

# Nordic Journal of Dance

– practice, education and research



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## Editorial Board

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# Editorial

March, April, May and June 2020 will be remembered as extraordinary within the world of dance as governments closed down theatres, dance studios, ballrooms and all sorts of places where people usually come together to dance. Gradually, many of us have come to a new normal, in which the only certainty is that we do not know what will come next. Students and teachers have danced and taught via digital platforms: in bedrooms, living rooms, kitchens and outdoors. Covid-19 has brought with it fear, challenges, questions, limitations, frustrations and learning. New experiences have been gained, and how dance researchers and writers will deal with it all lies in the future. The authors of this issue – who live in Denmark, Sweden, Greenland and Finland – cover a wide range of themes and methods on how to write and research dance.

An incorrectly attributed photograph of Anna Wikströms Academy of Dance in Gothenburg in a recently published anniversary book introduces Astrid von Rosen's article 'Image Activism in the Dance Archive: The significance of Anna Wikströms Academy of dance'. From a critical archival theoretical perspective, von Rosen (an associate professor at the Department of Cultural Sciences at Gothenburg University) questions the archival as static and emphasises collaboration between different actors and its importance in the interpretation of the material.

In her article 'The Brudevals, 'Danishness' and lived reality, associate professor Inger V. Damsholt, shows how current realizations of the traditional 'first dance' at a wedding in Denmark are negotiated in relation to changes in the society. Damsholt shows how realizations of brudevals can be read as different understandings of Danishness. She uses Sara Ahmed's theory of affect as interpretational

framework and YouTube videos as a way to examine how dance practices migrate.

Flavia Devonas Hoffmann works as a dance teacher, choreographer and festival producer; she is a teacher at the College for Social Pedagogy in Ilulissat, Greenland and an administrative director for Arctic Culture Lab. In her article 'Exploring the body-landscape relationship through dance film', she reflects upon the body-landscape relationship based on her experience with directing and choreographing her dance film *Human Habitat*, in which a dancer journeys from a sustainable to a destructive relationship with the Arctic landscape.

Eeva Anttila, professor in dance pedagogy, has written a report on PedApproach 2020, in which students of master's programmes in dance and theatre pedagogy at Uniarts Helsinki organised an online event presenting their work as part of their graduation.

Von Rosen, Damsholt, Hoffmann and Anttila are four authors with distinctively different voices, themes and approaches. As I write this paragraph, I am particularly enthusiastic about the Damsholt article, as I was once a guest at a Danish wedding. Little did I know that more than twenty years later, I would finally learn about some of the things happening I got most curious about!

Enjoy!

*Hilde Rustad*  
*The editorial board.*

## Bildaktivism i dansarkivet: Betydelsen av Anna Wikströms Akademi för dans

Astrid von Rosen

### ABSTRACT

I artikeln kombineras kritisk arkivvetenskaplig teori om agens och aktivism med en empirisk undersökning av danshistoria i Göteborg, Sveriges andra stad. I fokus finns en i forskningen bortglömd utbildning, Anna Wikströms Akademi för dans (1930-1965). Wikström, som tidigare varit medlem i Svenska Baletten, erbjöd sina elever undervisning i konstnärlig dans, dans som träningsform, pedagogik och social dans. Hennes utbildning skilde sig därmed från den snävt elitistiska balettelevskolan på Stora teatern. Artikeln redogör för hur samarbetet mellan koreografen och dansaren Gun Lund, och Astrid von Rosen, forskare vid Göteborgs universitet, bidragit med ny kunskap om den lokala danskulturen. Artikeln argumenterar för att arkivförankrade aktivistiska förhållningssätt gör att flera röster, kroppar och verksamheter kan ta plats i danshistorien. Undersökningen kompletterar därmed tidigare postmodern danshistoriografi (se exempelvis Hammergren 2002; Morris och Nicholas 2017) med ett Göteborgsexempel.

### ABSTRACT

The article combines Critical Archival Studies theory about agency and activism with an empirical exploration of dance history in Gothenburg, Sweden's second city. It focuses on Anna Wikström's Academy for Dance (1930-1965), an education which has not been explored in previous research. A previous member of The Swedish Ballet, Wikström offered her students courses in artistic dance, dance as physical exercise, pedagogy, and social dancing. Thereby, her broad education differed from the narrow, elitist Ballet School at The Stora Teatern. The article accounts for how the collaboration between choreographer and dancer Gun Lund and Astrid von Rosen, scholar at the University of Gothenburg, contributes new knowledge about the local dance culture. It is argued that archival and activist approaches make it possible for more voices, bodies, and functions to take place in dance history. As such, the exploration complements previous postmodern dance historiography (see for example Hamnergren 2002; Morris och Nicholas 2017) with a Gothenburg example.

## Bildaktivism i dansarkivet: Betydelsen av Anna Wikströms Akademi för dans

Astrid von Rosen



Uppslag ur *Dansglädje, drömmar och disciplin: Svenska balettskolan 70 år, 1949-2019*.

### Ur dansarkivets mörker

Syftet med den här artikeln är att undersöka hur akademikers och praktikers samarbeten kring dansarkiv kan teoretiseras och konkret bidra till förändring och komplettering av tidigare danshistoriografiska narrativ. Låt mig börja med ett fotografi som hämtats ur arkivet på Göteborgs stadsmuseum. Fotografiet publicerades i den nyligen utkomna jubileumsboken *Dansglädje, drömmar och disciplin: Svenska balettskolan 70 år, 1949-2019* (Hellström Sveningson 2019, 37). Det är en vacker och välgjord bok, som varvar information i en tidsaxel med personliga dansarminnen.

När jag betraktar fotografiet förundras jag över den gåtfulla danshistoria bilden tycks förmedla. Jag ser bara ben och fötter i glänsande tåskor med

prydligt knutna band, korta klänningar i fint tyg, noga koreograferade positioner och allvarliga ansikten. De åtta unga kvinnliga dansarna ser ut att träda fram ur danshistoriens mörker. Det är lätt att fångas av deras både fokuserade och drömska blickar; det är lätt att förföras av den stämning av svunnen tid som fotografiet förmedlar. Bilden tycks helt enkelt vara perfekt för att illustrera unga dansares drömmar och ambitioner. Bildtexten lyder: «En bukett balettelever på Stora teatern är redo för dans 1956. Fotograf okänd. Teaterhistoriska samlingarna, Göteborgs stadsmuseum» (Hellström Sveningson 2019, 36).

Ordvalet «bukett» kopplar samman de unga dansarna med plockade och arrangerade blommor,

vilket berövar dem agens. Några namn på dansarna nämns inte, och det står heller inget om att de är «okända» eller varit svåra att identifiera. När namnen utelämnas eller deras frånvaro lämnas okommenterad blir dansarnas status lägre än fotografens. Mötet med bilden och bildtexten förmedlar dels en berättelse om hur dansare oreflekterat kan nedvärderas, dels hur deras dans (frusen i fotografiet) förmår engagera betraktaren genom tid och rum. Detta öppnar för frågor om hur mitt – historikerns – och utövares – dansares med fleras – aktiva samspel med arkivalier (bevarade spår av aktivitet), som dansfotografier, kan förstås teoretiskt, och vad forskning kan bidra med i relation till dansens ofta okända kulturarv.<sup>1</sup>

## Dansa där vi gräver

Artikelns avstamp i fotografiet ovan har föranletts av att det har framkommit att dansarna inte tillhör Stora teaterns balettelevskola, utan den idag i det närmaste bortglömda Akademi för dans, ledd av Anna Wikström (1890-1980) och Helmut Lotz (1894-1955). Det var dansaren och koreografen Gun Lund, som i sin ungdom dansade för Wikström, som uppmärksammade mig på felaktigheten och presenterade arkivmaterial som kunde styrka hennes påstående (personlig kommunikation 12 och 22 november 2019).<sup>2</sup> När fotografiet på en grupp okända, men starkt uttrycksfulla dansare, kom fram i ljuset sattes historien i rörelse, och en annan del

av den lokala danshistorien började ta form. Den specifika forskningsfråga jag ställer är: Hur kan den transformativa kraften i Lunds (utövares) och mitt (historikerns) möte med arkivalien benämnas teoretiskt och bidra till konkret förändring av dansens historiografiska narrativ, i och bortom Göteborg?

För att besvara frågan kommer jag att använda mig av ny kritisk arkivvetenskaplig teori om agens och aktivism i kombination med den empiriska undersökningen av lokal danshistoria. Undersökningen bidrar därmed med en arkivvetenskapligt grundad fallstudie till det svenska och internationella danshistoriografiska fältet.<sup>3</sup> Inom detta fält finns åtskilliga kvalificerade studier som berör dansarkiv, men så vitt jag kan bedöma det, är det ännu sällsynt att nya arkivvetenskapliga teorier används. Skälet till att jag förordar dessa teorier är att de på konkreta vis öppnar för forskning som teoretiskt och praktiskt bejakar delaktighet och tydliggör vikten av samarbeten mellan forskare, utövare och arkivanställda (Caswell 2016; Caswell och Cifor 2016; Carbone 2015 och 2017; von Rosen 2017a och b, 2019b).

Med utgångspunkt i det ovan beskrivna förhållningssättet har jag sedan 2013 arbetat för att utveckla en «dansa där vi gräver»-metod, som tar sin utgångspunkt i Sven Lindqvists *Gräv där du står: Hur man utforskare ett jobb* (1978).<sup>4</sup> Genom att – i stället för Lindqvists cementarbetare – lyfta fram hårt

3 Nyckelverk inom det arkivriktade scenkonst- och danshistoriografiska fältet är Hambergren 2002, Freshwater 2003, Kershaw och Nicholson 2011, Borgreen och Gade 2013 (se särskilt kapitlet av Roms, Jones, Fensham och Whatley), Bleeker 2017 (se Fensham och Whatley igen), Mattson 2017 (se särskilt Hambergrens och von Rosens kapitel), Morris och Nicholas 2017 (se Hambergrens och von Rosens kapitel även här).

4 Detta har sedan 2013 skett inom ramen för Kritiska kulturstudier vid Göteborgs universitet, samt under gästforskarvisitationer vid UCL - University College London och UCLA - University of California, Los Angeles.

arbetade dansare som utesluts eller nedvärderats i historieskrivningen, och använda de senaste rönen från vår tids arkivvetenskap, bidrar jag till uppdatering av Lindqvists metod (von Rosen 2017b och 2019a).

## Dansbilden som aktiv agent

Under de senaste årtiondena har arkivbegreppet genomgått en omfattande teoretisk förändring. En tidigare huvudsakligen byråkratisk förståelse av arkiv har i allt högre utsträckning kommit att utmanas av idéer om ökad demokratisering, delaktighet och aktivism. Detta slags arkivbaserade aktivism syftar på olika intressenters möjlighet att aktivt delta i arkivrelaterade minnesprocesser och därmed, exempelvis, bidra till förändring av identiteter och narrativ (Flinn 2011; Sexton 2015; Gilliland, McKemish, Lau 2017; Findlay 2017).

Med utgångspunkt i en postmodernt influerad förståelse av arkiv beskriver arkivvetaren Terry Cook ett skifte från att arkivalier tänks som relativt statiska, neutrala eller passiva spår av mänsklig och byråkratisk aktivitet till ett rörligt tänkande som bejakar möjlig förändring. Enligt Cook kan arkivalier förstås som «aktiva och ständigt föränderliga agenter i bildandet av mänskligt och organisatoriskt minne» (Cook 2001, 29, min översättning. Se även Smit, Glaudemans, Jonker 2017).<sup>5</sup> Han tänker sig ett skifte bort från tanken att arkivalier vilar stabilt i hierarkiska organisationers system, till idén att de istället befinner sig inom rörliga nätverk som påverkas både av arbetsprocesser och mera personliga parametrar. Hur kan då tanken om arkivaliers agens appliceras på fotografiet av «de okända» dansarna i jubileumsboken?

