

# Nordic Journal of Dance

– practice, education and research

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# Editorial

Dance research in the Nordic countries focuses on both past and present, and both on traditional and contemporary dance forms. This issue of *Nordic Journal of Dance: practice, education and research* illuminates this diversity vividly. Dance practices are also becoming ever more varied, as practitioners with versatile backgrounds enter and develop the field. Of course, practice and research are interconnected. Thus, it seems appropriate to state that the dance field is developing towards increased multiplicity. This trend reflects the increasing complexity of the contemporary world. *Nordic Journal of Dance* appreciates dance researchers' and practitioners' efforts to understand these complexities and encourages the readers to cruise through all articles, whether or not closely related to their own special interest.

The issue begins with a glimpse to the past. Anne Fiskvik's research article titled *Tracing the Achievements of Augusta Johannesén, 1880-1895* depicts a detailed picture of remarkable individual who, according to Fiskvik, was one of Norway's most important ballet dancers in the latter part of the 19th century. Fiskvik also gives a vivid description of the Norwegian theatre world of that time and supports her investigation with resources that have not previously received much attention. Historical research on dance, indeed, seems to be thriving in the Nordic countries.

The second research article, *The Construction of Meanings in Breaking: Insights from Breakers in Oslo* takes us back to the present as it examines the phenomenon of breaking, often called also breakdance. The geographical proximity of Tonje E. Fjogstad Langnes' and Kari Fasting's study to Fiskvik's highlights how times have changed! As a dance form, breaking develops rapidly and dance researchers definitely need to move along with this development. This being said, it seems pertinent to point out that here, the first author, Tonje Langnes, has approached this topic through an ethnographical methodology where she has practiced

breaking along with the participants of the study, illuminating how dance research often is thoroughly intertwined with dance practice.

The third article is titled *The Presence of Real Reality: Six Theses on Dance Animateuring* by Raisa Foster. This is a practice oriented article albeit the author is also a dance researcher with a doctoral degree. Her topic draws from her doctoral study and her practical experience as a dance animateur. This article presents the main ideas of dance animateuring, a practice that tightly connects pedagogical and artistic practice, in a clear and inspiring manner.

The last article, written by Per Roar and Sidsel Pape, offers insights on *Seminarium*, an art project that explores the intersection between seminar and performance and aims at enhancing artistic development and critical knowledge in the field of dance and movement based performing arts. The title *Seminarium.no – Cultivating Discourse through Artistic Intervention* speaks for itself. The article presents the main ideas of the project, and more details can be found from the website of the project.

The issue also contains a review of an exciting and important contribution to Nordic dance scholarship, *Nordic Dance Spaces: Practicing and Imagining a Region*, edited by Karen Vedel and Petri Hoppu. In her review Helena Wulff states that "in an interdisciplinary area such as dance studies, traditional disciplinary boundaries do not necessarily matter anymore. We now share methods and theory to a great extent." I could not agree more.

The remainder of the journal includes some current information about conferences, publications and university dance programmes that may be of interest to the readers. I hope you will enjoy reading this issue of *Nordic Journal of Dance*, and become informed and inspired!

Eeva Anttila  
Editor

### ABSTRACT

Dancer, choreographer and teacher Augusta Johannesén was an important figure in several capacities for Nordic theatrical dance. She danced, taught and choreographed in Sweden, Finland as well as in Russia. Between 1860-1878 she was a member of the so-called *Johannensenske Balletselskab*, which toured extensively in the Nordic countries. The Johannensenske family settled in the Norwegian capital Kristiania in 1880, and Augusta Johannesén slowly established herself as a professional dance artist at the most important theatres in Kristiania. Over the years she became a dancer, choreographer and teacher of great significance, and her contribution to the development of Norwegian theatre dance cannot be overestimated. She was active as dancer well into the 1910's and "arranger of dance" up until she died in 1926. As a ballet teacher, she trained hundreds of dancers, including several of those who later went on to play a role in the Norwegian dance- and theatre scene.

In many ways, Augusta Johannesén is representative of a versatile dancer that can be found on many European stages, the versatile ballet dancer that was also typical of the Nordic dance scene around the "fin de siècle". She typically also struggled with stereotypical notion of the "ballerina". This article focuses on only a part of her career, her first fifteen years in Norway. Between 1880 and 1895 she established herself in Kristiania, dancing at the *Christiania Theater* and later at the *Eldorado*. The article also forefront an especially important event in Norwegian Nordic dance history instigated by Johannesén: The establishment of a "Ny Norsk Ballet" ("New Norwegian Ballet") at the *Eldorado* theatre in Kristiania in 1892. This is probably the very first attempt at creating a professional ballet company in Norway, and Augusta Johannesén's contribution is only one of many ways she made a difference to professional theatre dance in Norway.

### SAMMENDRAG

Augusta Johannesén – "excellent dancer with dramatic fantasy". Danseren, koreografen og pedagogen Augusta Johannesén har vært en sentral figur på ulike områder innenfor den nordiske teaterdansen. Hun danset, underviste og koreograferte i Sverige, Finland og Russland, og var mellom 1860-1879 medlem av det *Johannensenske Balletselskab*, som reiste mye rundt i de nordiske landene. Den Johannensenske familien slo seg ned i den norske hovedstaden Kristiania i 1880, og der etablerte Augusta Johannesén seg sakte men sikkert som profesjonell danser på de mest sentrale teatrene. I årene som kom, ble hun en viktig kapasitet i hovedstaden og hennes betydning for Norsk teater dans kan ikke overdrives. Hun var aktiv som danser langt inn på 1900-tallet, arrangerte danser og underviste frem til sin død i 1926. Som ballettpedagog trente hun hundrevis av dansere, mange av disse ble senere viktige for norske og utenlandske teaterscener. På mange måter var Augusta Johannesén representativ for den typen fleksibel danser som var vanlig på Europeiske scener i tiden rundt "fin de siècle". Hun kjempet også med stereotype holdninger til hva som var en riktig "ballerina".

Selv om hun kanskje er mest kjent som pedagog, tar denne artikkelen for seg hennes dansekarriere mellom 1880 og 1895. I disse årene etablerte hun seg og fikk oppdrag på *Christiania Theater* og på *Eldorado*. Artikkelen fokuserer også på en særlig viktig hendelse for den norske teaterdansen historien; etableringen av den såkalte "Nye Norske Ballet" på *Eldorado* i 1892. Dette er sannsynligvis det første forsøket i norsk dansehistorie på å etablere et profesjonelt dansekompani i Norge. Augusta Johanneséns bidrag i denne sammenheng var betydelig, og bare en av de mange måtene hun bidro til utviklingen av norsk teaterdans.

What can a ballet dancer of real capacity do in this country? Look for instance at Miss Augusta Johannesén, this excellent ballet dancer who also possesses a lot of great dramatic fantasy. – Alas! The many ballets she has composed and staged: Miss Johannesén's rich skills have never been allowed to shine rightfully, because our limited conditions did not allow for a steady ballet company. (Critic and writer Peder Rosenkranz-Johnsen, *Ørebladet*, 11 May 1909, author's translation).

Between 1880 and 1895, Augusta Johannesén established herself as dancer and "arranger of ballet" in Norway, working at venues such as the *Christiania Theater* and the *Eldorado*.<sup>1</sup> She was one of Norway's most important ballet dancers in the latter part of the 19th century. Even though the above quotation sums up the limitations she had to work under, Augusta Johannesén was a highly skilled dancer, well known and respected in the Norwegian capital Kristiania.<sup>2</sup> Despite the fact that there were no theatres offering steady employment for ballet dancers in the city Augusta Johannesén created, during the years 1880 – 1895, opportunities not only for herself but also for the many dancers who were involved in her projects. She was responsible for initiating a first professional Norwegian ballet company, which did not last but lived on as the ballet company of the

*Eldorado*. Thus, there were opportunities for a ballet dancer of Johannesén's calibre, and this article accounts for some of these and traces some of Johannesén's achievements during her first 15 years in Norway. I especially aim to bring to the fore an important event in Norwegian dance history that was instigated by Johannesén: the establishment of a *Ny Norsk Ballet (New Norwegian Ballet)* at the *Eldorado* in Kristiania in 1892. This is, to the best of my knowledge, the very first attempt at creating a professional ballet company in Norway.

The article is divided into three parts. In the first part, some space is given to an account of previous research on Augusta Johannesén, as well as to more in-depth considerations on source material used for this article. Given that a great deal of this article relies on the analysis of newspaper material, I have added reflections on the use of this material. In the second part of the article, Johannesén's background is contextualized through some biographical information and a short overview of the theatre situation in Kristiania during the period 1880-1895. The third part of the article analyses a few selected examples of Johannesén's achievements at the *Christiania Theater* and *Eldorado*, the two theatres that were most important for her career during her first 15 years as ballet dancer in Norway.

### Source material and previous research

My interest in Augusta Johannesén stems from

extensive work trying to document the Norwegian theatre dance history from 1700 up to 1950. Despite the fact that Johannesén was a well-known dance personality in Kristiania and a teacher of great significance, very little research has been done on her. Theatre historian Valdemar Hansteen summarizes her endeavours in his *Historien om norsk ballet*, (1989, 48-49) and he most likely has based some of his information on interviews with the dancer and actor Per Aabel, who took lessons with Augusta Johannesén and her sister Jenny.<sup>3</sup> Hansteen emphasizes her activity as dance teacher and offers little detailed information on her dancing career. A few other published sources mention Augusta Johannesén in some capacity or another. Theatre historian Trine Næss has written a brief section on Augusta and the Johannesén family in her book on the *Christiania Theater* (Næss 2005, 135-136). Næss has examined contracts and copybooks of the theatre, thus piecing together some of August Johannesén's activity at the *Christiania Theater*. Vivid and highly personal descriptions of Johannesén can be found in Rudolf Rasmussen's *Rulleboken* (1935) and *Tutti Frutti* (1941). Theatre director and impresario Rudolf Rasmussen is a significant source, as he worked with Augusta on several occasions, most importantly as artistic director of the *Eldorado* in 1892. He seemed to have known her fairly well, but there are some questionable "facts" in his description of her and her achievements as will be seen later in the article.<sup>4</sup> A short account of Johannesén is given in Haakon Nielsen's book *Byorginaler (City originals)* (Nielsen 1966, 123-124). However, Nielsen relies heavily on Rasmussen's accounts and offers little new information.

Augusta Johannesén was part of a family of itinerant dancers who performed throughout the Nordic countries, the *Johannesénske*

*Balletselskab*.<sup>5</sup> For the Nordic perspective, Sven Hirn's *Våra danspedagoger och dansnöjen*, (1982) is invaluable. A more recent book, *Theater i Norr* (2005, edited by Claes Rosenqvist), analyses some of the activity that the *Johannesénske Balletselskab* undertook in the northern regions of Norway, Sweden and Finland (Rosenqvist 2005, 82-85, 140-155, 340 f).<sup>6</sup> Augusta Johannesén was a member of this ensemble from early childhood until 1881. She was also active in Sweden parallel to her work in Kristiania. Swedish dance researcher Lena Hammergren has collected some material on Augusta Johannesén's work at the *Tivolibolaget* in Stockholm and writes about her work there in 1895 (Hammergren 2002, 12).

### Working with newspapers as source material

The above-mentioned sources do not offer much information on Augusta Johannesén's first years in Norway, probably because few of her Norwegian activities and achievements have so far been documented in detail. This article therefore tries to remedy this "gap" and relies heavily on archival material found in newspapers from 1879 onwards.<sup>7</sup> The material used consists of notices, advertisements, reviews, chronicles, interviews and portraits in Kristiania newspapers.<sup>8</sup> This is material that, to the best of my knowledge, has not previously been read and analysed in a dance context.

Even though one must never trust sources blindly, newspaper material has been helpful in assembling some of the missing pieces of the "Augusta Johannesén puzzle". American newspaper-researcher Lucy Salmon points out that the historian is concerned not simply with accounts of material events, but is equally interested in the interpretation of the spirit of a time or locality. This spirit is revealed both by the true and by the false accounts given by the press

(Salmon 1973, 25). In light of this, newspapers can be a valuable source for the dance historian, but one must always analyze its truth-value, as well as contextualize it. The material analysed in this article has been found and selected through reading newspapers on microfilm. I have spent countless hours in front of the microfilm-reader, a task tiring on the eyes as well as the brain. An attentive mind is needed, and consequently there is always a risk that something significant may be overlooked or misread.

Working with newspapers is a bit of detective work, one piece of information offering up new clues that beg to be investigated. What material to emphasize, which papers to select and what lengths of period(s) to be studied are among the fundamental choices in all historical work. Each newspaper offers a slightly different perspective and socio-political orientation of which the researcher must be aware. When investigating a person or phenomenon, you learn, through experience, which newspapers offer what type of information (Salmon 1973, 25). For instance, the newspaper *Verdens Gang* did not print any cultural information whatsoever in between 1880-1890, but from 1890 it started to publish this type of material. *Ørebladet*, on the other hand, was especially attentive to the variety theatres when the paper was launched in 1892.

Newspapers are also, in the words of historian Jerry Knudson, the *lingua franca* of society, and therefore a valuable index in measuring popular attitudes. This is a two-way street as the picture the mass media draw is a response to a predisposed public opinion, which is both satisfied and moulded by it (Knudson 1993, 2). *Ørebladet's* attentiveness to popular entertainment can attest to this interest in popular culture among many of its readers. It is also worth noting that newspapers present what the journalist or editor

saw as being relevant. Thus, many aspects of a situation could either be left out entirely or be superficially or insignificantly presented. This again must be measured against the needs and interests of the readers. For instance, it could be that the *Ørebladet's* attentiveness to the *variété*- and *vaudeville* theatres was due to the fact the journalist *Moustache* took a special interest in this type of entertainment.<sup>9</sup> He/she reported on the activities of the *vaudeville* theatres several times during the week and also made skilful comments about new and continental trends within the entertainment business. My research into later periods has shown that *Ørebladet* continued to be attentive towards dance.

Knudson also points out the wider significance of the press in both reflecting and shaping society. Newspapers unearth historical facts, and contextualise the same facts socially and politically. They aim to strike responsive chords with the public; without doing so, they could not exist economically (Knudson 1993, 1). Thus the analysis of the material collected has also contributed to an understanding of how theatre dance was viewed and of what positions ballet, *vaudeville* dance and new phenomena such as the barefoot dance and "Plastik" actually held in Norway.

While some historians use an entire newspaper as a basis for their research, others might use particular features of several publications. Knudson uses the expressions *cluster-* and *longitudinal* to describe how newspaper sources can be used (Knudson 1993, 1). My tracing of Augusta Johannesén has been done through both *cluster-* and *longitudinal* studies. The newspapers investigated have all been of the same format: four pages (in today's standard a small outlay). When documenting a specific event, for instance the *Ny Norsk Ballet* at the *Eldorado*, I have done cluster studies, investigating all the

newspapers that existed in Christiania in the fall 1892: *Aftenposten*, *Dagbladet*, *Morgenbladet*, *Morgenposten*, *Kristiania Intelligenz-Seddeler*, *Verdens Gang* and *Ørebladet*. This cluster study has aided in finding the “what, when and where” facts about the performances. The type of material collected consists of notices, advertisements and reviews as well as other cultural material that aid in contextualizing an event. In addition, I have done *longitudinal* studies with the aim of covering a longer period, from 1879 to 1895. For this I have read all daily editions of *Aftenposten* in order to get an overview of different types of dance events taking place during 1880-1895. During this investigation, I have collected material connected to or about Augusta Johannesén, the *Johannesénske Balletselskab*, and the Johannesén family’s dancing school(s), the first of which started in Kristiania in the fall of 1879. This article relies on material collected that relates particularly to Augusta Johannesén’s dance career.

Before moving on with the article, a word about how I use the newspaper material. Most of the reviews and notices published in Norwegian newspapers prior to 1920 were not signed, but published anonymously. When referring to or citing relevant material, I indicate a known writer by giving his/or her signature; otherwise citations or references are all anonymous. Note also that all quotations have been translated from Norwegian into English by me, and this is indicated in the text. Moreover, emphasis or alterations that are not found in the original text are given in italics.

