16th-century choreographers in France, who were using signs to write movement on paper that dancers had to consequently interpret[8]. In Jenna's choreographic process for *Some Choreographies*, which constitutes a performative approach to *Found Choreographies,* the dancer verifies kinetically the feasibility of the choreographic sequence, initially composed on his desktop, by transforming a two-dimensional image into a three-dimensional spatial experience, and if necessary the editing is updated.

Image 2: Ramona Caia replicates Mary Wigman's *Witch Dance* (1926) in *Some Choreographies.* Credit: Photo by courtesy of Jacopo Jenna.

In *Some Choreographies*, video excerpts on the projected screen and their incorporation by the single dancer interplay with each other. The screen provides information; it is the mirror to reproduce and embody a form, a movement or a gesture that is inscribed on its surface. In this process, the projected material stands as a reminder to the expert eye and at the same time as a source of information to the lay spectator. Both recognize the moving images stored in our collective memory, and the continuity and the connection of the flesh body on

stage with the immaterial bodies on the screen as the solo dancer embodies and transforms in (an uninterrupted) choreographic sequence the information depicted on the screen. The dancer becomes the site of fusion between different dance traditions, cultures and visual landscapes. She reenacts them by transgressing spatio-temporal limits and gender binaries while the screen reveals a type of *exquisite corpse*[9] in the form of a kinetic sequence of discrete clips that becomes materialized through uncompleted gestures that gradually build into a whole. The dance performer with her back to the screen offers a neutral interpretation of a nevertheless challenging process that entails failure and success in the practice of imitation that, in turn, reveals the human side of not being able to reproduce with precision what is depicted on the screen.

Although both *Found Choreographies* and *Some Choreographies* exhibit creativity in choreographic association and motion, as well as aesthetic and cultural values, the work, as I will analyze next, may introduce legal issues when seen through the lens of copyright protection laws.

Just A Second! Are We Talking About 'Stealing'?

Copyright protection laws usually shape a legislative framework for the arts to operate within and, inevitably, inhibit and complicate the practice of appropriation art, especially in view of economic profit and visibility. *Found Choreographies* and *Some Choreographies* involve risks up to a certain degree related to author- and owner-ship. Jenna's work, based on 'stealing' – to put it bluntly – of other artists' choreography and its documentation as intellectual property, is enabled by the availability, circulation and accessibility of the digitized material. Besides this, the 'stolen' or the 'borrowed' fragments are extracted from a cohesive whole and they are disarticulated from their original context. They are also embodied by a professional contemporary dancer who nevertheless has a limited affinity to most popular and entertainment dance genres and styles depicted on the screen. Therefore, at a closer look, issues both in relation to performance as well as dance and filmmaking become evident as the artist extracts (cuts-and-pastes), manipulates and detaches a part and an instance of a whole choreography reproduced on film[10]. In other words, the choreography fixed on film or video enables the copyright law protection to be applied, and through this lens, Jenna's creative approach raises issues of appropriation in the practice of appropriation as art-making.

Collage and photomontage, Marcel Duchamp's ready-mades, Andy Warhol's re-use of consumer products and Guy Debord's ideas about *détournement* (author's emphasis) are often considered precursors of appropriation art, the art form that creatively combines pre-existing material. Since then, numerous projects have operated within the framework of appropriation art. Significant examples of moving images include the durational works of *24 Hour Psycho* (1993) by Douglas Gordon, *The Clock* (2011) by Christian Marclay and the feature film *Final Cut*

Ladies and Gentlemen (2012) by György Pálfi – all works that are entirely based on films directed by others[11]. For those who have the possibility to watch the Italian state TV (RAI 3), *Blob* is another influential example of audio-visual and satire-based appropriation that depends on the re-use (re-editing) of fragments from TV news, broadcasts and footage found on the web. Since 1989, it has been a daily part of Italian TV, and its founders are a group of well-known cinema critics, including Enrico Ghezzi and Marco Giusti. As these examples point out, the *meta art* (author's emphasis), the art that comes after, "depends upon some previous work of art – and thereby implicitly or explicitly stands in a citational relationship to that earlier work"[12]. Without disregarding that the film industry holds strict copyright rules, metacinema and metatelevision – audio-visual genres that gradually gain visibility as theoretical discourses –, are dependent on the appropriation of pre-existing material.

In dance, however, the long history of cultural appropriation[13] – that has benefited the already privileged and has marginalized invisible and traumatized communities and individuals –, and the push of the market for originality and innovation have created contradictory connotations to appropriation as both a phenomenon and as a conscious, yet rare, artistic practice in conceptual dance[14]. Furthermore, the embodied transmission in dance creates specific hierarchies and restrictions, and to a certain degree, can offer advantages in the process of acquiring a style, a technique or a practice that are omitted when a movement is reproduced through the screen. The corporeal transmission through the body-as-archive has enabled dance forms to survive across time both ontologically and economically. In addition, the institutionalization of the repertory by dance companies, choreographers and their trustees who can afford to operate within the economy of protection as possessing, imposes various degrees of control over who is eligible to embody past works and under which circumstances. Although there are notable differences in the licensing of the embodiment of the choreographic archive in cases such as the Pina Bausch Foundation, Martha Graham and Trisha Brown dance companies and the Merce Cunningham Trust – whose materials have been included in *Some Choreographies* –, the corporeal transmission from dancers with first-hand experience in dancing and working closely with a company choreographer remains predominant. Considering this frame that strives for originality and lineage and where the video archive serves mostly as an aide-memoire, Jenna challenges in *Some Choreographies* the hierarchical ways of knowledge transmission that are based on inter-corporeality, thus the physical exchange and interaction between bodies. In this way, he destabilizes the foundations of corporeal dance transmission by promoting an unauthorized screen-to-body transmission.

Let's Be Honest: We All 'Steal' From Each Other

Dance is usually transmitted by a master to a pupil even in its most exploratory or commercial forms, and repetition through imitation is a fundamental way of

learning through the activation of mirror neurons. Nevertheless, rupturing the corporeal transmission by the body-as-archive[15] and taking advantage of dance transmission through the screen, thus learning through copying and imitating a rather intangible body, is part of a growing practice that aims to democratize contemporary dance and its archive(s). For instance, the *f*ABULEUS Rosas Remix Project[16], as well as the NELKEN-Line project, promote re-interpretations of key moments from Anna Teresa de Keersmaeker's *Rosas Danst Rosas* (1983) and Pina Bausch's *Nelken* (1982) by encouraging the embodiment of the choreographic material by anyone through copying from the screen. *Some Choreographies* also builds on the accumulated experience of Jenna in facilitating the educational project *Désir Mimétique* (2017–2020), which explores imitation as a practice of building knowledge.

The tendency in contemporary dance of copying through the screen also grew during the recent pandemic with the shift of dance from physical sites to online social spaces. On these occasions, the screen served as a medium to support choreographic transmission from a distance through imitation as a point of departure. However, this practice that gradually gains popularity and dominates the visual experience while minimizing sensorial and most importantly tacit ways of learning dance, is not entirely new. Historical reconstructions promote a dance like the one portrayed in the video archive and not long ago, first VHS cassettes and later DVDs served as a means for watching performances at home and with some practice, to even learn and perform a dance by imitation from the classical repertoire. The music channel MTV, established in the United States in 1981, was also crucial in assisting in the learning of choreographic sequences from music videos. Last but not least, the act of mimicry has been predominant in the culture of video games in which the video players reproduce the movement depicted on screen.

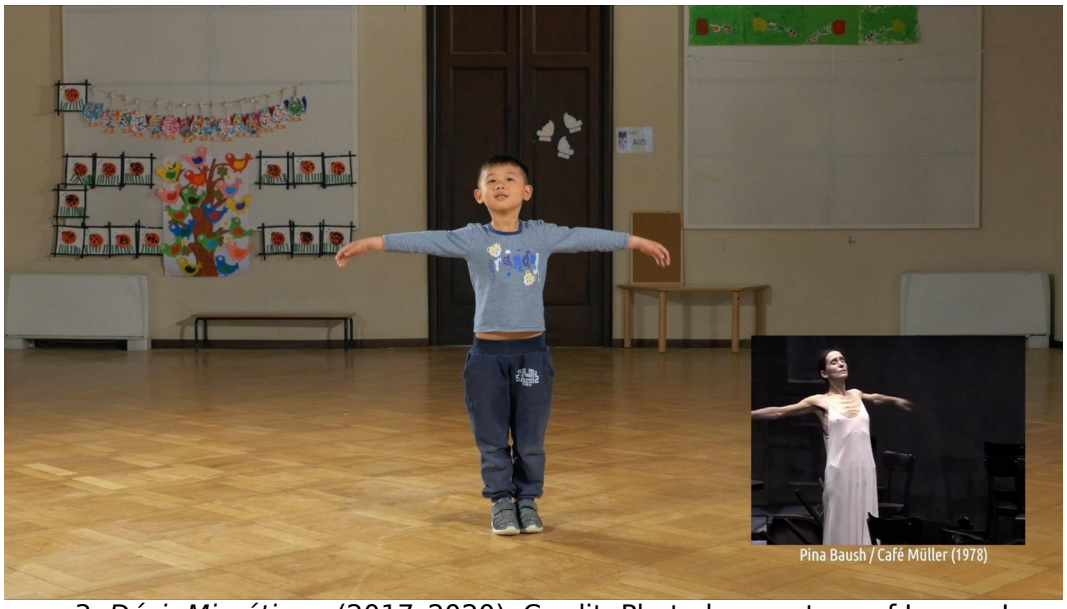

Image 3: *Désir Mimétique* (2017–2020). Credit: Photo by courtesy of Jacopo Jenna.

Jenna, both a filmmaker and choreographer, exposes the existing tendency of copying through the screen by placing video fragments as citations and their embodiments at the center of his practice[17] and in particular in *Some Choreographies*. As noticed by Isabelle Launay in speaking about the inherent paradox in the disassociation of the reference from its origin, the citation in dance "is both a site at which a transmission takes place and the site of transmission's impossibility"[18] since the inter-corporeal relation is absent. This paradox in the citation as a fragment with an explicit origin, is, therefore, what allows the transformation of the original source and the pre-existing material, which also enhances its evolution, relevance and adaptation to the present. I understand the use of citations as a network of (movement) thoughts that serve as points of entrance to the intellectual universe of others and remind us that we do not operate inside a vacuum; thoughts and ideas are recycled, expanded, disappear and re-emerge. The citation is what allows a discourse to be enriched and grow and, in the case of Jenna's accumulative citation technique, it deprives the work of copyright implications or at least it places it in a discourse of fair use and meta-art, as it suggests a creative and playful bricolage where the origins of the work are traceable. As suggested by David LaRocca in his introduction to *Metacinema* (2021),

> Instead of encountering a stand-alone work of art, meta-art opens up a museum; rather than reading a novel, metafiction insists on a library; quite apart from watching a single film, an audience for metacinema is directed to consider the full expanse of cinematic history.

Through this lens, Jenna encourages the viewer to recall the various references that comprise his work and to trace the threads of his *meta-choreographic work* (author's emphasis) into the history of dance and cinema. Therefore, the point of his *meta-choreography* becomes that movement material is recycled and recontextualized against modernist beliefs that aim to confine creativity in the myth of originality.

Final Thoughts Instead Of Conclusion

Closing this brief analysis that has attempted to place Jenna's practice into the lineage of appropriation art and to free his (meta-)choreographic bricolages from potential copyright and ethical implications, it is important to make a few final observations by posing the following questions:

- What kind of artistic, cultural and aesthetic values did the moving images in *Found Choreographies* have before becoming connected to each other, specifically referring to distinctions of "high" and "low" art in dance?
- What values do they gain when placed one after the other through kinetic continuity on the screen, as a performance, and as a meta-choreography?
- What values do these fragments give back to the *original* works (author's emphasis) and the individual artists?
- What values do these fragments obtain when we re-view them in their full context, either live or in documented form? Do the fragments of the meta-choreographic prompt us to re-discover their original context?

The contribution of the specific artist, as well as the practice of re-choreographing the archive lies in the potential subversion or re-evaluation of the canon in dance history. As the Greek dance artist-scholar Stella Dimitrakopoulou affirms, "contemporary choreographers [...] through remix take the writing of history in their own hands and thus become curators of dance and dance history"[19]. Through this lens, the practice of appropriation art has the potential to shift conventions taken for granted and power dynamics that are implied in the archive as a fixed entity. Exploring, choreographing and performing the archive, both as an educational and artistic practice, helps to increase the value of the invisible or the marginalized through a network of new continuities and affinities that re-attribute new values as long as they operate from a perspective of respect and care. As Jenna reminds us, through the title of one of his recent works, "imitation is the sincerest form of flattery"[20]; copying, using and citing existing material is an honest way to express admiration and honor an artist. Dancing with the archive offers a model of building knowledge of dance as a cultural manifestation both for the doer and the viewer who attest to an existing pedagogical and performance practice that is based on the reconfiguration, re-use and embodiment of the archive.

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Biography

Ariadne Mikou is a Greek dance artist-scholar based in Italy. With a background as an architect and choreographer, her research is focused on the social forms that emerge from the crossover between corporeal, spatial and screen-based arts. She publishes interviews and reviews; contributes to academic journals and book anthologies that explore screendance issues and expanded choreographic practices, community making and site interventions and she also creates choreographic scores. She is co-founder of futuremellon/NOT YET ART, an art collective that enables her to expand her choreographic and curatorial explorations. She also holds a PhD in interdisciplinary choreographic research that was fully funded by the University of Roehampton (London) and a Master of Fine Arts in Dance from The Ohio State University (USA) supported by the State Scholarships Foundation of Greece (IKY/Erasmus/Erasmus+) and a Graduate Teaching Assistantship. In 2021, she was awarded a Research Grant for the Creative Europe project *Dancing Museums-The Democracy of Beings* from Ca' Foscari University of Venice where she is also a Research Assistant for the SPIN project *Memory in Motion: Re-Membering Dance History* (2019–2022). She is also a selected artist for Creative Europe's *Migrating Artists Project-Challenging Dance and Cinema across Europe* (mAPs).

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1 For instance, French conceptual choreographer Jerome Bel has stated that “YouTube is our first library for the performing arts, it’s a new dispositif” (Tate, 2012).
2 The English translation of the title is *The Most Beautiful Show in the World*. The workshop was devised in collaboration with the Italian choreographer Marco D’Agostin and it concluded with two different audio-visual outcomes that were single-authored by each artist.
3 *Some Choreographies* is made in collaboration with the artist Roberto Fassone, who made a video of non-human choreographies for the second part of the live performance, and the sound designer Francesco Casciaro whose original sonic work also supports the logic of found audio. Both parts of *Some Choreographies* have recently been reviewed by emerging writers who attended this year’s Spring Forward festival in Greece which was supported by *Aerowaves Dance Across Europe* network. It is worth reading them on Springback Magazine as they provide a quick insight into the full work.
4 The fact that *Found Choreographies* may be presented independently from the performance is evidenced by its circulation in international film festivals such as 40th FIFA – Festival International du Film sur l’art in Montreal.
5 Online.

6 Mauss. These cross-cultural interactions have also been shaped through migration, slavery, cultural appropriation and colonialism.
7 Jenna, personal communication.
8 Lepecki, 2004.
9 A game and a collaborative technique adapted by surrealist artists. As a choreographic tool, it works as a kind of game telephone for receiving and transmitting a movement message. As a compositional device for the screen, it guides the editing in a sequence in which the beginning of each clip is based on the end of the previous one.
10 Speaking about the trace of choreographic work, Frederic Pouillaude claims that "it is important to remember that video does not document the work as such but only one of its instances (its performance on a given evening, on a given date, on a particular tour, and so on)" (Pouillaude, 241).
11 Particularly in screendance, the lineage of appropriation begins with David Hinton who is considered the father of found choreography (Delpeut online) and continues with the work of Miranda Pennell and Becky Edmunds among others. In the field of mixed media performance and video installation, independent choreographer Arkadi Zaides created *Capture Practice* and *Archive,* two works in which he reenacts the violent movements of Israelis who are depicted on the video archives of B'Tselem, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in The Occupied Territories. Also, *Dying on Stage* (2022) by Cypriot artist Christodoulos Panayiotou is a performance that employs approximately five hours of visual archival material on screen to explore the notion of death. Another example worth mentioning is the split-screen project *All She Likes is Popping Bubble Wrap* (2021) in which Greek dancer Ioanna Paraskevopoulou is seen performing the sound score for a 15-minute compilation of archival film excerpts.
12 David LaRocca, introduction.
13 The meaning of cultural appropriation may be summarized as the borrowing or copying of movements and dance styles without grasping knowledge of the culture, the history and the context from which they derive and operate. Plenty of examples ranges from 19th-century exotic ballets to early modern dance pioneers and choreographers of music videos. Cultural appropriation is characterized by superficial and aesthetic imitation that spices the narrative or a movement vocabulary usually of a privileged individual or institution, and it often involves a lack of engagement with or giving back to the community who ‘owns’ a specific dance form and it usually remains marginalized.
14 Examples of circulation of choreographic material within the culture of contemporary dance include: *The Last Performance* (1998) by Jérôme Bel that includes excerpts from Susanne Linke’s *Wandlung* (1978); Mårten Spångberg performing Steve Paxton’s *Goldberg Variation* in *Powered by Emotion* (2003); Xavier Le Roy immitating orchestra conductor Simon Rattle in *Le Sacre du Printemps* (2007); *The Hot One Hundred Choreographers* (2011) by Cristian Duarte and Rodrigo Andreolli where Duarte performs choreographic material from one hundred choreographers who influenced him more significantly; Stella

Dimitrakopoulou's *Frauen Danst Frauen* (2011) where two performers, including Dimitrakopoulou, try to learn the sitting sequence from *Rosas Danst Rosas* (1983).

15 Baxmann; Lepecki 2010; Bissell and Caruso Haviland.

16 It is relevant to remind the reader that the *f*ABULEUS Rosas Remix Project was initiated by Anna Teresa de Keersmaeker as a response to the videoclip of *Countdown* (2012) in which pop singer Beyoncé is seen reproducing moments from *Rosas Danst Rosas.* Back then, Beyoncé's "borrowing" raised a lot of discussion around the copyright implications of such an act.

17 Jenna has also worked with citation as a choreographic device in a previous work called *I wish I could dance like M.J.*. Part of this research includes the video *I was thinking about Merce Cunningham, but I Wish I Could Dance Like Michael Jackson* that juxtaposes videoclips with Michael Jackson with films by or archival footage with Merce Cunningham.

18 Launay, 5.

19 Dimitrakopoulou, 82.

20 art of "*Choreographies of Time. A Six-Step Survey*", curated by Susanne Franco, commissioned and sustained by the Italian Cultural Institute of Moscow in collaboration with the research project "Memory in Motion. Re-Membering Dance History" MNEMEDANCE.

Techniques Developed In Early Cinema To Edit And Choreograph Unscripted Footage

Blas Payri

Abstract

This article explores some of the editing and filming techniques developed in Early Cinema, and that are still valid when choreographing found footage today. The Lumière Brothers started revealing the choreographic nature of daily actions. Georges Méliès choreographed with editing by cutting, overlaying, dissolving and the substitution splice.

Fernand Léger applied looping and kaleidoscope effects to create new rhythms and patterns. Lev Kuleshov experimented with assembling together footage of different nature, creating new semantics. Dziga Vertov choreographed footage of different sources, theorizing the rhythmical editing. Leni Riefenstahl composed new movement trajectories with editing and inverting speed.

Keywords: Editing, montage, movement continuity, early cinema, screendance, unscripted footage, documentary, urban symphony, rhythmic editing, cinéma pur, pure cinema

This article proposes an analysis and re-discovery of the editing techniques that were explored in historic cinema, as those techniques still apply nowadays when creating a new work from archival footage. The main period of interest in this article is the decade of the 1920s, when many art forms underwent a period of radical experimentation, and in particular when many artists dedicated themselves to exploring the possibilities of the new art of cinema.[1] For instance, in the 1920's avant-garde artists such as Fernand Léger, Marcel Duchamp, René Clair and Germaine Dulac theorized and applied the concept of "cinéma pur" (pure cinema)[2], insisting on the importance of detaching cinema from narrative theatrical plays and literature in order to use purely cinematic elements of rhythmic editing, split screen, super-impositions and speed modifications. René Clair stated that "pure cinema" occurrs "as soon as a sensation is aroused in the viewer by purely visual means"[3]. This (mostly French) pure cinema used primarily recorded figurative footage, imposing new movements, rhythms and shapes through editing. This differs from other forms of abstract cinema developed primarily in Germany that used animated drawings.[4]

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This avant-garde movement of pure cinema is paramount in the development of films from archival footage, in particular when there is a choreographic intention of creating rhythm and movement. On one hand it proposed to further explore editing techniques to develop their full potential, and on the other hand, it proposed a new mind set: footage had to be seen for its abstract visual/movement properties and editing was a means to create abstract rhythm patterns and visual composition. In this sense, pure cinema rejected the creation of works based on a narrative script that implied a theatrical staging and filming of the script, and proposed to observe the movement and composition that arose from unscripted and non-staged footage.

The 1920s also represented a moment for the crystallization of film theory when many practitioners in the Soviet Union (such as Sergey Eisenstein or Lev Kuleshov, and of course Dziga Vertov, whose works and theories I will explore in greater detail) attempted to understand and formalize the language of cinema. For instance, Jean Rouch, a filmmaker-anthropologist that documented and analyzed ritual dances across the African continent in the 1960’s and 1970’s and remains very influential in the field of documentary cinema, indicated that his work "is based on experimentation with direct cinema, deriving from the theories, under the name cinéma-vérité, prophesized in 1927 by the Russian filmmaker Dziga Vertov."[5] Rouch points out that "kinopravda" (cinéma-vérité, or "film-truth") is "an ambiguous or self-contradictory expression since, fundamentally, film truncates, accelerates, and slows down actions, thus distorting the truth."[6]

Jean Rouch insisted on the opposition between working with unscripted footage, which was common to kinopravda and his anthropological activities, and working with scripted footage which prompts a very different editing process. In dance films and screendance, there is also a distinction between scripted and unscripted footage, and in this case the pre-existing choreography can act as a script. Some dance films simply capture the choreography as it is performed on stage, and others apply more sophisticated filming and editing, but the movement, time and structure are set by the choreography. On the opposite end of the spectrum, works of screendance based on pre-existing footage use editing techniques in order to "choregraph" the footage and create a new work with a new structure and rhythm. This footage can be considered unscripted material, even if it comes from a narrative fictional film or from a scripted dance, because the new work selects, assembles and cuts these disparate materials with a different intention from the original script. One of the main advantages when working with scripted material is the fact that the position of the actors or dancers and the framing of the camera are defined by the script and follow a logic intended for subsequent editing, taking into account movement continuity and direction, and the shot order.[7] The editor must then select their preferred takes from each shot and cut at the adequate moment. In contrast, the main challenge when editing unscripted material is discovering the potential movement commonality or continuity between shots that have not been recorded for a shared purpose.

Most creators whose techniques are studied in this article came from the world of documentary and communication, assembling unscripted footage to create newsreels or longer documentaries, such as Dziga Vertov, Walter Ruttmann in the 1920's, and later Leni Riefenstahl. As they needed to create coherent feature films from footage of sports, city streets, industrial machines, they developed an "eye" and techniques to detect the movement patterns, continuity and/or similarity of movement between different shots and built new meaning(s) via editing. Narrative editing as we know it today was developed primarily for scripted works, in particular by D.W. Griffith, (*The Birth of a Nation*, 1915), but in this article I am going to focus on artists who worked with unscripted footage. Other creators from the 1920s whose techniques I will analyze are related to "cinéma pur" and come from the visual arts and are related to cubism or abstract painting, such as Fernand Léger, or narrative fiction that were instrumental in creating an independent art cinema, such as Abel Gance.

In every instance, the aim of this article is to reveal and describe the editing techniques that apply to unscripted footage, rather than establish a history of the genre of archival-based screendance or the historical influences of different artistic currents.

Revealing The Choreographic Nature Of Daily Actions And Existing Movement: The Lumière Brothers

For many, the first task of the creator using unscripted footage is to perceive the movement within the footage and reveal its potentially choreographic nature. The first footage that the Lumière Brothers recorded in 1895 (France) was *La sortie de l'usine Lumière à Lyon* and is a perfect example of revealing the choreographic nature of a daily action: employees walking out of the factory at the end of their shift. First the women workers, then the managers all walking briskly due to the cold temperature, and finally the doors closing, are filmed in a single take of 45 seconds to 1 minute.[8] By capturing this daily action from a given angle and revealing its choreographic interest, the Lumière Brothers showed that the movement contained in unscripted movement could be as interesting as filming choreographed stage dance, for instance their footage of Loïe Fuller's choreography, *Danse Serpentine*.

In the "roaring twenties" avant-garde artists grew increasingly interested in the movement of urban life; for instance, Fernand Léger wrote in his 1924 essay *The Spectacle* that "the rhythm of modern life is so dynamic that a slice of life seen from a café terrace is a spectacle. The most diverse elements collide and jostle one another there."[9] A mass of people walking is also the choreographic subject found in *Manhatta* (USA 1921) and other urban symphonies, as well as in many recent screendance pieces where "individuals, couples and groups map a journey across time and space by walking in different paces and/or standing still; passengers become a performative ensemble which creates multiple trajectories

and random encounters."[10] Other daily activities have more organized and rhythmic patterns, that are easily converted into choreographic sequences: Some modern found choreographies reveal, for example, the "dances formed by the execution of certain physical works. This revelation of the choreographic effects of certain labors or sports activities is of course not new"[11]: it can be found to varying degrees in the works of René Clair, Leni Riefenstahl, Dziga Vertov, etc. In general, the unscripted footage of human masses in urban landscapes or human activities in industrial contexts became both a point of interest for the French avant-garde and Soviet artists[12], a time when industrialization was seen as a source of movement and human progress and the role of the filmmaker was to reveal the rhythm of this footage through editing.

Revealing The Choreographic Nature Of Machine Movements: From Gance To Vertov

La roue (*The Wheel*, France 1922) by Abel Gance marks several innovations in editing, and in the integration of mechanic movement as part of visual spectacle. "Its importance lies in the place it gives, for the first time in the history of cinema in this way, not only to mechanics, to the machine - in this case the railway - whose parts are shown in close-ups, which are detailed, but also to the cadence, to the rhythm of the machine as a model for editing."[13] "The most radical of Gance's many technical innovations, ...was the use of propulsive rhythms and metrical, frame-by-frame cutting to create perceptual paroxysms.[...] Gance's editing is founded not on dialectical collision but on the explosive power of image clusters, what he called *dynamite images*. His goal was to link images, both horizontally and vertically, in an ecstatic synthesis in which every constituent part played a necessary role. Lines of motion are emphatically contrasted with one another".[14] It is relevant to note that this type of editing is applicable to both scripted and unscripted footage, as the sensation of rhythm and energy arises from the contrast, acceleration, and use of shortened frame length, and that those techniques are perfectly applicable to unscripted footage, and therefore to screendance created from archival footage. "*La Roue* generated many subsequent radical experiments, starting with Léger's *Ballet mécanique* (France, 1924)."[15] It was a projection of extracts of *La Roue* in 1923 with pure mechanical movement, dances of wheels, rails and pistons, that stimulated Fernand Léger and René Clair[16] to make movement-based short films. *La Roue* also prompted an essay by Fernand Léger, where he theorizes his views on pure cinema:

> Abel Gance's film [*The Wheel*] has three states of interest that alternate in contrast - a dramatic state, a sentimental state, a plastic state. It is this plastic contribution that I will try to bring out [...]. This new element is presented to us with an infinite variety of means, under all its faces - close-ups, mechanical fragments, fixed

> or mobile, projected at an accelerated rhythm which touches the simultaneous state and which crushes, eliminates the human object, reduces it of interest, pulverizes it.
>
> Fernand Léger, 1925.[17]

Machine movement was a very popular theme in the arts at the beginning of the 20th century[18], as cities were bustling with new mechanical transportation and industrial machines impressed by their precision and speed. *Machinism* became a concept for avant-garde artists of the 1920's and Léger praises the fact that in *La roue* "the machine becomes the leading character"[19] We can find moving machines in Fernand Léger's *Ballet mécanique* (France 1924), where the title itself states the intention of revealing the choreographic nature of machines in movement and subordinating human movement to mechanical rhythms[20]. The "ballets" of streetcars are the main component of Walter Ruttmann's *Berlin, Symphony of a Great City* (Germany 1927), but in the case of Ruttmann's urban symphony, the streetcars tend to be filmed in wide shots that reveal the general movement of the ballet in their duration, while the footage used by Léger tends to use close-ups and an editing that imposes a rhythm.

Choreographing With Editing: Georges Méliès And Cutting, Changing Speed, Overlaying, Dissolving

Georges Méliès was a pioneer in the art of "special effects" and magical tricks in cinema. One of the techniques he developed is the **substitution splice** or **stop trick** (*arrêt de caméra*), a technique in which a scene is filmed, the camera stops recording, an element of the scene is changed, and then the camera starts recording again, making a magical appearance or disappearance of the modified element. Other techniques he developed were **multiple exposures**, time-lapse photography and changes of speed, **dissolves**, which allowed elements in parts of the frame to appear or disappear, to make a progressive transformation from one state to the other of a given character (cross dissolve) or to multiply subjects on screen.[21] Méliès used these techniques to create magical tricks, and in some cases, he created clear cine-choreographic developments, such as *L'homme orchestre* (*The One-Man Band*, France 1900) in which a man and chairs continue to multiply on screen, and the numerous iterations of the man have an organized collective movement. Today, these effects can be executed in postproduction and do not require in-camera editing.

Choreographing With Editing: Fernand Léger And Looping

In order to understand the possibilities offered by the repetition of a fragment of film in a loop, it is useful to refer to the musical realm, as looping was one of the

main new ways to create musical patterns in the early Tape Music or *Musique concrète* as devised by Pierre Schaeffer in the 1940s. One of the findings is that the duration or period of the loop carries perceptually different results[22]:

- A period (duration of the loop) inferior to 100ms results in the perception of a new timbre and frequency with what is named "grain" in electroacoustic music. It is important to note that we cannot freeze sound the same way that we can easily freeze the image by maintaining a frame as a static picture.
- When the period of the loop is above 100ms we start to perceive a pulse, a rhythmic figure that corresponds to the duration of the loop.
- When the period goes beyond 5 seconds, we perceive a (looping) phrase, where the internal events of the loop can be perceived and generate a pattern that is repeated.

This distinction can be applied to cinema, although the visual and auditory perception of rhythm are quite different. When we apply a very-short-period loop to a moving image we create a vibration, then, with longer periods we go from jerky movements to gestures, and when the loop exceeds 5 seconds, we perceive choreographic phrases.

The first systematic use of the loop in film is likely found in *Ballet mécanique* by Fernand Léger, who labeled it as a "plastic emotion obtained through the simultaneous projection of fragments of the image at an accelerated rate."[23] In this experimental work, we can find relatively short loops that create a pulsation and rhythms, new gestures, but also longer loops. In particular, we observe a laundress "climbing a ladder with her bundle of laundry, and when she has reached the top she finds herself again on the first step: this repeats twenty-one times."[24] This longer loop becomes a new choreographic phrase, with its internal rhythm and events. The combination of longer and shorter loops corresponds to cine-choreographic phrases and gestures.

As I mentioned earlier, *Ballet mécanique* focuses to a large extent on machines and the similarities of their rhythmic movements to human beings. Jump cuts are employed to create a mechanical pulse, as the same shot of a man is repeated five times, with a piston picking up their rhythmic beat. "This section is unified by a regular rhythm that in the case of the machines is created by their movements, but with the humans is manufactured through jump cuts and the repetition of shots."[25] Looping is used by Léger to create and unify rhythmic patterns, truly choreographing together disparate unscripted footage.

Dziga Vertov: Establishing Movement, Rhythm, And A Poetical Sense In The Archival Compilation

Editing archival footage became a very practical need that appeared with the newsreels that consisted of "compilation films" of archival footage from different

sources edited together, starting with the newsreel compilations covering the first world war, 1914–1918.

> The maker of compilation films extends this hypothetical experiment into a practical method of film production. Working with newsreel and allied material which has not been scripted or shot for the purpose for which the compiler will use it, he is able to make films with a smooth, logically developing continuity. Without the advantages of a planned shooting script —without directed performances from actors, properly interrelating shots, etc.—the compiler's sole assets are his skill as an editor and his ability to exploit the remarkable suggestive power of spoken commentary.[26]

These compilation films became a full genre of their own, and in particular "Russian director Dziga Vertov experimented in the *genre* as early as 1923 (*Kine Truth*, *Kine Calendar*) and followed his early experiments with more ambitious ventures in the early days of sound, in *Enthusiasm* (1931) and *Three Songs about Lenin* (1934)."[27] Vertov is of particular relevance regarding the question of "choreographing the archive", as he developed a new poetic way to capture movement and edit it, which established new techniques of early screendance, although Vertov's work is categorized within the *genre* of "Urban symphonies":

> a particularly prolific genre of experimental cinema that was exemplified in the 1920s by Paul Strand and Charles Sheeler (*Manhatta*, 1921), Alberto Cavalcanti (*Nothing but the Hours*, 1926), Walter Ruttmann (*Berlin, Symphony of a Great City*, 1927), and Dziga Vertov (*The Man with a Movie Camera*, 1929). In these films, the circulation of cars, buses and trains, the movements of pedestrians and the gestures of urban sociability take on choreographic qualities due to the musicality of the editing and, often, the subsequent addition of music whose rhythm, as if by magic, seems to correspond to the pulsations of urban animation.[28]

Vertov was also influential in the concepts of editing as described in modern manuals[29] where movement and rhythm are defined as follows:

- Movement, differentiating two criteria: the direction and speed of a movement. It is assumed that the direction in which an object or character moves in one

plane is maintained in the next plane; and that speed remains unchanged so as to maintain its coherence.[30]

- Rhythm: the intervals at which the shots change allow us to establish various relations between them, whether of parallelism or contrast, similarity or difference. Likewise, the rhythms of the events shown or of the actions of characters can be decisive for the rhythmic continuity of perception.[31]

These criteria are particularly relevant when editing unscripted or archival footage, as the great challenge any editor faces is to create the continuity or opposition between disparate shots. Based on his experience of documentary footage editing, Vertov developed the "theory of intervals" that is the basis for creating a rhythmic editing akin to poetry[32], in which intervals are based upon the "movement between the pieces, the frames; upon the proportions of these pieces between themselves, upon the transition from one visual impulse to the one following it". Karen Pearlman--a film editor, screendance maker and academic--bases the "physical rhythm" on the "meaningful rhythmic visual order" defined by Vertov, "not as a means to something else but as a revelation in and of itself":

> "Physical rhythm" is the rhythm created by the editor when she prioritizes the flow of the visible and audible physical movement in the film over other types of movement (such as emotional interactions of characters or larger patterns of events in stories). […]
>
> If an editor is working primarily with physical rhythm, she is working primarily with physical movement's size, speed, force, direction, and other visible or audible elements. Her cine-phrases are made by shaping arcs of movement in the frame, of the frame, and across the joins of two or more shots. Her choices pertain to linkage or collision, to the rise and fall of energy, to the rate and concentration of movement, to the pulses and cycles of tension and release of physical movement.[33]

Assembling Footage Of A Different Nature: Semantics And Kuleshov Effect

Lev Kuleshov is a Soviet filmmaker celebrated for his experiments in film editing developed in the 1920's that are particularly relevant when "choreographing the archive". One of his experiments concerned the creative geography, or artificial landscape, where he filmed footage at various locations and times, and then the shots were assembled through editing so that they appear to happen in the same location and time. This is a very common practice in fictional filmmaking today,

but was a conceptual revolution at the time. Kuleshov experimented further by "creating a woman"[34] using footage of body parts from different women.

The most famous experiment, that has received the name of the Kuleshov effect, relates to the different meaning that the audience associates with a given shot depending on the context of the editing. For instance, when we see someone's face and then the shot of a scene B, we establish an association, and the person appears to be thinking about scene B. Depending on the nature of scene B, the person will seem hopeful, hungry, depressed… Sergei Eisenstein applied this type of editing in his first feature film *The Strike* (Soviet Union, 1925) in which scenes of cattle being slaughtered are intercut with scenes of the proletarian masses fleeing attack, generating a very direct emotional effect that opens a path to use archival footage for semantic and emotional purposes. This effect is commonplace today, but is paramount when connecting footage in order to create a common meaning.

Choreographing Footage From Different Sources: Rhythmic Editing From Abel Gance To Dziga Vertov And Leni Riefenstahl

As mentioned earlier, *La roue* by Abel Gance (France 1923) inspired many avant-garde works of pure cinema, including *Ballet mécanique*.[35] This is a completely scripted film, but Gance developed editing ideas that are relevant to creating a rhythm with unscripted and non-staged footage.[36] For instance, Gance used rapid scene changes and montages with cuts between different shots to create a vertiginous sensation: this is essential as it is clearly the editing and not the filmed action that creates the rhythm and the energy. Furthermore, the accelerating and rhythmic editing unifies the different shots into a montage that is a new entity with a separate trajectory from its individual parts. Avant-garde artist René Clair, praised the editing in *La roue*: "We had already seen trains moving along tracks at a velocity heightened by the obliging movie camera, but we had not yet felt ourselves absorbed – orchestra, seats, auditorium and everything around us – by the screen as by a whirlpool".[37] René Clair valued "not just the cinema's capacity to represent movement but its ability to impart the sensation of motion to the viewer, to make the viewer *feel* movement"[38], which he referred to as "pure cinema" lyricism and that we can consider kinesthetic transmission.

Image 1: Parallel editing of an exterior wide shot and an interior close-up with matching movement in *La roue* (Abel Gance), LaRoueGance.jpg, Credit: screencapture by the author

In *La roue*, Gance also proposes parallel editing with a group dancing in a circle in the mountains filmed in a wide angle that alternates with a single character dancing in a circle inside her house at a similar tempo, filmed in a close-up (figure 1). This matching of movement from different frames is patent in the Urban Symphonies such as Ruttmann's *Berlin, Symphony of a Great City*, and even more clearly in Dziga Vertov 's *Man with a Movie Camera*, where we can see the continuous movement of the city and the succession of machines, tramways, and people at work or doing sports with a continuity of movement quality across the different shots. It is more difficult to match the internal movement of different shots[39] than to create a montage with aggressive editing that cancels the internal properties and imposes the rhythm of the cutting. Vertov really developed his theories of intervals to set a rhythm in editing (or the physical rhythm, as described by Karen Pearlman[40]) after having edited hours of documentary footage himself, and possibly feeling how delicate and sometimes elusive it is to find matching points and cutting between the movement of different shots.

Image 2: Leni Riefenstahl performing her *Dance to the Sea* with the images of the sea that are intercut to match her dance, from *Der Heilige Berg* (1926), DanceToTheSea.jpg, Credit: screencapture by the author

I will not dwell as long as I should on Eisenstein, who worked principally on scripted cinema, but his writings, and above all, his implementations of metric and rhythmic editing, including the famous "Odessa steps" scene in *The Battleship Potemkin* (Soviet Union, 1925) constitute a milestone in the art of editing. Eisenstein showed the importance of mixing different angles and types of shots, combining close ups, wide shots, details, and to use the direction and movement to create a montage which is very expressive and easy to understand by the audience, in spite of (or thanks to) the complexity and diversity of the shots. Regardless of the disputes about fiction and non-fiction in the early Soviet period, Eisenstein revealed a new way of editing that fully applies when choreographing unscripted footage.

Even prior to the urban symphonies created by Ruttmann (1927) and Vertov (1928), the *Dance to the Sea* by Leni Riefenstahl, which serves as a "prelude" in the film *Der Heilige Berg* (*The Holy Mountain*, Germany, 1926) by Arnold Franck, represents an achievement with regards to choreographing footage taken from different sources. This sequence presents an adaptation of the stage choreography that Riefenstahl performed across Europe, where time and space are fragmented and non-linear, and is edited with shots of the sea and clouds that mimic the movement and shape of the dance (or vice versa), giving the feeling that Leni Riefenstahl is directing the sea with her gestures. Thanks to the carefully crafted common evolution in the movements of the sea and the dancer, with periods of intensification and lulls, this prelude reaches a more poetic result, and is also easier to perceive. The prelude uses montage as a form of *choreographic composition*[41] or reconstruction of movement by allowing inanimate objects to dance in juxtaposition with different body parts, building upon the editing achievements of Fernand Léger in *Ballet Mécanique.*

Composing The Movement Within The Frame: Splitting The Frame From Léger To Vertov

In order to make dance from different types of footage, the split screen was used in *Ballet mécanique* and in *Man with a Movie Camera*: in image 3, we see examples of a screen split into four portions, revealing people dancing with different framing and hands moving on a piano, and it becomes a composed cine-choreography, where even if some parts don’t have the same rhythm, they offer a counterpoint (instead of a mismatch in movement that would result in a classical successive editing). We also see how Vertov split the screen to reveal two instances of telephone workers moving cables, increasing the organized and choreographic nature of the movement on screen.

Image 3: Split screen examples in *Man with a Movie Camera* (Dziga Vertov), VertovSplit.jpg, Credit: screencapture by the author

Another way to transform the footage is by creating kaleidoscopic effects that create new figures and therefore new movement patterns within the frame, and this is amply developed in *Ballet mécanique*. Vertov went one step further by moving the kaleidoscopic effect with a rotation of the different frames (see image 4): this created a double effect of re-choreographing the footage, as on one hand the symmetries of the kaleidoscope made new movement patterns emerge, and on the other hand, a new complex choreographic phrase emerged that corresponds to the progressive rotation of the frame. This kind of non-linear transformation[42] of the image is very effective and receives plenty of use in recent screendance, creating completely new figures and choreographies with evolving kaleidoscopic transformations.

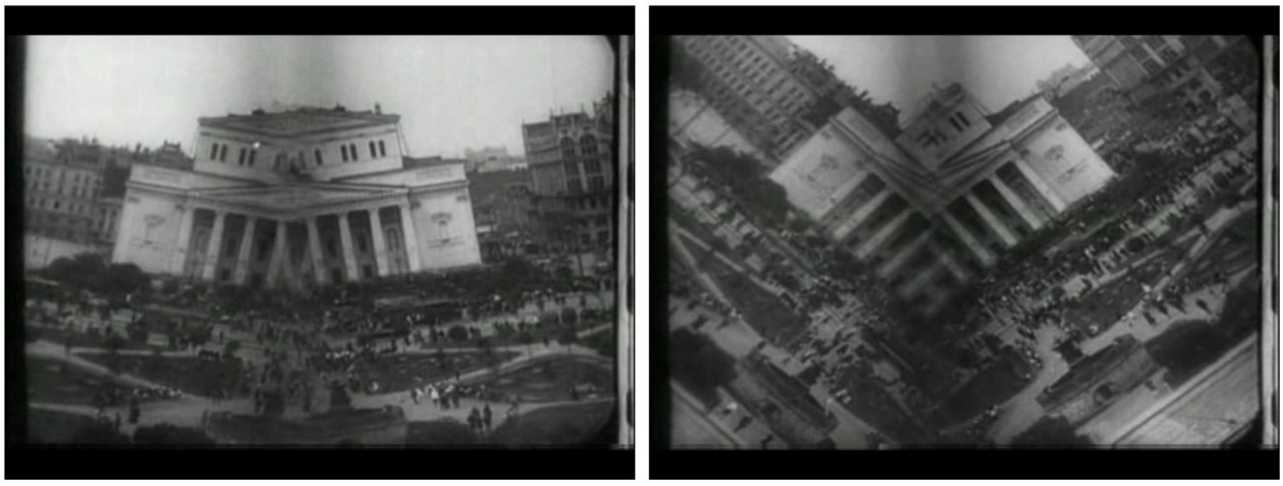

Image 4: Evolving split screen in *Man with a Movie Camera* (Dziga Vertov), VertovEvolvingSplit.jpg, Credit: screencapture by the author

Composing New Movement Trajectories: Leni Riefenstahl Re-Choreographing Sports

Leni Riefenstahl(1902-2003) was trained as a swimmer and a dancer, and after a career as a dancer on stage, she became an actress in films involving sports and dance. This experience provided her with a deep understanding of body movement for the camera. She became a film director in the 1930's and was later hired by the Nazi Party to create its propaganda films, collaborating and replacing Walter Ruttmann as a film director.[43]

Leni Riefenstahl was in charge of filming the Olympic Games of Munich in 1936, during the Nazi rule of Germany. In retrospect, despite Riefenstahl's unquestioning of the propaganda she was supporting, she introduced and explored many artistic and technical innovations in filmmaking, including a system for filming underwater and changing from above water to underwater in a continuous take, using 6 cameras to film an action, changing angles and introducing new views, framing with partial close-ups, and training a year in advance with the film crews to understand the motion dynamics in each sport and set the camera accordingly.

Additionally, in post-production Leni Riefenstahl also made movement the focus of her editing that shifted sports into a new realm, different from traditional documentation and more in favour of poetic and choroegraphic compositions. The combination of all the takes from the different angles led to over 1,300,000 feet[44] of exposed film, and the postproduction process spanned two years, resulting in two films *Olympia 1* and *Olympia 2, Fest der Schönheit* (*Olympia 2nd part – Celebration of Beauty*). I will refer (images 5 & 6) to this second feature film, whose title strongly indicates that the intention was on extracting poetics rather than the competitive aspect of the games.

Image 5: A continuity montage of different athletes on the pommel horse, in *Olympia 2* (Riefenstahl, 1936-8). The cuts between the athletes are made in full movement, with a continuity of the movement. OlympiaPotro.jpg, Credit: screencapture by the author

Leni Riefenstahl's filmmaking innovations are numerous, but I will focus on her contributions to editing.

1- Movement continuity editing (movement *raccord*): in image 5 we see an example of montage featuring different athletes executing their gymnastic performance on the pommel horse. We see one athlete after the other with matching movements and framing, creating continuity, and this feeling of unity persists even when the angle changes, as there is a general continuity of movement. Riefenstahl enhances the unity of these athletes and the beauty of their movements, rather than the competition.

2- Creating completely new movement phrases with editing and time reversal: in this case, Riefenstahl breaks away from the documentary aspect of the film, to really enter into a pure world of movement creation. Image 6 shows a moment of the final high diving sequence from *Olympia 2, Celebration of Beauty*. It starts with a reversed shot of a diver that emerges from the water and appears to ascend into the sky where he realizes some of the acrobatics of the trampoline jumping, and this is cut with other acrobatics from other athletes filmed at the climax of their jump, to create a continuous movement of people flying in the cloudy sky.

3- Slow motion is used profusely throughout the film to enhance the elegance of the movement and the athletes' mastery of the athletes' bodies.

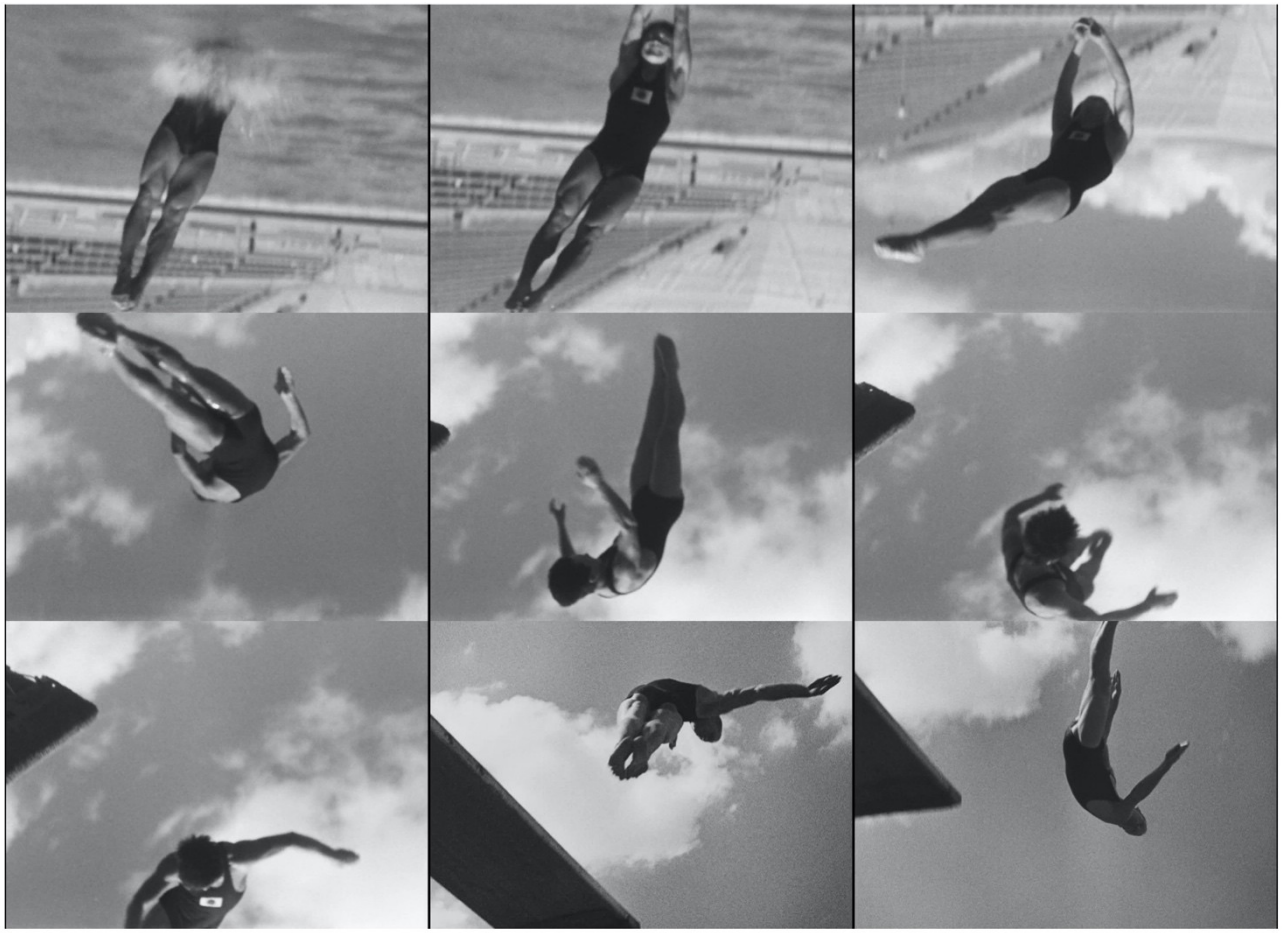

Image 6: A montage of the high diving sequence, with a reversed shot of a diver emerging from the water and ascending into the cloudy sky, then interspersed with shots of other divers at the climax of their jump, creating an endless floating flow in *Olympia* (Riefenstahl, 1936-8). RiefenstahlDiving.jpg, Credit: screencapture by the author

Authorship And Creating Through Editing Archival Footage

I would like to emphasize this point with respect to the authorship of archival films: Riefenstahl decided that the large amount of still "unused footage would be used by her young assistants as an opportunity to work with film-making on their own. She allowed them to experiment with the footage, making Kulturfilmen (cultural films) and short films to be played before the feature attractions".[45] The filmmakers (authors) of these films were the editors, even if the "direction" of the takes was by Leni Riefenstahl. She firmly believed that the creation of a film is essentially made in the editing room, and this is a dilemma that continues today

in screendance: who is the author among the choreographer, the cameraperson, the editor and visual effects creator, and the director of the shoot?

According to Spanish Intellectual Property Law (which is conceptually similar to other Latin legal systems, such as French or Italian law), the authors of an audiovisual work are the director, the screenwriter and the composer of the original soundtrack.[46] The editor is not considered an author. When choreography is simply filmed on stage, it is not considered an audiovisual work whereby a director will obtain an author's rights[47]: it will be considered a documentation of the choreography, even if it is recorded with multiple cameras and there is editing. There is a legal ambiguity regarding screendance, in that there is a director who will be the author of the screendance, but the role of the choreographer is not made explicit, although in reality they hold similar functions to that of the screenwriter, who is considered an author by law in many countries.

Regarding works that result from editing archival footage, French Intellectual Property Law proposes the concept of "composite work": "a new work is said to be composite when it incorporates a pre-existing work without the collaboration of the author of the latter." The composite work "is the property of the author who made it, subject to the rights of the author of the pre-existing work".[48] Therefore, one can consider that the Intellectual Property Law indicates that the editor of pre-existing works is considered the author of the resulting film when there is a creative process, as is the case when choreographing archival footage. But in contrast, the editor of a newsreel compilation is not considered an author, even if it requires great skill[49] because a compilation is not considered an original new work.

Discussion And Conclusion

I have discussed a variety of editing and postproduction techniques that were developed in early 20th century films, in particular during the 1920's, that apply to contemporary practices of editing unscripted or archival footage with an intention to create new work with its own rhythms and temporal structures. This is not an exhaustive list and I did not wish to enter into discussions of who was the first to apply a precise technique. For instance, the technique of stopping the recording in-camera for a moment in order to create a jump cut (the stop trick) was developed by the Edison studios a year earlier than first used by Georges Méliès[50] The importance here is that Méliès discovered the possibilities of this and other techniques and applied them in numerous short films, often with a choreographic intent, and that these techniques remain in use today. Many early filmmakers also explored and perfected techniques that are not referenced here, as an exhaustive historic overview is outside the scope of this article.

To summarize, the potential techniques that compose the language of archival footage choreography through editing are:

- Editing within the frame: split frame, kaleidoscopic transformations, dissolving, overlaying
- Modifying movement: looping, jump cut, quick editing/splicing, speed change and speed reverse
- Creating new choreographies from different materials: rhythm and movement continuity editing, matching frames and movement, creating new meanings by assembling contrasting shots.

These techniques are still in operation today, although contemporary technology makes it much easier to put them into practice. It is essential to note that the contribution of these pioneering artists does not concern exclusively the purely technical aspects of their work, it also concerns the new mentality they brought, a new approach to what cinematographic creation can be. Their focus on "pure cinema" generated an interest in rhythm, composition and movement that has encouraged the use of these techniques to create truly original works. For instance, applying the technique of reversing time or looping a fragment can create a surprising or amusing effect on the audience, but these artists went beyond technical gadgets or visual trickery, and used these techniques to create works with an original artistic language. They demonstrated that the editing process was a fully creative tool in cinema, and that its possibilities went beyond the mere assembling of staged shots based on a script. These pioneers showed that dedicating time and effort to the artistic editing of unscripted footage can yield outstanding works.

Finally, attention to the artsits and the works discussed in this paper can be of relevance to Screendance makers today who work with unscripted footage. The editing techniques that arose from the various experiments and developmemnts in technique and concepts can serve as inspirational references and provide a foundational stepping stone, while still acknowldeging that technological advancement does allow editors (and choreographic ones) to apply effects without necessarily knowing their historic ‘origins’.

Biography

Blas Payri is a professor of Audiovisual Communication at Universitat Politècnica de València, and his teaching activities focus on digital postproduction, sound design and film music analysis and creation. He has created numerous screendance pieces, taking in charge directly the direction, the editing and postproduction and the creation of the music. This has allowed him to explore the creative possibilities of editing including issues of rhythm, music co-articulation, movement continuity, and rhythmic editing and the use of postproduction to impose a rhythm to the footage.