När fotografiet presenteras i jubileumsboken bidrar den till synes sakliga bildtexten till ett intryck av organisatorisk förankring och stabilitet. Texten gör att det framstår som trovärdigt att dansarna en gång

5 En anslutande förståelse av arkiv i relation till dans finns exempelvis i Bleeker 2017.

tillhört Stora teaterns balettelevskola. En dåvarande institution har en gång i tiden tagit emot fotografiet och en person har sorterat in det i en arkivordning. I denna process har bilden inordnats i det material som rör Stora teaterns balettelevskola. Processen kommer upp till ytan när bilden publiceras i jubileumsboken. I mötet med Lunds minnen och kunskap skapas en intensiv rörelse, där den framlagda historien ifrågasätts och bortträngda röster och kroppar kräver plats. Här blir det tydligt att till synes stabila ordningar och sorteringsmekanismer alltid rymmer sin motsats: det rörliga och föränderliga som ifrågasätter det som tycks vara givet och svårt att förändra.

När Gun Lund fick syn på fotografiet i boken och började ställa kritiska frågor om det rubbades arkivinstitutionens och jubileumsbokens till synes stabila ordning. Detta kan, i ett första steg, begreppsliggöras genom Cooks idé om arkivalier som föränderliga agenter i minnesskapande processer. Lund var av förklarliga skäl upprörd över felet i boken; för henne var det som att en viktig del av danshistorien, en del hon själv ingått i, tryckts undan och tystats. Lund berättade för mig hur fotografiet började framkalla minnen av Anna Wikström och Akademin för dans. Att bilden så uppenbart var felaktigt benämnd väckte också frågor om vad som kunde göras åt situationen i relation till historieskrivningen. Lund vände sig till mig med dessa frågor, och jag bejakade arbetet med att finna ett möjligt svar på dem. Det som sker här, öppnar för en arkivbaserad aktivism som strävar efter konkret förändring av danshistoriens narrativ.

Vare sig Lund eller jag var intresserade av att klaga på ett till synes marginellt faktafel i en i övrigt välgjord jubileumsbok. Samtidigt ville ingen av oss släppa taget om den bortträngda danshistoria som plötsligt kommit upp i ljuset. Det är här som begreppsliggörandet av bildens agens blir användbart. Cooks arkivteori om agens och rörlighet öppnar nämligen för att aktivt, och teoretiskt medvetet, låta arkivalier bli del i nya arbetsprocesser. Enligt Cooks

teori förändrar detta «betydelsen av alla tidigare aktiveringar» (Cook, 2001, 29). I fallet med fotografiet på «de okända» dansarna gör idén om arkivaliers agens att de nätverk som den ingår i kan sättas i spel och aktivt bidra till förändring av danshistorien. Hur kan då denna förändring gå till och benämnas teoretiskt? I nästa steg i undersökningen är fokus på arkivbaserad aktivism och hur Lund och jag konkret kunde omförhandla fotografiets relativa «sanning».

## Aktivism i dansarkivet

Historikern och arkivvetaren Andrew Flinn tar sin utgångspunkt i det expanderade arkivbegreppet när han formulerar sin teori om arkivbaserad aktivism. Med Flinns egna ord uttrycks detta på följande vis:

To work to ensure the past is remembered, that individual lives are not forgotten or misrepresented, that the independent archive is constituted and made available is to make a political intervention in which the past, personal, and collective can be celebrated and commemorated but at the same time can also be used for education and debate.<sup>6</sup> (Flinn 2011, 13)

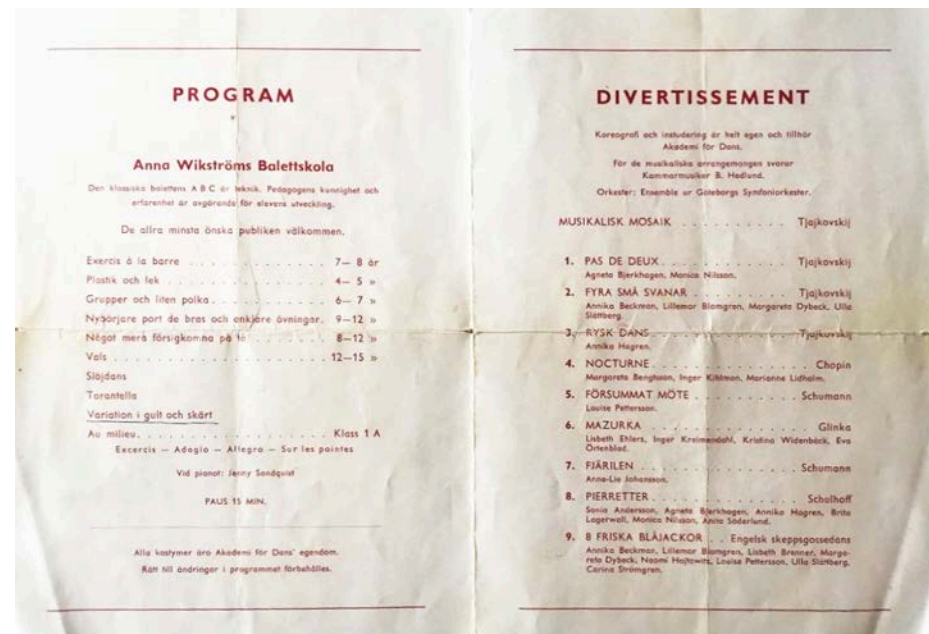
Flinn definierar två sorters arkivbaserad aktivism, en som avser förändrade attityder hos anställda inom arkivinstitutioner och en som fokuserar på oberoende aktörers aktivistiska agendor. Lund och jag är just sådana (relativt) oberoende aktörer, vars arkivengagemang kan beskrivas som aktivistiskt. Vårt arbete överskrider arkivinstitutionens bevarandeintressen, och ingår i en mera omfattande agenda, som handlar om konkret förändring av danshistoria och historiografisk reflektion över hur

6 Jag har valt att inte översätta detta frilagda citat för att jag vill att Flinns eget språk ska ges utrymme. I de följande kortare citaten har jag gjort översättningar för att underlätta läsbarheten.

den skapas, glöms eller göms undan.

I sitt eget arkiv, i källaren i huset där de bor, fann Lund och hennes partner Lars Persson pressklipp och ett programblad som hörde till «Balettmatiné, Akademi för dans å Stadsteatern, söndagen den 13 maj 1956, kl 14.00». Under rubriken «Unga dansares söndag» skrev *Göteborgs Morgonposts* Birger Idelius om Anna Wikströms arrangemang. Fotografiet på unga dansare som illustrerar Idelius artikel är detsamma som i jubileumsboken. Bildtexten lyder «Som en vacker vårbukett... Gruppen är ur klass I A». I programbladet återfinns «Variation i skärt och gult», som uppmärksammas av Idelius: "[...] vi nöjer oss i andanom med att (före pausen) överrätta en blomma till 'de skäras' okända lilla anförarinna ('Variation i skärt och gult'). Hon har redan en armföring, en hållning och en grace, som många vid Storan kunde ha skäl att avundas henne." (Idelius 1956). Sammantaget visar arkivspåren att det är Anna Wikströms dansare som syns på fotografiet i jubileumsboken.

Den «okända dansare» som får beröm av Idelius är troligtvis den då 13-åriga Lund (personlig kommunikation 22 november 2019). Den grundläggande utbildning Lund fick på Akademi för dans gav henne en start på en dans- och koreografkarriär som idag framstår som enastående (Landell 2006). I citatet där Lund (som namnlös) får beröm indikerar Idelius att eleverna på Akademi för dans håller hög klass, och att de kan utmana eleverna på Stora teatern. Sammantaget visar arkivfynden, det nätverk som fotografiet på «de okända» ingår i, att det i Göteborg under 1950-talet fanns två dansskolor med höga ambitioner, och därtill engagerade och danskunniga skribenter. Det är lärorikt att bli varse hur en ensidig, institutionsorienterad bild av dansutbildning i Göteborg kan förändras genom Lunds arkivfynd. Som Flinn uttrycker det, arkiv utanför institutionerna «kan inte bara representera



etablerandet av en plats där det förflutna dokumenteras och samlas på ett passivt vis, men, vilket är avgörande, också vara ett utrymme där arkivet blir ett betydande verktyg för upptäckt, utbildning, och bemyndigande» (Flinn 2011, 9).

För dem som arbetar inom minnesinstitutioner, som museer med arkiv, handlar den aktivistiska positionen, enligt Flinn, om «ett professionellt ansvar att se bortom sina egna samlingar och de egna förvaringsplatsernas väggar» för att visa omsorg och ta ansvar för samlingars tillkomstkontext i samarbeten med oberoende eller utom-institutionella aktörer och sammanhang (Flinn 2011, 15). Flinn betonar att detta inte handlar om att nedvärdera någons kunnande, utan om «en delvis omfokusering och omformulering av arkivuppdraget» (Flinn 2011, 16). Museets nuvarande bibliotekarie, Pernilla Karlsson, är tillmötesgående när jag frågar om material från Akademi för dans (personlig kommunikation 2019-11-28). I museets arkiv finns personrelaterade pressklipp, ett flertal artistfotografier av Wikström och Lotz, och

*Programblad där Klass 1A nämns, utan att dansarnas namn tagits med. Akademi för dans, Balettmatiné, 13 maj 1956, på Göteborgs stadsteater. Gun Lund och Lars Perssons arkiv.*

fotografier och pressklipp för Akademi för dans. Bilden på Wikströms dansare, som återgavs i jubileumsboken, återfinns i arkivet under material från «Stora teaterns balettskola 1950-1970 ca».

Med hjälp av Lunds arkivforskning kan fotografiet av «de okända dansarna» attribueras på ett nytt sätt. Mera arbete återstår för att få fram namnen på dansarna på fotografiet. Att i framtiden, om så är möjligt, namnge dansarna gör att de kan förflyttas från att utgöra komponenter i en dekorativ stämningbild till, att ha agens som individer och grupp. Det jag vill lyfta fram här är hur den arkivbaserade aktivism som Lund, Persson, och jag ägnat oss åt, sätter Göteborgs danshistoria i rörelse. Men hur är det med historieskrivningen och dess roll i det här specifika fallet?

## Anna Wikströms Akademi för dans och historieskrivningen

Vad var Anna Wikströms Akademi för dans och på vilka sätt kan det vara historiografiskt viktigt att uppmärksamma hennes och skolans roll i Göteborgs dansliv? Att Akademi för dans hade avgörande betydelse för Lunds möjlighet att bli dansare, har redan framkommit, men vad för slags danskultur representerade skolan? Genom att välja att fokusera på det som dansforskaren Lena Hammergren (2002) benämner «danskultur» blir det möjligt att både studera individuella artister och pedagoger som marginaliserats och verksamheter där gränser mellan konst, underhållning och social dans överskrids.

Anna Wikström (född Svensson) föddes 1890 i Stockholm och gick bort 1980 i Göteborg. Enligt *Göteborgs och Bobus läns porträttgalleri* blev Wikström som tioåring elev vid Kungliga Operans balettelevskola och nio år senare solodansös. Hon avancerade till prima ballerina 1914, och var 1916 en av de dansare som var elev hos Michael Fokin.

*Anna Wikström. Fotograf okänd. Teatersamlingarna Göteborgs stadsmuseum.*



År 1919 lämnade hon operan och 1923 framträdde hon som solistdansare i Svenska baletten, på dess Amerikaturné. (*Göteborgs och Bobus läns porträttgalleri*, 1935). Wikström turnerade också flitigt i Europa och Norden tillsammans med sin danspartner Lotz, som varit verksam som balettmästare i Tyskland. Enligt recensioner från en turné i Sverige 1922 var hon en uppskattad och skicklig dansare (se *tidningar.kb.se*).<sup>7</sup> När Wikström och Lotz startade Akademi för dans i Göteborg 1930, var det således en högutbildad och framgångsrik dansare med internationell erfarenhet som slog sig ned i staden. Artistporträtt i Teatersamlingarna vid Göteborgs stadsmuseum vittar om en tidstypiskt bred repertoar där Fokininspirerade klassiska och plastiska danser, varvades med allvarliga dansdramer, humoristiska, och folkloristiskt inspirerade inslag.

