



Carolina Bäckman and Andrea Deres

Getting together to forget, to re-member

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Mappings of care and maintenance within the independent field of dance and choreography through the participatory activities of Danish Dance Stories

By Carolina Bäckman and Andrea Deres

– in dialogue with Stine Frandsen and Nanna Stigsdatter

Although we – the authors of this article – have been engaged within the independent field of dance and choreography in Denmark for more or less two decades, spending more time than most immersing ourselves in past-present-relationships, our sense and knowledge of what has taken place within the field one or two generations before us seems hollow. This indicates how the past is *not* present in a precarious, project-oriented work-life – at least not consciously. Yet what lies in the shadows comes to play a part in how we act into the present. Thus, knowing your history, in all its rich complexity, acts as a condition for being able to (care)fully respond to the past in a becoming future.

The feeling of historylessness is something we regularly experience being voiced by a wide range of colleagues in different contexts. Hence, in this article we aim to unfold and contextualise what we recognise as a (felt) *collective amnesia* haunting the independent dance scene in a Danish context. With an ambition to identify potential reliefs for this condition, we delve into the participatory activities of the artistic initiative *Danish Dance Stories* – more specifically the event *Monumental Movement* at The Danish National School of Performing Arts in December 2023. While exploring potentialities of gathering in practices of re-membering a (plural, embodied) history of dance, we ask: What gets un/ravelled in situations of forgetting and re-membering together with others? How could these activities be understood as *acts of care*? And in a wider perspective, how do these intimate practices of past-present-future

relations connect with an institutional, long-term responsibility of taking care – of *maintaining* – documentation and other archival records from the past?

Becoming situated

We – Carolina Bäckman, Andrea Deres, Stine Frandsen and Nanna Stigsdatter – are four Copenhagen-based freelance dance artists rooted within collective art practices. Belonging to somewhat different generations, we all have a Scandinavian background, as well as a state supported professional dance education within contemporary dance. Together we initiated *Danish Dance Stories* (DD) back in 2018, with a shared conviction in the importance of a supportive collegiality within the scattered work-life-work situation that people working within the independent field of dance and choreography most often navigate. We saw a potential in gathering around dance (hi)stories, as a way to meet and engage across generations, artistic affiliations, positions, and geographic borders. Already then aware of, and wanting to respond to, the (feeling of a) collective amnesia within the field.

DD started as a singular project and has developed into a platform for collegial exchange and a growing (digital and lived) archive – still with project-based funding. Through participatory explorations and activities, informed by an expanded notion of choreography, our aim is to create a lively basis for dialogue and knowledge sharing from within the independent field of dance and choreography in Denmark (and beyond). From a practice-oriented starting point, we collect, activate and contextualise a spectrum of experiences, perspectives and local/global dance stories. By emphasising personal and embodied perspectives, we situate the work within a feminist and critical discourse around history writing, a positioning we unfold in the section *Thinking with others*.

DD's activities are documented at danskedanshistorier.dk which over time has come to constitute a significant amount of open source material, gathering diverse perspectives from the (at this point) around 150 participants who have been part of re-membling and activating dance stories since 2018¹.

1) See all participants: <https://danskedanshistorier.dk/about.php>.

In this way, wanting to acknowledge the field as a multitude of individual artistic voices from a broad understanding of dance and choreography. DD have never aspired to write one singular Danish dance *history*, but rather to nurture the simultaneity of perspectives and entangled storylines; (Danish) dance *stories*.

*Re-membering across generations
letting go forever or for now,
digging deeper to unleash and release,
staying with it so that other meanings can unfold.*

To sustain the activities of DD is motivated by the current lack of political and institutional focus and support of historicisation of the independent field of dance (and performing arts) in Denmark; a need to engage in a past, present and future that we ourselves are a part of. In the article “Expanded choreography and history writing in the flesh: Independent dance artists claiming their past” by Danish dance scholar Karen Vedel (2021), Vedel introduces different initiatives for documenting, collecting and archiving dance and choreography in a Danish context (tracing these back to the 1980s). She concludes that the projects discussed were all initiated and driven by dance artists, and while posing relevant and innovative questions for how to care for ephemeral and embodied art forms, they seem to be motivated by “a self-empowering response to the need to bring the past, present, and future into dialogue with one another” (Vedel 2021, 68). DD is one of the case studies in the article, and we can very much – as individuals and as part of a field – relate to the situatedness (Haraway 1988) that Vedel addresses. As artists we are not standing outside the historicisation, on the contrary we are (within) the liveliness of time and space. Thus, the participatory remembering practices presented in this article – e.g. dancing, writing, voicing, discussing and sharing – contribute to alternative mappings across time-space, but they also function as self-care for us and the participants. The activities create an opportunity to individually and collectively respond and (re)act upon the (felt) collective amnesia, forming a recognition of what it means to belong, becoming part of and continuously becoming situated.

