

EXC »Temporal Communities«

Online Workshop
June 3–4, 2021

Responsive Bodies

**The Ethics of
Temporal Community
in Contemporary
Dance**

**TEMPORAL
COMMUNITIES**

DOING LITERATURE IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE
CLUSTER OF EXCELLENCE

Freie Universität  Berlin

By relating positions of philosophical literature to the connection of dancing and dance reception, the workshop investigates the ethical dimension of temporal communities in dance. Based on but also going beyond the co-presence of dancing and kinaesthetically responding bodies, temporal communities in dance address an extended audience: They transcend the present moment of dancing into the past of ethical reflection and into the future of responsible action.

How can we relate philosophical connections of ethics and performativity (Hannah Arendt, Judith Butler, Werner Hamacher, Jean-Luc Nancy, etc.) to the materiality of moving bodies? What role do vulnerability, resilience and non-identity play in terms of the temporal community of philosophers, dancers and spectators? How can we understand contemporaneity beyond shared time and presence so that contemporary dance can acknowledge the fragility and incompleteness of the past and unlock the potentiality of the future? And how is this understanding of contemporaneity linked to ethical responsiveness in dance and dance reception?

3 June 2021

15:00

Welcome and Introduction

Alexander H. Schwan (Freie Universität Berlin)

Panel 1: Re-Definitions: Choreography and Dancing

Moderator: Mariama Diagne (Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien)

15:15

An Ethics of Inconsistency

Lucia Ruprecht (Emmanuel College, Cambridge)

15:45

Community and Choreography: A Reflection on Dance's Constitutive Outside

Raf Geenens (KU Leuven)

Discussion & Break

Panel 2: Articulations

Moderator: Monika Raic (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin)

17:00

Enactive Communal Expression in Dance: Limits on Spectator Access

Aili Bresnahan (University of Dayton / University of Roehampton)

17:30

On Corporeal Grounds: Bodily Integrity and its Artistic Articulations

Sandra Noeth (HZT Berlin)

Discussion & Break

Panel 3: (Non-)Relationalities

Moderator: Lindsey Drury (EXC 2020)

18:45

Cleansing Violence: Notes on (Non-)Relationality and Absolution

Mlondi Zondi (Wesleyan University)

19:15

Questioning Man in Joana Tischkau's ›Colonastics‹

Stefan Hölscher (Ruhr-Universität Bochum)

Discussion

4 June 2021

Panel 4: Transpositions

Moderator: Kirsten Maar (Freie Universität Berlin)

15:00

The Choreographic Attitude: Documentary Dance and the Ethics of Witnessing

Timmy De Laet (University of Antwerp)

15:30

Transsituational Techniques

Gerko Egert (Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen/HBK Braunschweig)

Discussion & Break

Panel 5: Co-Existence

Moderator: Nina Tolksdorf (EXC 2020)

16:45

Arenas of Exchange: Dance, Ethics and Communities of Practice

Fiona Bannon (University of Leeds)

17:15

The Experience of Co-Existence

Leonie Otto (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main)

Discussion & Break

Panel 6: Intersubjectivity

Moderator: Alexander H. Schwan (Freie Universität Berlin)

18:30

Touching Gestures of Relational Care: Three Case Studies from Israel of Choreographing Intersubjective Considerations through Touch

Einav Katan-Schmid (Berlin)

19:00

Normative Issues in Dancing Together

Ilya Vidrin (Northeastern University)

Discussion & Virtual Apéro

Organisation: Dr. Alexander H. Schwan, Institute of Theatre Studies, Freie Universität Berlin

The workshop will take place online in English via Webex.

Contact: responsive-bodies@temporal-communities.de

Please register here:

The QR code is clickable.