Lotz, som var balettmästare och danspedagog från Tyskland, bidrog med kunskap om damgymnastik, och både han och Wikström undervisade i sällskapsdans. Här öppnar sig det som var Akademi för dans signum: en dansutbildning i tre tydliga delar: balett och plastisk, sällskapsdans och rytmisk gymnastik. Som Hammergren skriver: «Den blandade danskulturen ger, om man är öppen för det, upphov till nya läsningar av förändringskeenden i danshistorien» (Hammergren 2002, 160). Det förändringskede som Hammergren belyser gäller åren runt 1900, när många olika slags danskulturer kämpade om publikens gunst, och kvinnliga dansare klev fram som starka entreprenörer. Wikström och Lotz har sina rötter i denna mylla. Akademi för dans representerade en bred och folkligt förankrad danskultur där balett, social dans och gymnastik möttes. Mottot var, »[s] til, uppfostran, kultiverad dans» (Å. L. 1980). Recensioner av akademiens dansuppvisningar visar

<sup>7</sup> Jag sökte på «Helmut Lotz» eftersom Anna Wikström är ett relativt vanligt namn och träffarna enbart på henne blev för många.

att verksamhetens kombination av konstnärlig dans och fysisk och social fostran var uppskattad i Göteborg. Exempelvis talade *Göteborgs-Posten* 1944 om «solid popularitet här i samhället» och hävdar att det är en «anmärkningsvärd god teknisk underbyggnad» som ges av Akademi för dans (Es An 1944).

Jag har inte kunnat finna några mera fördjupade uppgifter om Akademi för dans i tidigare danshistoria, men frånvaron av omnämning är också intressant att uppmärksamma. I danshistorikern Erik Näslunds redogörelse för Stora teaterns baletts historia, publicerad 1984, i teaterns jubileumsbok för 125-årsfirandet, nämns inte Akademi för dans, trots att teaterns dansare ofta hämtades därifrån och dess artister tränade dans där (Näslund 1984; Idelius 1956; Å-L 1980). I jubileumsboken från 2019 upprepas något av denna exkluderande syn i formuleringen om att det är en «relevant dansutbildning» som fokuseras (Hellström Sveningsson 2019, 7). De utbildningar som hamnar utanför Stora teaterns balettelevskola stämplas som irrelevanta. Samtidigt som jubileumsböckerna om Stora teatern är viktiga historiografiska bidrag med avseende på institutioners historia, gör de samtidigt att den breda danskultur som Akademi för dans stod förblir dold.

Vittnesmål i Göteborgspressen visar att den undervisning som bedrevs vid Akademi för dans stannat kvar i människors minnen. I en artikel i *Göteborgs-Posten* från 2014 beskrivs ett läsarbrev om Helmut Lotz grav, som var stadd i förfall: «Jag tycker inte att en som gett oss äldre göteborgare så mycket dansglädje skall glömmas bort. Please research!» (Öhnander 2014). Brevet genererade en rekordstor läsarrespons. Berättelserna handlade om möjligheten att lära sig «dans och gymnastik på ett avslappnande sätt i motsats till Ling-gymnastiken som var mera militärisk», eller om att tillägna sig «moden vals, slowfox med långa svepande steg, foxtrot, tango och wienervals». Andra vittnesmål pekar ut en uppfostrande sida hos skolan: «Hos Lotz lärde jag mig steppa. Han var en disciplinist,



*Anna Wikström och Helmut Lotz framträder som «Det rika paret», «5:e dansmatinén, 1936». Teatersamlingarna Göteborgs stadsmuseum.*

perfektionist och hade ett hett humör. Hos honom lärde jag mig hållning, grace och självtillit.» (Öhnander 2014). Irene Weiss-Eklund, syster till författaren och konstnären Peter Weiss, vittar om hur hon studerade till danspedagog vid Akademin för dans, och genom detta lyckades öppna dansskola i Alingsås och försörja sin familj (William-Olsson 1999).

## Sammanfattning...och in i framtiden

I den här artikeln har jag undersökt hur forskare och utövare samarbetat för att i en aktivistisk «dansa där vi gräver-anda omförhandla den lokala danshistoriens narrativ. Artikeln visar hur intensiv forskning med utgångspunkt i en arkivalie, ett fotografi av »glömda» unga dansare, kunde öppna för kunskap om en viktig dansutbildning som inte haft någon plats i tidigare historieskrivning. Fotografiet, som var felaktigt attribuerat till Stora teaterns balettelevskola, finns

i en aktuell jubileumsbok om teaterns balettskola i Göteborg. Genom att begreppsliggöra fotografiets agens och de aktivistiska handlingar som ledde till mera kunskap om bilden och dess sammanhang, kunde historieskrivningens traditionella fokus på institutioner utmanas, och den utom-institutionella, i detta fall breda, danskulturen och de utövare som fanns där träda fram och ta plats.

Artikeln redogör för hur samarbetet mellan dansaren och koreografen Gun Lund, Teatersamlingarna i Göteborgs stadsmuseum, och universitetet i form av min medverkan, kunnat berika stadens danshistoria med ny kunskap om en bortträngd dimension av danskulturen. Anna Wikströms Akademi för dans (1930-1965) välkomnade olika intressenter och lät konstnärlig dans, dans som träningsform, pedagogik och social dans mötas. Stora teaterns balettelevskolas snäva elitism utgör en motsats till Wikströms konstnärligt ambitiösa, men samtidigt breda och socialt förankrade sätt att bedriva utbildning. Med det arkivförankrade aktivistiska förhållningssätt som denna artikel utforskat, utmanas hegemonin, och flera röster, kroppar och verksamheter kan ges en plats i danshistorien. Min undersökning kompletterar därmed tidigare postmodern danshistoriografi (se exempelvis Hammergren 2002; Morris och Nicholas 2017), med ett Göteborgsexempel.

Undersökningen om Anna Wikströms Akademi för dans ingår i forskningsprojektet *Expansion och mångfald: Digital kartläggning och analys av den utominstitutionella scenkonsten i Göteborg 1965-2000* (VR 2019-2021).<sup>8</sup> Projektet, som bejakar delaktighet och implementerar samarbeten mellan utövare, akademiker och arkivinstitutioner, vill bidra med modeller för hur lokalt «dansgrävande» kan utföras. Konkret har arbetet resulterat i att Anna Wikström och hennes Akademi för dans kunnat ges

plats i projektets databas. Genom detta ökar förståelsen för danskulturens förutsättningar efter att skolan stängdes 1965. Jag välkomnar alla intresserade att besöka databasen på <https://db.gu.se/expansion/>, även om den i nuläget är under uppbyggnad och därmed fokuserar på vetenskapligt innehåll, snarare än estetik och gränssnitt.

## Arkiv

Gun Lund och Lars Perssons arkiv  
Teatersamlingarna, Göteborgs stadsmuseum (GSM)  
Svenska dagstidningar, tidningar.kb.se

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### Författarens tack

Jag tackar härmed de två anonyma granskarna av artikeln för konstruktiva förslag. Tack också till Pernilla Karlsson på Göteborgs stadsmuseum och Gun Lund och Lars Persson för gott samarbete.

## BIOGRAPHY

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## The Brudevals, 'Danishness' and lived reality

Inger Damsholt

### ABSTRACT

This article represents part of the author's ongoing empirical study of the Danish *brudevals* (bridal waltz) tradition recognized by the means of three characteristic conditions: a specific piece of music by Niels W. Gade, a particular group choreography in which a circle of clapping guests slowly move closer to the newlywed couple and a final section of the ritual in which guests cut the tips of the groom's socks. The purpose of the article is to highlight how current realisations of the dance reveal the brudevals as a dynamic living tradition and to show the complexity of the political implications it can have when dancing it. Drawing on Sarah Ahmed's affect theory, the article argues that different negotiations of the brudevals naturalise various understandings of 'Danishness'. The article argues that an alternative contemporary form of the brudevals, which incorporates a montage of international popular dance and music, produces a version of national identity that underlines the notion of world citizenship as a significant part of being Danish. In realisations of the brudevals danced by same-sex couples, a kind of 'Danishness' is produced through affect that naturalises and celebrates *lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex and asexual* (LGBTQIA) marriages. Finally, a Turkish-Danish brudevals produces a multiculturalist understanding of 'Danishness', which does not conform to a specific national cultural heritage but can encompass several ethnic groups.

### ABSTRACT

Denne artikel repræsenterer en del af forfatterens fortløbende empiriske undersøgelse af den danske brudevals-tradition der her genkendes på grundlag af tre karakteristiske betingelser: et specifikt stykke musik af Niels W. Gade, en bestemt gruppekoreografi, hvor en kreds af klappende gæster bevæger sig langsomt tættere på brudeparret og et sidste afsnit af den rituelle dans, hvor gæster klipper spidserne af brudgommens sokker. Formålet med artiklen er at fremhæve hvordan nutidige realiseringer af dansen viser brudevalsen som en dynamisk levende tradition og at understrege kompleksiteten af de politiske implikationer, det kan have, når man danser den. Med udgangspunkt i Sarah Ahmeds affektteori argumenterer artiklen for, at forskellige forhandlinger af brudevals naturaliserer forskellige forståelser af danskhed. Artiklen hævder, at en nutidig form for alternativ brudevals, der indeholder et break med en montage af populærmusik og tilhørende dansebevægelser, producerer en version af danskhed, som understreger forestillingen om 'verdensborgerskab' som en væsentlig del af det at være dansk. I andre brudevalse, der danses af to af samme køn, produceres en slags danskhed, der naturaliserer og hylder *lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex and asexual* (LGBTQIA) ægteskaber. Afslutningsvis producerer en tyrkisk-dansk brudevals en multikulturalistisk forståelse af danskhed, som ikke er begrænset til en bestemt national kulturarv, men kan omfatte elementer der peger i retning af forskellige etniciteter.

## The Brudevals, 'Danishness' and lived reality

Inger Damsholt

### Introduction

This article represents part of a larger ongoing empirical study of the brudevals tradition in Denmark.<sup>1</sup> During the first two decades of the new millennium, I focused my research on popular social dance practices specific to Denmark. While I have published several articles on the Danish Lanciers tradition (Damsholt 2009 and 2014), the present article is the first presentation of results from my study of the Danish brudevals tradition.<sup>2</sup> As I was born in Denmark and have lived in this country for most of my 55 years, I have attended many weddings here, including my own. Apart from the experience and knowledge I acquired as an insider of Danish culture, my knowledge of the brudevals stems from a vast amount of material, including historical archival material (for example, dance descriptions, sheet music, feature films and YouTube videos). From this 'insider' position, my view as a researcher is that systematised empirical knowledge of the history of the brudevals tradition and its contemporary practice is scarce (see Andersen 2020, Kaivola-Bregenhøj 1983 and Kofod 2008 & 1996). *The Great Danish Encyclopaedia* states that the dance is derived from August Bournonville's ballet *A Folk Tale* (1854) with music by Niels W. Gade and describes it in the following manner:<sup>3</sup>

The guests stand in a circle around the dancing couple and clap their hands. Gradually, they approach the bridal couple and make the circle smaller. When all the guests are close to the bridal couple, the groom is lifted in the air by the male guests and the tips of his socks are cut off. (Jensen 2020)

On the basis of my lived experience and my ongoing research of different materials, I have characterised the contemporary Danish brudevals as meeting three conditions, which are as follows: it must have a specific piece of music by Niels W. Gade («Brudevals» from 1854), a particular group choreography (a circle of guests clapping and slowly moving closer to the bridal couple) and a cutting ritual (guests cutting the tips of the groom's socks). According to a contemporary source, some believe that the sock cutting ritual is carried out, because 'guests want to prevent the groom from «making his socks green» with other women', while some guests might 'tear the bride's veil apart and take a piece home, which should bring happiness' (Brudevals, 2020).