Blas Payri has a training in computer science (Engineering Degree at Institut National de Sciences Appliquées, Lyon; Master's Degree at École Normale Supérieure, Lyon), in scientific research in sound perception (PhD at LIMSI-CNRS, Orsay, Paris; Postdoc at UCLA, Los Angeles), and in music composition (Composition Degree at Ecole Nationale de Musique de Villeurbanne, Specialization Degree at Conservatoire de Nanterre) and has published research articles in computer science, music and film perception, film music and screendance.

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Sense Of Meanings: A Deconstructive Lens On Time, Space And Opposites In The Film *The Host* (2016) Directed By Miranda Pennell

Luisa Lazzaro

Abstract

Deconstruction has been used in theater practice and performance art since the 1960s -1970s as a strategy to guide viewers to observation of things and people in and around the performance practice, questioning meaning and its making. This paper proposes that deconstruction is relevant and of value to screendance practitioners for the way in which it supports the challenging of dominant narratives, and invites us to notice and question fixed truths, including our own.
For the purpose of my argument I will focus on a film, *The Host* (2016) by Miranda Pennell, a film made from archive images, which are deconstructed by the filmmaker as part of her narrative making. Among the numerous studies and contributions Derrida has made within philosophical debate, I will focus solely on his theory of deconstruction of text and meaning to contextualize the deconstructive approach adopted by Miranda Pennell in her film *The Host* (2016).
Pennell's approach includes her research into the narrative of the film. This inclusion gives the film a performative attribute, which I argue to be a point for considering the film a work of screendance.

The combination of the archive material and Pennell's approach to it, allows her to shift between various possible truths that cohabit within a broad spectrum of time and space. In the words of Trinh T. Minh-ha in "The Totalizing Quest of Meaning" from *Theorizing Documentary* edited by Michael Renov:

> To compose is not always synonymous with ordering to persuade, and to give the filmed document another sense, another meaning, it is not necessarily to distort it. If life's paradoxes and complexities are not to be suppressed, the question of degrees and nuances is incessantly crucial.[1]

Pennell's deconstructive approach favors the consideration of such "degrees and nuances"[2] when presenting her narrative, constructing meaning that is complex in its subtleties and implications by pairing opposite concepts and looking at their relation and their relation to herself and others. In *The Host* (2016) this pairing is consistent throughout the film, openly inviting viewers to question what is being shown.

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Through a close analysis of *The Host*, contextualized both with reference to Derrida and to the wider field of screendance, I conclude that a deconstructive approach offers filmmakers and screendance practitioners interested in re-interpreting archive materials through film editing the opportunity to expand choreography to another discipline. As a screendance practitioner, I find that this opens up a world of narrative possibilities, and this is reason enough to shine more light on works that do so.

Keywords: deconstruction, observation, archive, screendance, absence, presence, temporal and spatial shifts

Introduction

Miranda Pennell is one of the few filmmakers who engages with deconstruction to construct meaning that allows viewers to recognize the relativity of her process. As a dancer/performer I realized that what I cared mostly about when working was the time spent in the studio creatively figuring out possibilities with a choreographer. I valued the making part of the process more than performing. When I watched *The Host* I was stirred by how Pennell's narration included her thinking and her actions with relation to archive material. Other than having enjoyed its questioning of the colonial relationship between the UK and Iran, I was also attracted by how creative the filmmaker became with her archive material. I enjoyed watching what seemed like a choreographic process with images. This reignited my passion for composition and made me joyful to see that this was possible outside of a dance studio.

The Host has been presented at public screenings as a film documentary - and it certainly does document a process of research undertaken by the filmmaker with relation to images from a past time. However, there is also an element of performance in the film characterized by voice and clues about the filmmaker that is as important as the archive material used. Claudia Kappenberg points out, in *The Politics of Discourse in Hybrid Art Forms*, that if we are to consider the body as an indispensable 'partner' of film, to define screendance we should also consider this partner outside of the screen space, and possibly extend it to multiple concepts of its presence.[3] In line with this expanded idea of the body being outside of the screen, I consider *The Host* to be a screendance work.
In an interview, Pennell recognizes her position in the film as a performative one. She explains that the use of her voice in narrating her research is an element that constitutes this role:

> "I tried to give an indication of my presence and of course my voice, by narrating my experience and by narrating the process of making, I am doing a kind of performance..." (M. Pennell, personal communication, 31 November, 2019)

Pennell deliberately chose to use her research process in the narrative and present herself as an investigator in the film. This character however is not visible in its entirety, but hints of her presence can be identified in the film. Parts of her body such as her hands, and objects like headphones, gloves, and her lunch sandwich container are deliberately shown.

> … I had a desire to put myself in between these images, to show myself even though I can't be present in a film that is made up of these still photographs, but what I did do, because I had a desire to be present, I started scanning and photographing images around me and including them to show a trace of me… (M. Pennell, personal communication, 31 November, 2019)

The Host is primarily a film about the activities of the company British Petroleum (BP) in Iran, seen through the filmmaker's research of archive material and personal photos. The images concern the oil company where Pennell's father worked during the 1960s. *"The Host* is a film, which is about looking at images in the past and trying to make sense of them and trying to make sense of history." (M. Pennell, personal communication, 31 November, 2019)

The identification of personal elements (family photographs and images of the filmmakers' objects and hands) and impersonal elements (the photographs from the oil company stored in Coventry, UK) are important to understanding Pennell's consideration of present and past as well as her role in the narrative of the film. These elements opened a route to concepts of time and place that became significant to Pennell's creative process enabling her to shift between time periods and locations: "…I think what was most important is the shifting of time and shifting of place, so for me it was always important to come back to the present and come back to my position as the maker…" (M. Pennell, personal communication, 31 November, 2019) Time and place are interconnected with an idea of self. Pennell defines this 'self' as:

> …a processor and transmitter of impressions…embodied observer… who does not resist her entanglement in the objects she studies, her research allows for the possibility that these objects may make claims on *her*, and eventually by extension, on *us,* in multiple ways.[4]

The interdependence between the self and the objects described by Pennell is similar in concept to Jacques Derrida's theory of deconstruction of meaning in literary analysis. He argued that there are no self-sufficient units of meaning in a text just as Pennell thinks that "claims on *her*"[5] can rise from sources outside of her. In both cases there is a reciprocal relation, without which meanings would be deprived of wider associations and contexts.

Derrida And Deconstruction

Jacques Derrida developed deconstruction as an approach to philosophical and literary analysis in the 1960s. He challenged binary and hierarchical ideas of Western philosophy by showing that opposite terms and contradictory meanings are not autonomous, and that by deconstructing oppositions it becomes possible to explore the implications of their relationships.

"…to put it in a nutshell, deconstruction is the reading of texts in terms of their marks, traces, or undecidable features, in terms of their margins, limits or frameworks, and in terms of their self-circumscriptions or self-delimitations as texts."[6] So, instead of looking at what is in a text, the focus would be on what that text may exclude and other non-immediately recognizable connections to it. This concept has been extended to other disciplines, and for the purposes of this essay I will focus on its extension to theater, and performance art.

Focus on deconstructive theater or performance art already includes a variety of ways and possibilities resulting in a challenge to defining the approach. The latter is characterized by a questioning of conventional elements within the act of the theater making and/or performance process. I will offer examples from two artists who use deconstruction in their practice.

Rose English's *Flagrant Wisdom* (2009) is a site-specific performance in which English deconstructs an act of acrobatic glass balancing by juxtaposing it with a glass manufacturing process in the same performance. The material of glass is being shown from its conception. This strategy provides a comparison and invites viewers to reflect on multiple aspects of the glass, rather than single out the virtuosic acrobatic act, which is more readily associated with performance. Could glassmaking also be perceived as an act of performance? Rose English may indirectly be inviting her audience to ask that question. Another example is Augusto Corrieri's *In Place Of A Show,* a lecture performance that challenges the idea of what happens in a theater. Corrieri has toured theaters in Europe and South America to offer a viewpoint of when these are not being used as locations where performances are given. In a way, he is deconstructing the space to create a different type of performance, one that challenges the more known form of play or dramatic performance that would be programmed in the theaters in question.
Pennell in *The Host* (2016) deconstructs her relationship to the images as well as the archive images themselves questioning and raising awareness to what is not readily visible or perceptible to her and viewers. My analysis of her approach has led me to identify absence and presence in the audio-visual image inside and outside of the screen, and spatial and temporal deconstruction.

Absence, Presence, Past, Present, Wide And Close Up In The Film *The Host*

Pennell deconstructs some of the images to reveal what may not be apparent at

first glance.

> …the film asks us to look, and look again, at images produced by the Oil Company and personal photos taken by its British staff in Iran – including the filmmaker's parents – not for what they show, but for what they betray.[7]

A series of photographic images of land (tectonic plates of Iran) are intercut and overlaid with drawings of maps, directional arrows, identification numbers and locations. Sounds of debris or rocks rolling and rain falling accompany these aerial photos, intercut and cross-faded with maps and close-up images. A few minutes after they first appear, some of these images are seen again. This time the filmmaker's voice says: "the company would use aerial photography to pinpoint the location of the oil. Geologists studied the photos according to principles of geophysics to identify hidden patterns."[8]

The hidden patterns or the idea of these are made more perceptible to the viewer through subtle superimpositions of maps and photographs created by cross dissolves of the images. The hidden patterns become visible thanks to the emphasis of images that contain absence. The signs are recognizable or readable only when juxtaposed or shown to coincide with the photographic images that alone indicate concealment of specificity.

The Host includes various photographs of the oil refinery and the oil fields found by Pennell in the BP archives. As the images are presented and described as 'painting' or 'real', the voiceover also says: "There are thousands of workers here. Where is everybody?"[9] In these photographs absence is telling. The voiceover continues: "They don't show the inside of buildings, and the workers outside only appear by accident. You have to search for them."[10]

This attention to what is not present, and to the opposition of outside and inside, defers the perception of what we see. So instead of seeing photographs of a place void of human existence, as the images appear to be, we perceive the possibility and probability of people inside as a result of Pennell's presentation of absence. We can imagine a non-lifeless existence beyond the lifeless looking buildings; we can imagine people working inside. Relevance is given to what is invisible on screen but imaginable and inevitable when interpreting the image. Pennell's acknowledgement of workers in the refinery by asking 'who are these people?' opens ways for more questions, such as why are the workers hardly ever visible? In response to Laura Mulvey's chapter "The Pensive Spectator" in volume 2 of The International Journal of Screendance entitled *Scaffolding the Medium*, Pennell reflects on time and how "Mulvey's essay thinks about time across different kinds of films…"[11] Pennell refers to two of her films Y*ou Made Me Love You* and *Why*

Colonel Bunny Was Killed within the context of the time register attributing the former to the idea of now - movement within a continuous present shot; and the other to the idea of then - a reconstruction of re-framed archive still images. Miranda Pennell writes in 'Some thoughts on "Nowness" and "Thenness" that the former is the essence of performance and the latter the essence of photography.[12] In *The Host*, however, nowness and thenness are mutually included, a combination that fits with Derridean deconstruction of the marginality of time.
A photograph of the oil fields taken in 1932 shows a site Miranda Pennell says she knows because 14 years later her parents would go there and 31 years later she too would be there, "peering over the edge of a white cot."[13] Pennell continues: "I think I remember this, but in 20 minutes it will dawn on me that it must have been just a colored photograph that I've seen."[14] Pennell informs the viewer what she will reflect about remembering. In another section of the film Pennell mentions the idea of non-chronological time, time that moves "in different directions, that it coexists with past and future."[15] Time seems to be deconstructed by a playful interaction of images of the past and her voiceover as heard and experienced in the present moment of a viewer.

Pennell's voiceover again in *The Host*, in conjunction with a photograph of her mother looking at an historical site, continues to specify that her "...father can't be seen because he is on the outside looking at the figures on the inside. I am invisible too, looking over my father's shoulders at my mother who is looking at some other characters. She is wondering who these people were and who it was that put them there. She is imagining another time, and I am trying to imagine the time she was in."[16] Past/present, inside/outside, visible/invisible all seem absent and present simultaneously to the viewer as a result of the 'nowness' of performance (the voiceover of the filmmaker and the viewer's reception of it) and the 'thenness' of the image of Pennell's mother in front of an ancient ruin.

In addition to the time register, Pennell also invites the viewer to deconstruct the spatial form of the image. One of the most arresting moments shown in *The Host* is of a worker in torn clothes, with greasy shoes and hands, seen with his back to the camera curved in a position that suggests physical strain in his job; he is flanked by a man standing in non-work attire, hand in pocket, wearing a fedora-type gentleman's hat, apparently watching and supervising the work. Pennell deconstructs this image by providing successive different close-ups of it. The act of moving closer into fragments of the image and offering different perspectives makes it possible to recognize multiple relations among the different fragments. The men's clothes, shoes, hands and stance are juxtaposed and their unnoticeable differences in the wide frame suddenly become apparent. Contrasting details such as their appearance, their positions and their occupations become interpretable. This offers the viewer an insight into the filmmaker's perception about the status of these two men.

Pennell's deconstructing of oppositional ideas and concepts in *The Host* emphasizes the subjectivity of her knowledge and that of the other individuals she observes. This process ultimately emphasizes the complexity of knowledge:

> …I started with putting the images together, but the only way they take on a meaning is the one that I give them. So I want to involve the audience in that, because sometimes I make wrong assumptions about an image and I want that to be transparent and I want the viewer to go through a similar experience of questioning what we know about images, what we know about the past, questioning the stereotypes that we have about an image, so I think by sharing with the viewer some of the thoughts that I have about the images I am inviting them to question my authority as a storyteller and to ask themselves questions about the images. (M. Pennell, personal communication, 31 November, 2019)

Conclusion

A deconstructive lens on Miranda Pennell's work is useful to explore the creation and interpretation of meaning within screendance that makes use of archive materials. Observational and critical theory drawing on oppositions makes it possible to acknowledge and consider multiple subjective experiences and knowledge. This is relevant in that it can challenge dominant conceptions of history and societies, and therefore help transcend traditional historical narratives based on binary and hierarchical forms of thinking. Not that many makers of screendance use deconstructive approaches and include these within their narratives. Why? Possibly dance is still predominantly conceived and perceived within a theatrical form. More work that challenges this single connection is needed. As a person with a background in dance performance I find myself wanting to experience dance on screen differently than on screen performance. *The Host* (2016) connected me to the perspective of choreographing archive and the performative element being present and absent in the film. As an artist I am inspired to make work that re-organizes and re-interprets archives. Writing about deconstruction in *The Host* (2016) has also uncovered some of my own fixed truths and challenged my critical approach to meaning in film and screendance.

Biography

Luisa is an Anglo-Italian artist and a movement professional with a keen interest in film. Following a career in performance she began experimenting with film in 2009 and pursued this interest, obtaining an MA screendance from London Contemporary Dance School in London in 2020. During the MA she became particularly interested in editing archive material, curated a historical screening as part of the student-led screendance festival Frame Rush 2019, and edited a series of archive-based films to mark The Place's 50th year anniversary. Luisa

collaborates as a film maker with dancers and choreographers, filming and editing a series of short films that have been exhibited internationally in festivals and galleries. Recently Luisa was invited to guest co-edit (together with Marisa Hayes) the section “Choreographing the Archive - Interfaces between Screendance and Archival Film Practices” for The International Journal of Screendance. Luisa is currently completing a Netflix-led training course (via Safe Sets) for the position of Intimacy Coordinator for Italian TV and film, and is relocating to Italy to start working on a series. She will also be continuing her independent research in Screendance.

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3 Kappenberg, 27.
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6 Silverman, 4.
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8 Pennell.
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11 Pennell, 72.
12 Ibid.
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15 Pennell.
16 Pennell.

Memory, Dance And Archive: How An Archived Performance Inspired The Creation Of The Dancefilm *Does The Dancing Have To Stop?*

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to delve into memory and dance, and to show how the archive can contribute to definitions of dance. It offers a personal journey into the records of my dance career, where I revisit and reclaim the past framed through the perspective of a mature dancer now aged in my sixties. Using the medium of dancefilm, my position is of observer, dancer, recaller, and bearer of my archive. I experiment with traces of the past, overlaid with the present, to introduce a dialogue about how this investigation can address the aging body as a site of archive. Through my research, I assert that as a dancer, my archive is housed within my body. I am using my dance history and my memories as the vehicle to address the issue of aging from a Western dance context.

Keywords: archive, the body as archive, embodied memory, time, re-enactment, past

The tradition of the African griot is to be the voice, the storyteller, who recounts archived histories. As Chiji Akoma describes, the griot is "a traditional raconteur, and chronicler of history".[1] As the custodian of my danced memory, I use a similar authoritative narrative from a Western perspective to re-tell my embodied archived history. As an older dancer, I house and document many danced memories within my body, and I demonstrate that these danced memories are also "sheltered," and concealed within. I am the guardian of this history of dance physically filed within me,[2] and this embodied dance archive has become an unexpected asset to my research of the aging dancer. Thus, my body has become an experimental site from which to discuss aging. Performance studies scholar André Lepecki observes that for some dancers, this physical archive has become intrinsic to their choreographic works, stating "that dancers ... are increasingly turning back on their dance history's tracks in order to find the 'object of their quest.'"[3] Whereas, visual and performance studies scholar Mark Franko questions the relevance of returning to past works as a way of critiquing or addressing issues that are current.[4] I would argue that contrary to Franko's thinking the revisiting of past work has proved timely and relevant for my research, enabling the merging of old with the new to discuss the issues of aging within the culture of dance, by looking

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at the old (my archive), I can create new work.

It is necessary for me to revisit the dancer of my past and recall her performances in order to create a positive concept of dance and age. Through editing processes assisted by analog and new digital technologies, I step back into my archive to re-present these past works in the dancefilm *Does the Dancing Have to Stop?* (2013).[5] It centers on one dancer (myself), her physical representation, and her dance through time. My archived memory of a dance solo inspired a re-enactment of—or, as art critic Hal Foster suggests, "an idiosyncratic probing" into—my danced history.[6] Performance studies scholar Juliane Tomann advocates such probing has provoked a re-enactment of "living history ... bringing to life and appropriating the past," and a danced archive is no exception.[7] From a performative aspect, Tomann depicts this re-enacting as "bodily practices of memory."[8] Indeed, this "probing" involves a memory of a dance and two filmed performances employing choreographic re-enactments and re-membering, all featuring myself as performer at different times of my life. These are my archives; through them—and assisted by digital technology—I can show authentic representations of my personal aging through the lens of a dancefilm.

As part of this investigation, I have delved into how my memory of a dance solo that I created in 1988, titled *Tristesse,* might influence my current research and practice. I created the original work as a 30-year-old dancer in London. It was a different time, country, and stage of life, and as such, it is a danced history. For *Does the Dancing Have to Stop?* I married the archival experience of my dance performances with my investigative research into how older professional dancers navigate exclusion due to the bias surrounding aging within Western dance culture. As proposed by Franko, the linking of the original solo with further filmed re-enactments influences the impact of the dance film, becoming more than "an historical artifact."[9] The context for this body of work was to show the transitional changes that aging brings to a dancer. It was also to address, as Roberta Galler puts forward in her essay "The Myth of the Perfect Body," that the aging body could be seen as a "symbolic threat", that their bodies pose to the reigning ideologies of beauty, health, and femininity in order to disrupt those oppressive ideals.[10] Decline continues to have a negative connotation within Western dance culture and society. Derrida speaks of a "topology," which I see as an embodied network that houses a dancer's (in this case my) archived performances.[11] This topology intersects to bring together material housed within an older body enabling discussion on aging via a new dance film. The technical challenge was to use pre-digital archival film footage overlaid with new digital footage from the present, as an embodied narrative featuring an older dancer (myself), so as to highlight aging, aesthetics, and a dancer's "dance-by-date."[12] Indeed, Franko suggests that "seeing the new in the old ... can be called reinvention."[13] My aim therefore was to produce a film that would engage the issue of aging through movement, not word,

and to invite, as performance studies scholar Diana Taylor suggests, “expressive embodied culture,” as opposed to written culture.[14]

I revisited my archive, using *Tristesse* as the starting point. There was scant documentation of the making of the 1988 solo other than drawings (see Images 1 & 2) and some journal entries (see Image 3), and I proposed that my memory alone would be the guide. Performance studies scholar Rebecca Schneider suggests, “if it [the performance] is not visible, or given to documentation or sonic recording, or otherwise ‘houseable’ within an archive, it is lost, disappeared.”[15] Through the making of dancefilms in 1992, 2007, and 2013, I argue that my 1988 performance is not lost, but transmuted. Though it was not visually recorded on film, it is housed within my embodied archive, visible as an essence of the choreography held within the relationship of my mental memory to my embodied memory. Similarly, Taylor asserts the remembering of movements made is an embodied practice, which “offers a way of knowing.”[16] However, feminist Peggy Phelan believes, “performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations: once it does so it becomes something other than performance.”[17] Naturally, no performance/re-enactment of the same work can be identical; while the choreography is still absolute, the intentions of the dancer change each time the work is performed, so in essence Phelan is correct. What I demonstrate is that although the original 1988 performance was ephemeral, the choreography and intent are remembered by myself (the performer), when re-enacted, the performance evolves and matures into an “archivally informed performance,” just as I re-experience the choreography as I mature as a dancer. As philosopher Søren Kierkegaard states, “the very fact that it has been makes the repetition into something new.”[18]

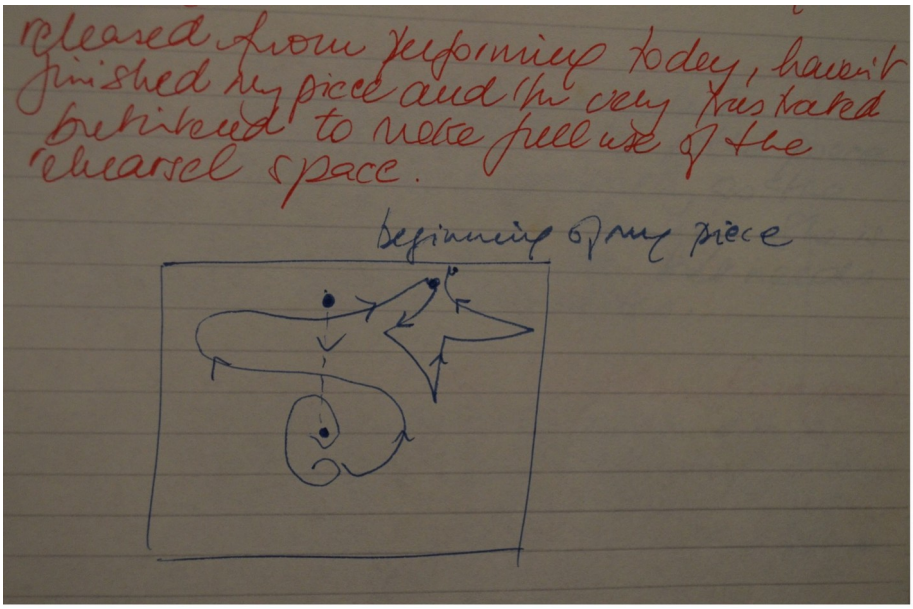

Image 1 drawing from author's Laban journal 1988, Sonia York-Pryce

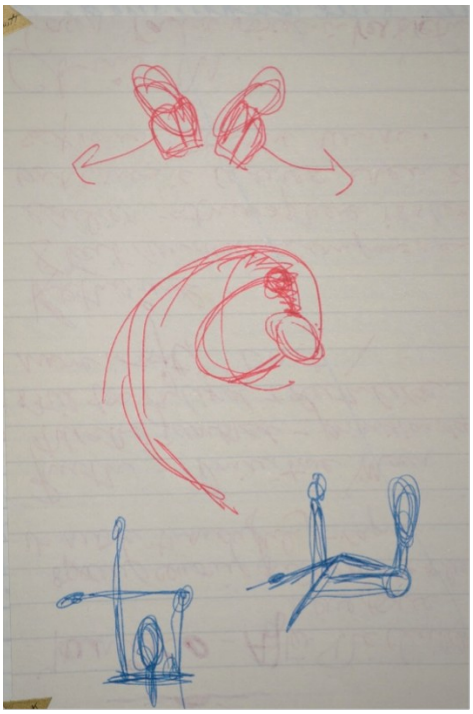

Image 2 drawing from author's Laban journal 1988, Sonia York-Pryce.

The concept behind creating the dancefilm *Does the Dancing Have to Stop?* was to experiment with juxtaposing youth versus aging, so as to provoke a response about the older dancer. I envisaged filming myself dancing with my "other," the younger me, by projecting recorded video performances of myself reprising *Tristesse* in 1992 and 2007 onto my body in real time. Thus, the remembering process for the new film work was assisted by the inclusion of this archival memory from these two other performances, which fortunately were captured on video tape, and their existence became integral to the creation of the new digital work in 2013.[19] By showing three stages of life danced by the same woman, the film could act as a catalyst to open discussion addressing Western dance culture's ageism and to focus attention on discrimination experienced by older female dancers.

As Ann Cooper Albright observes, "the [aging] body is currently a site of much critical debate," the devaluation of lived experience is a cultural and social issue, as is no different in the dance world.[20] It is worth comparing the work of two female artists whose intentions are to destabilize the aesthetics within Western dance culture and society, as well as to represent an invisible demographic. *Vanitas* (2017), by Brazilian multidisciplinary artist Vinícius Cardosa, features a naked elderly woman gracefully dancing with a young nude woman. Skin on skin, there is a juxtaposition of youth tempered with impending mortality.[21] The sensitive im-

agery and soft lighting focus on the older dancer's mature physicality as the camera follows her form. This imagery is the antithesis of the cultured norm. This is a body that provokes and yet Cardosa treats her subjectivity with tenderness while drawing attention to her advanced physique, particularly as she moves alongside the firm form of the much younger woman. There is a different sensuality to this ancient "other." By contrast, in *A Corpo Libero*, Italian choreographer and performer Silvia Gribaudi's comical performance plays with the grotesque, provoking the viewer to gaze at her forty-something body gyrating in a public square.[22] Gribaudi plays with Western cultural stereotypes by objectifying her mature form to demonstrate that the middle-aged body is not mainstream either; as with the aged, it is generally preferred invisible. She uses her provocative performance to objectify her mature unconventional dancer's body, to draw attention to culture's bias to accept that a woman of her age and physicality can and should have permission to behave in such a manner. This still draws a negative rather quizzical reception; it's an unwanted visibility—youth trumps aging. Again, older women are expected "to act their age."

Does the Dancing Have to Stop? was a place to address bias, identity, the subjectivity of an older dancer, and the objectivity of the aging body, but not to concentrate on decline in a negative way. A dancer's identity is enveloped in who they are as both person and performer. If they are invisible, no longer seen to be performing, then they are erased from society and the stage. Film is a way of prolonging their presence in a culture that does not encourage dancers to extend their careers or value their embodied knowledge.

It is not unusual for dancers to remember movement sequences long after performances finish. For myself, dances remain as if tattooed onto my body and into my psyche – a nod to Derrida's text-based archive. Routine, Repetition, and Repertoire are the three Rs of a dancer's life. Kierkegaard observes that while "repetition might be considered a small work, it is in fact the recurrence of an experience."[23] As Kierkegaard suggests, my memory of the movements from 1988 are recalled with the blink of an eye, despite so much time having elapsed. It is my task/role to decide through recall and repetition whether the work had held or lost any of its resonance. Indeed, as suggested by artist Astrid von Rosen regarding the archive, "what happens if we fail to acknowledge the challenges posed by the so-called ephemeral heritage and its traces?"[24] Recalling the "traces" of choreography signals a recapturing of the past and a re-presenting of it in the now.

Taylor asks, "how can we think about performance in historical terms, when the archive cannot capture and store the live event?"[25] Dance is a non-verbal artform and text does not recall the performance as readily as a dancer performing the choreography or a film documenting the work. The original performance was indeed not "captured" as such; nevertheless, it is "archived" within my body. *Tristesse* began as a work in progress in January 1988 for my Choreography Level

2 studies at The Laban Centre for Movement and Dance, London. At the age of 30, I was already considered an older dancer. For my musical accompaniment, I had chosen an aria from Puccini's *Tosca*, Act 2, "Vissi d'Arte" ("Love and Music"), a particularly emotive recording performed by Maria Callas. The premise of *Tristesse* was centered on how I could convey through the choreography a sense of grief that I was experiencing at the time. From my choreography notes of January 28, 1988, the critique from fellow students states, "don't over interpret the music, try minimalism, or go with my emotions."[26]

Later, on February 1, 1988, I wrote, "watch use of the head and eyes. Transition from fall onto the floor. Watch phrasing and over interpretation."[27] These small details hardly convey the choreography, but, as the dancer and choreographer, I understand the deeper significance of the language and its interpretation. As Taylor suggests, the value of embodied memory carries real substance, despite dance being understood as "ephemeral, nonreproducible knowledge."[28]

My journal entry of February 11, 1988 (see Image 3) details, "[I] Spent 2 hours [re]listening to my music and brushing cobwebs out of my head. Determined to fill the gaps and stop worrying."[29] The sharing with my fellow students at Laban that day had provided the opportunity to give a "live" performance of the work and to invite critique. Some reviewers indicated I needed to "give more"—to "stop holding back emotionally and to take more risks."[30] Rebecca Schneider suggests: "first, that performance disappears, ... second, that live performance is not a recording; and third, that the 'live' takes place in a 'now' understood as singular, immediate, and vanishing."[31] I argue the importance of this "live" performance at Laban, its temporality, resonated deeply with me; there was no opening to perform the work in public, or to visually record the event, but the choreography over time has remained embodied to this day.

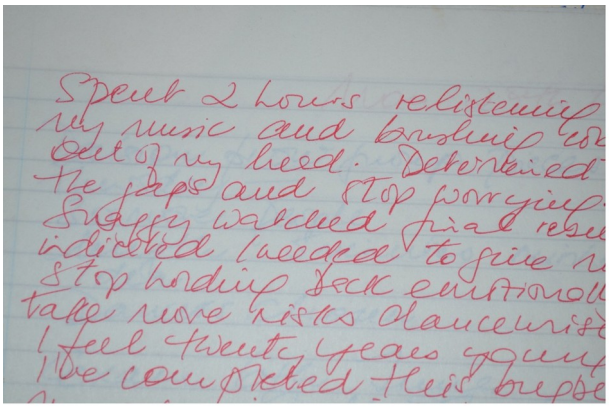

Image 3 Author's notes from Laban journal 1988, Sonia York-Pryce.

On November 6, 1992, I was asked to reprise *Tristesse* in a sharing of works in a theater in Inverness, Scotland. Having not danced the solo since 1988, it was an

instinctive decision to re-enact the work despite there being no filmed recording and limited notated documentation of the work, with only my memory as guide. This re-enactment became an example of what philosopher Henri Bergson recognizes as the benefit "of studying a lesson [dance] in order to learn it by heart ... that it is imprinted on my memory."[32] For me this is true; it is mirrored by the embodied memory of the choreography, and stands out before my mind as a definitive event in my danced history.[33] By simply closing my eyes, I could recall the movements, and hear the music; even though several years had passed, reprising the performance did not seem impossible to achieve. Franko suggests that through re-enactment "corporeality and space ... highlights and brings urgently to our attention in the present moment."[34] Indeed, performance scholar Martin Nachbar acknowledges the untapped possibilities a dance archive presents, when considering that "stored movement knowledge meets embodied movement knowledge."[35] This "stored" knowledge has influenced my practice; four years on from its first performance, the work felt more evocative, and the revisiting brought excitement—an opportunity to re-perform, to re-live it, to engage a different audience, and to give the work its first theater sharing. As Franko suggests, my re-enactment of *Tristesse,* "treat[ed] the past dance as something that exists in the present."[36]

This second performance/re-enactment was documented, filmed "live" from a static camera placed in the auditorium, with the focus framing the stage proscenium. The choreography remained the same, and this archived analog reproduction of the "live" performance was recorded on VHS videotape and stands as the visual documentation of the time, place, and performance. It is frozen in time. As performance studies scholar Philip Auslander suggests, "the event is staged primarily for an immediately present audience and … the documentation is a secondary, supplementary record of an event."[37] While this is true of the performance, it is the archival value that is of importance to me. I have one photographic still (see Image 4) as a static documentation of the performance, time, and place. Screenshots taken from the recording would later act as snapshots of the choreography. Hence, this analog recording became my visual guide to re-enacting the work.

Image 4 the author performing tristesse, linda sime, 1992.

Image 5 screenshot of the author performing tristesse, 1992.

In 2007, aged 49, and living in Australia. I returned once again to the archival solo *Tristesse* (1988) as well as to the 1992 *Tristesse* recorded performance video recording to create a new solo *Au Revoir to All That* (2007) (see Image 6).[38] Filmed in a theater in Queensland, it featured the original choreographic elements and a part re-enactment of the 1988 work with a different soundtrack. As before, it was documented with a static video camera, recorded on VHS video tape. Therefore,

the two archive dancefilm recordings (1992 and 2007) were recorded as documentation of two "live performances," produced in different countries, filmed in two different theater spaces, captured with similar technology, reproduced on VHS video tape.[39] While performance theorist Richard Schechner suggests that no notation, reconstruction, film or videotape recording can keep a performance original,[40] what I aim to demonstrate is that I have "kept" this embodied memory of the 1988 performance in these two recorded performances. It has reappeared, been re-enacted and is now visible, embedded in the later dancefilms.

Image 6 Screenshot of the author performing Au Revoir to All That, 2007.

Seeing the possibilities of these archived films by editing them into a new dancefilm *Does the Dancing Have to Stop*? gave me the opportunity to experiment with the archive, by bringing the past and the present together. Performance studies scholar Steve Dixon observes that film and the digital become a "permanent kinetic flux ... a technological model for the contemporary experience of time."[41] I am dancing with time. My archive exists because of technical reproduction; the discussed videos of 1992 and 2007 validate those live performances which hold new resonance, transferring my identity from past to the present. Indeed, as suggested by multidisciplinary artist Marisa C. Hayes, the genre of screendance allows one to play with time, "to push the boundaries,"[42] enabling this new work to bring together my archived danced performances and to merge them with the present.

Dancer and filmmaker Sue Healey's work concentrates on aging by focusing on Australian senior dance artists, "celebrating the incredible wealth of danced knowledge ... and to ensure that they are not forgotten."[43] Healey's *On View: Icons* (2015), a montage featuring former prima ballerina Lucette Aldous, weaves archive performance footage merged with the present.[44] The sensitive imagery brings attention to Aldous's sinewy but still balletic body, beautifully poised as she pays tribute to her younger self, as a projection of a filmed performance is reflected onto her body and a wall. She is shown performing a pas de deux with

Rudolf Nureyev from the ballet *Don Quixote* (1973). We see a body that has significantly aged, juxtaposed against her youthful agile self, celebrating her virtuosity. She signifies a dancer embodied with a lifetime of dance, an image that is not mainstream.

As in Healey's film, threading the past with the present to highlight aging was an important exercise to include in my research. When making the 2013 film, I found the quality of the archived live performance video recordings from 1992 was blurry, distorted, showing that over time the quality of the video had aged too. In essence, the 1992 and 2007 filmed performances depict a dancer held frozen in time, recorded, aged 34 and 49, marked by age. From this point, the premise was to project the films onto a wall in a studio, and as I danced, the projections from my past would pass over my body (see Image 7). As suggested by Tomann, it was "present day bodies combining with behaviors of past bodies."[45] By using my own body as the subject to symbolize the invisible and disenfranchised older professional female dancer, the film addressed how aging could be seen in a positive way. More importantly, the film revealed the aging body as a site of archive—or, as dance scholar Mark Edward suggests, "a living archive."[46]

These projected films acted as layering of time, with the past sharing the stage with the present—my filmed younger self and my digital double, both projected onto my 57-year-old body as I moved. The juxtaposition of the once youthful dancer performing with the mature dancer signified the passage of time and allowed the presence of the marginalized older dancer (see Image 7). As suggested by Dixon, "the double coexists with the live performer."[47] It was a danced dialogue about aging. Dance scholar Linda Caruso Haviland suggests that the body and the archive become "a sentient archive," embodied knowledge fused with cognition and memory.[48] This work becomes a melee of memory, lived danced choreography, and time, an archive of movement which acts like a palimpsest, holding traces of these past performances. While that rendering of the work has disappeared forever except in my memory, re-experiencing, repetition, or re-living a solo created in 1988 was for me an easy concept; it released the bodily recall of the choreography embedded in my memory and embodied in my limbs. Of course, as this original "live" performance was not recorded on film, witnessed only by my handwritten notes to authenticate the event, it is up to the reader to believe this event happened.

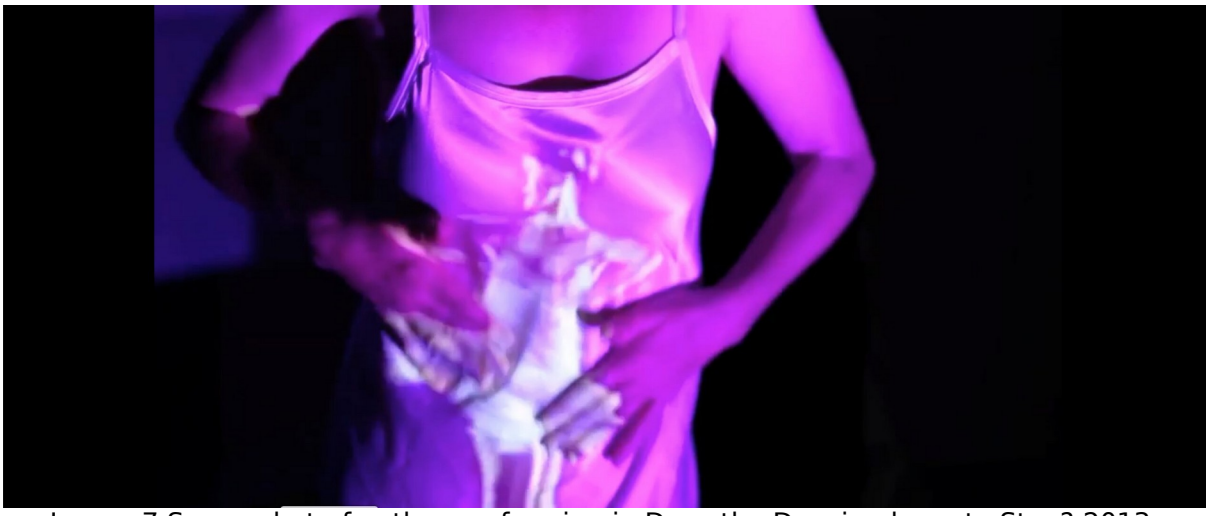

Image 7 Screenshot of author performing in Does the Dancing have to Stop? 2013.

Does the Dancing Have to Stop? was produced for the screen with the intention to be shown as a projection in an art gallery. Of greater importance was to discover how the audience experienced and engaged with this "live" digital recording projected in large-scale format on a gallery wall in what Philip Auslander reveals are "real-time operations."[49] Interestingly, my use of digital technology to convey the issue surrounding dance and aging is viewed by Dixon as follows: "the medium is not the message ... the performer is."[50] The footage exposed in the making of *Does the Dancing Have to Stop?* stands for a merging of time, depicting a feeling of loss as a woman dances with her younger self, revealing an older woman who internally feels the same, but the footage demonstrates otherwise. Again, Dixon suggests, "it operates as an index, as another trace and representation of the always already [younger] physical body".[51] The point of highlighting aging through a dancefilm is to understand how an older female dancer's body is viewed, not only from a Western dance standpoint but also within society. Corporeal politics are at play. As sociologist Elizabeth W. Markson suggests, "the portrayal of the female body in this medium provides a kind of everyday politics of emotion and feeling that contour spectators' real, lived, emotional experiences."[52] Merging these past dance archives with the present-day dancer (to produce an emotive dancefilm) challenged the stereotypical dancer by celebrating the older. As Markson contends, "the postmenopausal body ... does not fit into contemporary cultural discourses about 'ideal' feminine beauty."[53] Western dance continues to champion youth and agility. From the reviews I have gathered in response to my dancefilm, the audience engaged positively with the subjectivity of the film, seeing artistry, rather than the negativity of aging.

Realizing the significance of using these two filmed performances in the context of age, these archives became intrinsic to the dancefilm and to the politics of corporeality, asking if the aging body has a presence. Some of the original video sections highlight the lack of superior quality footage where clarity is taken for

granted in the age of digital technology. This is due to the age of the video and becomes a visual metaphor for the fading of the past and the aging of the dancer. Franko states that “the re-enactor [myself] assumes closeness to the past through the body itself as archive”.[54] As has been described in the process of creating a film in the present using archive footage, as implied by Derrida, involves “translating [danced] marks” from my past to weave a theme about aging provided an opportunity to give older dancers agency.[55] Using embodied knowledge encased within the older body reveals the taboo of dancers performing beyond a standard time, an aesthetic engrained within Western dance culture. I am, as Derrida suggests, the “guardian [of these archives] and a localisation” is embodied within.[56] It could be suggested that *Does the Dancing Have to Stop?* becomes an archive within an archive; the dance is no longer ephemeral but lives on forever in the digital space.

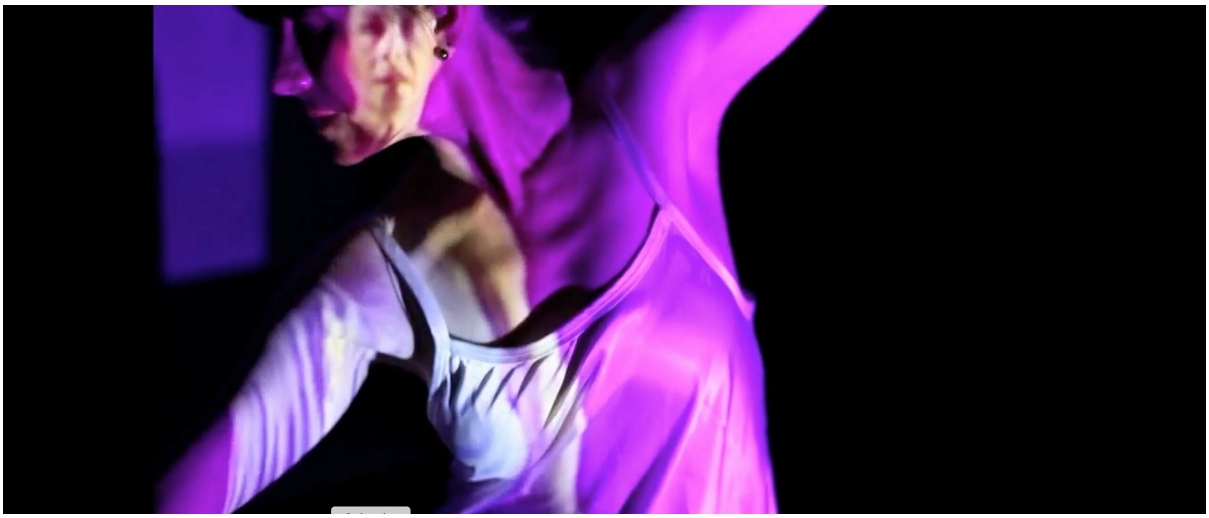

Image 8 The author performing in Does the Dancing have to Stop? 2013.

Since the making of *Does the Dancing Have to Stop?* my research into the dancer’s archive has gone on to inspire further filmography exploration into personal embodied memory, from analog through to digital technology, investigating how, over time, a different “presence” emerges from the same dancer.[57]

Biography

Sonia York-Pryce, Dr. of Visual Arts, B.A.. Digital Media, Honours; (Griffith University), B.A.. Visual Arts (Southern Cross University), dancer, interdisciplinary artist. From the 1960s to the present-day Sonia has trained and danced extensively in ballet and contemporary dance, initially in the UK, then settling in Australia in 1994. For her doctoral research she examined how senior professional dancers still performing aged over 40, navigate the bias of ageing and discrimination, and the affect it has on their practice. She interviewed numerous

dancers, in Australia and internationally, including founder members of NDT3 and Berlin's Dance On Ensemble demonstrating, "how their embodied practice rather than their age defines them."

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York-Pryce, Sonia. *Utterly (in)Appropriate.* https://vimeo.com/233604194. 2017. *Vimeo.*

1 Akoma, 113.
2 Ibid., 10.
3 Lepecki, 28.
4 Franko, 1989, 57.
5 See *Does the Dancing Have to Stop?* (2013), https://vimeo.com/78251127.
6 Foster, 3.
7 Tomann, 2.
8 Ibid., 4.
9 Franko, 1989, 57.
10 Galler, 166.
11 Derrida, 10.
12 Edward and Newell.
13 Franko, 1989, 58.
14 Taylor, 17.
15 Schneider, 101.
16 Taylor, 3.
17 Phelan, 146.
18 Kierkegaard, 103.
19 Ibid., 19.
20 Albright, 5.
21 Cardosa, 2017.
22 Gribaudi, 2012.
23 Kierkegaard, 102.
24 Rosen, 9.
25 Taylor, xvi.
26 Author's personal journal, 1988.
27 Ibid.
28 Taylor, 20.
29 Author's personal journal, 1988.
30 Ibid.
31 Schneider, 87.
32 Bergson, 89.
33 Ibid., 89.
34 Franko, 2017, 3.
35 Nachbar, 25..
36 Franko, 2017, 9.
37 Auslander, "The Performativity of Performance Documentation," 4.
38 See *Au Revoir to All That* (2007), https://vimeo.com/107881146.
39 See *Tristesse* (1992), https://vimeo.com/296575438.
40 Schechner, 50.
41 Dixon, 517.
42 Hayes, 613.
43 Healey, 2015a.

44 Healey, 2015b.
45 Tomann, 26.
46 Edward, 36.
47 Dixon, 250.
48 Haviland, 2.
49 Auslander, "Digital Liveness," 7.
50 Dixon, 215.
51 Ibid.
52 Markson, 79.
53 Ibid., 80.
54 Franko, 2017, 10.
55 Derrida, 16.
56 Ibid., 10.
57 See *Interprète/Inappropriate Behaviour* https://vimeo.com/136466421; *Utterly (In)Appropriate* https://vimeo.com/233604194.

Choreographing The Archive: Image Gallery

This electronic gallery proposes a collection of stills from artists who work with archival photographs and footage. The initiative was born from the desire to include international artists who were unable to contribute an article for diverse reasons (language barrier, time constraints, etc.) and to highlight the visual evolution of one particular strand of screendance creation that focuses on choreographing and working with found and archival footage. The film stills featured in this gallery continue to expand upon an approach that was first recognized in screendance several decades ago via David Hinton's archival compositions and his later collaborations with Rosemary Lee and Siobhan Davies. The gallery, coordinated by guest editors Marisa Hayes and Luisa Lazzaro, includes artists who explore diverse notions of found gestures, found footage, family archives, contemporary news footage, as well as historic archival images.

The artists and films included are:

Les Robes Papillons (*Butterfly Dresses*, 2021, France) by Camille Auburtin

Goodbye Love (UK, 2014), and *To Be Continued* (2020) by Becky Edmunds

That Elusive Balance (2021, Italy) by Salvatore Insana

Fatherland (2018, UK) by Stuart Moore and Kayla Parker.

Fuori Programma (*Unscheduled,* 2016, Italy) by Carla Oppo.

Series *Toute la misère du monde* (*All the Misery in the World*, France, 2015-2019) by Franck Boulègue

Tango Brasileiro (UK/Brazil, 2014) by Billy Cowie and Gabirela Alcofra

Dance Number 6 (1984-85) by Raphael Montañez Ortiz

The International Journal of Screendance 13 (2022)
https://doi.org/10.18061/ijsd.v13i1.9198

***Les Robes Papillons* (*Butterfly Dresses*), France, 2021, by Camille Auburtin**

A film that merges what the director/choreographer refers to as three distinct types of archives. **Archives of the present** include digital images filmed between 2007 and 2012 that capture Auburtin's grandmother's final years in a medical center for people living with Alzheimer's. These images trace the family's personal interactions through touch, movement and spoken language. **Photographic archives** are used in the film to capture earlier moments between grandmother and granddaughter, offered by the filmmaker as a subjective recollection of her childhood memories. **Super 8 and video archives** were filmed in the 1960s-1980s by Auburtin's grandfather, as well as by the families of the dance students who studied with Auburtin's grandmother, a former ballerina. For the artist, these images are links to the past, to our own memories of family, but were also conceived as choreographic compositions that draw on the dance within the frame, the movements of the camera, and the choreography that emerges through editing. In combining these different approaches to archives, the artist creates a subtle and sensorial tribute to her grandmother who lives on in the memories and bodies of those she loved and taught. Via an intimate portrait of family, *Les Robes Papillons* offers a universal reflection on multiple approaches to transmission and archives, including personal memory, the body as an archive, as well as visual archives. Film trailer: https://vimeo.com/474678046


© Les Robes Papillons 2020


© Les Robes Papillons 2020

Goodbye Love, UK, 2014, **a film by Becky Edmunds**

A personal family archive film.

Available to watch at: https://vimeo.com/151298203

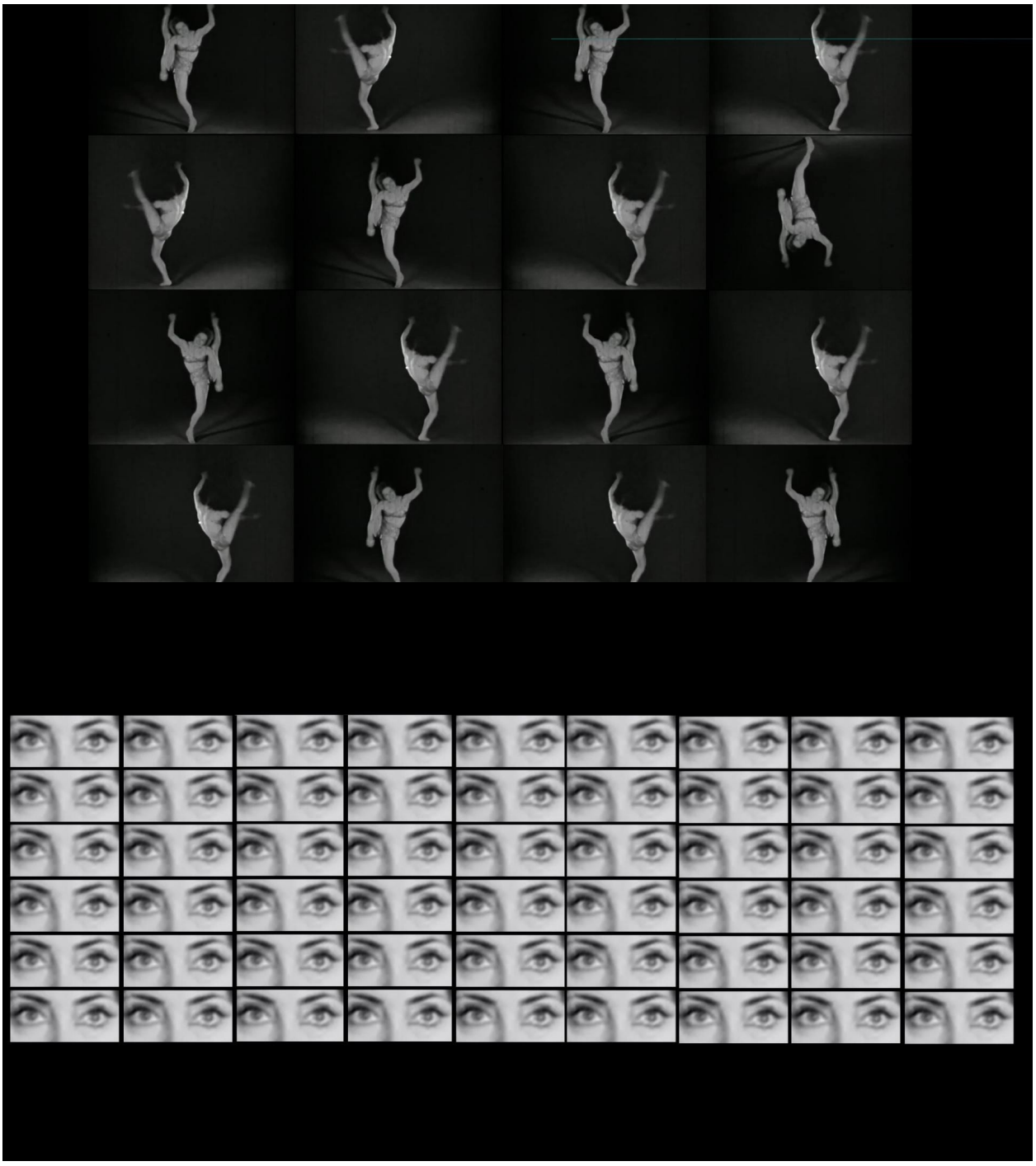
To Be Continued (2020) by Becky Edmunds

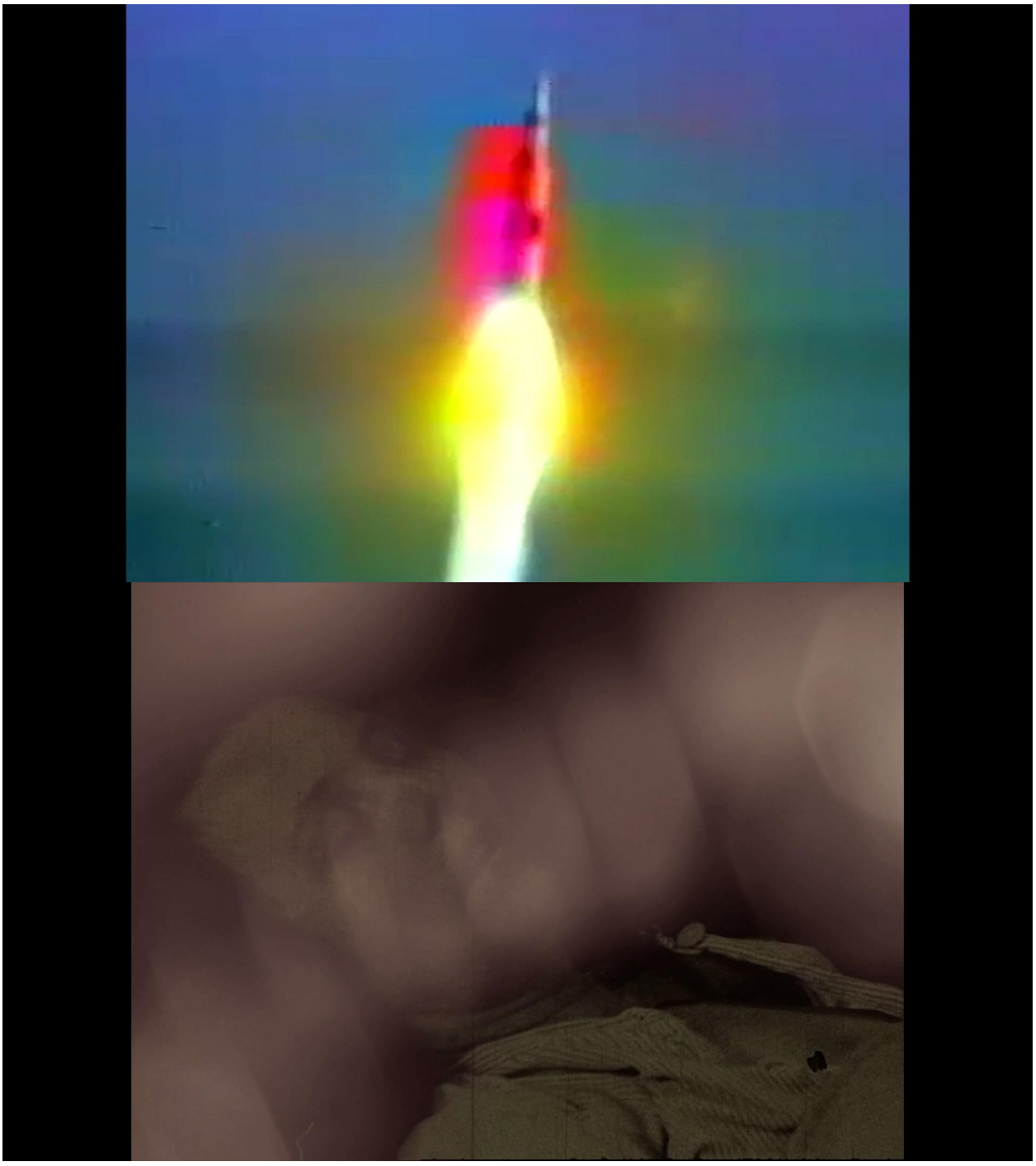
To Be Continued is a 27 episode web series, based on the stories told in a collection of journals that were found in a pile of rubbish.