### Augusta Johannesén - a highly skilled and versatile dancer

When Augusta Johannesén settled in the Norwegian capital with her family in the fall of 1879, she was 23 years old and a very experienced dancer. She had, in fact, spent most of her life

on Nordic stages as a ballet dancer in her father’s ballet company, the *Johannesénske Balletselskab* (*The Johannesénske Ballet Ensemble*). Augusta was born in Sundsvall, Sweden in 1857, during a series of performances that the company gave there.<sup>10</sup> She was one of (at least) four biological and two adopted children of ballet master Johan Fredrik Johannesén, a Norwegian, and Catherine Altenburg.<sup>11</sup> The ensemble, founded around 1850, turned into a true family business when ballet master Johannesén married and formed a family. The children became dancers of the ensemble, literally being brought on stage in children’s roles from a very young age. Upon moving to Norway, the family continued to work closely together in various projects. The father would for instance arrange dances for Augusta at various theatres, while also running a series of well-renowned ballet schools. The first school was named *Johannesénske Plastik og Danseinstitut* and opened in the fall of 1879, and Augusta and Jenny took over the responsibility for the school when their father retired. Because the school’s name changed several times during the years discussed in this article, I will refer to it as the Johannesénske dance school (without italics).<sup>12</sup> Augusta Johannesén was active as a teacher in this school from its very beginning, and taught there while at the same time pursuing her performance career. Like so many dance artists, then as well as today, she maintained parallel careers as both dancer and pedagogue.

In the source material Augusta Johannesén is repeatedly noted for being a highly technically skilled dancer. In fact, most reviews in Nordic and Norwegian newspapers report solid technical abilities for the entire *Johannesénske Balletselskab*. Where did Augusta learn to dance so well? This remains somewhat unclear. The version offered in several Norwegian newspapers is that the Johannesén children were educated

in Russia.<sup>13</sup> A few sources mention the royal Imperial Ballet School in St. Petersburg as the educational site. I have not been able to verify this, but the family performed in St. Petersburg on various occasions. A theatre poster from 1862 portrays the company in action, with a drawing of what Sven Hirn assumes to be Augusta and her brother Alfred dancing a folkdance (Hirn 2002, 157-157). The most direct reference about Augusta Johannesén’s education comes from a portrait of her sister Josefine (Johannesén) Gullberg in the Swedish journal *Idun*. The journal explained that she [Josephine] made her debut at the Imperial Alexander Theatre around the age of 5, and that she studied with the famous ballet master Christian Johansson, who was originally Swedish.<sup>14</sup> Thus it was pointed out that Mrs Gullberg belongs to another “school”, not the Bournonville School, which was common in Sweden (*Idun*, 17 April 1891, 127). Josefine was two years younger than Augusta, and both sisters (as well as the other siblings) could have studied with the same ballet teacher.<sup>15</sup> It is also possible that Augusta received a different education than her sister. Nevertheless, Augusta herself refers to the period spent in St. Petersburg as the best period of her life. She recounts watching the Imperial Ballet dance and how this has remained with her as a “rosy dream”. She does not, however, offer any details about her stay or education there (Portrait of Johannesén in *Tidens Tegn*, 28 July 1910). Her Russian training thus cannot be verified, but what matters for this article is that the rumour of solid Russian training cast an aura of both mysticism and respect around her. Most importantly, the source material leaves little doubt that she was technically skilled. Regardless of her education, Augusta Johannesén’s skills

were shaped by her long-time career as an itinerant ballet dancer. She seems to have had character dance as her forte and was often listed as performing different national dances. She is also reported to have had comical talents, which she used in the many different pantomimes that were part of the *Johannesénske Balletselskab*’s repertoire. She can thus be identified as a “demi-character dancer”, versatile, technically able and well versed in several dancing styles.<sup>16</sup>

### A respectable dancer

In 1880, Augusta Johannesén was probably the female dancer with the best training and skills in Kristiania. She had a possible drawback; she apparently did not have the looks of the ideal



Illustration 1. Augusta Johannesén drawn as a caricature by Thoralf Klouman (approx. 1909)

ballerina. No photos of her dancing have been found, but the actor and artist Thoralf Klouman drew a caricature of her in 1909, as can be seen on the previous page.

The drawing does not exactly flatter Augusta Johannesén as it emphasizes a characteristic, but not beautiful face, and this overshadows her otherwise gracious posture. The theatre director and impresario Rudolf Rasmussen, who played an important role in the cultural life of Kristiania around the “fin de siècle”, retrospectively described her in the following manner: “She was not really beautiful, but she had an expressive mimic, shining eyes as black as coal, and, above all, an excellent dance technique.” (Rasmussen 1934, 103, author’s translation). From this I read that she had a strong, lively and charismatic face, which, in my opinion, is also reflected in Klouman’s drawing. According to Rasmussen, the theatre directors and instructors did not value Augusta’s characteristic looks. He claimed that when she was given dance engagements, it was often in scenes where her face could be blurred, either by mist or behind/with veils: “She [Augusta Johannesén] was indeed a most magnificent dancer and an excellent instructor. She was not really beautiful [...] At the theatres the instructors usually let her dance behind a curtain or with a veil or mask [...]” (Rasmussen 1941, 65, author’s translation). Rasmussen’s descriptions of Augusta Johannesén were done retrospectively in the 1930’s and 1940’s, when looking back on his long career as a key figure in Kristiania’s cultural life. His evaluations were obviously coloured by personal opinion. Still, as theatre director and Kristiania’s leading impresario, he was used to making judgements on what would “sell”, and his appraisal must be understood in that context. It must not be forgotten that Rasmussen also emphasized her competence as invaluable to the dancing community: “Augusta

Johannesén’s capacity as solo dancer and instructor was quickly discovered, and the theatres often made use of her abilities.” (Rasmussen 1934, 103, author’s translation).

If solid skills did not suffice to give her permanent employment, it was simply because at this point in Norwegian theatre history, no such opportunity existed. No position was created for her even at the most relevant theatre, *Christiania Theater*. However, the very same Rudolf Rasmussen created opportunities for her at the *Eldorado*, as will be seen later in the article. To what degree her looks played a role in limiting her work prospects is difficult to evaluate though her appearance could of course have hampered some of her possibilities in Kristiania. There is, however, no material in newspapers attesting to this in a direct manner. What is clear from several sources is that a female dancer would be scrutinized and evaluated for her degree of “anstendighet” – “propriety”, and on that scale Augusta Johannesén fared very well.

Questions of propriety and respectability were very much at stake in the latter part of the 19th century. A new theatre law was passed in Norway in 1875, and of special interest for this article is a paragraph stating that permissions should be granted in such a way that law and order as well as *decency* were maintained. That these were new and better times for theatre and entertainment in Norway can be attested to by the fact that the old laws against theatrical performances outside of the few privileged theatres were abolished. Archivist Torkel Bråten at the Norwegian *Riksarkivet* in Oslo points out that the new law finally ended the monopoly of Norwegian theatre, but at the same time, provided detailed guidelines as to how the Norwegian theatre field should be regulated. Questions of respectability and high morale were at stake (Bråten 2014, 2-3).<sup>17</sup>

My research has shown that questions of decency and morality were especially pertinent for ballet companies and dancers performing in Norway. For instance, a review in *Stavangeren* emphasized that the *Johannesénske Balletselskab* was morally sound:

This Ballet Ensemble [*Johannesénske Balletselskab*] distinguishes itself from most other ballet ensembles by the fact that propriety is paid attention to in a sufficient manner. Therefore, the performances can safely be recommended to be seen by everybody, even the most sensitive person. (*Stavangeren*, 23 September 1878, author’s translation).

The focus on decency is not surprising, given that ballet dancers worked with their body and showed more flesh than performers in other art forms. Similar concerns about keeping the morals up and avoiding any indecency can be found all over Europe. Female dancers were scrutinized even more than men in regards to decency. Dance researcher Christy Adair points out that moral issues were especially fronted during the Victorian age (Adair 1992, 36). Thus the bodily display of flesh that dancers often showed was especially prone to attacks: “Traditionally, in keeping with dualist notions, women have been portrayed stereotypically as either the ‘virgin’ or the ‘whore’. In dance history a number of acclaimed ballerinas have been described by these two stereotypes. [...] this is the male fantasy of women and ‘femininity.’” (Adair 1992, 72). If we adopt Adair’s rather “black and white” notions, Augusta Johannesén would certainly have belonged to the “virgin” category of dancers. She would not show more flesh than absolutely needed and compliments were paid her in the newspapers on her respectable dressing, for

instance in *Morgenbladet*, 6 October 1892. The upkeep of modesty and propriety was surely a heritage from her career as itinerant dancer, when decency was constantly commented on in Sweden, Finland and Norway. It was also an issue in the Kristiania theatres.

As a result of the new law on entertainment, theatres of all kinds were established in Kristiania. Some of them were short-lived, whereas others more lasting. The 1880’s and 1890’s was a period in which theatre-life blossomed and as new theatres were opened, many offered repertoire that called for dance numbers. The advertisements for Kristiania from 1880-1910 show an amazing activity, every day audiences could choose between a variety of “high brow” and popular entertainment.<sup>18</sup> Several theatres employed dancers in their various productions. Dancing would be a part of vaudevilles, revues, and variétés, as well as operas and operettas. As such, the theatre-life in Kristiania was similar to that of the other Nordic capitals. What was absent in Norway was of course a professional opera and ballet company similar to those of Copenhagen and Stockholm.<sup>19</sup> However, there was an awareness of this lack, and there were heated discussions in the leadership of the *Christiania Theater* about what the obligations of this semi-state-supported theatre constituted. The debate was mostly about the lack of a professional opera and went on from 1870’s and onwards (Næss 2005, 129-135; Kindem 1941, 50-75). There were hefty debates about whether *Christiania Theater* had the responsibility for giving Norwegian audiences opera, but the newspaper material I have examined rarely addresses the issue of dance.<sup>20</sup>

### Augusta Johannesén at the Christiania Theater

When Augusta Johannesén settled in Kristiania, it is quite understandable that she aimed to be hired

at the *Christiania Theater*. Established in 1827, it was the oldest theatre in Kristiania, in fact founded by a Swedish dancing master and actor, Johan Peter Strömberg. *Christiania Theater* functioned, at least informally, as the Norwegian national theatre until it was replaced by the newly built *Nationaltheatret* in 1899. *Christiania Theater* thus tried to uphold a certain literary standard, but the directors were also aware of their responsibility towards opera and operettas. The opera debate mentioned above was mostly about the responsibility of Christiania Theater towards opera and ballet. Not all agreed that the national theatre had obligations towards opera or ballet, but some directors were more favourable towards these art forms than others. However, even if the theatre never had a permanent ballet ensemble, quite a few ballet performances were given there by visiting companies or troupes, for instance by August Bournonville and Adrian Gredelue (Næss 2005, 136).

With the Johannesén family in town, the theatre had access to highly qualified dancers.<sup>21</sup> Augusta Johannesén's position at the *Christiania Theater* can be described as that of a "faithful freelancer". She was never on a permanent pay roll, but was used in various projects from 1880 onwards. Her off-and on engagement continued also at the new *Nationaltheatret* when this replaced *Christiania Theater* in 1899. She danced in operas, operettas and theatre pieces that contained dance. In Johan Ludvig Heiberg's *Elverhøi*, she created one of her more memorable interpretations and became especially noted for her point shoe dancing in the play (*Tidens Tegn*, 4 January 1926). When *Elverhøi* was given with a new cast in 1886, Johannesén and corps de ballet performed the ballet divertissement in the fourth act. The play received good reviews and *Morgenbladet* made a special comment on Johannesén's dancing:

The staging of the piece is thoroughly done and creates a good impression. It is worth to make a special mention of the ballet divertissement in the fourth act, here the solo parts were very handsomely performed by Miss Johannesén. She had also put together a very well instructed corps de ballet, consisting of young girls. The Minuet in the fifth act was under her guidance arranged in a very successful manner. (*Morgenbladet*, 12 January 1886, author's translation).

This review is rather typical for its time: The Kristiania newspapers would write positively, but they seldom elaborated on Johannesén's strengths or weaknesses. *Morgenbladet* in fact gives a little more detailed information than what was common. We learn that the corps de ballet consisted of young girls. It is possible that these were recruited from the Johannesénske dance school as this was not uncommon practice: In later projects that Johannesén engaged in, for instance at the *Eldorado* in 1892, it is known for a fact that her students were engaged as dancers.

Maybe it was her success in *Elverhøi* that encouraged Johannesén to apply to the management of *Christiania Theater* in September 1887. She asked to be given the opportunity to stage her own dance evening:

Kristiania, 19/9 87. To Theatre director Schrøder.<sup>22</sup>

Due to the fact that I recently have composed a new dance, I very much hope that it can be performed at the Kristiania's Theater. If this [dance] should not please the audience, I will not ask for any compensation. I will supply the costume myself. I kindly ask to be given an answer soon.

With high regards. Augusta Johannesén (Copy of Document 30/31, 1886, from the copy books of the *Christiania Theater*, author's translation).

The tone of the letter is far from assertive, but hints to a modest dancer making a timid request. There would have been little risk involved in her planned enterprise. Still the management politely turned her down: She was thanked for her offer, but told that due to the situation of the repertory at the time being, no such occasion was available. However, the letter ended on an optimistic note: "The directorship will remember this offer, should there later in the winter turn up possibilities to use Your valuable skills." (Document 31 1886, from the copy books of the *Christiania Theater*, author's translation). Thus we can infer that the *Christiania Theater* administration did

appreciate her, but did not have resources enough to allow her an entire solo evening. Given the fact that the management was under heavy criticism for showing too much opera and operetta, it is not difficult to understand that a solo dance evening could not be prioritized. Allowing for an entire dance evening would probably have been met with severe reproach//disapproval from those who felt that the theatre should be reserved for the traditional spoken theatre.

In the years to come, no further opportunity turned up for a solo evening at the *Christiania Theater*, but Augusta Johannesén continued to be used as dancer in various performances. She danced in several operas, for instance in *Carmen* (1891) and *Mefistofeles* (1893). She was also hired as instructor and arranger of a variety of dancing in plays, operas and operettas. To my knowledge, both Johannesén, as well as the other dancers, were hired for each production. Thus she was offered continuous engagements, but no steady employment at the *Christiania Theater*. However, the work was especially valuable because it brought her status and a positive reputation as a dancer and instructor. During the 1880's, Johannesén was, in the newspaper's advertisements and reviews for other theatres, mentioned as being the ballet mistress and premier ballet dancer of the *Christiania Theater*. Thus other theatres, such as the *Eldorado*, *Folketeatret* and *Tivolihagen*, regarded her as "belonging" to *Christiania Theater*. She was, for instance, referred to as the première-danseuse of the *Christiania Theater* in a notice that advertises her dancing at the *Eldorado* (*Kristiania Intelligenzsejler*, 12 November 1892). Advertisements for the *Christiania Theater*, however, politely emphasized that the dancing was

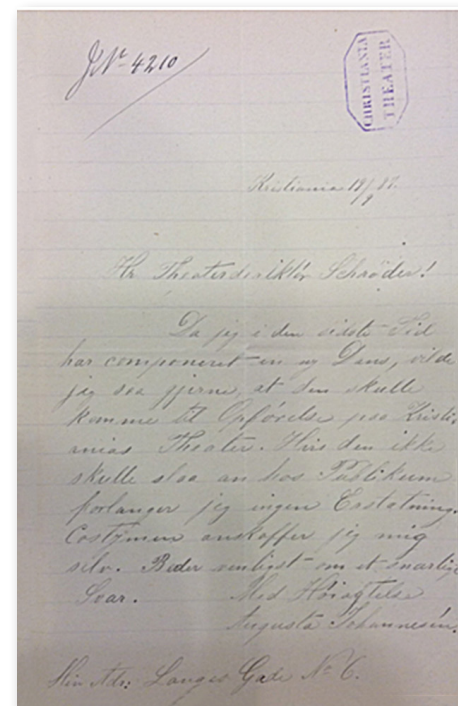


Illustration 2. Copy of Document 30/31, 1886, from the copy books of the *Christiania Theater*, held in the theatre collection at the National Library of Norway.

done by her, but did not give her credit as ballet mistress or ballerina. Despite this, engagements at the *Christiania Theater* were invaluable. They made her visible as dancer and instructor, and gave her a status that though vague inside the *Christiania Theater* itself, helped lead to other work opportunities. When the *Eldorado* opened in 1891, Augusta Johannesén was soon hired as ballet mistress and solo dancer. It was also at the *Eldorado* that she was given the opportunity to launch a ballet ensemble in the fall of 1892, an ensemble that set out to become a *New Norwegian Ballet* and was noted as a great achievement in the press.