Within a Nordic context, it is particularly interesting to note that the word 'brudevals', which is known in all Scandinavian languages, generally denotes the more international concept of the 'first dance' of a married couple. Nevertheless, in the context of Danish weddings, the word 'brudevals' also connotes the three characteristic elements described above. This is obvious when comparing broadcasts of the 'first dances' performed by the three Scandinavian crown prince-/crown princess-couples in 2001, 2004 and 2010 (Ragnar Bang Huseby 2013, RoyalLife CZ 2014 and Anneliese Lohse 2010). The Norwegian and Swedish couples perform their first dances to different pieces of music, and eventually, guests join in with the couple dancing. The Danish couple, however, performs a traditional Danish brudevals to Gade's music in which a group of clapping guests gradually encircles them. And although the broadcast of the

royal Danish wedding did not document any cutting ritual, other sources have indicated that the Danish Crown Prince had the tips of his socks cut off after press photographers had gone (erla@bt.dk 2004).

Rather than confining the brudevals to a number of necessary or sufficient conditions in a static dance tradition, the purpose of the present article is to highlight how current realisations of the brudevals in Denmark reveal its character as a dynamic living tradition. My ongoing research suggests no one-to-one simplicity in the relationship between the brudevals as a habituated practice and its discursive deliberations. In this day and age, any practice that has the character of being a Danish tradition is in danger of being used by conservative nationalist parties as the norm for 'real Danish people'. This can be seen in the patenting of traditional Danish food, clothing, dance and so on. In this article, the intention is not to de-politicise the brudevals or to claim that it is an innocent tradition. My intention is to show the complexity of the political implications it may have when dancing the brudevals, thus I do not accept the idea that we all have super-agency to determine the meaning of what we are doing.

In writing this article, I am inspired by Sarah Ahmed's theoretical framework as presented in *The Cultural Politics of Emotions* (2004), in which she turns to the question of how we can theorise positive affect and the politics of good feeling. Starting from the notion that emotions are cultural practices rather than psychological states, Ahmed argued that bodies or individuals become aligned with popular ideology inside a community through emotions (Ahmed 2004, 1). The idea is that affect is material rhetoric and that affective power can dictate the modes of lives and function as a gateway into the social world. While Ahmed primarily analysed how written or spoken texts perform emotion, her theoretical framework is inspiring when considering the political implications of affect in a dance practice like the brudevals. Thus,

in this article, I start from the notion that a dance tradition, like the repetition of words, elicits an emotional response that grows upon repetition and enhances social alliances and notions of national identity.

In the context of my ongoing research, it seems crucial to emphasise the fact that the arguments in the present article are not based on extensive field work, such as formal participant observations or ethnographic interviews. The constitution of 'weddings in Denmark' as a field that can be investigated systematically through field work would obviously provide a richer body of data that might illustrate the complexity of the brudevals as a dynamic living tradition in a more convincing manner. Nevertheless, in this article, I dare to make arguments about 'Danishness' in the brudevals that are based on my insider knowledge of the tradition as well as a vast amount of archival material. To illustrate the complexity of the brudevals as a dynamic living tradition, I refer to an array of current material found on the Internet, including nine realisations of the brudevals documented by wedding guests and uploaded on YouTube by bridal couples or their guests. Obviously, the arrival of the Internet 2.0 and the consequential possibility of studying people online has 'prompted discussion among both the research community and the general public about the ethical implications of researching humans, their information, and their activities in large-scale digital contexts' (Fiesler, Young, Peyton, Bruckman, Gray, Hancock and Lutterset, 2015). In other words, just because something is legal does not mean it is ethically plausible. Briefly, my position on the ethics of using the lived reality documented in the nine YouTube videos examined herein is that they constitute published material. I assume that the bridal couple and their guests agreed to the videos being uploaded. Furthermore, while it might be true that many people do not fully understand what 'publicly available' really means or its ramifications, I do not think that I am

compromising anybody's privacy by referring to the videos in the context of my article.

## How is the brudevals Danish?

*Surrounded by cheering spectators, a couple of formally dressed men take up the dance floor, which is lit in the manner of a discotheque. One man is tall, large, light skinned, slightly bald and wears a black suit. The other man is short, petite, brown skinned, black haired and dressed in a shining white suit with a corsage on his left lapel. As the performance starts, the «Time of my Life» song from the final scene of the classic Hollywood dance film Dirty Dancing (1987) is heard and the two men embody the iconic dance moves of the choreographic parts of Johnny (Patrick Swayze) and Baby (Jennifer Grey). At first, the tall man in the black suit represents Johnny, but soon, the gender roles are switched, and the short man in the white suit kneels down to catch the tall man in the black suit in an ironic imitation of the way Johnny catches Baby in the film. The dancing continues with a montage of popular music to which the dancing couple performs a series of dance moves partly derived from music videos. Three minutes into the performance, Niels W. Gade's «Brudevals» is heard, and the spectators immediately start to sing along and clap their hands on the down beats of the music. The two men now take a dance bold and perform a waltz. At the beginning, the tall man in the black suit leads the dance, while the short man in the white suit follows. After a while, the men change roles, thus 'queering' the way this phenomenon is seen in many other contemporary couple dance practices. Towards the end of the first run-through of the music, the guests have started to move in on the couple,*

*and by the time the music ends, both men are lifted up by some of the guests, stripped of their shoes and the tips of their socks are cut off.*

The YouTube video *Peter & Peter – Brudevals*, which I have described above, is described by the uploader as 'a slightly atypical «Brudevals» at our wedding August 11, 2012' (Borg, 2013). But why would it be considered 'atypical'? One interpretation of this might focus on the fact that the dance starts with a montage of popular dance and music. Another interpretation might focus on the fact that it is performed by two men who 'queer' the waltz as well as the enactment of moves from Johnny and Baby's iconic final mambo in *Dirty Dancing*. Finally, my own description of the video highlights the fact that the short man in the white suit has black hair and brown skin. While this observation most likely has little to do with the uploader's description of the dance as 'atypical', very often, at least in the Danish context, phenotypic traits are immediately associated with territorial belongings and migration.<sup>4</sup>

But how is a brudevals like the one described above Danish? In this article, I argue that affect in the brudevals relates to narratives of 'liveable lives', including same-sex and inter-ethnic marriages. This means that versions of 'Danishness' are also naturalised through affect. To highlight the complexity of the brudevals tradition in relation to notions of national identity, I use as a framework for the article the brudevals danced by Peter and Peter, which points to the themes of my main analysis. First, I highlight how the existing trend of an 'alternative' brudevals, that refers to international viral first dance videos on YouTube, produces a kind of 'Danishness' that underlines the notion of world citizenship as a significant part of being Danish. Second, I propose that realisations of brudevals performed by same-sex couples produce a kind of 'Danishness' that naturalises and celebrates Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex

and asexual (LGBTQIA) marriages. Finally, I highlight the fact that the bridevals can be negotiated in ways that combine two different ethnicities, producing a notion of 'Danishness' that does not conform to a specific national cultural heritage. In this context, it seems important to underline the difference between the habitual practice of the bridevals and its discursive deliberations. In other words, when locating different notions of 'Danishness' in current realisations of the bridevals, I oscillate between describing explicit elements and unpacking elements that have not been understood before.

### Globalisation, digitalisation and 'first dance' choreographies

The popular media's definition of a 'first dance', such as that in the English version of Wikimedia, stresses that the music to which the married couple dances is highly varied, 'with modern chart hits often being selected' (Wikimedia Foundation Inc. 2020a). It also suggests that 'some modern couples either slow dance or learn a dance, whether it be a ballroom dance style or a choreographed dance routine' (Wikimedia Foundation Inc. 2020a). That Wikimedia's definition of a 'first dance' is vastly documented becomes clear when browsing the many videos uploaded on YouTube showing first dances at Euro-American weddings. Thus, many couples perform a slow dance to a modern chart hit, but more importantly, many couples present themselves in a choreographed montage of signature dance moves from Hollywood films and music videos. Signature dance moves typically originate from popular dance films, such as *Grease* (1978), *Footloose* (1984) and *Dirty Dancing* (the «Time of my Life» finale in particular) and music videos, such as Sir Mix-A-Lot's «Baby Got Back», Beyoncé's «Single Ladies (Put a Ring on It)», Psy's «Gangnam Style», Yvvis's «*The Fox (What the Fox Say)*» and «Harlem Shake» (for example, Fijiterp89 2014, Jake Britt 2016 and Luke

Walker 2013).

While some 'first dance' videos that include an improvised slow dance seem to highlight the intimacy of the couple, choreographed dance routines or montages highlight the 'first dance' as a theatrical stage production. In general, it seems that in this day and age, 'first dances' blur the concepts of the 'participatory dance', 'theatrical dance' and 'screen dance'. More specifically, a 'first dance' is often choreographed as a live event in reference to particular instances of the screen dance, such as the «Time of my Life» finale of *Dirty Dancing*. However, it may also be conceived as a screen dance in the sense that video documentations of it are expected to have a significant after life on social media. In her article, «Screendance 2.0: Social Dance-Media,» Harmony Bench used Beyoncé's official video for «Single Ladies (Put a Ring on It)» when identifying 'viral choreographies' as specific dancing in viral videos in which social media users contribute with re-performances of specific choreography (Bench 2010, 204-206).

When browsing the many videos uploaded on YouTube that document bridevals dances at weddings in Denmark, it seems clear that Peter and Peter's negotiation of the traditional dance represents a more general trend of performing an 'alternative bridevals' (Bryllupskanalen 2020a). Many videos document realisations of the bridevals that insert a choreographed routine of popular music and signature dance moves into the traditional form. Usually, the bridevals starts with Gade's «Bridevals» music, and the couple enters the dance floor while guests get ready to clap their hands and move in on the couple. After a while, Gade's music is suddenly interrupted and a montage of popular music and signature dance moves unfolds. As a conclusion to the dance, Gade's music returns and the guests initiate the traditional group choreography moving closer to the couple, after which the cutting ritual unfolds (see, for example, Larsrefshauge 2008, Tomas Mygind 2013, Bo Berggreen 2013 and DJ Sjass

2013). While Gade's music may refer to a historical era of national romanticism, the montages of popular music and dance can refer to a more general notion of the 'olden days' within the lifetime of the newlywed couple and their friends, including iconic dance moves from the films and videos of their youth or childhood. In this sense, the alternative bridevals refers to a more or less mutual heritage of popular music and dance moves shared by younger generations, who are generally not familiar with dancing the waltz.

With the insertion of a choreographed montage of popular music and dance moves from a globalised digital context into the traditional form, the alternative bridevals can be read as producing a kind of 'Danishness' that disturbs the notion of Denmark as a closed nation state with a particular national culture. Thus, the alternative bridevals refers to a community conception and form of 'Danishness' that focuses on world citizenship as a significant part of being Danish. Alternative realisations of the bridevals suggest that part of Denmark's national cultural heritage is shared with the rest of the world or that Denmark is part of a larger global community that shares a mutual heritage of popular culture. As such, the alternative bridevals suggests an overarching sense of global uniformity or even notions of 'McDonaldisation' or 'Disneyfication', which suggest the internationalisation of United States mass culture entertainment values. However, it ought to be underlined that the global popularity of the Korean music video «Gangnam Style» and the ensuing flow of K-pop seems to have challenged the hegemonic status of the United States when it comes to popular music and dance. In any case, the alternative bridevals produces a kind of 'Danishness' that does not conform to a specific national cultural heritage but underlines a global heritage of global citizens.