Written by a man called Dick Perceval, the journals cover the years 1925–1976. They vividly detail his life in Berlin in the 1920s, his work as a journalist and frustrated author, and the extraordinary events that brought him to work at Bletchley Park in WW2. They record the turbulence of his first marriage and hint at dark secrets. They tell of love, loss, loneliness, ambition and disappointment.

To Be Continued brings this story to life using archive footage. A cast of hundreds is drawn from old Hollywood films, public information broadcasts, cine club creations and home movies to deliver the extraordinary story of the life of an ordinary man.

To Be Continued is made in partnership with Screen Archive South East and is funded by Arts Council England. Made in collaboration with Gerard Bell and Scott Smith. Available to view at www.tobecontinued.online





That Elusive Balance **by Salvatore Insana (Italy), 9'40'', 2021, footage from Eva Braun 16mm reels**

Salvatore Insana writes: "The best days are made of elusive balances, of subliminal happiness, inexorable. Can the search for happiness be anything other than the search for balance? Happiness is made of eyes that feel observed, of eyes that see each other again, of eyes that discover for the first time. Happiness is in the eyes of those who discover who we were, how we were. But what is its rhythm, what is its speed? What is its movement? When is an image happy? And when, thinking back to Chris Marker, can what we see suggest to us the image of happiness? How many frames do you need to be happy? And how many do you need to show happiness? How many frames do you need to accumulate in order not to lose your smile? Happiness as the fruit of retinal persistence. Is what remains what makes you happy? Can happiness be grasped? Can it be held back? What happens when the happiness of the individual collides with the happiness of others? This unconscious joy, happiness of the encounter between two frames, imperceptible as something that always escapes."

Trailer: https://vimeo.com/504489161

Website: http://www.dehorsaudela.com/p/aporieoutdoor.html?fbclid=IwAR1PV2iXFP174iF_ek5pyQaJ0UdlX9l1evRSuPX-wM5YPWod5hbvS17b52E

*Father-land (*2018) by Stuart Moore and Kayla Parker

Autoethnographic Memory Archive

Father-land (2018) is a 20-minute essay film made collaboratively by Stuart Moore and Kayla Parker through an artist research residency hosted by the Nicosia Municipal Arts Centre (NiMAC) in Cyprus. The story of Nicosia unfolds through a montage of views of the fractured landscape of the Buffer Zone and its accompanying ambient soundscape, as the voices of two unseen narrators share their recollections as children with fathers who served with the Royal Air Force (RAF) on the island and reflect on images of conflict and the legacies of colonialism, occupation and the Cold War. *Father-land* creates an autoethnographic memory archive that brings together the personal and the political in these post-Brexit and increasingly unstable times.

Father-land (2018) Directed by Stuart Moore and Kayla Parker. UK: Sundog Media. 4K film, 20min colour, stereo sound. The film can be viewed here: https://vimeo.com/301493003

Father-land won the 2020 British Association of Film, Television and Screen Studies (BAFTSS) Practice Research Award.

MOORE + PARKER
Artists Stuart Moore and Kayla Parker's collaborative films explore the interplay in landscape film-making between place and memory. Their ethical practice embraces environmental and ecological themes at the intersection of post-industrial landscape and climate emergency. Recent exhibitions include, Undercurrents (Crisp-Ellert Art Museum, Florida, forthcoming), Carbon-Borders-Voices (UK), Loss (ArtP kunstverein, Vienna), Contemporary Art Ruhr (Germany), and Strangelove (UK). They recently completed the short 16mm film poem, *The Other Side Now*, in collaboration with the writer and academic, David Sergeant, commissioned for the Sustainable Earth Institute's Creative Associates programme.

Image A-03I was running along the back streets with my friend who's a Cypriot boy… ah, whose name I can't remember now. I was about seven… and he took me to visit his grandmother who used to process…

Image A-04…carobs in a caravan, a little old caravan. And she let us taste the carob syrup. That's one thing that's always stayed with me – the taste of the carob syrup…

Image B-10 *the call to prayer continues and fades away*
It's quite a strange feeling with the Buffer Zone, and thinking about my father coming here several times with the RAF.

Image B-13but something which you're not really experiencing, you're just… beside it. So, you're without experience.

Fuori Programma (Italy, 2016) by Carla Oppo

Fuori Programma is a short archive film by Carla Oppo, which won the Premio Zavattini in 2016.

Summer camps in the 1950s: a child's magic tricks entertain his camp friends. A mature voice recalls and travels through memories: games, duties, expectations, adults' intrusions into the youthful and juvenile universe. An intimate account of a holiday that lasts until memories lose their solidity and become onirical, liquid and free.

Images from Archivio Audiovisivo Del Movimento Operaio e Democratico (Audiovisual archive of the labour and democratic movement)

Available to view at Premio Zavattini | Fuori Programma di Carla Oppo

***Toute la misère du monde* (*All the Misery in the World*, France, 2015-2019) by Franck Boulègue**

In a series of short videos, Franck Boulègue began exploring news and historic archival footage in response to the European migrant crisis, which erupted in 2015 as a result of the civil war in Syria and other acts of violence worldwide. Against the backdrop of multiple waves of asylum seekers braving extreme conditions to reach the European Union, the artist created his video works for an exhibition dedicated to the organization Reporters without Borders as a call to action, asking European governments to open their borders to refugees. His videos often feature politicians in public televised speeches. Using repetition and modified speeds, as well as large blocks of text, the artist explores the gestures and absurd phrases that public figures employ to justify their anti-immigration policies. The same series also explores found footage from uncredited advertisements and educational films that address the theme of borders and movement. The video series takes its title from a highly mediatized phrase made famous by the former French prime minister Michel Rocard, “France cannot accommodate all the misery in the world,” which became the subject of one of the series’ installments.

The series is available to watch on Numeridanse.TV: https://www.numeridanse.tv/videotheque-danse/toute-la-misere-du-monde?s&fbclid=IwAR1Iym6nkdXtvY-D4uxXLugsutIL06IWamFqhU-Sg61YEkui70Z7O80BmF0


BUILDING FENCES
Construire des barrières, ce n'est pas un travail facile
NO EASY JOB

Tango Brasileiro (UK/Brazil, 2014), by Billy Cowie and Gabriela Alcofra

Tango Brasileiro is a three-minute film directed and choreographed by Billy Cowie and Brazilian artist and dancer Gabriela Alcofra, commissioned by UK Channel 4 TV and Brazilian TV in 2014. The work uses digital technology to superimpose contemporary live footage of dancer Gabriela seamlessly onto archive film from 1930's Rio de Janeiro.

The piece takes on a classic Recitative/Aria structure where in the first section, the young Gabriela explains in the form of a poem how she can stop time simply by saying the word Now, much to the distress of her little friends.

Link to view film online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zgseBin6ThQ

Dance Number 6 (USA, 1985), by Raphael Montañez Ortiz

Starting in 1985, Montañez Ortiz began a series of what he calls "digital/laser/videos"; he has made a large number of these "arresting, provocative and suggestive" works (Scott MacDonald). He selects excerpts of commercial films on laser disc, which he deconstructs with the help of a computer program installed on one of the first Apple models. Using a joystick, he experiments with cutting up the seconds of action of his choice and moving them back and forth at different speeds, while also modifying the sound. He manipulates these sequences as many times as necessary until the result is ready to be fixed on video tape.

This approach to found footage is experimental not only in aesthetic terms. As the artist distorts a scene's temporal structure, he also deconstructs the cultural canons which are proper to cinema; he also does this, to some degree, to political ends, as he denounces colonialism, capitalism and patriarchy in Western society.

Dance Number 6 is part of a 27’00 film *Dance Number 1-6* available to rent at: https://lightcone.org/en/film-3211-dance-number-1-6

Interview with Astero Styliani Lamprinou on her use of archive images in her screendance work *Secret City* (Belgium, 2020)

Luisa Lazzaro

Following a screening of *Secret City* (2020) at the Projection Room in Brussels on 24 September, 2021 I contacted Astero to ask if she would be interested in granting an interview, focusing on the use of archive images in her film. I sent her my questions via email to which she replied also via email.

The interview is divided into parts 1 and 2, reflecting a two-month interval. Both parts are written on the basis of email exchanges with the film director: Part 1 focused on what led her to use archival images in her film; and in part 2 the interviewer wanted to highlight the creative process adopted by Astero and her team.

Secret City (Belgium, 2020) by Astero Styliani Lamprinou is a work of screendance inspired by sites and buildings that no longer exist. Two characters dance and move through Brussels re-igniting a connection to the city as it was and offering viewers a different perspective of the buildings they encounter and inhabit, a fluid and ephemeral perspective as they experience it. Described as a “passage in time and place” (Styliani Lamprinou, online. Accessed 6 September 2021 at https://lefifa.com/catalogue/secret-city) by Astero, the two characters find and lose each other in fleeting moments until they reach a utopian-like place where we are reminded amusingly of the inevitable changes that take place in life’s continuum.

Credits: Directed, conceived and produced by Astero Styliani Lamprinou, performed by Ana Cembrero and Astero Styliani Lamprinou, Edited by Yorgos Lamprinos, Sound by Thomas Damas, Mixing by Thomas Guillaume, Cinematography by Oliver Imfeld, Color Grading by Jorge Piquer, Music by Philippe Létalon.

Film trailer https://vimeo.com/505760401

Full film https://vimeo.com/471664697

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Part 1

The interview below with Astero Styliani Lamprinou focuses on her use of old postcards embedded within the narrative of the film and how the archive materials influenced the film from pre-production to the final stages of its making

1. Could you start by telling me about yourself and your relationship to Brussels?

I arrived in Brussels on a cold December night in 2004. I remember coming out of *Botanique* Metro[1], and vaguely seeing an incredible panorama in the dark. I was motivated to join a very vibrant dance scene, but the city's architecture made an even bigger impression on me! In the daytime I was more amazed to discover a city in which so many older buildings were interspaced with those of a more modern structure. I found the city very small and practical in which to install myself: to work and have a family - like a village in the center of Europe. Observing the city over the years and its mixture of old and new, made me want to discover its past, when it was obvious that the city had had a different image.

2. You say that the book, *Bruxelles Disparu*, by Marc Meganck inspired the film. I am interested in knowing more about the element of "disappearance" that influenced the film.

The book by Marc Meganck shows old images of buildings and places in Brussels that have disappeared. These images helped me understand more or less what the city looked like in the early 1900s. It was very harmonious and the buildings were thought out in great detail, unlike today. Wisely, Marc did not show what replaced the old buildings that disappeared, because these keep changing. Brussels has been described as a site in constant construction! But, what he didn't show is what inspired me to make the film, the past and the present next to each other**.** First, I wanted to show several old images of the city, unveil a glorious past that had disappeared, so the use of archive material was absolutely crucial to start this comparison and bring the city's past to light. Then, I wanted to show how some of these sites have remained the same and how others have been completely altered. By this simple juxtaposition, I thought I could invite the audience to decide which sites they prefer and raise some sensibility about the past. Do modern interventions respect the surroundings and their history, or do they just impose themselves, in disregard of the old buildings?

1 Underground station

3. *Secret City* uses archive material (postcards). Could you tell me a little about how the archive might have shaped the filming?

The archive material was the point of departure for the whole film. Guided by Marc Meganck's book, I went to the archives of Urbanism in Brussels, where I found 2000 old images of the city. I selected 140 and used 13 in the film. Based on the images, I made a trajectory for the dancers' passages through the city, starting from sites that had not changed much, such as the Royal *quartier*[2], to areas that went through major transformations such as the *Place Rogier*[3] with its modern white flat circular canopy. Based on the angle of each archive image, my goal was to find exactly the same angle for filming today. This was only possible for some images, like the first images of *Botanique*[4] and *Parc Royal*[5], because some areas have changed drastically. Moreover, some buildings that were photographed at the time (early 1900s) were no longer there.

4.Did the archive also have a resonance in the movement material on site in your film?

The choreography was conceived solely on site and was inspired by its past and present images. For example, when Ana is sliding on her back down the stairs of *Mont des Arts*[6], we are alluding to the cascading fountains of water that were there in the early 1900s.

5. You mentioned that movement best emanates the ephemeral quality of time, but I was also attracted by the element of stillness and sculpture in your film. How important was this with relation to conveying time?

The movement in this film is based on the theme of passage. In a city that has existed for years and years, the characters make a flowing passage, pausing only to contemplate and bring about visions of the past, and frame details of monuments of the city. The stillness of the characters is an active meditative state, where they are floating between present and past. For me, seeing this passage and the transformations of the city within the span of a century, points out the ephemeral aspect of movement and of our mortality in general. The movement takes place fluidly but vanishes like smoke in the air. In a way it

2 The district in the center of Brussels known as such because it houses the main square (*The Place Royal*) and the Royal Palace of Brussels, which is no longer used as a royal residence.

3 Major square in the Brussels municipality Saint-Josse-ten-Noode

4 The botanical gardens in Brussels

5 The Royal Park in Brussels

6 Meaning "Hill of the Arts", *Mont Des Arts* is an historic site in Brussels that includes an urban complex and a public garden

describes our fate: from inhabiting this city every day to inevitably disappearing one day.

6. What are your thoughts about the cinematography in relation to the archive?

The old black and white postcards in the film were used as images in stillness. The characters arrive at a site, and in a moment of contemplation they have visions of the past suspended in time. There is a clear distinction between the past and the present. The still, black and white past, is then found in the living and colored present, identical or altered. On two occasions, the semi-real and semi-fantastic characters acquire qualities of their visions and lose color. When they become black and white at the end of the film, it is as if their ephemeral story has already vanished into the past.

7. How was the archive material choreographed within the editing of the film?

We used a metronome throughout filming to sustain a dynamic tempo. For the editing, I relied on someone with years of experience. Yorgos started the editing slowly, following the tempo of the first character and then he accelerated, following the running and matching the tempo of the flowing choreography. Introducing the still archive image at this pace was the biggest challenge. We needed to allot enough time for the image to register, but not so long as to drain the overall rhythm of the film. Yorgos decided to directly cut the old images in and out to add more dynamism, instead of slowly fusing the images from the past into those of the present, which he considered inappropriate and old-fashioned for this film.

8. In a few shots, I like how the people in the archive postcard look as if they are actually watching you perform, and how the points of view shift among various characters. In another interview you say that the film is “a passage in time and a passage in space”. It seemed to me that this passage is non linear and multifaceted. Could you comment?

The characters make a flowing passage in the present time and space of the city, but they also bring in the old images as their visions of the past. Their costumes, inspired by the color of the statues in the city today, were chosen to make them look distinct from everyday people, make them easy to detect from afar and transform them into animated statues. They are there now, but they could have been there in the past just like the city’s statues. They appear and reappear in various areas of the city constantly losing and finding each other. They appear in color, but they also lose their color, as if they’re traveling into the past, which accentuates their ephemeral quality as passengers in this city and of movement itself. Their surreal journey ends in a colorful utopia of plastic design of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s in a museum, another preserved space of the past.

Part 2

This second part of the interview follows a more creative approach to questions and answers based on the process as initiated and explained by Astero in Part 1 in relation to her use of the archive material in *Secret City*

1. You mention that Brussels's architecture had an impact on you when you first arrived in the city and that the book inspired the architecture in your film. Did the images in the book reawaken your memory? Could you reflect on archive material and memory?

I did not know how Brussels used to be in the past. I was just very surprised to see this landscape of mixture and inclusion of old and new buildings. The landscape itself raised questions about the past, which I was able to partially answer through the book *Bruxelles Disparu.* There I could discover the old face of the city, which I never knew and which has partly disappeared. However, I knew the city well enough to locate all the spots where the old buildings had been and see what had replaced them at the present time, which was not revealed in the book. This kind of comparison became my own mission throughout the film.

2. Numbers of postcards of Brussels from the past that you observed and selected

2000 - 140 -13

There are about 2000 words at this point in this interview, could you make a first list of about 100 and then select only 13?

City, panorama, perspective, **landscape**, **past**, **present**, **passage**, movement, **architecture**, **comparison**, harmony, classicism, flowers, curves, statues, **buildings**, **monuments**, flowing passage, meditative state, stillness, visions, ephemeral, connection, **disappearance**, vanished, **surreal** journey, colorful utopia, **trajectory**, departure, filming, angle, frame within a frame, sculpture, surroundings, sensitive, surroundings, embrace, contrast, **transformations**, dynamism, mix and match, constant construction, details, glorious, juxtaposition, sensibility, allusions, black and white, vivid colors, **archive, postcards**, challenge, movement, observation, impression, unveil, images, suspension, contemplation, semi real, semi fantastic, story, experience, localize, spots, colorful utopia, mission, melting, flowing, state, inhabit, fate, identical, losing, finding, characters, surprise, face.

Surreal Passage

Past Buildings

Present Architecture

Monuments Transformations

Landscape Trajectory

Postcards Comparison

Archive Disappearance

3. Trajectory

Image 1: Styliani's sketch on map of Brussels indicating choreographic pathway, Credit: Astero Styliani Lamprinou

4. Allusions

The sites and their function in history determined the choice of movement in the choreography of the film. For example, when Celeste is melting down at the paws of a statue of a lion, she is representing the unknown dead soldiers for whom this monument was built, *Tombeau du Soldat inconnu*, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Image 2: *Tombeau du Soldat inconnu*, Credit: Oliver Imfeld
Image 3: *Tombeau du Soldat inconnu*, Credit: Archive image from the collection of Belfius Banque, Copyright ARB-SPRB, Documentation center of Brussels Urbanism and Patrimony "*Service Regional de Bruxelles, Centre de Documentation de BUP*'' with the authorization of the Royal Academy of Brussels

Or, by sliding on her back down the stairs of *Mont des Arts,* she makes an allusion to the water that used to cascade down the center part of the stairs when it was designed for the International Exposition in 1910.

Image 4: Dancer sliding down steps of *Mont des Arts*, Credit: Oliver Imfeld

Image 5: *Mont Des Arts*, Credit: Archive image from the collection of Belfius Banque, Copyright ARB-SPRB, Documentation center of Brussels Urbanism and Patrimony "*Service Regional de Bruxelles, Centre de Documentation de BUP*'', with the authorization of the Royal Academy of Brussels

5.Framing the frame

The idea of frames within the frame of the camera was to draw the eye to small details of the city. And to show that the two characters are very sensitive to their surroundings revealing interesting angles and points of view. A framed sculpture suddenly looks different than in its full aspect, and the bodies of the characters literally embrace the details.

Image 6: Dancer framing a sculpture from the *Parc Royal*, Credit: Oliver Imfeld

Image 7: Dancer framing a sculpture from the *Parc Botanique*, Credit: Oliver Imfeld

6. Can you comment on how you worked with each location in relation to the image?

It was a big challenge to find the same angles from which the pictures were taken in the past. I wanted to show the past accurately next to the present.

The image of the gardens of *Botanique* in the beginning of the film was quite easy in that sense, because the building where the photo was taken in the past still exists, and I managed to get access. However, as one can see below, even though the gardens of *Botanique* are still very similar to what they once were, the changes in the surroundings are not as discreet.

Image 8: *Le Jardin Botanique*, Credit: Archive image from the collection of Belfius Banque, Copyright ARB-SPRB, Documentation center of Brussels Urbanism and Patrimony "*Service Regional de Bruxelles, Centre de Documentation de BUP*'' with the authorization of the Royal Academy of Brussels

Image 9: *Le Jardin Bortanique*, Credit: Oliver Imfeld

In *Place Rogier*, the old railway station in the middle of the picture has disappeared and only the two hotels on the right-hand side have remained there. This square is barely recognizable today.

Image 10: *Place Rogier*, Credit: Archive image from the collection of Belfius Banque, Copyright ARB-SPRB, Documentation center of Brussels Urbanism and Patrimony "*Service Regional de Bruxelles, Centre de Documentation de BUP*'' with the authorization of the Royal Academy of Brussels

Image 11: *Place Rogier*, Credit: Oliver Imfeld

The *Grand Place*[7], used as a parking space during the International Exposition of 1958, is looking empty and clean before the constant invasion of tourists at mid-day, nowadays.

7 The central square of Brussels

Image 12: *Grand Place*, Credit: Archive image from the collection of Belfius Banque, Copyright ARB-SPRB, Documentation center of Brussels Urbanism and Patrimony "*Service Regional de Bruxelles, Centre de Documentation de BUP*'' with the authorization of the Royal Academy of Brussels

Image 13: *Grand Place*, Credit: Oliver Imfeld

7. Can we have a statement/reflection/poem/sketch from Yorgos that responds to how you described the editing and inclusion of the postcards?

With this project there wasn't really a question of a visual reference with the edit. It was more about performance and achieving fluidity. We wanted the jumps into the past to be dynamic and visually incorporated and not have the "reminiscing" feel of a dissolve.

Another interesting technical part in the editing process was that initially, we edited on a pre-existing recording, which we could not keep due to very expensive copyright fees. We decided to commission an original track instead. While the original music was being written, the composer had to decide on the bpms (beats per minute) of his track, even though the melody was still evolving. The bpms defined the tempo of each scene and could not be altered once they were communicated to the editor. During the editing, we used those precise bpms so we could have the edit as precise as possible to the tempo of the action and the movement. Eventually, the final music score matched the tempo of the final version and the synchronization was achieved.

8.Color and fading

My initial idea about the color grading was to use all the old images in black and white so as to contrast the full color images of live sequences in the present. Together with Jorge Piquer, we worked the different sepia color of the old pictures to a unified black and white and accentuated the contrast to make them look more cinematographic. For the full color of the rest of the film, we worked with a very vivid Technicolor aspect, accentuating reds, greens, yellows and the turquoise color of the costume to make it stand out in the panoramic shots. This maximized the contrast between past and present, adding fun and lightness to the film and juxtaposing these with the heavier nostalgia of the past, the aging and transformation of the city.

The fading of the characters in the film is an allusion to the ephemeral aspect of our lives. It can be interpreted in several ways: These two women might be present now, but sooner or later they will become part of the past. Time is running for everyone, themselves and the city; or, their visions of the past make them discover a city they perhaps prefer and want to return to. Finally, the fading color adds to their atemporal surreal aspect, as they are literally floating between past and present throughout the film.

Biography: Astero Styliani Lamprinou

Astero Styliani Lamprinou originally from Athens and based in Brussels, studied movement, dance, cultural theory and choreography, at the *Laban Centre* and *London Contemporary Dance School* and completed a Master's degree in *Surrey University* with a scholarship from A. Onassis foundation. She was predominantly a performer in various fields (contemporary dance, opera, theater, video, installation) in London, Ireland, Athens and Brussels. She has worked with *Dance Theatre of Ireland*, *English National Opera*, *English National Theatre* and with choreographers such as Joanne Leighton, Yolande Snaith and David Hernandez. Her first short dance film is *SECRET CITY* (2020), a dancing passage in the city of Brussels and her second film *WALL TO WALL* (2020), is a site-specific dance on camera. She is currently working on the project *STONES,* for film and live performance.
Website: https://asterolamprinou.com

Entanglement In Time: Nostalgic Affect As Cine-Choreography In *The White Crow* (2018) And *Suspiria* (2018)

Kaixuan Yao

Abstract

This essay is an investigation into the historical claim of a work of screendance that involves re-imagination, re-composition, or re-enactment: In what way does it access history? And how should we treat, with due seriousness, the vicarious aura of historicity these works afford? After identifying the ontological status of time as the blind spot in the debate regarding the corporeal relationship to the archive, I introduce the Deleuzian conception of time as an incessant exchange between the virtual and the actual. I present the hauntology of certain pasts as a result of the virtual-actual exchange dissipating the temporal identity of an event, which is in turn experienced as the subject's dispersion of the self. And I redefine the body as a corporeal-archival system that channels the exchange. I then analyze the nostalgic tones of the two selected films as affects formulated by cine-choreographies that express the dispersion of the self as an experience of the dissipation of the temporal identity of an event, thereby providing an analytical approach that makes it possible to interpret such screendance practices' claim to history.

Keywords: cinechoreography, nostalgia film, Gilles Deleuze, Suspiria, The White Crow, theory of time, reenactment, time image

Though this volume of IJSD invites us to investigate the ethical, creative and curatorial aspects of using archival footage to envision screendance practices, my article reverses the order of subjects in the question, in order to contemplate the same constellation of concepts at hand—archive, film, dance, performance, choreography, history, memory and temporality—from a different angle: *to what extent does the envisioned movement on screen serve as a (re)new(ed) piece of archival footage? To what extent is it now part of the archive (whatever the definition of an archive is)?* To ask these questions is to suggest that the practice has, however inconsequential, a claim to history (whatever the kind of historicity signified by the contested definitions of the archive).

This essay is an investigation into the historical claim of two fictional narrative films with dance sequences that involve re-imagination, re-composition or re-enactment: In what way do they access history? And how should we treat, with due seriousness, the vicarious aura of historicity these works afford? Describing that “aura of historicity” is a tricky matter, particularly when corporeal practices are involved, for it risks imposing an interpretive narrative on modes of expressions that

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defy narratives. It risks defining “history” in a narrow, humanist sense as if it could only manifest itself with the aid of some interpretive agency, when, ironically, one of the greatest potentials of corporeal events such as dancing is that they unleash the unhuman[1], that they are “means without ends.” [2] André Lepecki has written eloquently in this direction. He looks at the “turning and returning to all those tracks and steps and bodies and gestures and sweat and images and words and sounds performed by past dancers”[3] in contemporary experimental choreography, and argues that the artists are propelled not by some paranoid-melancholic, nostalgic authorship, but by a “will to re-enact”[4]—I will return to his account in the following part of this essay.

Suffice it to say that inquiries about a work’s historical claim inevitably lead us to examine the motives—human or unhuman—behind the work’s engagement with materials from the past, be them archival footages or historical tropes circulated in media representations. Such engagement points to a relationship between the choreography and the archive that, as my analysis will show, informs us immensely about the ontological status of time. In other words, understanding choreographic modes of access to the archive sheds light on the temporal logic behind the “will to re-enact.”

In this essay I look at two popular[5] nostalgia films that take the intersection of dance (movement and embodiment), cinema, and time seriously. Both films, drawing from a range of biographical sources and audio-visual imageries from the past, have a visually nostalgic quality, which, upon first look, may be guilty of the Fredric Jameson’s charge of nostalgia films as displacing “real” history with the history of aesthetic styles.[6] But such sweeping statement does not do justice to the fact that both films *feel* haunted by history, falling irresistibly into the spirals of questions relating to the hyperstatic structure of history, if not time itself. This may be partially attributed to the nature of the historical drama they each engage with that relays itself in a form of hauntology, calling upon artistic re-enactment: *The White Crow* (2018) features the story of Rudolf Nureyev’s defection to the West against the backdrop of the cultural Cold War, at the height of ideological containment and paranoia for uncontainable residues, at a point in history when the human species was inadvertently heading to the end of history. *Suspiria* (Luca Guadagnino 2018)[7] situates a mystic, generational power struggle within a dance company in Berlin during the German Autumn, when violent oppositions between the state and the terrorist *coup d'état* cited the Nazi past as an unburied *lieux de mémoire*. Directorial choices also play a determinant role in formulating the spiraling, haunted nostalgic affects. Both films find the dancer’s body a fitting medium to steer the nostalgic fall, creatively employing “cine-choreography”[8] to navigate the presented period of history. Examining the nostalgic affects as cine-choreographies allows us to trace their modes of access to historical materials, their entanglement *in* time.

The archive—as a physical or virtual property, or as a theoretical concept—has received considerable scholarly attentions to the kind of access it provides us to the past. Theorists of performance and embodiment have questioned the stability and permanence of the archive, offering corporeal instances of transmitting or revisiting history that disrupt the logocentrism assumed in archival practices. However, the ontological status of *time* as the medium for accessing history is largely left out from the discussion. Despite often skirting along the porosity and intractability of time, the debate regarding the corporeal relationship to the archive retains this theoretical blind spot. By addressing the blind spot, I radically redefine the archive, and return to the opening questions of the essay with new perspectives: the envisioned movement on screen is a part of the archive to the extent that its cine-choreography records the co-performance of the body and the movement of time in memorizing, retrieving, or even flirting with the past.

Blind Spot: The Ontological Status Of Time

In *The Archive and the Repertoire*, Diana Taylor recuperates the status of the repertoire as an embodied form of historical knowledge that has long been suppressed by the hegemony of the archive. Taylor shows us the inter-dependency of two epistemic systems—the writing system and the performative system—and argues that the performative is just as persistent in transmitting the past as writing. Through embodiment, cultural scenarios were repeated with difference along the passage of history. History, in Taylor's implied outlook, unfolds along the linear passing of time. It is curious that Taylor's veneration of the repertoire stops at a felt cognitive boundary, as if acknowledging embodiment as an *episteme* that changes how we think we could access "a time in the past" does not suffice to pose a question about the possibly changed status of the ontology of time itself.

Rebecca Schneider, prompted by a different set of embodiment practices, wonders about their "knotty and porous relationship to time."[9] Schneider's writing in *Performing Remains* takes the readers to relive the stunning and confounding temporal experience she had while witnessing civil war re-enactments. The "enthusiasts" dress up vividly in detailed clothing and put up "performances" as if they were, indeed, soldiers or civilians of the 1860s. In their live "reincarnation" of dead figures in history, Schneider observes "the ambivalence of the live, or its inter(in)animation with the no longer live,"[10] and the scene "if not the thing itself (the past), somehow also *not not* the thing (the past), as it passes across their bodies in again-time."[11] Schneider is interested in the hauntology of time manifested in the body as a site where time tangles, leaks and returns to. Recalling Derrida's *Archive Fever*, Schneider perceives the archive as a material infrastructure with built-in anachronism, awaiting the future archivist's participation. The word "archive" is derived from "*árchōn,*" which alludes to an image of the state house:

> built for live encounters with privileged remains, remains that, ironically, *script* the encountering body as disappearing even as the return of the body is assumed by the very logic of preservation . . . Here it becomes clear: the theatricality . . . the performative bases of the archive, is that it is a house of and for performative repetition, not stasis . . . For even as a linear order of time appears to be kept intact by the archive, it is a continual *coup de théâtre* which 'dislocates the linear order of the presents' and folds the past into a deferred time of 'much future work'—suggesting a future for pasts that have, much like a play-script in relation to production or dance steps sedimented in trained bodies, not *yet* taken place.[12]

The archive, with its promise of a temporal *coup de théâtre*, is always already a repertoire. André Lepecki concurs with Schneider, though coming from a different theoretical path. Following Foucault, he argues that the archive is "not a thing, not a recipient, not a building, nor a box,"[13] it is instead "the general *system* of formation and transformation of statements (my emphasis)."[14] Nonetheless, Lepecki differs from Schneider by advancing a more radical claim: the body is not (only) an archivist, it *is* the archive.[15] "Choreography," he writes, "is also a dynamic system of transmission and of transformation, an archival-corporeal system that also turns statements . . . into corporeal events and kinetic things."[16]

What Schneider has touched upon—the inherent anachronism in the material infrastructure for preservation—Lepecki takes it further by claiming the body itself as that material infrastructure. Lepecki's move to center on the body is influenced by Gilles Deleuze, for whom the body is the privileged site for transmission and transformation between statements and events. The body short-circuits the virtual and the actual, producing affects. In "The Autonomy of Affect," Brian Massumi borrows Deleuzian terminologies: How else to account for the listed instances of conscious incognizance or incognizant consciousness, the "missing half second" before the initiation of one's free-willed action?[17] If the activity of consciousness was not absent during the missing half second, then it must be "overfull, in excess of the actually performed action and its ascribed meaning,"[18] in the field of "the virtual, the pressing crowd of incipience and tendencies"[19] that through consciousness's selection are prevented from being actualized. The body is therefore the privileged site to register the affect of such selection process, as the body continues to *express* even when consciousness fails. It is free of the need to *articulate* and therefore is always in a state of open indetermination. Similarly, Lepecki's conception of the body as *árchōn* works along the same line of the actual-virtual divide: the body is "a critical point, singularity—squeezing out actuals from the virtual cloud, and secreting back virtuals from the actuals, turning corporeal events into kinetic things, corporeal things into kinetic events."[20]

Lepecki goes on and argues that contemporary dance re-enactments arise not so much from an impulse *towards* the archive "from a specific subjectivity," rather

from an “archival impulse,” a bodily call to reenter the creative, virtual field of multitude and potentials that defies assumptions of actual authorial intention.[21] Re-imagination, re-composition, or re-enactment are propelled by the virtual forces transmitted and taken up by bodies across time, with each instance of enactment actualizing a previously unrealized potential. However, by focusing on the liberating creative codes offered by the virtual, Lepecki omits the quintessential characterization of the virtual and the actual: their temporal bind. This omission inevitably leaves some questions unaddressed: Why *this* form of actualization? Why *this* work of re-imagination, re-composition, or re-enactment? And why *now*? Why does it actualize in *this time* through *this body/these bodies*? What does this actualization tell us about the virtual, its past and future actualizations?

Deleuze: Time And The Inter-Subjective Unconscious

Lepecki argues, following the Foucauldian notion of the archive, that the “self” as an expression is simultaneously multiplied, differentiated, and dispersed, as the body functions as an archival-corporeal system. The system “dissipates that temporal identity in which we are pleased to look at ourselves.”[22] What is the temporal identity that is being dissipated here? What is the dissipated temporal identity? How does it disperse the self?

Gilles Deleuze’s re-reading of the Freudian *Nachträglichkeit* offers an account for the dispersion of the self in temporal entanglement. Freud’s *Nachträglichkeit* is scenario-based, particularly the scenario of a young woman with shop-phobia, unable to visit any shop on her own. During her treatment, she remembers that at the age of twelve, two shopkeepers laughed at her clothing. And further, she recollects that when she was eight, a shopkeeper tried to touch her through her clothes. The question is: Why is the reaction delayed and the memory repressed? Why is she unable to go shopping only now, instead of at twelve, or immediately after the assault? (Recall my questions above: Why actualizes now? Why this form of actualization?)

Freud’s explanation is that only at the age of puberty does the child realize what sexuality is and retroactively interprets the previous experiences in sexual terms. Her effort at the sexualized reinterpretation renders herself complicit with the molester. Therefore, the remembered event becomes doubly unbearable and repressed as a result. Whereas for Deleuze, “what dramatizes the memory is not that one now interprets the event through adult eyes instead of a child’s, but that one now relives it at both stages of life at once.”[23] For the obsessive insistence to avoid it now comes not from retroactively attributing adult motives to the child’s experience, but the other way around: “one feel[s] oneself a child again *while* going about the present business [and] feel[s] complicit [only because that] child was always already forming an adult sensibility.”[24] The delayed reaction depends not on a “solipsistic unconscious” but an “inter-subjective unconscious,”[25] that is,

the communication between the childhood self and the adult. Jay Lampert summarizes this temporal model at work:

> It is not that there exist two events separated in time, the multiple potentials in the earlier getting resolved in the latter, or the later gathering up and reacting to the earlier; rather, there is *one event occurring at two distant moments in time at once*. At its best, the overlay need not subsist as trauma or reaction, but as a poetics of time regained or a politics of intersubjective historical modes of productivity. . . . *The point is that delay is a structure of time before it is a matter of psychic, economic, or some other specific kind of development* (my emphasis).[26]

The recurrence of an event in time is experienced as a dispersion of the self. For Deleuze, the past is not a temporal entity pushed into existence by the "coming" of the subsequent present, but a reservoir of the virtual aspects of an event awaiting actualization. The present passes, "but the past itself does not pass[,] it is conserved in itself, endowed with its own virtual reality distinct from any psychological existence."[27] The present is, in contrast to the past, an actualized aspect of an event. This incessant virtual-actual movement dissipates the temporal identity of an event, which is in turn experienced as the dispersion of the self.

My following analysis of the selected films focuses on how cine-choreographies express the dispersion of the self as an experience of the dissipation of the temporal identity of an event. *The White Crow*, I argue, presents the historical subject as dispersed across two temporal moments of the Cold War as an event: during the Cold War and after the official "end" of it. Using different strategies, *Suspiria* reenacts the German Autumn as a historical moment that belongs to the continuing social debate about the political "we" in Germany, portraying the violent struggles as an "intersubjective historical mod[e] of productivity."[28] My aim is to provide a way of analysis that could trace the temporal entanglement—the dissipation of the temporal identity of an event—through cine-choreographies, making it possible to interpret a piece of work's vicarious claim to history.

The White Crow: Recollection-Image

The film, as a project of cinematic biography, anticipates the historically well-known event of Nureyev's defection as its end point since conception. Oleg Ivenko, a trained ballet dancer who plays Nureyev in the film, performs several abridged dance scores on the Parisian stage. But overall, the film is less interested in staged performances than in the rehearsal process. Not only does the film compulsively and repeatedly pull us back to Nureyev's pre-stage training in Leningrad, the film's entire procession has a final performance—at the Le Bourget airport as the theatre of defection—seen on the horizon.

The film satisfies its audience's voyeuristic interest for rehearsal. The audience is at a position to seek out the "rawness" and the "realness" of the rehearsal as the place where crucial actions happen but are withdrawn from the public view. They come to the film, whose central plot of a dancer's defection has been elaborately spoiled in its marketing trailer (Studiocanal UK), with the aroused appetite for the "real" story behind the defection, the dancer's "leap of faith." The extra-diegetic spectatorial expectation (*ex-spectare*) is embodied by the journalists in the diegetic space of the film, with whose earnest pressing for a diplomatic if not straight up political statement from Nureyev function as a watchful presence next to the KGB agent throughout the film.

What the audience is promised to take from this film is spoken by the director Ralph Fiennes himself, through his screened persona as the Nureyev's teacher Aleksandr Pushkin: "We spend so much time on technique, it's all we think about . . . Story. What story do we wish to tell?"[29] may say that the film is intended for story-telling—to narrate to the audience how the dancer arrives at his decision to defect. The narration is executed in the guise of Nureyev's personal nostalgia, portrayed in the film by the constant shuffling between the narrative present in France and Nureyev's flashbacks of his childhood, his ballet training in Leningrad and bits and parts of his life and his circle of acquaintances in the USSR—memories of home that tug at his heart, casting clouds over his later decision to defect.

Everything melts down in the cinematic movement in-between memories and the present—the mysterious dance in time—into a dream of floating signifiers: We glimpse at the 1960s streetscape of Paris "bath[ed in] a creamy, sun-drenched light that radiates romance and nostalgia,"[30] characters in period costumes, dance scenes in "lush blues, greens and pinks as if . . . a retro, Technicolor musical," [31] "[t]he details of the Soviet everyday life" which "are quite convincing and seen through a soft lens of nostalgia"[32] for "a longtime émigré looking for a trip down the memory lane,"[33] these include: the empty streets and squares of Leningrad, Soviet home décor, food and tableware, the list continues. Nostalgia cascades down the screen and softens everything.

Interestingly, the nostalgic affect is produced by choreographed cinematography. The film lavishly employs "recollection-images"[34] to delineate a temporal logic. In Paris, Nureyev visits the Louvre and lingers amid the collection of sculptures, captivated by their vigorous gestures.

Image 1: Nureyev looking at a sculpture. Credit: StudioCanal UK

The camera swiftly cuts to the past when he was practicing alone by the barre repeating the dance routines, soaked in sweat, making sloshing sounds with his shoes on the floor.

Image 2: Nureyev practicing routines. Credit: StudioCanal UK

The camera then cuts back to the present at the Louvre, showing Nureyev appreciating the perfect proportion of strength and spirit of the sculptures, while the amplified slushy sound from his practice in the past stays with us, as if the past is *touching* the present. And while Nureyev affectionately touches the bulging joint on the foot of a herculean sculpture, the camera shows us his own swollen feet after practice in the past, resembling the marble-form in the museum. In this way, the camera establishes a tactile link between the past and the present. Like the sculptures whose gestures now appear to arise from an entirely tactile history of the body, Nureyev's past also takes on a touch of sculptural grace and solemnity.

In one scene, Pushkin/Fiennes says to Nureyev/Ivenko: "Steps have a logic, you need to find that logic, not to force it. One step follows another, with no impression of haste or effort. Steps follow, and belong. They are interconnected," [35] and raises his arms softly as he speaks.

Image 3: Pushkin saying “They are interconnected” as he raises his arms softly. Credit: Studio-Canal UK

It is with a dancerly bewilderment emerging from the traversal between memories and the present that the cascading nostalgic images strike us like an arm that softens, a gesture that touches, a motion picture that emanates the virtuality of time. “Soften the arm,”[36] the film repeatedly sends out this message as is dictated by various dance instructors in the practice scenes. Thus, in a tactile manner, each flashback follows and belongs, leading to the scene of defection, the story’s closure.

Indeed, it is not that the present narrative-action requires a past as its causality, as if Nureyev’s appreciation of the sculptures needs to be explained with his training in the past, or as if Nureyev’s decision to defect needs to be explained by how he perceives his youth. The film hardly supports this logic, for the past does not *lead* to the present, it *touches* the present as the present *gestures* to it, which points to a dancerly dimension of time beyond causal relations. “An inexplicable secret”[37] of time propels the flashbacks: “[they must] be justified elsewhere,”[38] not from the past as causality. The “recollection-images must be given the internal mark of the past from elsewhere,”[39] for “[t]he circumstances must be such that *the story cannot be told in the present*. It is therefore necessary for something else to justify or impose the flashback, and to mark or authenticate the recollection-image (my emphasis).”[40]

The story cannot be told in the present. The circumstances must be such that the story must be told in flashbacks, in the short-circuiting of one's present self and recollected self. The circumstance is none other than the working of time itself:

> The virtual image (pure recollection) is not a psychological state or a consciousness: it exists outside of consciousness, in time, and we should have no more difficulty in admitting *the virtual insistence of pure recollections in time* than we do for the actual existence of non-perceived objects in space. . . . Just as we perceive things in the place where they are, and have to place ourselves among things in order to perceive them, we go to look for recollection in the place where it is, we have to place ourselves with a leap into the past in general, into these purely virtual images . . . (my emphasis).[41]

The film's cine-choreography of the nostalgic affect—the choreographed choices of cinematography to deliver movements—not limited to bodily movement, but movement across the actual-virtual registers as well—bespeaks the virtual insistence of a temporally dissipated event. We should note that the film's nostalgic affect blurs two separate temporal registers: Whose nostalgia? It could be Nureyev's personal nostalgia. It could also be the present spectatorial or directorial investment in the past. The event is, therefore, dissipated across two temporal moments: in the past during the Cold War, and in the present, after the end of the Cold War. The tactile cine-choreography tells the story of Nureyev's defection as well as the story about the spectator or the director's attempt to provide an account for the defection.

Revisiting Pushkin/Fiennes' enunciation—"We spend so much time on technique, it's all we think about . . . Story. What story do we wish to tell?"[42]—reveals the other layer of the story told by the tactile technique. In this scene, Pushkin's ghost comes to life through Fiennes' embodiment, in effect asking a Cold War era question regarding the difficulty of story-telling: we are equipped with all the techniques for narratives, but how to narrate history in light of the advent of an *event* that signals the end of history?—either the end of political-ideological progress when one camp wins, or the potential nuclear annihilation in a lose-lose situation.[43] That Fiennes masquerades as Pushkin literally *embodies* a dispersion of the self that points to the dissipation of the Cold War as a temporal event. Fiennes, the film's director masquerading as Pushkin, is tongue-tied with a retrospective, contemporary question: We already know of the end of the Cold War, but what had led to its ending? How to narrate the occurrence of an *event* after "the end of history"?[44] How to narrate the steps that led to the dissolution of the stalemate? Has the stalemate actually dissolved? What is the real story behind it? The two sets of questions, enunciated respectively by Pushkin and Fiennes, are, in fact, "one event occurring at two distant moments in time at once."[45] The film's tactile

cine-choreography not only tries to tell a defection story, but also the story of the Cold War as a temporally dissipated event: the film's alternation of Nureyev's memories of the USSR and his present in the West disguises yet demarcates the political rivalry of the two camps. And Nureyev's defection, bringing closure to the alternation, stands in for the end of the Cold War.

Suspiria: Dream-Image

Suspiria is a nostalgic remake of Dario Argento's original horror masterpiece of the same title. It follows a similar story of an American girl Susie (played by Dakota Johnson), who joins the Markos dance company in Berlin only to discover that the company is a witch coven and becomes involved in the company's supernatural conspiracy that preys on its own members. The new film widens the scope of its narrative by incorporating a series of historical events associated with the terrorist activities of the Red Army Faction. This historical period takes its name as "the German Autumn" from the omnibus film *Germany in Autumn* (1978) which was made to capture the social atmosphere during the late 1977.

In the new film, the company's building stands next to the Berlin Wall graffitied with political slogans and the symbol of hammer and sickle, alluding to RAF's political rhetoric. Patricia (played by Chloë Grace Moretz), a dancer from the company, is suspected to be involved in RAF activities. The film starts with Patricia's visit to the psychoanalyst and Holocaust survivor, dr. Joseph Klemperer, an added character in the remake that showcases the new film's grounding of the story and the surrounding historical reality in a psychoanalytic register. The character is also a reference to Victor Klemperer, whose diary becomes an invaluable source that records the witnessing of German society during the Third Reich. As the following analysis will show, Dr. Klemperer in the film is similarly a helpless witness to the violent events of 1977. On her way to Klemperer's home office, Patricia crosses through a smoky standoff between protesters and the police. The strain of social unrest continues: On her first day in Berlin, Susie witnesses the RAF bombing close to her temporary accommodation. Midway, the film cuts to a televised news footage about the safe release of hijacked passengers from the Lufthansa airplane and the suicides of three RAF members in the Stammheim prison, announcing the end of the Baader-Meinhof era.

What follows is the company's public dance performance gone wrong: we know from the film that the dance group has survived the war under the lead of Madame Blanc, a chief choreographer who weaves spells into her choreography to influence what is happening outside the company, in society at large. In this regard the performance mirrors RAF's undertaking, not to mention that the title of the dance piece is the history-laden word "*Volk*." A stage accident abruptly ends the performance halfway, just like the miscarried venture of the RAF. After the performance Susie talks to Madame Blanc: "it's all a mess isn't it, the one out there,

the one in here, the one that's coming. Why is everyone so ready to think the worst is over?" In many ways what's happening inside the dance company parallels the historical events outside. The Markos sisters are experiencing a dynastic change as well as a power struggle between the predatory, witch-matrons and the curious younger generation of dancers, reflecting the generational divide in West German society haunted by its Nazi past and short of means to imagine a future that refuses the official optimism of post-war economic miracle.

The film adopts ventriloquism—the "practice of making voices appear to issue from elsewhere than their source"[46]—as its primary strategy of cine-choreography. Dance in this film takes on the "active form" of the ventriloquy. As an act of spell-casting, it animates or distorts the body and mind of others, holding "the power to *speak through* others (my emphasis)."[47] In his writing on ventriloquy, Steven Connor remarks on the inherent violence of utterance, as the voice secrets a sonorous envelope that "tear[s] apart distance . . . the space between us is nothing but a delirium tremens of voice."[48] In the diary book of the character Patricia, we are shown her drawings of how the company's dance binds space and time through the moving body.

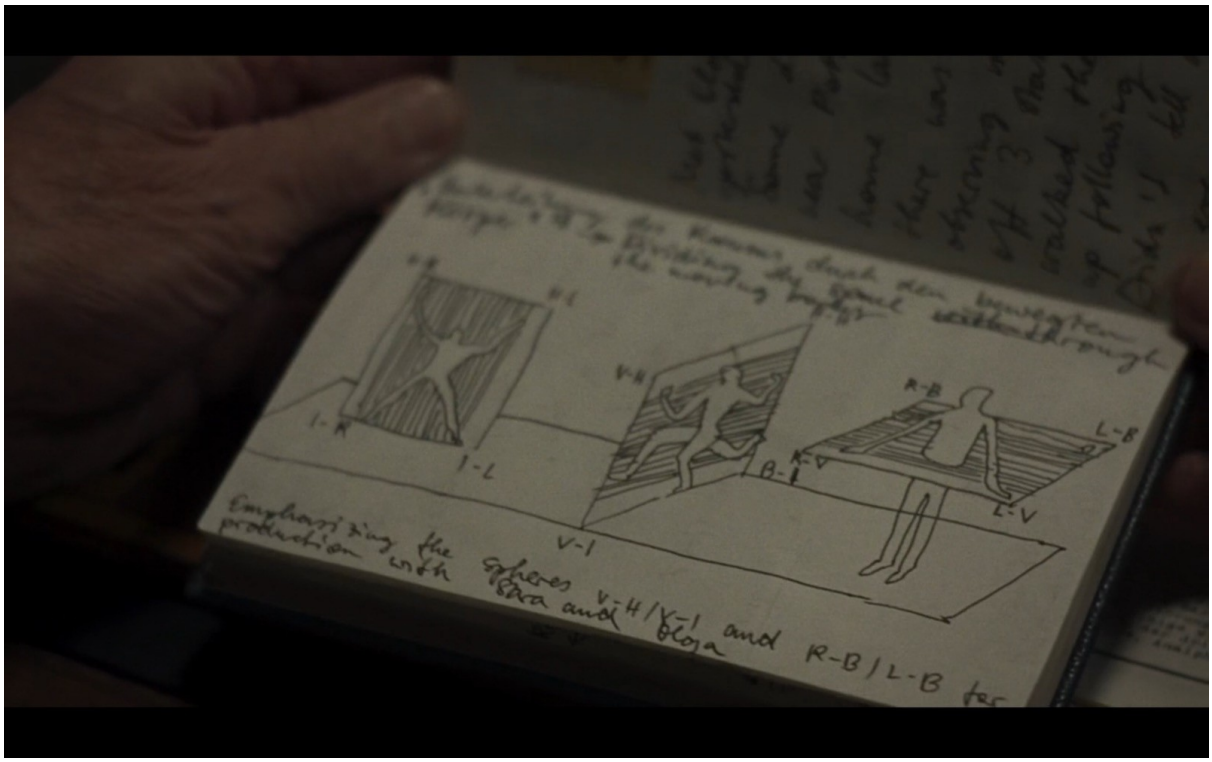

Image 4: Patricia's diary. Credit: Amazon Studios

This mechanism plays out when Susie dances, inadvertently casting a spell on Olga, another dancer from the company. As Susie dances, Olga's body breaks like the tormented dance of a marionette. Her limbs twisting, her bones protruding from beneath her skin, making gory, and cracking sounds. In short, Olga's body implodes.

Image 5: Olga implodes, image5.jpg, Credit: Amazon Studios

But a more visceral form of implosion is also at work here, casted by the omnipresence of the radio voice. The radio voice in *Suspiria* has a persisting presence in the background, broadcasting news of the RAF's hijacking of the Lufthansa airplane up until the release of the hostages. The film pays tribute to Rainer Weiner Fassbinder's *The Third Generation* (1979), a film about the third generation of the RAF that presents an incessant bombardment of the sound of television newsreels. Marshall McLuhan theorizes that the radio is a nostalgic medium. It is a medium of implosion, of claustrophobia, of the compression of space, turning "the psyche and society into a single echo chamber."[49] He draws on the prevalence of radio in the 1930s interwar Germany, whose defeat thrust them back from a previous outward-looking, visual obsession into brooding upon the resonating sound within. In a similar fashion, the simmering sound of the radio in *Suspiria* makes an implosion in the mind. The public mind is a dummy to the radio-ventriloquist and therefore takes on the "negative form" of ventriloquism, "being *spoken through* by others (my emphasis)."[50] This is reflected in the film by Dr. Klemperer's dream

walk across the city. As he listens to the news on TV about the release of Esslin and Meinhof, his caretaker remarks “before the war Germany had the strongest women, like your wife Anke,” thus conferring on the chain between the broadcast and the ‘dive back in memory’ that it solicits. Klemperer frequently crosses the Berlin Wall to look after the little shed in East Berlin where he and his deceased wife used to live together, traversing the spatial divide to trace a past that is lost. The spatial-temporal traversal of his dream walk stands in for the psychological implosion.

Image 6: Dr. Klemperer (center) walks in a stumbling manner. Credit: Amazon Studios.

Under the radio’s spell, Klemperer is wobbly on his legs as he walks across the city. His steps achieving “degree zero”—they lie somewhere between the actual motor steps of a senile body and the virtual, tenuous gait as if in a dream. But whose dream? Deleuze calls this an implied dream, in which one experiences reality but as if caught in the dream of the other. In this reality that is the implied dream, the movement of the world takes precedence over the movement of the body: “The road is not slippery without sliding on itself. The frightened child faced with danger cannot run away, but the world sets about running away for him and takes him with it, as if on a conveyor belt.”[51]

Deleuze talks about the dream-image not so much to confound reality as to delineate an experience of dispersion when the past comes back, when an event dissi-

pated across time haunts us like a dream. The dream multiplies in all its virtual possibilities. This implied dream is therefore open-ended, and it cannot be subsumed under the category of dreams as opposed to reality:

> [T]he virtual image which becomes actual does not do so directly, but becomes actual in a different image, which itself plays the role of virtual image being actualized in a third, and so on to infinity: the [implied] dream is not a metaphor but a series of anamorphoses which sketch out a very large circuit.[52]

Outside the dance company, Klemperer is held in the movement of the world. Inside the company, his doppelganger Madame Blanc tries to affect the world with her choreography of dance movements. As doppelgangers (they are both played by Tilda Swinton) they embody the dispersion of the self in the virtual-actual circuit: The witches' telepathic communication becomes actualized in Madame Blanc's spell-woven choreography, whose spell becomes actualized in the sizzling sound of the radio, the power of which is further actualized in Dr. Klemperer's dream walk. The fantastic nature of the walk is then actualized in his hallucination that his wife returns to the city, which is then actualized as a menacing force of the city itself embodied in the fierce wind that blows through the underground, but actualized again in the RAF's practiced guerrilla urbanism, *ad infinitum*. There's not a single entity to whom one can attribute the source of the dream. The witches could be interpreted as dream characters born out of Klemperer's guilt for not protecting his wife who died in *Theresienstadt*. But equally Klemperer can be read as an embodied character that the practice of witchcraft gives to the world. The escalating entanglement of the world and the characters is reflected in the increasingly intense dance sequences in the film.