Lucia Ruprecht**An Ethics of Inconsistency**

In *Comment vivre ensemble*, Roland Barthes distinguishes between the metrical regularity of ›rhythm‹ and the ›flexible, free, mobile‹ patterns of idiorrhythmy. My paper takes this distinction as a point of departure to cast an ethical light on the relationship between choreography and dancing. If choreography is on the side of the prescribed spatio-temporal arrangements of rhythm to begin with, dancing is on the side of idiorrhythmy's potentially defiant ›swing‹. I would like to explore this by using as an example the inconsistencies in the interpretations by young dancers of a solo variation from Wayne McGregor's *Chroma* (2006), which allow for an appreciation of idiorrhythmic decisions as prime modes of ethical subjecthood. Barthes' declaration that ›only a subject (idios) can ›delay‹ rhythm – that is to say, bring it about‹ invites us to think of dancing as generative rather than representative of choreography. This is where Barthes' ethics of form arises in the field of dance.

Lucia Ruprecht is a Fellow of Emmanuel College and an affiliated lecturer at the Department of German and Dutch, University of Cambridge, UK. Her research is situated at the intersections of dance, literature, film and cultural theory. She is the author of *Gesural Imaginaries: Dance and Cultural Theory in the Early Twentieth Century* (OUP, 2019) and *Dances of the Self in Heinrich von Kleist, E.T.A. Hoffmann and Heinrich Heine* (Ashgate, 2006). She edited or co-edited volumes across the fields of literature and dance studies, most recently *Towards an Ethics of Gesture* (special section of *Performance Philosophy*, 2017). She is currently co-editing the *Handbuch Literatur & Performance* (De Gruyter).

Raf Geenens**Community and Choreography: A Reflection on Dance's Constitutive Outside**

The aim of this paper is to take a step backwards. The problem of community in contemporary dance cannot be accurately thought through without first looking at dance's constitutive outside, namely social dancing. This is where most dancing actually happens and it is a ›constitutive outside‹ because dance as an artform emerged by separating itself from social dancing. In social dancing, the nature of dance is clearly on display: dancing always served community formation and used to be an intrinsic part of life's most important rituals. But in order to become art, dancing was transformed into ›works‹, which populate an ›imaginary museum‹ (Goehr) and which transcend the moment of performance so that they can be seen, re-seen and contemplated by an audience. Deprived of its organic embeddedness in communities, dance must now re-connect with societal and ethical issues from within the artificiality of its own medium. I will look at various choreographic strategies that show an exemplary awareness of the ambivalence of dance: choreographies are ›things‹ or ›objects‹ but, by their very nature, they have a communitarian telos.

Raf Geenens is an associate professor at KU Leuven's Institute of Philosophy, Belgium. He was educated at the universities of Brussels, Leuven and Paris VIII Vincennes, and he has held visiting positions at, among others, the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales and Columbia University. His primary research interests are in continental political and legal theory. Yet he also has a vivid interest in the history and philosophy of dance.

Aili Bresnahan**Enactive Communal Expression in Dance: Limits on Spectator Access**

In this presentation, I will use an article by cognitive scientists McArthur Mingon and John Sutton on why robots cannot dance the haka to show that some dances are embodied, entrained, enscripted, temporally sensitive and culturally enacted practices that cannot be represented adequately via imitation. Next, I will show how this epistemological fact about experiential access bolsters Paul C. Taylor and Thomas F. DeFrantz' independent claims that those artistic expressions involving people who have experienced oppression that are made for these groups to share internally cannot and should not be accessed by outside spectators unless they are invited to do so. Finally, I will show that lack of prior experiential access is not a complete bar to appreciating others' cultural expressions – that it just provides some ethical constraints on how these new engagements should take place, which those who are sensitive to others should be willing to take on.

Aili Bresnahan is an associate professor in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Dayton in Ohio and a 2020–21 US Fulbright Research Scholar at the Centre for Dance Research at the University of Roehampton in London. Her research centres on philosophical aesthetics, performance, improvisation, creativity, expression, style and interpretation, particularly in dance and the performing arts.

Sandra Noeth**On Corporeal Grounds: Bodily Integrity and its Artistic Articulations**

The ongoing pandemic has once again placed questions about the protection and security of bodies at the centre of political and social debate. However, the right to bodily integrity continues to be distributed unequally, creating experiences of disintegration and dispossession for some while offering legal protection and ethical recognition to others. The lecture examines what it means for an individual body and for the body of a collective to be safe or unharmed, and how a body's status is linked to how we imagine, experience, represent or define it. In dialogue with contemporary performative practices and based on a relational understanding of the body, it questions our responsibility when it comes to creating visibility and agency for bodies that are under physical or symbolic attack.