How to write, how to read

As a starting point for the writing process of this article, Andrea, Carolina, Nanna and Stine (DD), got together for a two-day workshop in June 2024, where we plunged into the sound documentation of the event *Monumental Movement* (MM)². Through a thematic lens of care and maintenance, we listened to the recordings while doing body work and moving around, reflecting and taking notes; opening up towards an embodied knowledge. We went on to unfold these fragmented notes through a collective writing exercise, generating a series of textual reflections. In this way the workshop functioned as a *situated methodology*, providing a certain mode for understanding the documentation; re-mem-bering, imagining, analysing; formulating what is at stake in a sensuous, entangled and poetic way.

How to write and visually present what we hear?

*While listening to the soundscapes from Monumental Movement
we invite all our knowledges and experiences to inform and get informed
by what we hear.*

After this initial workshop, we (by now Carolina and Andrea) have continued to trace out, contextualise and expand the collective reflections into the framework of this article; reminding ourselves which questions called for answers, spurring other types of thoughts and formulations, helping us thread through from beginning to end. The fragments resonate throughout this article as right-aligned, italicised sections, weaving in and out as a complimentary texture; as a situating inside the event. Similarly, we use parentheses, hyphens and slashes³ as a way to open up towards multiple meanings/readings and fruitful (mis-)understandings.

2) Published documentation from MM: <https://danskedansehistorier.dk/stories.php?y=2023>.

3) This textual alteration is inspired by scientist and thinker Karen Barad's work, which we connect with Massey's thinking on time-space. E.g. how "remembering" becomes untangled by the use of a hyphen: "re-mem-bering", which (intuitively and theoretically) then can be perceived as an embodied practice, which instead of going back to what was, makes an effort to deal with colonized historicity and open up towards new possible histories (Barad 2018).

Thinking with other(s)

We have brought in texts from four critical feminist thinkers across a range of disciplines, whose radical perspectives nourish an artistic approach to historicalisation: offering perceptions of past, present and future beyond the colonial (singular and linear), questioning immanent power structures and trusting communities above individuals. They also suggest unconventional propositions of how care can come into being, which we find fruitful to bring into the writing process.

In order to articulate DD's intention of creating a plural historicalisation which acknowledges the mood of dance and choreography into being, we throughout the article return to the book *For Space* (2005), by British social scientist and geographer Doreen Massey (1944-2016), whose work has given way for a critical feminist and relational approach within the field of geography. Her concept of *time-space* (Massey 2005, 27) – an interconnectivity between time, space and places as a lively multiplicity of trajectories in a becoming “arrangement-in relation-to-each-other” (Massey 2005, 111), connects and fuels our perception of engaging in historicalisation through embodied practices. Moreover, Massey illuminates an ongoing interplay between chance, chaos and order; elements which to us correspond with the caring unfolding in many of DD's activities. Another inspiration has been the text “Canon and Archive” by German cultural studies scholar Aleida Assmann, from which we bring with us a definition of a *cultural memory* as well as her reasoning on how *forgetting* is a condition for remembering (differently) (Assmann 2010, 97). The way she differentiates between active and passive forgetting (Assmann 2010, 98), has further inspired us in our search of *what lies in the shadows*. This search also brought us to the important work of British/Australian writer and feminist/queer/race studies scholar Sara Ahmed, who's research, in her own words, is concerned with “how bodies and worlds take shape; and how power is secured and challenged in everyday life worlds as well as institutional cultures” (Ahmed 2024). While remembering together (e.g. in the specific setting of MM, taking place within an institution) – we find it crucial to bring with us the “figure of the feminist killjoy” (Ahmed 2017, 252), as it functions as a significant, brave actor, illuminating hidden/suppressed perspectives as an act of care. Further on, we bring forth the thinking of