### Rainbow weddings and rainbow families

What is enacted in the bridevals is the climax of the romantic wedding narrative. This includes an awkward tension between an institutionalised and ritualised choreography and the expectation of genuine feelings felt by the newlyweds in the middle of the circle of guests. Thus, the practice of the bridevals is suffused by specific ideas of romantic love and specific feelings the bride and groom are expected to have for each other. These may include excitement connected with the historical concept of the wedding night as the most romantic and 'hot' night of one's life. In principle, the couple's dance hold represents their first close physical encounter and thereby, the initial phase of the wedding night. The encircling movement of the guests reduces the size of the dance floor, which constitutes a visceral unification of the two, and many couples end up in a close embrace, often kissing each other passionately. The encircling choreography also foreshadows the sock cutting ritual, which marks the monogamous nature of the expected marital relationship into which the bridal couple is expected to enter. Thus, the Danish bridevals can be read as a practice that celebrates the family as an institution. In other words, the affective energy of the clapping circle of guests seems to be saying, 'This couple is now recognised as a family and thereby, part of our community made up of networks of families'.

Considering the bridevals in the larger context of weddings, marriages and families, the dance is related to broad political discussions about what we are supposed to strive for in society. In her article «Happy Objects,» Ahmed highlighted how happiness functions as a promise that directs life towards marriage.

Happiness is an expectation of what follows, where the expectation differentiates between things, whether or not they exist as objects in the present. For example, a child might be asked to imagine

happiness by imagining certain events in the future, such as his or her wedding day, 'the happiest day of your life'. (Ahmed 2010, 41)

Contributing to the affective narrative of the practice of the brudevals, Jens Werner, widely known as a judge on the Danish version of *Strictly Come Dancing*, explained, 'The most intimate and most private, besides the wedding night, is probably if one is allowed to dance the brudevals with ones chosen one, because... there are a lot of memories that flare up, reserved for only the man and the lady, or whether it is a man and a man, or a woman and a woman, it does not matter, but the couple, and I think that is not found elsewhere' (Bryllupskanalen 2020b). In this context it needs to be highlighted that the legal rights of the LGBTQIA community in Denmark are some of the most extensive in the world. Same-sex sexual activity was legalised in 1933, and Denmark was the first country in the world to recognise civil partnerships for same-sex couples in 1989. Since 2010, Denmark has allowed same-sex couples to adopt jointly, and in 2012, the registered partnership act was replaced by a gender-neutral marriage law. As such, I propose that the same-sex brudevals refers to a community conception and form of 'Danishness' that celebrates rainbow families and underlines a part of the national cultural heritage that has to do with LGBTQIA rights. Thus, the affective intensity of the brudevals also (re)produces other political conceptions of normality in a presentation of other norms that suffuse the dance. In other words, part of the affective intensity of the same-sex brudevals might have to do with the fact that the two individuals of the couple are proud to be 'out of the closet' but also proud to embrace the marriage institution through their practice of the brudevals.

Documentations of same-sex 'first dances' in Denmark found on the Internet show that the practice of the brudevals is negotiated in different ways. To demonstrate this, I have compared the same-sex

brudevals danced by Peter and Peter with a same-sex brudevals danced by Carina and Maibritt, which was documented in a YouTube video entitled *Brudevals Marie Key Uden Forsvar* (Maibritt Overgaard 2013). Considering the three characteristic conditions defined earlier, the two realisations are similar in the sense that they include the particular group choreography and the cutting ritual. In both dances, the guests form a circle around the bridal couple, clapping and slowly moving closer to them, so the circle became smaller. The two realisations are slightly different in their respective negotiations of the sock ritual. In this context it ought to be underlined that Carina and Maibritt are (cross-) dressed in a traditional heteronormative manner: one as 'the groom' in a black suit, and one as 'the bride' in a traditional Euro-American white dress and veil.<sup>5</sup> Thus, while Peter and Peter are both lifted in the air to have the tips of their socks cut off, only the groom has the tips of the socks cut at the end of the brudevals danced by Carina and Maibritt. Moreover, Carina and Maibritt's brudevals concludes with a tradition in which the groom removes the bride's garter using his mouth.

A big difference between the two realisations of brudevals has to do with the use of musical accompaniment. Peter and Peter's realisation includes the characteristic «Brudevals» by N.W. Gade (1854), but Carina and Maibritt's brudevals is solely accompanied by a Danish chart hit from 2012 entitled «Uden Forsvar» (Without Defence). Both pieces of music have the potential to produce a notion of 'Danishness'. Much of the affective intensity of Peter and Peter's brudevals could be due to Gade's music being related to a larger understanding of Danish national heritage. Yet many Danish citizens might actually think of Gade's music as belonging to a more global notion of wedding music on the same level as Felix Mendelssohn's «Wedding March» (1842) or Richard Wagner's «Bridal Chorus» (1850). In contrast, much of the affective intensity of Carina and Maibritt's

brudevals could be due to the use of a Danish love song by Marie Key, who is an iconic singer-songwriter in the Danish LGBTQIA community (Marianne Kongerslev 2016). Finally, both realisations of the brudevals highlight the complexity of the traditional dance as negotiated in reference to a larger context of modern Euro-American wedding celebrations. Thus, Peter and Peter begin their dance with a montage of popular dance and music, while Carina and Maibritt dance to a modern chart hit.

### Migration and ethnic minorities in Denmark

Connected to a more universally recognised wedding concept, the Danish practice of the brudevals is implicitly aligned with wedding traditions and 'first dances' that represent different ethnicities worldwide (Beau-coup 2020). These traditions and dances are part of the cultural heritage brought to Denmark through migration. The Turkish community is currently considered the largest ethnic minority group in Denmark, thus, unsurprisingly, many weddings in Denmark are traditional Turkish weddings reproducing Turkish wedding traditions, including a Turkish 'first dance'.<sup>6</sup> Documentations of such weddings are found on YouTube, including the television portrait of the wedding of Bahar and Selahattin, both descendants of Turkish immigrants, which was celebrated in a large sports gymnasium in a suburb of Copenhagen (videoarkiv ishøj 2012). As the bridal couple arrives at the gymnasium, a Turkish announcement states that they are 'about to dance the first dance of their life together' and that 'they have chosen the piece of music themselves'. This 'first dance' appears as a simple improvised slow dance during which the couple talks to each other, and children sprinkle them with rose petals.

Considering conservative nationalist politics, a Turkish wedding in Denmark can be regarded just as nationalist as a Danish wedding in Denmark – or a

Danish wedding in another country – can. Reading a wedding as nationalist is obviously predicated upon the idea that what is enacted represents 'Turkishness' or 'Danishness' respectively - and that this is a necessary prerequisite for the wedding to be proper and that the wedding is seen to sustain a specific national community. One of the terms often referred to in Danish debates about migration is the concept of a 'parallel society', referring to the self-organization of an ethnic or religious minority or group of immigrants. In the perspective of Ahmed's affect theory, the repetition of concepts, such as 'parallel society', in public texts represents material rhetoric that aligns some bodies inside a community while marginalising 'other' bodies in 'other' communities. In a Danish context, the use of the 'parallel society' concept often implies that a minority group wants minimal social and cultural contact with the majority society, and as such, it is seen in opposition to concepts like 'integration' and 'assimilation'.

So, what happens when people of so-called 'Danish descent' marry someone from 'outside' of Denmark? Some realisations of the brudevals seem to highlight the fact that an 'outsider' is assimilated or integrated into Danish culture, such as the aforementioned brudevals performed by the Danish Crown Prince Frederik and Crown Princess Mary, a former dual citizen of Australia and the United Kingdom. Their brudevals emphasises the fact that when you marry into the Danish royal family, you must integrate or assimilate by embracing the new nationality in terms of language, religion, norms and practices. In her essay, «Happy Objects,» Ahmed suggested that migrant individuals and families are under pressure to integrate, 'Although integration is not defined as «leaving your culture behind» (at least not officially), it is unevenly distributed, as a demand that new or would-be citizens embrace a common culture that is already given' (Ahmed 2010, 49).

Nevertheless, some descendants of immigrants,

who were born and raised in Denmark, insist on performing their dual identity as a hyphenate ethnicity brudevals. An example of this is the story of Steen and Süheyla, which is based on many hours of interviews with a man of Danish descent and a woman of Turkish descent, who did not wish to reveal their real names (Width Bindslev 2015). At the beginning of their wedding reception, which takes place in a large sports gymnasium holding about 500 people, the arrival of the couple culminates with a traditional Turkish first dance, ‘...the music shifts tempo into a slower pace...the first song Süheyla sang for him (Steen) in Turkish...’ (Width Bindslev 2015). Later in the evening, the couple performs the Danish brudevals.

The brudevals is on at 24:00 hours, as Süheyla and Steen have decided. The Turkish band does not know the song, so instead, Süheyla and Steen dance to a Turkish waltz, while their friends draw closer and closer together on them. To the great surprise and joy of the Turkish guests, the friends finally lift up the couple, cutting a piece of Süheyla’s veil and of Steen’s socks. (Width Bindslev 2015)

As Gade’s music is replaced by Turkish music, so the dance itself becomes a Danish-Turkish brudevals referring to several ethnicities at the same time. But more importantly, this brudevals is danced in the context of a Turkish wedding reception in Denmark long after a traditional Turkish ‘first dance’ has already been performed. Thus, these circumstances seem to disturb the implicit asymmetrical power relations associated with the Turkish minority, if a ‘minority’ is defined as a group that has no power to define the norm. More importantly however, it highlights that the Danish norm - the ‘brudevals’ – can be negotiated, thus making room for other ways of dancing it.

## Conclusion

In this article, I have considered different ways in which people in Denmark seek to negotiate the brudevals as something that can be inclusive and encompass them as individuals. In other words, different ways of practicing the brudevals that seem to be stating, ‘This dance is also for us!’ In reference to Ahmed’s affect theory, I have explored the political implications of affective intensities in the practice of the brudevals and its potential to enhance social alliances in notions of ‘Danishness’ that do not conform to a specific national cultural heritage. I have proposed that the alternative brudevals, which includes dance elements from popular dance films and music videos, produces a community conception and form of ‘Danishness’ that includes a digitalised global heritage and underlines world citizenship as a significant part of being Danish. Secondly, I have proposed that brudevals danced by same-sex couples produce a kind of ‘Danishness’ that naturalises and celebrates LGBTQIA marriages. Finally, I have proposed that individuals who are considered ethnic ‘outsiders’ can align with a notion of ‘Danishness’ inside a community through affect produced in the brudevals. The brudevals danced by the Danish Crown Prince and Crown Princess enhances the larger assimilation of Crown Princess Mary into Danish culture. But more importantly, the Turkish-Danish brudevals danced by Steen and Süheyla shows that the Danish norm can be negotiated by combining the traditions of two different ethnicities.

In a final remark, I would like to return to the danger of the brudevals being colonised by conservative nationalists, as mentioned in the introduction, and the possible reluctance people might feel towards performing the dance. I am intrigued by recent migration research that questions the so-called ‘national identity argument’, according to which cultural diversity is a threat to the shared (national) values underpinning social cohesion and redistributive justice. Highlighting that there is no consensus among

political theorists about *which* values we need to share to foster social cohesion, research reveals that empirical investigations suggest that ‘liberal citizenship’ and ‘multiculturalist’ values produce more social cohesion in terms of trust and solidarity as opposed to conservative or liberal nationalist values (e.g. Breidahl, Holtug and Kongshøj 2018). Considering the brudevals tradition within this theoretical framework, we might conclude that liberal democratic values allow people to dance a ‘first dance’ in whatever way they want and that multiculturalist values represent a substantial opportunity to perform one’s own traditions.