Image 7: “Volk”. Credit: Amazon Studios

As the film’s choreographer Damien Jalet explains:

> There is a kind of revolution of the body in the film. The film starts from a relatively academic way in terms of dancing. It’s very sculptural in [that] way. There’s a very close relationship with rhythm, with geometry the body has, beautiful lines. And as you go in the film, then you start to enter into distortion. . . . Dance becomes also a bit more internal, and less just visual or just frontal.[53]

What does the dispersion of the self, presented in the dream-image, inform us about the temporally dissipated event which continues to haunt the characters? In his analysis of the representation of the German Autumn on screen, Thomas Elsaesser argues that existing representations rely largely on an Oedipal metaphor that reads the RAF’s outlashes as the “return of the repressed” or an Antigonist inability to mourn:

> [Their] cultural currency gives the ‘drama’ of the hot autumn a powerful pathos, but [they] also hid[e] a number of historical blind spots emerging from . . . the terrorists’ irruptive presence in the urban fabric [and] ris[k] mis-identifying the medium in which the events not so much unfolded but were subsequently to take on a good deal of their historical significance.[54]

In *Suspiria*, the RAF's urban presence is presented as a witchy, supernatural force meandering through the city and as the omnipresent voice of the radio covering their news, "[the] mode of address . . . authenticated the bond between the terrorists and their contemporaries."[55] Elsaesser presents sources in which people stated that they experience the RAF's street violence mediated in the news not only as street theatre, but also as a kind of music, "their political violence as a percussion cutting into the monotone of [the] everyday, a form of bodily 'sensation' which, rather like rock music, delivered non-verbal expression and opened up a new subjective space."[56]

In other words, their political violence took up a "vocalic body," that is, "a surrogate or secondary body . . . formed and sustained out of the autonomous operations of the voice."[57] The voice confers shape and becomes a vocalic body characterized by the "ways in which the voice seems to precipitate itself as an object, upon which it can then itself give the illusion of acting."[58] Under the duress of history, the RAF is "involved in a situation of *Nachträglichkeit*, engaged in making up for something that had been omitted in the past,"[59] namely the political "we" beyond the traditional symbolization of the nation, the class and the people. They made the violent urban outbreaks a vocalic body and solicited the public mind's non-symbolic and imaginary identification with it, through which a new subjectivity may emerge. As if caught in the virtual matrix of time, the public was challenged with an inter-subjective exchange as they uneasily identified in their reaction to RAF terrorism the legacy of a past political lethargy to the violence of the Nazi state:

> so strong is the embodying power of the voice, that this process occurs . . . also in voices . . . that have a clearly identifiable source, but seem in various ways excessive to that source. The voice then conjures for itself a different kind of body; an imaginary body which may contradict, compete with, replace, or even reshape the actual . . . body.[60]

It is then interesting to see that the film's progression of dance movements goes from symmetrical and in-control to fanatic and possessed, as if the act of spell-casting through dance inadvertently brings forth a vocalic body that proceeds to take over the dancer. The centerpiece of performance is *Volk*. In the span of the film the dance group makes various attempts to give a complete performance of it, but all endeavours go awry, either aborted in the middle, or, as in the performance near the end of the film, the geometric lines of the choreography can no longer contain the frenzied movements of the bodies.

Image 8: The last performance as a sacrificing ritual. Credit: Amazon Studios

The last performance turns out to be a sacrificing ritual, as it sacrifices the lives of the dance group members to welcome the arrival of Mother Suspiriorum. The dancers who initiate and invite the supernatural force through their choreographed movements in turn become possessed by it. This strikes me poignantly as an ominous "anamorphosis" of the suicides of the RAF members at *Stammheim*—those who secreted the voice became inevitably consumed by the political "we" that the voice posed. Through the dream-image choreographed as a form of ventriloquy, *Suspiria* presents the dispersion of the public psyche experienced as its coming-to-term with a new collective subjectivity.

Conclusion

In this essay I have discussed how Deleuzian ontology of time adds complexity to the question of historical claims in relation to cinechoreographic practices that borrow materials from the past, or, in other words, that access the archive. My analysis of the selected films accounts for their "aura of historicity," by demonstrating that the films' cinechoreographies portray the dispersion of the self that points to a virtual *event* dissipated across time, haunting us each time with its actualized temporal identity. An analysis of the cinechoreography of movement and embodiment informs us of the form of actualization and gives us clues about the virtual activities of the event in the form of post-human historical reflections, to

the extent that the dispersion of the self is embodied by the bodies on screen as a corporeal-archival system that actualizes the virtual.

Biography

Kaixuan Yao studied Comparative Literature at Utrecht University, the Netherlands, where she wrote about dance in nostalgia films as a form of historical reflection. Currently she is pursuing a PhD degree in Chinese Literature, Culture and Media at University of Minnesota, Twin Cities in the United States. Her research focuses on the legacy of socialist China in contemporary Chinese life by delineating a corporeal genealogy in film, literature and art.

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1 Colebrook, 11-12.
2 Agamben, 57-59.
3 Lepecki, 29.
4 Ibid, 31.
5 The parameter for their popularity is drawn from their respective distributions: *Suspiria* by Amazon Studios, meanwhile *The White Crow* was a film I came across on an international flight's menu of movies.
6 Jameson, 67.
7 The film is a reimagining of Dario Argento's *Suspiria*.
8 Brannigan, 14.
9 Schneider, 9.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid, 8.
12 Ibid, 108-9.
13 Lepecki, 37.
14 Foucault, quoted in Lepecki, 37.
15 Lepecki, 14.
16 Ibid, 37.
17 Massumi, 29.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid, 30.
20 Lepecki, 37.
21 Ibid, 30.
22 Foucault, quoted in Lepecki, 38-9.
23 Lampert, 87.
24 Ibid.
25 Deleuze, *Difference*, 124.
26 Lampert, 88.
27 Marrati, 74.
28 Lampert, 88.
29 Fiennes.
30 Lemire.

31 Ibid.
32 Ellementary.
33 Ibid.
34 Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 47.
35 Fiennes.
36 Ibid.
37 Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 49.
38 Ibid, 48.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
41 Ibid, 80.
42 Fiennes.
43 Alan Nadel has written about the Cold War as an historical event that makes any attempt of meta-narrative impossible. Nadel, 13-67.
44 Fukuyama.
45 Lampert, 88.
46 Connor, *Dumbstruck*, 13-4.
47 Ibid, 14.
48 Connor, “Violence,” 79.
49 McLuhan, 327.
50 Connor, *Dumbstruck*, 14.
51 Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 59.
52 Ibid, 56.
53 Amazon Studios.
54 Elsaesser, 287.
55 Ibid, 289.
56 Ibid.
57 Connor, *Dumbstruck*, 35.
58 Connor, “Violence,” 80.
59 Elsaesser, 295.
60 Connor, *Dumbstruck*, 36.

Erratum

9/13/2022: Corrected author’s name to Kaixuan Yao.

Rippling Outwardly: Expanding The Notion Of Screendance Archives With Augmented And Mixed Reality

Jeannette Ginslov

Abstract

In this article I propose that augmented reality (AR) and mixed reality (MR) have the potential to expand the notion of a Screendance archive. This takes the form of a hybrid installation, where visitors are invited to download an AR app onto their mobile phones, or tablets, to access a Screendance archive tagged to images in an installation space. This type of archive, is conceived as a piece of artistic work for hybrid installations, and is intrinsically related to collaborative artistic, philosophical and technological research. It has the ability to highlight temporal shifts between past and present and demonstrates how archived somatic states may ripple outwardly across technologies, bodies, and space, to audiences who embody these states within the wider somatic field. For these MR interactions to work, methods in relation to filming, editing, and archiving are re-examined. Documentation and archiving methods are reviewed through a phenomenological lens and once distributed within the AR/MR archive installation, a postphenomenological perspective reveals how new relations with technology, materials and media are discovered. Furthermore, the use of AI is perceived as enhancing the rippling out of affective somatic states that becomes an *embodied materiality*[1] (orig. emphasis), a relational feminist posthumanist perspective, that, permanently changes ways of seeing and experiencing dance on screens and the notion of a Screendance archive.

Keywords: *Screendance, archive, installation, embodied materiality, Augmented Reality, AI*

Introduction

In this article I propose that augmented reality (AR)[2] and mixed reality (MR) [3] have the potential to expand the notion of a Screendance archive. Since 2011, I have worked with Susan Kozel, in collaboration with other artists and researchers, creating several Screendance AR archives as hybrid or MR installations and exhibitions, with the aim of sharing bodily states with viewers through technological and philosophical experimentation. Each collaboration attempted to tackle the problem of archiving and disseminating subtle bodily states that are often lost or depleted in conventional archival forms. This type of archive is conceived as both a piece of artistic work for hybrid installations, and is intrinsically related to artistic, philosophical and technological research. Visitors to the installations are invited to download an AR app onto their mobile phone, or

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tablet, enabling them to access and experience this Screendance archive/installation. Once installed, they hold their device in front of an image, and the AR app triggers the video tagged to that specific image (Figure 1).

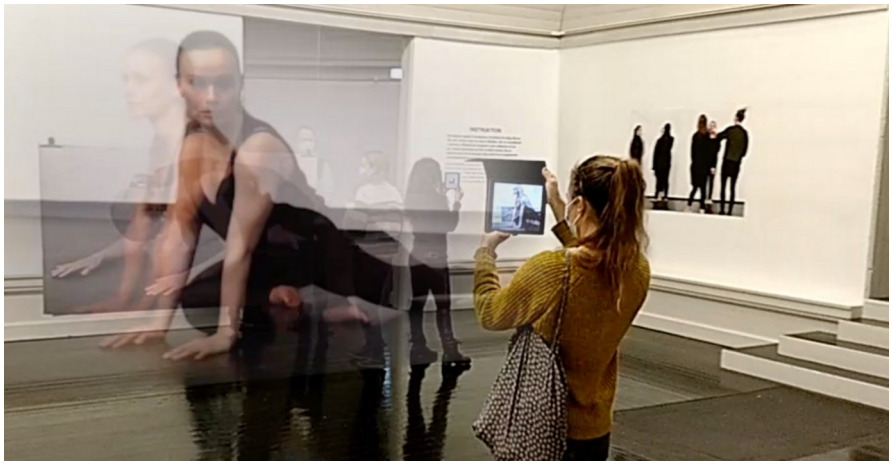

Figure 1 *Conspiracy Archives* 11 December *2020* at *Close Encounters*, for Dansehallerne and Den Frie Centre of Contemporary Art - *Photo Keith Lim*

In this way the AR app allows the visitor to immerse themselves in the resonant bodily states of the dancers archived in the video and tagged on the image in the installation. This type of interaction with an archive, not only highlights temporal shifts between past and present but also demonstrates how archived somatic[4] and affective[5] bodily states may ripple outwardly like resonant waves across old and new technologies, bodies and space, servers and Wi-Fi, mobile devices, and apps, to audiences who embody these states within a wider somatic field. By triggering the archive with the app on their device (Figure 2), the interaction becomes a performative act, as without audience participation, the archive lies dormant.

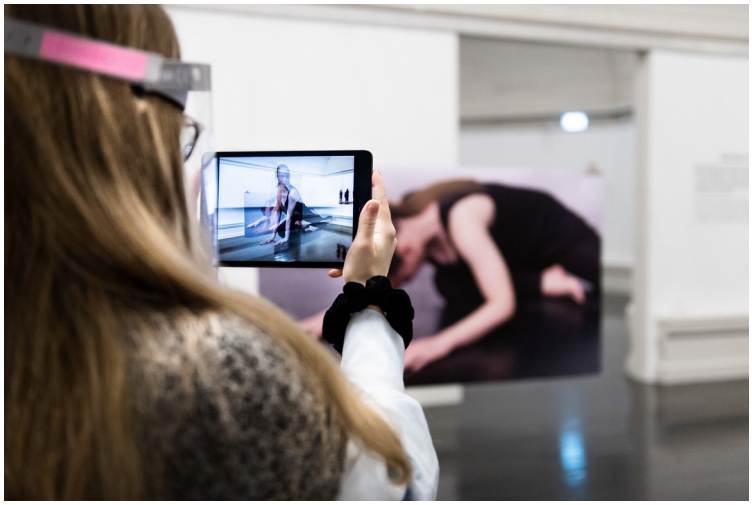

Figure 2 *Conspiracy Archives* 11 December *2020* at *Close Encounters*, for Dansehallerne and Den Frie Centre of Contemporary Art - *Photo Søren Meisner*

For these MR experiences, interfaces, and affective interactions to work and be felt, alternative methods, in relation to filming, editing, archiving and dissemination are needed. Differences between documentation and archiving methods are therefore discussed, such as the use of an embodied camera rather than a static camera on a tripod. Furthermore, the paper highlights how, if embodied methods are used during the archiving process, they not only capture and amplify the somatic states of a dancer in the archival footage, but also aid in the production of affective video creation in the edit. Once uploaded, distributed, and shared within an AR/MR archive installation, from a postphenomenological perspective, the article reveals how we form new relations with technology when seeing-feeling resonant somatic states are discovered by visiting the installation archive.

Furthermore, such relations or entanglements with technology propose a more performative approach to archiving, as an audience's participation is needed to activate and complete the reception of archived somatic materials. When this occurs, visitors to the installation, in their embodied present, may feel waves of somatic experiences from the past, rippling out at them from their mobile devices. This rippling effect is a dance of agency brought about by an audience's relation with human and nonhuman materials, the past and present. Additionally, if AI[6] is used within an AR/MR archive installation it may have the potential to permanently change existing ways of seeing dance on screen as it enhances the rippling of affect and somatic states across bodies, screens, and technologies. MR for a Screendance archive installation thereby offers practitioners and curators new ways of presenting archived materials to audiences. This became particularly relevant during the 2020-22 pandemic when presenting and accessing Screendance was limited to online platforms or to restricted visits to gallery spaces.

To discuss and support the ideas above, some Screendance and AR projects, in which Kozel and I have collaborated or created, will be referred to in the article. The projects are described in the Somatic Archiving website: https://www.somaticarchiving.org/. They are examples of how AR/MR, and AI may be used to challenge existing notions of the Screendance archives and how they may be used in disseminating or sharing not only archival materials but affective somatic states:

- *AffeXity: Passages and Tunnels* (2013) by collaborators: Jeannette Ginslov (video & concept), Susan Kozel (artistic direction & concept), Wubkje Kuindersma (dance), Camilla Ryd (special effects), Jacek Smolicki (sound), Daniel Spikol (technical production), Oliver Starpov (dance)
  http://www.jginslov.com/affexity-passages--tunnels.html

  https://www.somaticarchiving.org/work/affexity-passages-and-tunnels

- *P(AR)ticipate: body of experience | body of work | body as archive* (2013) created by Jeannette Ginslov http://www.jginslov.com/participate.html and https://medium.com/the-politics-practices-and-poetics-of-openness/p-articipate-body-of-experience-body-of-work-body-as-archive-b19446c9ce5d#.6u4wy1kcg

- *Conspiracy Archives* (2017-2020) by Susan Kozel (archival concept), Margrét Sara Guðjónsdóttir (choreographer), Jeannette Ginslov (video, concept & stills), Keith Lim with Daniel Spikol (AR app creation)
  http://www.jginslov.com/conspiracy-archives.html
  https://www.somaticarchiving.org/work/conspiracy-archives

- *CATALYSTS – Somatic Resonance* (2021-22) Margrét Sara Guðjónsdóttir Guðjónsdóttir (Concept, Choreography, Author of performance works and the somatic practice FULL DROP into the Body, Susan Kozel (Philosophy & Archival Concept, Jeannette Ginslov (Affective Video Creation & Visual Concept) and Keith Lim (AR/MR/AI Creation and Interactive Technologist).
  https://www.somaticarchiving.org/work/catalysts-somatic-resonance
  Trailer: https://youtu.be/mfVtNX36-uk
  Promo Video: https://youtu.be/acocqkeUjWc

Documenting Or Archiving?

For the Screendance and AR/MR projects *AffeXity: Passages and Tunnels* (2013) and *Conspiracy Archives* (2017-2020), Kozel and I discussed the differences between documenting and archiving dance on video. Questions arose: What are the differences and how would they impact our artistic research? Would an understanding of the differences alter the methods, notions, and processes of archiving? Would I, when filming, approach the dancers and their movement differently? Would this be recognised and felt in the footage upon review? Would this facilitate the filming and amplification of somatic states, given that both projects were concerned with archiving and sharing affective and somatic states of the dancers? Would adopting new approaches to the processes of capturing somatic states affect myself, the dancers and ultimately the footage? We continued asking: What approach should be used if different methods ultimately affect video footage and the viewing of it? How could I acknowledge this, whilst filming?

After much discussion Kozel and I concluded that for these Screendance and AR projects, archiving dance using video was qualitatively different to documenting dance, as archiving is primarily concerned with the capture of affect and bodily somatic states, rather than movement and linear movement progression. They decided that, in its broadest sense, documentation is where the camera is often set up on a tripod in the corner of a studio or where there are several cameras in

front of a stage left to record. Both positions may require human intervention to point the camera, to follow a dancer's movements or to change the frame size for example. However, this form of documentation does not require much human intervention and the process is mainly concerned with non-human vision, as the camera is doing all the work. Later in the edit, if using a multi-cam edit, the editor selects various angles best suited to the movement and narrative progression based on visuality, taking heed of where best to cut and join movement through the cut and the different vantage points or frame sizes. These processes may therefore be seen as being entirely ocularcentric, concerned more with vision than experiential qualities.

However, when filming for *Conspiracy Archives* (2017-2020), where the dancers performed strong somatic and resonant states of experience rather than dance sequences, I discovered through practice, that I needed to find another way of using the camera, my body and bodily senses entwined with my vision to capture these states. This method, discussed below, implied a more embodied approach to filming and editing and became the method used to archive the resonant and experiential bodies for this specific Screendance archive.

Archiving 1: The Embodied Camera And Edit

Archiving somatic and resonant states of experience rather than dance sequences implied that I capture the somatic states of the dancer by embodying the camera, rather than focusing on the documentation of movement that is more reliant on ocularcentric processes. I needed to embody the camera and later, the editing tools and processes.

An embodied camera implies taking on a phenomenological approach or method. Borrowing from Maurice Merleau-Ponty[7] one needs to understand embodiment that emphasises the body's role in mediating internal and external experience. Merleau-Ponty posits that the Körper, the objective body and Leib, lived subjective experience, combine as a state of self-experience, which he named embodiment. This is about body-mind integration and states of being as a form of knowing, from a first-person perspective. Furthermore, embodiment requires that we change ways of seeing ourselves in the world, to ways of experiencing it, originating from deep within the body. This implies exploring embodied consciousness, or the mind in the body[8] through the *felt-sense*[9] (orig. emphasis). The *felt-sense* is a bodily knowing that "is not an immediately identifiable specific emotion or sensation, but something 'fuzzy' and difficult to pin down, yet also clearly 'there' inside you, telling you about your situation"[10]. This shifts literal modes of *seeing* and knowing to modes of *sensing* and knowing. In this way it constructs knowledge from a first-person perspective and thereby pushes the experiential to the fore. By relying less on visuality to create knowing, it assumes ways of knowing through the bodily senses as being the way to verify knowing something.

However, Merleau-Ponty proposed later that embodiment is about the self, entwining with the world in the shape of a chiasmus, a never-ending and twisting figure of eight, entangling body-self-world. Here you are entwining with the flesh of the world:

> Visible and mobile, my body is a thing among things; it is caught in the fabric of the world…they are encrusted into its flesh, they are part of its full definition; the world is made of the same stuff as the body[11].

The flesh of the world is the place for living experience in which the dualistic Cartesian subject-object relation blurs, forming the chiasmus. This chiasmic relationship is between body-self-world. Here, you are caught up in the world and the world is caught up in you, for "where are we to put the limit between the body and the world, since the world is the flesh[?]"[12]. It is here we should "reject the age-old assumptions that you put the body in the world and the seer in the body, or, conversely, the world and the body in the seer as in a box"[13]. The chiasmus therefore "forbids us to conceive of vision as an operator of thought that would set up before the mind a picture or representation of the world"[14], as vision is embodied, with all the other sense modalities. One does not just see things and act upon seeing them. One is caught up in the world, with one's vision, *felt-sense* and actions that are affected by people and things in the world[15].

This forces one to ask questions about mediation, how to archive somatic resonant states or embodiment using a video camera? If one is caught up in the world through the chiasmus where vision is embodied and caught up with the other senses, how does this afford relations with technologies, and in this case the camera and edit? Answers may be found in Martin Heidegger's notion of *readiness-to-hand*[16] (orig. emphasis), where there is a merging of the body with technology. He cites an example of a carpenter using a hammer, where the carpenter is so familiar with the tool that he no longer maintains a conscious awareness of how to use it but is only aware of hammering. Engaged in this action, the hammer becomes perceptually transparent, and becomes an extension of his Body Schema as the tool withdraws from being a separate object to the artisan and is drawn into the action that is being performed. Here the carpenter's Body Schema adjusts to the technology, creating an intuitive relationship with it, such as one experiences when riding a bicycle.

Merleau-Ponty however, describes the notion of embodying technology as becoming incorporated through use. The incorporation of technology may be found in his thought experiment of imagining a blind man navigating a street with a cane. Where does the blind man's self begin in relation to his material engagement of the cane. Is it at the tip, the handle or halfway? It is found in the circuit of material engagement between the cane, the environment and the man's

perceptual experience. Stick, man, and pathway form a circuit of information. The stick, an extension of his Body Schema, is a perceptual tool that transmits material differences in the environment which he feels through the cane, to which he adapts. Once mastered, the stick becomes transparent and withdraws from his focal awareness to become an element of his "motor-perceptual repertoire"[17]. The man incorporates the stick into his Leib, as it is inseparable from his Body Schema.

Using these notions, I began to explore how the camera could become incorporated into her Körper and Leib. With this I would extrude rather than capture, film or shoot the dancers. Extrusion is derived from the notion of lava extruding from a volcano, a more organic process of shifting matter from one site to another through a volcano or a camera aperture. To enable these extrusions, I incorporated the camera into my Body Schema and by doing so, it becomes part of my Leib. Taken literally, I used the camera as an extension of my Body Schema through incorporation, and by doing so created a bodily extension, extending my Körper and Leib through the materiality of the camera. This meant that I could not leave the camera on a tripod and let it film without my embodied consciousness guiding what the lens should extrude. Rather, I held the camera in my hands, my legs become the tripod to see-feel with my embodied being what the dancers were doing through the embodied device. In fact, I no longer felt the materiality of the camera as my Body Schema reacted instinctively to seeing-feeling through the lens. In this way she is always present and listens with her entire being to what the dancers are doing, as my *felt-sense* responds to the somatic performance of the dancers. However, at times I do mount the camera on a tripod when required, such as when the choreographer asks me to leave the rehearsal floor or stage. I then secure my camera on a tripod in such a way that it stays completely malleable, that is I use it with all the settings very loosely set.

This enables me to follow the dancers in a state of complete embodied awareness as if I am still beside them on the floor, extruding their performance. I never allow my embodied being to leave the viewfinder, as I see-feel the resonant affective states of the dancer/s that are fully incorporated or entwined with my Leib. This extrusion is a *chiasmic techne* as I entwine my being with the dance occurring in the situated world and my being engages with the affective somatic resonances and materialities performed by the dancers, through my embodied technological lens and device. Once these states are extruded through this chiasmic techne, I then place it on the timeline to be edited, to further refine and amplify the moments of somatic resonance.

In front of the extruded clips in the timeline, I avail myself to editing the video footage through my *felt-sense,* to select, refine, and thereby archive and embody the somatic states of the dancers. Rather than focusing on movement sequences or using pre-determined narrative structures to guide the edit, I rely on my

embodied *felt-sense* to edit the footage that I see-feel on the timeline. In addition, I use layers of footage, mixing the transparency levels to create and amplify the affective resonance of the clip that will appear in the AR installation. The focus is on the experiential and not on linear narratives nor on sequences of movement but rather an amplification of affective somatic states, that will later ripple outwardly into the viewer holding a mobile device. The sound accompanying the video also aids in this rippling effect. This I define as stage one of the process of archiving: affective video creation.

Archiving 2: Rippling Outwards

Once stage one is complete the affective videos are finalised and uploaded onto an AR app, Vuforia, which tags or assigns each video to an image in the installation, so that when the viewer holds their phone over the image the video and installation spring to life (Figure 3).

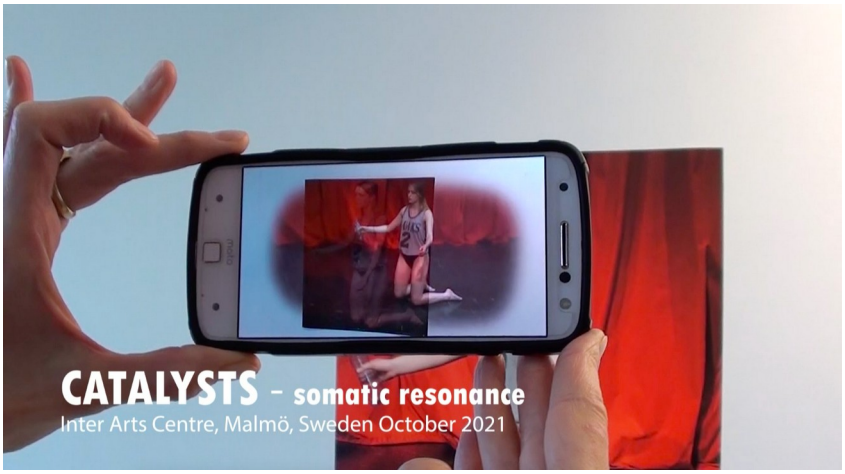

Figure 3 CATALYSTS: Somatic Resonance – Screengrab: Jeannette Ginslov 2021

This may be considered stage two of the archiving process and is currently being investigated in the artistic residency *CATALYSTS: Somatic Resonance,* listed above. This artwork is examining how affective "potential may arise from awakening latent energies over time, across media and flesh, expanding what dance can be and how bodies can remember"[18]. The interdisciplinary team of artists and researchers is involved in the choreography, affective video creation, archiving, philosophy, and AR/MR creation, to explore *affective choreographies*, (a philosophical term that Kozel has coined and is currently exploring) of the digital, analogue, embodied temporalities, and materials within the AR/MR installation experience. According to Kozel, *affective choreographies* require researching the placement of the tags in the installation space, investigating levels of transparency of the videos and the positioning of the archived videos onto the images, all in relation to the viewer moving through the installation using a mobile device. The combination of all these different materials and actions may be understood as a choreographic process that sets out to not only intensify the

somatic resonance of each video, but also make the experience of engagement or viewing more affective for the viewer. To do so, the team is exploring the notion of kinaesthetic algorithms or kinaesthetic AI and describe how AI may be used in rippling the somatic states of the dancers, informed by Guðjónsdóttir's "FULL DROP into the Body"[19] outwardly, across the fields of archived media and the visitor's body in the MR installation space. Additionally, they are raising questions about the use of AI, the ethical implications of its use, for example how to avoid Big Data Companies harvesting data from location-based media. That however is beyond the scope of this paper but is discussed in a documentary video[20].

Rippling outwardly, is stage two of the archiving process may also be viewed through a philosophical lens. This draws firstly on Don Ihde's[21] pragmatic postphenomenological perspective and Rosi Braidotti's feminist posthumanist, perspective where embodied interactions with technology and materials occur, similar to the viewer's experience at the installation. These emerge through the "incorporation"[22] or mutual constitution of contemporary technologies that actually "*re-embody* our fleshly experience"[23]. This *re-embodiment* [24], [25], [26] occurs through human-technology relations, where the user forms unique relations along a continuum with the technology, allowing them to access and extend themselves into new forms of embodiment beyond their naked bodily senses.

Using Ihde's perspective, CATALYSTS – *Somatic Resonance* may be seen as revealing these types of relations with technology and could be described as embodiment relations. Here there is a symbiosis or unity with the technology and when familiar with its use, the handheld device used by the visitor becomes perceptually transparent. Hence the mobile device, phone or tablet could in this installation become perceptually transparent when the videos are highly resonant or affectively engaging. These interrelations thereby transform and shape the visitor's experience of the installation, as the device is incorporated in their bodily awareness as an extension of the world they are experiencing, the archive. This reflects new relations with technology, new ways of seeing-feeling archived somatic states that are discovered through embodied relations with the archive. However, these entanglements require a performative approach to archiving as an audience's participation is needed to complete the reception of archived materials.

For Ihde these human-technology relations are produced by "inter-relational and reflexive"[27] experiences with the technology that focus firstly on individual experience in relation to mediated imagery, making Ihde's *I-technology-world* definition clear (orig. emphasis). With these interrelations subjectivity and "self-knowledge (are) gained reflexively and in strict interaction with our experience of being-in-a-world"[28], and in this case the MR installation. Secondly, these inter-relations also include *background relations* with technology that are understood as *present absences*, not directly experienced but contextual to human life, like

WiFi or the internet, that continue to shape a person's experience in the MR installation. As such, they renew and augment the *Body Schema*, human perception, agency, and cognition. We therefore find that we are no longer a subject in a closed body, but experience our subjectivity from a first-person perspective, through our performative relations within the MR installation.

The use of AR/MR/AI in *CATALYSTS – Somatic Resonance* may then be thought of as having the potential to permanently change existing ways of seeing dance on screen, enhancing the rippling out of affective and somatic states across bodies, screens, temporalities, and technologies through a MR. This form of installation is attributed to the rise of and the development of the Internet, advances in computer programming, coding, instrumentation, and the miniaturisation of wearable and mobile technology since the beginning of the new millennium. Here ecosystemic approaches between human and nonhuman objects, online and in the real world, were explored against the background of feminist posthumanism. Since then, borrowing from Braidotti[29], the posthuman subject is defined within a philosophy of multiple belongings, "a relational subject…that works across differences and is also internally differentiated" yet grounded and accountable. The merging of the human with the technological is a feminist "post-anthropocentric posthumanism", resulting in a new form of subjectivity in an ecology with multiple layers of interiority and exteriority and "everything in between" (ibid.). According to Braidotti[30], this new form of subjectivity "expresses multiple ecologies of belonging, while it enacts the transformation of one's sensorial and perceptual co-ordinates". This may be understood as occurring through an embodiment of differing materials, practices, actions, and experiences, as an *embodied materiality,* as performative actions within the MR installation trigger multi layered archives of varying materials and these experiences are embodied by the visitor through participation in the installation. The work is thereby reliant on distributed embodiment across varying degrees of human and nonhuman materials and experiential perspectives. It starts from a first-person experience and ends with a wider somatic experience of a shared *embodied materiality*, that is felt across bodies, images, technologies, and resonant forces that *ripple outwardly* across and through the visitor participating in the MR installation.

Conclusion

This article has revealed ways of using phenomenological methods to challenge traditional methods of documenting and archiving dance with a camera and AR/MR/AI to change ways of interacting with a Screendance archive. More specifically it described ways to choreograph an archive using AR/MR and AI. These technologies amplify affective states that ripple outwardly across bodies, technologies, and time within an installation. In this way it gives birth to new ways of archiving, sharing, and disseminating somatic and resonant states to visitors in a gallery. Here they experience embodied interactions with their handheld devices

and embody the somatic experiences that they view and feel on their devices. Through this form of embodied interaction, the archive becomes performative. Their experiences become an embodied materiality, where the somatic resonance of the dancers, ripples outwardly across an archive of time, technologies, and the viewer's body. Choreographing the archive in this way may have the potential to permanently change existing ways of seeing, documenting, and archiving dance on screen[31].

Biography

Dr Jeannette Ginslov (PhD, MSc, MA) is an artist, researcher and published scholar whose practice as research examines embodiment in relation to Somatic Dance, Screendance and embodied technologies. She also facilitates online Screendance workshops internationally and since 2011 has collaborated with Kozel on several AR/MR installations. In 2021 she was awarded a PhD from London South Bank University. Her current research focuses on embodied materiality, computational Screendance and visual aesthetics. Most recent works: *CATALYSTS: somatic resonance*, a Screendance AR/MR collaboration that premiered in Berlin Feb 2022 and *Scatterdance* for *Nanocosmi*selected for the Open Call ESS & InterArts Centre Residency an interactive installation. In January 2022 she joined the School of Arts and Communication (K3), Malmö University, Sweden, as an MCS Master's Thesis Supervisor. http://www.jginslov.com

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Somatic Archiving Website:
https://www.somaticarchiving.org/work/catalysts-somatic-resonance

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1 Ginslov (2021)

2 (AR) or Augmented Reality is an app that overlays digital content such as video, imagery, text, or sound on a hand-held device such as a mobile phone, or a tablet enhancing the user's physical world.

3 (MR) or Mixed Reality or MR is the merging of real, virtual or augmented worlds that produce new and immersive environments. MR is the place where people and digital objects co-exist and interact in real time, not exclusively in the physical or virtual world, rather a mixed reality of the real and the augmented.

4 Somatic refers to somatic dance practice where practitioners are concerned with and are highly attuned to experiences of movement through their own corporeality, temporality, spatiality, motility, subjectivity, and kinaesthesia (Fraleigh, 2018).

5 Affective stems from the word affect which is often thought of as human emotions; however, affect, according to Kozel (2007), is about dynamic flows or intensities felt by the body and occur between bodies and things. They are also felt as nuanced sensations that arise from being in a situated body. Using Merleau-Ponty, Kozel (2007, p. 287) describes affect as "an acknowledgement of our being embedded in the fabric of the world alongside others" through the senses, with no division between self and world.
6 AI or Artificial Intelligence emphasises the creation of intelligent machines that work, react, and mimic the capabilities of humans and is created by machine learning. This it does by recognizing objects, understanding, and responding to language, making decisions, solving problems and by combining these perform functions. Google search engine is one of the most popular AI applications.
7 Merleau-Ponty (1964a)
8 Merleau-Ponty (1964b)
9 Gendlin (2003)
10 Boden and Eatough, 162
11 Merleau-Ponty, 1964a, 163
12 Ibid., 138
13 Ibid.
14 Ibid., 162
15 Kozel (2007)
16 Heidegger (1962)
17 Besmer (2015, 58)
18 Kozel, (2021)
19 Guðjónsdóttir's "FULL DROP into the Body" *The* "FULL DROP into the body" created by Margrét Sara Guðjónsdóttir, is a somatic meditative dance practice that involves meditation, deep tissue, and fascia release.
20 A documentary video by Jeannette Ginslov (2021) about the making of CATALYSTS: Somatic Resonance with discussions around the issue of AI in the project: https://youtu.be/Jnn9S0asxe0
21 Ihde (2002)
22 Ihde (2010, 42)
23 Ibid., 111
24 Ihde (1993 and 2010)
25 Besmer (2015)
26 Kozel (2017)
27 Ihde (2010, 42)
28 Ibid., 41
29 Braidotti (2013, 49)
30 Ibid., 193
31 See video of *CATALYSTS: somatic resonance* that premièred 24-28 Feb 2022, at the Institute for Cultural Inquiry, Berlin https://youtu.be/mfVtNX36-uk and the protoype, *Conspiracy Archives* (2020) at Close Encounters, Den Frie Centre of Contemporary Art, Dansehallerne, Copenhagen https://youtu.be/Qn3avBxgnd0

Perception, Temporality And Symbol: A Study Of *Man With Cockerel* By Ranbir Kaleka (2001-2002)

Sandhiya Kalyanasundaram

Abstract

This article makes an early attempt to emerge a dialogue between neuroscientific theories of perception and video art while proposing alternate lenses to view Kaleka's installation in the context of Indian contemporary video art. The author proposes that Neuroaesthetics as a field may benefit from studying screendance and audience engagement because the conceptual complexity offered by screendance has the potential to throw light on cognitive and affective systems during emergent aesthetic episodes.

Time and symbol, two critical elements that pave the way for new perception, and how these elements transform into materiality in Kaleka's work are discussed. This discussion reveals in more depth, the illusory loop that Kaleka constructs in order to engage the audience in a deeper and more critical perception of the human condition at the interface of society, politics and economics with the techniques of video art. While the paper places greater emphasis on perception of an artwork by its audience, artists may be able to use the neurocognitive model analysis to develop different engagement strategies with their audiences. The author's intention is to delve into an expanded investigation of aesthetic experience and perception using the elusive links between art and science.

Keywords: Ranbir Kaleka, neuroaesthetics, VIMAP, temporality, action perception control

Introduction

Ranbir Kaleka is one of the leading media-artists of India, particularly known for the technique of projecting video onto his paintings. Kaleka's *Man with Cockerel* (2001-2002) inspires a few questions both from the use of its video loop technique as well as the painterly play of light in the black and white video of the man holding a cockerel. At first sight, it invokes the rustic village life still seen in remote parts of India, the closely entwined lives of human and animal/ bird. It is also reminiscent of cockfighting practices around the world since ancient times. While the practice has been both condemned and outlawed in India, it continues on a limited scale. Kaleka studied art history and painting and there are distinct influences of both the knowledge of art history and the techniques of light and shadow in painting.

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In art history, the idea of the man holding a rooster recirculates ushering in multiple layers of meanings: Marc Chagall uses emotional associations in his paintings of roosters; Fernando Amorsolo's *Man with a Rooster* invokes a rustic and unhurried time returning to people their sense of heritage and M. F. Hussain's *Woman with a Rooster* subverts the issues surrounding vitality and fertility.

Also evident in his work is the influence of Indian cinema's narrative power, especially of its Neo-realist movement. The Neo-realist period in Indian cinema starting from the early 50s offered a close and scathing look at the socio-political identities of a newly independent country and its people. This wave of cinema co-evolved with both the national and regional literature of the times and focused on using the medium to critique socio-economic and politically relevant issues without mainstream song and dance sequences entirely. Visually, the movies contained slow narratives and vivid compositions of the intensity and beauty of human emotions and relationships. The protagonists in these movies also were not super-heroes, they were men and women in their daily lives woven together by social, moral, economic, and political threads (Chatterjee, 1989; Girish, 2021).

Analysing Kaleka's work in the context of the self and the autonomy of individuation, Kalita, N.R. writes, "In the collision between the projected and painted interfaces of video painting, Kaleka's arrangements are meticulous in resisting a pluralization of image-forms and media." In talking about his own work, Kaleka discusses his experiments with materiality in *Man with Cockerel*. Transcribing his words from a talk, (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G0VnlFBECPk, 13.49 minutes)

> "… this is again, working out with materiality, I projected this on various surfaces…I projected this on plexiglass and now what plexiglass did, it was sanded plexiglass, it refracted the image. So, a black and white image began to contain color, you could see color in the image even though there was no real color."

Kaleka seems to play with and allude to constructing a system as a means of facilitating the interaction of the material (plexiglass) with the real world, the society, the man in his environment- leading to the emergence of a particular causality from within the confines of a preset functioning- a dimensional leap from within the artwork itself. This particular notion seems to resonate with what Jane Bennett defines as 'vibrant materiality'. As Jane Bennett suggests, "to encourage more intelligent and sustainable engagements with vibrant matter and lively things", Kaleka spins materiality into the realm of the social and the political scenario within contemporary India inviting several reflections on materiality and plurality. Indian society is an amalgam of religions and several hundred years of struggle between the critique of materiality and the economics of transposing material commodities as a means of both survival and power. Materiality and

plurality cross-over in Kaleka's work as we examine it beyond the physical materiality, the work's production date and the social, political mediasphere during its creation, his personal process of investigation into the nature of things and the work's place in the canon of contemporary Indian art. Rather than take a stance on materiality or analyze the epistemological underpinnings of materiality to art, Kaleka is content with allowing frames of perception to emerge. Kaleka also does not dwell on the tangibility and lasting nature of materiality, his quest is in emerging the human condition at the interface of society, politics, economics and materiality. *Man with Cockerel* seems to emerge in a continuous transit from what resembles a rural character to the sounds of noisy urban life and vice versa, mapping the elusive spaces of a dual nation and its citizenship; the thresholds of colonial history and the industrial aspirations of the independent nation; the population divided by culture, ideology, religion, history and memory.

In light of Frame Theory where Goffman (1974) argues that much of our behavior is cued by expectations which are determined by the frames which constitute the context of action, materiality adds an interesting dimension. In observing the Man with the Cockerel, we look for these 'frames' to give us clues: what is the place in which the action of holding the cockerel is set? what is the actor wearing? what time of day is it? what are the sounds in the larger ecosystem? are there other actors with different social roles? What is the actor projecting to the audience? Is the cockerel struggling to flee? is it about to be sacrificed? Will it be dead or alive? Adding to these questions, is the layer of materiality- the video in a time-loop- suggesting both the inevitability of time and the limits of materiality to the human experience.

Kaleka's work can be engaged with through multiple lenses within the larger umbrella of art and film perception. I have followed Kappenberg's (2015) suggestion to focus on the larger canvas:

> "We should perhaps be less concerned with individual projects and whether they are Screendance or not, but rather consider a wider body of works and even include that which occurs in the everyday through interactions with cameras and screens, digital media, and the internet. If a person is caught on a CCTV camera in a public building, perhaps this is also part of the contemporary machinery of Screendance."

In the process of focusing on 'opening out the frames of references and the voices in the field of screendance' as part of 'The evolving critical landscape of the field', I have positioned my analysis at the junction of role of aesthetic experience in the appreciation of art. Here, the mechanisms underlying perception of art and the neural underpinnings of an aesthetic experience come to the forefront. As contemporary art and screendance both can have conceptually challenging

components, they serve as a perfect testing ground for theories of perception. In order to further unpack perception and the roles of the art work and viewer in aesthetic experience, I use the Vienna Integrated Model of Art Perception (VIMAP) which expands on the influential 2004 model proposed by Leder et al. The Leder et al., 2004 model used a modular structure and provided an integrative view of cognitive and affective processes involved in aesthetic appreciation while placing cognition within semantic context (Leder and Nadal, 2014). The VIMAP Model 2017 by Pelowski et al. expands on the 2004 and 2014 Leder et al; Leder and Nadal models.

Kaleka's work reflects realistic social scenarios interspersed with imagination and questions both art and meaning. In his own words (quoted later[2]), he emphasizes the need to understand his work through the psychological imprints from his childhood and the cognitive and affective components of his experiences. Using the VIMAP model allows for visual appreciation of the formal elements of screen based contemporary artwork while enabling deeper interpretations and categories for nuanced analysis of socio-cultural complexities that are unique to Kaleka's work. In this manner, a coherent and meaningful sensemaking of the aesthetic encounter of Kaleka's work becomes possible. In addition, the VIMAP model provides a strong framework for socio-cultural and individual positionality of diverse artists. Both the cognitive and affective aspects in his work elicit strong responses from two of India's foremost contemporary art critics. Therefore, in order to expand our understanding of Kaleka's work, I detail the devices he uses for shaping the viewer's perception and the current research regarding the neurocognitive control of perception. Secondly, I have also applied the neurocognitive VIMAP model of art perception at a superficial level to analyse the perception of Kaleka's art by Geeta Kapur and Nancy Adajania. After this, I expand more deeply into two aspects of aesthetic perception: the different symbols within his work and how the particular temporal framework used by the artist evokes multiple emergent meanings in the audience.

Neurocognitive Control Of Perception

Kaleka's use of video/ screen techniques gently yet confidently reshape perception for the viewer. He repeats, but the actions are different each time. He gives us temporary relief in the glad tidings of the placid lake and the birds that visit, and yet draws us back time and again in a slow drawing in of our bodies, beings, intellect, mental processes and self and personhood into the critical narrative symbol that his work depicts. Awareness of movement emerges as we watch, and the movement draws us into the socio-politics, but also in its return swings, and waves, draws us back into ourselves creating a perceptive structure of sorts it is these subtle acts of action that allow the viewer to be subconsciously, unconsciously and then slowly consciously be drawn into action perception. Kaleka's process of artistic inquiry -through the objects' material qualities, the visual juxtapositions and spatial politics define engagement at one level while the

viewer's engagement happens through shifts in perception and time. We have to respond simultaneously to the actions of the man and the cockerel as if they are 'performing' in real time, however they are constructs of fractional moments, recorded and revised.

As we watch, we are also engaged in a continuous process of decoding and encoding the information we are presented with. Experience of the art may result in several emotional and intellectual engagements, at the same time, our process of encoding and decoding information happens through the neural networks of our brains. The materiality of aesthetic experience can therefore also be understood through an active dialogue with neuroscientific studies of visual art experience and moving image where materiality of the neuronal network adds a dual layer of appreciation and questions as it weaves together neurobiological and cognitive explanations. Within the brain, large-scale neural networks modulate function in time scales ranging from milliseconds to seconds, with feedback from the environment and the task on hand. The unfolding of art experience also derives from such functional networks with the advantage of shaping these structures individually through various past experiences as well as the speed and long-range connections developed therein. Bottom-up processing retrieves sensory information from our immediate external environment to build our perceptions. Top-down processing allows for interpretation of sensory inputs based on pre-existing knowledge, experiences, and valuations.

In his work, Kaleka has taken an aspect of our ordinary visual experience and turned it into the object of a visual experience. Kaleka often mentions growing up in a 'Haveli, a traditional manor house, with historical and architectural value and how his childhood experiences shape his work:

> "My brother and I were the only two children in the large house. Nothing major ever happened in the house, and time moved slowly, giving great significance to the tiniest 'non-event'. These types of phantasmagoric performances and the architecture of the haveli formed my inner life and sense of visual proportion. As I moved out from the village to the town, and then to the city, travelling to different regions of India, I actively collected orally narrated stories from strangers and friends. From the recesses of my mind where they had settled, the accumulated stories emerge as invented 'events', creating a psychological map of my mind and of the people amongst whom we lived."[2]

Aesthetic experiences individuate through multiple modes of seamless integration of information and attribution of value: understood as "emergent states, arising from interactions between sensory–motor, emotion–valuation, and meaning–knowledge neural systems" (Chatterjee & Vartanian, 2014, p. 371) that have been

selected through several evolutionary pressures. Kandel, 2012, p 741 explains how the top-down and bottom-up processes complement each other in art perception: “Information processed from the bottom up relies in good part upon the built-in architecture of the early stages of the visual system, which is largely the same for all viewers of a work of art. In contrast, top-down processing relies on mechanisms that assign categories and meaning and on prior knowledge, which is stored as memory in other regions of the brain. As a result, top-down processing is unique for each viewer.” In a simplistic way, this means that bottom up processes come into play while observing the formal elements of an artwork/performance while top down processes mediate expectations and meaning.

Action perception also depends on multiple sources of information such as sensory, motor, and affective processes. Blake and Schiffrar (2007) write that the perception of a human body in motion is influenced by reciprocal conceptually driven top-down and bottom-up processes while focusing on visual sensitivity to human motion. Several lines of evidence show that the sensory representations found in the perception of action align with motor representations during the planning of actions (Hommel et al. 2001). In studies of the neural correlates of dance appreciation using live performances, it was found that knowledge/semantic and physical contexts influence the subjective experience and the authors suggest that, “spectators covertly simulate the movements for which they have acquired visual experience, and that empathic abilities heighten motor resonance during dance observation” (Jola, Abedian-Amiri, Kuppuswamy, Pollick, & Grosbras, 2012). Artists have effectively used top-down and bottom-up processes of perception in their art by creating and shaping implicit and explicit messages of the moving body, emphasizing verticality, emotion and social messaging. For example, Kandel (2012, p737) discusses top-down processing where perceptions begin from the general and lead into the specific through active engagement with prior knowledge though the example of Gustav Klimt’s art.

> “If, for example, we look at a landscape painted by Gustav Klimt, such as A Field of Poppies, it is difficult to ascertain the meaning of the image from the internal content alone. What is immediately apparent is a homogenous expanse of green paint, punctuated with spots of red, blue, yellow, and white, stabilized by two small passages of white at the top edge of the canvas. Once we compare this image to what we know about painting, however, the content of the picture becomes perfectly clear. Considered in the tradition of landscape painting, specifically that of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist pointillists, what emerges from the mass of green and red splotches is a beautiful pastoral scene of a poppy field covered in flowers”.

While it is not studied in this context, an interesting example for an artist's use of top-down and bottom-up processes to communicate with their audience, is the depiction of a giant roaring waterfall cascading thunderously down the mountains in South Indian Koodiyattam dance, recognized by UNESCO as Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. Stunningly minimalistic in approach, the Koodiyattam artist is seated and uses only two fingers of the right hand, the index and middle fingers moving together and alternately at several different speeds to conjure up the vision of the majestic waterfall. Viewers often leave the performance talking animatedly about the waterfall clueing us into bottom-up processes that come into play in their experience of the dance performance. The visual and aural (mizhavu drumming) sensory clues feed the bottom-up processes for the generation of the aesthetic experience of a gigantic waterfall. Even when the audience is comfortably seated, watching the performance, the human visual system has been shown to be tuned for gathering and responding to socially relevant information through studies focusing on the chameleon effect and the underlying mirror neuron system. The mirror neuron system is characterized by activity in the premotor and parietal cortices during the passive observation of movements (Gallese et al., 2004).

However, connoisseurs of Koodiyattam clue into several cultural, literary-analyses; metonymic and advanced musical knowledge for the same scene implying the role of top-down processes in their aesthetic experience.

The Vienna Integrated Model of Art Perception (VIMAP) connects "early bottom-up, artwork-derived processing sequence and outputs to top-down, viewer-derived contribution to the processing sequence" (Pelowski et al., 2017; p 82). The model also accounts for aesthetic appraisals, emotions, and physiological and neurological responses to art while expanding on earlier model of art experience by Leder et al., 2004. Therefore, the VIMAP model provides a framework with which the experience of Kaleka's art can be analysed. Given that Kaleka's work reflects the realistic social scenarios laced with layers of imagination and unexpected possibilities, I have used the framework of the model to dissect how the artist uses devices to modulate the audience's perception. While limited in scope, an attempt has been made to perform an initial analysis of the perception of two critics of the contemporary art scene in India, Geeta Kapur and Nancy Adajania, through their writing about Kaleka's Man and cockerel. Both critics have a positive, favorable response to the artwork and refer to aspects of Buddhist philosophy; while Geeta Kapur borders on existentialism, Nancy Adajania wrestles with phenomenology in the mix.

This is a first attempt to use the VIMAP model to parse the perception of an Indian contemporary artwork through the eyes of two culturally situated critics and in the present form does not aim to do more than that.

Geeta Kapur's excerpt[3]:

> "A bald man with a placid, Buddha-like face, clutching and letting go then clutching and letting go a plumed fowl (*Man with Cockerel*, 2001): this rhythmically repeated, soft-gray image offers a tantalizing grasp of desire, an allegory on dispossession. Kalekas subject-matter is representational and yet, by the form and brevity of its videoed avatar, by a trick of durational fallacy, by sheer transience, it erases its signified meaning. The imaged body at the brink of dissolution and disappearance reads like an index of mortality. Its quotidian identity is subordinated to a fragile sense of being where no assertion, no action is necessary except that which trusts in a minimal continuum of survival. The language of representation enters the liminal zone and the encounter, sanguine, serene, evanescent, resembles a haiku where the hypothesis offered about a lived life needs no backing of proof".

Geeta quickly transitions from descriptions of the formal aspects of the artwork including her responses to colors, timing and the behavior of the cockerel as a first look at the artwork into a more nuanced offering of the discursive and curatorial frameworks of the contemporary art scene in India and the situational concerns while drawing from global references to derive meaning. Considering just this excerpt at face value, we see the early bottom-up processing lead into a more top-down drawing of connections and meaning-making. We see the emphasis on top-down processing, involving the "significance of the artwork, a viewer's ability to master, and the relation between art and the self" (Pelowski, 2017. p103).

A clear limitation to this exercise arises from being unable to parse if her use of the words: sanguine, serene, evanescent refer to emotional states that are aroused in her as she encounters the artwork or a transformative outcome she projects from her reference to Buddha. From a superficial mapping to VIMAP, Geeta Kapur's writing clearly allows us to speculate her attention and arousal, stage 2 perceptual analysis, stage 3 implicit memory integration (inferred from her references) followed by stage 4 explicit classification. According to VIMAP, these stages culminate in a stage of cognitive mastery. Several outcomes are outlined as part of the cognitive mastery stage, however given that there is only a short excerpt and no other data from Geeta Kapur's original encounter with the artwork, it is not possible to speculate further here.

Nancy Adajania's excerpt[4]:

> "...the painter and installator Ranbir Kaleka retains the sensuous quality of painterliness in his video installation, *Man with Cockerel*. Rendered with the hypnotic aura and pace of a black-and white silent film, the video operates with a minimal narrative, calibrated gestures. The action of the loop is simple, yet rewards phenomenological scrutiny: a man enters the frame, holding on to a cockerel, perfectly mirrored by his reflection. He looks at the viewer, as though for confirmation of his existence, his possession of the bird. At this point, his image breaks up; but as suddenly, reappears, while the cockerel makes good its escape. The synchrony between person and reflection breaks down, as the man pursues the runaway cockerel, leaving his reflection behind. A moment later, the reflection breaks down, as the man pursues the runaway cockerel, leaving his reflection behind. A moment later, the reflection follows the person in slow motion. The man returns, both bird and reflection under control: the sequence of escape and capture repeats itself. Why are these insistent images so lucid, yet difficult to grasp? Buddhist in desires that enslave the self to the object of its passion, turning existence into a chain of pursuit, possession, frustration and renewed pursuit. The brief point of choice, when the cycle might be broken, is perhaps indicated by the time lag when the reflection momentarily refuses to play mirror".

Nancy Adajania alludes to more finer details in her description such as the 'sensuous quality of painterliness' and 'pace of a black- and white silent film'. From a superficial mapping to VIMAP, Nancy Adajania's description allows us to speculate her attention and arousal, stage 2 perceptual analysis, stage 3 implicit memory integration (inferred from her references) followed by stage 4 explicit classification (Phenomenology, Buddhism). Per VIMAP, these stages culminate in a stage of cognitive mastery. It appears that Nancy Adajania makes one of the outcomes in stage 5 visible in her writing. She asks, 'Why are these insistent images so lucid, yet difficult to grasp? displaying the self-relevance response outcome. Once again, due to the limited material available for analysis, it is not possible to go beyond speculation.

However, both critics' responses seem to align with the model's conception of aesthetic appreciation as a complex interaction between perceptual, cognitive and affective processes. As suggested by the model, semantic context, time and space modulate the response and aesthetic experience of the critics to Kaleka's screen-based work.