### The New Norwegian ballet at the Eldorado theatre

The *Eldorado* opened in 1891, and rapidly became a theatre to be reckoned with in the Norwegian capital. The *Eldorado* attracted audiences mostly from the middle- and upper classes. It featured a variety of entertainment, including classical concerts, vaudevilles, operas, operettas, and plays. (Odd Bang-Hansen 1961, 39-40, advertisements and notices from the Kristiania newspapers 1891-1895). Johannesén was closely connected to the establishment from the very beginning. In the fall of 1892, advertisements show that the *Eldorado's* "*Nye Norske Ballet*" – *New Norwegian Ballet* – was introduced to the Kristiania audience. The event was announced in all the major newspapers in Kristiania, two days prior to the premiere that took place on 24<sup>th</sup> of October 1892.

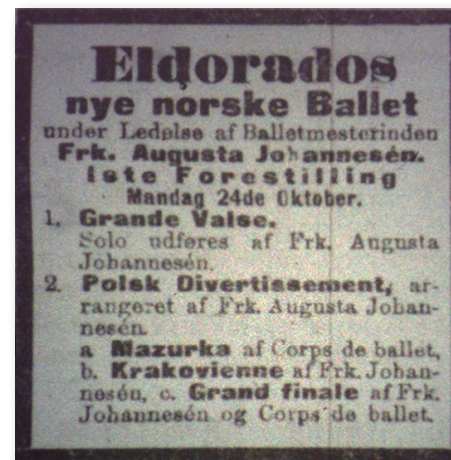
The appellation *new* is interesting - it could either refer to similar, earlier attempts at creating a professional ballet, which my research so far has given no evidence of. However, it could be that the title is hinting at the famous violinist Ole Bull's *Norske Ballet* in Bergen in 1853. Bull attempted to

establish a national ballet at the *Nationale Scene*, with an ensemble consisting of highly skilled, but not professional folk dancers. They danced *Halling* and other folkdances to Ole Bull's accompaniment on the *Hardanger fiddle* (Hansteen 1989, 33-35). Similar attempts at showing Norwegian folk dance on stage were quite common; the second half of the 19th century was a time when the audiences favoured folk dance.<sup>23</sup>

Most likely, however, "new" was referring to the establishment of a *ballet ensemble*. For the first few performances the ensemble was given the theatre entirely to themselves, performing a variety of dances. Presumably the orchestra accompanied the ensemble, even though nothing is mentioned about this in the advertisements.

We see from the advertisement from *Morgenbladet* on the right that Johannesén was announced as both dancer and "arranger" of the different numbers. Not surprisingly, national dances – Polish ones – were part of the repertoire, together with a *Grande Valse* in which Johannesén danced solo. This program was repeated three days in a row. Thereafter, in subsequent performances, the ensemble was featured as part of the larger *variété* that was offered every evening, performing shorter ballets. Ballet *divertissements* and pantomimes were included, for instance in *I Ungarens Land* (*In the country of Hungary*), *Marionettene* (*The Marionettes*), and *Najaderne* (*The Najaderes*).

Most newspapers mentioned the premiere of the *New Norwegian Ballet. Verdens Gang* announced that the first performance of the ballet would take place at the *Eldorado* "this same evening" (*Verdens Gang*, 24 October 1892). None of the papers gave a review of the event the day after the premiere on 24 October. But the critic in *Morgenposten* was very positive in a review published a few days later:



*Eldorado* does all that it can to prove that even in the area of *variété*, we can compete with foreign resources. The latest attempt in this direction is a Norwegian Ballet under the directorship of Miss Johannesén. The Ballet, which made its debut the other day, was very respectable, even excellent when considering the short rehearsal time. The dancers were beautiful, the costumes likewise and the decorations, made by [Jens] Wang grandiose. (*Morgenposten*, 29 October 1892, signed o, author's translation)

Note the reference to the ensemble's respectability that is mentioned as a positive feature of the new ballet. Being judged respectable in addition to excellent would make the audiences feel "safe" about going to see dance. Note also that the ballet ensemble was praised for its beautiful dancers, thus good looks were something that obviously also mattered, perhaps especially in a *revue*- and *vaudeville* theatre like the *Eldorado*.

Some more information about the quality of the ensemble can be gleaned from other reviews. According to the *Kristiania IntelligenzSedler*, the ensemble was young and inexperienced.

Illustration 3. Advertisement for the Eldorado's New Norwegian Ballet, *Morgenbladet*, 23 October 1892

The paper was, however, optimistic about the enterprise, pointing out the newness of the enterprise:

So now one has done a modest beginning with a Norwegian ballet here [in Kristiania]. It has not achieved any great results so far, but results can come, and the important solo dancer Ms. Augusta Johannesén can always be counted on to be rewarded the grace of the public. (*Kristiania IntelligenzSedler*, 27 October 1892, author's translation).

Johannesén was pointed out by *Kristiania IntelligenzSedler* as the major attraction of the ballet ensemble, but no further details about what made her dancing so "important" was offered. However, already the day before the premiere, *Ørebladet* shed light on where the dancers came from: they were students of Johannesén (*Ørebladet*, 22 October 1892). The Johannesénske dance school was located in the *Eldorado*-building at this time, an arrangement that must have been convenient for both the *Eldorado* and Johannesén in terms of rehearsals and training. A week after the premiere, *Dagbladet*, like most of the other newspapers, paid respect first and foremost to Johannesén's performance: "Miss Johannesén dances to the full satisfaction of the audiences. Her Norwegian students are still very young in the *terpsichorean* worship, but create success with the *Najadernes Dans*." (*Dagbladet*, 9 November 1892, signed *Sasin*, author's translation). From this we learn that even though the ensemble was inexperienced, it nevertheless charmed the audiences in the eyes of *Dagbladet*. Regrettably,



no details as to why the ensemble's performance of *Najadernes Dans* was successful were offered.

### The short-lived New Norwegian Ballet

In 1892, the artistic director of *Eldorado* was the before-mentioned Rudolf Rasmussen, who at the age of 26 was already a prominent figure in the cultural life in Kristiania. He was essential in giving Johannesén the opportunity to create the *Eldorado's New Norwegian Ballet*. Whether it was Johannesén's idea or his is not known because Rasmussen does not offer details about this endeavour at all in his memoir books. Instead he gives a lengthy account of the next project that Johannesén was involved in, the revue *Tutti Frutti* (Rasmussen 1941, 59-69). Both Johannesén and the ballet ensemble were heavily involved in *Tutti Frutti*, a large-scale production that played for a sold out house 101 times during the spring of 1893. The *Eldorado* had 2 000 seats at this time, so this was no small achievement.<sup>24</sup> The revue was the invention of Rudolf Rasmussen, and retrospectively it has been cited as a major event in Norwegian popular theatre history (Odd Bang-Hansen 1961, 39-45). Rasmussen, pulling together a team of well-known artistic forces, including Johannesén and the ballet ensemble, aimed to create a revue according to European standards.<sup>25</sup> Advertisements show that Johannesén both danced and arranged corps de ballet numbers, but no details of the dancing in *Tutti Frutti* were offered in the reviews. At the most we are informed that the dancing was highly competent (Reviews and notices in *Aftenposten*, *Morgenbladet* and *Dagbladet* 2 January 1893).

Retrospectively, the launch of the *New Norwegian Ballet* was an important first step towards the establishment of a professional dance ensemble in Kristiania. The *Eldorado* was, in

1892, the largest theatre in Kristiania. Despite the relative low status of dance in the entertainment hierarchy, it was probably a conscious decision on the part of the directorship to establish a more permanent ballet ensemble, because a good variety theatre needed a ballet. The source material makes it possible to piece together a picture of an ensemble of inexperienced, yet charming and beautiful female dancers. Johannesén was the "prima ballerina" and major attraction of the ensemble. The repertoire was varied, but several pieces had a folkloristic touch, quite in keeping with balletic trends of the time. The ballet ensemble was used in subsequent productions, for instance in *Tutti Frutti*, which played for the entire spring of 1893. At this point, however, the ensemble was not presented as *New Norwegian Ballet* any more, but as the *Eldorado Ballet*. Thus the *New Norwegian Ballet* was a short-lived enterprise, lasting only a few months in the fall of 1892. It is not clear to what degree the dancers of the *Eldorado Ballet* continued to be supplied by the Johannesénske dance school. Rasmussen mentions the ensemble briefly in his book *Tutti Frutti*: "We did have a ballet as well, a permanent ballet, and at the core of this danced Augusta Johannesén, the Russian-Swedish dancer, who had settled in this town with her family." (Rasmussen 1941, 65, author's translation). Rasmussen refers to the "new and permanent ballet" but does not offer any more information on the ensemble's life after *Tutti Frutti*.

Johannesén was soon again engaged at the *Christiania Theater*. Other ballet masters took charge of the *Eldorado Ballet* in the years to come.<sup>26</sup> So far, my research has not shed light on why Augusta did not continue working with *The New Norwegian Ballet*. Maybe she was only meant to establish the ensemble, then move on to other engagements. It could also be that she did not

work well with Rudolf Rasmussen, who preferred to keep her face veiled up during dance numbers. In any case, soon after its founding, Norway's first attempt at a professional ballet fell into oblivion, and it took almost 20 years before actress and dancer Gyda Christensen made a similar attempt at creating a professional Norwegian ballet at the *Nationaltheatret*.<sup>27</sup>

### The achievements and legacy of Augusta Johannesén

Johannesén was a multitalented artist: dancer, choreographer and pedagogue. When her family settled in Christiania in November 1879, she established herself as both performer and teacher, and until she gave up active performing, she worked with several projects. She was a "freelancer", but with a tenuous base in *Christiania Theater*. Her teaching was done at the Johannesénske dance school(s). Her career did not differ so much from the average freelance dancer of today: She found dance engagements where opportunities emerged. Her work at such different venues as the serious *Christiania Theater* and at variety theatres like the *Eldorado* 1892-93 and *Kristiania Tivoli* from 1903, is testimony to her flexibility – so typical of the type of versatility that was needed of a ballet dancer at this time, both in Norway and other Nordic countries. She was part of a transnational business where dancers often travelled and worked in other countries. She was used continuously as a dancer and "arranger of dance" in Christiania, as well as in Sweden. In 1895, Johannesén was, for instance, given the responsibility of staging a ballet pantomime at the *Tivolibolaget* in Stockholm. This was a huge project, involving 25-40 persons. She danced the leading role, in addition to being responsible for the choreography, music and

costume of the pantomime (Hammergren 2002, 121). The engagement indicates that she was recognized as a capacity not only in Norway, but also in Sweden. In fact, Augusta Johannesén could have chosen to live and work in Sweden like her sister Josefine. In a portrait of Johannesén published by the newspaper *Tidens Tegn* in 1910, the journalist commented that had she worked in Sweden, she would have had more artistic opportunities and received more respect as a dancer than she had in Norway. Instead she chose to continue her career mostly in Kristiania. (*Tidens Tegn*, 13 July 1910). It is likely that she decided to keep Kristiania her hometown because her parents and several of her siblings lived there. Most importantly, perhaps, was the fact that she was needed as a teacher in the Johannesénske dance school, and later took over the school together with her sister Jenny around 1895.

At the beginning of this article, we saw that critic and writer Peder Rosenkranz-Johansen in 1909 implied that the lack of a Norwegian Royal Ballet had a negative impact on Norwegian dance culture (*Ørebladet*, 11 May 1909). Rosenkranz-Johansen claimed that Johannesén therefore was forced to find work that, at least in his opinion, was not always "up to standard". But in this Johannesén was not alone: versatility was required for most professional dancers at the "fin de siècle". Ballet dancers in all the Nordic countries would work in different venues. Some dancers even preferred the more popular ones because they paid better.<sup>28</sup> Rosenkranz-Johansen attributed the lack of appreciation of Augusta Johannesén to the lack of understanding of ballet as an art form and – the paucity of dance performances (Rosenkranz-Johansen *Ørebladet*, 11 May 1909). Perhaps there was a scarcity of a "trained" ballet audience in Norway, but my research has revealed

that the Kristiania audience was given ample opportunity to see ballet at the more popular venues. Numerous ballet companies, such as the *Svenske Balletselskab*, *Götha Balletselskab*, and *Antonios Balletselskab* visited the *Tivoli* and *Eldorado* (Newspaper advertisements, 1880-1910, see also Fiskvik 2014a, 159-182).

Maybe Johannesén's achievements were not always given enough attention in the newspaper material as seen from today's perspective. But the Kristiania papers did not ignore her; they just seldom found it necessary to report any details outside of stating that the dancing was good. It is my distinct impression that Johannesén was well respected by the press. They often mention her dancing in very favourable terms in informative notices, but offer few real reviews. Dance was, at this time, generally low on the artistic hierarchy, and this attitude is probably reflected in the relatively few writings on ballet compared to other art forms. Also, dance was often covered by music and theatre critics who would not be dance experts. What can be established is that the source material, the reviews and notices in the newspapers, reveals that journalists valued Johannesén. They appreciated a dancer who could be relied upon to make proper appearances and presentable choreography when called for. There is ample mention in the source material of her as being highly skilled. Also, she kept her dancing appropriately unprovocative. Respectability was important for a woman supporting herself as a dancer and teacher. Perhaps for this reason, she shunned away from the working class venues such as *Alhambra* and *Bazarballen*. These offered variety shows and vaudevilles that included dancing, and were mostly frequented by audiences from the working class. (Odd Bang-Hansen 1961, 39-40). Apparently Johannesén was not opposed to working in vaudeville theatres as such, because the source material shows that she danced at the

*Eldorado* (1892) and also at the *Kristiania Tivoli* (1903). But these were venues frequented by the middle and upper classes.

Johannesén's first 15 years in Norway were important for Norwegian theatre dance. According to dancer and actress Gyda Christensen, she was a natural talent, "simply born into the art form" (Christensen, *Tidens Tegn*, 4 January 1926).<sup>29</sup> But in Norwegian theatre dance history, she, as a dancer and "arranger of ballet", has more or less fallen into oblivion, despite that fact that she was well known in her own time. More attention has been called to her to her achievements as a teacher, as for instance seen in Hansteen's book. Johannesén created opportunities, not only for herself, but also for the many dancers who were involved in her projects. She was responsible for initiating a first professional Norwegian ballet company, which did not last but lived on as the ballet company of the *Eldorado*. This article has given a first analysis of some of her achievements. Needless to say, a lot more research is needed in order to fill several gaps in her activity and obtain a better understanding of her career both in the years 1880-1895 and in the periods after. Having spent a great deal of her professional life performing in Nordic cities prior to moving to Norway, she was an established artist with a solid reputation and important connections. It is therefore feasible that she could have been engaged in other Nordic countries as well in Sweden after settling in Kristiania. More research is needed in order to document and analyze Johannesén's work in Norway, as well as her achievements in Sweden, and possibly Finland and Denmark. Her work as a teacher of ballet and of "Plastik", as well as an "arranger of ballet" also needs to be documented in more detail. In short, more research will hopefully contextualize Johannesén and give a fuller picture of her place in the history of Norwegian and Nordic theatre dance.

## Notes

- 1 The word choreographer was not used in newspapers, programs etc of this time. Usually it would be stated that the dances/ballets were "arranged by".
- 2 The Norwegian capital was, from 1877, called Kristiania. Prior to this it was spelled Christiania, and the older spelling is reflected in several names, for instance Christiania Theatre. The press would often use Christiania and Kristiania interchangeably. In 1925, the name of the capital was changed to Oslo.
- 3 Per Aabel describes studying with Augusta Johannesén in his self-biography, *Du store verden!* (Aabel 1950, 18-21).
- 4 Rasmussen wrote several books, reminiscing about his experiences as artistic director of several theatres as well as impresario for Kristiania. These books are written retrospectively in the 1930's and 1940's, therefore one must take into account that he might not have remembered everything correctly.
- 5 A separate article on this significant ensemble will be published in *Nordic Theatre Journal*, 2015. In order to avoid overlap, I include minimal information on the Johannesénske Balletselskab in this article.
- 6 I am grateful to Claes Rosenqvist who, in email correspondence has guided me in the tracing of the Johannesénske Balletselskab Nordic endeavours.
- 7 Augusta Johannesén's name has frequently come up in various sources previously found in connection to other research projects, especially when researching the dancer and actress Gyda Christensen and her importance in bringing modernism in dance to Norway. (See Fiskvik 2014b, 343-357).
- 8 I am grateful for all the help I have received from the Gunnerus library in Trondheim, particularly I want to thank librarian Tore Moen.
- 9 On 9 April 1892, the journalist Moustache for instance gave a lengthy account on the Variety theatres in Kristiania.
- 10 Augusta's mother was 41 years at the time, which was not unusual for childbirth. However, because the church books of Sundsvall were damaged in the fire in 1888, it is not possible to verify whether Augusta was a biological or adopted child.
- 11 The father, Johan Fredrik Johannesén was born in Kristiania in 1826, and supposedly travelled to St. Petersburg where he

was educated as acrobat and dancer. (*Aftenposten*. 11 September 1900). I have so far not been able to trace or verify the Russian connections to Johan Fredrik Johannesén.