Sandra Noeth is a professor at the HZT-Inter-University Centre for Dance in Berlin, and a curator and dramaturge. She specialises in ethical and political perspectives toward body-practice and theory. Noeth acted as the Head of Dramaturgy and Research at Tanzquartier Wien (2009–2014). She has been a senior lecturer at Stockholm University of the Arts since 2012 and was a resident professor at Ashkal Alwan's HWP programme in 2015–16. Recent publications include *Resilient Bodies*, *Residual Effects: Artistic Articulations of Borders and Collectivity from Lebanon and Palestine* (2019, transcript) and *Bodies of Evidence: Ethics, Aesthetics, and Politics of Movement* (2018, with G. Ertem, Passagen).

Mlondi Zondi

Cleansing Violence: Notes on (Non-) Relationality and Absolution

This paper discusses the limits of reconciliation ethics through an engagement with a performance by the South African dancer Abert Ibokwe Khoza, co-choreographed with Berlin-based Robyn Orlin, titled *And so you see ... our honorable blue sky and ever enduring sun ... can only be consumed slice by slice* (2018). In the performance, they (Khoza) invited specifically white audience members to enact a ritual of cleansing, to wash their body. Using dance analysis and aspects of psychoanalysis, I question the critical purchase of turning to touch and water as cleansing devices for transcending historical sexual-racial trauma. I read this dance against the backdrop of post-Truth and Reconciliation Commission public enactments where white apartheid despots such as Adrian Vlok travelled around black communities washing black people's feet as a symbol of redress for anti-black atrocities they committed during apartheid. What assumptions about empathetic identification and reconciliation drive the contemporary choreographers to invoke these fraught gestures and rituals? I argue that an attachment to catharsis and intersubjective relationality, in this particular instance, obscures and maintains the status quo.

Mlondolozzi (Mlondi) Zondi is an Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow at Wesleyan University's Center for the Humanities. As a PhD graduate of Northwestern University's Performance Studies Department, Mlondi also completed graduate certificates in Critical Theory, African Studies and Gender & Sexuality Studies. Prior to attending Northwestern, Mlondi received an MFA in Dance as a Fulbright scholar at the University of California, Irvine; and a BA (Hons) cum laude in Cultural Studies

and Performance Studies from the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal in South Africa. Currently, Mlondi is working on a book project titled *Unmournable Void: Contemporary Black Aesthetics and the Ends of Reconciliation*, a study of critical Black artistic practices that tend toward the dead and dying. The manuscript approaches questions of matter, mourning and ontological absence through an engagement with art history, visual studies, revolutionary Black thought, psychoanalytic theories and dance/performance theory. Mlondi's work has been published in *The Drama Review* (TDR), *ASAP Journal*, *Text and Performance Quarterly* and *Propter Nos*.

Stefan Hölscher

Questioning Man in Joana Tischkau's »Colonastics«

My talk will address the question of the extent to which contemporary dance is inscribed in a historical constellation that is inseparable from the history of colonialism and a certain European image of man. Man is a profoundly ambivalent figure here: On the one hand, within the framework of colonial projects, an image of humans as that of white men was over centuries globally exported from Europe and served as the model for others according to which they were forced to adapt themselves. On the other hand, there was also the invocation of the human who is missing on the side of the colonised. The European idea of man, which divided the world into the West and the rest for centuries, is therefore no longer tenable. By referring to the video clip series *Colonastics* by the Afro-German choreographer Joana Tischkau and the Caribbean philosopher Sylvia Wynter's writings on different genres of the human, I will show in how far theatre is the place where a dispute can be fought over who is man in contrast to the human.

Stefan Hölscher is a postdoc researcher at the Fritz Thyssen project *Collective Realization – The Workshop as an Artistic-Political Format* at the Institute for Theatre Studies at Ruhr University Bochum (Germany). His habilitation project deals with Ludwig Feuerbach's writings on the human as a relational being, read from a postcolonial perspective.