Within semantic context, I propose that two key elements: temporality and symbol serve as key influences to the perception of the viewer. In Kaleka's work, temporality is constructed through a blend of culture, memory, architectural

frames, spatial play and the tools and techniques of video art. Symbol is constructed out of multiple devices as well. In the context of the work being discussed, there are three symbols that are embedded within the work- The device of agitation; Man and cockerel as a unified, twinned whole; The ephemeral bond between man and cockerel. How temporality and symbol come together to deepen perception, is further discussed below:

1 The Question Of Temporality

Man with Cockerel plays with time as history; as individual and cultural memory; as a way of rustic village life and the almost theatrical performance of the man holding the cockerel and his reflection disappearing. The artist's childhood spent in a haveli, the historical, cultural contexts and architecture of the haveli, the unfolding of a day within the haveli as the artist's memory and the influence of all these factors in the creation of Man with Cockerel are considered. A Brahminy kite frequents the scene, as do other birds, the water remains a constant, light, colors and moments seemingly change, but what is it that we have been called to witness in this court bounded by the screen? The birds fly by, the boat seamlessly navigates the waters of lake perhaps at dawn or a little later, the water goes on drawing us into eternity in its gentle lapping. We are subconsciously embedded into this tranquil scene, and for those who have lived through hot summers in the tropics, timelessness and time entwining through the long listless day is as normal as drinking a glass of water to quench thirst. In this strange time that the tropics reveal, life is stark, unbearable, poignant and yet strangely fertile and lustful. As Kaleka describes his lived experience of place and space, time and time-space through the architecture of a haveli, we begin to see the immediacy of his symbols through the windows of the haveli, scene after scene emerges in time, yet time movement is fractional, so slow, that the screen has actually not moved at all. In slowing time to a minute fraction, we see that the loop of symbol, is in fact not a repetition, but a restoration of a small instance in each of its shades, textures and meanings.

Here then, the nature of perception that Kaleka calls for, is the fineness of detail, the things we miss because we are blatantly fast, and allow ourselves to be wilfully blind in the way we process a moment. He slows it down for us masterfully, very much architectural in its spatiality and temporality, delivered in the materiality of the screen. In such slowness, there is no escaping from reality, there is no escaping from ourselves and our shallowness of grandiose belief in the value of greed and desire. Ganguly, D. K. writes, "We need to remember that the formation of loop cannot be simply created by repetition of audio-visual elements, neither the chaotic assemblage of the same would create a sensation of turbulence". If we observe temporality in the Man with the cockerel loop, it appears tangible and measurable. The passage of time in its acute shortness reveals less about the past and more about performing the present. However, to

me the most intriguing aspect through engaging with this temporality is the viewer's perception that can be revealed. How does Kaleka invoke memory in the viewer through his peculiar slicing of the experience of temporality? Using the loop expands time for the viewer, yet the image is minimal. The viewer is located precisely in that mental space of contemplation between time and timeless, haunted by the slow reflection of the man and cockerel receding into our interiority in an endless ebb and flow. Kaleka disturbs us with his central loop positioned in eternity, that the water seems to symbolize. Image and sound interpenetrate each other in interesting ways that are not particularly complementary.

The visual of the man with the cockerel itself inspires a vantage point- a slower negotiation of life where one may delight in the sight of a kingfisher alighting by a small pond, a sparrow, or a rose-ringed parakeet chatting with its partner. However, the noisy soundtrack has the tendency to induce different images of everyday urban India where a vantage point is achieved by viewing life through the train window or seated in the hot humid back of a car caught in a traffic jam. Temporality of the reflection seems to be most critical; it is at once pervasive and ephemeral. Therefore, a critically important aspect to study with respect to perception would be the inherent experience of time perception. For instance, Man with the Cockerel confronts us with a temporally shrunken vision of the scene, while triggering our visual recognition of motion. The loop creates 2 layers of perception: a shifting/unshifting event in the scene, influenced by past perceptions of the artist himself, present in the video and a slower timescale of life which creates a pause in the audience's mental perception of the event of the man holding the cockerel where the cockerel seems to have settled down after perhaps an initial struggle against being caught. The direction of causation could run in either direction where the experience of motion lies in the awareness of location/position, or the experience of motion could also lie in perceiving multiple occupancy of time.

2 **The Symbol:**

In the words of Spanish priest and philosopher Raimon Panikkar:

> "The symbol is not an objectifiable reality. A symbol is not an object. A symbol includes the subject for whom the symbol is symbol as much as the object which we may somewhat point out as part of the symbol…The symbol reveals the symbolized in the symbol itself, not outside, transcending thus the dichotomy between subjectivism and objectivism. The symbol is a matter of experience"[1]

Three symbols that stand out in Kaleka's work are:

The Device Of Agitation As A Symbol

In traditional Indian art, arriving at the form that stands in as a symbol for a philosophical construct is a highly desired goal. This idea continues to be explored in Indian art cinema through the 80s. Man with a Cockerel is probably best understood by drawing parallels from the suggestions inherent in the works of directors such as Mani Kaul, Saeed Mirza and Ketan Mehta from the 70s and 80s. In the work of these directors, the use of imagery is for the purpose of a nuanced mood, the silence is neither comforting nor a spiritual stillness. It is instead an understated agitation captured in moving image almost as if it were still photography or painting. Mani Kaul has often likened his movies to paintings. An unusual sense of stillness is achieved through the slow pace of editing and fixed frames in *Man with Cockerel*, the stillness here is neither calming nor silent, much like frames found in Mani Kaul's "Uski Roti". Uski Roti (1970)[5] films a woman sourcing and making bread for her husband, a trucker. She waits for him at a truck stop to hand over the bread. What starts out as an innocuous narrative slowly transforms, frame by frame, into the layers of complexity: her loneliness, the struggle of protecting her sister and knowing her husband spends more time with his mistress.

As she politely, timidly hands over the bread, the agitation becomes visible in the absence of everything that the viewer might anticipate in the scene. The agitation clues the audience to the dispensability of her existence, the tremendous loneliness and the horror yet to come. The agitation is coded in the handling of cinematic time-space. Arindam (2018) [6] explains more deeply about the time aspect in Kaul's films as he writes, "The temporal dimension of Kaul's films vary radically from both Ghatak and Bresson and is informed by the notion of Shruti, a metric for tuning, borrowed from Indian classical music that explains the prominence of temps mort in his films."[6]

In a similar way, the sparseness of images and characters within the loop in Kaleka's work, create an agitation, through distinctly performing absences: Where is the backdrop of an idyllic village that the man and the cockerel suggest? Are the man and his cockerel displaced from their original setting to an unfriendly space where they are strangers? Is the man about to kill the cockerel after triumphantly curtailing its escape? Or is the cockerel his companion? Does the man's facial expression belie his thoughts or his message to the viewer? Are they performing their shifting identities? The question of identity is unraveled in the many complex layers of this agitation.

Through these absences, the device of agitation functions as a symbol of changing worlds. Symbol itself is a matter of experiencing and the experienced: the cross-section of lost opportunities and movement towards brave new world; the presence of the past in the present and its role in shaping the future; migration and the transience of human experience in different worlds- the artist

and the audience exchanging worlds of memories and realities through the artistic work. The device of agitation in the larger Indian context serves as a symbol created for contemporary exploration of themes and allows the audience to play with it, allowing them to access their memories, impressions, and perceptions in order to challenge traditions and systems that stand in the way of economic and social advancement.

Man And Cockerel As A Unified Twinned Symbol

The man is holding a cockerel as he walks into the frame, with a brief struggle, the cockerel escapes from his hands. In a following sequence, the loop plays back and the man appears to have caught the cockerel back. Interestingly, while the man was chasing the cockerel, his reflection remains in the sequence and as if the reflection has acquired a persona, it moves in slow motion following the man. We are tempted to fall into despair momentarily, each time the cockerel escapes, there is a pang of pain, leaving us to feel ourselves in its pathetic wings. We are left in a strange space of fear and emptiness, left alone with this stark element of human emotion, almost undefinable, and yet colossal in its presence. We get respite from the cockerel in the form of a heron retracing its steps, a few birds in flights and the lapping waters in the end. One intriguing moment is when the performance of the reflection does not synchronize with the performance of the man, what are we then invited to explore and witness? What do the twin identities of the man and his cockerel mean within the context of the societies which we are part of and our responses to the happenings in our own society as well as the larger global society?

Within the context of India banning cockfights, it could be read as a critique against the customs that bind Indian male bodies in their socially performative roles? It might suggest ambivalence, an uncertainty of relations between old and new lives/ identities/ laws and customs (Kappenberg, 2021, pers.comm). Kaleka challenges the limits of our own security, by drawing us deep into the elements of our own perception that we live comfortably with. In his introduction of a twinned symbol of man and cockerel in a series of looped sequences, he questions what we take for granted through the symbol as a mode of material inquiry. What if we replace the symbol with a man/ cockerel individually? The tension of the work would then be limited. However, through its use, an entwined interactive symbol such as man and cockerel in itself becomes a material model/ a technique that Kaleka uses brilliantly to confound our perception of reality.

The Ephemeral Bond Between Man And Cockerel As A Symbol

Both Man and cockerel are symbols of the inescapable reality of our lives, the bind that keeps us going in a loop of interconnections. The real symbol in Kaleka's work lies in the intangible, ephemeral yet irreversible bond that man and bird share, a predestiny of sorts that they must contend with, the confounding riddle of our existence. In choosing this seemingly non-threatening imagery that is perhaps an everyday incident that occurs over and over again, almost mindless in its nature,

and yet, so deeply embedded in the politics of survival or both subjects, the symbol allows us to transcend the ordinary and enter that which is extraordinary - that rare moment of sentience, when we open up to the paradoxes of reality with a critical eye. The symbol is an event, it is a relationship, an irreversible moment in time, yet left to us to reflectively engage with in a surreal, almost fiery loop of the ordinary. Kaleka calls us to witness the unremarkable by looping time, so that it suddenly takes on the weight and burden of becoming a symbol of our times. in that casual yet predetermined choice of subject, he elevates the everyday to the deeper politics of conscience, asking what is meaning, is meaning important to art?

Conclusions

For the perception of any artwork, there are a number of factors which deliver the artistic experience. These include background, culture, memories and associations of an individual viewer, associations of value and reward as well as expertise and relevant art-related knowledge. Through the perception of time and symbol, we are also able to bridge unexpected networks of the brain. Pushing the possibilities of human perception that emerge at the intersection of culture, technology and media art open up multiple ways to experience and study both art and cognition. At the heart of new perception, we are drawn back into the world of choreographed movement on screen, an elusive whole, that uses imagination to help us perceive reality with a more nuanced eye. We will need to explore screen-based movement as a medium, technique, tool as well as method that offers new freedoms of perception for creating a dialogue with neurocognitive models. Neuroaesthetics as a field may benefit from studying screendance presentations and viewer engagement of on-screen action as well as ‘screen’ itself as the conceptual complexity offered by screendance has the potential to throw light on cognitive and affective systems during emergent aesthetic experience.

The interplay and treatment of time and symbol feature as materiality in Kaleka's *Man with Cockerel*. Extending back from Kaleka’s video installation into the field of screen dance, we recognize that screen dance offers the potential for time to become a tangible material that can be drawn as infinite symbols into itself, allowing new patterns of thought to emerge.

While the focus is only on the perception mechanisms of the audience, the neurocognitive model analysis described in the paper may also be used by artists as a tool to create strategies for multiple levels of engagement between their work and the audience.

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Biography

Sandhiya Kalyanasundaram is a dance educator, choreographer and poet. Trained in Bharatanatyam, Butoh and Flamenco, Sandhiya has led and performed in several collaborative performances between dance styles, served on the Jury Panel for the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival and enjoys working at the intersection of neuroscience and dance. She is currently experimenting with screen dance to explore the interconnections between body and the natural world.

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When 'Being' Becomes 'Doing': Representing Queer Masculinities in Screen(dance) Space

Callum Anderson

Abstract

Departing from the proposal set out in Amelia Abraham's *Queer Intentions* - that although being gay is now largely accepted in the global north, there is still a disparity in the acceptance of actions - this paper asserts that there is still a lack of explicit gay and queer narratives in screendance. Arguing for explicit queer representation, rather than having to rely on invisible clues, I assert that representations which communicate that queer people should be invisible are damaging, furthering my suggestion of a need for explicit queer narratives. Throughout this paper, I suggest that a move from a more passive 'being' to an active 'doing' in the telling of queer stories is necessary in representing queer masculinities in screendance space.

Keywords: queer, masculinity, representation, performative progressiveness, heterocentric

Introduction

Departing from the proposal set out in Amelia Abraham's *Queer Intentions: A (Personal) Journey Through LGBTQ+ Culture* - that although being gay is now largely accepted in the global north, there is still a disparity in the acceptance of actions - I assert that there is still a lack of explicit gay and queer narratives in dance and on screen. Amelia Abraham is a journalist from London, UK, and her first book *Queer Intentions* is a snapshot of queer experiences contemporary to its publishing date of 2020. Discussing marriage, drag performance, pride and representation, it also discusses countries and parts of the world where identifying as LBGTQ+ is still punishable by law. Drawing on these different aspects of contemporary queer experience, Abraham discusses the complications of increased acceptance as queer culture becomes more mainstream in the West and, in discussing the exponential closure of gay bars, along with other queer spaces in the UK, suggests that "[p]erformative progressiveness seemed to indicate that *being gay* was OK, while *doing gay* wasn't"[1] (orig. emphasis), and I contend that this 'performative progressiveness' is still apparent today.

This paper will look to articulate some of the different representations of queer masculinities currently available across screendance works by dance artists working in the UK.

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Drawing on research from across dance, film, and media theories to inform my discussion around representations of queer masculinities, I hope to assert the need for queer narratives in screendance, as 'being' becomes 'doing' in queer representations. My focus on queer masculinities is informed by my identity as a gay man and queer artist, and while a deeper investigation into the myriad representations of queerness is beyond the scope of this paper, I have focussed on those representations that I most identify with, and are most readily available.

I will discuss DV8 Physical Theatre's *Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men*[2], alongside *Untitled: Video Portraits*[3] by Christopher Matthews/Formed View as a more recent work. I will also consider two works from the Nigel Charnock Archive, *You*[4] and *Still*[5] as further examples of works that present, and are made by, gay men and queer artists. These works are not without their challenges, as they focus solely on white, cis-gendered, gay men. DV8 and Nigel Charnock have become seminal, canonical figures, whose work has been widely seen, and so their works have also had an influence on the wider dance sector.

While this paper focuses on how 'being' and 'doing' may be investigated through queer screendance works, and how there is a need for more complex representations of queer masculinities, this is done in the knowledge of my privilege in being able to readily discover work which resonate with me. I have not been able to discuss works which consider more diverse sexualities, gender identities and races, and as such I have built upon research which codes the white male body as one which all other bodies are then othered. It is my assertion then, that by queering the white male body, I can argue for the need for more complex representation of queer masculinities, alongside other bodies in screendance, and how these representations may be informed by social interaction and cultural expression in mainstream media, which I will explore in later sections of this work.

Throughout this paper, I am building on the assertion made by Douglas Rosenberg in *Screendance: Inscribing the Ephemeral Image* that 'out of modern dance's leftist, socialist beginnings and its embrace of sexual indeterminacy, queer culture, and marginalized voices, the "gaze" of the viewer of screendance would be considerably at odds with [Laura] Mulvey's "male gaze."'[6] Further to this assertion, I would like to contend that screen(dance) space is readily able to accommodate representations of queer masculinities.

I will be using 'queer' as a term for representations that are not heterosexual, and in reference to dance artists and the work they produce, aligning my paper with the concepts that surround Queer theory. I will at times interchange this with 'gay' when citing work by others, or when referencing a person specifically, who has identified themselves as such at the time of writing this paper. At times, the acronym LGBTQ+ is employed to refer to the community as a whole. This is not necessarily how others would employ these words, but resonate with me

personally as I identify as a gay man, and a queer artist. My discussion around 'masculinity' focuses on the white, heterosexual man as archetype, influenced by current and historical identifiers; violence, power and agency as the only way to be accepted as a man. A queering of these representations, and an acceptance of vulnerability as a push against the culture of hypermasculinity, is key to my argument in later sections of the paper.

Performative Progressiveness And The Need For Queer Stories

Amelia Abrahams argument, that "*being gay* was OK, while *doing gay wasn't*", has been echoed by others in recent published research. Adriana Brodyn and Amin Ghaziani contend that "Attitudes towards homosexuality have liberalized considerably, but these positive public opinions conceal the persistence of prejudice at an interpersonal level"[7], they go on to suggest that there is "empirical variability of performative progressiveness, a concept that describes the co-occurrence of progressive attitudes alongside homonegative actions"[8]. From the assertions of Abraham, Brodyn and Ghaziani, I would also go further to suggest that not only do we still need queer spaces, we need performance to tell explicit and complex queer stories beyond the narrow representation that is currently accepted into mainstream media which I will analyse in the next section of this paper.

In the title of this paper, I alluded to the 'being' and 'doing' that Abraham sets out above, and that for queer representation to be truly realised, 'being' must become 'doing'. For the purposes of this paper, I would suggest that 'being' is, at its root, a passive act - it is a state of existing. 'Doing', on the other hand, is active - the act of performing or executing an action. Tolerance of people who identify as LGBTQ+ in the UK has increased along with the increase in rights and legal reforms (being), whereas homonegative actions occur when someone is actively 'performing' their sexuality, such as by holding hands with a same-sex partner, attending a Pride event, or appearing outside of the performative heterocentric and gender norms (doing).

Although gender and sexuality operate independently of each other, each with its own societal constructs, they have been intrinsically linked in academic and cultural discourse. As such, I would like to highlight the ideas put forward by Judith Butler in the discussion of performing gender. Butler also recognizes the differences in 'being' and 'doing' that I have discussed, and suggests "gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed"[9] and goes on to assert that "the "being" of gender is *an effect*, an object of a genealogical investigation that maps out the political parameters of its construction"[10] (orig. emphasis). In identifying as LGBTQ+, there is a move away from 'compulsory heterosexuality'. Sarah Ahmed asserts that "compulsory heterosexuality…as the accumulative effect of the repetition of the narrative of heterosexuality as an ideal coupling"[11]. Butler labelled it the 'heterosexual matrix'

suggesting that “for bodies to cohere and make sense, there must be a stable sex expressed through a stable gender (masculine expresses male, feminine expresses female)…defined through the compulsory practice of heterosexuality” [12] and performing, or doing, outside of the heterosexual matrix is where homonegative actions are still experienced.

The representation of queer experience, and of queer people has a complex past, and a fuller investigation into queer representation is beyond the scope of this paper. I would, however, like to assert the importance of overt queer representations in screen space. Sharif Mowlabocus argues that “[q]ueer representation in the pre-liberation era of Anglo-American film was something to be discovered; something available to audiences ‘in the know’, but had to be searched for, discovered and *identified*. Queer audiences then (and, arguably, now) were invited to become detectives, piecing together the clues that were built into the the text. It is perhaps unsurprising that, just as the history of queer people has been one shaped by invisibility, so invisibility has been a defining factor in the history of queer representation.”[13] (orig. emphasis) Mowlabocus also highlights the dichotomy of being and doing, suggesting that it is “not just… coming out online, but…‘being’ online, with their identities residing in digital as well as physical space and time”[14]. Therefore, explicit queer representation is important as it allows queer people to see themselves visibly, rather than having to rely on invisible clues in both the online and offline worlds. Representations which communicate that queer people should be invisible is surely a damaging one, furthering my suggestion of a need for explicit queer narratives. This speaks to the need for queer stories, as through representation, so it offers modes of expression[15] as I will continue discussing in the next section of this paper.

Men In Dance, Men On Screen

The treatment of men in dance and on screen, and representations of queer men specifically, is steeped in a ‘learned’ masculinity. Doug Risner, in his essay *What We Know About Boys Who Dance* suggests that “the dance community has only recently begun to speak of the silence that surrounds gay and bisexual males in dance”[16] and goes on to assert that “[b]oys and young men…in dance walk a fine line when it comes to gender norms, heterocentric bias, peer pressure, and dominant cultural ideology.”[17] Published in the late 2000’s, I would say that his suggestion still rings true today. Although with other media outlets these representations and conversations of queer masculinity are becoming more recognised, I would argue that there is still a need to challenge the current treatment of men in dance and, specifically, in screendance space.

It is widely regarded that men on screen are an aspiration for the men viewing them. In his seminal work *The Velvet Rage*, Alan Downs suggests that “our culture raises men to be strong and silent. Straight or gay, the pressure is on from the time we are very young to become our culture’s John Wayne-style of man”[18],

however gay men “like to think we have exempted ourselves from all this macho stereotyping. After all, we have committed the *great* masculine transgression of falling in love with another man”[19] (orig. emphasis) directly disrupting Butler’s heterosexual matrix. Downs’ John Wayne-style of man could be described, as many Hollywood leading men, as hypermasculine. Hypermasculinity is the “reaction against perceived incursions of the feminine”[20]; in order to rescind any possibility of a representation appearing feminine, an exaggerated form of masculinity is employed. This archetype has developed past the ‘leading man’ of Hollywood cinema, and becoming the unachievable power of the Terminator, the sexual prowess of James Bond, and the ‘action man’ type talents of Jason Bourne. These far reaching and readily available representations of hypermasculinity in mainstream media are recourse for the omnipresent pressures as pointed out by Downs.

There is a prevalent construct within both dance and film representations of masculinity, of the need for violence and hypermasculinity to allow a man to be looked at on stage or on screen. As Laura Mulvey suggests, ‘[m]an is reluctant to gaze at his exhibitionists like”[21] but in “structuring a film around a main controlling figure…, his screen surrogate…are thus not those of the erotic object of the gaze”[22]. Just as on screen, it has been argued that for a man to be accepted on the concert stage, he has to show hypermasculine characteristics similar to men on screen. This is contended by Ramsey Burt who suggests “in order to to represent masculinity, a dancer should look powerful,”[23] and goes on to assert “that ‘extremely aggressive’ is a way of reimposing control and thus evading objectification”[24] (orig. emphasis). Only in this way can he be seen without being emasculated. As Keefe suggests, there is an “assured masculinity tied to…athlete stature”[25]. This may be because of an underlying homophobia which relies on and informs homosocial bonding and men’s position within a current culture of heteronormativity[26], and Burt suggests that the reason for this is “the fact that western society is and has for hundreds of years been profoundly homophobic,” [27] giving rise again to the prevalence of performative progressiveness.

If hypermasculine representations of men are needed in dance and on screen to ensure the heterosexual matrix, the coding of queer masculinities must also have a shorthand. The use of ‘camp’ is often employed as a way of clearly coding a man as gay, but as camp is effeminate, and therefore ‘weak’ in comparison to the hyper-man, it goes some way to reduce the threat of the gay man and does not encroach on the ‘straight’ screen space. In her seminal essay, Susan Sontag suggests that camp is “not a natural mode of sensibility, if there be any such. Indeed the essence of Camp is its love of the unnatural; of artifice and exaggeration. And Camp is esoteric - something of a private code, a badge of identity”.[28] This idea of a ‘private code’ echoes the assertions of Mowlabocus in the previous section of this paper, of the subtextual clues employed when coding queer men in screen space.

Men in dance and men on screen inhabit differing but similar spaces in both society and the cultures being discussed in this paper, as “cinema and dance have…ultimately appropriat[ed] both technique and style from the [other]”.[29] I would like to quickly touch on the concept of hermeneutics in terms of the culture of masculinity and its representation in mainstream media. Hermeneutics describes the way in which the reading of a text is informed by the interpretation of the text as a whole informing the interpretation of the details, and knowledge of the details informing the interpretation as a whole[30]. If we take this cyclical pattern of interpretation and apply it to the construction of dominant masculinity, then representations affect behaviour, and behaviour in turn is prescribed to representations that are available. Peter Barry asserts this by suggesting that “images of masculinity and femininity in film pervade our lives and offer us ways of representing ourselves”[31]. In this way, it becomes understandable that by missing out many queer masculine identities from mainstream media, representations are sought out through other means and thus queer culture might be informed by avant-garde art and performance. To combat these representations, Dyer suggests that “[l]esbian/gay culture has always had for sake of political clarity to include assertions of clear images of lesbian/gay identity, but it has also carried an awareness of the way that a shared and necessary public identity outstrips the particularity and messiness of actual lesbian/gay lives. We have felt the need to authorise our own images, to speak for ourselves, even while we have known that those images don’t quite get what any one of us is or what all of us are”[32].

Rosenberg suggests that representations of masculinity are contextualised by “the closed-system culture in which contemporary screendance resides”[33] and adhere to “the tendency towards fetishization of dancing bodies on screen.”[34] I would therefore like to take the opportunity to suggest that there could be a link between contemporary screendance practice and representations of queerness. Rosenberg goes on to write that “[b]odies, whether coded queer or straight, and certainly regardless of gender, are likely to be the object of *some* spectators desire. It is the architecture of camera space itself that enables the presentation of any body as an object of desire, but that objectification is ultimately the collective purview of artists, curators, and consumers of screendance”[35] (orig. emphasis). It is this contention that would allow for queer representations of masculinity to be made available through screendance over other forms of media, as Rosenberg also proposes that “screendance holds the potential to undo… cinematic oppression as a site for a kind of *liberated* body”[36] (orig. emphasis). I will be exploring this proposal further in the following section, as I analyse a variety of screendance works made by queer artists dealing with representations of queer masculinity.

Being And Doing In Screen(dance) Space

Throughout this paper, I have been suggesting that a move must be made from a more passive 'being' to an active 'doing' in the telling of queer stories and representations of queer masculinities in screendance space. In the following section, I will discuss a number of screendance works made by white gay men, that show representations of queer masculinities.

Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men, originally made for the stage in 1988, "was DV8's first stage show to be professionally adapted for film…, it explores the interwoven notions of loneliness, desire and trust. Founded upon the conviction that societal homophobia often results in tragic consequences, the work grapples with the disturbing forces that drove Nilsen to kill for company" [3738]. Alongside this, the work was made in the shadow of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and just as Section 28 was passed into British law[39]. This work brings together the concepts of both 'doing' and 'being' gay, and this is explicitly stated in the description of the work above.

Shot in black and white, the work begins with a depiction of a gay night club scene of the late 1970s and early 80s, and the work does not shy away from showing men dancing together in overt homoeroticism. The camera work highlights this, showing close ups of skin on skin contact. As the work progresses, the movement becomes more physical and the club scene becomes an almost violent form of contact improvisation, with the dancers throwing themselves at each other, over and over. In another section, the work clearly deals with the notion of internalized homophobia. Two dancers form a duet, with one dancer flinching at the imagined touch of the other before finally breaking down into his arms. The final section of the work takes place in a bedroom, and is the most direct link to the crimes of Nilsen. This time, the duet is slower and more tender. The dancer taking the role of the victim, limp and unresponsive, is manipulated by the dancer taking on the role of Nilsen. The care given to the victim in this final scene cemented this work as an "unremittingly honest depiction of the darker dimensions of the gay male psyche."[40] For such an explicitly queer work, it does not rely on stereotypes of camp, but instead relies heavily on hypermasculine representations of violence and aggression that I discussed earlier. The strength of this work is that it fully embraces the active 'doing', and queers the representations of these hypermasculine stereotypes by having men dance with each other, and shows, albeit with dark undertones, a clearly coded homoeroticism.

Looking instead at the works that form part of the Nigel Charnock archive[41], these are perhaps more passive in their treatment of queer representations. You have to look further into Nigel Charnock as a dancer and choreographer to recognise his work as queer, and these films are much less overt, perhaps because they are serving a different purpose as extracts of longer live works. *You* uses "[v]erbal

and physical slapstick [to suggest] darker truths behind love, sex, and relationships" and is describes as a "dance monologue" and "an interpretation of of a classic performance piece taken from the archive of the late performer and choreographer, Nigel Charnock", *Resurrection*[42]. British Council Film lists its genre not only as 'Music/Dance' but also as 'LGBT'[43], so although the language is for the most part, gender neutral, and the solo male performer only uses 'he' and 'she' once each, the given genre suggests that the screendance work made for the archive should be read as a queer work. From the spoken language it would be hard to define this work as LGBT, but looking further into Nigel Charnock as a the original choreographer, and Dan Watson who performed this work, it may start to become clear how a screendance could fall into the category of 'being' gay, rather than 'doing'. This context is there to find, rather than being made explicit as previously asserted by Mowlabocus. At the very end of the film, a close up of the solo male dancer shows him looking off behind the camera. The shot cuts to the dancers point of view, showing the other credited performer, Kier Patrick, stood watching. It might be suggested that Kier has been stood watching for the entire performance, and as a man watching a man dancing, could imbue to audience members something of a queering of Laura Mulvey's "male gaze" as Rosenberg has previously suggested.

Still, which also forms part of the Nigel Charnock archive, is taken from a long form live dance piece of the same name which Charnock choreographed for Candoco Dance Company[44] in 2009. A duet between two men, *Still* represents male dancers in 'accepted' ways as I discussed earlier. There is a reliance on (choreographed) violence, with punches, choke holds and the dancers pulling and pushing one another around the performance space. Adversely however, these movements which are intrinsically violent, are not thrown with any force or malice, they are treated as any other movement, and it is not a surprise when strikes are near misses. This choreography is interrupted by moments of more gentle holds and embraces, which are often then exploded out of with a return of the violent style of choreography, launching the dancers towards the camera and closing in the screen space. The choreography by Charnock and direction/edit by Graham Clayton-Chance, offers up some surprises in terms of the treatment of men on screen. Alongside the moments of gentle embrace, there is some more explicit queering of the onscreen characters. One dancer runs his hands down the body of the other, while later in the work one dancer lays on the floor and the other, kneeling beside him, goes in for a kiss. These moments which more actively speak to the work expected of Nigel Charnock, never fully commit. The hands are thrown away before they reach their intended goal, and the dancer laying on the floor covers his mouth and throws the other dancer over his body onto the floor before the kiss lands.

Throughout this duet, Charnock and Clayton-Chance are clearly playing with accepted representations of men in dance and in this on screen adaptation, and

beginning to cross over from ‘being’ to ‘doing’. It is not fully realised, perhaps because this is an extract from a longer work. Both *You* and *Still* are, I would argue, representations of queer masculinity. This is not necessarily reliant on the identity of the performers, but rather because they were made by an openly gay, and often radical, choreographer. Nigel Charnock has been quoted as saying “with every piece I make there is a part of me in there, it’s always about people and how people deal with each other”[45]. Work made by a queer artist will, I would argue, always represent queer experience in some way or another, and by understanding these works in context, I align my understanding with Dyer as “[l]esbian/gay culture has always had for sake of political clarity to include assertions of clear images of lesbian/gay identity… We have felt the need to authorise our own images, to speak for ourselves, even while we have known that those images don’t quite get what any one of us is or what all of us are.”[46]

Illuminated against a plain black background is the topless top half of a white man. With a full beard and chest hair, this screened body is clearly coded as male, but once he starts moving, there is nod to femininity, to camp, to a queer dancing body. This is *Untitled: Video Portraits* (2017) by Christopher Matthews/Formed View. Matthews describes the work as in a “music video format” but “[t]he videos are played without the sound so that the subject, the body and its gestures, become more present… By masking the gender of the singer and the placing of the (white mid-30s) male body in relation to the music and its performance, I aim to highlight the codes of gender and performance of sexualities.”[47] Matthews uses the static frame of the shot, as well as looking directly into the camera, and as such at audience members, to directly contend with established representations of masculinity. In his representation, the male dancer *wants* to be looked at, he is directing his gaze at the audience, Mulvey’s male gaze, inviting them to look at him. The movement, as I previously suggested, has camp connotations, with the violence often linked to masculinity replaced by a feminine, flirtatious vocabulary. Using vocabulary that is usually reserved for women in music videos, shoulder rolls, fluttering eyelids and ‘arm-ography’, Matthews is embodying Rosenbergs “liberated body”. By being the only body on screen, and coding his body as both masculine and queer, he is able to push the boundaries of queer representation in a more explicit way than *You* or *Still* does, and as the only body on screen, cannot be viewed with the same homoeroticism that is prevalent in *Dead Dreams*. I would argue that this is the closest to Rosenberg’s liberated body of the woks that I have analyzed in this paper.

Conclusion: Representations, Queer Masculinity And Screen(dance) Space

The screendance works that I have discussed show how representations of white queer masculinity have been made available in screen space, and more specifically, in screendance. Departing from the notions of ‘doing’ and ‘being’ as set out by Amelia Abraham, I discussed performative progressiveness, and how

tolerance and attitudes towards the LGBTQ+ community are still marred by homonegative actions towards performing outside of the heterosexual matrix. Touching on the history of queer representation, I aligned my thoughts with Sharif Mowlabocus, and asserted that explicit queer narratives were necessary after many years of private and subtextual code that lead to an invisibility of queer characters and experiences.

Further to this, I discussed how masculinity is represented in dance and on screen, focussing on a culture of hypermasculinity. In discussing how violence is usually employed to negate the possibility of a male dancer being looked at without becoming the erotic object of Mulvey's male gaze, I also examined the shorthand of camp in representations of gay men as a comparison to the hyper-man. Focussing on a theoretical framework surrounding representations of men in dance and onscreen, and how these representations might be interpreted as queer, I have built upon Rosenberg's assertion that screendance is at odds with the male gaze as described by Laura Mulvey.

In analysing screendance works that span a period of over 30 years, I hope to have shown how the being and doing of queer representation has ebbed and flowed in response to mainstream representations and the political climate, and how these works have gone some way to interrogate masculinity and create complex representations of queer experiences. Though this paper I have shown how representations of queer masculinity might be created by artists and dancers who identify as such, and how these representations, though perhaps grounded in a theoretical framework, might be expanded through the practice of screendance. The white, cis-gendered male body has historically been what other bodies have been othered against: I hope that in queering it, we might go some way to discovering more complex representations in screendance.

Biography

Callum Anderson is a Brighton-based contemporary dance artist and screendance director. As an independent artist-scholar, his practice is heavily influenced by video technology, and the development of mediated dance performance. His work is predicated on making screendance accessible to a wider non-dance community, and giving dance communities the opportunity to experiment with video technology. Working across live and digital performance, he has made work for large scale screens, portable devices and installations. His research focuses on the representation of men in dance and on-screen, principally the the representation of queer masculinities. In 2021, he was awarded a commission from the Sussex Dance Network which aimed to address the underrepresentation of funding of those identifying as LGBTQ+ in the dance sector, as demonstrated in Arts Council England's most recent Equality and Diversity report. In 2022, the resulting film was deposited to Screen Archive South East, University of Brighton, for preservation as part of 'Our Screen Heritage'. Callum holds a BA (Hons) in Dance

and MA in Performance: Dance, from the University of Chichester, and received the Valerie Briginshaw Prize for dance writing and academic excellence for his MA thesis. Find Callum online @callumdanderson.

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1 Abrahams, *Queer Intentions*, 108-109.
2 Hinton, “Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men”.
3 Matthews, “Untitled: Video Portraits”.
4 Nigel Charnock Archive, “You”.
5 Nigel Charnock Archive, “Still”.
6 Rosenberg, *Screendance*, 168.
7 Brodyn and Ghaziani, “Performative Progressiveness”, 307.
8 Ibid.
9 Butler, *Gender* Trouble, 33.
10 Ibid, 43.
11 Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 145.
12 Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 151.
13 Mowlabocus, “Representing Gay Sexualities”, 53.
14 Ibid, 56.
15 Barry, *Beginning Theory*, 182.
16 Risner, “What We Know about Boys Who Dance”, 58.
17 Ibid.
18 Downs, *The Velvet* Rage, 122.
19 Ibid, 123.
20 Joyrich in Fuchs, “The Buddy Politic”, 201.
21 Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures*, 20.
22 Ibid.
23 Burt, *The Male Dancer*, 51.
24 Ibid.
25 Keefe, “Is Dance a Man’s Sport Too?”, 103.
26 Nardi, *Men’s Friendships*, 1992
27 Burt, *The Male* Dancer, 29.
28 Sontag, *Notes on ‘Camp’*, 1.
29 Rosenberg, *Screendance*, *33*.
30 McNamara, “Dance in the Hermeneutic Circle”, 1999.
31 Barry, *Beginning Theory*, 182.
32 Dyer, *Now You See It*, 44.
33 Rosenberg, *Screendance*, 168.
34 Ibid.
35 Ibid, 168-169.
36 Ibid, 169.
37 DV8 Physical Theatre, “Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men.”
38 Dennis Nilsen (1945-2018) was a Scottish serial killer who murdered at least twelve young men and boys between 1978 and 1983 in London, UK. His victims were often homeless, drug addicted or operated as rent boys. The political and societal homophobia at the time meant that many of his victims were never re-

ported as missing, giving one reason why he was able to continue killing without drawing the attention of the police.
39 Section 28 (or Clause 28) was in effect from 1988 to 2000 (in Scotland) and form 1988 to 2003 (in England and Wales), and prohibited the ‘promotion of homosexuality’ by local authorities.
40 McLeod, “Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men, Fall 1997”.
41 On an interesting point of lineage, Nigel Charnock was a member of the original cast of *Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men*.
42 Resurrection is a solo stage show choreographed and performed by Charnock, 1991.
43 British Council Film, “You”.
44 Candoco Dance Company are a British dance company made up of disabled and able bodied dancers.
45 Nigel Charnock Archive, “Still”.
46 Dyer, *Now You See It*, 44.
47 Matthews, “Untitled: Video Portraits”.

Kinesthetic Exchanges between Cinematographers and Dancers: A Series of Screendance Interviews

Alexander Petit Olivieri

Abstract

This paper examines the kinesthetic exchanges between camera operators and dancers, and proposes that their creative methodologies and interpersonal relationships can enhance the making of a screendance. I discuss how I discovered this project, unpack the phrase "kinesthetic exchange," and identify the cinematographer as the co-creator of a film's kinesthesia. I also discuss screendances that prioritize mobile camera operation, and I speculate that shared kinesthesia between camera and dancer has the potential to kinesthetically and emotionally affect audiences. Included are six interviews of contemporary dance makers and filmmakers that speak to the kinesthetic connection between the dancer and camera operator, and how that relationship enlivens the two-dimensionality of the frame. It is my intention to offer varying perspectives about kinesthetic exchanges between camera operators and dancers, and how their relationships may influence the creative processes for the creation of screendances.

Keywords: *camera operation, camera movement, co-creation, collaboration, improvisation, intimacy, intuition, kinesthetic exchange, light, observational practice, personal histories*

Preface

Since my first days as a contemporary dance student, the intangibles of dancing have gripped my attention and garnered my love of dance's potential for relationship building. Movement scores have guided me through new possibilities in my physical and emotional range on what feels like a cellular level. Sharing these experiences with others reveals the intimacies of space and time that create a knowing of connection. This awareness comes from a feeling of kinesthetic exchange – a shared connection built upon the actions of the body that emerge in a process of co-creation. I am referring to a mutual offering of attention and care on a kinesthetic and haptic level that occurs between dance collaborators. For many of us, we were deprived of the satisfaction of kinesthetic exchange for the first year and a half of the COVID-19 pandemic. There have been moments of grieving where I've imagined not returning to dance gatherings and live performance events.

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Dance of any kind can feel both significant and inexplicable, and yet, its importance deserves a supporting argument that defends this creative channel for those compelled to journey through it. Like many dance artists in 2020, I turned to film out of necessity, as it was the only way to simulate an artistically physical and sensorial experience with other people. I started filming myself without any knowledge about how to compose the frame, record sound from the environment, and explore something filmically choreographic other than the physical act of dancing. With more research and practical experience, I recognized something of primal human value inherent in film and relational to dance-making. Film is saturated with opportunities that invite us into collaborative relationships with the rawness of human exchange, intimacy, listening, and care that feels related to co-creating with other dancers. As a maker of screendances, I feel moved when a dance on camera reveals human motion in coincidence with the movement of nature and the elements of a site. I often wonder about different artists' aesthetics and their processing of merging ideas in a creative process. What gets agreed upon between the collaborators of a film's project? Are the dynamics of their collaboration palpable to the audience? And if so, I am also curious about the ways in which cinematographers and dancers can explore and borrow one another's craft to enhance the viewership of an audience. Furthermore, it is my intention to address myriad types of collaborative relationships that camera operators and performers can have, while acknowledging that their roles are not always clearly defined the same way in every collaborative process.

Methods

To better understand the relationship between camera operator and dancer, a relationship that I was experiencing in my own work as a camera operator, I sought to understand how more experienced screendance makers understand and experience kinesthetic collaboration. I interviewed six dance filmmakers with roots in western European contemporary dance traditions and connections to the Seattle arts community because of their manipulation and flow of the camera, kinesthetically working with the dancers, as well as their proximity to my work as a contemporary dancer and filmmaker. These artists, Corrie Befort, Adam Sekuler, Margarita Bali, Babette DeLafayette Pendleton, Benjamin Kasulke and Dayna Hanson exemplify what feels possible when we invest in "cross-pollinating" ideas, moving with a site to inform the body, co-creating a choreographic relationship between camera operator and performer, co-editing with differences of intuition, and trusting in one another's specialty to help actualize an idea. It is important to acknowledge that no one's creative process is the same and these artists' films speak to myriad types of collaborative relationships that exist in the making of screendances. Depending on budget and labor costs, sometimes their roles are multifaceted, economizing by taking on multiple roles at once as performer, director, choreographer, cinematographer, editor and director of photography. These interviews support the notion that these roles are not always clearly

defined the same way in every collaborative project. Depending on the artist and their role in a given screendance, I also refer to camera operators, cinematographers and directors of photography when there is only one person doing all three roles, and when the roles diverge because there is a larger crew. However, for the purposes of this paper, I generally reference the person behind the camera as the camera operator. Furthermore, it is my intention to share insights about their creative processes as a framework to inquire about the kinesthetic exchanges between camera operator and dancer.

I am also drawn to the incorporation of raw humanistic themes that include the shared labor of intimacy and kinesthetic relationships. The level of care and intimacy cultivated by the camera operators and dancers seem to parallel the subject matters of human connection in their films *Rota* by Corrie Befort, *Agua* by Margarita Bali, *36 Hours* by Adam Sekuler, *Swimming in Air while Rooted in Water* by Babette Pendleton, and *A Moving Portrait of Me and My Dad* by Dayna Hanson and Benjamin Kasulke. Thus, I speculate that the movement and intention to connect between the camera operator and the dancer makes these exchanges meaningful on a human level. I also included a close analysis of their films in conjunction with what these artists shared with me about their creative processes. In the end these interviews were a collaborative endeavor that required an investigation of these artists' works and their histories. It also required my presence to tailor questions about camera operation, and I felt the richness of our conversations reflected their generosity and enthusiasm to share their work. The complexity of all these artists' films is a reflection of their kinesthetic exchanges between camera operators and dancers, and they've given me insights about possible methods for future projects and creative endeavors that may be pertinent to other emerging and seasoned scholars and artists in the field of screendance.

Kinesthetic Exchanges

When I dance, I move to connect, and when I film, I connect with the movement. I believe dancers and camera operators have the potential to feel their way through time and space by contributing choreographically to the rhythmic and kinesthetic elements of a film. When I'm filming dancers, my eyes are drawn to the kinetics of the body's expressivity. As I witness a subject carry another human body, I can imagine feeling the shelf that supports their weight, and my brain gives me the impression of what it must feel like to be weightless. I try to complement this sensation with the camera's handheld motion. I am reminded of what it feels like to partner someone and discover the nuances of another person's body, feeling their breath as a signal sensor to track our movements like a telepathic form of non-verbal communication. Together film and dance share a choreographic language inflected with breath, connective tissues and intuitive sensibilities for movement from both dancer and camera operator. When they find

their flow together, they make the two-dimensional space of the frame simulate a three-dimensional viewing of the film.

According to Douglas Rosenberg, “Screendance is the literal construction of a choreography that lives only as it is rendered in either film, video, or digital technologies.”[1] While I agree that screendance only comes into being in digital space, I began to wonder if the focus on the product of screendance failed to recognize the lived bodily experiences during the creation process. During the early stages of filming and production, I suggest that choreography of a screendance enables both digital and real-life spaces to intersect when a camera operator and dancer kinesthetically collaborate in time and space. Ultimately, this kinesthetic exchange has effects on a film’s final edit because the transposition of live movement to moving images illustrates camera operator’s and dancer’s choreographic structure, logic and rhythm. Thus, this co-creative relationship is essential to the making of a screendance and affects the decision-making of a director and editor in post-production, as well as the perceptions of the viewer.

In the year of 2021, I worked as the cinematographer for two projects with vertical dancer Roel Seeber.[2] Vertical Dance is considered a “hybrid dance form that brings together dance and the equipment of rock climbing. . .” such as a rope and harness to access the vertical space of landscapes that vary from mountain ranges to urban skyscrapers.[3] Together we made two films titled *The Boards* and *. . . X . . .* Holding the camera in my hands, I spent weeks feeling comfortable moving my body and the camera as one entity to track the flight of Roel’s choreography. Discovering ways to distribute the weight of the device against my body, I used the tension of the neck strap, panned the camera on make-shift dollies and mobile tripods, pulled and dragged the camera with towels across the floor, and eventually got my hands on a camera stabilizer, such as the Zhiyun Gimbal. I experimented with the many ways cinematographers get creative with mobile shooting and tried to simulate the swing and flight of the dancer with my body through the camera’s lens. The thrill of filming Roel came from the freedom to compose the frame with my intuition for the mechanics of his movement as he yielded to the rope’s pendulum-swing rigged from the ceiling. Determining where things are situated in the frame, I continually get excited playing with how long it takes for something to reveal itself on camera.

As I began filming, I also drew inspiration from a vertical dance film titled *Dom Svobode*, a screendance choreographed by Iztok Kovač and filmed by Thierry de Mey.[4] This film led me to seminal works filmed by Thierry de Mey that filmically showcase the kinetics of the three-dimensional world. With films such as *One Flat Thing Reproduced,* choreographed by William Forsythe, and *Ma Mère de l’Oye* and *Rosas danst Rosas*, choreographed by Anne Teressa de Keersmaeker, I can feel the choreographic relationship between the camera and the dancers.[5] For instance, in part two of *Rosas danst Rosas,* the cast of four dancers activate the

cafeteria space with a kinetic and visceral movement language that gestures at the psyche and sexuality of the female body. All the while, De Mey reveals the intimacies of coy expressions juxtaposed by trucking, panning and dollying the camera around the thrashing gestures of the dancers to evoke the sensation of surveilling and overlooking their institutionalized sitting.[6] De Mey uses his camera as an extension of his body, creating a method of seeing that is unique to him, and it signals my body with curiosity about the specific mover with the camera that he is. The thought of him filming as a form of choreography, engaging with the performers in time and space, deepens my investment in studying the kinetics of his camera movement. I often wish to emulate his embodied connectivity between what he sees and how he tracks the dancers with his camera.

According to the film theories of Sergei Eisenstein, it is our intrinsic knowing that activates an empathetic response and begs for closeness and relatability to the dancing body and the profilmic elements on screen.[7] The way that de Mey works with dance on camera affects me, and I feel moved to dance beyond the cushions of my seat. All of this to say, I do not seek to universalize my response to his kinesthesia as an experience shared by all. I speculate that my proximity to European dance traditions influences my emotional response in ways that I am inclined to elevate his work over other artists. That is to say that my aesthetics in art-making shift as I work to learn and unlearn patterns of seeing that prioritize a body of work over another. Developing a lens that sees difference, reveals the origins of ideas and how they connect to a person's identity. The lens of a screendance narrows the distance between art that we identify with and art that reveals different perspectives about the nuances of history and culture.

For this project, I interviewed cinematographers, Adam Sekuler and Benjamin Kasulke, who respond to the kinesthesia of performers with the movement of their own bodies. It could be said that their films evoke what some scholars in western European contemporary dance and film traditions would say is "kinesthetic empathy." Early 20th century dance theorist and critic John Martin coined the term kinesthetic sympathy for "concerning the sense of immediate and unmitigated contact between dancer and viewer."[8] John Martin explains,

When we see a human body moving, we see movement which is potentially produced by any human body and therefore by our own. . . through kinesthetic sympathy we actually reproduce it vicariously in our present muscular experience and awakens such associational connotations as might have been ours if the original movement had been of our own making.[9]

German expressionist choreographer Mary Wigman shared similar sentiments about the creative process for dance in that, "to experience dance creation means absorbing it through the eye and feeling it kinesthetically."[10] Additionally, this term

has been discussed by dance theorists like Kerr Houston, who defines kinesthetic empathy as an inherent aspect of dance performance. Houston elaborates that,

> . . . dance is a communicative art form whose effectiveness relies in the large part upon the processes of inner mimicry and neuromuscular association. While seated and apparently passive, members of an audience at a dance performance respond empathetically to the moving figures onstage, and are thus able to understand and even experience the feelings of the dancers. And, in the process, any notional distinction between viewer and performer arguably dissolves.[11]

The same may be said about film, first articulated by Eisenstein, who concluded that “emotional perception is achieved through the motor reproduction of the movements of the actor by the perceiver.”[12]

What these theorists and scholars are speaking to is that neuromuscular connection between brain and body, a chemical occurrence between our eyes and the movement that the body interprets. Susan Foster describes a body-centered place of knowing that allows us to recognize movement as if “it had been of our own making.”[13] However, our emotional connectivity to others through our shared feelings of kinesthesia is a science we don’t quite yet know how to explain. Foster makes it clear, however, that there is a dichotomy of difference and sameness among people when discussing kinesthetic empathy through the lens of culture and personal histories. Dr. Linda Caruso Haviland’s interview with Foster reveals that identifying empathetic associations between things is, “a political decision, the choice to affiliate with either sameness or difference to the exclusion of the other.” And Foster elaborates that the “choice[s] towards sameness, denying difference. . . or towards difference, denying commonality” are never free from bias because they are steeped in historical, social and political influences.[14] Therefore, it is important to name that the movement relationship between camera operator and dancer doesn’t necessarily imply that everyone will have a kinesthetic response that connects them to the work.

I would echo Susan Foster’s theory that our understanding of kinesthetic empathy does have obvious historical, social and political implications, despite existing in the liminal space between the mystery of art and science. This encourages me to discern the ways that film manipulates my eyes to process kinesthesia as something that I am compelled to feel. The importance of noticing what my eye looks for is a practice of attending to the ways I project my own experiences onto a work of art. In doing so, I am equipped to determine the reasons why I kinesthetically empathize with a particular work of screendance over another. It's safe to ask the question, “do I feel more liveness towards a film or a dance made and performed by people who share my same western European culture?”

Dissecting and understanding my positionality, not only reflects my own unconscious biases, but unlocks the door to nuances of intellectual, emotional and kinesthetic responses from people's histories, politics and cultural identities. Screendance not only becomes a way to translate the kinesthetic exchanges of its makers, but it is also a technology that brings us closer to understanding and valuing one another's differences.

Thinking back on my experiences collaborating with Roel Seeber, I have enjoyed myself most letting go of a smaller idea for a bigger opportunity for growth and learning. When I'm vulnerable in moments of not knowing, sharing the work, giving credit, assuming the blame when I'm wrong, and making creative space for my collaborators, I have explored connections between the camera and the body in a way that liberates me with opportunity for possible innovation. Collaboration with Roel has resulted in the creation of a space for play, experimentation, questioning and intimacy. In the same way that dance creates a container for vulnerability and connection, screendance integrates kinesthetic and interpersonal exchanges between dancers and camera operators. Thus, Roel and I created visual and kinesthetic artifacts of what we collectively shared, dialoguing with movement and allowing connectivity to tether us between our specialties like threads sewn into the fabric of our film's creative process.

Cinematographer As Co-Creator

American modern dance choreographer, Merce Cunningham is famous for stating that when the camera and the dancer move in agreement, there is a relationship that, "creates a movement experience not possible on stage."[15] Others have previously commented on the symbiotic relationship between the camera operator and the performer, see for example Paulina Ruiz Carballido's discussion of the dance duet between the camera and the performer in the work of Maya Deren.[16] Hence, it is my intention to discuss the kinesthetic exchange between the camera and the body as it relates to my embodied knowledge and speculate about the ways in which the dynamics between camera operator and performer can enhance the viewer's engagement.

Choreography for both live performance and screendance involves identifying the relationship between the moving body and the camera. According to Douglas Rosenberg, when we migrate dance to the camera space,

> one participant – the dancer – moves freely, unencumbered, while the other – the camera operator – is tethered by the camera, a prosthetic image-gathering device that by necessity becomes an extension of the body.[17]

In this way, the camera adapts the choreography to the screen, identifying energy in motion with readiness for the unpredictable. Rosenberg states that

improvisation can often be the start of a screendance where the camera's gaze finds the motion in a way that "diversions and details vie for the eye's attention. . . with an engaged looking at the body that is unique to the device."[18] It becomes exciting when this method of seeing feels like dancing – negotiations and permissions to make choices like following or breaking rules of composition to frame the body in space. Screendance maker Tim Glenn qualifies such ideas about cinematography feeling like a dance by saying that the choreography of the camera is an experience of "adding motion to motion. . . to create a kinetically charged experience for the viewer."[19] Additionally, screendance scholar, Karen Wood concludes that film has its own way of activating a viewer's kinesthetic empathy because of its exploration of specific film techniques.[20] Camera motion, close-up shots, different angles that unflatten the two-dimensionality of an image, as well as choreographic editing contribute to the kinesthetic empathy of the viewer. These techniques are designed to invite the viewer to suspend disbelief so that their perceptions can linger between reality and the imaginary.

The advantage of being a dancer with the ability to choreograph or know the score with which the other dancers perform may also allow the cinematographer to move freely inside of a given structure. This knowing can simplify my engagement in a way that my camera movement supports what I see through the lens. When I feel the rhythm of the steps and sense the performer's energy, the spontaneity of an improvisation doesn't feel as difficult to track, and I rely on my sensibility for movement to translate the performer's energy into something conceivably felt on screen. I appreciate the moments when I feel the impetus to breathe in stillness, follow a new trajectory of focus, and shift my orientation to invite the dancer to feel me as a partner with whom they are performing. I am a dancer holding the camera, performing with the artistic agency to compose a visual image by the design of my eye and body, and I get to play an integral role in the exploration of the dance with the performer.

Choreographer, dancer and filmmaker Eiko Otake claims that, "when the camera's movement and our movement do not relate, the result appears uninteresting. . . in other words, the camera and our bodies should complement each other."[21] Eiko's research as both dancer and filmmaker positions her unique perspective in favor of dancers participating as cinematographers of their own films. Eiko describes her partner Takahashi Koma using a tennis ball under the weight of a board and the camera to achieve the desired height and camera movement off the ground. Eiko recalls, "[Koma] flat on the floor, something that was hard for the other cameraman to do. With a bit of practice, the camera rotated, slid, panned and moved ever so gently but not mechanically."[22] Their research supports this notion that dancers as cinematographers are inclined to make important contributions to the world of dance film, "as they are the artists of motion."[23]

Along the same lines, former professor of dance film at the Ohio State University, Mitchell Rose encourages students to “think like filmmakers,” in order to to “make [their] camera movement more right for the scene and the shot.” [24] In his lectures on physicality for cinematography, he reminds students that their training as dancers puts them at an advantage for understanding the attentiveness and sensitivity necessary for mobile shooting. “You’re all dancers,” he exclaims,

> ...so, you can walk steadily. Do not plod along because the camera is going to jostle. Instead, soften your knees, soften your elbows, soften your breath and move like a ninja with feathered stops.[25]

From the perspective of choreographer and filmmaker, Dayna Hanson, discusses movement and the inherent sensibilities that put the dancer at an advantage for learning the skills of operating and shooting a camera. She elaborates that,

> ...getting behind the camera, learning those skills, and also trusting and acknowledging what you bring to shooting dance as a mover is something valuable. As in dancers’ experiences with movement prepare them to understand what is happening inside of the performer’s body.[26]

To support this claim, Dayna reflects on a past experience watching the director of photography belabor a specific shot because he lacked movement sensibilities that connected motion to that of the performer.