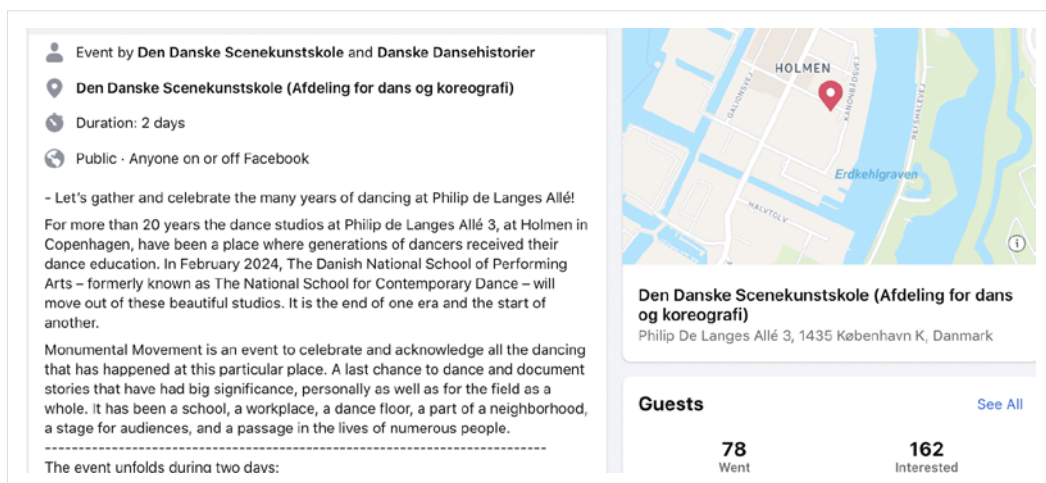
the Chilean/Mexican/Austrian artist and curator Amanda Piña, who speaks from an indigenous, women of colour-perspective, around artistic curation as cure (Piña 2024). While belonging to the same generation as us and being connected to the European field of dance, she comes (from) with(in) another perspective, that we – as white cis-women, being born into a western view on history as a systematic, academic discipline – find highly relevant to bring into this article. In order to gain a deeper understanding of DD in a local/global context, we are informed by Vedel's historical-analytical introduction of different artistic initiatives for historicising the independent field of dance and choreography in Denmark (Vedel 2021).

Case study – introducing Monumental Movement

We will now introduce the event of *Monumental Movement* (MM) as a case study in order to present some of the methods and workings of DD, which in the upcoming sections will be contextualised and put in a broader perspective.

In December 2023, the event of MM was held at the dance department of The National Danish School of Performing Arts (DASPA) – a final closing ceremony of the dance studios at Philip de Langes Allé (PDLA) as the school decided to terminate the lease, despite years of protests and political actions from current and former students and staff (Wøldiche 2023). As a response to the situation, four generations of alumni – graduating in 2003, 2005, 2017 and 2022 respectively – initiated the event of MM: Carolina Bäckman, Andrea Deres (DD) and Rebecka Berchtold (5678⁴), together with Casper Albrektsen and Magalí Camps. The event was arranged in close collaboration with the school and consisted of a performance evening as well as a whole day with workshops, social time and a final dance floor. Marking the profound significance that the spaces at PDLA have had for the dance education in Copenhagen, as well as for the art form as a whole (in a Danish context).

4) Link to the podcast 5678: <https://soundcloud.com/5678dancetraining>.



Screenshot of MM Facebook-event (accessed 7 November, 2024).

Through an open invitation⁵, MM invited everyone who felt connected to the dance studios at PDLA, offering the possibility to meet across generations, and we – former and present students, teachers, colleagues, supporters, friends (these roles which over time are negotiated, altered, swapped and multiplied) – gathered in order to remember, acknowledge, mourn, let go of and celebrate the time(s) at PDLA.

*Cared for and carried,
relieving somebody else's burden.
Spreading things out, becoming (in)visible (again)*