Timmy De Laet

The Choreographic Attitude: Documentary Dance and the Ethics of Witnessing

In recent years, there has been an increasing interest among contemporary dance artists (such as Arkadi Zaidis, Olga de Soto or Eszter Salamon) in using historical events, factual data or oral testimonies as a direct input for their work. My aim in this presentation is to enquire how these documentary forms of choreography put spectators in the position of witnesses and place particular ethical demands on them. To this end, I will consider how the figure of the witness became a recurrent topic in late-twentieth-century continental philosophy as well as feminist and decolonial theory. Against this background, I will argue that documentary dance reveals how the »aesthetic attitude«, as described by Simone de Beauvoir in *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (1947), can be redressed as a distinct choreographic attitude that, through the combination of ethics and aesthetics, illuminates a particular type of temporality that calls on the existential conditions of spectatorship.

Timmy De Laet is an assistant professor of Theatre and Dance Studies at the University of Antwerp, Belgium. His research is supported by the Research Foundation Flanders (FWO), the Fulbright Commission and the Belgian American Educational Foundation (B.A.E.F.). His research interests include the

iterative nature of dance in relation to reenactment, archiving and historiography. Timmy's writings on these topics have been published in journals such as *Performance Research*, *Tanz and Dance Research*, as well as in *The Oxford Handbook of Dance and Reenactment* (2017) and *The Routledge Companion to Dance Studies* (2020). Timmy is Managing Editor of the *European Journal of Theatre and Performance* and the founder of CoDa | Cultures of Dance – Research Network for Dance Studies.

Gerko Egert

Transsituational Techniques

The talk discusses the politics and ethics of dance and its community through the concepts of technique and the transsituational. The event of a dance, be it in the form of a performance, a workshop or as training, is situated in an assemblage of practices and techniques. Each of these events results from numerous influences such as specific training, rehearsals, etc., on the one hand, and, on the other, it affects subsequent situations such as other performances, forms of training, reflections, text, etc. In short, dance is transsituational. I will propose the concept of the transsituation to think about the politics of techniques in dance and its events: created or learned in one situation, a technique is a tool to expand the original situation and fuel a new one. This transsituational logic of techniques can create a consistency of practices as much as it can be used to induce alteration and challenge the order of a given situation.

Gerko Egert is a performance and dance studies scholar. He is currently a visiting professor at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste Braunschweig and a postdoctoral researcher at the Institute for Applied Theatre Studies, Justus-Liebig-University, Giessen, where he

is working on a project entitled »Choreopower. On the Politics of Movement«. His current publications include: »Experimente lernen, Techniken tauschen. Ein spekulatives Handbuch [Learning to Experiment, Exchanging Techniques. A Speculative Handbook]« (co-edited with Julia Bee, Nocturne 2020) and »Operational Choreographies. Dance and Logistical Capitalism« (Performance Philosophy, forthcoming).

www.gerkoegert.com
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Fiona Bannon

Arenas of Exchange: Dance, Ethics and Communities of Practice

With no tangible object to possess, the experiential practices that identify dance are difficult to promote in societies where notions of value remain bound to the possession of commodities and/or attainment of monetary gain. However, through dancing experiences attention shifts to values found through our *being-in-association*.

Experience found moving can forge relations and understandings, akin to Iris Murdoch's sentiment when noting, »... art is for life's sake ... or else it is worthless«. As makers of artistic responses grounded in the animating cultivation of social interaction, we are continuously engaged in debate with notions of responsibility for those we work alongside. The relevance of emergent relations in collaborative processes animates more than the resulting artefact. Intertwining the philosophic, the social and the civic as demonstrative features of communities of practice, I ask, what moving has to do with teaching us the responsive ways we each co-exist through relational, ethical encounters.