> [watching] directors of photography do their best to keep up with a dancer and struggle to learn bits from the choreographer to understand and put themselves in close proximity to the action, I’ve learned over the years that as a mover and a shooter, dancers behind the camera can potentially go further than more traditional cinematographers because they can do both.[27]

Canadian filmmaker, Marlene Millar says there is nothing she loves more than going out with her camera and dancers, “moving with them and determining those moments of stillness and movement like choreography for live performance.”[28] She sees it as a beautiful way to merge her two paths as dancer and filmmaker to explore the choreography of camera operation for dance films.

Documentary filmmaker Andy Abrahams Wilson, recounts his experience working with Anna Halprin in his essay, “Breaking the Box: Dancing the Camera with Anna Halprin.” He describes relying, “. . . on a ‘structured improvisation,’ using one camera and no shot list. As such, the filmmaker became part of the intimacy of

the dance, creating his own dance with Halprin as she would with the elements surrounding her."[29] He elaborates,

> In working with Anna, I usually hand-hold the camera, freeing up my own movement, emphasizing subjectivity, and allowing the energy of the dance to move me. After all, dance is the movement of energy through the medium of the body, and film is the movement of light through the medium of the lens. When the camera is in synch with the dance, and the filmer with the dancer, energy breaks through the containers of body, stage, camera, screen. We experience a transcendence, or a flow, when the boundaries of subject and object, experience and consciousness, disappear.[30]

Andy's agency and freedom to dance as the camera operator is one creative experience that I believe dancers are inclined to succeed at given their embodied knowledge as movers. His mention of flow and transcendence when the boundaries between the viewer and the film dissolve is another way of saying that the spectator interprets the two-dimensional experience of the film with a heightened state of awareness for the three-dimensional performance in real time. From first-hand experience, that is how I discovered that I wanted to pursue concert dance, watching VHS tapes of the American Ballet Theatre and imagining that I was embodying Baryshnikov's performance state, circling my unfinished basement with a never-ending coda of wishful leaps and turns. Furthermore, I speculate that this sensation of knowing from the body coupled with an invested state of watching creates a scenario where both film and live performance bring people together to witness and translate the humanness of the body into something reachable through the screen.

Ultimately, the collaborative process between cinematographer and performer awakens my feelings of liveness when I am a part of merging both film and dance practices. Admittedly, I entered filmmaking wishing for the technical aspects of the camera and editing not to interrupt the sacred flow, intention, and physical effort of the dancing. Eventually, I realized what was precious to me about dancing could still be present in the production of the film. It would just be communicated through a filmic language of shooting and editing that would not be secondary to the dancing. The creative process instead leaned into a film-forward approach that tapped into the connectivity with my body and the camera as both performer and camera operator.

Intuitive Kinesthetic Exchanges

Corrie Befort's history of making screendances has brought her into collaborative conversations with cinematographers that inform her on-going research of filmmaking. Her screendances are heavily rooted in her embodied knowledge of

contemporary dance, improvisation and live performance.[31] In my interview with Corrie, she speaks about a dynamic process with her collaborator and cinematographer for her film *Rota*, all the way through its genesis to post-production. She recalls,

> I think back to my collaboration with Darrick Borrowski on our film *Rota*, and the way that he and I were both choreographing the scene together, seeing things individually as a dynamic exchange. Because Darrick is an architect and a designer, "the frame" was always a very living thing for him. And as the performer and choreographer I felt like I could exist inside his framing - and I could play off it too. It was an improvisation together – though with very set choreography. When we edited it later together, we'd edit from the standpoint of how he played it in the moment and how I played it in the moment. And looking for the liveliness in that from both of us. Paying attention in that way taught me a lot about choreography and improvisation.[32]

I interpret her collaborative process with Darrick as one that was centered around intuition and experimentation, where the logic of the work supported the methods used to unveil the continuity of the film. The process of filming felt very lively for Corrie, where Darrick's method of searching for the liveliness in the frame encouraged Corrie to move in a way that enhanced his framing. This kinesthetic exchange allowed Darrick to respond to her movement as she responded to the environment around her. This dynamic exchange allowed the filming process to unfold as an improvisation where listening, sensing, and noticing one another's part generated a product that felt deeply collaborative.

When she and Darrick co-edited the project, she remembers their dynamic from the shoot day informing the editing. Their collaboration affirmed to her that her participation in the editing room became integral to the actualization of the type of work that interested her. She shares,

> I've never just handed off footage to somebody and said "edit this please" because I'd feel bad about it. . . I'm not going to expect someone to see the subtle thing that I was hunting for in the footage. Because it's my hunt. Sean Donovan, an awesome human and very patient editor, once said, "you've been making me crazy looking for this weird thing for six months, but now I'm seeing it.[33]

Corrie mentions that at the computer, they play into their kinesthetic experiences from the shoot day that are visible in the footage and still present in their bodies. Together they make choices that feel integral to their shared experiences of the

work as a way of awakening the two-dimensional space of the film. By intuiting their shared experiences with body and camera, they incorporate choreographic elements of time and space that resonate with their shared sense of co-creation. Sometimes situations create friction between collaborators that get in the way of the desire to chase an interesting idea. In her interview, Corrie described her experiences where the working environments lacked cohesion in the collaborative exchange. This inability to crosspollinate reveals an experience where one artist holds onto an idea so tightly that they diminish the other person's creativity. As a result, not following your intuition may mean sacrificing your voice to move a vision forward that is no longer shared.

In one of Corrie's creative ventures, she describes making a film where the communication between her direction and the work of the cinematographer fell short because his interpretation of the dancers' score wasn't accurate. She shares,

> There's a film I made for Suzi Tucker and the Institute for Complex Adaptive Matter called *Slip Cadence* about Alzheimer's disease where there was a kind of breakdown of communication between myself and the camera op., Bronwyn Lewis, who was otherwise doing great work. So, I had to try to capture what I was looking for quickly as the weather was rapidly shifting. I realized that I needed to move with the dancers like I was in a trio with them. I had to wait for the timing and be entirely responsive through knowing the choreography – and let my body guide, support and also somehow stay out of the way. It was a very instructive moment for me and we got the shot we needed in one take.[34]

Essentially, the kinesthetic exchange in this instance would have benefitted from more time integrating the cinematographer into the choreographic process with the dancers. In Corrie's case, this was an impossibility, and when weather patterns alter the plans of a shoot day, sometimes collaboration means setting the ego aside with as much respect for one another's craft as possible with an agreement to switch roles, which in this case was camera operation to ensure that the scene got captured on film.

Subsequently, Corrie's experience operating the camera encouraged her to tap into her intuition as a dancer. Once she had control of the camera, this allowed her to simulate a movement relationship rooted in the concepts of time and space as a duet with the dancer. In this case as well, Corrie's collaborative processes that followed involved the camera person knowing the physical score, "so that they could move and be responsive enough to choreograph with the camera and be in concert with the dancers with live-time choice making."[35] When everyone is working from the same point of reference, artists allow intuition and choice-

making to be a part of filming, and in Corrie's case, this affirmed for her the necessity to direct a cinematographer to dance with the dancer. More specifically, Corrie says that it resembles, "the best kind of contact improv when the camera person physically knows the choreography or the score of the improvisation."[36] This way the camera operator can anticipate the dancer's choices in the frame as a "co-choreographer."[37]

Improvisational Kinesthetic Exchanges

Margarita Bali is an Argentinean award-winning choreographer, screendance and video-installation artist and teacher.[38] Throughout Margarita Bali's career, she has used improvisation as her generative language for story-telling. For her screendance, *Agua*, the production was scheduled for ten days on the coast of Uruguay, where a shipwrecked Chinese merchant vessel laid abandoned and weathered by the waters of its sunken history.[39] Initially, she visited the site by herself and shot footage amidst an incoming storm. The activity of the current created powerful images of waves crashing into the ship's remaining structure. When she went back with the dancers, she subsequently spent five days in the presence of violent winds and undertow shooting and guiding the dancers through improvisational tasks on the ship.

Her own movement and improvisation behind the camera delivered a sense of trepidatious witnessing and explorative play. This improvisational approach to filming left her with a collection of footage that she needed to sift through and study to find a logic and through-line. In the editing room, she realized the first pieces of footage that she took of the storm were compelling enough to logically resolve the film with a message about the forces of nature and the inevitability of impermanence.

While collaborating with dancers, she puts trust in her collaborators with whom she creates an environment that is spacious and open for individual creativity. She reveals that in her early work, she had a history of creating dances by teaching phrases and steps, but realized her work was better served by working "with dancers who can improvise well, otherwise she cannot work because [she] cannot get into their bodies."[40] Her role becomes more about directing them with exercises and time constraints through space.

This is the same level of spaciousness that she offered the composer for the film, Marcelo Moguilevsky. She describes editing the film's visual sequence to its entirety before sending it to the composer. This process of editing without the guidance of sound is similar to David Hinton's direction for the editing of *Birds*, for which he is famous for saying, "I began with the idea that you have got to start with the rhythms of the action itself … purely as visual music first of all, just images and no sound."[41] This film-forward approach was the foundation of Margarita's collaborative exchange with the composer. She credits the reason for

the film's power to the composer who "knew how to build the situation to the end," using the film as a guide to create a soundtrack that supported the visual story-telling. Thus, trusting everyone's intuition and their commitment to their craft helped bring the work together. The process of filmmaking has the potential to be something shared and built upon each persons' specialties shaping an idea. As director, she guides with a vision that speaks to the contributions of her dancers with equal exchange.

When I interviewed Margarita about this film, her memory for details seemed to focus on the process of filming the dancers by herself, editing the film months later and then working with a composer for the first time. She had little recall about the choreographic information she derived with the dancers, considering she wore many hats for this film as the director, editor, cinematographer and choreographer. But her memory of *Agua* told a different story about how invigorated she was filming her dancers with her camera. Her kinesthetic exchanges with the dancers and the incoming storm are portrayed in the footage from the last day of shooting. These moments capture the essence of the storm in a way that is unique to her style of improvisation, and rightfully so, the footage is visceral and evocative of her collaboration with the dancers. She shares,

> I know that when I go out with a camera, those actions - I loved that moment. I don't know why, but I like being behind the camera. Also, many times I just work with camera people, but I love to see what is in the frame.[42]

I could hear her enthusiasm about moving with the camera, exploring improvisation with intuition about how to transpose the performance into the two-dimensional frame. In doing so, she involved her kinesthesia in the filming, playing with time and space as a choreography of impulse to improvise with the environment and her dancers. She focused the camera, capturing the dance between the performers, the ocean and the ship. The final moments of the film begin with a long shot of four dancers holding onto the sides of the ship's wreckage. I can sense her weight shifting in the water, stabilizing her camera against her body with the support of her team bracing her from behind. As the waves crash, the four dancers depreciate to three as we feel her camera jolt upward towards the sky, losing focus of the fourth dancer under water. The scene reveals the third dancer getting swept away as the two others retreat from the current and grab hold of the ship for another round of impact. She details, "I also wanted to go in the water, but I had somebody holding me from the back so that I could be sure that I wasn't going to end up completely taken by the waves." We can see the water batter the sides of the ship, destabilizing her posture that ricochets her movement through the lens. Salt water and sea foam pelt the dancers duetting, falling, rolling, gathering and bracing one another for another tussle in the foam. The final duet finds cover against a nook in the ship's side as

the waves crash over them one last time, surrendering in a slow-motion dissolve of the camera's fade to black. Margarita's footage is raw and heart-racing, capturing the strength of the storm and its unforgiving rhythms of retreating and advancing over the sand and everything else in its grips.

Kinesthetic Exchanges In Observational Practice

Adam Sekuler is a filmmaker, curator, educator and programmer based in New Orleans, Louisiana.[43] Kinesthetic exchange for Adam Sekuler involves finding people who understand his approach and what interests him in the filmic process. I realized observational practice is deeply important to Adam, and the quality of his work speaks to his level of specificity that his collaborators must also believe in. When he is behind the camera, Adam always looks for moments that bookend the events in the frame, which informs his kinesthetic approach to filming. He organizes shots and searches for the instance that something begins and ends, and he qualifies that because his sense of time is slower than most screendance filmmakers. He says that he just hasn't "met a lot of folks who really get the level of patience that [he] brings into the work."[44] Along with this observational practice, he mostly works with the constraints of a static frame until he feels compelled to move with the dancer. Every movement is motivated by the focus of investigating the history of sites in his films. He says that his approach allows dancers' movements to interpret the idiosyncrasies and personalities of a site "with an aim at world-building."[45]

Adam discusses that both dance and film work with time, and "how you use that time is important for both dance and film." How you allow that time to unfold in ways that excite and expand the audience's experience is where the commonality between both film and dance align for Adam. He adds that, " …collaborations with dancers stem from the fact that actors tend to work in short and isolated moments, and the dancers [he] works with cherish space and time in the same way that interests [him]." I infer his statement to mean that dancers and other filmmakers work with time differently than he does, and that difference motivates him to work with dancers that explore duration in a way that allows the environment to reveal itself through the body's investigation of that space. Thus, for Adam, kinesthetic exchanges with dancers orbit around the common aesthetics that interest his creative team such as duration, patience, and unearthing the histories of sites as dancers become the animators of the storytelling.

In 2019 Adam worked with a friend named Angelle Hebert on a project in New Orleans titled *36 Hours*.[46] Their collaborative relationship began with a dance film titled *Pontchartrain* back in 2016 that became the spring board for this feature film about Angelle's experience of giving birth. Adam notes that Angelle became inspired by the prospect of filming her dancing in a remote location in the woods in the days leading up to giving birth, while also documenting her labor in the

hospital a few days later. Adam agreed, thinking he was making two separate projects, one that investigated a primal state of pregnancy framed by the elements of a remote Louisianan forest, as well as a short documentary about her process of giving birth. As he started editing, he realized that he, “foolishly thought it would be a two-minute gift to a friend that turned into a feature film.”[47]

The cinematography takes the intimate approach of documentary film while tracking Angelle’s experience of waiting and enduring the side effects of a natural labor. The logic of the film moves to and from Angelle’s intrapartum experience and the Bayou forests. At the start of the film, Adam’s camera uses a static long shot to establish Angelle and her pregnant figure, centering her dancing under a green covered canopy of mature living oaks. While she dances, she moves with a primal and animal physicality that manifests the physical reality of carrying a child in the days leading up to giving birth. Sounds of insects and bristled pines juxtapose the beeps of monitors tracking her and her baby’s heartbeats. In the forest, Adam’s camera begins to move, complementing Angelle’s improvisation and revealing her perspiring body duetting with her unborn baby inside her energetic and epidermal kinesphere. Through the obstruction of trees and foliage, Adam seeks to kinesthetically relate to Angelle’s somatic improvisation, tracking her spine with every flexion and extension. I witness her tap into a realm of the feminine only a woman in labor could share, but my body’s response reveals Angelle’s proximity and engagement with Adam’s camera, and I am brought close enough that I imagine the humidity that dampens her hair, softens her joints and constricts her breath. Their collaboration reveals the resilience of the body and its ability to manifest the psychological and physical work of pregnancy. Eventually, the film cuts back to the hospital and her partner’s therapeutic touch supports Angelle’s endurance through the suspense of her first pregnancy. In the end, Adam’s closeups of the infant’s birth both reflect the raw human experience that I witnessed earlier in Angelle’s dancing, and his role as witness is palpable through his posture and control of the camera throughout these moments of buildup.

Adam co-creates from the perspective of camera operation and adapts the choreography to the screen with his own movement sensibilities. His film techniques are designed to evoke a kinesthetic response in the spectator’s body, and I can feel my brain making sense of what my body feels to elicit the experience of moving from a primal state of being. In the end, Adam’s closeups of Angelle’s performance reflect the raw human experience of her return to a primal state of connection with the earth and her body. I chose to interview him about this work because their co-creation is palpable in Adam’s role as a witness through the emotionality of his posture, breath and control of the camera.

I suspect their artistic relationship allowed Adam to film permissively in this documentary-style approach. His camera movement and editing choices demonstrate support and care towards Angelle’s vulnerability and artistry in the

film. In the hours leading up to a life-risking procedure, her humanity to share the rawness of her primal movement is an offering so profound that I have not seen work of this kind before. Her collaboration with Adam speaks volumes about the level of connectivity shared between her and Adam's kinesthetic exchange and demonstrates artmaking that can transpire when connection and vulnerability become the shared language of a screendance.

Kinesthetic Exchanges With Documentary-Style Camera Techniques

Babette DeLafayette Pendleton creates multidisciplinary work as an artist, choreographer, director, curator-producer, and researcher. At the core of Babette's artwork, emphasis is placed on the liveness of the materials available, the interactions between land, and body - human or animal, and the exploration of solastalgia, the distress caused by environmental changes. Her projects, often shown in chapters, build on one another becoming roving physical collages that are visual narratives involving performance, sculpture, photo, and video.[48]

In my interview with Babette, the subject of kinesthetic exchange between cinematographer and performer extended to her role as director relative to that of the camera person. For *Swimming in Air While Rooted in Water*, Babette's approach to this documentary-style film adopts the ideas of witness to allow the bodies to reveal events of real life as they unfold in relationship to the site. During Babette's collaboration with cinematographer Rodrigo Valenzuela, she describes a way of working that allowed her as the director to be in duet with his control of the camera. For this film, she knew the dance so well that she was, "constantly choreographing the movement of the cinematographer. . . able to anticipate and provide cues as to how [she] wanted the footage to be seen and captured."[49] In essence she moved in concert with Valenzuela, understanding the importance of following his instincts about composition and light passing through his camera lens.

Babette goes on to explain as part of her process, she was interested in exploring a documentary style of filming and then subverting it slightly through the editing process. Part of what is considered to be crucial to documentary filmmaking is "to get familiar with the face [or body] and the environment," to match up their vibes that you can compose and organize through the framing elements like leading lines, the line of thirds, headspace, leading space, etc.[50] Kris Truini, a documentary filmmaker specifies that with regards to camera movement, "it becomes a predicting game of matching what the subject might say [or do] and how that might fit into the story."[51] Even though he isn't talking about dance, the communication of the body can be applied to capturing the dancing subject. He details the benefit to starting the shot with a wider focal length to give the viewer more information to feel comfortable gradually acclimating to the scene, "to place the subjects and to give an understanding of their environment."[52] Babette describes that, "we did things where the movements lasted long enough so we

could start rolling from further away and then approach and come closer to the [dancers].”[53] This method of approaching the dancers from a distance created this feeling of stepping into a world already in motion, where the viewer arrives as a voyeur to witness the relationships building between the dancers and the site. Valenzuela eventually changed focal lengths to get a tighter shot, allowing the camera to witness the intimacies of the movement on the black sand beaches of Washington’s coast. I can sense the fatigue of their bodies’ as they are scraped by the flesh of their partner’s seat on their shoulders. This idea of tightening the frame is not only from the work of the lens, but also from the proximity of the cinematographer’s body to the subject. It is considered to be an effective way to allow the viewer to feel the emotional impacts of the subject, as the scene “becomes more intimate.”[54]

When I asked Babette about how she approaches choreography from the perspective of the camera, she revealed that for this particular project

> “the filming for me [was] just filming, and I [wasn’t] interested in choreographing at that moment. That moment, I am capturing what is happening for real. I am not distorting the true effort of what these [dancers] are doing. Or faking it like that thing of filming it from one angle for five seconds, and we’re going to stop, then we’re going to film from this other angle for five seconds. No, for me I wanted to capture what is really happening, but then in the editing I want to choreograph that.”[55]

This informed her choice-making to collect raw footage of the dancers with a lot of breathing room before and after perceived beginnings and endings so that she could make choreographic choices in the editing room.

Although some artists are more inclined to observe the cinematographer work while the camera is rolling, Babette’s approach involved choreographing the movement of the cinematographer from an established place of trust between them. Their working relationship allowed them to achieve her vision with his expertise. Their relationship of director and cinematographer functioned in such a way that their kinesthetic exchange was defined by Babette’s directions for his movement to be an extension of her choreographic instructions. For them this created an opportunity for teaching movement sensibilities to the cinematographer that translated her vision into the making of this film. In exchange, she was able to learn the tricks of the trade from his expertise in shooting the camera.

Kinesthetic Exchanges With Light And Personal Histories

Dayna Hanson is a Seattle-based artist, dance filmmaker, accomplished writer, director, choreographer and educator. [56] Dayna performed and produced *Measure*,

a short film she directed with Gaelen Hanson, which has been considered a seminal work in screendance for its crisp diegetic sound and the measured rhythms of soft-shoe unison between her and performer, John Dixon.[57] During our interview, we discussed her film A *Moving Portrait of Me and My Dad*, which touches on a unique collaboration with her father, Vern, aging with Alzheimer's Disease and cinematographer and friend, Benjamin Kasulke.[58] This portion of the interview reveals the outcome of kinesthetic exchanges that came from deeply personal, artistic and familial relationships.[59]

This film began with her father's practice of Tai Chi, and for many years Vern tried to teach it to her. She admits to "never taking him up on the offer," but she in turn invited him to perform in one of her films.[60] At the early stage of his disease, Tai Chi was one of the things he could still do well. During the film's creative process, Dayna realized that she was unable to teach him movement, and instead, she says, "He did an interpretation of visual images that [she] gave him, with which he moved with serenity and equanimity."[61] His movement juxtaposed her percussive staccato and sharp intensity, restlessly appearing and disappearing in and out of the frame. This is an example of creating space for your partner to access their strengths in a collaboration. A redirection of her choreographic plans, he could instead visualize images to track his body's memory of the physical practice of Tai Chi. She recalls him smoothing the air with his softening impact, moving with her in a loop of shared connection of unison gestures. As personal as the film was to her, this sharing of art between father and daughter exemplifies the type of intimacy that collaboration can inspire in art-making. She says,

> When someone is in early stages of illness, and you haven't even developed a language for processing or discussing it as a family, I think one coping mechanism is to imagine that they will live a very long time and that the disease will progress slowly and somehow won't be so bad. Or even that the diagnosis isn't certain and that the person won't die. *A Moving Portrait of Me and My Dad* captures Vern in a clear, authentic, exquisite state—and it also captures my desire to honor and evoke and crystallize our relationship, maybe before the disease began to overtly diminish him.[62]

The personal nature of this work also feels evident in the interaction between light, sound, and camera operation. The music has a driving pulse that is unsettling yet intimate. The electric guitar complements the edges of Vern's fluid and meditative movement against the physically urgent and rhythmic pulse that Dayna signifies as a race-against-time.

Cinematographer and Director of Photography, Benjamin Kasulke discusses his process with Dayna and Vern as "[making] plans to shoot this in one week. The

next weekend, we showed up early in the morning, and we were done in a few hours."[63] Prior to meeting Dayna, he says,

> I never thought I would work with choreographers. I didn't know anything about dance; I don't even know how to classify modern dance. I just knew that I met this person that was making stuff, and we made each other laugh a lot. And she seemed to embrace the ideas I had about how the camera might interact with her movement, and how we could work together to draw the audience's attention, or to just showcase the movement with a still frame as needed and let things play out.[64]

Benjamin's filmic plan of action with Dayna began pragmatically with room for play and exploration. He mentions that when filming set choreography, he often begins filming screendances by setting up a shot, recording everything from head to toe to construct a timecode of choreographic events. This serves as a "script with bookmarks."[65] As common practice as this may seem, its advantages create space for conversation with his collaborators around isolating specific events for a more three-dimensional illustration of each moment. He says,

> There'll be a movement with a hand at two minutes and thirteen seconds, and we need to figure out how that gets shown to the audience. What does that do, and what was the meaning of that? With film, there's ways to break that down. I can't imagine shooting this way without thinking of the camera like a dancer as well.[66]

Benjamin also discusses interacting with the light as a fourth choreographic element of the film. He shares that when he arrived for the day of shooting, he knew he'd be using a primitive video camera, " … and knowing that this was a film about Dayna and Vern's relationship, [he] knew that the camera looked good if [he] put lights really far away, pointing, right down the barrel, as in right into the lens."[67] He says this approach creates two scenarios, "It gives a good kinetic energy when the camera lines up Vern and Dayna with a light deep in the background. And you get a sense of not only the choregraphed movement, but there's the extra bonus of the light as part of the choreography."[68] By embracing the shallow focus from the darkness in the theater, Benjamin incorporated cinematic flairs as a choreographic element, suggesting that,

> The flickering may help force an edit if you need to get out of something, elapse time or add an ellipsis and stretch things out. You can use the flares as cut points in a way that you might not be able to do in a narrative scene where two characters are

> sitting stationary at a dinner table and you're editing around reactions, natural pauses or blinks.[69]

As the camera movement duets with the light sources, Dayna is framed catching up to the reality of her father's condition. It is as if he's communicating words of comfort and assurance about their togetherness as collaborators and father and daughter. At the end of the film, Dayna and Vern join together in a unison phrase of circular hand gestures that create spheres around their bodies. This image feels symbolic of their connection, and as the camera journeys away and tilts upward, we see them united by a bond that we imagine will last them beyond this realm of borrowed time.

In terms of the film's list of shots, the camera cuts between a static establishing long shot where we see both Vern and Dayna dancing in the wings of a theater, a site for Vern to cross over into Dayna's the realm of expertise as a performer. Closeups with the camera are handheld, evoking uncertainty about time and what tomorrow will bring. When the camera cuts between a series of extreme closeups and medium shots, we follow aspects of Dayna's body that illustrate her wariness in the rhythms of her gestures. Dayna's dancing goes in and out of her own repetitive and percussive phrase work adjacent to her father's slow-moving gestures. The tension between their movement intensifies from Vern's perspective, revealing Dayna through the camera's over-the-shoulder angles paired with the intentional lens flares from the Fresnel lanterns hanging above them.

In the end, the strength of this work lies in Dayna and Vern's intentions to move with Benjamin from a place of shared sensitivity about the weight of Vern's diagnosis. Their kinesthetic exchange reveals all sides of the performers with a gentle and sensitive gaze. Benjamin's camera movement invites me to watch Dayna and her father fixed in the distance, framing the theater space in a way that feels balanced and rich with depth as a metaphor for their relationship. In and around Dayna's gestures, twists of her spine and the sounds of her percussive foot patterns, Benjamin also directs my eyes to Vern's steadiness in the soft bokeh of the frame. The three dimensionality of their movement is revealed by the camera's steady pans, different angles and focal lengths that feels supportive like a third dancer in the space. The camera's directions also feel choreographed to the extent that I imagine Benjamin designing a figure-eight around Dayna and Vern's dancing. Through a kinesthetic exchange, Benjamin's movement narrates the emotionality of Vern's predicament through the undercurves of his steps with soft arrivals and easy departures. Details of Vern's hands carve through space as we catch Dayna running in and out of the frame to pull us into a new thought, taking in Vern's gentle response.

This collaboration resulted in a work that is not only visually compelling both cinematically and kinesthetically, but it reveals something recognizably sacred about what took place that day of filming. The level of intimacy captured by Benjamin's expertise revealed Dayna's aesthetic for authentically raw and vulnerable humanism, as well as Vern's essence as performer and father. This film would serve as a foundational jumping off point for a piece of live performance titled, *We Never Like Talking About the End* that Dayna premiered the following year in 2006. The live work contained a section where Vern enters the space and performs a solo based in his expertise of Tai Chi. He sat on stage, observed the cast and then exited as the rest of the dancers stood still, swinging their arms in circles. Dayna refers to this moment as an important "image" that lives on in her memory. Vern's kinesthesia came back to her in the wake of his death, and she states, "I became aware that I had created a precious, extremely helpful image of him that I could refer to later in my grief over his passing."[70]

This reference that Dayna made about "that image" of Vern stayed with her, and the seeds of this live performance began in the making of *A Moving Portrait of Me and My Dad.* This film would come to represent a kinesthetic exchange between Benjamin, Vern and Dayna that would become a spring board for future collaborations and continued advancement in their respective careers in cinema and screendance. This film not only speaks to the possibility of collaboration between cinematographer and performers, but reveals the outcome of a kinesthetic exchange that generated a work of art from a shared place of connection and personal histories.

Conclusion

Screendance incorporates choreography from both digital editing and the kinesthetic exchanges between camera operators and dancers with a kinesthetically collaborative approach that strengthens interpersonal and creative relationships. The joining of dance and film brings artists of different mediums together, and the magnetics of a screendance's multidisciplinary nature pull us towards the intersection of world-building and human connection. Problem-solving and troubleshooting ideas between the camera and dancer enable collaboration in the presence of our perceived differences. Camera operator and dancer can nurture the seeds of a collaboration with a kinesthetic exchange that merges one another's movement histories and artistic differences into a helix of complexity and possibility.

The evidence that I have presented suggests that kinesthetic exchanges during the filming process may be translated into kinesthetic empathy for viewers, even if the way viewers respond is different depending on their experience, such as a woman who has given birth will respond differently to Adam Sekuler's film *36 hours* than me. Examining my positionality, not only reflects my own unconscious biases, but reveals the nuances of intellectual, emotional and kinesthetic

responses from people's histories, politics and cultural identities. In this way, screendance is a technology that brings us closer to understanding and valuing one another's differences when we examine it through the lens of self-reflection.

Screendance also teaches us that collaboration depends on trusting one another's exploration of knowns and unknowns that involves calculated risk-taking. Together, film and dance share a choreographic language inflected with breath and a flow of beginnings and endings that make the two-dimensional frame simulate a three-dimensional viewing experience of the film. One can integrate the mind and body to move with active attention and grounded sensitivity, supporting the other person's idiosyncrasies and creative spontaneity. With dexterity for listening and feeling each other's movements, both camera operator and dancer can connect and attentively gauge one another's rate of motion to dialogue with creative impulses. This kinesthetic conversation builds a heightened sense of liveness that controls the gears of adaptability in response to what is unpredictable.

Admittedly, I initially thought that, for me, film would be a temporary replacement for live performance, but what I found was a rich creative path for dance-making in a new medium that has all the ingredients of community-building and skill acquisition. It awakens my desires to express, connect and feel communion with others that I missed in 2020 and 2021. In the end, I've acknowledged that film has an artistic expression of its own right that appeals to my desires to collaborate kinesthetically with other artists.

Biography

Alexander Petit Olivieri is an Assistant Professor of Dance at the University of Central Oklahoma. Alexander holds an MFA from the University of Washington in Dance and a BA from Boston College in Theatre Arts & Philosophy. He teaches contemporary dance technique, contemporary dance history, creative dance-making, and screendance. His research interests include pedagogy, screendance, site and place, and modes of collaboration in creative processes. Alexander is also an active contemporary dance choreographer, video artist, and performer in the United States.
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2 Roel Seeber is a performer with the Oakland, California – based Vertical Dance Company, Bandaloop.

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21 Otake, *Envisioning Dance*, 82
22 Ibid, 84
23 Glenn, 69
24 Mitchell Rose, Zoom Interview with Author
25 ibid
26 Dayna Hanson, Zoom Interview with Author
27 ibid
28 Marlene Millar, Zoom Interview with Author
29 Andy Abrahams Wilson, 233-234
30 Andy Abrahams Wilson, 234
31 Corrie Befort: As a dance artist working between choreography, visual and textile design, Corrie translates sensation-based ideas into performances, objects, sets, films and scores. Her award-winning films, performances and sets have been presented and commissioned in the United States, Japan and Belgium. She is also a teacher and advocate of inclusive dance practices, and she works with Dance for Parkinson’s programs in Seattle and Anacortes, Seattle’s Path with Art that supports people recovering from homelessness, addiction and trauma, Seattle Festival of Dance and Improvisation, *Start Where you Are,* Velocity Autism Movement Therapy and Fidalgo Island Elementary School District in Anacortes, Washington.
32 Corrie Befort, Zoom Interview with Author
33 ibid
34 ibid
35 ibid
36 ibid
37 ibid
38 Margarita Bali has co-directed with Susana Tambutti, the Argentine contemporary dance company NUCLEODANZA for twenty-five years, touring her choreographic work in over 100 venues in Europe, North and South America, India, Korea and Australia. She also concentrates her interests in the production of multimedia and interactive works, site-

specific architectural video performances and sculptural video installations for museums, galleries, and alternative performance spaces.

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40 Margarita Bali, Zoom Interview with Author

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42 Margarita Bali, Zoom Interview with Author

43 Screening in forums and film festivals throughout the US and internationally, Adam Sekuler's many alternative films strike a delicate balance between stylization and naturalism, creating a poetic and lyrical form of visual storytelling. He has produced short works for Barry Jenkins, Lisandro Alonso, Josh and Benny Safdie, Valerie Massadian, Amie Siegel, and Joe Swanberg. Recently, he edited Robinson Devor's feature length documentary *Pow Wow*, which premiered at Locarno Film Festival. He holds an MFA in Studio Arts from the University of Colorado, Boulder, he is Founder and Programmer of Radar: Exchanges in Dance Film Frequencies, Associate Director of Zeitgeist Multi-disciplinary Arts Center, and he was Program Director for Northwest Film Forum (Seattle) for 8 years. His work has screened at International Film Festival Rotterdam, Film Society of Lincoln Center, Anthology Film Archives, Walker Art Center, Seattle Art Museum, Northwest Filmmakers Festival, Museum of the Moving Image, and dozens of other venues around the globe.

44 Adam Sekuler, Zoom Interview with Author

45 ibid

46 Adam Sekuler, dir. *36 Hours*, 2019. https://vimeo.com/ondemand/36hours/290503209

47 Adam Sekuler, Zoom Interview with Author

48 Babette is also the director of Yellow Fish, a durational performance art festival which aims to bring awareness to the significance and study of time through cultural practices and artistic mediums, while facilitating community involvement in historical and contemporary thought surrounding Durational Performance. Babette holds a BFA in Dance from Cornish College of the Arts, and an MFA in Curatorial Practice from Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) with a minor in Critical Theory.

49 Babette DeLafayette Pendleton, dir. *Swimming in Air While Rooted in Water*, 2017. https://vimeo.com/249592589

50 Truini, https://youtu.be/smE69BTB7Mc

51 Babette DeLafayette Pendleton, Zoom Interview with Author

52 ibid

53 ibid

54 Truini, https://youtu.be/smE69BTB7Mc

55 Babette DeLafayette Pendleton, Zoom Interview with Author

56 Dayna is an award-winning filmmaker whose dance films have screened at festivals internationally, including Los Angeles international Short Film Festival, Dance Camera Istanbul, and Festival Internacional de Videodanza de Buenos Aires. She is a 2006 Guggenheim Fellow, a 2017 MacDowell Colony Fellow, a recipient of the 2010 United States Artists Foundation Oliver Fellowship in Dance and a 2012 Artist Trust Arts Innovator Award. Dayna wrote, choreographed and directed an episode of HBO's *Room 104* —"Voyeurs," starring Sarah Hay and Dendrie Taylor—that was hailed as one of the top television episodes of 2017 by multiple outlets, including *The New York Times* and *Vox*.

57 Dayna Hanson, *Measure*, 2009, https://vimeo.com/85267019

58 Benjamin Kasulke became a negative films cutter with The Image Treasury, Seattle, Washington from 1999-2005. His shooting career began when he started working extensively with the dance film community in the Pacific Northwest and particularly with the Seattle based performance group '33 Fainting Spells'. While employed as the staff cinematographer for the Seattle based Film Company, he began running collaborations with award winning filmmakers Guy Maddin and Lynn Shelton. In 2011, he was invited by the Sundance Institute to join the Feature Film Director's Lab as a doph. He has received awares such as Slamdance FF 'KODAK Vision Award for Best Cinematography' [2006] & Toruń FF [Poland] Honorable Mention 'Best Cinematography' [2006] for '*We Go Way Back*'; The Seattle Stranger 'Genius Award in Film' shortlist [2007]; Independent Spirit Award nom 'Best Cinematography' [2012] for '*The Off Hours*'; Genius Award Film [by the Seattle weekly newspaper '*The Stranger*'] [2013].

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60 Dayna Hanson, Zoom Interview with Author

61 ibid

62 Dayna Hanson, Written Correspondence with Author

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70 Dayna Hanson, Written Correspondence with Author

Lithium dancing (hidden in plain sight)

Simon Ellis

Abstract

In this article I explore screendance's affair with social media, and the logics of production and consumption endemic to dancing for and with smartphones. I use an incidental encounter with two people making a dance video to try and make sense of the ways in which screendance practices and practitioners are being changed by social media technologies. The writing is built on the work of Harmony Bench, Shoshana Zuboff, Alan Jacobs, Zygmunt Bauman, Neil Postman, Yuk Hui and Annie Pfingst and Helen Poynor. I use their scholarship and art to construct an experimental and non-linear seven-part narrative about how screendance can become a set of practices that visibly contradict the extractive datafication of humans in motion.

Part 1—*Two young people and their camera*—describes the encounter with two people filming their dancing, and serves as the platform on which this writing is based. In part 2—*An assumption about what happened next*—I introduce the theme of hiding that runs throughout the article, and make a case for my assumption that these two people were making their screendance for social media. Part 3—*Algorithmic choreography*—introduces the relationship between choreography in screendance and social media algorithms. Part 4—*Being in (the) economic common*—explores the digital commons as outlined by Bench, and its relationship to visibility, technology and profit-making. Part 5—*Myth and the right to a future tense*—discusses Jacobs and Zuboff and how they both deploy *hiding* to consider a future that transcends technocratic rationalism. In part 6—*Hidden in the future* I zip forward far into the future and remember a 2016 screendance work by Annie Pfingst and Helen Poynor. I do this to as a strategy to imagine a non-technocratic world. Finally, part 7—*To distill production from consumption*—describes how, through social media, we in screendance have acquired a logic of consumption disguised or hidden as a mode of production.

Keywords: social media, digital commons, public commons, technology, myth, algorithms

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> the outside world, the non-digital world, is merely a theatrical space in which one stages and records content for the much more real, much more vital digital space.
> – Bo Burnham[1]

> Here indeed, the whole mechanism of the operation is invisible to the viewer: the deepest darkness reigns: suddenly, a ghost appears, far, far away at first, appearing as a point of light to the audience. But it soon grows, becomes bigger and bigger and seems to approach slowly at first, to then rush towards the spectators: the illusion is total.
> – Victor de Moléon (1836)[2]

1. Two young people and their camera

In which I describe an actual event that prompted this thinking and writing.

I am out for a walk during my one hour of permitted outdoor exercise. It is March 2021 and we are nearing the end of the strictest part of the UK's second national lockdown.

They are two young people, perhaps 15 years old, playing together in a park, or what is called a common. The area is not nature as such but it is also definitely not the city.

I am walking past them, wary of watching or intruding, but also captivated by their play. They are dancing for each other. Or rather, one of them is dancing for the other who is recording the dancing on a smartphone held in portrait mode. The camera and the dancer are close to each other; it is a close-up. They take turns: they dance, record, watch, point at the screen, and laugh.

The dancing is mostly movement in the head and neck; rolling the head side to side around the frontal axis. They more or less do the same short sequence every time, as if they are trying to perfect the performance of the moves, or the recording of the performances. This trio of two young people and a smartphone are deep in their own world. Their game seems to be on repeat. The movement has a quality of being able to be reversed, repeated, or played back. Each dance is exquisitely brief, and not linear or forward seeking. It is as if there is a visual glitch in their matrix.

By this stage I am some way past where it is they are dancing. It has been no more than three minutes since I first saw them.

2. An assumption about what happened next

In which I introduce the central conceit (or assumption) of this article, and use these two young people to stand-in for screendancing on social media.

In Volume 11 of IJSD—*Expanded Screendance*—Katrina McPherson noted Douglas Rosenberg's description of screendance as "the most invasive of all arts species" that "has been 'hiding in plain site' since well before there was a critical mass of interest in the form, even before it was named as such."[3] Then, Volume 12 of IJSD —*This is where we dance now: COVID-19 and the new and next in dance onscreen* —acknowledged and celebrated screendance's undeniable visibility as people danced and watched dancing through screens during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic lockdowns. In that same issue, Elena Benthaus described feeling "wary"[4] that screendance was somehow hidden before the virus acted as a great revealer, and outlined how dance fads have long been "circulated by Hollywood musicals and dance films" and TV shows.[5]

These descriptions of the practices of screendance being variously hidden, revealed, circulated, and invasive are telling in how those of us interested in screendance narrate or construct its history and practices. Something will always be hiding (in plain sight) if there isn't yet a name for it, or indeed the desire to do that naming. When we name or attach a label to anything we render it visible.

This writing is not about the kind of hiding that speaks of screendance's uncertainty about itself and desire for recognition. Instead, it is an attempt to understand what I could not see when I happened across those two young people making dances for their smartphone, and how mechanisms and narratives of *hiding* might matter to those of us who create screendances.

These two young people were dancing in plain sight while recording their movement, but it's not possible to know with any certainty *why* they were recording their dancing. The assumption on which this writing rests is that what I saw that day was not the full story; that what they did next or soon after was to post the *best version* of their screendance performances *on social*. I think this assumption is plausible and warranted because, as Harmony Bench suggests, it is "difficult if not impossible to separate dance in public from social media in an era when the latter are determining forces of contemporary social life and engagement."[6]

My assumption effectively renders these two young people as representations or proxies; they stand in for all humans recording their dancing and uploading it to social media, not solely teenagers doing the same thing. People dance, record their dancing, and upload those recordings to social media; and we do all of these things routinely. Volume 12 of IJSD is testimony to the fact that social media

technologies are cultural levers and patterns deeply embedded in screendance practices.[7]

I am agnostic towards social media platforms, but given how much dancing is happening on TikTok[8] I will assume that this was their social media weapon of choice.

3. Algorithmic choreography

In which I question who is doing the choreography and just how little social media needs to know in order to know us.

> embedded in every tool is an ideological bias, a predisposition to construct the world as one thing rather than another, to value one thing over another, to amplify one sense or skill or attitude more loudly than another.
> – Neil Postman[9]

In *TikTok and Short-Form Screendance Before and After Covid* the internet anthropologist Crystal Abidin describes how TikTok shapes you "to create content in specific ways," and is "squishing you into a template and teaching you how to perform creativity within a box."[10] If these two people on the common during lockdown—or anyone for that matter—set out to make algorithmically inspired screendance it would likely look like the dancing they were doing, and be shot with the smartphone they were using. I saw their movement-performances-on-repeat without the need to *scroll* or *refresh*, and I can easily imagine their video likenesses on a small screen: the framing, dancing, music, and virtual stickers, and the desire to share and be seen.

I suspect though that they did not set out to make a screendance the way IJSD readers might understand an *intention* to make a screendance. Rather, the screendance was more made *on* them, and without them being aware of—nor probably caring about—the coercion. Who is doing the choreography here? These are ways of moving shaped by a machine that doesn't see how these young people are dancing, it doesn't need to. It is not an all-seeing machine of an invisible state. Rather, it is a commercial machine that has "blown by the panopticon"[11] There is no *outside* because it is not an institutional building, and there is "no zone of life that is not being infiltrated."[12] These two dancing people were being directed by an invasive all-seeing sightless machine that carries the "colonizing forces of algorithmic logic."[13]

But it is not so dystopic is it? After all, this machine was programmed by humans. The algorithms—opinions "formalized in code"[14]—were created by *someone*, probably more than one person: a cloud of developers-as-choreographers;

unseen, hidden. American author/blogger Seth Godin writes, “The folks with the power are the anonymous engineers, tweaking algorithms without clear awareness of what the impact might be.”[15] It is improbable that those software developers could ever imagine how their code in Kotlin, Java, Swift or Objective C would prescribe the way these two people were dancing.

At the same time, I do not want to overestimate the sophistication of their mathematics; very few data points are required for us to reveal ourselves through social media. The Wall Street Journal has found that although shares, likes, follows and the things you watch play a role in determining one’s FYP (For You Page) on TikTok, the platform needs only one piece of data to “figure you out”: “how long you linger over a piece of content.”[16] We will always linger over the things that attract our attention, whether we are in public or whatever remains of the private.

4. Being in (the) economic common

In which I think through dancing in common (spaces), the recursive power of Postman’s technopoly, and how any discussion of technology is a discussion about economics.

In 2000, the Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman described a liquid-modern society in which the balance has tilted from the societal improvement for the common good and heavily “towards the self-assertion of the individual.”[17] In liquid modernity, the public sphere has become one of the “many spoils of deregulation, privatization, individualization, of the conquest and annexation of the public by the private.”[18]

These two young people were in a public sphere that in the UK is called a common. Such spaces are owned privately, or by local councils or the National Trust. They have simple and reasonably relaxed rules, and are protected, cared for, and open. They are one of few areas in the UK not overwhelmed by CCTV. Yet within this particular public space on that day in March 2021, the public dances performed by these two people were annexed by privately owned algorithms. This public-private paradox of the commons is a direct part of what social psychologist Shoshana Zuboff calls surveillance capitalism, that deploys “extractive operations in which our personal experiences are scraped and packaged as the means to others’ ends.”[19] The purpose of these hidden extractive operations is to predict our future behaviors and to sell those predictions to advertisers. This mostly hidden economy functions because data and advertising now rule the world’s economy.[20]

In *Perpetual Motion: Dance, Digital Cultures, and the Common* (2020) Harmony Bench describes and analyzes the role of digital technologies in the global proliferation and circulation of dances. She writes that “regardless of whether gestures should circulate freely across moving bodies, they most certainly do.”[21]

Bench uses Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's idea of the common as being more than simply a shared resource (like in the shared *common* outdoor spaces here in the UK). Instead, Hardt and Negri's common is produced socially and is essential for social interaction and ongoing production. Bench writes how "ideas, customs, and practices that are collectively generated and make it possible to live together"[22] are examples of Hardt and Negri's *artificial* common (as distinct from the *natural* commons of limited resources).

In the book, Bench expresses a delicate ambivalence in describing the digital commons in dance. She articulates the ideologies and conflicts at play in how dance snowballs and circulates, while acknowledging that individuals generate belonging and community through digital circulations of movement. These circulations of gestures are, according to Bench, "assertions of dance as common,"[23] and it is digital contexts—or more precisely "technologically enabled decontextualization"[24]—that generate the conditions for dancers to create a movement culture in common and to feel as if they belong. Bench is also clear that she does not suggest this movement culture in common is an "an antidote to cultural appropriation or capitalist expropriation."[25]

There are two words Bench uses—and that I have quoted above—that interest me. The first is *assertions*, and the second is *decontextualization*. They interest me because to decontextualise gestures and movements from *everything* privileges and "repackages ideologies of freedom and universal access,"[26] and creates the conditions to *assert* being in common. That is, technologies of decontextualization generate the necessary distance, invisibility, and absence to make possible the production, reproduction, and circulation of gestures that in turn serve the pursuit of belonging (and being seen to belong) in common.

I wonder though what those two young people in the common were really asserting. Even while (hypothetically) distributing and circulating their public dancing, these two young people were certainly not creating content for some innocent digital commons. I worry that to call this space in the cloud a *common*—particularly given the word's idiomatic meaning—implicitly trivializes or glosses over the powerful technocratic mechanisms at play, including in some simple dancing between two young people and their smartphone.

For all that Bench so beautifully and diplomatically articulates, my sense is that she leans towards the circulation of dancing through the digital commons as being a good thing for dance.[27] The implication is that the circulation and proliferation of humans in motion in the digital common creates positive externalities; that is, by definition, benefits to the public good not mediated through the market. But what of negative externalities? What kind of effluent is created by our digital dancing commons and who eventually pays for it, and when, and how? Even given the implicit or explicit value of the circulation and proliferation of gestures in the

digital common, it is worth remembering that all technologies—including those of social media—are developments "largely oriented economically to profit-making"[28] and that "technology was, is, and always will be an expression of the economic objectives that direct it into action."[29] In other words, when we dance with technologies, we dance with profit-making, and perhaps now we are only ever dancing with technologies.

In 1993, the technology skeptic Neil Postman coined a word, technopoly, which he describes as "the submission of all forms of cultural life to the sovereignty of technique and technology."[30] Postman describes technopoly as totalitarian technocracy because it "eliminates alternatives to itself"[31] by rendering them invisible. Technopoly is a way of culture and thinking in which no matter the question, the answer is technology. Yet, when there is only one answer, the nature of the questions we ask inevitably changes and we create loops of recursion that are both frightening and fascinating.[32]

5. Myth and the right to a future tense

In which I describe Alan Jacobs' understanding of the value of myth in the technopoly and the understandable temptation to go into hiding.

In 2019, the humanities scholar Alan Jacobs wrote an essay called *After Technopoly* that, like much of his thinking, calls attention to the power and value of myth making. Jacobs describes how Postman's technopoly "arises from the technological core of society but produces people who are driven and formed by the mythical core."[33] Jacobs' thinking about the mythical core is based on the work of the Polish philosopher Leszek Kołakowski. The mythical core represents those of us "who practice moral life by habits of affection, not by rules."[34] For Kołakowski, the mythical core of culture is those experiences that are not able to be manipulated because they are "prior to our instrumental reasoning about our environment."[35] In other words, the mythical core—a way of experiencing "nonempirical unconditioned reality"[36]—is unable to be pressed into the logic of technology no matter our rational capacities. For Jacobs, the mythical core is a way out of the recursive loop of the technopoly.

This interplay between rationalism and myth is a key aspect of Jacobs' ongoing thinking. He argues that technocratic rationalism cannot be avoided but rather transcended: "that there is something better, not in opposition to it, but on the other side of it. Something that will in time emerge."[37] This all sounds so easy, perhaps even quaint, but Jacobs also warns that the place for transcending technopoly will be a *hidden place* because if "transnational technopoly can hunt you down and root you out, it will; and it probably can."[38]
In *Surveillance Capitalism* Shoshana Zuboff also talks about hiding, and her thinking is similarly bleak when it comes to the future. She writes of the terrible danger that we become accustomed to either life without privacy or the necessity

to hide from being seen. She suggests that both alternatives—total transparency or hiding underground—"rob us of the life-sustaining inwardness, born in sanctuary, that finally distinguishes us from the machines."[39] Her perspective is that surveillance capitalism has compromised our right to the future tense. This is the right to make moral decisions free from forces that modify and exploit our behavior, and that function beyond our awareness.

6. Hidden in the future

In which I zoom out far into the future to remember a screendance and consider what it might mean for those of us here in the present who make screendances.

> [The Robber Barons'] greatest achievement was in convincing their countrymen that the future need have no connection to the past.
> – Neil Postman[40]

> On a long enough timeline, everything becomes obsolete.
> – Joshua Millburn and Ryan Nicodemus[41]

The American writer Stewart Brand proposes that there are "six significant levels of pace and size in the working structure of a robust and adaptable civilization."[42] From "fast and attention-getting to slow and powerful"[43] the six levels are: fashion/art, commerce, infrastructure, governance, culture and nature. Brand writes how the role of fashion and art is essentially to be "quick, irrelevant, engaging, self-preoccupied, and cruel"[44] whereas the "vast slow-motion dance"[45] of culture operates through centuries and millennia. Brand suggests that together these distinct and contradictory pace layers provide internal negative feedback that stabilizes and affords the health of civilization.

So now I'm going to attempt to zoom out in time to the pace of *culture* according to Brand's levels. It is a level or place where time as chronos operates akin to Danny Hillis' *10,000-year clock*[46] or *The Clock of the Long Now*.[47]

Those two young people have grown up, lived their lives and are gone. They are probably survived by family, but maybe not. I am long dead. Perhaps the park is still there? It is common land so hopefully it has not been developed; but I am doubtful. There are parts of the teenagers' phones from 2021 that are still on the planet in some form: lithium, copper, gold, lead, zinc, etc; elemental fragments of devices that once afforded some public dancing back in 2021 during the pandemic that is almost forgotten. For the most part these elements are in landfill. Those software companies that wielded algorithms to reach through the smartphone to choreograph or enframe that dancing are long gone too; I can no longer remember their names. They were once so certain and stable;

omnipresent. Their algorithms disappeared with them, and have been replaced by old mathematics rethought and recompiled.

I feel none of the vertigo that American media theorist Douglas Rushkoff suggested I might feel if I were to zoom so far out.[48] But *he* was writing in 2013, so what would he know?

I notice the stillness and slowness, and the absence of sniping chatter. In that stillness I remember seeing a screendance by Annie Pfingst and Helen Poynor called *in Memoriam* that was first screened in 2016.[49] I saw it at the Light Moves Festival of Screendance in 2018; such a long time ago. This is a film that—according to Brand's thinking—is the scale of art operating at the pace of nature.[50] The film is kryptonite to the digital social platforms that people once used. In the film a single figure inhabits densely forested areas through different seasons. I don't remember there being much movement in the body; indeed my key memory is of the tapestry of the terrain, and of the passing of time. But that was no ordinary time that was passing, even under the machinations and co-ordinates of the long now.[51]

in Memoriam is—or is it *was*?—a film that treasures myth and seems to resist and transcend technopoly. It is a film in a *hidden place* in plain sight. It is unable to be rooted out, even as the dancer Helen Poynor is enmeshed in the roots of trees and of nature. It exists through its edit and feel in an *other* time akin to kairos.

Here, as I write, long into the future, some uncountable years after the screening in Limerick, it seems that it is no mere coincidence that the film was shot in an Iron Age fort; an ancient place of protection, a place by which we recognize the slowness of culture, and the creep of nature. A place where others like us sought shelter, protection and safety. It is, after all, worth remembering that the feeling of safety makes it possible for us to "dare to choose the unknown."[52]

in Memoriam is the kind of screendance that recognizes and understands modes of production and presentation, and pursues alternate tastes, pace, and time. It is grounded in making and process yet somehow manages to avoid the feeling that it was designed for consumption. How can that be? What sleight of hand is at play?

Around the same time that *in Memoriam* was being made, the philosopher of technology Yuk Hui[53] wrote an article called *Cosmotechnics as Cosmopolitics*.[54] Cosmotechnics is a strange term that describes the "unification of the cosmos and the moral through technical activities, whether craft-making or art making."[55] It is as if Hui is turning back from Postman's technopoly towards tool-using cultures. In the article, Hui tells the story of a very good butcher called Pao Ding who claims that having an excellent knife is not enough:

> it is more important to understand the Dao in the cow, so that one does not use the blade to cut through the bones and tendons, but rather to pass alongside them in order to enter into the gaps between them.[56]

Hui writes that when the butcher encounters any difficulty, "he slows down the knife and gropes for the right place to move further."[57] This is the Dao (or *way* or *path*), whereas the Qi is the technical/phenomenal object (or "technics"): the knife. I like to think that Annie Pfingst and Helen Poynor's sleight of hand was to recognise the utility of the knife as technic, while being busy with the Dao of making. That is, in *in Memoriam* they unified the cosmos and the moral.

In this future or the next, screendance emerged out of the rubble of "life versus the machine"[58] and humankind's dance with the technological singularity. The singularity—which did not end up happening just in case you were wondering—once described the point at which "ever-more-rapid technological change leads to unpredictable consequences."[59] The technological singularity is the thing that even back in 2017 Hui was calling a pipe dream. At some point in the 21st century screendance simply refused the "homogeneous technological future"[60] that had been presented to humankind as the only option.

7. To distill production from consumption

In which I try to draw these threads together through lenses of awe and ambiguity.