12 The Johannesénske ballet school had a variety of different names, with different combinations of Dands, Dance, Ballet and Plastik, but always keeping the word Johannesénske (Advertisements in the Kristiania newspapers, 1879-1926).

13 There are quite a few references to their education in Russia in various source materials, especially in the papers that covered the tour of the Johannesénske Balletselskab in 1878, and 1879, for instance Romsdals Budstikke, 6 June 1878.

14 Christian Johansson (1817-1903) was originally Swedish, danced under Bourmonville and continued his career at the Imperial ballet in St. Petersburg where he became a distinguished teacher with great influence.

15 Speculations can also be made about a possible earlier connection between Johan Fredrik Johannesén and Johansson; it could have been that Johan Fredrik studied with Johansen for his own education.

16 See Fiskvik 2014a, 159-182 for an analysis of the versatile dancer in the Nordic countries between 1890-1930.

17 In 1875, after seven years of back-and forth in the political and bureaucratic system a new law was passed on 22nd May 1875. Archivist Torkel Bråten at the Norwegian Riksarkivet has investigated the laws concerning the Norwegian theatre monopoly. See Bråten (2014, 1-10) for a more detailed account of the theatre monopoly. This is so far unpublished article.

18 For a discussion on "serious" and "popular" theatre culture, see Fiskvik (2014a), "Working in Nordic Dance Venues", in Vedel and Hoppu (2014, 159-182).

19 For more information on the various theatres in Kristiania, see Fiskvik 2014a, 159-182.

20 See for instance *Aftenposten*, 25 October, 1889, *Morgenbladet*, 13 April 1890.

21 Augusta was not the only member of the Johannesén family that hoped to work at the Christiania Theatre. Already in January 1879, Augusta's father, the ballet master Johannesén, applied to the directors of the Christiania Theatre, asking them to hire the Johannesénske Balletselskab over the market-week. The theatre management politely turned this down. Later, both

Johan Fredrik and Edmund Johannesén were used as arrangers of dance in various theatre pieces. (Næss 2005, 136).

22 Hans Schröder was director of Christiania Theatre from 1879 until 1899.

23 One such example is from November 1892, when Eldorado announced in an advertisement in *Dagbladet* that their Variété would feature Hallingdansen performed by a “well known couple”. (*Dagbladet*, 29 November 1892).

24 Tutti Frutti premiered on 1 January 1893 at the Eldorado.

25 Rasmussen brought in the highly skilled writer Hans Wiers-Jenssen to write the texts for the revue, and the music put together folk melodies and vaudeville tunes from European productions. (Rasmussen 1941, 59-69).

26 Ballet master Axel Kihlberg's efforts as ballet master at the Eldorado were, for instance, given good reviews in 1898. (*Aftenposten* and *Dagbladet*, 8 November 1898).

27 See Fiskvik (2014c, 67-90) for more information on the semi-professional ensemble at the Nationaltheatret.

28 See for instance Hammergren (2002), Vedel (2008), Fiskvik (2014a, 159-182) for more information and discussion on this versatility.

29 For more information of Gyda Christensen and her importance for Norwegian theatre dance, see Fiskvik (2014a), and Fiskvik (2014b).

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## The Construction of Meanings in Breaking: Insights from Breakers in Oslo

Tonje Fjogstad Langnes  
Kari Fasting

### ABSTRACT

The focus of this paper concerns the meaning of breaking in the lives of young people living in Oslo, Norway. Meaning arises in the process of interaction with other people (social interaction) and self-reflection. The data are produced by the use of fieldwork (eight months) among young breakers at two sites in Oslo referred to as the Location, and included 17 separate semi-structured interviews. The interviewees were six females and 11 males, all of them breakers, aged between 15 and 30 years old. Seven of the interviewees belonged to different minority groups, while ten were ethnic Norwegians. The results show that through the interaction at the Location youth with diverse ethnic backgrounds experienced a strong sense of identification and belonging, not only to local breaking crews (groups) but also affiliation with breakers all over the world. The meaning of breaking was constructed around the feeling of freedom to “just be yourselves”. The breakers connected with themselves and their bodies, and experienced a sense of importance and respect. Consequently, the breakers also felt empowered in situations disconnected from the dance context.

### SAMMENDRAG

I denne artikkelen ser vi på hvilken mening breaking har i livet til unge mennesker som bor i Oslo, Norge. Mening oppstår i interaksjonsprosessen med andre mennesker (sosial interaksjon) og fortolkningsprosessen hos det enkelte individ. Datamaterialet består av feltarbeid (åtte måneder) blant unge breakere på to steder i Oslo referert til som the Location, og er kombinert med 17 semi-strukturerte intervju. Totalt ble seks unge kvinnelige- og 11 unge mannlige breakere intervjuet, alle i alderen 15-30 år. Syv av de intervjuede hadde minoritetsbakgrunn mens ti var etnisk norske. Resultatene viser at gjennom interaksjonen på the Location opplevde ungdom med ulik etnisk bakgrunn en sterk følelse av identifisering og tilhørighet, ikke bare til det lokale break crewet men med breakere i hele verden. Meningen med breaking ble konstruert rundt en følelse av frihet til å kunne «være seg selv». Breakerne uttalte en følelse av å komme nærmere seg selv og sin egen kropp, og opplevde en følelse av betydning og respekt. Konsekvensen ble at breakerne følte «empowerment» også i situasjoner utenfor dansekonteksten.

## The Construction of Meanings in Breaking: Insights from Breakers in Oslo

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Every week, for the last three years, Jo has taken the one hour bus ride to practice breaking (often referred to as breakdance) with guys that are twice his age. Just fifteen years old, Jo has made a deliberate choice to be committed to breaking even though none of his classmates are into it. Breaking seems to mean a lot to Jo, but why and how did he become so committed? What is it about breaking that makes Jo make this journey every week? By investigating the constructed meanings in breaking we hope to get closer to an answer to these questions.

As one of the elements<sup>1</sup> in the hip-hop culture, breaking has evolved into a worldwide phenomenon. The hip-hop culture is one of the most prominent youth cultures of today and has emerged from the social and structural changes that formed the post-industrial urban climate of the South Bronx; one of the poorest communities in New York, during the 1970s (Chang 2012). For the Latino- and African American inhabitants of the ghettos of the Bronx the meaning of breaking was connected to group solidarity. Hazzard-Donald (2004, 512) argues that the participants through hip-hop dance<sup>2</sup> presented “a challenge to the racist society that marginalized them”. By organizing themselves in crews [groups], which were networks for socializing, they claimed status on the street and supported each other. Through breaking marginalized youth showed a resourceful ability to create their own expressions out of a life that seemed to offer very little (Banes 2004). According to Stevens (2006), breaking

started to become publically known outside its subcultural borders in 1981 when Sally Banes published an article in the Village Voice (Banes 1981). As the media became fascinated by breaking, the youth gained respect among the inhabitants and breaking symbolized hope for the future. Later the Rock Steady Crew performed in the movie ‘Flashdance’ and battled [competed] <sup>3</sup> the New York City Breakers<sup>4</sup> in the movie ‘Beat Street’ in 1984. This year, breaking became an international fad (Schloss 2006) and evolved into a worldwide phenomenon (Mitchell 2001; 1998).

In New Zealand Kopytko (1986, 25) did one of the earliest anthropological studies on breaking and argued that breaking provided a strong and positive identity that raised the self-esteem of “problem youths”<sup>5</sup>. Drawing on anthropological and historical research, interviews and personal experience, Schloss (2009) presented a nuanced picture of breaking in New York City, its social context and as a manifestation of the most fundamental principles of hip-hop culture. Osumare (2002) highlighted the Hawaiian Islands as a cultural crossroads between East and West and introduced the concept of the intercultural body as a tangible result of the globalization of American pop culture in general and hip hop subculture in particular. The intercultural body refers to breaking as a global hybrid dance; an expression of the negotiation of personal and collective identity. By observing breaking in France, Shapiro (2004) reveals how alliances between members of different

groups produced interdependent processes of institutionalization that constructed a new field of practice and contributed to structure breaking internally into subspaces such as art, competition or as socialization. Shapiro (2004) highlights the “artification” of breaking through theatrical presentations, as social workers and educators supported to develop the dance during the 1980s. As a result, breaking was recognized by “high art” dance institutions (Shapiro 2004, 320). The artification process of breaking is examined by Shapiro and Heinich (2008). Fogarty (2010) explores the relationship between musical taste and breaking in a multi-sited ethnography. Fogarty (2010; 2012a) uses the term imagined affinities about the identifications expressed by a cultural practitioner who shares an embodied activity with other practitioners. Imagined affinities are sustained through mediated texts, such as video, online representations as well as travelling involving encounters between breakers. In Scandinavia, the first noticeable impact of the hip-hop culture became evident in 1984 and breaking was the first popular element. According to Vestel (1999, 7) the movie *Beat Street* was tremendously popular at a youth club in Oslo, Norway, in 1986 and had an empowering effect on the boys from the “slum”. In Denmark, Engel (1996; 2001) makes similar conclusions from her fieldwork among different dance groups connected with the hip-hop culture during the 1990s.

Despite the global proliferation of all the elements in the broader hip-hop culture, this literature review shows that the academic research on breaking is limited. The aim of this study is therefore to contribute to better knowledge about youth and breaking. As a global phenomenon, breaking seems to offer a frame of references to youth with diverse ethnic backgrounds that

are experienced as meaningful. Hence, in this paper we examine the breakers’ constructions of meaning through social interaction in Oslo, Norway.

### **Symbolic interactionist perspective on the constructions of meaning(s)**

As reality can be considered socially constructed, the construction of meanings can be seen to take place in the process of interaction (Becker and McCall 1990). This means that as members of the subculture<sup>6</sup> of breaking the breakers share the meaning of specific ideas, material objects, and practices through interaction (Williams 2011, 39). Hence, the members of the subculture are tied through symbolic interaction. The subculture of breaking is comprised by members who construct and re-construct their acts in relation to one another. Through social interaction they take another’s action<sup>7</sup> into account, and decide on an action dependent on that fact (Charon 2010). Through ongoing coordinated interactions the breakers form “joint actions” (Blumer 1969, 17). These joint actions are constantly negotiated as each breaker is involved in self-reflection<sup>8</sup>. As a result new joint actions are produced. Hence, as members of the subculture breakers affect and are affected by the shared perspective (Shibutani 1955). It is important to note that each individual acts according to their “definition of the situations”, which is created as a result of the social interaction with others and self-reflection in the situation (Charon 2010). By defining the situation it is given meaning, and actions are a result of this definition. This means that how a breaker defines the situation is central to how he or she acts in it. Hence, it is through the definition of the situation that meaningful actions are created.

To sum up, meaning is a process, that is socially constructed in a specific cultural context (Järvinen and Mik-Meyer 2005). People act towards social objects based on their attributed meanings; these meanings are constructed through social interaction and are modified through self-reflection. Even though individual and joint actions are framed by historical and cultural meanings, individual creativity is always at play and new forms of joint actions occur. As a result, the constructed meanings of breaking are culturally transmitted through social interaction with other breakers from all over the world, bound to its historical origin, but locally constructed by the breakers in Norway, the local breaking crews and the individuals who practice breaking. Hence, the breakers define immediate situations according to perspectives developed and altered in ongoing social interactions.

### **Methodology and the context of the study**

This article presents initial findings from a broader ethnographic doctoral study on youth and breaking in Oslo, Norway. Ethnography is an interpretive approach to social science that is often based on observational work in particular social settings, and involves studying the behaviour of a culture-sharing group (Silverman 2010; Creswell 1998; 2009). The empirical data consist then of 1) field notes; regarding significant events, cultural phenomena, informal conversations, and the interaction process (between the breakers themselves, as well as between the breakers and the researcher), and 2) semi-structured interviews. Such a qualitative approach combining fieldwork and interviews allowed for an in-depth understanding of the social practices of breaking. This paper illuminates

the researcher’s interpretations of the empirical data encompassing the meaning constructions within the culture of breaking.

### **Data gathering, sampling and analysis**

The fieldwork was conducted by Langnes from August 2011 until March 2012 at two sites in downtown Oslo. Even though the sites were located in different parts of the city their appearance and organization were very similar. The sites have therefore been merged into the *Location*.

The *Location* had been remodelled from offices to an open room with no facilities such as wardrobes or air-conditioning. Inside the *Location* the room was unofficially divided into three parts; a “cypher” where the dancers took turns, a padded rehearsal area for more gymnastic power moves, and an outsider<sup>9</sup> area. Every day 2-35 people from all over Oslo practiced for five hours at the *Location*. Most of the breakers were men as there were just a few dedicated girls in the milieu.

The fieldwork was carried out for four days (two days at each site) a week. The fieldwork was intense as it involved the first author participating in the bodily practices of breaking as well as taking “jotted notes”<sup>10</sup> (Bryman 2012, 450; Lofland and Lofland 2006, 109). However, much of what happens inside the culture of breaking could not be understood through observations alone, and the fieldwork was therefore supplemented with semi-structured interviews.

At the end of the fieldwork, the first author sampled 17 interviewees through generic purposive sampling (Bryman 2012). The interviewees included men and women of different age, breaking experiences, ethnic diversity and the three dance styles<sup>11</sup> identified within breaking. Six

female breakers, aged between 18 and 25 years old, and 11 male breakers, aged between 15 and 30 years old, were interviewed by Langnes in an office outside the Location. Ten of the interviewees were ethnic Norwegians, while seven had diverse ethnic backgrounds. The interviews were semi-structured (Kvale et al. 2009). The overall goal of the interviews was to: elicit descriptions of events and situations regarding breaking; to gain a sense of global and local affinity with other breakers and their degree of involvement; and to discern the implications breaking had on the participants' everyday lives. Every interview has been fully transcribed by the first author, before loading into the qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA.

In the analysing process the first author has read and re-read all data (both the transcribed interviews and the fieldnotes) thoroughly to obtain a general sense of the information and to reflect on its overall meaning. The salient themes identified in the data were used as codes to retrieve data in MAXQDA (i.e. thematic analysis, Bryman 2012). Thematic analysis revealed shared experiences across participants within the culture of breaking. The results presented in this article are based on an interpretation of the analysis of the coded themes: "meaning", "meaning – involvement", "meaning – affiliation", "meaning – community", "meaning – sanctuary" and "meaning – self-esteem". The coded themes also organize the results and discussion section of this article, as we start by underlining the importance of involvement in the milieu, the subheading "You can't do it by yourself" addresses the feeling of affiliation and community, while the subheading "It's up to you" highlights the determination needed among breakers and how the social interaction develops the breakers' self-esteem.

During the analysing process all participants

were grouped under the names: "Kim", "Jo" and "Sascha", to conceal their identity and to protect their anonymity. The data are then presented through meaning condensation (Kvale et al. 2009) i.e. the material has been compressed focusing on the main themes in the milieu. As a result, the presented excerpts from the interviews are sometimes merged from one or more participants within the same grouping. The groups represent different degrees of involvement and influence<sup>12</sup> in the milieu. The group named "Kim" includes the established breakers who were active in the milieu; trained breaking regularly, attended battles, and seemed to be influencing the milieu. The group named "Jo" refers to the partly established breakers who appeared occasionally at training and battles; they were accepted as members of the breaking milieu but seemed to have limited influence. The third group, "Sascha", refers to the novices, they attended training and battles occasionally, and as rookies they were not fully accepted and had little or no influence in the milieu.