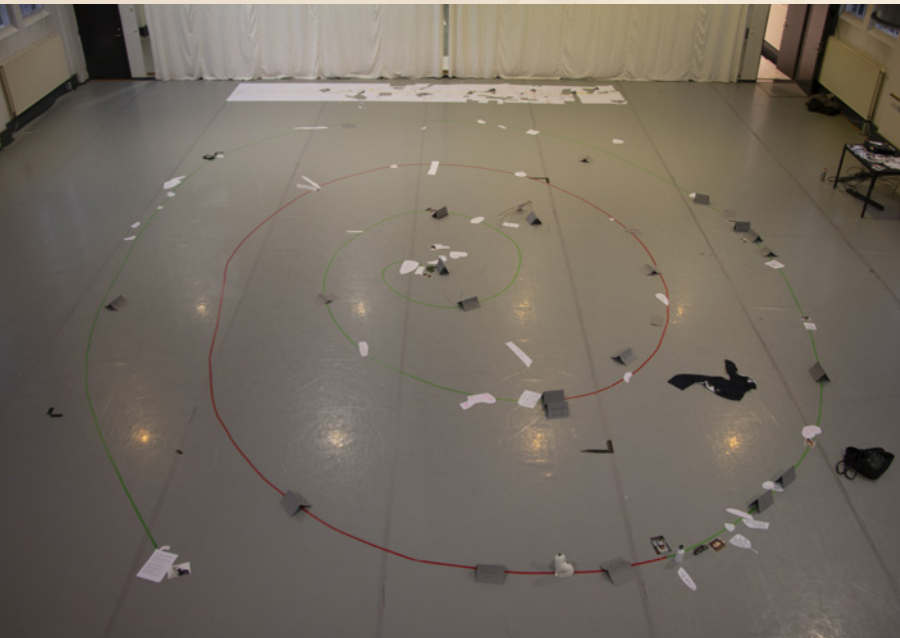
During the event DD facilitated three different workshops:

*Spiral Timeline*⁶ was held in two parts – “Timeline” and “Spiral” – which merged into the performative score, *Spiral Timeline*.

5) Online invitation: <https://ddsks.dk/da/kalender/monumental-movement> (Accessed 18 August, 2024).

6) The workshop was a re-working of a former *Spiral Timeline*-workshop as part of the *DD residency* at Vestjyllands Højskole in 2018, thus this version is named *Spiral Timeline 2a+b* on the webpage/podcast.

“Timeline”
Photograph Þórunn Guðmundsdóttir.
→



“Spiral”
Photograph Þórunn Guðmundsdóttir.
←

“Spiral Timeline”
Photograph Þórunn Guðmundsdóttir.
→



During the first part – “Timeline” – we (the participants) collectively mapped out a *herstory* of the school.⁷ A chronological timeline starting in 1986⁸ and ending 40 years later (three years into the future), in 2026. Personal memories, significant individuals/groups and events, as well as information of a more general character, were inscribed in the timeline, as accurately as possible. The participants were encouraged to ask each other questions, as well as adding on information where it seemed to be needed. After a lunch break, we entered the second part of the workshop – “Spiral” – where we had taped out a huge spiral on the floor in one of the dance studios, divided in past (outer), present (middle) and future (inner) areas/eras. The participants were asked to cut out fragments from the previously co-created timeline, and to (re)place these – together with objects related to the building and/or the school⁹ – intuitively in the area/era one felt that it belonged. In this way we collectively plotted the spiral with different historical artefacts, merging timeline and spiral, and thus trans-forming the two parts into *Spiral Timeline* – a performative score which the participants were invited to activate and unfold through an improvisational format of instant choreography.¹⁰

*A group of people are dancing,
whispering and gossiping about former events,
letting things spill out which until
now has been held in or forgotten.
Clapping, laughing, name-dropping, choiring –
connecting sit bones to heels.*

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- 7) The format is inspired by the dance collective *Samlingen* (SE) who has done a series of herstories in different contexts and places, e.g. as part of *DD symposium* in 2018 (herstory is a term for feminist history writing, or history viewed from a female or feminine perspective).
 - 8) The year where the association *Ny Dans* sent in a first proposal to the Ministry of Culture concerning the establishment of a professional dance education in DK.
 - 9) The participants had beforehand been asked to bring an object with them to the workshop; an idea, which is inspired by a lecture-workshop held by Karen Vedel at *DD symposium* in 2018.
 - 10) A microphone was placed in each area/era – not amplified but as a means for documentation. The participants could use them as a way to highlight information from the score, thus coming to affect the performative situation.

*Open Mic*¹¹ followed the *Spiral Timeline*-session and held a simple format: all participants gathered in a big circle and two microphones were passed around to those who wanted to share something.¹² The participants were invited to speak directly from the heart and as a starting point we asked: “What have you learned here?”

*There is a nerve in this setting.
To dare to speak up in the circle, to let others listen.
Something is at stake.
A strong wish to express something that seems important.*



Open Mic. Photograph Þórunn Guðmundsdóttir.

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- 11) *Open Mic* as well as *Private Mic* was developed and facilitated together with Rebecka Berchtold.
 - 12) The microphones were there as a means for documentation and therefore not amplified, but inevitably came to affect the situation by giving focus to the current speaker as well as adding a nerve to the setting.