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## Notes

- 1 The literal translation of the Danish word 'brudevals' is 'bridal waltz'.
- 2 I would like to thank Birgitte Schepeleer Johansen, Willem Brooke-deBock and my colleagues in the research group Dance in Nordic Spaces, who have all commented on various versions of this articles.
- 3 All quotes from Danish texts have been translated by the author.
- 4 According to recent figures from Statistics Denmark, approximately 10% of the population in Denmark have been defined as immigrants or descendants of recent immigrants, who are people born in Denmark from migrant parents or parents without Danish citizenship. The majority of these citizens are migrants or post migrants from so-called 'non-western countries' (Statistics Denmark 2020).
- 5 While Carina and Maibritt did not change roles as leader and follower, their dance hold was 'queered', possibly unintentionally, as the groom unconventionally placed the left arm around the bride's waist, whereas the bride placed her right hand on the groom's shoulder.
- 6 According to recent statistics, there are approximately 30,000 people from Turkish backgrounds in Denmark, including immigrants and descendants (Statistics Denmark 2020).

## BIOGRAPHY

Associate professor, PhD, **Inger V. Damsholt** is Head of Studies at the Department of Arts and Cultural Studies at the University of Copenhagen. From 2002–2006, she was *Chairman of the Nordic Forum for Dance Research*, and as an extension of this work, she contributed to the establishment of the Nordic MA in Dance Studies programme as well as the research group Dance in Nordic Spaces. Her publications on traditional

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## Exploring The Body–Landscape Relationship Through Dance Film

Flavia Devonas Hoffmann

### ABSTRACT

In this paper, I reflect on the body–landscape relationship based on my experience with directing and choreographing my dance film *Human Habitat* in which a dancer takes us on a journey from a sustainable to a destructive relationship with the Arctic landscape. I outline the background and thoughts involved in producing a dance film in the Arctic and analyse the characteristics of the dancer's bodily interventions with the landscape. I investigate the properties of being embedded in a processual landscape and examine the consequences of these properties for choreographing movement in a landscape. I further outline how the film evokes kinaesthetic empathy and therefore fulfils my intention of bringing the Arctic into people's awareness. My examination has a phenomenological approach, and I draw on processual theories of landscape, material specificity and kinaesthetic empathy.

### ABSTRAKT

I denne artikkelen vil jeg reflektere over forholdet mellom kropp og landskap basert på min erfaring med å regissere og koreografere dansefilmen min *Human Habitat*. En danser tar oss med på en reise fra et bærekraftig til et destruktivt forhold til det arktiske landskapet. Jeg skisserer bakgrunnen og tankene om å produsere en dansefilm i Arktis og analyserer egenskapene til kroppslige intervensjoner med landskapet. Jeg undersøker egenskapene ved å være innebygd i et prosessuelt landskap og undersøker hvilke konsekvenser disse egenskapene har for å koreografere bevegelser i landskap. Jeg skisserer også hvordan filmen fremkaller kinestetisk empati og derfor kan oppfylle intensjonene mine om å bringe Arktis til folkets bevissthet. Min undersøkelse har en fenomenologisk tilnærming, og jeg trekker på prosessuelle teorier om landskap, materialspesifisitet og kinestetisk empati.

## Exploring The Body–Landscape Relationship Through Dance Film

Flavia Devonas Hoffmann

Photos: Ken Are Bongo

In January 2020, my dance film *Human Habitat* premiered at the Tromsø International Film Festival in Norway. *Human Habitat* has its origin in the clash between untouched nature and the growing industry in the Arctic and explores the oscillation between human resilience, resistance, vulnerability and fragility through the use of dance, film and music. It shows a female dancer moving in the snow-covered Norwegian Arctic landscape and takes its audience on a journey from a sustainable to a destructive relationship with the landscape she is moving in.

In this paper, I reflect on the body–landscape relationship based on my experience with directing and choreographing *Human Habitat*. First, I present the background and synopsis of the film before analysing the characteristics of bodily interventions with the landscape. I then investigate the properties of being embedded in a landscape and the consequences of these properties for dancing in a landscape. Finally, I outline how the film evokes kinaesthetic empathy and therefore fulfils my intention of bringing the Arctic into people's awareness.

My research has a phenomenological approach, and I draw on processual theories of landscape, material specificity and kinaesthetic empathy.

### Background

The Arctic is relevant to all of us because, as Sheila Watt-Cloutier (2018) puts it, it is the health barometer of the globe. Based on meteorological processes, negative trends in the world have a bigger impact on the Arctic than other places on the planet. The issue of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) illustrates the interrelation

of the Arctic and the rest of the planet: synthetic chemicals that are used in agriculture and industrial processes in the south accumulate in the Arctic. POPs can therefore be found in the Arctic snow even though they have never been used in the Arctic. An originally healthy, clean and sparsely populated habitat such as the Arctic has thus become heavily polluted. As POPs are liposoluble, they can be found in the fat of fish, seal, reindeer and even humans, causing the breast milk of Inuit mothers to become highly contaminated with dioxins (Watts-Cloutier 2018; Johansen 2002). It is clear that we should be aware of the fact that all our actions have very far-reaching consequences.

For thousands of years, the Arctic has been a healthy, clean living place (habitat) where humans – in this case, indigenous communities such as Sámi people – have interacted with the landscape in a strongly bodily connected and sustainable way. As a result of industrialisation, colonialism and globalisation, there has been a power shift in the determination of the Arctic landscape. Decision-makers in offices far away from the Arctic are impacting the very same landscape as the indigenous people, although their focus is on increased economic activity through industrial operations such as mining, oil drilling, fish farming, cruising tourism and cargo shipping. These decision-makers are disembodied from the landscape, which means that they do not *feel* the impact or consequences of their actions *on their own bodies*; however, the people living in this landscape very much do. As a dancer and choreographer who has lived in the Arctic since 2014, I felt the need to make a dance film because I could feel *in my own body* the frustration about the destructive developments in the Arctic.

By using the media specifics of film, *Human Habitat* allows me to address the viewer on a physical, affective, pre-reflective and prelinguistic level. I thereby hope to sharpen people's awareness of our bodily connection to, and dependence on landscapes in general and to the Arctic landscape in particular.

### Synopsis and movement analysis

*Human Habitat* lasts 8 min 29 sec. It does not have a classical narrative, but as a filmmaker, I tried to create an associative collage of the dancer's intrinsic and extrinsic relationship with the landscape. The dancer is trained in contemporary dance, but her movements are not strictly tied to any specific dance technique.

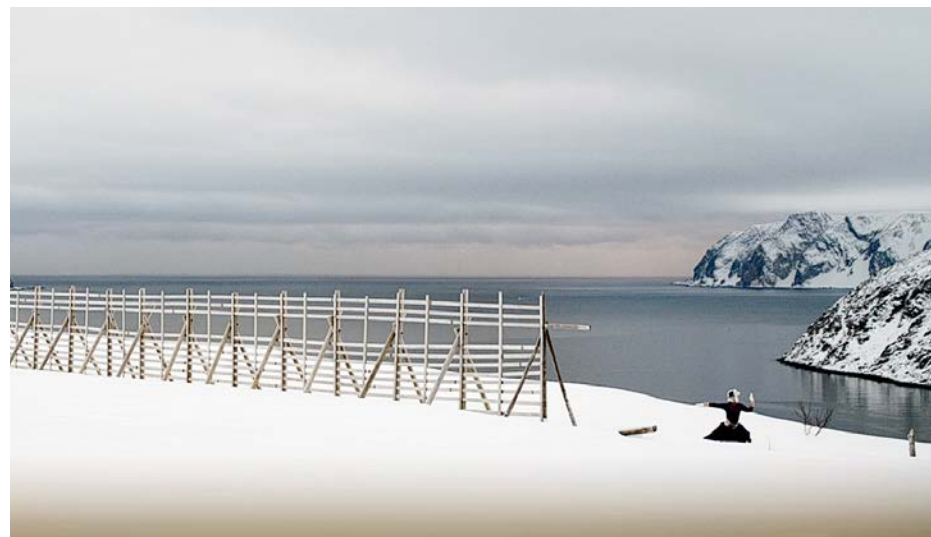
In the beginning, the film shows the dancer harmoniously integrated with the landscape, and all her movements are smooth, fluid and confident. We see her walking along a shoreline and on a plateau with steady, soft, secure steps, neither hurrying nor hesitating. Sometimes she stops, and her body lines follow the lines of the landscape.

The harmony is interrupted by distant industrial noise. At no point in the film do we actually see any

industrial activity, such as machines or manufacturing plants; we only *hear* them, and the intensity of the industrial noise increases during the course of the film. Parallel to this, there is a shift in the dancer's integration with the landscape. While at first she is a natural, integral part of the landscape, acting *in* and *with* the landscape, she now starts to act *on* it, shifting to become external, transforming into the «other» of the landscape. Her movements become more space-consuming, rough, abrasive, destructive and incomplete. She starts to work the snow with her hands, digging in it and throwing it up (i.e. she starts using the materiality of the landscape). I chose to focus frequently on the dancer's hands based on the idea that our actions emanate from our hands (i.e. *handlings*).

While the industrial noise is only connected to the landscape in the beginning, the uncomfortable, disharmonious, metallic sounds now emerge through the dancer's movements, which are machine-like and flat with sharp stops. Her whole body has a very serious and target-oriented expression.

Having lost all the lightness of the initial movements, she starts to lose her balance, which in turn leads to her running in very stormy weather. This scene



relates to the acceleration of industrial developments and the destructive behaviours of human beings. As if she looks for technological facilities to handle the more-or-less uncontrolled situation, she climbs on a wind shield, but she cannot hold herself and falls off.

The film now increases even more in tempo and tension, with the dancer rolling, cramping and stumbling between razor-sharp stones on a harsh shoreline. She brushes the small plants on the ground very harshly. Her hectic, impulsive and fast movements

are interrupted by hyperextended positions.

We see her face grimacing with pain, and she starts running in order to flee all the problems caused by the destructive ways of using the land. Suddenly, she falls into dark water. This fall marks an abrupt shift in the film's tempo. The dancer now floats gently under the surface, holding her breath for a very long time, thereby giving the viewer a sense of suffocation. Even though she is under the water, we hear industrial activities, and the dancer is horrified by the sound of







sonar explosions. Again, she tries to flee, but there is no way out.

In the last scene of the film, we see her lying in the snow, tired and dulled, like a wounded animal. After rolling over into a foetal position, she pushes herself slowly and languidly forward, creating a circular pattern in the snow. In shooting this scene, the camera was slowly lifted higher and higher until we only see her as a small dot in the gigantic landscape. However, even though we cannot see the human body anymore, we can see the traces of humanity left behind.

### Bodily interventions with landscapes

In *Human Habitat*, I do not perceive space and landscapes as linear/metrical or as a collection of given data as they are usually defined in Western understanding, so I used a processual understanding of the landscape concept that is both rational and dynamic. A landscape «is a process in continual evolution, occurring in the interaction between the environment (with the complexity of its affordances and invariants) and the perceiver: a body in motion using its physical and cultural agency [...], in order

to establish a relationship with and a boundary for the environment» (Menatti and Rocha 2016, 13). In processual understanding, a landscape is a field of directed awareness that has its origin not in a cognitive examination, but in a processual corporeal experience (i.e. an actual bodily interaction). For me as a dancer and choreographer, dance seemed to be the most appropriate art form for articulating the dynamic, non-conceptualised experience of the processual affordance of landscape, and the Arctic landscape therefore became an embodied articulation through my dance film (in contrast to a conceptual, verbal articulation).

Even though the film as a work of art does not have any performative processual character (since it is a set in the presented unchangeable work), the work during shooting had a strong processual character, and eventually the final edit of the shoots defined the film as artwork. Drawing on the terms of Henri Bergson's process philosophy, there was an immediate, non-conceptualised experience of the landscape that was transformed into dynamic content (i.e. the movements of the previously created choreography transformed into new movements based on the interfacing of the self and the world) (Bergson 2001). The shooting

process was an ongoing dialogue with the landscape as no single choreographed sequence from the studio could be transported to the landscape (as a matter of course, a transposition of the studio material to the screen was to be avoided); there was a continuous adaptation process with its own artistic value. Our awareness of the constantly changing features of the landscape (i.e. our interfacing of ourselves with the world) forced us to react to the ecological otherness immediately and in non-conceptualised ways. Many times we started with the set choreography but ended in a fruitful improvisation process where the dancer, the cinematographer and I just reacted to our bodily experiences of being embedded in the landscape.