Fiona Bannon is an academic based in the School of Performance and Cultural Industries, University of Leeds, with research and teaching interests that include aesthetics, ethics, socially engaged arts, dance practice, pedagogy and performance. Recent publications include: *Considering Ethics in Dance, Theatre and Performance* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018). Fiona is a Director of CePRA (Centre for Practice Research in the Arts); frequently working as an adviser and external examiner for programme initiatives and institutional reviews. After a second term as Chair of DanceHE (standing conference for dance in higher education), Fiona is now working with World Dance Alliance and aims to establish *World Dance Alliance-Europe*.

Leonie Otto

The Experience of Co-Existence

Based on a reading of Xavier Le Roy's installation *Temporary Title* (2015) – a landscape in perpetual transformation that the visitors can join and leave as they please – and referring to the notion of thinking and listening in the philosophies of Martin Heidegger, Jacques Derrida, Jean-Luc Nancy and Hannah Arendt, I will put forward an ethics of how spectators and performers think: an ethics of thinking in the sense of listening to one another, paying attention to how we all relate to one another and in the sense of a mutual response-ability.

Leonie Otto teaches at the Frankfurt Institute for Theatre, Film and Media Studies. She wrote her doctoral thesis on thinking in dance, especially in the choreographies of Laurent Chétouane, Philipp Gehmacher and Fabrice Mazliah / The Forsythe Company. She has worked as a dramaturge in the independent theatre scene, was a member of the jury for Tanzplattform in Germany and is currently a member of the Theaterbeirat of the city of Frankfurt.

Einav Katan-Schmid

Touching Gestures of Relational Care: Three Case Studies from Israel of Choreographing Intersubjective Considerations through Touch

Following from phenomenological, relational and pragmatist approaches in ethics and aesthetics, and by analysing performances by three female Israeli choreographers, this presentation fosters touch as a contemplative aesthetic sense relevant to moral processes of reasoning. While traditionally the »distant« (or »intellectual«) senses of vision and hearing are considered more relevant to aesthetic appreciation than the »proximal« bodily senses of smell, taste and touch, I understand the aesthetic experience of bodily movements through the appreciation of touch as a source for the reciprocal transformation of (symbolic as well as actual) meanings in dance. I will analyse choreographies by Yasmeen Godder, Anat Danieli and Dana Yahalomi, and will study how they perform touch as a sensual activity of both cultural and perceptual significance. Analysing the relationality of touching feelings, I will further argue that the sense of touch facilitates an intimate intersubjective understanding, in which caring for others can be an adjusted form of caring for oneself.

Einav Katan-Schmid is an independent researcher based in Berlin, a core convener for the international network »Performance Philosophy« and a member of the editorial board of »Studies in Dance: Theories and Practices« (Dance Studies Association and Michigan University Press). She led the practice-based research project »Playing with Virtual Realities« as part of her postdoctoral fellowship at the Cluster of Excellence »An Interdisciplinary Laboratory« at Humboldt University of Berlin. Among her publications is the book »Embodied Philosophy in Dance: Gaga and Ohad

Naharin Movement Research« (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016). She holds a PhD in philosophy from Tel Aviv University, Israel. Her current research deals with choreographing the ethics of care in Israel.

Ilya Vidrin

Normative Issues in Dancing Together

In this short presentation, I will discuss the significance of ethics in dance partnering through the lens of normative epistemology. What makes a gesture or physical expression right or wrong? According to what standards do we evaluate the rightness of movement? These questions are essentially concerned with the deontic status of physical norms – in other words, how should we move together? Rather than directly answer these questions, I have found it valuable to tease apart what these questions are asking, especially given that these questions are not unique to dance practices. What are the associated systems of thought and network of commitments that frame embodied evaluation? Thinking critically about the nature and role of evaluation enables a deeper consideration of what ethical reckoning can be achieved through dance.

Ilya Vidrin is a research-practitioner situated at the nexus of performing arts, ethics and interactive media. Born into a refugee family, Ilya grew up navigating the nuances of cultural expectations, language barriers and diverging political ideologies. This experience of code-switching fuels his research and artistic practice to interrogate the ethical dimensions of human interaction, including the embodiment of empathy, trust and agency. Based in Boston, Ilya is a postdoctoral associate in Theatre and Creative Practice Leadership at Northeastern University.