Private Mic was introduced directly after *Open Mic*, essentially consisting of a lounge chair, privately placed in one corner of the big studio, with a connected microphone and recorder. An invitation and opportunity to record what you did not feel like or did not have the time to share during the previous sessions.

*These stories seem to come straight from memory to mic,
some of them so fresh that they almost haven't cooled off.*

No one is listening, so I can say it as I feel it.

Affected by the heat of the mo(nu)ment / movement.



Private Mic. Photograph Þórunn Guðmundsdóttir.

Mappings of Time-Space – contextualising *Spiral Timeline*

In the following section, we will contextualise the alternative mappings and underlying mechanics within the workshop *Spiral Timeline*, tracing how *care* is underpinning and present within its participatory practices. By thinking with Massey's concept of time-space; as a landscape where space, place, temporalities and bodies are intertwined and in flux, we articulate expanded choreographic notions of the interdependence between chaos and order, happenstance and not-happenstance (Massey 2005, p. 14; 111). We further explore potentials within Assmann's understanding of how forgetting is the norm and remembering the exception (Assmann 2010, 98).

In spatial configurations, otherwise unconnected narratives may be brought into contact, or previously connected ones may be wrenched apart. There is always an element of 'chaos'. This is the chance of space; the accidental neighbour is one figure for it. Space as the closed system of the essential section pre-supposes (guarantees) the singular universal. But in this other spatiality different temporalities and different voices must work out means of accommodation. The chance of space must be responded to. (Massey 2005, 111)

Chaos as care

Our intention behind the workshop *Spiral Timeline* was to reorganise a recognised linear timeline in order to create new connections and clashes between the plotted events and objects – bringing them (back) to life through the instant happenings of the performative score. "Timeline" and "Spiral" provided different approaches for creating alternatives in order to confront a colonised understanding of time and space as static and singular: "Timeline" functioned as a collective, explicitly subjective herstory, queering up the Western traditional horizontal mapping of history while still caring for a chronological order. In "Spiral" taking it a step further by actually cutting up the horizontal timeline and re-placing it in another time-spaceliness. This provided a possibility to *practise* breaking up chronology: to re-situate

and re-connect, to care for the intra-relationality (Barad 2007) as well as the non-potentiality (Massey 2005, 11).

a slice of time(s): >

a cluster: ••••

two singular/independent events: * ^

While Massey discards western, colonial maps as representatives of space as a complete, coherent system (Massey 2005, 107-109), she notices an alternative potential in e.g. feminist literature where “maps can be both deconstructed and then reconstructed in a form which challenges the claims to singularity, stability and closure” (Massey 2005, 109). Similarly, we experienced how the plotted spiral created negotiable and permeable distances and (dis)connections between past, present and future; relationalities in and through time-space. In her example, Massey remarks that these textual (though inventive) cartographies are not *spatial* structures, and that working with overwriting and layering (palimpsest) “fails to bring alive the trajectories which co-form this space.” (Massey 2005, 110). The liveliness was however very much present in the participants’ activation of the *Spiral Timeline*. We experienced how the invitation into a *performative reading* – the offer to *embody and engage* with differentiated clusters or slices of the re-placed records/artefacts, while also being *affected by and affecting* the simultaneousness of the situation – gave space for a lively, and somewhat chaotic, exploration of alternative historical assemblages.

The playful approach of *Spiral Timeline* stimulated the “unexpectedness of space” (Massey 2005, 111) – or a “‘deep order’; order and disorder as folded into each other” (Massey 2005, 117, drawing on Lewin [1993], Hayles [1990] and Watson [1998]). A chaotic, yet choreographed, situation in which it became possible – and necessary – to simultaneously care for one’s own positioning in relation to (each) other, while tending to the always becoming present situation. In other words, we experienced how *Spiral Timeline* appeared as a micro-cosmos, a prototype for *practising care in time-space*.

*What is here now – in this moment?
We speak it out and dance it out in order to connect and rearrange.
We map to expand.*

Listening with our whole being

We witnessed how the improvisational mode of *Spiral Timeline* activated a familiar attention through which the participants could perform and navigate within the seemingly chaotic, deep order. As contemporary dance practitioners we recognise this attention as stemming from years of training and fine-tuning the sensorial attentiveness of what artist Eleanor Bauer calls the *modybind* (body+mind) (Bauer 2022, 7), becoming accustomed to moving in-between-and-across, navigating while be(come)ing lost. As Merce Cunningham, one of the most highlighted choreographers in western tradition, formulates it: “The fortunate thing in dancing is that space and time cannot be disconnected, and everyone can see and understand that” (Cunningham 1952, 37). For us, Massey’s thinking around (and through) time-space, expands and articulates this tacit knowledge (Polanyi 1967) of the dancer, which underpinned the practice.