The social interaction within the Location was registered in the first author's fieldnotes. Since the breakers were self-organized, the room was filled with people just doing as they pleased. As the fieldwork emerged, the fieldnotes revealed that the three groups of breakers related differently to the areas inside the Location. The established breakers ("Kim") would mostly be in the cypher, but could circulate between all the three areas. The novices ("Sascha") and the partly-established breakers ("Jo") would, for the most part, be in the outsider area or the padded area. They would participate in the cypher if there were few established breakers present.

Järvinen and Mik-Meyer (2005) emphasize that an interactionist perspective has implications for the empirical data, as the presented results are

dependent on and constructed by the interaction between the breakers and the researcher. Hence, reflexivity regarding the researcher's position is required (Haraway 1988), which will be discussed in the next paragraph.

### Limitations and ethical considerations

Hammersley & Atkinson (2007) highlight that ethnographic access is an on-going negotiating process. Langnes was granted formal access to the Location by its owners and at the first entry a gatekeeper was used. The gatekeeper was useful in order to be introduced to the breakers, but what really was a door opener was mentioning the name of a former breaker who was an acquaintance of the first author. This former breaker turned out to be well regarded in the milieu, and by dropping his name, the first author was accorded more credibility in the milieu.

As the main focus inside the Location was on the actual practice of breaking, it was necessary for Langnes to practice breaking in order to blend in with the breakers. Even though the first author had a background in gymnastics and social dance, involvement in the movements required for breaking was a big challenge. The first author had no previous experiences with breaking, was thirty-six years old and a woman. The result was that the first author usually practiced breaking in the outsider area. But two months into the fieldwork she was invited to enter the cypher to show off her breaking skills. This test was a turning point in order to interact with the breakers. By being willing to contribute to the dance, the first author achieved a "hanging out" status (Woodward 2008; Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). Consequently, the first author could circulate more freely between the three

areas inside the Location. Woodward (2008) highlights that "hanging out" gives no insider status, but offers insights into a social world that is not provided to outsiders (hanging about). As a result, Langnes gained the breakers' trust in informal conversations and in the interviews.

This project was granted ethical approval from the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD), and all the participants gave informed consent prior to involvement. All data has been handled confidentially and several strategies has been applied to ensure the participant's anonymity, e.g. the two fieldwork sites are merged into one Location, the participants have been categorised into groups with gender neutral names and the data are presented by meaning condensation. Though this is an extreme oversimplification, it has been necessary as the breaking milieu in Norway is very transparent.

### Results and discussion

Almost all of the participants started with breaking after being impressed by the dance through what Fogarty (2012a) defines as mediated encounters. Inspiring movies, videos, internet forums or shows elicited excitement among the participants: "It just hit me. I just 'shit'...I want to do that" (Kim). With no previous experience with breaking nor friends that were breakers, the participants made a deliberate choice to start with breaking. Through self-reflection breaking was defined as something they wanted to do. This decision led them to the Location where the meanings of breaking started to evolve through the process of interaction, for as Jo noted: "You need to dance and become a part of the milieu [to understand what breaking is all about]".

Through the social interaction at the Location, the rookie Sascha soon learned to

distinguish between breaking as “the real thing”; that only could be learned through social interaction and involvement, and breakdance; the presentation of the dance in media as “acrobatic and gymnastic movements” (Langnes and Fasting 2014). There was no doubt among the participants; breaking could only be learned through face-to-face interaction with other breakers. Schloss (2009) argues that this is a natural result of the nature of breaking. Despite several attempts to make breaking mainstream, the activity has no product to sell (Schloss 2009). This clarifies that breaking is something that has to be lived. It cannot be bought or sold. The symbolic value of breaking was created through a demand for involvement. During the fieldwork Kim emphasized that:

You need to live as a breaker to understand. To really feel it. . . . go to work, go to practice, feel your body getting tired, but still force yourself to work out. Attend battles. . . . Only then you can understand.

Consequently, the meaning of breaking was constructed through bodily involvement. The result was that most of the participants felt an obligation to practice breaking every day even though their bodies were worn out or injured. Charon (2010) argues that such encouragement and the demand to be committed nurtures social interaction and holds a group together.

At the Location the social interaction was all about breaking, both in the bodily practices and in the discussions. The breakers continually reinforced and informed one another through the discussions surrounding breaking experiences, such as where to travel for inspiration, which battles to attend, how to practice and so on. These conversations tied the participants together

as the breakers took each other's actions into account (e.g. Charon 2010) and transmitted knowledge about breaking. As a novice Sascha soon learned the shared meaning of specific ideas, material objects and the practices of breaking (e.g. Langnes and Fasting 2014). This included the informal organization at the Location; how to place themselves in the room, the importance of battling and travelling and other information important for the group. Gradually Sascha adjusted his/her actions to be in line with the other participants at the Location and become a part of the collective joint actions.

### You can't do it by yourself

Even though all the participants found their own spot inside the Location, it was assumed that it was impossible to develop as a breaker by oneself. The social interaction; the support and feedback from other breakers, were regarded as crucial in order to develop and manage the moves in breaking. This was evident when Jo, a breaker from a small town outside Oslo, visited the Location. As the only breaker in Jo's hometown, he/she was struggling not only with the motivation to practice four times every week but also to manage the moves of breaking. In a conversation between Jo and Kim, Kim emphasized that:

If you practice alone - it takes forever to learn it. You need to practice with experienced breakers . . . make them look . . . you must take a hold of me and say 'Bro . . . Can you help me?' An experienced breaker sees it right away and can help you. Alone it is very difficult, it takes a very long time. It is almost impossible. (Fieldnotes Nov 18, 2011)

By using the term “Bro” Kim underlines the feeling of affinity among breakers; they belong to the same

group that support each other. As part of the “family” everybody at the Location was accounted for and expected to contribute. Fogarty (2010; 2012b) argues that analogy of the “family” has been a part of breaking since its origin, as breaking crews were defined as families. The analogy is still alive today (Fogarty 2012b, 2010) and was apparent among the participants from Oslo.

It is like a foundation wall. Like a family, support and back up. . . . you belong somewhere, and that is nice. I do not stand alone. And sometimes we do stuff together.

You are part of a group that demands things of you and you must give something back. (Kim)

The image of a family suggests that the breakers feel responsible for each other similarly to kin relationships. They act with one another in mind (Charon 2010, 153). Fogarty (2010, 110) argues that the analogy of the “family” has developed from “a one-dimensional signification for the closeness of friends who participate in a shared activity to become *extended* families that are multi-generational in composition”. The extended families involve not only alliances between crews at the local and regional level, but also an affiliation with crews and breakers in different areas of the world (Fogarty 2012a). This is supported by Osumare (2002), who argues that breakers all over the world can communicate and relate to one another through what she defines as the “intercultural body”. As a result the breakers located in Oslo, Norway regularly used YouTube, internet forums, media, and travelling to interact with other breakers from all over the world. Consequently, breaking seemed to provide alternative identification and acceptance.

I experience breaking as . . . I have travelled and met with different people, and have a positive impression of breaking worldwide. It is like a community. As a breaker arriving in another country, you are considered as a friend since you do the same thing. . . . I think that is beautiful. That you, regardless of culture, religion, race or whatever. . . . you have a sense of community. (Kim)

### It is up to you!

In the conversation with Jo from out of town, Kim highlights the determination needed among breakers by saying; “you must take a hold of me”. The statement refers to the view that every breaker is in charge of his/her own development and actively needs to seek assistance from more experienced breakers. To approach the more established breakers was not only an important element in order to raise the novices' confidence, but also in order to transmit the constructed meanings in breaking. Schloss (2009) argues that the personal interaction affects the individual breakers' understanding of breaking; its history, their placement in it, their expression of individual/group identity and how this knowledge is transformed to others. For example as a novice at the Location, Sascha soon picked up the term foundation<sup>13</sup>.

Among the group of breakers there was an ongoing discussion about the rather abstract term *foundation*, also referred to as “basic elements”. Even though there were various definitions of foundation, the idea of it framed the participants' actions as they all related to it one way or another:

You need to know how to walk before you can run. (Jo)

It is about preserving the roots of breaking, the history, to understand what you are doing. Basics are the foundation for everything, I think. You need to start one place. (Sascha)

The idea of foundation was historically rooted and each breaker's interpretation of *foundation* had profound influence on their actions (e.g. clothing, dance style, practices). The different interpretations divided the breakers into different subgroups representing different dance styles, but on the other hand foundation tied the breakers together through symbolic interaction and formed joint actions. As Blumer (1969) noted "joint actions" does not mean imitation but are an ongoing coordinated interaction where individual creativity is always at play. This element of creativity was underlined through the construction of breaking as art.

Through the social interaction at the Location, the novices quickly learned to define breaking as an artistic dance. It was a strong expectation to every breaker not to "bite" [copy] another breaker, but that everybody should develop their own dance style and "just be themselves". Hence, individualization is significant and art is seen as deliberately created and emerging over time (Shapiro and Heinich 2008). The artification process (Shapiro and Heinich 2008): e.g. change of terminology (breakdance vs breaking) and the defining of breaking as art, started according to Fogarty (2010) in the year 2000 as the breakers got more invested in talking about breaking as aspects of an art form worthy of aesthetic considerations. As a result, breaking has aspired to an international aesthetic, while remaining an art form centred on competition (Fogarty 2010). The legacy of breaking seems to be connected to a sense of retreat, and especially the established breaker Kim expressed a strong sense of freedom:

When I break I feel connected with myself. Everything else does not matter. ... You can feel the moment. Breaking is a means of meditation. When you get into the zone, everything else is gone and you are just floating ... that's magic and sacred.

Kim expressed a feeling of connecting with him/her-self through breaking and communicates a state of mind detached from everyday life. The meaning of breaking was constructed around a sense of being free, and as a result the breakers constantly hunted for the ultimate feeling of absorption. This state of mind was evident around the cypher. Here the established breakers were the majority and the energy of the cypher could be felt in the whole room.

Kim is in the cypher. The activity elsewhere in the room has stopped for a minute. Everyone [in the room] seems to be mesmerized by Kim's movements. Fully concentrated Kim pays no attention to the others. It is almost like Kim is hovering. (Fieldnotes Sept 25, 2011)

To "be yourself" also constructed the feeling of being an individual of importance. The demand that everybody should and could contribute to the dance and create their own expressions is rooted in breaking's origin (Banes 1981). The meaning of breaking was constructed around the feeling of "being someone". The result was a sense of respect and recognition.

I feel that I switch roles. The milieu is very different from school. People are very different. It is very pleasant [to be at the Location] ... to be with people that I feel more connected with. (Sascha)

By having the same frame of references the breakers experienced a sense of belonging. This is supported by Fogarty (2012a) and Osumare (2002) who argue that breakers all over the world have a perception of commonalities.

An important element of the social interaction at the Location was not only to support but also to challenge each other further. Jo said that "they [referring to other breakers] are your driving force; they are the ones pushing you". This is clearly seen in the cypher where the breakers take turns. According to all breakers, everybody can participate in the cypher, there are no requirements. But as Jo noted: "It is difficult to start, to just walk into the cypher and be self-confident. I think it takes time". To participate in the cypher required courage, and during the fieldwork it became obvious that the ones entering the cypher were mostly the established breakers. But by mastering the moves of breaking, both Jo's and Sascha's self-esteem increased:

Jo: I like that it makes me feel athletic, I never felt that at school, I was never really good at anything. Breaking makes me feel athletic.

Kim: So it is the physical part that you like about breaking?

Jo: Yes. No. Not just that ... it is like a drug, you get addicted, just have to do it. (Field notes 18 Nov. 2011)

It gives me confidence and belief in myself, more and more. It does that. ... I get motivated. (Sascha)

The rise of self-esteem is supported by earlier research (e.g. Kopytko 1986; Vestel 1999). Through social interaction; support and

challenges, Jo and Sascha developed not only their breaking skills but also self-confidence to enter the cypher. This confidence was transmitted to contexts disconnected from breaking.

Some [break] moves I have struggled with for years, but when I defeat the barrier - it is not only a victory for my breaking but for me as a person. I know that I can do it, regardless of how hard the task is. I have proved to myself, that through discipline and dedication I can do whatever I want in life. (Kim)

For all the participants breaking developed to be a significant part of their lives: "I think about breaking all the time" (Sascha), "I moved to Oslo to follow my passion" (Jo) and: "It is more than a hobby. You make sacrifices - family, work, education ... you put everything on one card" (Kim). As a result of their dedication and commitment to practice breaking several times a week, breaking gradually emerged into a lifestyle where: "You have to adjust everything" (Jo). A life without breaking, was for most of the participants, unthinkable. They stated that when their body could not take it anymore, they would still be a part of the milieu bringing their knowledge to the next generation of breakers. This is supported by Fogarty (2012b), who argues that as the breakers get older they take on new roles in the milieu. The breaking crews have become more multi-generational and the older dancers have an important mentoring role for younger dancers. Consequently, knowledge is passed along to new generations of breakers and forms joint actions that are negotiated and constructs new joint actions.

## Concluding remarks

In the introduction we presented Jo, a fifteen



year old boy who has made a deliberate choice to be committed to breaking. For the last three years Jo has travelled every week to practice breaking with guys that are twice his age. In this paper we have focused on the construction of meanings in breaking-- to highlight what it is about breaking that makes Jo so committed.

The results illuminate how youth with diverse ethnic backgrounds experienced identification and belonging to a global society. Through the social interaction at the Location, Jo gradually became a part of the collectively initiated joint actions at the Location. As the meaning of breaking was constructed as something that had to be lived, Jo felt dedication to the group. Charon (2010) argues that such demand to be committed and to nurture social interaction holds a group together. Through commitment and interdependence a culture develops that becomes important to the individuals who make up the group. As the meanings of breaking were culturally transmitted through mediated encounters (Fogarty 2012a), the result was a sense of belonging not only to the local crew but also the affiliation with breakers all over the world. As the Location gathers breakers with diverse ethnic backgrounds, breaking becomes a means of alternative identification that is both local and global (Langnes and Fasting 2014). Hamera (2007, 19) argues that the learning of dance techniques translates the individual body into a common “mother tongue” that is shared and redeployed by its participants that hold sociality together across differences and perpetuate over time. McCarren (2013) emphasizes that “le hip hop” is a figural language in which dancers express themselves differently. The result was that Jo got socialised into a group that not only supported him, but also challenged him to contribute to the dance. Consequently, the meaning of breaking was

constructed around the feeling of freedom to “just be yourselves”. As a consequence, Jo communicated a sense of connecting with himself and his own body. Even though the breakers faced each other in battles, they supported each other at the Location. Schuff (2012) highlights that the freedom to self-expression is strengthened by a supportive dance environment where dancers support each other rather than compete. The supportive environment at the Location offered breakers a frame for expressing and processing emotions through breaking. This means that breaking offers a frame of reference to youth with diverse ethnic backgrounds that is experienced as meaningful, and many of the breakers expressed a sense of wholeness. Accordingly, Jo’s sense of importance and respect was transmitted to contexts outside breaking, and he felt empowered in situations disconnected with the dance. Hence, breaking is not only a meeting point across social- and cultural borders, but also an important source for personal growth. This indicates that breaking may offer a means to overcome unequal opportunities and cultural differences. The meanings of breaking are summed up by Jo himself:

The meaning of breaking? It’s about self-discipline, patience, the opportunity to stand for what you love. . . . It is about affiliation. It’s about love and hate, meaning that if I am angry it is reflected in my dance. It is a language. It can mean dance. But simply. . . it is a lifestyle.

## Notes

- 1 Other elements in the hip-hop culture are; MC’ing (rapping), DJ’ing (playing records by using two turntables), and graffiti.
- 2 Refers to waack, breaking/breakdancing, and rap dance (Hazzard-Donald 2004)
- 3 To battle involves comparing skills and are normally performed in a cypher. A cypher refers to an impromptu circle where the dancers take turns. A battle could be formal in front of judges or informal at practice or at dance gatherings. Either way, everyone knows it is a competition and the goal is to continually exceed the other (Fogarty 2010).
- 4 Breakers or a breaker; persons or a person who performs breaking.
- 5 The majority of New Zealand breakers were Maori or Pacific Islanders that were failing school and who often faced discrimination because of their social position and ethnicity (Kopytko 1986, 24)
- 6 We follow Williams (2011) and define subculture as a cultural phenomenon. This means that subculture is an abstraction from the individuals that comprise it, and refers to culturally bounded networks of people (Williams 2011).
- 7 Anything that humans do and give name is an «act».
- 8 The term refers to the process of self-interaction, i.e. the interpretative process within the individual, that is interwoven with social interaction and influences that social interaction (Denzin 1992).
- 9 Outsider refers here to novices and visiting breakers. The Location gathered breakers from different crews. Some crew would prefer to practice more at one site than the other. When a member from such a crew showed up at the other site, their status would be as a visiting breaker and they would often prefer to dance on the padded area or outsider area instead of the cypher.
- 10 Very brief notes jotted down out of sight to evoke memory about events later, also called scratch notes (Bryman 2012, 450).
- 11 Experimental-, Old-School-, and All-Round-dance style.
- 12 Influence refers to the individual’s impact in the milieu.
- 13 Schloss (2009, 50) refers to the legendary breaker Ken Swift who defines foundation as: “the combination of the mental approach, philosophies, the attitude, the rhythm, style and character combined with the move”.