> As much as networked technology has dismantled and distributed power in more egalitarian ways, it has also extended and obscured power, making it less visible and, arguably, harder to resist.
> – Astra Taylor[61]

> What was required of the earth so that I might be able to use this technology? […] Upon what systems, technical or human, does my use of this technology depend? Are these systems just?
> – L. M. Sacasas[62]

I recognize that this writing is a rather curious rollercoaster ride through many sources and many ideas. I worry that what I hope is a strength (traversing broad terrain) will be judged as a weakness. Perhaps some of you are still with me. Perhaps I lost others in making the assumption I did about those two young people doing their lithium dancing in the common.

Certainly, this article is filled with the ambivalence generated by my assumption that what they did next that day in March 2021 was to knowingly *and* unwittingly participate in a complex techno-choreography of extraction. In many respects I felt and continue to feel something akin to *awe*: "the perception of vastness and the struggle to mentally process the experience."[63] Awe is unusual because it mixes emotions that do not normally reside together. In the case of these two people dancing, I experienced beauty and fear. There was beauty in happening across two human beings dancing together through play; the sense of them being close together and in common, and of their obliviousness and disinterest in being seen. I like to pretend that in that brief moment watching their dance-to-be-screened James Carse's idea of the infinite game came to my mind. This is a game predicated on surprise and in which there is no audience, only players.[64] They were making something together, not something to be watched or consumed. Yet I was afraid too. I was afraid of the hidden players and costs—the negative externalities—of that play for their future, and for our future. Perhaps then this writing is an attempt to place that feeling of awe in the context of the work we make and see in the field of screendance.

Perhaps also the writing reflects my desire to convince readers—particularly those of you who make screendances—that in social media (and the dancing that happens on it) we have acquired a logic of consumption disguised or hidden as a mode of production.[65] That there is danger in valorizing the making or creativity of these two young people who are proxies for all of us who make screendances to be consumed:

> And it is in our role as producers, not consumers, that we contribute to the common good and win recognition for doing so.
> – Michael Sandel[66]

I am proposing that we must seek methods of making that distill production from consumption; that our work is to pry apart the discombobulating effects of screendancing to be seen, and to do this in plain sight. I understand screendance to be a small enough field—and collection of practices—to interrogate and resist the logic of production predicated on consumption. We have talked about such resistance for years as a community but as dance has become more and more visible on social media, the temptation is to celebrate these days in the sun, and turn our backs on promises to the future in which we "expand our understanding of responsibility to include how our actions effect people we will never meet."[67]

Western culture's crash zoom to social media since around the introduction of Facebook's Like button in 2009[68] has made the stakes high and ambiguous for screendance: the promise of being transmitted and seen (finally!) at the cost of extractive consumption and the "immediacy of appropriation."[69]

> We need more lithium today, and merely hope to find greater reserves—or a suitable replacement—tomorrow. This revaluation has the effect of shifting the place of the natural order from something intrinsic to our practices to something extrinsic. The whole of nature becomes what economists tellingly call an *externality*.
> – Alan Jacobs[70]

It is simply a coincidence that the extraction of lithium plays a key role in the production of our smartphones that themselves are agents and transmitters of extraction and consumption. Perhaps also it is a coincidence that those two young people dancing with and for their smartphone offered a glimpse (in plain sight) of the thin line between that difficult-to-name thing intrinsic to their playful practice, and the poison of social media's consumptive virality.

Acknowledgments

I acknowledge the people whose work I have cited. I have done this without their permission, and in some instances pulled their work out of the context in which it was first presented. I am grateful for their scholarship and craft, and the influence they've had on my thinking and understanding. Thank you to Harmony Bench for the endnoted clarification in Part 4 of this writing. Thank you also to the journal's peer reviewers for their generosity and care with the work, and to Kyra Norman for her careful copy-editing to prepare the document for publication in IJSD, and for her ongoing stewardship of IJSD.

The entire development of *Lithium dancing (hidden in plain sight)*—every edit, tangent, and syntactical tic—is publicly accessible as part of a GitHub repository at github.com/skellis46/slipbox/commits/master/two%20women%20dancing.md. The working title was *two women dancing*, and the first git commit (i.e. upload to GitHub) was on 7 May 2021. The document was renamed *Lithium dancing* on 27 September 2021 and all remaining edits are visible at github.com/skellis46/slipbox/blame/master/Lithium%20dancing.md.

Biography

Simon Ellis works with practices of choreography, filmmaking and dance. He was born in the Wairarapa in Aotearoa/New Zealand, but now lives in the UK and works at the Centre for Dance Research (C-DaRE) at Coventry University. He grew up in a family where politicised conversations about human dignity, consumerism and even technology were common. These conversations have shaped his values as an artist, and underpin much of what his practice is about, and how it is conducted. He also thinks about the ways humans might value things that are not easily commodified, and likes to imagine a world filled with people who are sensitive to their own bodies, and the bodies of others.

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1 *Inside*.

2 In Chateau and Moure, *Screens*, 49–50.
3 Rosenberg, in McPherson, “Walking in the Light,” 55.
4 Benthaus, “This Is Where We Have Danced for Quite a While A Viewpoint/Reflection on Social Media Dist(d)ancing,” 283.
5 Ibid.; see also Bench, *Perpetual Motion*, 10.
6 *Perpetual Motion*, 65.
7 E.g. Blanco Borelli and Moore, “TikTok, Friendship, and Sipping Tea, or How to Endure a Pandemic”; Benthaus, “This Is Where We Have Danced for Quite a While A Viewpoint/Reflection on Social Media Dist(d)ancing.”
8 E.g. Blanco Borelli and Moore, “TikTok, Friendship, and Sipping Tea, or How to Endure a Pandemic”; Harlig et al., “TikTok and Short-Form Screendance Before and After Covid”; Dexter, “Dance, Dance Revolution.”
9 *Technopoly*, 13.
10 In Harlig et al., “TikTok and Short-Form Screendance Before and After Covid,” 192.
11 Zuboff, in Farrell, “Shoshana Zuboff” n.pag.
12 Zuboff, in ibid. n.pag.
13 Morrison, Nyong’o, and Roach, “Algorithms and Performance,” 10.
14 O’Neil, *Weapons of Math Destruction*, chap. 3: Arms Race, n.pag.
15 Godin, “Is TikTok Powerful?” n.pag.
16 *How TikTok’s Algorithm Figures You Out* n.pag.
17 Bauman, *Liquid Modernity*, 29.
18 Bauman, *Does Ethics Have a Chance in a World of Consumers?*, 28.
19 Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*, chap. 1.
20 Noauthor, “The World’s Most Valuable Resource Is No Longer Oil, but Data.”
21 Bench, *Perpetual Motion*, 160.
22 Ibid., 5.
23 Ibid., 9.
24 Ibid., 160.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid., 8.
27 In a personal communication with Harmony Bench in September of 2021 I asked her if she felt my description or *sense* of her position was accurate. She disagreed and suggested two things: a) that “delicate ambivalence” was more accurate; and b) that if the question were flipped: “Is dance good for social media?” then she would agree with that.
28 Weber, Roth, and Wittich, *Economy and society*, pts. 1, p.67.
29 Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*, chap. 1.V The Puppet Master, Not the Puppet: n.pag.
30 Postman, *Technopoly*, 52.
31 Ibid., 48.
32 Turkle, *The Empathy Diaries*.
33 Jacobs, “After Technopoly,” 4.
34 Ibid.

35 Ibid., 3.
36 Kołakowski, in ibid.
37 Ibid., 13.
38 Ibid.
39 Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*, chap. 17.III Every Unicorn Has a Hunter n.pag.
40 *Technopoly*, 54.
41 *Love People, Use Things* n.pag.
42 Brand, *Clock of the Long Now*, 36.
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid.
45 Ibid., 38.
46 I first read of Hillis' work in Brian Eno's *A Year with Swollen Appendices* (1995), but was reminded of his work (and Stewart Brand's) while reading Douglas Rushkoff's book *Present Shock* (2013). This is to acknowledge their influence on this section of the article.
47 Hillis, "The Millennium Clock."
48 *Present Shock*.
49 *In Memoriam*.
50 Brand, *Clock of the Long Now*.
51 Hillis, "The Millennium Clock."
52 Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being*, 67.
53 Thanks to Joanne "Bob" Whalley for introducing me to Yuk Hui's book *The Question Concerning Technology in China* at around the same time that I stumbled across Alan Jacobs discussing Hui in *From Tech Critique to Ways of Living*.
54 "Cosmotechnics as Cosmopolitics."
55 Ibid., 7.
56 Hui, "Cosmotechnics as Cosmopolitics" n.pag.
57 Ibid. n.pag.
58 Paul Kingsnorth, in Jacobs, "From Tech Critique to Ways of Living," 28.
59 Chalmers, "The Singularity" n.pag.
60 Hui, "Cosmotechnics as Cosmopolitics" n.pag.
61 In Jacobs, "Tending the Digital Commons" n.pag.
62 "The Questions Concerning Technology" n.pag.
63 Kaufman, *Transcend*, chap. 7 Peak Experiences n.pag.
64 Carse, *Finite and Infinite Games*.
65 Bauman, *Liquid Modernity*.
66 *The Tyranny of Merit*, chap. 7 Recognizing Work, n.pag.
67 Jacobs, "Tending the Digital Commons" n.p.
68 Alter, *Irresistible*, chap. 5 Feedback, n.pag.
69 Jacobs, "From Tech Critique to Ways of Living," 30.
70 Ibid.

Book Review: Dancing Women: Choreographing Corporeal Histories of Hindi Cinema by Usha Iyer. Oxford University Press (2020)

Sandhiya Kalyanasundaram

In their new book, *Dancing Women: Choreographing Corporeal Histories of Hindi Cinema (Oxford University Press, 2020)* Usha Iyer, who is Assistant Professor of art and art history at Stanford University, delves into the dances performed by women in Hindi cinema through the lens of cultural history, as well as from the perspective of women performers' agency and mobility. Their in-depth analyses of how these actresses transformed the landscape of performance in post-independence Indian cinema, through virtuosity in dance and new movement vocabularies, as well as the introduction of choreographers, props and costumes, addresses the complex and critical historical underpinnings of cinematic choreography. The book underscores the importance of studying dance and choreography in Indian cinema in both postcolonial and cultural studies. It is also an important work in understanding female agency, politics and identity through the lens of performance.

While several authors have traced the connections between Indian cinema dance and performance traditions that precede it, Usha Iyer draws out the deep resonance between music and dance and the notion of a "multi-bodied choreomusicking body". They argue, "A choreomusicological approach to the Hindi film song- and- dance sequence advances the concept of a "choreomusicking body," composed of a conjoining of the playback singer's voice, the on-screen performers' gestural repertoire, the music director's composition, the choreography team, as well as the bodies of the often- nameless musicians who produce the instrumental soundtrack for the number, among many others" (55). This notion is critically important to the understanding of Indian cinema dance as well as the virtuosity of the artistes and choreographers. Iyer painstakingly re-reads iconic dance sequences, etching the labor of the background dancers, musicians and singers using archival, anecdotal, and visual sources. In doing this, they weave together the threads of the performer's repertoire with the choice of playback singer and the particular musical composition. Absolutely fascinating are the recounting of rehearsals, training, practice, delight, pride and identity of the performers.

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Through the work of several actresses notably Sadhana Bose, Azurie, Vyjayanthimala Bali and Helen Ann Richardson Khan known mononymously as Helen, Iyer documents the stunning onscreen improvisations that result from an amalgamation of classical Indian dance styles like Bharatanatyam and the range of international movement vocabularies that have informed the style of Indian film dance since the 1920s. They also highlight how the dance virtuosity of the lead actress enables the actress to forge the narrative of the film. Through detailed analyses, such as that of the song, "*Bakad bam bam baaje damru*", Iyer reimagines the inter-relationships between music and dance in the study of Indian cinema, centralizing the embodied experience of sound, and emphasizing how aural and visual gestures negotiate discursive meaning and narrative through inherent choreomusical aesthetics. Furthermore, Iyer organizes the choreography into dance styles with detailed descriptions of techniques of hand gestures, body isolations and clearly marks the performance numbers from the production numbers. By doing this level of technical analysis, Iyer clarifies the extraordinary efforts of each female film dancer; their virtuosity and the immense interconnected undercurrent of agency and creative support.

A key area that the book traverses is the "national impetus behind cultural reform" where Usha Iyer masterfully brings out the various conflicting points of view that led to the invention of new dance traditions across India. In the South, they highlight the roles played by Rukmini Devi Arundale and T. Balasarawathi in the history of Bharatanatyam: from temple, to court, to the proscenium stage and film. In the East, they also write about the eclectic blend of dance forms that Rabindranath Tagore invited into Santiniketan. They highlight his efforts to create a new dance style liberated from classical Indian dance narratives, and his critique of the nationalist sexual politics. This spanning of multiple movements across India, that foregrounded dance in redefining a national narrative of culture, and the reframing of the modern Indian feminine is key to understanding how public performance, social respectability and reform were assuaged in film dance.

Functioning as a synthesis of the historical forces leading to the evolution of film dance technique and aesthetics, as well as the changing landscapes of the purpose of dance in Indian cinema, Usha Iyer's book spans the movements and creative labor of the leading lady, the background dancers, the choreographer and the invisible labor. Placing social history alongside film, while correlating to other performance cultures, migrations, and technologies that influence on-screen dance making as well as audience responses, Usha Iyer emphasizes the undercurrents of inter-connected and related networks that produce new forms of mobility.

Biography

Sandhiya Kalyanasundaram is a dance educator, choreographer and poet. Trained in Bharatanatyam, Butoh and Flamenco, Sandhiya has led and performed in

several collaborative performances between dance styles, served on the Jury Panel for the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival and enjoys working at the intersection of neuroscience and dance. She is currently experimenting with screen dance to explore the interconnections between body and the natural world.

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Book Review: *Screendance from Film to Festival: Celebration and Curatorial Practice* by Cara Hagan (2022)

Mary Wycherley

Keywords: screendance, festival, curation, representation

Screendance from Film to Festival: Celebration and Curatorial Practice is a timely and rich mapping of screendance histories, stories, eras and legacy largely through the prism of festivals and their development. Hagan's commitment to the field, as a screendance artist, scholar and curator, is demonstrated throughout this 200-page book in which she draws from her expertise across each of these perspectives. Her book is presented as a body of work generated from a love and dedication to the field of screendance and that passionate tone and sense of celebration resounds throughout. Nevertheless, though the title and tone have a timbre of lightness, the book does not hold back from sharp critique, deep questioning and provocations. This results in a deft weave of the author's personal experiences, case studies and a history of film, film festivals and screendance curating.

The author describes the book as "a curatorial memoir with a great deal of context that serves as a platform and an invitation".[1] The book's first half charts solid contextual information on screendance film history, festivals and curating from which an in-depth examination follows in its second half, with particular consideration given to themes of representation within screendance works and festivals. Opening in the form of a trip down memory lane, chapter one traces the author's "Falling in Love"[2] with screendance and its related genres. We are invited to share in her journey in which childhood viewings of early TV dance classics and explorations of works from directors such as Fellini and Kurosawa provide the grounding in film and dance experience that have framed her relationship to screendance today. This personal account opens out into a wider tracing of the developments of film in the exquisitely detailed follow-on chapter "An Art Worth Celebrating"[3] that introduces the aesthetics and political arguments from early photography to Dadaism and Surrealism. Similarly, a later chapter dedicated to curation gives an equally focused introduction to the history of western curation across centuries. Hagan's book draws on her own experiences with depth as a black artist and curator emphasising screendance's relationship to identity and representation. Indeed my encounter with Hagan's book coincided with the events of the 12th of May 2022, when I learned of the reports[4] of the murder of ten black Americans in Buffalo, USA as I sat reading in my home in Ireland.

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Hagan's commitment to foregrounding the realities of marginalised communities seemed, unfortunately as ever, an important vantage point for considering the field of screendance.

> *"Segregation, supremacy and discrimination are abundant historically and contemporarily".*[5] *(Hagan, 2022)*

It is the collection of three chapters in its latter half (9,10,11) that foreground with particular urgency these critical perspectives on identity and representation in screendance and how these circumstances and consequences might impact its curation. Echoing Maria Reilly's own considerings on the concept of "curatorial activism", [6] Hagan positions her curation and that of others as "a practice of awareness-building".[7] Hagan's call for reflection is evident in both her practice as a curator as well as within her writing, tuning to and acting on how we attend to issues of identity within screendance festival contexts. She foregrounds the reality that screendance grapples with "disparities and imbalances"[8] in its festival programming and curation particularly across race, gender, ability and age.

> *"White performers have always been over represented as compared to performers of colour with regard to the US population."*[9] *(*2020)

Needless to say, screendance is not alone here, and the arts more widely grapples with issues of representation both within the ways we enable artists to be present and visible, and how work itself represents. And though these experiences vary in their intensity across different countries within their own histories, the significance of Hagan's account is clear and considerable and of importance within the particularly global experience of screendance.

The author founded American Dance Festival's Movies by Movers festival as "the first black woman to start a Screendance festival in the United States".[10] A detailed examination of this festival is presented over five years, acting "as a research platform to explore issues of representation from the vantage point of the curator".[11] The premise of the chapter is that the disparities and imbalances mentioned above warrant and "demand" examination, attention and active changing. Complimenting this chapter are additional case studies including research conducted within the open submission processes of Outlet Dance Project[12] and The Mobile Dance Film Festival[13]. Collectively this analysis gives strong and clear statistical analysis on representation across those festivals. Through these case studies, the author not only gives examples of the disparities but also the reasons why these might exist. This data mining on issue of representation is a valuable and rare analysis for the field.

The author recognizes how screendance created in America cannot separate itself from its "segregated histories"[14] and her research and US based case studies

weigh in to exemplify this. But this book calls on us all to consider these statistics in relation to our own experiences and biases.

> *"If it is the role of the curator to care for the material that constitutes the screendance landscape, it is the duty of the curator to understand the power they possess, to influence the perception audiences have of the works and to influence the trajectory of the field at large." (2022)*

In Chapter 11 Hagan drills directly into festival models and curation that highlight efforts where approaches to considering diversity are evident. Specifically, she deals with examples of US festivals and their directors and teams actively taking on these challenges. Foregrounding the different scales of festivals, Hagan's acknowledgment of larger festivals and agencies, whilst highlighting smaller platforms and artist led contexts, is a valuable consideration that echoes her considerations of diversification of programme and approach. By listing her own curatorial goals, Hagan offers clarity and transparency in her approach to festival curating and analysis. Highlighting the concern that "*the perception for many artists of color is that a lot of the festivals and spaces that host festival activities are not spaces for them*"[15], Hagan calls into question how festivals and programs need to consider not only *what* we curate but *how* we curate. How are a festival's values evident and when do these become saturated by a plethora of content which might submerge that vital space for considering?

Hagan is equally attentive to questions of gender, age and ability, and these are similarly considered with her festival case-studies research as key concerns for screendance. Dedicated to two artists, Pauline Koner and Kitty Doner, chapter three is a passionate and inspiring contribution to the book that examines modes of dissemination prior to the proliferation of screendance festivals in the 70's. Highlighting these women as pioneers of dance on television at a time when this field was particularly male dominated their innovative approach was exemplified by their technique of *cameragraphing*[16]. Here they explored key principles relevant to many screendance makers today including screen-space, performance quality on screen and (the less explored) considerations of live editing. The unearthing of these women's contributions in 2018 via papers from the New York Public Library and the reciprocal contribution to the author's thinking about dance on screen, comes with an infectious enthusiasm. Through Hagan's intimacy in detail and celebration of the women via her research, I find myself thrilled and appreciative reading this discovery.

Hagan's analysis of the historical and contemporary development of screendance festival-making emerges in particular within Chapters 4 & 5 in which she identifies four developmental stages that are broadly delineated by patterns and behaviours. This cumulative picture of the landscape of festival-making supports an understanding of the linear historical timeline, though as the author notes

these are taken mainly from a North American perspective with some interlinking across other continents including South America and Europe. Four generational categories are presented as unfolding since the 1960s; the Preservationists (1969-83), the Delineators (1984-2003), the Hyper-Localists (2003-2016) and the Collectivists, (2016-onward). In summary, each period points to inherent characteristics that might be summarised briefly as: Preserving the genre, defining the genre, the do-it-yourself mentality and digitally enabled festivals, respectively. Delineating these according to time affords an efficient framing for a consideration of screendance development, though I might add that this efficiency may equally be a stumbling block in enabling a considering of the inherent frictions and developments *across* different modes of approach, ethos, scale and the widening of contexts. The inclusion of further categorisation is therefore welcome in Chapter 5, which sets out as an invitation and information hub for enthusiasts, makers, or would-be festival directors. There, five distinct festival identities are presented, drawing from examples of existing festivals: Cinema festivals, Make festivals, Multi-purpose festivals, Itinerant festivals and the increasingly present Online festival, considered within the context of the recent global pandemic.

For Hagan, the Collectivists (the fourth and currently active generational category presented) are “declaring their festivals as sites of curatorial activism and are making decisions based on what they see as the future of screendance”[17]. Though this sentiment is unlikely to be limited to current activism in the field, its value as a call to action for the future is striking. Hagan’s breadth and emphasis on an “active”[18] consideration of curatorial practice is clearly evident and highlighted in the chapters entitled “Curatorial Adventures” and “A Treatise about Curating”. Intentional and active festival curation seems more present and indeed needed in our community as noted by the author. Given the somewhat recent rise in the use of the term curation within dance and screendance contexts, Hagan’s featuring of key terms such as curating and curatorial practice is significant in progressing a dialogue around how festival curation may be considered as a practice in screendance. By applying the term ‘curator’ in relation to the festival examples in the book, Hagan invites a consideration of these activities within the resonances and contexts such terminology invites. Reflecting beyond the book momentarily, if the term ‘curating’ is to be used to define what screendance festivals do, then we must ask in what way the activity of curating and programming have shared qualities and are differentiated. Drawing from curatorship and its richly explored practice stemming largely from the visual arts, resonances are opened up that can invest screendance with wider contexts which may encourage expanding models and approaches to sharing work. Bringing attention and clarity to the meaning of curation in each festival context will bring with it a responsibility and care for the content and its (festival) container and ultimately a widening of screendance’s resonance.

Hagan's soft but assertive tone throughout this book addresses, head-on, key challenges across our current society through the lens of screendance, unequivocally affirming our need for "curatorial activism" in screendance. This is not a time to be passive about our futures[19] and this book and its inevitable ensuing conversations will impact how we sense, feel and activate our curatorial futures in screendance.

Biography

Mary Wycherley is a freelance dance artist, film director and curator based in Ireland. Supported by the Arts Council of Ireland since 2007 her artistic work is experienced in performance, cinematic and exhibition contexts. It is presented and commissioned both in Ireland and internationally for venues, festivals and galleries. Interdisciplinarity is a key feature in her work, with collaborations connecting widely across a range of artists and contexts. Mary is co-founder and curator of Light Moves Festival since it's inception in 2014. She was Limerick Dance Artist in Residence from 2015-2019. Mary founded Studio Light Moves in 2019 as an artist development wing of the festival which currently hosts residencies for dance and digital media research collaborations. Her teaching in dance, film and interdisciplinary creative process spans University level, professional masterclass and individual mentoring contexts. She continues to teach regularly at the University of Limerick where she was Course Director of the MA Contemporary Dance Performance there 2016-18. Recent touring work and commissions include feature length film *In the Bells Shadow* and live dance for gallery *Invisible Histories*, award-winning film *WRoNGHEADED* and a film quintet *Far-Flung Dances*. Currently Mary is creating *Weathering*, a live cinema work and she is completing a PhD at the Centre for Dance Research (C-DaRE) at Coventry University.

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Body And Lens International Screen(ing) Dance Festival And Seminar 2022[1]

Sumedha Bhattacharyya, Jindal School of Liberal arts and Humanities, O.P. Jindal University

Script[2]

Hosts : Dr Urmimala Sarkar[3] and Sumedha Bhattacharyya[4]

[*Message on Zoom:*

Welcome to the Body and Lens International Screening Dance Festival and Seminar 2021 https://www.duetwithcamera.com/blog/categories/day-1-body-and-lens-festival]

[Event begins]

SEMINAR: Film Genre: A Vision Of Screendance

Day One

Urmimala begins, by defining Screendance: notion of 'dance as film' compared to 'dance for film'...

There is a lot going on with a number of creative people experimenting with the medium of camera when they dance, or with moving / dancing bodies when they work with their cameras to continue to converse with their audience. Over and above that, in the current scenario there is an invisibilization of the dance space and also an increasing need for them to engage with the new world that is emerging through the pandemic time. We see a lot of responses, both from people who communicate through their dance and people who think through their camera.

Both are responding to the need of the time in space and time. This is the moment that we as practitioners, filmmakers and academics, could possibly think of ways to come together to bring dance, camera and space into a discourse - by which some of us may find future directions that we need to cull out for ourselves.

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We acknowledge all the effort of many of the festivals of yester years in India, as the forerunners and pathbreakers. It has been wonderful to watch the diversity of the films brought together to us today, I hope everyone has enjoyed these shows.

A warm welcome to all the panellists for the discussion. Today we will begin an ambitious wish towards a possible course that could emerge for dance for camera. This is a dream come true and the community that is getting together for the event and together we work from the course.

Sumedha: Extending and deepening the thoughts you share with us. Thank you, Urmimala Ma'am, for setting the right kind of tone to the Seminar. My mind wanders a lot around questions as a dancer and Screendance practitioner about the hierarchies of dance, camera, space, very strong agents of choreography. Do you like questions that a dancer would ask the camera : Dance with camera, dance for camera , dance on camera? Where does the power lie, who decides?

We have put together a number of films for us to experience this intersectional vocabulary of choreography and filmmaking that are relatively less explored, but an emerging space of discourse in the context of India. We don't claim to be pathfinders but want to explore the excitement, the curiosity, and discovery. Micro-genres, nuances are important to understand if we would like to do this. We have curated the festival not to 'address' these issues, but we are putting a community together that can start to know, make, create and imagine new kinds of 'seeing' dance.

https://www.duetwithcamera.com/blog/categories/day-1-body-and-lens-festival

Sumedha introduces **Stefano Fardelli**

I have the privilege of introducing, Stefano Fardelli from Italy, is a dancer, choreographer, teacher and Founder - Artistic Director of EurAsia Dance Project International Network. He teaches as a guest teacher for professional academies, companies, theaters, festivals, postgraduate programs and professional dancers in all five continents, including The Place, London (UK).

https://www.duetwithcamera.com/post/our-animal-kingdom

Question: It would be great if you could discuss the film *Animal Kingdom* by Akram Khan Company and Numeridanse TV. This project was an opportunity for participants to evoke the wild things that we believe alive in all of us. We are interested in what you think of the film and how may it become a new vision for Screendance, looking at the relationships between dance with /for/in camera.

Stefano highlights the need of diversity of aesthetic, cultures, background, age and that is demonstrated significantly in *Animal Kingdom*. The movement of seven animals, is a new way of to bring communities and bring a participatory nature of the project. He touches upon the somatic and aesthetic difference between a live piece that one sees on the camera, and dance for the camera, the latter with possibilities to play with fragmentation and proximity. For the pedagogy of dance, he suggests that a dancer needs a space for professionalisation of the camera. Learning process behind the camera matters, because light, camera quality and proximity matters. “Everything has a career, a specific training and learning. “The camera is seeing many things that are almost like imagination to the film, the feeling after the show, memory and the camera.” he adds.

https://www.duetwithcamera.com/panelist?pgid=kq9fzh8a-f69d4c8b-6b39-4bdc-8142-a7ac78b55791

Introducing *The Dotted Bodies* by two emerging artists and art makers **Prakriti Sharda** and **Sagarika Debnath** who asks a provocative question:

What happens when an enthusiastic philosophy major and a bored engineering graduate meet? An accidental film.

On a wintry afternoon, two women reminisce about their college’s annual production piece over a telephone call. They recall how they slowly lost control over their own bodies while performing a piece on the seven sins, supported by a dimly lit stage and blasting speakers. Four long summers have come and gone since the event and yet, those eleven dancers continue to safeguard the melancholy and desolation derived from a stage far, far away from their homes. With a cacophonous doom lingering beneath their movements, the dancers re-enact their rehearsals from that summer evening. The call traces the journey behind the survival instinct of a dancer when the curtains, lights and stage morph into an echo, synonymous to the seven deadly sins.

What do you think happens when a stage performance is restaged through the camera and for the camera?

Sumedha: New layers are added to the way it can start making new meanings and trigger different ways of creating additional imaginative paths for the audience. Because it is no longer just the performance, but all the new nuances the images, the camera and the lighting, the mirrors can create? This film invites a certain kind of gaze to see text, intimacy, vulnerability. Mirrors play a significant role in evoking that intimacy that is feminine. *A discussion about light, editing, text, intimacy, vulnerability, inviting the gaze, towards a space that, using mirrors evokes intimacy...*

https://www.duetwithcamera.com/post/dotted-bodies

Urmimala: The film explores the moment of imaginative intersection of two seventeenth century classical artistic tradition- Shakespearean tragedy and South Indian dance form- Kathakali.

A warm welcome to **Dr. Ashish Avikunthak** who is amongst us today. He is a filmmaker and a cultural anthropologist. Named Future Greats 2014 by Art Review, he has been making films for more than 25 years. His films have been part many national and international events. He has a PhD in Cultural and Social Anthropology from Stanford University and has earlier taught at Yale University. He is now an Associate Professor in Film/Media at Harrington School of Communication, University of Rhode Island

Question:

-- Ashish Avikunthak *Dancing Othello*

1. As a filmmaker and cultural anthropologist, what do you see as the vision and critique of pedagogy for Screendance filmmaking?

2. In Screendance teaching, how do you think non-narrative storytelling plays a role in re-imagining dance and film practice. As an educator yourself, please share an example of a course topic you teach.

Ashish Avikunthak shares about the approach of *Dancing Othello* to be a self-reflexive critique of the postcolonial subject to which Urmimala Sarkar adds that there is almost a self-decolonization happening with the camera. For Ashish, in his own words asserts

“Screendance holds possibilities to become a discursive disjuncture, where dance is used to as a political moment”.

In a course on Screendance, he envisions, on one hand, an ontology of the moving body: Deleuze, Heidegger: What does the moving body do? What does a curated/choregraphed moving body do, and on the other hand, “the importance of dance/moving body/the performative body that is intrinsic in the prehistoric Indian architecture”. Lastly, he anticipates, that there will be a discursive friction between the western theoretical framework of the ontology of the body and the Indian thinking of the performative body.

Urmimala: Thank you for your talk and it was lovely to hear from you.

https://www.duetwithcamera.com/panelist?pgid=kq9fzh8a-8226001b-2901-4436-859a-9acefe104584

Introducing **Douglas Rosenberg**

Sumedha: I still remember the day I sat in the library reading his book on *Inscribing the ephemeral image*, and finished it in a night, sleeping in the library itself, resonating deeply with it.

Douglas Rosenberg (MFA, San Francisco Art Institute) is a Professor in the Art Department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is an artist and a theorist working with performance, video and installation whose work has been exhibited internationally for over 30 years.

Film: *Empire* by **Giaa Singh Arora**

Introduction: *Empire* has a dream-like abstract narrative in which a young woman goes on a strange journey encountering herself and her own struggles.

Gia Singh Arora is a filmmaker, performer, and dancer. Abhyas Somatics forms the base of her artistic intuitions and impulses. Her practice freely traverses between the Indian classical form, Odissi, and performance art.

Question:

As a Screendance theorist and artist, what do you see as the vision and critique of pedagogy for Screendance?

https://www.duetwithcamera.com/post/empire-2021

Douglas shares an analysis on Gia’s film.

“A woman watching herself, sitting outside of herself, projection, surveillance, the surveilling eye moves quickly in the ecological space. The knowledge of being watched to share her inner life. There is a cinematic trope, we see the subject, we see what the subject sees. Inner life of the subject we are looking at. There is a moment in the film, the sense of the uncanny that begins to appear. The relationship with nature, the sensuality, self-nature of surrealism, reminded me of the films of Maya Deren, Alfred Hitchock’s films that speak of male gaze, the hysteria and the horror the character is feeling. In this case the filmmaker subverts a sacred realization of the self and builds on perhaps a self-care approach.”

Sumedha: Thank you Douglas for sharing your viewpoints on the film.

Urmimala introduces **Rick Tjia**

I now welcome Rick Tjia... Rick's early training years began with tap dancing, eventually branching out into professional studies of classical ballet, jazz, hip-hop, and contemporary dance. Rick also works closely with International Performing Arts & Theatre (I-PATH) through leading dance education in the 21st Century. He is a member of Phoenix Associates in the UK, an organization that offers opportunities and masterclasses to students aged from 6 right through to professional dancers.

Question:

1. As an educator in a Theatre based organization, what do you see as the vision and critique of pedagogy for Screendance in the 21st century?
2. Please share with us an example of a course/workshop topic you teach or include in your Choreography Online classes.

"The context is everything. All situations are not created equal. A camera is added, what am I making? Is this a film with dance in it? Is this a dance film? Is this a film about dance? Very valid approaches but yet not the same thing. More than a camera zooming in and out. We are choreographing bodies that move, camera person with a camera is a body that moves. So with film and choreographing dance, the camera is also choreographed.

"Most choreographers don't know cameras and editing. Editing affects the story afterwards. Basically, it's a re-choreography of the dance. Choreographer who does not know the video/ film world, and so you usually have a film director, although they may be dance fans but not necessarily know dance. Choreographers have great ideas, what we see is the idea. What is important is the develop the idea. The idea has to go somewhere, it depends on the creator, but it still needs to go somewhere. We see the idea. Dance has been around forever, film and video been too. But we have to understand, we are taking on a whole new channel, we can't completely forget the old channels. Dance is an abstract language. Like motion, can be interpreted differently. When we create the dance, we have to understand that it is abstract, it is very difficult to get across very precise ideas with an abstract language. When you have a specific narrative, we use a text, we have a synopsis, so why use dance as a language?"

Introducing **Sanjoy K. Roy**

Sanjoy K. Roy, an entrepreneur of the arts, is the Managing Director of Teamwork Arts, Roy works closely with various industry bodies and Government on policy issues within the Creative Industries and Cultural Sector in India as a Co-chair of the Art and Culture Committee of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and an advisor to the Arts Council of England Diversity board for theatre.Roy has lectured and works in collaboration with several Universities world-wide.

Question:

As a person deeply invested in the Arts, and arts related development, how do you see the future of dance for camera as a training program within University setting in India? What is the requirement, and what would be the strengths that the pass outs could claim as new expertise?

Sanjoy K Roy provokes us to think about, what does it mean to capture the work? Remembering Astad Deboo, Sanjoy Roy spoke of how Astad Deboo needed to film his work. He had a film language, he was the choreographer, director, editor, and the costume designer. Bollywood genre of dance, the choreographer directs the dance, not the film-director, its' her vision. Moving on to speaking about Dance in film, especially in the Bolllywood genre, Sanjoy Roy shares that item numbers, the way most often dance is projected on screen, does not need interpretation. The entire narrative of the film most often has nothing to do with the item number. He asks What is the relationship between the dance, camera and the choreographer and the camera person/zoom and the dance you show?

Eyes and expressions are the core of dance, but also the feet and hand movement.? Discussing the use of Use of AI and Virtual reality he asks: How can the digital Discover, educate , propagate, and become a platform for new work being premiered? Dance curricula then is not history, tradition or the form, about technology, camera work, editing, all the new digital facilities.

Sumedha: Thank you for your time, Sanjoy Sir and your insights and inputs.

Introducing **David Outevsky**

He is an MSc Dance Science at Trinity Laban, London and a **PhD in Dance Studies program at York University, Toronto**. David served as a course director at the University of Calgary where he taught Dance and Performance History, Aesthetics, and Dance in Film.

Question: In Screendance teaching, which topic/s do you feel should be covered ? As an educator yourself, you may build the discussion with an example of a course topic you teach. How do you see the equation between the academic and practitioner? With that in mind, dance filmmakers, history of screendance different techniques ofor filmmaking, production, equipment, culture and oscial significance of the produced work

1) Why do I want to make this film?

2) What do the characters in my film represent

3) What do gestures and movement in the film represent

4) How will my audience interpret the dancing, the visuals and the ideas of the film?

5) How does my film fit into the larger context of screendance?

“Dance filmmaking is not a linear process, answering these questions can help guide. David reflects upon his first dance film and how it was relate to just the idea of displacement, and the numbness with an urge for stability, love and home, like the song, the choreography and the space. When he is teaching “Dance, film and culture” as an Undergraduate: culture analysis of popular dance films in the 20th century such as *Flashdance, Black Swan, Saturday Night Fever.* A cultural and aesthetic perspective of dance film and screendance is discussed and interpreted.In these films, it is discussed how camera movements /angles portray dominance /submission of a character. Think of machismo portrayed by John Travolta getting dressed, in posters of female celebrities, to the objectification and construction of the female body in *Flashdance* where she dances to *Maniac*. This perspective moves away from artistic perspective to the History of screendance and its use of theory.”

Conclusion Of Day One

Urmimala: We have come to the end of the evening today, and we will be looking forward to tomorrow. Thank you for all the panellists for invaluable time, who have made this evening a grand success.

Day Two

Welcome Address

Sumedha: Day One was a really enriching experience, and we are moving on to the second day. Which leads us to this event. We would like to thank all the panelists to give our valuable time. We build on what we did yesterday and continue to build om discussion. Please put your questions in the chat

Urmimala: Hi everyone and thank you Sumedha. I have been given the task of creating some provocations for today's session that would like to foreground a discussion on the possible structure of a course in Screendance. In that process we have actually been very privileged to see a range of films which excite us and our imaginations. I am going to play certain provocations/thoughts amongst you and not much take much time because your inputs are immensely important to all of us. I start by saying that that a screendance course in India maybe e envisioned to contribute to the development of the field of screendance through practice as well as research. So, we have film studies departments, we have filmmaking departments, screendance department doesn't have to belong to any of them or could belong to both. We do not know where to place it yet. But we do attempt to do screendance in our own ways in the dance /film courses. So the question is large and imminent that we need some kind of pedagogical structure.

A second provocation that I would like to propose is that an important thing would be to provide possibly some ways to critically assess what it means to create image-based art today? India has gone into this selfie mode, different kinds of images, Image explosion is the word all around. At this point to create image-based art, thinking anew about a pedagogy.

A third one would be, because there is a history of screen in Bollywood and Tollywood, regional cinema on screen, that space if it needs to have a pedagogy. Probably, the important thing is to take dance beyond an immediate presence to spaces of representation, conversation, and spaces of multi-speciality-based exchanges in terms of generating in itself a space for dance with/for/on camera.

The course would be envisioned to test and challenge individual practices, bringing it into the contemporary critical context that does not portray a narrative through dance but becomes a way to create a n narrative in and for itself with the camera and the space.

It is a space that will be co-created hopefully but not just be the dance captured on camera. Another exciting thing could be if we can think of fuelling individual and community filmmaking into considering ways of moving beyond their comfort zones and searching for radically different ways of interacting with the audience and other art sectors and wider society, wider meanings and wider presences. Just

creating a dance here in India, you know, something that is even part of our training, because they finish their training and prove themselves in front of an audience through a solo show which starts the stage or proscenium career. But Dance is not just that, something that is beyond this, something that is beyond the comfort zones.

The next one that I would peg, it would be great to imagine ways to develop a confident, articulate, independent practice, through practical experimentation, contextual research and public-facing engagements. Finally, a pedagogy in contemporary practices around screendance needs to develop a wider vison of the practice and how it relates to the contemporary world around us. It has a strong emphasis on creating a community of learning, and on learner-centred teaching through maybe seminar courses, personal tutorials, individual assignments and community ideas, interested, skills and artistic practices.

Here, I leave you all to continue this conversation. Thank you very very much for coming here. I would like to introduce our first speaker today.

Fai Cheung

“Yesterday’s films were long, today’s films are short. We are having a different kind of relationship with the audience. From our part of the world, I invite you to talk about South-East Asian films with us, to share the curatorial vision, this genre and flourishing medium.

Introducing **Fai Cheung**

Fai Cheung is a veteran producer, curator, executive and consultant in the arts and culture in China and Asia. He was advisor/curator for Helsinki Festival and kunstenfestivaldesarts Brussels. He has produced many performances, touring, exhibitions and festivals, and top Chinese artists like Cui Jian and Lin Zhaohua.He was Editor-in-chief of CrossOver, the leading art magazine in Hong Kong. He was a pioneer of Chinese Internet (with China.com). He has published hundreds of articles as theatre and dance critic, and was co-founder/vice-chairman of International Association of Theatre Critics (Hong Kong). He was also co-founder of Hong Kong Independent Video Award. He was a lighting designer for 12 years.

Question:

1 As a theater, dance critic, and producer, what do you see as the vision and critique of pedagogy for Screendance in the 21st Century?

2 In Screendance teaching, what topic would be most important for you to delve/teach/educate upon? As a producer and curator yourself, share with us the curatorial lens that you use in your city for producing films

“When I talk about screendance, my first question is actually not what is the dance, but what is the screen? Screen on mobile phone, film on screen of the computer. What screen are talking about? Earlier it was the larger-than-life screen in cinema halls. VR and AI are not cinematic screens, they are creating a virtual reality and you are in it . Its 360 degree and the audience can travel and choose where to look. There is no focus to follow, not a linear narrative that I have to follow. If we put dance in such a context, it is not even future screen, it exists NOW. A lot of VR products, films,games and documentary, fiction films are being made now and is we put dance in the interactive screen so what happens?

“We are in a new kind of visual experience will be developed very fast and maybe 20 years/50 years later it will totally replace a two dimensional or so -called 3d cinematic film experience. Most people will experience the moving images in such a way, VR/AR/MR/XR. When we are thinking about teaching screendance/dance film I think it is very important to look at the technology now related to the screen. Not the technology that’s impacting on the dance itself, its still the physical body and movement, I don’t think it will be replaced by robots.The technology is changing very fast. This screen, how we are experiencing images, moving images, how people react and interact with the moving images. I think in the teaching, we have to look film history 120 years, but also look forward next 100 years or next 20 years. What kind of screen we will have, and how to place or interact with dance and movement in such a new environment of visual images?”

Fai Cheung then reflects on the films he brought from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and USA collaborating with Korea.

https://www.duetwithcamera.com/post/face-to-face-2021 ,
https://www.duetwithcamera.com/post/landscape-without-horizon-2017
https://www.duetwithcamera.com/post/wang-shih-s-bed-2019

At the core of the question is what is dance? What is film? What is dance film? When the movement of the camera and the body is so minimal will it still be screendance/dance film?

Fai spoke of the film *Landscape without Horizon* by Jordan Fuchs and YeaJean Choi. The camera and the dancers are ONE. The camera is tied to some part of the body. We never see the camera itself, but we are very aware of the camera’s presence and how it moves together with the dancers. For him, the film was a beauti-

ful and clever way to engage the audience to explore space with dancers and the camera, at the same time. Not the audience watching how the dancers or how the camera is exploring the space. We are kind of brought into the space and exploring space together with them, the dancers and the camera. It touches upon very basic question around the relationship with the audience and screendance. What do you expect the audience to? Just watch? Or how can the audience be brought into the space/virtual cinematic space?

"In *Face to Face*, the director of the film Ziwei Song is a contemporary visual artist. In this project she is a movement director. She doesn't consider this as a dance film/Screendance. She doesn't consider the movement inside, is dance. She does not care. But we don't really are dominated by the intention of the artist, from our angle. Is it dance, or just choregraphed movements? She just used the physical movement to convey the narrative, then spoken word, dramatic story but its effective. It is dance for me, it is very beautiful. If we consider this as a Screendance, then there is a conceptual problem. Is it within a dance department, is it not in the film department? Are we talking about the form to define a genre, or the content? There are feature films, dramatic story. This Screendance how is it different from drama and music. Some basic conceptual things that we must think and discuss and debate about."

(Sumedha speaks on behalf of Mary Wycherley on her films):

Introducing **Mary Wycherley**

Mary Wycherley is a choreographer and director whose work spans live performance, the moving image and festival-making. Interdisciplinarity is a key feature in her work, with collaborations connecting widely across a range of artists and contexts. Her work is experienced on stage, in cinematic and exhibition contexts, with work presented and commissioned both in Ireland and internationally for venues, galleries and festivals. Mary is co-founder and artistic director of Light Moves Festival in Limerick. Her national and international teaching in dance, film and interdisciplinary creative process spans University level, professional master class and individual mentoring contexts

The Bog and the Meadow

In the films by Mary Wycherley there is a dialogue and connection with human, nature and environment and the camera. The gaze the body, the way it interacts with the environment. Extending the vision through the camera, how do we define space? There is a new kind of viewing of the ecology.

3-2-1

Introducing directors **Juhi Sharma** and **Alex Beechko**

3-2-1 as a film touches upon topics around woman behind the camera, how it brings a different kind of subjectivity, a female gaze towards her relationship with the ghost of her grandfather.

Douglas Rosenberg [introduced during Day One, above]

Questions:

> *As a screendance theorist and artist, what do you see as the vision and critique of pedagogy for screendance?*
>
> *In Screendance teaching, what range of topics can be shared and why? As an educator yourself, you may bring an example of a course topic you teach and how can it be extended to screendance pedagogy*
>
> *From the films being screened, you may also begin from discussing one film (on Day 1 or Day 2) that resonates to you and how it encourages a new vision for Screendance in India and the world.*

Song of Songs by Douglas Rosenberg is a Biblical text that seems to appear in many cultures but for Douglas it is a romantic and erotic poem that focusses on the physical, emotional and spiritual love between a man and a woman. That text was a prompt for him to think about self-intimacy, male intimacy, faith, grief, age-ing body, metaphors of seasons ,tradition, rituals, reference the artists in his life and their work that had touched him. In that particular film, he mentioned about the camera's scrutiny that made him accountable to all of the gestures and im-pulses, as someone working with dance on the other side of the camera. The film is stark and frank, and his body is subjected to the camera, creating a sacred space with trusted collaborators, exploring duration as a theme.

In his response to the question for pedagogy, he shared how is teaching practice is intrinsically about what does a work do? How does it make me feel? How does it do that? Where did it enter our body? In reference to Susan Sontag's book on Looking, where she talks about her interest not in the hermeneutics of the art but the erotics of the body.

Urmimala continues, introducing **Kirtana Kumar**

Kirtana Kumar is an Indian actor, director, dramaturg and filmmaker with 35 years stage experience. With her company, Little Jasmine Theatre Project, she has

created 15 original works of contemporary Indian theatre including Shakuntala (Bangalore/London) and The Big Bully Boo Hoo (Bangalore/Mannheim). Her focus has been on taking the personal and deeply political into the performance sphere. She teaches Theatre and Interculturality at various institutions in Germany, including the University in Dortmund. She developed and organised two national symposia on Dramaturgy (at Jagriti) and Theatre Pedagogy for Children (at Ranga Shankara), respectively. She was recently invited to be artist-in-residence in the city of Munich. During this period she curated a festival of theatre from Karnataka for TEAM Theater and co-hosted a series of conversation on postpandemic ideas at Meta Theater. Her latest work is a digital archives of communiqués between two women called Nagamma's Letters. She is a trustee of Women Artists Group and runs Little Jasmine Theatre Project, Theatre Lab (Youth) and Infinite Souls Farm & Artists Retreat. She currently serves as chairperson of the Board of Trustees at Visthar Institute of Development

Questions:

As a theater artist, dramaturg and filmmaker , what do you see as the vision of bringing these three disciplines in the pedagogy for Screendance in the 21st Century?

1. *In Screendance teaching, what topic would be most important for you to delve/teach/educate upon? Given your experience in Theater Pedagogy for children, please share with us an example of the course/workshop topic you teach.*

2. *As a trustee in the Women Artists group,how would you see gender playing a role in teaching screendance?*

Kirtana spoke of the adaptability to technology and how Dance itself is an extremely fraught space especially in the Indian context. Thrilling in Screendance, is the possibility of kind of removing oneself from a Brahminical constructs. There are fewer gatekeepers, a possibility of radicalism, access, and availability, and an openness to question aesthetics of high and low art, flow of the form etc.

Dance in India, moving away from elitism and the encouragement is to keep experimenting. There is no proposition to formality. She feels that the screendance films has collaborative and intersectional, democratic and emotional possibilities to experiment with.

The virtuosity of Screendance should not be hijacked. This is a moment for keeping this wide-open, non-confrontational, listen and look and seeing, and the intimacy that it allows is feminine.

Thank you once again everyone for all your time and effort for making Body and Lens possible.

[Event ends]

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1 Body and Lens Festival and Seminar in July 2021 was a step towards of creating a pedagogy for Screen dance / Dance for Camera a space for a series of three webinar / seminars to formulate a pedagogic discourse around a pedagogy for teaching Screendance in India https://www.duetwithcamera.com/body-and-lens-festival2021. The festival is organized by Koushik Podder in Sastrika Unit of Performing arts and Leo's Lions Production Company.

2 This article is in the form of an event-day script that was used by the hosts. The script is not a transcript, but quotes directly from the event day video and paraphrases at few instances.

3 Dr. Urmimala Sarkar is an Associate Professor of Theatre and Performance Studies, at the School of Arts and Aesthetics in JNU, New Delhi. She is a dancer/choreographer trained in Uday Shankar style of Creative dance, Kathakali, and Manipuri at Uday Shankar India Culture Centre. Her current work is on changing landscapes of dance in India, Sex-trafficking and designing of survival processes for survivors of trafficking, and politics of performance. She is also a visiting faculty at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, teaching a module on "Dance and Movement Therapy." She is currently the President of World Dance Alliance Asia Pacific, and one of the Directors of the Broad of Kolkata Sanved – an organization that works with women survivors of violence.

4 Sumedha Bhattacharyya is an interdisciplinary dance artist, educator, researcher, dance filmmaker and a primary caregiver. She is a faculty at Jindal School of Liberal arts and Humanities, India. Her artistic practice brings a fresh viewership of the camera as an artistic process for caring and contemplation, an enabling space for intergenerational bonding, and a narrative tool for dance pedagogy which challenges the existing formal qualities of 'seeing' dance. She is an awardee of Kolkata Centre for Creativity Art Fellowship in Dance with her embodied practice-based research project Duet with Camera that explores the space and spectatorship in-between the dancer and the camera.

Reflections On State Of The Art: International Symposium On Screendance 2022

Note: A collaborative document, compiled and edited by Sandhiya Kalyanasundaram, with notes and contributions from Ami Skånberg Dahlstedt, Claudia Kappenberg, Charlotte Griffin, Clare Schweizer, Diane Busuttil, Dominique Rivoal, Douglas Rosenberg, Gitta Wigro, Silvina Szperling, Sumedha Bhattacharyya, and Wesley Lim. Sandhiya transcribed from the recordings of the proceedings by Aaron Granat. The document captures notes by the speakers and presenters as well as notes and comments about presentations. It is organised chronologically by presentation.
https://screendancesymposium.art.wisc.edu

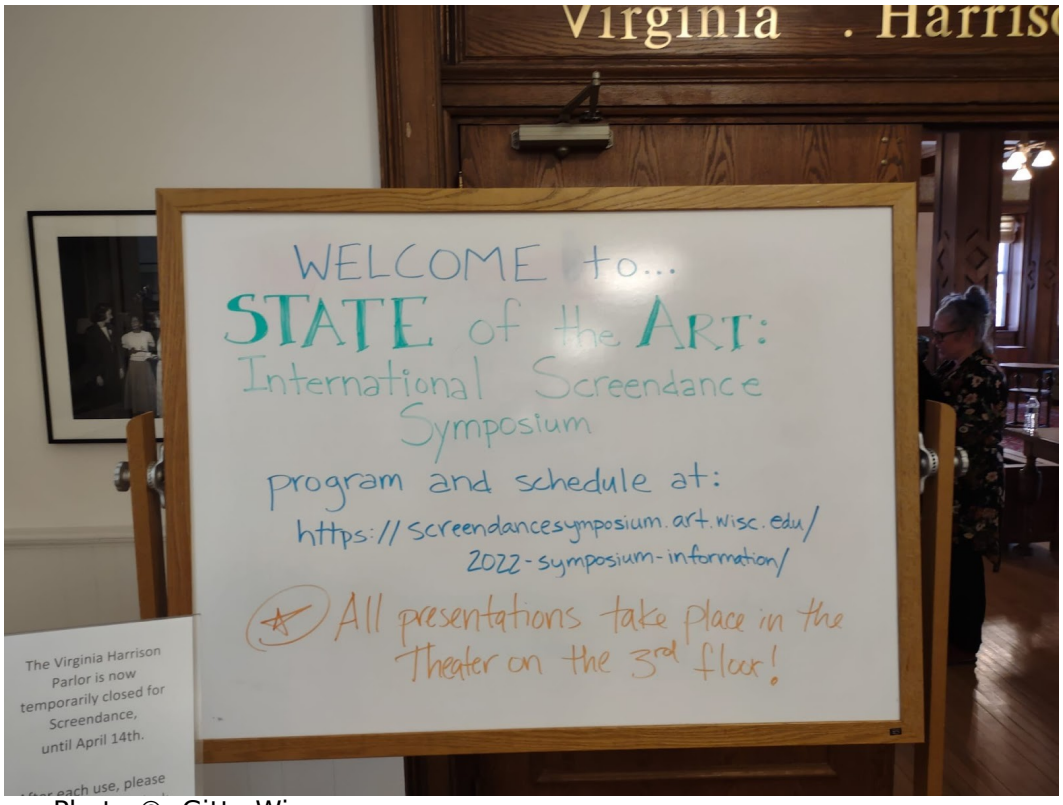

Photo ©: Gitta Wigro

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Sunday April 10, 2022
Welcome remarks by Douglas Rosenberg

Doug welcomed participants to the University of Wisconsin, Madison, which is on the traditional lands of the Ho-Chunk nation. He shared his observations of the last 20 years of screendance, calling out the opportunity for just being in the room together, literally making space for conversation, dialog and witnessing. The first iteration of the symposium was held at UW Madison in 2000.

Doug recalled Octavio Paz' words, "What distinguishes modern art from the art of other ages is criticism", saying that those words have been prescient for those within the community who wish to see Screendance as a way to address the current condition; the condition of this historical moment and to make meaningful, relevant and articulate statements about the real bodies of real people whose commitment to real and authentic discourse through their creative process motivates a palpable sense of urgency. Criticality as in deeply considered, intentional and a part of a discourse that is larger than itself, made of a multiplicity of objects, films, literature and more.

Doug acknowledged the support of the Virginia Horne Henry Fund on the UW Madison campus for the symposium and said that his original proposal had focused on a project that would look closely at the feminist roots of screedance: "That really is at the core of this endeavor; screendance is, I believe deeply rooted in feminist art practices." Celebrating that the model of feminist curating is *curation as manifesto making*, he called for its wider use in artistic curation. Doug also acknowledged the support of the Division of the Arts and Chris Walker as well as the departments of Art and Dance for their generous support. In closing, Doug talked about the need to really share space and things and platforms and opportunities; to be generous simply as a gesture of recognition and appreciated several efforts towards inclusivity, polyvocality and diversity.