This trained sensorial attentiveness might also be formulated as *listening*. An active, *care-ful(l)* listening which is not limited to hearing but includes our whole being. We were touched by how the participants took their time (and space) to listen, and thus cared for the (becoming) situation, opening up towards the simultaneity of listening to one self (e.g. physical sensations, associations and memories) and to the instant choreography continuously unfolding – bringing themselves into the practice as *dancer beings*.

*We are overlapping, creating layerings in twisted time(s), layering out
a landscape of this past present and future, creating points in time
CLAPPING CLAPP CLA CLAPP CLAPP CLAPPING CLASHes to take
departure(s) from, onwards and backwards at once, once upon a time,
this time, time, time(s). A chorus of past present future, unfolding as a
choreographic chaos.*

A possibility to forget, to re-member

In *Spiral Timeline* we also experienced how forgetting and re-membering became closely interdependent through performative acts. As described earlier, the performative layer allowed us as participants to let go of an inhabited (colonised) perception of history, and instead to borrow or try out (assemblages of) fragmented im/materials, which made us re-trace our own forgotten memories – or compose new ones. Assmann articulates how forgetting is a condition for remembering and that remembering is the exception of the two; that most memories are “hidden, displaced, overwritten, and possibly effaced” (Assmann 2010, 97) and that this relationship applies both on an individual and a cultural level.

[T]hey [objects] fall out of the frames of attention, valuation and use. What is lost but not materially destroyed may be discovered by accident at a later time in attics and other obscure depots, or eventually be dug up again by more systematic archaeological search.

(Assmann 2010, 97-98)

Assmann here refers to objects as physical artefacts, but if we were to include immaterial/ephemeral objects – memories, events, movements and sensations – we suggest that *Spiral Timeline* triggered opportunities for both accidental, as well as systematic, digging. We as participants experienced how the practice invited us to get lost – to actively fall in and out of these (forgotten) im/materialities – potentially spiralling us into falling endlessly/continuously towards potential futures. As Massey writes “On the road map you won’t drive off the edge of your known world. In space as I want to imagine it, you just might” (Massey 2005, 111).

While looking (or rather listening) back on the documentation from the workshop, we can almost sense how the centrifugal/centripetal-energy of the spiral contributed to the feeling of *getting lost* between memories, our own as well as other(s). In a way twisting or de-stabilising our sense of grounding, triggering us to forget and thus giving space to other findings/possibilities – to re-member differently. Engaging in empathic relations towards each other’s

experiences, enactments and reactions, creates (we propose) a shared sense of ownership and response-ability (Haraway 2016). Through practice we embody – and thus care for and *re-pair* – forgotten (hi)stories, giving space for them to (re)gain agency and life.

What lies in the shadows

*Who was invited, who was there, what was addressed?
What was said out loud and what has not been told?
How do we share the memories we (want to) forget?!*

In this section we shift our focus towards the formats of *Open Mic* and *Private Mic*. With Assmann's thoughts on cultural memory in mind, we return to these testimonies, listening carefully while acknowledging the (potential) stories and perspectives that might have been passively or actively forgotten. How and why was this? With a critical gaze on our curation, we strive to articulate how the invitation of MM, as well as the oral practices, exposed relationships between inclusion and exclusion – between illuminating and *shadowing*. Using Ahmed's notion of the *feminist killjoy*, we look at how these (inevitable) relationships can be challenged/alterd. In an attempt to unfold how intended acts of care are embedded in the artistic, curatorial work, we bring in Piña's thoughts around *curation as cure* (Piña 2024).

Building trust through curation and collective activations

The invitation to MM (co-written by all organisers) was formulated as an open invitation, yet the specific setting and purpose – gathering and celebrating the many years of dancing at PDLA – clearly resonated with people who had been affiliated with the education, and mainly those who brought with them positive memories. This issue – of *being part of* – was felt and addressed throughout the day and also resonates in the sound documentation, both as a value, as a privilege and as a consciousness of the exclusion that any (strive for) inclusion inevitably produces. The celebratory, ceremonial setting therefore shed light

on those who, for different reasons, did not show up, as the event also gave space for forgotten or suppressed memories to come to light.