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## BIOGRAPHY

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## ABSTRACT

Tanssi-innostaminen® ('dance animateuring' in English) is an artistic and pedagogical method, which I have developed in order to empower both individuals and communities. By dance animateuring I refer to dance/movement based activity, in which everyone can find their own way of moving and expressing by movement, but also reflecting the self and its connections to the other and the whole world. In this paper I will argue the six theses that define my approach to contemporary art making in dance animateuring practice: 1) The dancer should never aim to produce something specific but only to be present. 2) The performance shows that everyone can dance. 3) The performance is born from action, not from an idea. 4) The performance is multisensory and multidisciplinary artwork. 5) The performance is incomplete and ambiguous. 6) The performance challenges the conventional ways of seeing the world and people.

## TIIVISTELMÄ

Tanssi-innostaminen® on taiteellis-pedagoginen menetelmä, jonka tarkoituksena on elähdyttää sekä yksilöitä että yhteisöjä. Tanssi-innostaminen on sellaista tanssillista toimintaa, jonka pyrkimyksenä on löytää kunkin oma luonteva tapa liikkua ja ilmaista liikkeen avulla, mutta myös tutkia omaa minuutta ja minän suhdetta toiseen ja koko maailmaan. Tässä artikkelissa esitän kuusi teesiä, jotka määrittelevät tanssi-innostamisen nykyaikaisia toimintaa: 1) Esiintyjän ei tule suorittaa mitään, vaan olla ainostaan läsnä. 2) Esitys osoittaa, että kaikki voivat ja osaavat tanssia. 3) Esitys syntyy tekemisestä, ei ideoista. 4) Esitys on monitaiteellinen ja moniaistinen. 5) Esitys on keskeneräinen ja monitulkintainen. 6) Esityksellä haastetaan totuttuja käsityksiä.

## The Presence of *Real/ Reality*: Six Theses on Dance Animateuring

Raisa Foster

**T**anssi-innostaminen® ('dance animateuring' in English) is an artistic and pedagogical method, which I have developed in order to empower both individuals and communities. By dance animateuring I refer to dance/movement based activity, in which everyone can find their own way of moving and expressing by movement. The aim is not to teach any specific dance technique or style, but to help everyone to find movements that already exist in us.

Dance animateuring does not only have artistic goals, but also educational, social, political and ethical aims. It is a form of community dance. Dance animateurs approach dance from everyone's individual body and personal movements. The focus is in everyone's subjective experience. A dance animateur is a community artist, who inspires and encourages people to experience dance from the point of view both as spectators and creators. Animateuring aims for cultural democracy by acknowledging everyone, also children and adolescents, as active subjects and producers of their own culture. Dance animateuring is not just inspiring people *into* dance but also *with* dance.

I have studied the postgraduate degree of dance animateuring in the University of Melbourne (Victorian College of the Arts) in Australia. In VCA dance animateuring was seen as a form of making and researching contemporary performing art. The dance animateur can have various roles in art practice: She/he can be a director, performer or community artist. She/he can work in collaboration with other artists. She/he can be the leader of an ensemble or a facilitator of a multidisciplinary team.

In Australia the dance animateuring was purely an artistic degree. In fact we studied almost exactly the same courses that the students in choreography. I coined the term 'tanssi-innostaminen' when I was thinking of

*Photo 1. Katiska (2008). Dancers: Lauri Mäkinen, Mikael Hautala, Valteri Lahti, Jere Riihinen and Rasmus Järvenpää. Photographer: Eeva Saba*



an appropriate translation into Finnish of my Australian degree. Leena Kurki (2006) has translated the terms *socio-cultural animateuring* as 'sosiokulttuurinen innostaminen'. Following her example, I translated dance animateuring as 'tanssi-innostaminen'. Later I decided to register Tanssi-innostaminen® as a trademark.

What I mean today by Tanssi-innostaminen® 'dance animateuring' is significantly different to what I learned in Australia. Tanssi-innostaminen® is an artistic and pedagogical method; its educational aspects are as important as its artistic insights. In Australia the focus was on artistic practice, not at all on pedagogy. My background as a teacher as well as my research in education has had an important influence on my practice. I have conceptualized the philosophical, pedagogical and artistic background of my method very precisely in my doctoral dissertation (Foster 2012) and other publications, but most of all I have shaped my method in my practice. I have mainly worked with young men in my dance animateuring projects: *Katiska* (2008), *Ketjureaktio* (2012) and *Rikka* (2014). In the beginning of the year 2014 I started to teach my method to 16 adult students in a one-year (25 credits) course.

In this paper I will present the six theses that define my approach to art making in dance animateuring. As a dance animateur I mainly work with non-professional dancers. Some, if not all, of these theses may be obvious for contemporary dance practitioners; but the big audience, who is still holding onto the modern concept of art, is not familiar with these. I cannot separate the artist and the educator in me. Even if I have a strong artistic focus in my animateuring project and I am working in a fully funded professional project, I still consider myself an educator in the project. I am inspiring people to dance and with dance to life itself, but

through my practice I am also educating people to appreciate contemporary art.

### **1. The dancer should never aim to produce something specific but only to be present.**

Generally, every dance genre has its own movement vocabulary, which can be learned by repeating movements over and over again. A dance sequence and choreography are formed by combining dance movements within this specific style of dance. In order to be able to execute the movements well, knowledge and skill of the dance style are required. Even the smallest nuances in performance execution become visible, at least to experienced spectators. Dance is based on knowing and aiming for the ideal. Therefore it could be said that traditionally the dancer is formed by the dance; but in dance animateuring or any improvisation based dance practice, it is the dance that is formed by the dancers.

In dance animateuring it is not important *what* kind of movements the dancers are doing or *how* they are doing them. The dancer does not aim to imitate some movement or an ideal of the movement on stage. All the movements are created in improvisation and quite often on stage the movements are still improvised. Sometimes the improvised movements are organized in a predetermined sequence, but also then, or especially then, the dancer should have a "fresh" approach to the movements. The mover should never just repeat forms that she/he has learned before. Therefore the most important advice that I can give for my dancer is: "Don't act or pretend, do it for real."

The dancer should never worry about how the movements look for the audience or if the spectator understands what is performed. The performer should only focus on the actual

task, which has been the starting point for the improvised movement. It can be a mental image or a physical sensation. The power of a dance animateuring piece is born in the presence of a holistic body-mind-spirit in movement. The task for a dancer is almost never the same as the interpretation of a spectator. The most important thing for a performer is to be open and honest to the action. The mover has to trust that she/he is fine as she/he is – she/he just has to be present.

### **2. The performance shows that everyone can dance.**

The stereotypical dancer is a young woman. Technical virtuosity calls for ideal qualities from a dancer. Particularly in classical ballet, a certain body type is required so that the dance technique can be perfectly controlled, and visually acceptable. The problem, from an educational point of view, as my own experience tells, is that such a body type and virtuosity state requires so much technical skills through training that, at least in classical ballet, it is only possible at a professional level. This has led me to search for alternative ways to connect with the lived-body experience and to develop new methods for dance education (see also Anttila 2003). Dance animateuring is an anti-elitist method, which suits everyone. The meaning of dance is found somewhere else than in its technical virtuosity.

The dance animateur never finds her/his dancers incapable of doing something; what is important is the excitement of what people *can* do. The starting point for a dance animateuring process is the abilities of different people and what they are willing to do and find in the process. For example, the physical abilities of people who are in wheelchairs are just *different*, not worse, than those who are young and athlete.

The skillful dance animateur can work from the different qualities and personalities found in the group. The difference brings variety and touching reality to the performance. In the performance, which is built in the animateuring process, the movements of dancers are always good and believable, because they are born in the lived bodies of the performers.

Performers are always in the center of the dance animateuring process and performance. The performer is never the instrument of a dancer animateur's ambition and vision; but she/he is the subject, the real actor in the piece. The dance animateur invites the performer to try out diverse ways of expressing her/himself and playing with different themes. At first, the task of an animateur is mostly to motivate and encourage the dancers to fearless explorations. When the improvisation explorations start to produce material, the animateur writes them down. Then later she/he casts the final performance out from this material.

Often the spectator, who witnesses a dance animateuring performance, has a feeling that she/he would also like to be dancing on the stage. Surprisingly, contemporary dance seems accessible and achievable even for an inexperienced spectator. Every dancer looks different but equally talented. Could I be a dancer too?

### **3. The performance is born from action, not from an idea.**

Dance animateuring is never formal dance; it also tries to avoid extreme expressionism. It never aims the bodies to produce ideal forms as instruments or to express emotions by some inner and separable agency. In a dance animateuring process an animateur should have a "phenomenological attitude": the dance animateur should throw her/himself into an

open process together with participants and without any prior ideas and ideals. It is actually impossible to avoid the prior thoughts, therefore it is important to be aware of them and also willing to get rid of them.

Dance animateuring is a leap to an unknown (see also Anttila 2003) – also for an animateur. Texts, images, objects, music, and space can offer impulses to movements. The animateur must trust her/his intuition; if there is “something” in a movement, it will end up at the final performance. The scenes will raise emotions; even if we do not intentionally search for them. During the process we do not know *what*, but *something* will come up. You just have to have faith. The most important thing is to perform what is born in the process. The dance animateur can never have a clear idea of the performance beforehand.

The anti-idealism of dance animateuring has its challenges: when you write a description of your piece to a brochure or an application, you are forced to define what your work is all about. After all, it is important that in the creative process the animateur stays open to all suggestions that the collaboration with dancers, and also with the lighting designer, music composer and other collaborators, may offer. In dance animateuring we do not dance out our prior ideas, but the ideas are born in and from our dance.

#### 4. The performance is multisensory and multidisciplinary artwork.

The recognition of an ideal dance performance – and an ideal body type – is mainly based on visualization. Western thought has always privileged vision as the dominant sense, equating it with consciousness and rationalization, and thus the sight is kept

separate from the “lower”, the non-intellectual senses: tactile, smelling, tasting and hearing (see also Parviainen 1998, 20–21). In order to achieve the clearest possible image of the forms of moving bodies, a formal dance is often performed in a traditional theatre stage and under bright front light. Also costumes are designed to highlight the exposition of the dancers’ bodies. The moving body plays the leading role, therefore nothing should interfere.

Dance animateuring highlights the multisensory ability to our perceptive body. The dance is not trained in front of a mirror, but often improvisation tasks are executed eyes closed. This helps the movers to concentrate on their inner feelings, their bodily sensations. The movement may be initiated by tactile or aural senses; sometimes we move the way that we deliberately produce new sensory perceptions. The listening of senses produced between you and your partner is highlighted in contact improvisation. Also on stage the dancer should focus on the multisensory inputs; the presence of a performer will deeply affect on an audience.

Often an impulse for dance may come from space, from the architecture of it, from its structure, the texture of different surfaces, from lights and shadows. The work, which has been created by the dance animateuring method, always takes the venue and its characteristics into account. A work can be site-specific. It means that the work has been created in its performance location, and the venue’s concrete physical, but also emotional and metaphorical, aspects have formed the work. Also in the works which have been created on the traditional stage, a dance animateur uses the potential that the different stages can offer. Every stage is unique; therefore on tours the work must be adapted to every specific stage. A dance animateur gets excited about the numerous

opportunities that the venues can provide. There are no obstacles, only possibilities.

A dance animateur must be able to handle the overall concept of the work, but she/he does not have to be an expert in everything. The art works created in the dance animateuring process are always the results of collaboration. It is of course easier to work in collaboration, if also the other art professionals are used to working in dialogical improvisation. The sound and lighting design, the set and costume design, texts, songs, movements and all the other elements of the work are created together using the strengths and special talents of the animateuring team.

For dance conservatives dance animateuring, or a lot of other contemporary forms of dance, is probably not dance at all. Work which has been created in an improvisation process, is often difficult to put into a box labeled purely as “dance”. The work is movement based, but it may also contain speaking or singing and important visual elements. Dance animateuring is committed to a task to help people to communicate with contemporary art. A dance animateur is not interested in working inside an “arts bubble”, because she/he believes that it is possible to challenge also the big audience to question the modern concept of the world. If the art work is holistic expression done with total commitment and

there is everything present, do we have to put it into some specific box?

#### 5. The performance is incomplete and ambiguous.

In an animateuring production, the material should be organized as a montage, instead of as a coherent storyline. The form of montage respectfully invites spectators to construct their own interpretations. There is not a single correct interpretation of the work – and the world. The montage structure, the polyphonic nature of the work offers spectators a chance to reflect on the self and the phenomena of the world. It may be a challenge for an inexperienced spectator to see a performance which does not have a clear storyline or a red thread.

Dance is still pushed to the marginal – perhaps because it is often perceived as “difficult”. Strangeness and difficulty comes from the fact

Photo 2. *Ketjureaktio* (2012), *chor.* Raisa Foster, *dancer* Timo Karvonen.  
Photographer: Mikko Korhikoski



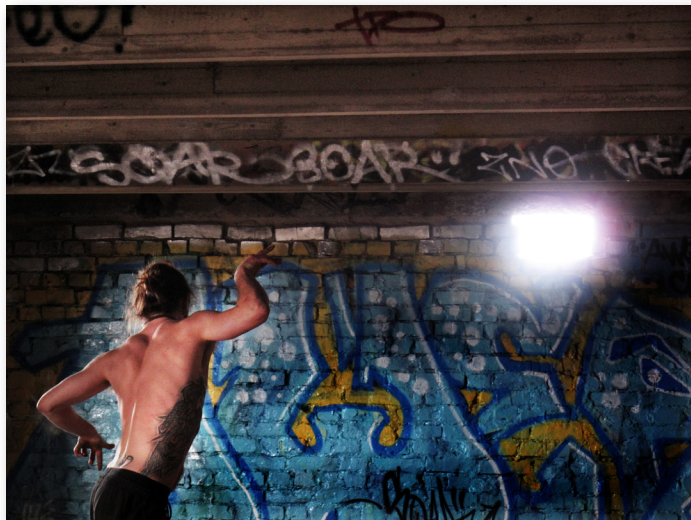


Photo 3. Rikka (2014).  
Dancer: Ale Ripatti.  
Photographer:  
Erkki Salomaa

formance gets its full meaning in the interpretations of spectators. While watching a performance the audience experiences something in common, but at the same time each and every spectator has her/his own unique experience of it. The experience always happens in a context; the previous

experiences as well as the current state of mind form the background for a new experience.

### 6. The performance challenges the conventional ways of seeing the world and people.

It is important that the dance animateur as an artist-educator understands that truth is not something that is constituted *a priori* but something that we constantly constitute through our actions. By repeating the existing techniques of art we hold on to the structures but also to the values of the current world view. The education process means socializing the values of the art field and also the politics of aesthetics (Parviainen 1998, 107). Therefore it is crucial that as educators we critically pose the questions: whose values and aesthetics are we delivering? Merleau-Ponty (2008, 208) notes that “every language conveys its own teaching and carries its meaning into the listener’s mind. A school of music or painting which is at first not understood, eventually, by its own action, creates its own public”. We should understand

that the spectator is trying to analyze the work based on modern concepts of art. She/he is searching for the artist’s intention, some logic or coherence and often a clear message. Dance animateuring as a contemporary art practice aims to liberate people from the burden of knowing and understanding the “truth”. The complexity of artistic experience requires trust and courage to plunge into the world of art.

The work of art in dance animateuring is never ready, even when it is performed to an audience at the first time. Life is never ready, so why should an art work be? We can perform the reality as we picture it in our heads, but if we want to show *real* reality, we cannot just trust our rational minds. Dance animateuring does not aim to show the reality as static totality, but as a dynamic and open process. Incompleteness and ambiguity belong to life, so they do to contemporary art.