Long Table discussion // "Manifestos, Aspirations, Start-Ups: Identifying the Field/ Changing the Field/ Shaping the Field with [left to right] Claudia Kappenberg, Marisa Zanotti, Harmony Bench, Ann Cooper Albright, Litza Bixler, Katrina McPherson and (online) Marisa Hayes, and others

Video still from documentation ©: Aaron Granat

Summary of the beginning of the Long Table discussion: Claudia started the discussion, noting that the Long Table was developed by artist Lois Weaver out of a feminist impulse to address "what and who is missing from historical accounts, and what to do about it". Claudia recalled the process, places and people, including the Screendance Network that have contributed to where we are now and to the journal. Katrina McPherson, Simon Fildes and Karl Jay Lewin led Open Source Video Dance at Findhorn, Scotland in 2006. Following this meeting Doug, Katrina and Claudia wrote a funding grant to the UK's Arts and Humanities Council and received £46,000 to start an international Network. The idea of the Network was not to have a fixed location and to travel around and meet in different places in the US and UK; they decided to start a journal during their first gathering at Brighton. Claudia noted that UW Madison / Parallel Press supported the Network and the journal through the printing of the first issues of the journal and argued that Doug had misrepresented this history in his introductory program notes by suggesting the journal had been launched in Wisconsin - Ann added that they decided to launch the journal in a restaurant in Brighton. Claudia noted that we

need to be careful with the language we use, that we need to include the networking, the relevant people as well as diverse institutional support - Katrina asked why foreground institutions, saying that the point of Open Source Video Dance was to get away from this format and even from identifiable individuals, to make a collective endeavor, adding that this is also the question of the gatekeepers which is ongoing work. Harmony raised the point that later on attributing authorship becomes a challenge. Katrina raised the point that in Gaelic language there is no possessive pronoun.

Litza talked about open source code, structural barriers and the need to invite people in. Harmony called attention to screendance that has existed on the margins, commitment to popular dance and dance in all its manifestations, broader representation of dance forms. Lots of work to do and there are lots of really robust histories that we can draw into and draw from. Ann shared her experiences about bringing in history and pushing the field forward, she said that thinking and doing go really well together. Ann urged for the future to draw from the special energy and experiment and put into action what has been written about or discussed. Marisa Hayes raised the point of visibility of the journal and the work and outreach in non-English speaking countries. She reaffirmed the need to stay vigilant about language and communication and expressed her happiness that IJSD was willing to publish translations. Kelly Hargraves suggested that showing DIY films allows for another mode of representation.

Ann spoke about IJSD as a journal that focuses on rigor, which is about intentionality, and the thoughtfulness of a long-form essay, and argued that that is not inherently elitist and helps move the discourse in the field forward. Claudia spoke about the journal also being a platform, a collective forum and conversation between many voices; curating a journal issue is the creative work of choosing a topic and soliciting contributions.

Gitta notes: A speaker, talking about the symposium, proposed that “these events present a post-festival model”, and that “they declare screendance as a form of consequence.” This wasn’t pursued further in this discussion, but raises questions alongside other points made in the opening discussion about access and representation. Throughout the four days I was struck by the highly selective nature of the event, in which the in-person attendance was basically limited to those who were also invited speakers.

The opening discussion also surfaced new initiatives in process. Doug explained that connected to the symposium are a documentary and an open-source archive of screendance activity. Litza Bixler shared that she is working on establishing a guild for screen choreographers in line with other film industry guilds.

Ami Skånberg Dahlstedt // Screendance - a Journey for Artistic Agency and a Workshop Proposal for a Non-Binary Technological Gaze (bring your smartphone)

Ami started her presentation with her extensive thesis and footage of Suriashi, a smooth sliding walk without losing contact with the floor and a neat body balance. Two key takeaways from Ami's talk were: 1. translating the idea of 'Opacity' to the human body in order to welcome/enable the other into the space. 2. How can technology serve a slower pace, speaking nearby and kind listening. Ami led us into a delightful workshop of being aware of our mobile phones, each other, the space and the lighting with a mindful absorbance and dissolving into the space and the human presences.

Photo ©: Gitta Wigro

Charlotte notes: After engaging with this practice and other synergistic moments during and after the symposium including viewing Gabri's new film *Sheila*, I am interested in how ancestors, shamans, and lucid dreamers are absent/present in the forming of screendance histories and futures.

Ami notes: Name of my PhD thesis is *Suriashi as Experimental Pilgrimage in Urban and Other Spaces* (University of Roehampton, 2022) including 11 hours of

submitted footage of the Japanese walk suriashi through space alone or with others. At first, I did not know if I should call it screendance, but now I think it is screendance extended/expanded as well as choreography extended/expanded.

Photo: Douglas Rosenberg and Ami Skånberg Dahlstedt walk in suriashi on 5th Ave for Ami's PhD (during Dance on Camera Festival 2015)

Maryah Monteiro (Zoom presentation) // Presenting work from Pola Weiss (Mexico), Analivia Cordeiro (Brazil), and Silvina Szperling (Argentina)

Maryah transected time historically from the 70's and peeled the layers of an artistic universe constructed by 3 artists merging contemporary dance, video art, multimedia installations, performance and visual arts. She tied in the idea of transdisciplinarity (Basarab Nicolescu) to situate the feminist; a positionality that may be able to minimize bias by its inherent inclusivity. Her study of corporeality and poetics that was framed and emerged in the larger artistic universe was fascinating and revealing of the politics and pressures of the time period.

Chad Michael Hall in confluence with the American College Dance Association Panel Discussion // Dance, Film and Future Landscapes with Gabri Christa, Li Chiao-Ping, Omari "Motion" Carter, Katrina McPherson, Harmony Bench, Charlotte Griffin, Cara Hagan

https://www.acda.dance

Ami notes: Hagan and Bench - Discussion on screen dance literacy/media literacy - what does one need to know? What about vocabulary? How does one understand visual arguments? Cinematic storytelling? The privilege of academia - the field inside/outside. Screendance and nostalgia.
How to blow up the curriculum? Gabri talked about how young people want to wait, and are actually tired of the 'instantness' - more precarious after pandemic Tik-Tok not to be overlooked, VR-AR

Charlotte notes: I also appreciated Harmony's advocacy for thinking about "fluency."

Gitta notes: (to add to Charlotte's point above!) In a discussion of the wealth of screen experience today's students bring, Harmony noted the difference between literacy and fluency. Students are literate, as a consumer of media, but don't necessarily have fluency, i.e. the ability to create those media. We are less thoughtful in our consumption than we could be.

Sandhiya notes: Katrina talked about the clarity of intentionality in teaching.
Charlotte posed the question, "How do we create pathways into screendance for students without prior access to technological tools".

Elizabeth asked the long table to talk about shifts in the field and how those shifts are paving the way for new experimentation and how that might inform education and curation?

Gitta notes: (this may have been from a different section of the day!)
Discussion about students' access to work from within the screendance field and beyond, in relation to their knowledge and awareness of context and the field's existing histories. Katrina spoke about the experience of *not* having ready access to other screendance work as an emerging maker, and how that shaped her process at the time. "I was making work, for the first 6 years, when I *couldn't* see anything - no internet, online videos etc. I *read* about Maya Deren, I watched Tarkovsky, and I built from there."

Re. students' access to other work, someone commented that sometimes people do not want to know what came before for fear that they would be confirmed to be 'unoriginal'. Harmony noted that students often come with existing cliches, and/or an assumption that there is something specific that educators expect them to create/deliver.

Cara pointed out an important shift in the dynamics in the sector, "post"-pandemic: Lockdown made big companies move into making dance films, and now these big companies are also fundraising, essentially competing with

individual makers, who have worked in this field for a long time but can't command the same level of resources, for the same, limited funds.

Monday April 11, 2022

Dean Diana Hess talked about plans to start an MFA program in screendance at UW Madison. School of Education has dance/ art/ heath as a combination of depts and also has the oldest dance dept in the US.

Autumn Mist Belk // Crafting a Diverse Screendance Audience with Robin Gee, Jen Ray, Clare Schweitzer, Jennifer Scully-Thurston

Panellists introduced themselves and ruminated on two broad questions throughout the discussion: What is an elevator pitch for defining screendance/dance film? How can we clearly describe the field while also being inclusive of screendance's breadth?

Autumn then posed the question: What strategies have you used to pull in new audiences? Panellists answered within five main categories: education, representation, accessibility, frequency, and meeting people where they are. Autumn has taken the path of educating people about the field and how they can get it, giving people a way in, and having lesson plans for kids in school. This gives audiences a way to understand what they are seeing.

Clare talked about the Frameform podcast. Started by Hannah Weber, Frameform frames the conversations that were started at events and continue the conversations. Each episode curates three films and discusses. Episode themes have ranged from warehouses, pop culture, tik tok and dance video episodes. Frameform is currently moving to season 3: www.hmweber.com/frameform, access through podcasts. Jen said that Frameform focuses on content that has market accessibility, relevance, and in-depth subject knowledge; a good example being the film *Uprooted* that was discussed in frameform and featured Robin.

Robin mentioned that Intersectionality, space, place, and identity are key aspects of her festival programming. Jennifer said that her personal belief is that so much goes into the making of a dance film that films need to be seen. So as a response, she created a monthly festival with a theme and has been able to screen movies such as *Taste of Night*, a cathartic movie. Harmony asked a question about foregrounding the integrity of artistic investigation. How do we find a balance between the artist on their quest and audience needs? Jen, Robin, and Jennifer talked about their festivals, the criteria for judging that ensures inclusivity; creating visibility and opportunity for artists from many different perspectives and funding issues. They raised issues of awareness and unconscious bias - what are we 'seeing'? how can aspects of seeing be surfaced and addressed?

Clare and Autumn discussed creating younger audiences and bringing in a wider community such as films from other continents including alternative forms/media/interfaces. Belk works with school teachers to show films to young audiences and to create material that can be used for teaching in the classroom. Schweitzer also mentioned films with STEM (particularly math) content as these will fill a trending need in K-12 learning objectives. Important practices found along the way towards diverse audience building included pairing conversations with screenings, being in our bodies as we consume screendance, and understanding the frame through which we view the form is fluid.

Ami notes: Discussion on the rhythm of dance film programming. How to have fun with screendance? How to make nondancers into dance lovers? Representation matters and having staff that are too white otherizes.

Gitta notes: Cara Hagan added the idea of playfulness as an important curatorial strategy. “It can all be a bit serious: how do we make it fun for the audience?”

Photo ©: Gitta Wigro

Marisa Zanotti // A New England: Filming Architecture and Community as Choreography

Marisa focusses on choreography in and around the architecture -intersecting the lives of people who work there, she is there at 4 am. In this work, she has been influenced by the writing of Syrian architect, Marwa Al-Sabouni who calls for designing spaces to enable communities to live harmoniously- cohesion- identity- healing.

Marisa lives in Brighton; she fell in love with the ugliest building in Brighton. The building rents space to small businesses, engineers, bakers, artists. Marisa noted that artists and small businesses activate the space through their work. The building is located in a gentrifying area which is economically diverse, the area has changed significantly in the last 15 years. Marisa's work moves between drama film and dance film using different strategies to understand what is and what could be. As a director she starts by looking for the magical/ fantastical in the everyday, part of it comes from being a performer and also watching a lot of dances. She observes and records movement in and around the building pigeons, and seagulls, drug sellers' movement of people up and through the building, walking through corridors and choreography through the architecture, imagining space is sentient.

Ami notes: the spatial content, space is sentient. Marissa fell in love with the ugliest house in Brighton. Capturing ghost presences - Architecture and choreography. Liminality 4.30 am regular morning photo sessions - the work of constant returning

Wesley Lim (Zoom presentation) // Babylon Berlin

Performances plays a central role in the neo-noir Netflix series Babylon Berlin. In particular, dance is thoroughly interwoven into the complex plot contributing to semiotic meaning making. Taking an intermedial approach using several performative lenses: gestural and dance movements, costuming, music, lyrics, dialogue, mise en scène, and camera work, I analyze the performance of the queer figure Svetlana Sorokina, who dresses in drag as Nikoros singing "Zu Asche zu Staub" at the in the Moka Efti club. In addition to this character's performance, four female background dancers move in costuming and choreography citing Josephine Baker's banana dance. In this scene the audience also knows the choreography and dances with the spectacle while male characters watch the performance. I aim to show how these complicated constellations of different figures involve a panoramic feel and co-presence which reflect not only the context of the late-Weimar Republic but also contemporary society.

Wesley notes: I'm still in the very early stages of the piece. There are more ideas here than there are cohesive arguments. I drew on the work of Marinetti's ideas of

futurist dance, which remain primarily theoretical with few actual instances of dance, to see if this might have been a goal in the dance scene in *BB* (through robotic movement and drawing from recent post-WWI aesthetics)....and why. I appreciated the questions regarding: more explanation of the context, the role of the women, and the role of the camera.

Extended long table in the parlor

Topics ranged from camera, style, choice, to funding and ethical use of funding.

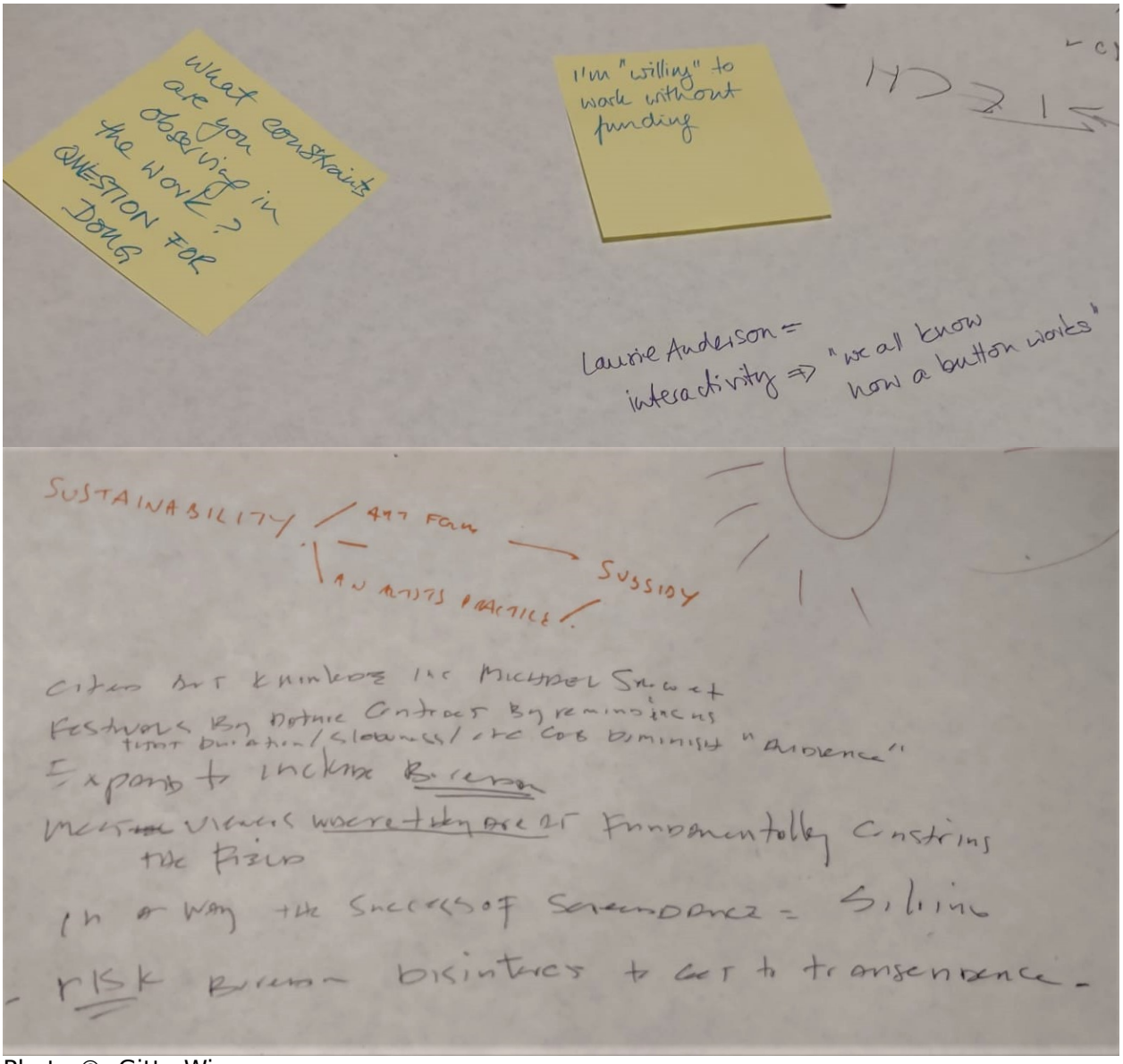

Photo ©: Gitta Wigro


Photo ©: Claudia Kappenberg

Ami notes: Do people know Baker was forced to wear the banana skirt? She refused at first. Male producers' idea. Terrible to not be able escape from that, and being quoted for hundreds of years. Fetishization of the dancing body, the female dancer. From Loie Fuller and now. I think Baker used mad humour as her bodyguard.

Charlotte Griffin (in person) with George Ellzey (in person), Meredith Webster (Zooming in) and Waeli Wang (Zoom) // Emerging Perspectives

Ideas from the screened films:
Meredith; slow movement, looks like northern Sweden, disparity income rich-poor, erasing the native population, Wyoming, high income vs low - nonviolent ways of working with dance on screen and dance in space
George; regain power, Iphone, experimental graduate class, DIY, social media activism, black communication - nuts and bolts, the reappropriation of the n-word, triptych, rhythm, new artistic energy
Wang; kinzugi, Japanese mending with gold, chasms, pan ethnicity

Charlotte notes: The questions I posed to the artists were:
Nuts and bolts-- How did you construct and realize your vision for this work?
Bells and Whistles-- What makes this work particularly special to you or to the trajectory of your work?
Heart and soul-- What inspired this creation and how does it connect to the heart and soul of your personal story and the ideas you aspire to bring into conversation with your audiences and the world?
Mountains and molehills-- What challenges or hurdles did you overcome or do you continue to face in the process of creating and/or exhibiting this work?
Leaps and bounds-- Where is this work heading and what is next for you in the realm of screendance and artistic pursuits? How might universities and arts

organizations better support artists such as yourself through education, production, curation, and presentation?

Ami notes: Lovely speakers –friendly framing by Charlotte G

Book Launch and Recognition - 1st Floor Parlor (light refreshments served) // Cara Hagan's Screendance From Film to Festival; and Harmony Bench's Dance: Digital Cultures; also Katrina's 2018 edition of Making Video Dance

Harmony's book is open access: read online at https://manifold.umn.edu/read/perpetual-motion/section/699edd3c-b14f-4201-b0a6-92c5426a8cb4

Doug shared the first version of IJSD with handwritten corrections and approval seal. Harmony brought in the printed version of IJSD Vol 12: This Is Where We Dance Now.

Photo ©: Claudia Kappenberg

April 12
Welcome/Announcements by Katrina McPherson // Changing the Lens - Thoughts on Documentary Theory Applied to Screendance

Marisa and Katrina held a conversation on how their practices are parallel and diverge. Applying Cela Bruzi's theory (New Documentary, 2016) to Katrina's work: "A documentary will never be reality nor will it erase or invalidate that reality by being purely representational. Furthermore, the spectator is not in need of signposts to understand the documentary is a negotiation between reality on the one hand and image, interpretation and bias on the other. Documentary is a negotiation between filmmaker, subject and spectator.

The second key idea was also from Cela Bruzi's writings on Performative Documentary where she defines performative as a way of being more sensic. Presence and engagement of the filmmaker with the performer is central to the film making. Marisa started the discussion by commenting that in watching the 2 films, the way they describe space was in almost opposite ways. In the first one space explodes and there is a multiplicity of spaces, and in the second one, there is an extraordinary intimacy and implosion of energy.

Katrina said she wanted to use that and through reflections she landed on the question: "What are my stories that I want to tell, the story inside me is one of my family. The story that needs to come out is one of my body, my mother, my grandmother and my children".

She had only met her grandmother through the photographs and used her grandmother's gestures to understand who she might have been and how she is inside of Katrina as she starts to assume her grandmother's gestures. Katrina then tied back to her original point about the negotiation between reality and fiction.

In *Paysages mixtes*, she talked about allowing the camera to witness the first moments and process of engagement and working together with Harold after 18 years. Claudia asked about editing and being taken to another place by the camera with each edit, potentially entering a different relation each time. Katrina answered about using a formal approach to editing and agreeing to score only what they had remembered filming. The conversational style of presentation-discussion between Marisa and Katrina worked extraordinarily well and brought out several levels of engagement and understanding of a work between two established artists and scholars.

Claudia notes: Katrina's work and research challenge the binary of documentary and fiction; what if we drop this distinction? An exciting opportunity for creative exploration.

Ami notes: Subject-spectator - “performative” - being ‘authentic’ - acknowledge the camera and the very situation of documenting. Ami noted that the new documentary theory with its focus of being never representational could be brought to working with family (ancestors!)
Ami asked if the energy of this way of working comes from resistance, saying no to certain paradigms and defending vulnerable ways of working? (Resisting the film industry)

Photo ©: Claudia Kappenberg

Long Table//Representation in screendance; Setting the table with (left to right, above) Gabri Christa, Sandhiya Kalyanasundaram, Omari "Motion" Carter, Cara Hagan, Li Chiao-Ping, Silvina Szperling (online) and others

Ami notes: Lois Weaver's long table format. A discussion on ownership and representation in screendance, abolitionist practices, an eye in cage vs a cloak to step out of.

Silvina notes: I talked about the networking being done by Latin American festivals of videodanza since 2005, which has evolved from a 3 festivals partnership into 25 festivals from LatAm (plus Spain and Portugal) at @rediv.oficial (IG). I consider this a successful (ongoing) process of *inclusion*, which is a word that I prefer over *representation.* I find representation too flat as a tool of power, because it addresses a political system that has proved to have its huge failures. We discuss curatorial, artistic, academic, and political issues that of course are all related. We do practice collaborative curation and are there to support each other, in order to *not need the Northern Hemisphere* (laughters from the audience).

Sandhiya notes: Gabri Christa talked about the importance of invitation for the notion of representation. She also addressed the problem of writing to publish in English for those whom English may not be a first language.

Sandhiya noted that the meaning and interpretation of representation is non-uniform. She asked, what does representation do for us? In answering she cautioned that while representation informs us, gives us knowledge, influences our perception, representation also has potential to obscure and fragment. So, what actions do we then need to be mindful of when we create and watch screendance? She also raised questions about internal and external representation. In thinking about representation, she brought small everyday aspects to attention: How do we present ourselves; how do we take in the world and what do we want to say to the world?

Omari talked about induction in London Contemporary Dance School and counting only a handful of people of color. He quoted Alvin Ailey saying "black dance came from white writers" and no matter what work he created, it would be seen as black. He was representing by just being there, just being himself.

Cara talked about the separation that is always there. To the question," Is screendance feminist?", she answered, "Maybe it is feminized, but absolutely not feminist". She raised the issue of nudity in screendance. Cara recounted the experience of seeing for the first time, in 2022, frontal nudity of a black woman presented as an ideal of beauty.

Li Chiao-Ping said that she was excited to see things changing. Being a first generation Chinese American, she was taught to erase herself and to merge. She resonated with thoughts shared at the table.

Silvina considers herself English-fluent but finds there are linguistic, political and geographical borders. Silvina is the only Latin American in the room (virtually!)

Gitta notes: Cara talked about expanding the canon: “What films do we consider our canon? What is currently not centralised because it is not considered ‘mainstream’, but it *did* influence the field, such as the cakewalk, the Nicholas Brothers.

Representation gives information; it can also fragment. Discussion about writing from a perspective that isn’t your own – representation vs. fetishization. Being able to talk to each other without needing to be the same.

(I think this bit is Cara but not sure:) We are complex; “when do we claim certain identities to make a particular point, and when do we reject, complicate, refuse certain identities. No one shows up in a space as only one thing; and we are perceived in single or multiple ways (which may or may not align with our identities.

Ami notes: The white savior
Cara: What about cakewalk – a north-American dance genre?
Cara: Feminized or feminist screendance?
The table was empty upon arrival, what to do with that moment? Ami tried to show an embodied comment by lying on the side ON the table. Representing bodies without words, and trying to process what was said about how we are perceived matters – for example the Saami choreographer Ola Stinnerbom who “looked more Saami than his parents and siblings” – and how this experience of being othered made him start researching the forbidden (by Swedish church) Saami dance. It felt weird lying on the table after a while - but Omari lay/ stepped up on the table as well. Taking care of spaces, talking talks with and through our bodies. Screendance community.

(Also acknowledging Maya Deren’s banquet table in 1943 Meshes of the Afternoon) Representation-non-representation, visibility-invisibility, empowerment, vulnerability, sitting, lying down and collaborative curating.

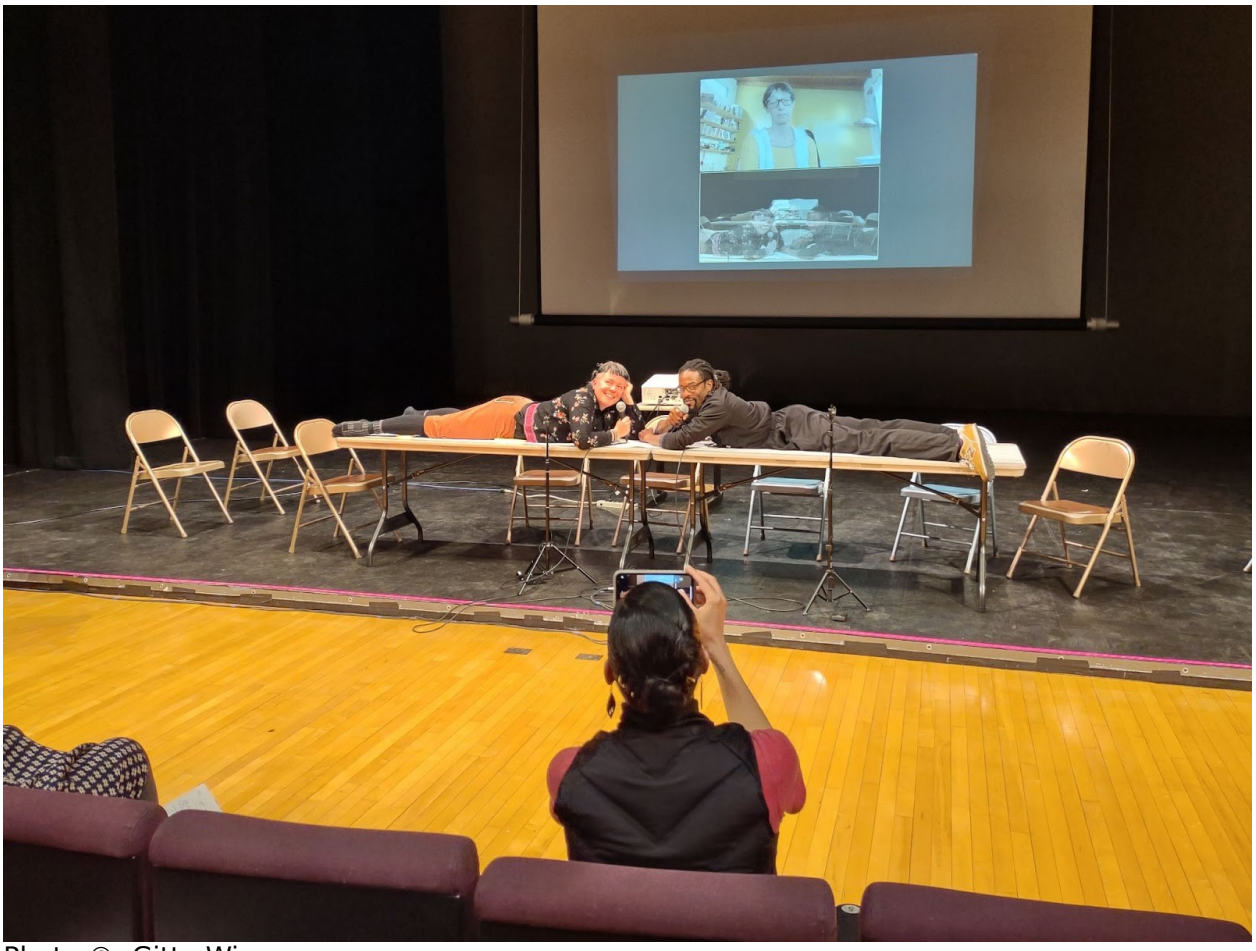

Photo ©: Gitta Wigro

Charlotte Notes: I was initially drawn to screendance because of the possibility of seeing and engaging with a multiplicity of persons, places, ideas, and aesthetics within a single program or artistic event. This continues to be inspiring, but I appreciate the collective resolve and energies shared during the symposium to transform practices and to move away from monocultural dominance, especially white supremacy in American cultural institutions, toward multicultural preservation, transmission, and innovation. Cara's book and curatorial practice give us markers and models to consider as do the workings of many in attendance. Omari described a friend explaining that any dance he creates will be seen by the white dominant culture as black dance no matter the aesthetic nature of the work. George shared the challenge of being pigeonholed and needing to make a certain kind of "black film" to get a place at the table and feeling like there are quotas that programmers fill. Once the black artist box is checked, there is nomore room. This line of the conversation circled me back around to the ACDA panel and the discussion of how screendance manifests in higher ed dance curriculums. How does reshaping curricula from a restorative justice lens reshape the field, and as Cara pointed out, "How long does it take to revise a curriculum?"

Multicultural, biracial, and passing identities are part of this story– and while we tend to the pressing needs of racial justice, how are we also tending to the multiplicities of the human experience and its representation.

Priscilla Guy (Zoom presentation) // Collaborative Curatorial Practice

Priscilla notes: This essay proposes collaborative curation as both a political and artistic gesture. Using Haraway's theoretical model of the string figures, as well as her notions of situated knowledge, response-ability and non-innocence (1989, 2016), I aim at excavating a sense of community inherent to screendance making, and apply it to curatorial practices. Taken as an engagement towards collectivity, curation can be envisioned as a tool to challenge dominant images and hegemonic modalities of body representations on screen. A tool to cultivate curiosity and responsibility towards each other. Through two different case studies, I illustrate how such collaborative curation can have a transformative effect on individuals, as well as on their practices. I like to call it an act of radical love, one that is in no way innocent: to love each other consciously through our ability to build places and imagine spaces for each other.

Sandhiya notes: https://www.regardshybrides.com
Priscilla talked about the 2019 Festival: Collaborative curatorial practice as string figures.
Curation as a tool to challenge hegemony- body representations on screen
Case studies illustrate the conscious effort to reimagine spaces. Echo some of the ideas from Jennifer/Robin/ Jen- long table

Ami notes: Expanding the scene

Gitta notes: From Priscilla's presentation: "In a collaboration your relative position and power changes as the work progresses." I was also really struck by Priscilla's comments about accepting (perhaps embracing) the 'inefficiency' of working collaboratively: she spoke about the group's "inability to do things in a timely manner. I am used to being efficient - but this made us rethink success; working in a spiral form not a linear path." This sat in contrast with one of the issues raised in the higher education panel, that interdisciplinarity and cross-departmental collaboration need an investment of time (and other resources). It was welcome to see an example of this investment of time in an 'inefficient' yet highly productive collaborative process.
It also raised the question how (western?) languages usually fail to capture collective, collaborative labour [or make it] visible, harking back to the opening discussion of the origins of the screendance journal.

Clare Schweitzer // Lone Mountain College San Francisco Dance Festival

Clare notes: Over the course of this presentation, Clare aimed to track the history and development of Lone Mountain College's San Francisco Dance Film Festival, aiming to situate the festival within the context of the histories of the San Francisco dance community, the West Coast Experimental Film movement and interdisciplinary collaborations between the two.

Clare tracked the history of Bay Area experimental film, referencing the Art in Cinema Series presented through the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art from 1946 to 1954. These screenings not only created an audience for experimental and avant-Garde cinema in San Francisco, but also laid the groundwork for similar work to be created in the San Francisco Bay Area. Interdisciplinary collaborations emerged between dance and film artists and featured collaborations such as Anna Halprin and James Broughton as well as Welland Lathrop and Padgett Payne. One notable team mentioned was experimental film artist Sydney Peterson and Mills College dance professor Marian Van Tuyl, who collaborated on films such as *Horror Dream* (1946) and *Clinic of Stumble* (1947), the latter of which was screened as an excerpt in the presentation. The presentation then referenced video collectives such as Video Free America & Camera Obscura as well as interdisciplinary initiatives such as the KQED Experimental Project which was later known as the National Center in Experiments for Television Initiative, which produced experimental works for television. The work and tenure of dancer/choreographer/historian Lenwood Sloan at the San Francisco Arts Commission eventually led to the San Francisco Dance Film Festival Program. One of the editions featured an event called the Meta-Kinesis preserve, (on Saturday, February 4th, 1978 as a part of the 1978 Dance Film Festival), which presented one of the earliest uses of the term "videodance" and featured experimental film installations that pushed the boundaries of what video dance could be. The conclusion of the presentation was a call for preservation and a reminder of the precarity of historical records, as festivals may be seen as institutional but their dependence on external factors do affect their operations and by proxy, their curation. Each one is a reflection of its time and place. Link to Source material.

Ami notes: important to acknowledge more filmmakers, act of historiographical activism
Doug ended the talk by acknowledging the point with Jewish art; we live in a sacred world and everything glistens with meaning.

Jananne Al-Ani, Timelines, 2022, Panoramic Video Installation, 9 minutes 7 seconds. © Jananne Al-Ani. Installation view. Photo: Rob Harris. Courtesy Towner Eastbourne UK.

Claudia Kappenberg // In the Face of War, a Historiographic Turn in Screendance

Sandhiya notes: Claudia used the work of Jananne Al-Ani to explore the question, “How do artists use moving image and Screendance to interrogate and reflect on historical narratives, war and violence?” Claudia referred to Kafka's parable suggesting that the past moves us forward, the future pushes us back. She screened a film by London-based, Iraqi-born artist Jananne Al-Ani which traverses extreme close-ups of a brass tray from Iraq from about 1918, with engravings of the British occupation of Iraq, guns, a plane, a man being hanged… with voice over by her mother remembering scenes of her life. It was a very beautiful film where the brass tray literally transforms into a landscape and the narration adds to the imagination of the agonizing events.

Claudia notes: Thinking about how we devise history I came across Walter Benjamin’s proposition that “[…] every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably.” (Illuminations, 1999:247). In other words, histories are dependent on the present for being recognized and written, and what is written or not written depends not on the past, but on how it is seen in the present. He wrote this in the 30s,

concerned about the rising extremism, but today the situation is similar in that much becomes normalised which is not (or no longer) considered a state of emergency. The work of history therefore, is to challenge the process of normalisation. By asking, how do we screendance history, I am also posing the questions as to how do we challenge normalisation?
Ami notes: The thought of Trinh T Minh-ha that speaking close to moving images allows more listening and less claiming of space - reflect on historical narratives, as not to reproduce violence when speaking nearby violence; We should stop using the verb 'shoot' in film-making.

Dominique Rivoal (Zoom presentation) // Somatic Relational Filmmaking Practice

Developing a somatic relational filmmaking practice by Dominique Rivoal
Dominique presented a project titled, "The shared space of Hackney Marshes"- in which dancer Claire Loussouarn and herself as filmmaker meet every month to film in the same spot of the Marshes for a period of four years. Dominique emphasized that it helps filmmakers to have a personal movement practice to shift the focus from the eye to the body and limb and increase awareness and receptivity to the space. In her project, Dominique explores the 'dyad' format between mover and filmmaker acknowledging that their relationship remains situated in space and time. This encounter is intercorporeal, inter-subjective, interpersonal as each participant of the dyad comes in with their own cultural and personal experiences, but the lived experience of the encounter always exceeds the camera's audiovisual field, what is felt within the relational encounter is not necessarily seen within the frame but it leaves a trace.

Dominique cited the anthropologist MacDougall, 2006, "Corporeal images are not just the images of other bodies, they are also images of the body behind the camera and its relationship with the world" and questions, "Holding a camera give a certain protection, an agency to come closer and take a better look. How can I temperate this "authority" with sensibility, noticing the difference between what I am taking versus what is offered to me? Dominique overcomes the divide highlighted by Christopher Lewis Smith between the performer and the filmmaker by considering that they are performing equally in the space. Citing Jeanette Ginslov's work, Dominique suggests non representation methodology as a way of paying attention to the emerging relational movement and to escape the ocularcentric dominance of the medium.

Ami notes: dyadic relationship btw mover and filmmaker, non-representation

Dominique notes: Developing a somatic practice of filmmaking means privileging the experience of this process instead of the end product. Dance phenomenologist Sondra Fraleigh points out that 'somatic practices are autotelic; their values lie in the doing, not the showing' (Fraleigh, 2019 p95).


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Gitta notes: at this point in the conference, after 18 talks, presentations and addresses in two and a half days (as well as the informal conversations and social events), my brain was at capacity; it seemed to be the same for a few attendees. The afternoon saw some attendees fan out into other spaces - the lounge downstairs, the lakeshore, the pier, the university quarter's main street and its cafés; singly or in small groups. Basically, a bunch of introverts taking a breather! Harmony pointed out in conversation that 'we are not used to this anymore' -after two years of no or few gatherings, little (if any) travel, *we* are different. It prompted me to think about the space and spaces of an event like this. Main spaces, side spaces. Room to work, room to think, together and alone.

Hannah Fischer // HOLD: Scoring Screendance

http://www.fischerdance.org/about

Drawing on the work of Isabel Sandoval, Katrina McPherson, bell hooks, Jenny Odell, and Joey Solloway, a practice and theory has emerged: the Intuitive Gaze In this lecture, Hannah will detail researching a feminist and decentralized approach to embodied cine-dance making. Hannah developed this approach while creating the large-scale, multi-channel screendance, HOLD, which serves as the primary creative research. Surprising outcomes of this approach have been

comprehensive scoring at all stages of creative practice, agency for performers, and new approaches to editing.

Ami notes: scores - shaping the space

Diane Busuttil (Zoom presentation) // Together We Dance, a collaborative dance film project

Diane notes: In this talk I focused on the social engagement aspect of creating a dance film using a Zoom format. This project was initiated through a funding body to curb isolation in seniors during the Covid-19 lockdown in Sydney, Australia. I spoke about the process of meeting with these women over sixty-five years, once a week on zoom; some were previous dance students and some were from another senior dance group called “Agile not Fragile”, all participants were dancers.

The sessions were split into two sections; a dance class and then a creative session whereby we tried out filmic ideas and movements that would specifically relate to forming movement patterns specifically for the confines of the multiple zoom frames. We entered and exited the frame, wore different colors executing similar choreography each week. We played with props and filmed movements that would then be reversed for the final film. As I facilitated the creative outcome, the participants were actively engaged with the overall process as well as allowing ourselves to be spontaneous and playful when needed. I found that break out rooms were a wonderful creative tool that allowed the participants to get to know each other through movement tasks and shared choreographic patterns. The social element of this zoom film was imperative to the overall success of the project. Linking people who were isolated in their own homes, unable to see family members and, in some cases, unable to leave the house due to the restrictions of people over eighty years of age. The Together We Dance project allowed people to connect and share their experiences of the pandemic and express their frustrations and joy through dance and movement.

In terms of the creative process, I had the editing semi-planned before engaging with the participants. Many of the scenes were planned to link into and/or overlap with other elements of the film. There was a lot of transparency with my intended experiments, which invited the group to embellish ideas as they went along.

Inspiration and research for *Together We Dance* was gained through Miranda Tufnell’s books *A Widening Field, Journeys in body and imagination* (2004) and *Body Space Image* (1993). Both were useful resources for using various materials and creative stimulus to generate improvised movement. I also looked at many dance and new zoom films, the most inspiring one being Phenom, a zoom 10 music video clip by Thao & The Get Down Stay Down, as well as the works of

Maya Deren, Barbara Hammer, Miranda July, Pipilotti Rist, Tracey Moffatt, Miranda Pennell, Darren Aronofsky and Mike Figgis

Photo ©: Claudia Kappenberg

Wednesday April 13, 2022
Welcome/Announcements by Douglas Rosenberg // Topic TBD
Doug screened Sally Banes' reading of her paper, "Making Tharp Baryshnikov"

As a writer and historian/theorist of dance and performance studies, Sally Banes was deeply engaged with the most canonical movements of the 20th century, from the Judson Church Group, through postmodern dance. Her book, Terpsichore in Sneakers virtually created the framework for discussing dance in a postmodern context. Her subsequent book, Dancing Women: Female Bodies on Stage, moved beyond the binary understanding of women in performance as either victims or liberated heroes, to excavate a more nuanced understanding of the multitude of representations across female bodies on stage and by extension, on screen.

Ami notes: Doug also acknowledged Nuria Font - who defended dance on camera as radical productions with a good audiovisual level.

Excerpt from ***Making Tharp Baryshnikov*** *by Sally Banes (2000)*

"*In 1977, Twyla Tharp's Making Television Dance, an hour-long videotape made in collaboration with director Don Mischer for WNET's Television Laboratory, was aired nationally on PBS. This paper is an analysis of a small portion of Making Television Dance — Tharp's brief solo, which ends the screendance event. I will argue that in this solo, Tharp seems to recorporealize herself as Mikhail Baryshnikov, even a Baryshnikov with enhanced powers. Watching the dance now, and thinking about the historical context of the piece relative to the emerging feminist movement of the 1970s, one wonders if she does this partly to assert through her screen-choreography a feminist political stance of women claiming equal rights with men, perhaps even claiming superior powers — as if to say, in this case, "Anything you can do, Misha, I can do better." Yet paradoxically, through her assertion of what one might call masculine "privilege" in a complexly layered gender-bending screen choreography, she also seems to argue for an inclusive androgyny that expands dance roles for both men and women.*

Making Television Dance is also very much a piece of the 70s in that it expresses certain feminist values — one of which is a brand of liberal civil-rights feminism, claiming equal rights for women on the dance stage and in the dance profession, as well as in the television studio (where very few women worked as directors) and in intellectual life. Tharp (and other women choreographers of the 70s) claimed equal rights for women by creating dance images of women as intellectual powerhouses. Tharp's work at this time parallels that of "liberal feminism," which sought equal opportunities for women in the workplace, at home, and under the law. In Making Television Dance, part of what we witness in the process is that Tharp is very much in charge of the project and, although experimenting with a new form, well on top of her learning curve in terms of dealing with television technology as well as the television crew. Her voiceover commentary, especially, signals her position as a woman who is confident and authoritative, an expert in her profession. In this respect, she claims equal rights with men to be in charge — to direct not only a dance company, but also the making of a television program.

Yet I would say that in Tharp's work of the mid-70s one can also see other feminist strands, including a playful commitment to confusing gender codes and appearances, for other reasons than equal rights feminism — for aesthetic as well as moral purposes.

Tharp recorporealizes herself as Baryshnikov, but she becomes a super-Baryshnikov, with augmented powers — powers heightened not by the "magic" so

often associated with dance, especially with ballet and its fairytale themes, but by the down-to-earth, assertively feminist, harnessing of science through modern technology, which makes television dance."

Photos ©: Claudia Kappenberg

Sumedha Bhattacharyya (Zoom presentation) // Duet with Camera: From an Instagram Space to a Community of Screendance Practice and Pedagogy in India

Sumedha notes: In this sharing, I traced the entangled journey of personal, fragile moments that began during the pandemic, leading of a year-long practice based, interdisciplinary, arts research project based in India : *Duet with Camera* that became an An archive of/for/with coping and chorus thriving during times of radical uncertainty and crisis Initiated as a social media page to enable dialogue and educational awareness around dance and cinema in India, the project found its way from a local, accessible and democratic space of the Instagram page, to conversations with cinematographers, movement practitioners (theatre, dance, visual arts etc), enabling series of collaborations and virtual residencies , towards a shared community of creative practice leading to India's first artist-led International Screen(ing) Dance Festival and Seminar 2021 . I also shared my decolonial, transnational and critical approach to pedagogy for the university classroom that is built on liberation, solidarity and radical care, which arose from my creative process and curriculum designing of Screendance as a cross-registered Expressive arts elective at a Liberal arts institution in India.

Sandhiya notes: Sumedha drew historical references to Ray, Pramod Pati and Uday Shankar- brief turnbacks to experimental cinema in India.
Gabri asked about how sonic images of Ray/Uday Shankar connected with Sumedha's personal practice. Sonam, an online attendee commented that she loved the idea of Camera as God; personifying the agency and mocking the power of camera.

Ami notes: Embracing Death as a teacher, letting go Movement - Migration
Grandmother's journey Bangladesh -India

Sandhiya Kalyanasundaram // Ranbir Kaleka: Man and Cockerel, Time and Symbol

Still from Ranbir Kaleka's Man and cockerel, 2001-2002.

Sandhiya positioned Ranbir Kaleka's Man and cockerel, 2001-2002 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V_7LGGqBoxc) within screendance and analyzed the various performative elements in the video artwork. She centered the work's power in its ability to influence and play with audience perception through the elements of time and multiple symbols. She also highlighted the role of architecture in human experience and described Kaleka's extension of the 'Haveli' architecture beyond space and soundscapes into layers of memory and the politics and paradox of everyday survival. She made a case for a dialogue between screendance and neuroaesthetics and used the Vienna Integrated Model of Art Perception by Pelowski et al., (2017) to bring in points of discussion about both audience perception and artistic intent.
Katrina referred to the work of Karen Wood in employing kinesthetic empathy as a lens to analyze choreographers' intentions and audience responses to watching screendance.

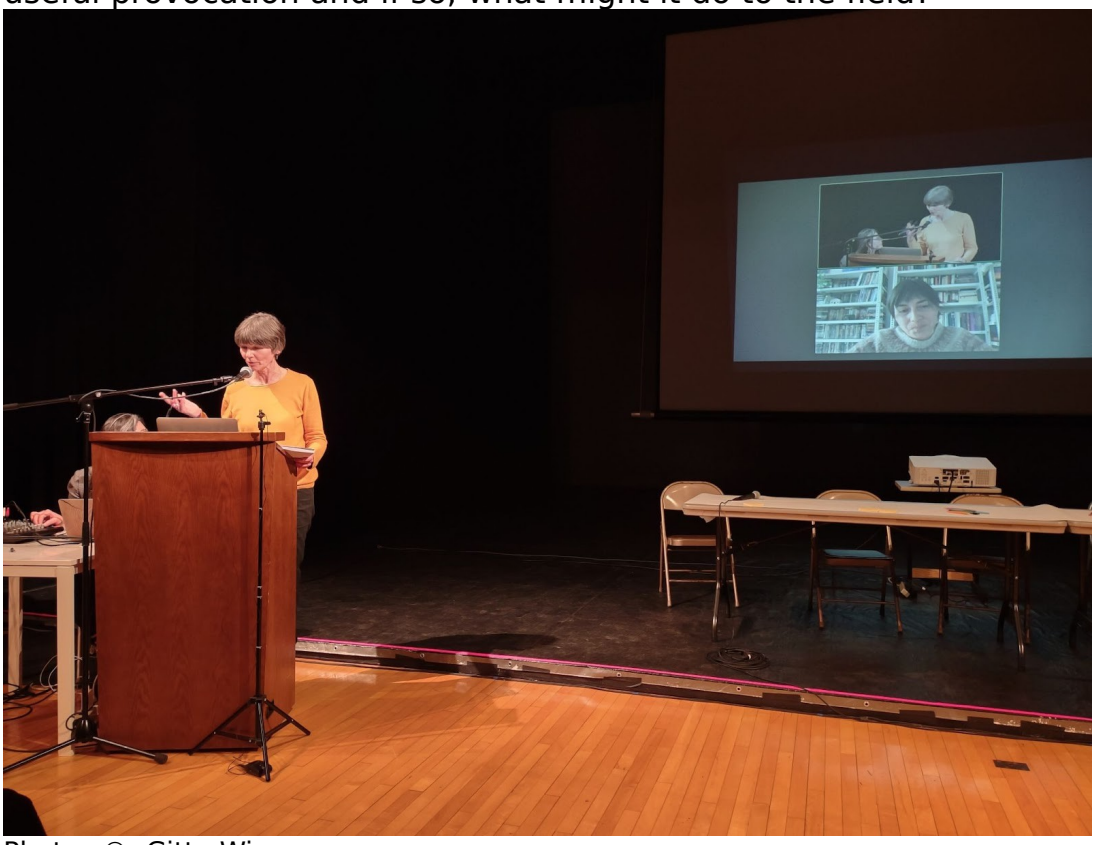
Claudia notes: The courtyard as an audio-visual space in which scenes are repeated and impressions layered, a space of memories transposed into a video loop. Architectures affect our experience, how we read things, how we remember things.

Ami notes: childhood = watching life happen - events in a courtyard Neuroaesthetics + screendance, kinaesthetic empathy - all aesthetic experiences are actually specific!

Alma Llerena (Zoom presentation) // Narrative and Non-Narrative Screendance

Alma looked at screendance festivals in Spain from 2000- 2018 and looked at films that have been curated in these festivals over the years. She has Identified differences and categories by studying narrative and non-narrative screendance, how the body is portrayed and the structural work. Common characteristics between narrative and non-narrative screendance are hybridization of audiovisual and choreographic languages, music over and movement itself.

The main differences lie in duration, shot sizes, editing patterns and styles, time ordering, use of effects and choice of locations. She found that audiovisual language of narrative screendance films is similar to narrative film genres while non-narrative audiovisual language is similar to video art. Claudia commented that classifications can be problematic because they close things down. She asked if instead of nouns, verbs were used, how would that change what Alma is proposing? She also cautioned about the use of binaries; perhaps they can be a useful provocation and if so, what might it do to the field?



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Ami notes: Alma Llerena discussed her analysis of narrative and non-narrative screendance works from 2013-2018 - 5 years to identify from over 200 categories of classification/preferential styles of making. Alma described her PhD journey - serving the film industry, Alma originally desired to study magic realism and looked for screen dance films that may involve magic realism, but pushed to be more analytical, she started asking about duration - why was duration always short in most screendance festivals?

Photos ©: Gitta Wigro

Omari "Motion" Carter // 'What is Urban Dance on Screen?

Omari introduced the video essay format to talk about his work. He talked about his sense of responsibility in educating himself and others about the layers underneath.
Cara Hagan asked if urban dance is inherently site specific?

Ami notes: Academia is a drag show -work to include more drag, present research through film and rhyme, talk with specific rhythms -part of the research

Claudia notes: great to see the video essay outside the strictly academic/ institutional context. Omaris' video essay is both playful and critical, taking the

long view whilst also being specific. Talking about screendance through screendance.

Gitta notes: The infrastructure screendance uses / works within (e.g. dance, film, visual arts institutions, theatres, galleries, etc.) “filters out” certain practices because of their respective conventions, biases, histories.

Izabella Pruska-Oldenhof (Zoom presentation) // A Duet Between the Organism and Technology”: Amy Greenfield’s Screendance

Izabella discussed the screendance works of Amy Greenfield as hybrids of dance and experimentations with cutting-edge motion picture technologies. She argued that Amy Greenfield’s works not only articulate the turning points of developments in electrotechnics and in shifting conceptions of the self but also retrieve and weave into their fabric the forgotten or omitted by history women—real and mythical. Izabella took a deeper look at ‘*Dervish*’, focussing on Greenfield’s kinetic energy and video as electromagnetic energy and ‘*Wildfire’*, made by post-production analogue technological methods with a special focus on its ‘communicating free female intuitive energy’.

Ami notes: ethereal video, off stage since 1990, but continued - 44 works, “free intuitive female energy”, self-reflective, kinetic/electromagnetic energy, experimentation in defence of the analogue, turn the knobs in non-standard ways

Photos ©: Claudia Kappenberg

Caroline Ferreira Mota da Silva (Zoom presentation) // The Body of the Urban Black Woman Who Dances

Caroline talked about her personal experiences and her belief that Body is memory, body is a lived experience and cannot be divided in the contemporary here and now.

When we look at the interaction of body with technology, we need to ask about what is the body we are referring to, the responses of self and young black women who have the opportunity to see representations of themselves on screen. This visibility on screen allows for accessing memories from deep within hidden under layers of resistance to the messages received by society and situations, allows the expression of their truthful selves and emerge the powerful affirmative meanings.
This call for change is actually a manifesto to access and assess black people in a different way. Caroline also talked about how religion affects the woman's body and the belief that dancing truthfully to oneself is a spiritual journey. She talks about being a black mother, the chores of everyday living and still coming out and occupying the place and creating art and the role of the art in turn affecting the black woman's body.

Ami notes: My body, my dance, we are beautiful. Selfcare as a strategy. Working mother, Bahia, African dances in the university - recognize oneself in a place of power. God dances as well. How art affects the body.

Pamela Krayenbuhl // TikTok & Vernacular Screendance

TikTok algorithms and the choreographies that it forces.
Pamela argued that Tiktok was less about the freedoms of the platform and more about its constraints. Tiktok centralizes its own alchemy of personalized content recommendations.

TikTok has one billion active users in 4 years while facebook has 3 billion in 16 years. What does this visibility mean for screendance? Pamela asserts that tiktok makes it easier to create and share what she frames as vernacular screendance, a personal performance created to preexisting or remixed audio. Vast majority is made by everyday users where users skew young. Viral dance challenges to create original dances and copied and performed by non-professional dancers are a typical scenario. Many seek to be professional tiktokers with the aim of generating revenue, finding agents and seeking more professional opportunities.
As a dance media historian, Pamela notes that one criticism about Tiktok is the apparent lack of credit where due and racial politics especially in American Tiktok.
There is a homogeneity of frame and movement: The screen space has shrunk down, the portrait orientation reducing the width of the frame, 'entrapping; the performer in an upright, body-sized frame with little space or context. Predominant choreographies are firmly rooted in hiptop dance, body hit the edges of the screen, this Pamela sees as a performance of entrapment. The popular

format is the tight frame with limited choreographies of constraint regardless of the performer's abilities. Ethos of these choreographies continues to remain home-bound and pandemic related home-bound scenarios.
Harmony asked about remediation and the emergence of platform specific videography, and noted that instructions are similar to dance games.

Ami notes: vertical cinema, young people's intro to screendance, stuck in a frame, claustrophobic, all happens in the same place by design, self-policing and community-policing, audiovisual turn, media modules/models, many from dance, few from film. @lizzo has more followers than @ABT
Really great to get both statistics and examples of how Tik Tok builds performative responses - embedded in the app. I showed Pamela my master alumni choreographer Eva Svaneblom who has her glocal gallery on Tik Tok: https://www.tiktok.com/@glocalgallery

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Ximena Monroy (Zoom presentation) // Choreocinema: Map of Transmedia Notions

Ximena's talk focussed on choreocinema as a weave of transmedial notions and as a living network of enunciation and composition for the creation, study and experience. She positioned choreocinema as a field that involves mutual contamination and enrichment of choreography, movement and film-video where they can be transformed at their intersections and new relationalities can be proposed. She referred to the works of Maya Deren and Talley Beatty while

positing choreography and kinetics as writings of movement and writings of the body. She referred to a set of terms available in Spanish that she used at her visual art exhibition with a performance art piece.

Marisa wondered if she was thinking about who she was opening the doors to as she was parsing the terms. Ximena answered she felt a need to open screendance to experiences that were not necessarily screendance but found applications of the notions she proposed in a much wider artistic ecosystem.

[ends]