As curators it was our intention to create a trusting atmosphere as a condition for the possibility of sharing (and/as caring). In this context, it is important for us to acknowledge that it was the participants' generosity – their individual, collective and continuous contributions – which co-created the situation and filled it with meaning. In order to articulate how trust was built throughout the event, we will include the initial happenings of the day: The programme¹³ started off with an improvisation-based morning class, guided by Malin Astner (a long-time teacher at DASPA), followed by a circle of gratitude guided by Andrea Deres (DD)¹⁴. Both activities contributed to an awakening of the trained sensorial attentiveness of the *modybind*, respectively acknowledging the specific (local) situation, and intra-relations in a bigger (global) perspective. Furthermore, as the participants had brought with them an object relating to PDLA, they had considered their private archives before arrival. This attentional and physical tuning in was continuously nurtured throughout the different activities of the day.

Killing the joy as an act of care

Assmann differentiates between active and passive forgetting, where the first connotes to *trashing* and *destroying* and the latter relates to e.g. *neglecting*, *losing*, *hiding* or *leaving behind* (Assmann 2010, 98), though not necessarily permanently. Through the encounter of MM, we have become attentive to yet another mode of forgetting – the relationship between *illuminating* and *shadowing* – where the act of shadowing to us seems to both include passive and active forgetting: you might shadow someone or something accidentally, or you can consciously put them in the shadows. An in-between/doubleness which for us is fruitful to think with as well as to stay critical to.

13) Event invitation including programme at DASPA's webpage: <https://ddsks.dk/da/kalender/monumental-movement>.

14) Taking time to stand still, holding hands and silently acknowledging those who made the education (in this building) possible, as well as those less privileged – also including (without being specific) current planetary and political situations in the world.

Time compressed. Intimacy condensed.

During *Open Mic* one of the participants spoke up, making us all sharpen our modybind as they reminded us that this place – this institution – is *not one but many*. By voicing how this place *also* carries harassment and oppression, that one participant altered all other testimonies of the day. Calling out problems that peaked 15 years ago illuminated the vulnerability of an educational institution, as well as the responsibility of its leaders, and shed light on the risk of defining institutions and issues from the most recent circumstances – from what we remember, and not from what we (want to) forget. In a celebratory context like MM, it takes guts to bring up memories from the shadows that most of us try or want to forget. By taking on the figure of the *feminist killjoy* (Ahmed 2017, 252), the participant(s) who shared a testimony deriving from negative experiences not only cared for themselves, but simultaneously for the complexity of historisation by unsettling the (now un-)forgotten traumas of the past. As Ahmed states, a killjoy is essentially about “making manifest what exists” (Ahmed 2017, 252) and thus taking an individual responsibility towards – caring for – the (becoming) present. As the participant also stated in their testimony: “We have to stay critical in order to take care”¹⁵.

Healing potential

The etymological origin of curation – *cūra*; acts of caring for, curing and maintaining¹⁶ – enforces the understanding of the curated event of MM as a practice to bring out shadows from the past. By bringing dark(ened) memories and experiences out into the open – in this context with a community present (and through the documentation, to potential future listeners) – new paths are illuminated towards a possible process of repair, or *healing*. Both during and in connection to DD’s events, it has many times been voiced how engaging with(in) history together with other/s, is a form of therapy, although always said a bit hesitant, or with a bit of irony, like we do not dare to take it seriously. The writing/work of Piña helps us to recognise these notions of healing-po-

15) Sound documentation from *Open Mic*: <https://danskedansehistorier.dk/story.php?id=58&mode=stories>.

16) <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/curation#Etymology>. Accessed 18 August, 2024.

tential. While referring to indigenous ontologies from the Wixarika tradition, which “propose curing [*cura o curación*] as a form of healing without need for disease (...) a communal relation which involves humans and others alter- or counter-worldling, practised through ritual music, dance, and performance.” (Piña 2024, 2), she illuminates the healing potential for (more-than) human gatherings and connectivities across time-space. Making us acknowledge and trust the healing potentiality of an artistic, curating approach to (her)storying practices – also in a bigger perspective.

Going back to Massey, she writes about how care usually is associated with a tight proximity, as something practised face-to-face (Massey 2005, 186). She traces this phenomenon to a colonial historicity – how a Western we have internalised the ability to care for, respect and feel responsibility only towards the closest ones and rhetorically asks: “Does it have to be territorial at all? Perhaps it is not ‘place’ that is missing, but grounded, practised, connectedness.” (Massey 2005, 187). Massey forces us to return to the imminent question of inclusivity and range within DD’s work, which the name *Danish Dance Stories* connotes (Bäckman 2023, 60-62). Nevertheless, we join her call for practised, transindividual interrelations (Massey 2005, 187-189) as it resonates with our aspiration to cultivate an empathetic culture of responsibility and connectivity across time-space.