The purpose of performance is thus not to illustrate something specific, but to give time for a spectator to reflect on the self and its relations to the other and the world. The animateuring per-

the power as well as the responsibility that we have when we are engaged in the process of education. We can betray ourselves and claim that our teaching takes place on neutral ground, when we are following the conservative models of teaching, but we can also choose to critically evaluate these existing practices, and perhaps also to introduce fresh forms of expression that stem from alternative sets of values.

A painting is always concretely separated from the painter, but a dance cannot be separated from a dancer. Therefore theatre and dance especially can be very effective tools to question the subjective–objective division in trying to define the concepts of truth and knowledge in a new way. In the actions of dance or theatrical events at least two perspectives are always present, that of the dancer or actor and the other of the spectator. The act of dancing is evidently an inseparable unity of the subjectivity of a dancer and the objectivity of the dance.

Western thinking is full of other dichotomies than just subject-object and mind-body, such as male–female, adult–child, society–nature, and many more. One of the main goals of dance animateuring is to investigate and challenge these dichotomies. The best way to do this is to

thrust oneself into an open creative process, but not in a direct and intellectual way but with bodily practice. Then the work of art has a chance to slip in-between the artificial dualisms, somewhere in the presence of *real* reality.

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### BIOGRAPHY

**Dr Raisa Foster** (b. 1976) is an independent researcher/artist/educator from Finland. She completed her PhD in 2012 at the University of Tampere. She graduated as an animateur from School of Dance, VCA, University of Melbourne in 2006. Foster is experienced in directing and producing multi-discipline performances. She has also worked as a teacher of theatre, drama and

creative dance as well as visiting lecturer in several universities. Her artistic works, especially those created in collaboration with the young men Katiska (2008), Ketjureaktio (2012) and Rikka (2014), have been acknowledged as fearless and authentic. The works have been performed in several cities in Finland as well as in Denmark, Germany, Austria and the Netherlands.

## ABSTRACT

Seminarium is an art project that explores the intersection between seminar and performance. It is centred around a series of live events, titled Seminarium #1, #2, #3 etc, which take place in different geo-political locations and contexts in Norway. In this art project artists are invited to reflect upon their artistic practices and earlier works in a performative format and setting for an audience. Each Seminarium highlights a specific topic and uses the template of academic conferences, staged and employed for an artistic purpose, to explore new ways to present and discuss artistic endeavours and enquiries, and to accumulate experiences. The aim is to enhance artistic development and critical knowledge in the field of dance and movement based performing arts. See: [www.seminarium.no](http://www.seminarium.no).

## SAMMENDRAG

Seminarium er et kunstprosjekt som undersøker spenningsfeltet mellom seminar og visning. Det består av en serie av sceniske hendelser kalt Seminarium #1, #2, #3 osv som finner sted på forskjellige geo-politiske steder og sammenhenger i Norge. Her inviteres kunstnere til å reflektere over sin praksis og sine tidligere arbeider i et performativt format med og for et publikum. Hvert Seminarium setter søkelys på et spesifikt tema. Ved bruk av en tradisjonell akademisk konferanseform, iscenesatt som kunstnerisk virkemiddel, blir nye måter for å presentere og diskutere kunstneriske fremgangsmåter og spørsmålsstillinger utprøvd. Slik akkumuleres erfaringer og kunnskap. Målet er å fremme kunstnerisk utvikling og en kritisk diskurs i feltet for dans og bevegelsesbasert scenekunst. Se [www.seminarium.no](http://www.seminarium.no)

The word Seminarium derives from Latin and means seed cultivation. Here, it gives name to a field-based art project that wants to cultivate reflexive thinking and developments within the dance field. To enhance this cultivation process, the project applies the template of academic conferences as an artistic concept to develop the series called Seminarium: In light of specific themes, it invites dance-based artists to reflect on their artistic practices and previous works through giving this reflection a performative presentation on stage, followed by a conversation in plenary with an audience. The combination of themes and locations, disciplinary fields and contexts involved in the art project, is carefully chosen to ensure a fruitful cross-pollination. Each seminarium is therefore likewise developed in collaboration with its local hosts and institutional partners where it will take place. In this way, the art project aims to fertilize the dance field not only artistically, but also geographically, institutionally, and discursively.

### Background for the project

Seminarium comes out of the pilot project called Words and movement - seminar on text and dance that took place at Dramatikkens Hus in Oslo (Norwegian Centre for New Playwriting) in December 2011, and which looked into the relationship of dance to text. The artistic director at Dramatikkens Hus at the time, Kai Johnsen, gave dance scholar, Sidsel Pape, the opportunity to develop this seminar.

In giving form to the seminar, Pape drew on

her accumulated experiences from both running and participating in several study circles on artistic research at the Nordic Summer University (NSU) since 2002. In an open call, the seminar invited performing artists to propose presentations based on earlier work in order to reflect upon how their artistic understanding, practice and expression related to words and text. The aim was to highlight the interstice between words and movement as a separate field of interest within the performing arts, and through this focus, to strengthen the Norwegian dance discourse. The seminar insisted therefore on the importance of making use of Norwegian as a language, rather than turning to Euro-English.

Thanks to the safe framework created, which encouraged mutual and constructive criticism, the seminar aroused a sense of shared knowledge for the participating artists and audience alike. Through obtaining insight and knowledge about the different artists, their work processes and methodologies, the seminar also provided a collegial and democratic dimension to the artists that proved to be greatly missed in the Norwegian dance field. Moreover, the ways they approached and staged themselves and their art practices within the seminar framework, created on its own accord an artistic momentum: The respective presentations came to play together in an unintended but striking artistic whole, which conveyed a sense of the diversity existing within the dance field. In addition to creating an artistic event in itself, this manifestation of the multiple approaches and practices used also

made the contemporary dance field seem more accessible and transparent as an artistic endeavour for the general audience.

Several of the artists who contributed to the seminar, wanted therefore to continue this project in order to explore this potential. Among them were Per Roar (who, like Pape, also had a background from NSU), Peder Horgen, Snelle Hall, and Kristine Karåla Øren. Along with Sidsel Pape they discussed possible strategies and artistic

visions for how to develop this experience further. Instrumental in the first phase here were Pape, Horgen and Roar before Horgen resigned due to other commitments and Øren and Hall fully joined this process. Together with Solveig Styve Holte and initial support from the Dis-Course group in NODA, the Union of Norwegian Dance Artists, they founded the association Dansedyrkerne (DD), which in Norwegian means: the Dance Cultivators, to develop this art project: Seminarium.

### Artistic implementation

Approximately six months before each Seminarium, DD invites dance artists to send in proposals for presentations with duration of maximum 30 minutes, excluding the time set aside for discussion. Here, they are asked to briefly explain what aspect of the current topic they are interested in and how they plan to



*Photo 1. Marte Reitbaug Sterud from Framtidsdans, Seminarium#1, Trondheim 2013  
Photo: Andreas Schille*

actualize and question it by reflecting on their own practice and or previous artistic work. Seminarium offers artists the opportunity to revisit previous work and give it new relevance in a performative format. It distinguishes the project from the various other arenas in Norway that focus on showing work-in-progress, often predominantly aimed at younger artists. In Seminarium, artists can meet both

and cross-generationally, as well as across conventional divides of genre or style to reflect upon their own work.

On the basis of the proposals received, the selection of artists / artist constellations will be made. As head gardeners, DD are responsible for this central decision in the curatorial work of the project. The critical concerns here are to look out for different perspectives on movement and dance related to the current theme, and thereby, to ensure that a diversity of artists and polyphony of approaches are represented among the eight to ten contributions selected.

After making this decision, Sidsel Pape who is so far assigned the role as curator in the project, will enter into a dialogue with the selected artists or artist constellations in order to both identify eventual needs and define the practical framework for the presentations, as well as clarify

what material the artists want to question, share, and discuss. Based on this information, the curator will finalize the program with the actual order of the presentations. Each of which includes a minimum of fifteen minutes to plenary conversation and discussion led by the two moderators in charge. Karoline Skuseth (theatre scholar and producer at BIT Teatergarasjen), Annette Therese Pettersen (theatre scholar and critic), and Hild Borchgrevink (musicologist, critic and editor) have shared the role as moderators until now.

The role of the moderators is to initiate this dialogue with the artists and facilitate the conversation with the audience present. In the run up to each Seminarium, the moderators will enter into dialogue with the artists, and follow up on what the curator started. Together with each artist or artist constellation, the moderators will discuss how to best address the presentation in light of the theme and ask relevant questions, in addition to giving attention to the audience and their concerns.

However, in the seminarium, the role of the audience is reinforced with invited and informed audience members. They represent specific expertise and disciplines relevant to the theme and or the field of performing arts and dance in general. As invited and informed audience, they establish links between the field of dance and research institutes and educational institutions locally where the Seminarium is held. Moreover, they also offer new perspectives on our artistic practices that can contribute to a renewed understanding and discursive development in the field. This results in strengthening the impact of facilitating dialogues between dance artists as peers and a general audience, and thereby, fulfills the aim of Seminarium to be an artistic intervention that bridges the gap between artistic research and artistic practice through applying

strategies and means known from artistic research into the professional field of dance.

### Dialogue based approach

Seminarium draws on the template of academic conferences and uses it as an artistic concept. Normally, it will be arranged at professional venues offering the basic technical facilities artists might need for their presentations. Each seminarium takes place over three days. The first day is a dress rehearsal, including technical adjustments, meetings with the moderators and the other participants. The next two days are set aside to the public presentations with the following dialogue with the audience related to what has been presented.

To enhance a constructive exchange in Seminarium, everybody present is introduced to the art of voicing critical feedback and questions in an open and non-judgemental manner. Inspired by Liz Lerman's "Critical Response Process" (CRP), a method developed to nurture and facilitate group processes of exchange, DD has developed its dialogue based strategy for sharing and discussing different viewpoints on the contributions presented. This strategy is introduced each day, as a part of the safety routines of Seminarium, and put into practice in the conversations following the presentations, both by participating artists, moderators and audience alike.

In Seminarium, the use of the Norwegian language plays a central role. This decision relates to the following reasons: When striving to enhance practice-based knowledge and insights there are reasons to believe that the mother tongue offers more nuances and better precision than a foreign language can do. In the effort of developing the Norwegian dance discourse, the Seminarium is therefore based on the use of the



Norwegian language rather than English.

As an art project, Seminarium is organised around the principle of crop rotation, and will accordingly take place six times, in six different cities around in Norway in the period 2013 to 2016. DD has contacted dissimilar dance- and performing arts institutions in order to find hosts and contexts for our artistic fieldwork to stimulate artistic discourse development and cross-pollination.

### Volume 1: Seminarium #1-3

The project has recently concluded the first volume with its three seminariums:

**Seminarium#1** had the theme: “Time and Movement, Tradition and Dance,” and took place in Trondheim in conjunction with the international dance conference that Nordic forum for Dance Research (NOFOD) arranged together with the Society of Dance History Scholars and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in June 2013. Our hosts were Theatre Avantgarden and DansiT, the regional dance agency for professional dancers and choreographers in the county Sør-Trøndelag. NTNU contributed with the dance researchers, Professor Egil Bakka and Associate Professor and choreographer Tone Pernille Østern, as informed audience members and participants.

**Seminarium#2** had the theme: “Body and Movement, Art and Dance,” and took place in Oslo in January 2014. Our host was the Academy of Dance at Oslo National Academy of the Arts (KHiO), which also contributed with informed audience members, among others, Professor Anne Grete Eriksen and the Dean at the Academy of Dance, Suzanne Bjørneboe, in addition to the informed audience members Professor Gunn

Engelsrud and Associate Professor and dance artist Hilde Rustad, respectively representing the Norwegian School of Sports and Science and the Norwegian College of Dance.

**Seminarium#3** had the theme: “Change and Movement, Politics and Dance,” and took place in Bergen as part of Oktoberdans 2014. Our host was BiT Teatergarasjen and their dance biennial Oktoberdans. The University of Bergen (UiB) and the University College of Bergen (HiB) contributed each with two informed audience members, they were respectively Professor Knut Ove Arntzen and theatre scholar / dramaturge André Eiermann, and Professor Jan-Kåre Breivik and Adjunct-Professor / choreographer Karen Foss.

### Volume 2: Seminarium#4-6

**Seminarium#4** has the theme: “Sound and Movement, Rhythm and Dance,” and will take place in Tromsø in spring 2015. Our hosts are Hålogaland Teater and Dansarena Nord, the regional dance agency for professional dancers and choreographers in Northern Norway, and we will collaborate with the University of Tromsø (UiT) to find and invite informed audience members.

**Seminarium#5** has the theme: “Dramaturgy and Movement, Action and Dance,” and will take place in Hamar, presumptively in November 2015. Our host is Teater Innlandet, and we want to collaborate with the national film school in Norway at the University college of Lillehammer (HiL) and the program on animation and game development at the University college of Hedemark (HiHm) to find and invite informed audience members.

**Seminarium#6** has the theme: “Affect and Movement, Normativity and Dance,” and will take place in Sandnes, presumptively in June 2016.

Our host is the Regional Arena for Contemporary Dance Sandnes (RAS) in collaboration with the University of Stavanger to find and invite informed audience members.

### Documentation

Seminarium is documented in text and images. All six parts will be recorded on video in their entirety. These recordings will be stored at Dance Information Norway for future researchers. Edited video excerpts from each seminarium, together with short reflections written by the artists presenting and the moderators, and information about the project written by DD, are uploaded on our webpage [www.seminarium.no](http://www.seminarium.no).

The plan is that the accumulated material from the process will be edited into a publication on the project after the last seminarium is held. In addition to disseminating insights on the experiences accumulated, this publication will also add another artistic expression or outcome of the project.

### Organisation

Currently, the association Dansedyrkerne (DD) consists of the dance cultivators Sidsel Pape, Per Roar, Snelle Hall and Kristine Karåla Øren. Together they share the tasks of arranging each Seminarium, in collaboration or cooperation

## BIOGRAPHIES

**Per Roar** is choreographer and performing artist with an MA in Performance Studies from New York University, who currently is doing a doctorate in choreography at the University of the Arts Helsinki.

**Sidsel Pape** is a dance scholar, dramaturge and writer with an MA in dance science from the NoMads-program at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology NTNU.



Photo 2. Erikk McKenzie from Seminarium #3, Bergen  
Video still: Egil Paulsen

with local universities and or dance festivals/venues in Norway, and of further developing the art project based on these experiences. DD is hosted and supported with office facilities by Dance Information Norway, and funded by Arts Council Norway, Fond for Lyd og Bilde, Fond for Utøvende kunstnere and NODA's vederlagsfond.

**Snelle Ingrid Hall** is an independent dance artist and choreographer and holds an MA in Theatre Studies from the University of Oslo.

**Kristine Karåla Øren** is an independent dancer, educated from Statens Balletthøgskole, now Oslo National Academy of the Arts.

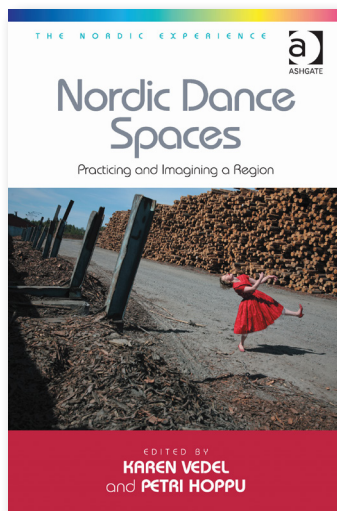
# Thriving Dance Spaces in the North

*Nordic Dance Spaces: Practicing and Imagining a Region*

Karen Vedel and Petri Hoppu, editors

Farnham, UK, Ashgate, 2014

In this day and age of globalization and Europeanization, many regions (re)emerge as thriving political and cultural entities, sometimes in critical response to the larger contexts, sometimes in productive dialogue. What could be more fitting then, than to review a volume entitled *Nordic Dance Spaces: Practicing and Imagining a Region* in the *Nordic Journal of Dance*? In addition, the book series where the volume is published by Ashgate is devoted to “The Nordic Experience.” An account of the



historical development of the Nordic region and its shifting politics, boundaries and imaginaries, is thus superfluous here. Suffice it to say, as the editors Karen Vedel and Petri Hoppu do in the introductory chapter: dance has been included in various forms and contexts in relation to the Nordic region since the early twentieth century. One pivotal point around that time was Isadora Duncan’s visits to Copenhagen, Stockholm and Helsinki. Later cross-border activities in dance have been, for instance, dancers working in a neighboring Nordic country, dance performances touring in other Nordic countries, and dance competitions and dance festival taking place in Nordic contexts. National dance organizations have liaised on a Nordic level.