I tried to de-hierarchise the relationship between the dancer and the landscape by positioning the dancer *in* and not *on* the landscape (i.e. by embedding the dancer in the landscape). I therefore used landscape dramaturgy as a guideline to create «wide, composite, and tentative spaces of cognition, affection, and sensation [...] multiplying personal views, challenging of the one-point view, and propositions for sharing a view» (Vujanovic 2018, 3).

Using the processual understanding of landscape, I also hoped to embrace the indigenous concept of landscape, which contrasts with Western conceptions. We shot the film in Sápmi, which means that we had to respect the land of the indigenous Sami people. Importantly, there was not only an *intervention in* the landscape through the dancing body, but first and foremost, an *integration of* the body with the landscape (Vitaglione 2016). This effect was obtained by using the lines and dynamics of the landscape in the movements of the dancer and through the movements of the camera, as well as a very basic awareness of environmentally responsible decision-making. All the members of the crew<sup>7</sup> live in the county of the filming location (Finnmark in Norway), so we were already a part of the land and did not put ourselves into or onto it while producing the film.

### Being embedded

The embodied relationship with the landscape is connected to the dancer's sensorimotor approach to the landscape. The dancer's perceptions embrace the whole landscape, and through her movements, the landscape emerges out of the «process of codetermination between the agent (the perceiver) and the structure (the environment)» (Menatti and Rocha 2016, 12). There is a continuous feedback loop of a two-fold cognition: there is the self-reflexive embodied cognition of the dancer's own embodiment and the cognition of her embodiment relational to the landscape. Block and Kissell (2001, 8) pointed out that «being *embodied* implies being *embedded* as well – embedded in a society, a culture, a language.» My experience with *Human Habitat* revealed that being embodied likewise means being embedded in a processual (as opposed to a linear) landscape.

The dancer's movements were not predetermined by meaning, but – in line with the processual character of the landscape – by breaking up or following the shapes and dynamics of the landscape. As a choreographer/filmmaker, I was therefore following the affective turn in theatre, having to «focus on the embodiment and the bodily experience of a situation» (Vujanovic 2018, 1). The bodily experience of the materiality of the landscape led to a mimesis through dance. For example, the dancer pursues shapes of diagonal schistous rocks with a position similar to the downward-facing dog. Her arm opens up at the same time and in the same dynamic as a wave breaking on the coastal cliff, and she literally *uses* the materiality of the snow by digging, tramping, lying and rolling in it.

By letting the dancer move in the snow, away from infrastructure and any daily settings, the film is deeply connected to the materiality of the landscape. Using her whole body, the dancer had physical contact with the materiality of the snow, stones, heather and water, so the materiality of the landscape became an integral part of the choreography. As Vitaglione (2016)

pointed out, we are in fact speaking of a material specificity in contrast to a site specificity because the materiality of the landscape is in focus while the exact site of the landscape remains irrelevant. In *Human Habitat*, it does not matter if it is an Arctic landscape in Norway, Canada or Greenland. To catch the material specificity, I used several medium and long shots of the site without the dancer being visible.

Similarly, as Vitaglione indicated, sound also intensifies the material connection of the body and the landscape. Sound is a vital component of *Human Habitat* and conveys a large part of the narrative, eventually building a bridge between the body and the landscape as we *bear*, but do not see, the destructive, industrial interventions of humans on the landscape. Apart from the camera as the orientation point, the dancer and myself as the director only had the landscape to refer to, not only spatially, but also as the initiator of movement quality as there was no music the dancer could use to guide the rhythm of her movements. It was the landscape that empowered the dancer's movements and my directions to her so that she was able to adapt her movements in terms of impulse, tempo, rhythm, dynamics and strength.

To choreograph in the open, white winter landscape was an interesting undertaking as there were no restrictive walls or divisions between the strong and weak spots as there are on a stage, and even the use of *en face*, diagonals, downstage and upstage (i.e. most of the spatial features a dancer usually refers to) were dissolved in the landscape. The snow-covered landscape had low contrasts as the colour of the snow, sea and sky were very similar, meaning that the visual orientation of the dancer was less informative and less important than her embodied, sensorimotor perceptions. Particularly in the very stormy weather, it was barely possible to keep our eyes open as most of the time the dancer had to face her body towards the wind so that the long skirt could embed in the landscape. The always-changing wind directions required the

whole crew to make very quick and spontaneous changes in spatial orientation.

### Kinaesthetic empathy

Dance films allow the viewer «to sense their own bodies interacting with the places highlighted in such films. [...] the surroundings become 'not merely settings' [...], but partners in dialog with a responsive, phenomenal body» (Kloetzel 2014, 18). Even if the addressed landscape is absent in the place where the dance film is presented, the viewer can still connect bodily with the landscape as a kinaesthetic response to the dancer's movements, which are embedded in the landscape. Consequently, from an artistic and conceptional point of view, I had to contextualise my message in the addressed site and materiality (i.e. dancing and filming in the Arctic landscape).

As Dan Zahavi (2011, 220) wrote, «all kinds of interpersonal relations including action understanding, the attribution of intentions, and the recognition of emotions and sensations rely on automatic and unconscious embodied simulation routines», meaning that the motor schema of the observer becomes active when watching a moving body. The dancer's phenomenological body and her movements in the landscape allow the viewer to empathise with or even *feel* the intrinsic relationship between her body and the landscape (i.e. the viewer responds physically to that relationship and thereby relates to the Arctic landscape presented in the film).

The viewer connects with the emotions that the dancer expresses in the film – not as a conscious attempt to replicate the emotions, but as an «automatic, unconscious and prelinguistic simulation» of the dancer's mental states (Zahavi 2011, 221). Thus, through the dance film, the viewer has the opportunity to accompany the dancer in her experience of moving in and with the landscape and to join her on her journey through her different emotional states, which are connected to the change from a sustainable to a

destructive relationship with the land.

I am aware of the risk that the viewer of the film could derive a different message from what I originally intended, especially as there is no classical narrative and the movements are abstract. However, thanks to the viewer's mechanism of kinaesthetic response and kinaesthetic empathy, an affective, prelinguistic reflection process is likely to be stimulated, and as soon as the viewer feels *something* related to the landscape in the film, I will have accomplished my aim for bringing the Arctic into their awareness. From then, it is, as in all dance performances, up to the viewer to draw personal insights from the experience of having seen the dance film.

### Conclusion

A dancing body in a landscape is an interesting object of investigation for both philosophical and artistic research. Philosophically speaking, the embodied and spatial awareness of the dancer can inform us about our own embeddedness in the landscape and therefore in the world. From a choreographic perspective, dancing in an open landscape offers some challenges regarding traditional reference points, and the material specificity of the landscape can be an inspiration for choreographic research. However, and more importantly, the medium of film in connection with dance has the ability to evoke feelings and a reflection process on a level other than that of a theatre production or a site-specific performance. The *mise en scène* or embeddedness of the dancer in a processual landscape, together with the mechanics of kinaesthetic empathy, allow the viewer to connect with the landscape on an emotional, pre-reflective level. In *Human Habitat*, the anonymous, open Arctic space is thereby transformed into an articulated landscape, and hopefully when watching *Human Habitat*, the audience is able to connect with and appreciate the Arctic.

Generally, I consider dance film as an appropriate

artistic expression to address current social and environmental issues as the medium of film makes it possible to contextualise the dance in the addressed site. The message may also reach a larger audience as the presentation of the film is not dependent on the simultaneous physical presence of the performer and the audience. Once the production of the film has been financed, it is possible to present it at a low cost all over the world. The media-specifics of dance appear in film in a similar way to stage performances, meaning that the dance film offers – but also limits – approaches to interpretation. Bearing that in mind, one should reflect on the reasons for choosing dance (and not a verbal art form such as literature or theatre) before producing any dance-related artwork.

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Photos 1–4: Photographer: Ken Are Bongo. Performance: Dance Film Human Habitat. Performer: Marthe Engdal. Location: Nordkyn Peninsula. Date: 13 February 2019

## BIOGRAPHY

**Flavia Devonas Hoffmann** holds a Master in Philosophy from the University of Vienna, a Bachelor in Dance- and Theatre Studies from the University of Bern, and Certificate of Higher Education: Dance Education from the Royal Academy of Dance. She works as dance artist, pedagogue and festival producer. She is employed as a teacher at the College for Social Pedagogy in Ilulissat, Greenland, and as an administrative director for Arctic Culture Lab, which is an international research platform for cultural and artistic practices in the Arctic.

### The main cast of Human Habitat

Dancer: **Marthe Engdal**. Writer, director, choreographer, costume designer: **Flavia Devonas Hoffmann**. Photographer, editor: **Ken Are Bongo**. Music: **Tapani Rinne**. Sound design: **Flurin Devonas**. Producer: **Aleksander Olai Korsnes**.

Shooting location: Nordkyn Peninsula, Norway, at 71°N

## Recent PhDs

*Anette Sture Iversen*

### Recent PhD graduates from Norway's Oslo National Academy of the Arts

#### Heidi Haraldsen:

Heidi Haraldsen is a leader in the one-year Teacher Education Program for the Performing Arts at Oslo National Academy of the Arts. In a collaboration between Oslo National Academy of the Arts and the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, she was given the opportunity to complete her PhD in December 2019.

In her thesis, *Thriving, striving, or just surviving?: A study of motivational processes among elite junior performers from sports and performing arts*, Heidi looked at motivational processes in elite training in classical ballet, music and sports, more specifically the interplay between personal motivational mentality and contextual conditions in relation to malfunctioning and various debilitating motivational outcomes.

Her conclusion was that talent development environments should be encouraged to facilitate autonomous functioning in order to better safeguard and aid elite junior performers in developing their full potential as both performers and human beings.

The dissertation can be found here: <https://nib.brage.unit.no/nib-xmloi/handle/11250/2634164>

#### Janne-Camilla Lyster:

In February 2020, dancer, choreographer and author Janne-Camilla Lyster defended her PhD in artistic research at Oslo National Academy of the Arts. In her dissertation, *Koreografisk poesi: Utvikling av litterære partiturer for dans* (Choreographic poetry: Development of literary scores for dance), Janne-Camilla explored writing, composing and performing such scores. The scores are addressed or directed to the dancer, who is free to interpret them in her own way.

#### Brynjar Bandlien:

Brynjar Bandlien is a freelance dance artist who defended his PhD in artistic research at Oslo National Academy of the Arts in April 2020.

The background for his research project, *Dancing recurrences – a performative practice within dance and dance-making*, was his interest in recurring situations, actions, movements etc. in creative processes. By recognising and following these recurrences, they may become a structure for the dance itself. The work was explored and shared through both performative practice and reflection.

For more information, see: <https://kbioda.kbio.no/kbio-xmloi/handle/11250/2425899>

# PedApproach 2020: Master's students in dance and theatre pedagogy of Uniarts Helsinki present their work as they approach graduation

*Eeva Anttila*



*Photo: Jenni Bergius*

**PedApproach 2020**, an online event organised by theatre and dance pedagogy students, presented artistic-pedagogical questions and topics that students have explored during their two-year studies at the Uniarts Helsinki Theatre Academy. The event is part of the master's programme curriculum in dance and theatre pedagogy, and the focus of this study unit is on articulating one's views on art pedagogy before a wider audience.