Piña continues: “To purge proposes a cleansing [*limpia*] of Western institutional spaces from their colonial habits through unmarketable spaces of conviviality and good living” (Piña 2024, 3). This perspective of altering *from within the institutions*, leads us to speculate on how DD, by collaborating with institutions,¹⁷ might be able to affect current and future structures towards a historiography that recognises (deep ordered) embodied and relational perspectives. This line of thought brings us to zoom out again from the specific event of MM, and to re-situate the work of DD in a longer and wider (time)

17) DD – through Andrea Deres and Carolina Bäckman – are currently engaged as artistic consultants in the three-year research-project *Knowing in Motion. Dance, body, archive* at the Department of Art and Cultural Studies at the University of Copenhagen (in collaboration with the Royal Danish Library), as well as in the development of an archive for artistic research: *The Circular Performance Archive*, hosted by the Danish residency BIRCA – Bækkelund International Residency Center for Artists.

span, articulating mechanisms of care and maintenance, from a local and relational perspective.

In the long run – who cares?!

*We have a responsibility as a field to remember,
to actually create a dance history so that we can look at it and decide
what we want to take with us and what we should not bring further.
Not having to (re)invent things every fifth year.*

If care is perceived as an intimate, immediate and response-able practice, we could see *maintenance* as a long-term, somewhat mundane responsibility. Our hope is that DD's different activities also expose the importance of, as well as contribute to, generating a greater culture for what we call *historicising-maintenance* – a structural tending of time-spatial relationalities. Vedel stresses that if the artist-driven archival collections of the short-lived initiatives in Denmark so-far are to be comparable in larger academic and artistic research contexts, there has to be a consideration of infrastructures which can accommodate this need (Vedel 2021). By this, Vedel hints at the lack of political priorities and long-term institutional resources and traditions for documenting and archiving independent dance in Denmark, a situation we believe contributes to sustain the (felt) collective amnesia.

We understand historicising-maintenance as a pervasive culture, and we apply the term not (only) in the meaning of conservation or preservation, but as continuous acts of nurturing and repairing. Something solid to critically trust and be able to *create friction with*. This culture might partly manifest as a national archive for the independent field of dance and choreography – and thus implementing historicising-maintenance requires financial, scholarly and infrastructural *resources over time*. However, what we find most urgently needed is a widespread acknowledgement that the past is important and/as interdependent with the present and future, and that people from different positions of power will *act* upon this meaning-making potential. Maybe then, the collective amnesia – over time – could be cur(at)ed and the history of dance

and choreography in a Danish context will begin to resonate and matter more (consciously) in the present and future.

As the collection of stories multiply on danskedansehistorier.dk, we are confronted with how DD, being an artist driven initiative, with (or without) project-based funding, on the one hand has been perceived as an institutional historicising resource – with all the associated power and responsibility such a position entails, while DD on the other hand exist in precarious conditions as an association run by (us as) freelance dance artists. Though we strive for a more sustainable structure to work through, we intuitively reject becoming an institution. For as long as we are situated within an artistic practice, we can embrace and reinforce the wild and living complexities and contradictions of/within time-space – chronology *and* chaos, imaginations *and* facts.

Laying fertile grounds for future histories – a conclusion

At this moment in time, *Danish Dance Stories* – as an artist-run, project-based initiative – is one of few platforms in Denmark where historical materials are collected, activated and made public. Taking care of past, present and future stories for the independent field of dance and choreography, require us to continuously consider and take responsibility for how the initiative conveys issues of being part of or not; inviting blind spots and killjoys to be a part of the cure/ation. Our aspiration is that the grounding and intra-connectedness, which emerges through the collective practices as exemplified in the case study of *Monumental Movement*, will continue to resonate long after the event – as embodied listening, empathy and care. In a bigger perspective, we hope that DD – together with other initiatives (across time(s)), who care for historical futures – can contribute to cultivating a collective responsibility for the interrelationalities of time-space. Laying fertile grounds for a greater artistic *and* institutional commitment (with)in the often messy and time-consuming work that historicising-maintenance demands. Because, from our perspective, what is needed in order to heal a (felt) collective amnesia is engaging pluralities – of care and maintenance, institutions and artists – a polyphonic deep order of dance (hi)stories.

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