Drawing on the five year research programme *Dance in Nordic Spaces*, the volume consists of a substantial introduction, “North in Motion,” by the editors and eight individual chapters by dance scholars from

Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland. The aim of the volume is identified by Vedel and Hoppu as “to bring a critical understanding of the interplay between the practices of dance and other aspects of cultural and political life to the fore together with new insights into the role of dance in shaping Nordic spaces” (p. 1). This entails an engagement with contemporary as well as historical features of dance, networks of dancers and dance organizations, and certainly corporeal aspects that recur throughout the volume

analyzing movement practices. Theoretically, the volume builds mainly on Henri Lefebvre’s ideas on the production of space as consisting of a triad of interrelated dimensions: lived, perceived and conceived. Dance events such as performances, rehearsals and classes exemplify practices that are a part of the production of social space. As the editors emphasize, in this volume dance is not separated from space, but seen as an active force in space making. Then space also impacts on dance.

Other theoretical perspectives applied in the volume are feminism by Doreen Massey and Rosi Braidotti, and postcolonialism by Arjun Appadurai and Rustom Bharucha. Transnational theory as formulated by Steven Vertovec is also discussed. Methodologically, the volume combines ethnographic fieldwork in the form of participant observation with interviews, archival research of historical and policy documents as well as filmed footage of dance.

The chapters tackle the topic of the production of Nordic dance spaces from different disciplinary backgrounds: dance studies, music studies and theatre studies, and ethnology. It is interesting to note that in an interdisciplinary area such as dance studies, traditional disciplinary boundaries do not necessarily matter anymore. We now share methods and theory to a great extent. Originating in dance anthropology, dance ethnography, for instance, is a well-established method in dance studies. As many dance ethnographers have discovered, participation (if possible) in the dancing might be fruitful. The reason is that there is knowledge in the practice (Wulff 2013).

Researching the emergence of a Nordic space of rock’n’roll and other American swing dances between the 1940s and the 1960s, Inger Damsholt obviously used archival material in her excellent chapter, not least press articles on the moral panic generated by the film *Rock Around the Clock*. Here the transnational influence is obvious. It is a palpable case of how transnational flows are locally managed (Hannerz 1996) as these dances evolved into new participatory and competitive dance forms. By focussing on the role of dance spaces in the growing Barents region, Karen Vedel contributes interestingly to a wider discussion on Nordic transnationality through the mobility of dancers looking for work and audiences. Writing about competitions in folk dancing in Nordic contexts, Mats Nilsson convincingly considers the change from participatory to presentational style of dancing. As to the notion of “folk”, he observes that the competitive dances lost their local meanings when they were included in non-localised dancing communities. Just like Damsholt, Lena Hammergren discusses how an American dance form was introduced in the Nordic region, more precisely African-American theatrical dance, also referred to as jazz dance, in the 1960s. The result was that a new movement diversity sprang up changing the previous dominance of ballet and European dance. Inspired by Appadurai’s five scapes, Hammergren’s skilled analysis builds on her concept “movementscape” meaning “spheres of life (economy,

media, technology, people and ideologies) that relate different places and people to one another in flowing movements” (p. 105). Egil Bakka writes very well about class, leading figures and dance space in the Nordic countries in the early 1900s. The dance forms are theatre dance, folk dance and ballroom, and then he adds “dancing crowds” to signify spaces such as assembly buildings where people would get together to dance. Inka Juslin’s chapter is set in North America as it investigates the reception of visiting Nordic dancers and companies there between 2007 and 2011. This is a fascinating account of national representation of dance in North America within a Nordic frame. Back in the Nordic region, Anne Margrete Fiskvik does a great job in her chapter on dancers’ work culture in the early twentieth century, especially in Norway. There were the often tacit cultural codes that dancers had to deal with as they moved between “serious” and “popular” dance venues. This she relates to issues of hierarchy and power in the dance world. The final chapter by Petri Hoppu is a fine examination of the Nordic folk dance movement, spanning the beginning, with a convention in 1920, to 1975 when the NORDLEK agreement took charge of the Nordic folk dance organizations. This opened up dance spaces of transnational cultural form.

In conclusion, *Nordic Dance Spaces* is a great read: well-crafted and engaging. It should be used extensively in teaching and research. My only objection is the price: almost 900 SEK at Adlibris. I hope university libraries will buy the e-book as it is more than 1000 SEK. Otherwise the volume will not be used in teaching without illegal copying.

Helena Wulff

*Professor of social anthropology at Stockholm University*

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- Hannerz, Ulf. 1996. *Transnational Connections: Culture, People, Places*. New York: Routledge. Wulff, Helena. 2013. “Dance ethnography,” in *Oxford Bibliographies Online*. New York: Oxford University Press.

**Expanding Notions: Dance/Practice/Research/Method**  
**12th international NOFOD Conference**  
**Reykjavík, 28th – 31st of May 2015**

**Theme:**

The realm of dance practice and research manifests itself in multiple ways. Within dance studies as an interdisciplinary field, the notions of dance, practice and research are constantly challenged – leading to fundamental questions such as: what is practice and what is knowledge? This, in turn, may open up new methodological questions. Possibilities and connections are created between methods in practice and methods in research, in ways that lead us to revisit and revise the concept of method as such, and as a consequence question different approaches to knowledge. This conference will address the multiple understandings of methodologies in dance practice and research, in order to contest pre-conceived conceptions of methods and revise our understanding of doing and knowing.

**Keynote speakers:**

Efva Lilja, Choreographer & artistic researcher, Vice-chancellor of DOCH, University of Dance and

Circus (Stockholm), 2006-2013.

Eeva Anttila, Professor of Dance Pedagogy, Theatre Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki.

**Further information:**

[nofodrvk2015.akademia.is](http://nofodrvk2015.akademia.is) (from 15th of January 2015)

[nofod.org](http://nofod.org)

Second announcement and opening for registration:

15th of February 2015

**13th World Congress of Dance and the Child International**  
**5<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> July 2015, Copenhagen Denmark**

The 13th World Congress will explore the theme of *identity in dance* as it is experienced in formal, nonformal and informal settings of education. It will be a unique opportunity for everyone interested in dance and young people to meet, dance, share, present and discuss issues related to the congress theme across age levels and professions. The programme will hold a variety of activities and presentation formats such as Nordic Dance Flavour workshops, invited keynotes, Creative Meeting Points, Twin Labs, Youth Forums, Professional Forums, papers, panels, research and dance workshops, project dialogues, lecture sharings, performances of young people and professional companies

Dance is as both a practical and a research area in rapid growth. Dance is part of four recognized artistic areas within arts education which is acknowledged as a key area within UNESCO's 21st Century Skills. Dance education in particular puts an emphasis on the role of the body in artistic processes and the body is in current research in educational studies, psychology and neurophysiology highlighted as being the 'place' where experiences, expressions and identity processes are grounded. A person's identities are in a multi-faceted understanding believed to be constantly developed in intertwinement with embodied and cultural experiences, social relations and all kinds of situations that we as human beings are part of.

**The Congress will explore:**

- **How can we understand identity in the 21st Century?**
- **What kinds of identity are experienced and expressed in dance practice of young people around the world today?**
- **What role does dance play for young people to understand their own and others' identities?**
- **How do professionals working with dance and young people understand their own professional identity?**

**Registration:**

<http://www.daci2015.dk/>

Registration opened 1st of November 2014.

If you have any questions regarding the registration process contact: [congress@bdp.dk](mailto:congress@bdp.dk)

**Organisers:**

The Congress is co-organized by and will take place at Dansehallerne, the Carlsberg area, Department of Nutrition, Exercise and Sports, University of Copenhagen, Northern Campus, and The Danish National School for Performing Arts at Holmen.

**Further information**

Congress Manager: Susanne Frederiksen, Dansehallerne: [infodaci2015@dansehallerne.dk](mailto:infodaci2015@dansehallerne.dk)

Program Chair: Charlotte Svendler Nielsen, University of Copenhagen:

[programdaci2015@dansehallerne.dk](mailto:programdaci2015@dansehallerne.dk)

## New Publication Series on Dance and Artistic Research

The Theatre Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki promotes the arts through publishing activity. Publications are an important part of education, research, and the societal impact of art, and an instrumental support for the work of the Theatre Academy. The Theatre Academy's publications present the results of the work done at the academy to the art and academic communities, students, and society at large, both nationally and internationally. The focus is on performing arts, research, and reports on the development of the theatre and dance fields, topical pamphlets, plays, and learning materials.

The Theatre Academy publishes in English the following three series on dance:

**Kinesis** is a series published by the Theatre Academy's dance programmes. The first works of the series were released in the spring of 2012. Kinesis features topical articles on dance and associated research.

English titles in the Kinesis series include:

- Jeroen Peeters (2014): *Through the Back. Situating Vision between Moving Bodies*
- Susan Rethorst (2012): *A Choreographic Mind. Autobodygraphical Writings.*
- Ric Allsopp & Kirsi Monni (eds.) (coming 2014): *Practicing Composition-Making Practice.*

**Nivel** is a series on artistic research in the field of performing arts. The Theatre Academy's Performing Arts Research Centre TUTKE publishes conference proceedings, textbooks, translations, and other topical material, all Open Access. See: <http://nivel.teak.fi/>

**Acta Scenica** is a peer-reviewed series on artistic research into the performing arts, including doctoral dissertations and licentiate theses available in print or online. Other peer-reviewed research and articles are also included.

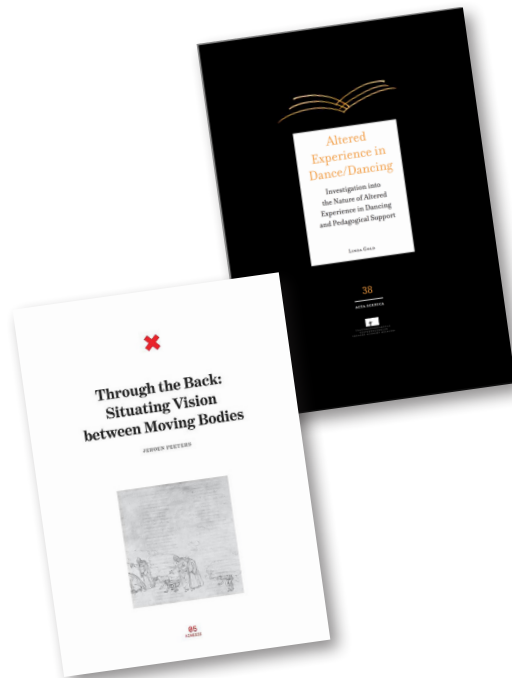
English titles in the Acta Scenica series include:

- Linda Gold (2014): *Altered Experience in Dance/Dancing. Investigation into the Nature of Altered Experience in Dancing and Pedagogical Support Bodies.*

For more info, go to:

<http://www.uniarts.fi/en/services>

and scroll down to Library of Theatre Academy



## Master Programmes at the Theatre Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki

In the spring 2015, the Theatre Academy has international auditions to three programmes; Master's Degree Programme in Choreography, Master's Degree Programme in Dance, and Master's Degree Programme in Live Art and Performance Studies. These are free, two-year programmes, with biennial intake.

The Master's Degree Programme in Choreography selects three to five new students to start their full-time studies in the autumn 2015. The programme emphasizes a historically conscious, yet critical, open, and research-based take on choreography. It offers the student a versatile learning environment, which supports artistic development, dialogism and cooperation, integrating practice and theory in studies and artistic processes.

The Master's Degree Programme in Dance selects ten to fourteen new students to start their full-time studies in the autumn 2015. The core of the studies is versatile research in the practices of a performer in the frameworks of dance art and other similar art forms. The studies develop the student's skills as a performer, as an independent and reflective artist and his/her preparedness to function in diverse and variable contexts of dance art.

The dance programmes' language of teaching and degrees is Finnish. The programmes also accept international applicants with sufficient proficiency in the English language. Should such applicants be admitted, English will be used in



*Pyhä Vitus (Holy Vitus), chor. by Satu Herrala (MA thesis in choreography). Dancers: Aino Voutilainen (left), Heidi Suur-Hamari, Aksinja Lommi, Anna Kausamo and Sofia Simola. Premiere: 23.1.2014 at Theatre Academy Helsinki. Photo: Jubo Iikonen.*

addition to Finnish as the teaching language for the entire classes.

The Theatre Academy is also looking for six exceptional individuals from a variety of fields, cultures and continents for the Master's Degree Programme Live Art and Performance Studies

(LAPS). LAPS is an English-language programme that focuses on artistic research / practice-led research at the intersection of Performance Studies and the practice of Live Art/Performance Art.

The application period to the aforementioned programmes is 7 January–27 January. For more information on the admissions, please go to <http://www.teak.fi/Admission> or to <http://www.uniarts.fi/en/>

The University of the Arts Helsinki consists of three academies (Theatre Academy, Academy of Fine Arts and Sibelius Academy) that have equal educational contents and cultural weight. The University of the Arts Helsinki fosters our art heritage and educates artists whose work provides society with life force and new perspectives and ways of thinking, encouraging people to ask questions. The Theatre Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki provides the highest education in the performing arts and research and strengthens the societal influence of art.



## Dancing Genius The Stardom of Vaslav Nijinsky

Hanna Järvinen

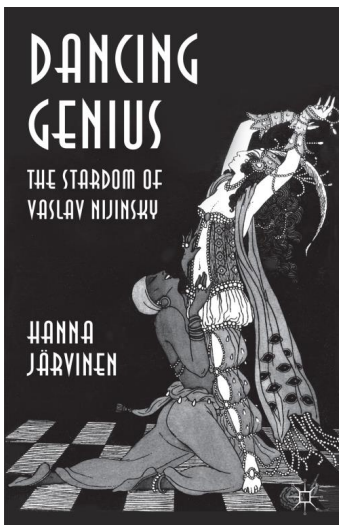
Hanna Järvinen is a Lecturer in Dance and Performance Studies at the Theatre Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki, Finland. Also working as a scholar of cultural history, Hanna has published articles for publications including *The Senses and Society*, *Dance Research*, and *Dance Research Journal*.

### About the book

*Dancing Genius* is the first book-length critical study on Vaslav Nijinsky as a star dancer of the Ballets Russes company. Through looking into definitions of virtuosity, stardom and genius, Hanna Järvinen contrasts contemporary materials from Russia, France, England and the United States with later, hegemonic interpretations. Nijinsky emerges as a celebrity figure whose dancing was attributed with genius in order to raise the prestige of the art form, but a figure also attributed with 'racial' characteristics in a thoroughly Orientalist manner. Tracing the historical figure in contemporary documents and later reminiscences, the book opens up questions about authorship in dance, about critical evaluation of performance practice, and the manner in which past events are turned into history.

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## DANSERISK SAMTALE: "DANS I FREMTIDENS SKOLE"

12. mars 2015  
Studioscenen, Dansens Hus, Oslo

Forskere og formidlere av dansefaget ser på muligheter for videreutvikling av faget i grunnskoleopplæringen.

Hva er status for dans i skolen i dag, og hvilke grep kan både kultursektor og skolesektor gjøre? Vi inviterer til en dansefaglig og utdannings- og kulturpolitisk samtale om dans - i skolen.

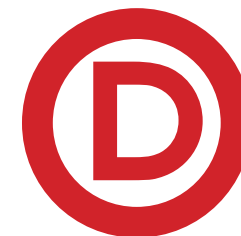
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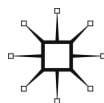
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# Nordic Journal of Dance

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Present your work in *Nordic Journal of Dance: practice, education and research*.

Volume 6 (1) will be published in May 2015. The deadline for submissions is February 1, 2015.

*Nordic Journal of Dance* invites practitioners and researchers to submit a variety of texts in two categories:

### Research Articles:

NJD expects these articles to present methodology, findings and theoretical argumentation related to diverse dance practices and artistic processes as well as learning and teaching dance/movement in the Nordic context. The maximum length of the submitted article is 5 000 words including possible endnotes and references. Please include two abstracts of a maximum length of 200 words: one written in the language used for the article and the other in a Nordic language (for articles in English) or in English (for articles written in native language), and a 100 word biography.

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