The first PedApproach event took place in 2018 in the form of a thesis festival. In 2020, the plans for a live event had to be changed quickly, and the event took a form of an online seminar with performances, workshops, panels, podcasts, and a series of blog posts. Despite the sudden change of plans and extremely challenging circumstances due to COVID-19, PedApproach 2020 was full of interesting and diverse content on different online platforms. The event took place from Monday, May 4, to Friday, May 8, and the blog posts, affiliated videos, and some podcasts are

still available online at <https://blogit.uniarts.fi/blogit/pedapproach/>. There is content in Finnish and in English. The programme included online workshops, panel discussions, and live performances that the audience could join. The full programme can be viewed at <https://www.uniarts.fi/en/events/pedapproach-seminar/>.

The performances included «In Between – Teacher's Monologue, Performance Exploring Its Own Story» by Esko Korpelainen, «Under the Bridge», an aerial performance by Anna Lehtonen and Verna Laine, «MANIFESTIVAL», a 'performance draft' by Minttu-Maaria Makkonen, and «fe(a)tus», a one-to-one video performance by Nóri Varga.

Esko Korpelainen based «In Between» on his thesis, which included writing letters to his own inner teachers. For PedApproach, Esko reformed this originally black-box performance into a living-room-live version. Esko reflects on the experience

of this online performance in his blog post entitled «And then there was also a dog...» (see <https://blogit.uniarts.fi/kirjoitus/and-then-there-was-also-a-dog/>). His reflections illuminate vividly how COVID-19 has created strange and unexpected situations for performers, as for all of us.

«Under the Bridge» was based on Verna Laine's work in a performance production entitled «Leap Beyond» at the Theatre Academy. «Leap Beyond» was a performative, participatory event in three parts, that was presented just before COVID-19 by three theatre pedagogy students – Verna Laine, Anna Lehtonen, and Laura Humppila – as part of their thesis work (see <https://blogit.uniarts.fi/kirjoitus/esittelyssa-leap-beyond-introducing-leap-beyond/>). In «Under the Bridge», the performers moved in harnesses that allowed movement to extend to new spatial and temporal dimensions, explored the «suddenly possible», and investigated what «taking a leap of faith» could be as a bodily experience.

In her «MANIFESTIVAL», Minttu-Maaria Makkonen researched relationships and space between spectators and performers when they are not in the same physical space. Afterwards, she wrote a blog post, or manifest, on her experiences (in Finnish; see <https://blogit.uniarts.fi/kirjoitus/manifestival-esitysluonnon-muualla-olevalle-yleisolle/>).

Nóri Varga's «fe(a)tus» was an interactive journey to the participant's body perception and memory. It focused on the problem of private and public bodies. The performer invited the participants to take a virtual walk into the uncanny, into a human body, and into our relationship to our bodies. Nóri based «fe(a)tus» on her future thesis work on body images and on her sound art project exploring the socio-cultural presence of our public and private bodies.

Heini Tuoresmäki's short movie entitled «Waste of Mind» explores how body memories affect how we

move and carry ourselves. As Heini writes, «There is no escape from body memories floating through you». Performers in her movie were fellow students Giorgio Convertito, Minttu-Maaria Makkonen, and Anne Rönkkö. The cinematographer was Pietari Peltola, the editor was Markus Leppälä, and the sound designer was Timo Tikka.

As mentioned above, the PedApproach event also included workshops. «Expressive Intensities», a remotely led workshop by Laura Humppila, focused on working with intensities and tensions of the body, applying mime techniques and Jacques Lecoq's seven levels of tension. The workshop was followed by a presentation and a discussion on the role of physical acting in the creative process and the performance «Leap Beyond», which explored taking a leap, exceeding oneself, flying, and the emotions and thoughts around coaching and the self-help phenomenon.

During the «All You Can Do Is Breathe and Hope» workshop, Maia Nowack and Mercedes Balarezo, together with the participants, explored one of the scores that they used for the «All You Can Do Is Breathe and Hope» performance, a joint artistic-pedagogical work that formed a part of their theses. The workshop focused on attention, presence, breathing, and sounding movements. This workshop also included a discussion of themes from Maia's and Mercedes's thesis works, «Weaving Presences, Unravelling Normal: Affirming Diverse Ways of Being in Dance Pedagogy» and «The Voice as a Limb: Sounding Dance Laboratory», respectively. Maia and Mercedes wrote a blog post that includes more details about the workshop, the score, their theses, and their reflections on leading this online workshop (see <https://blogit.uniarts.fi/kirjoitus/all-you-can-do-is-breathe-and-hope/>).

Dance pedagogy student Eevamari Kitti wrote a series of four blog posts about teaching, learning, and being. The first three posts are in Finnish, and



the fourth is in English (see <https://blogit.uniarts.fi/kirjoitus/about-learning-teaching-and-being-one-more-for-the-road-part-4/>). The third blog post, interestingly, turned into a performance in three parts that Eevamari created together with Jenni Bergius, with whom Eevamari will continue to work towards her artistic-pedagogical thesis. Those interested in «a performance that does not happen anywhere» and who can read (or translate) the Finnish instructions can still experience this performance that represents, again, one step towards the unknown that the COVID-19 situation has generated (see <https://blogit.uniarts.fi/kirjoitus/oppimisesta-opettamisesta-ja-olemisesta-osa-3/>).

In another blog post, entitled «in the air – dance workshop about climate emotions», dance pedagogy student Nella Turkki writes about how emotions about the climate can be shared, recognised, and expressed through dance improvisation and dialogue in diverse groups. She writes that this project started from the understanding that emotions are felt and experienced bodily and asks how climate crisis moves you. In her thesis work entitled «Woven into the

*Mercedes Balarezo from Quito, Ecuador, came to Uniarts Helsinki to develop new insights as a dance teacher. Photo: Jose Toral, courtesy of Colectivo Zeta Danza*

Air – Towards Ecologically and Socially Just Dance Pedagogy,» she focuses on cultivating practices that revitalize our connection with the world. Her blog post (<https://blogit.uniarts.fi/kirjoitus/in-the-air-dance-workshop-about-climate-emotions/>) includes a video with Nella's greeting: «Maybe this video wakes up inspiration for someone today!»

Still another blog post written in two languages by dance pedagogy student Maiju Heikkinen. «Kohti Päätymätöntä Matkaa/Towards a Never-Ending Journey» is a short introduction to the themes of Maiju's artistic-pedagogical thesis. «Kohti Päätymätöntä Matkaa – Tutkielma Sirkuksen Pedagogiikasta, Taidosta ja Taiteesta» (loosely translated as «Towards a Never-Ending Journey – A Thesis about Circus Pedagogy, Skill and Art»). Maiju's blog post also comes with a video that is based on the topics and exercises included in her written work.

There is much more content in Finnish on the PedApproach blog, including Anne Rönkkö's description of her thesis focussing on the «fake rehearsal» practice and Johanna Perttunen's presentation on «Taiteen Kohtaamisen Harjoitteita» («Exercises on Encountering Art»), including a 15-minute video on her thesis work. Moreover, the blog also serves as a platform for introducing students' podcasts and panel discussions.

«Performative Voice and Body» is a video podcast that presents a workshop entitled «Voz y Cuerpo Performático» co-taught by Laura Humpila and Mercedes Balarezo in Ecuador during the summer of 2019 (see and listen: <https://blogit.uniarts.fi/kirjoitus/voz-y-cuerpo-performatico/>). Veera Aaltonen, in her two podcasts titled «Nyt Se Näkyy, Nyt Ei» (loosely translated «Now You See It, Now You Don't»), discusses the connection between socio-economic status and arts education. Part one, «Raaka Alku» («A Rough Start») is 25 minutes in duration, and part two, «Taidepoleeminen Tuokio» («An Art Polemic Moment») lasts 38 minutes. Both parts are accompanied by a list of websites mentioned in the podcasts.

There were three panel discussions during the PedApproach event week. The first was in Finnish, and the topic was «Taidepedagogiikan Käytännöistä – Keskustelunavauksia Esitystaiteen Kentältä» («On the Practices of Arts Pedagogy: Openings from the Field of Performance Art»). The panellists were Kenneth Siren, Susanna Metsälä, Jaana Taskinen, and Riku Saastamoinen, and the facilitator was theatre pedagogy student Henni Kiri. The second panel discussion focussed on ethical issues around participatory performance. The panellists were Outi Condit, Petros Konnaris, and Gesa Piper, and Giorgio Convertito facilitated the discussion. The third discussion was entitled «Art Pedagogy in the Time of a Pandemic: How Has COVID-19 Affected Your Practice?» This panel included Marisa Martin,

Mary Kate Sheehan, Elinor Tollerz Bratteby, and the collective of Jenna Broas and Fabian Nyberg. David Scarantino facilitated this panel.

The PedApproach event also included presentations by Anna Lehtonen, in which she introduced her two different artistic-pedagogical thesis works, «Trilogy for a Dog» and «Leap Beyond». This presentation took place outside, near Vallila Garden in Helsinki.

Last but not least, «REMOTE GALLERY X» by Noora Karjalainen introduced another creative, interactive way to present artistic work online. Noora greeted the prospective participants in the following way: «Welcome to @uniartshelsinki virtual remote gallery, where you are invited to participate curating and creating shared exhibition. You will see a creature moving in our instastory. Your task is to watch it carefully and pay attention to details. When you are ready, draw what and who you see on screenshot canvas and post the result to your own insta account. All posted and tagged drawings will be reposted in our instastory and added to the gallery. In the end REMOTE GALLERY X makes something visible out of what we perceive and what we make meanings of. Will there be something in common? What is different?»

Despite the initial shock and many frustrating moments, PedApproach 2020 was a fruitful process and the remarkable result of hard, creative, and collective work. Teachers Irene Kajo, Liisa Jaakonaho, and Susanna Hast and producers Salli Berghäll and Venla Heinonen supported the work. This event exemplifies the resilience and resourcefulness of artists and arts educators, competences so needed during these times of uncertainty.

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### Research Articles:

Research articles are expected to present theoretical and conceptual frameworks, discussion on methodology, data gathering, analysis and findings related to diverse dance practices and artistic processes as well as learning and teaching dance/movement in the Nordic context. The manuscripts will undergo a blind peer review process. Artistic Research is welcome.

The maximum length of the submitted article is 6000 words including references and possible endnotes.

### Practice Oriented Articles:

The purpose of practice-oriented articles is to document and reflect upon the practical work being done within dance in different artistic and educational settings as well as with different age groups/populations. Artistic Development work is included in this category. Articles need to be relevant in the Nordic context. Articles will be peer reviewed by the board. The maximum length of a submitted article is 3000 words or less including references and possible endnotes.

### Emerging Scholars

The purpose of the category Emerging Scholars is to offer mentoring to emerging researchers, typically MA students who would like to turn their MA thesis into a research article. Articles need to be relevant in the Nordic context. Articles will be peer reviewed by the board. The maximum length of a submitted article is 3000 words or less including references and possible endnotes.

### General Guidelines:

Articles can be written in English or one of the Nordic languages. They can include alternative textual formats (for example illustrations, poems, dialogue). Type text and headings use 12 point font size and line-spacing 1,5. Mark references using Chicago Manual of Style. 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 of the author(s).

Please indicate clearly in what category you are submitting your article. For research articles, include a separate page with the name(s) of the author(s), title of the manuscript.

Send submission to [sans@dansepraksis.no](mailto:sans@dansepraksis.no) with subject heading «Contribution to Nordic Journal of Dance».

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### Research Articles

Bildaktivism i dansarkivet:  
Betydelsen av Anna Wikströms Akademi för dans *Astrid von Rosen*

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The Brudevals, 'Danishness' and lived reality *Inger Damsholt*

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### Practice Oriented Article

Exploring The Body–  
Landscape Relationship Through Dance Film *Flavia Devonas Hoffmann*

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### Reports

Recent PhDs *Anette Sture Iversen*

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PedApproach 2020: Master's students in dance and theatre pedagogy  
of Uniarts Helsinki present their work as they approach graduation *Eeva Anttila*

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