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Tracing Dance: Expanding Archives, Contemporary Witnesses, and Other Modes of Re-Producing Embodied Knowledge

Interview with Susanne Foellmer

Jitka Pavlišová

Susanne Foellmer graduated in Applied Theatre Studies at Justus Liebig University Gießen, received her PhD at Freie Universität Berlin, and is Professor in Dance Studies at the Centre for Dance Research (C-DaRE) at Coventry University, UK. Currently, she is senior fellow at the Alfried Krupp Wissenschaftskolleg Greifswald (2022/2023) with a project on choreography and protest. She has also been investigating dance's and performance's material remains in museums and archives as well as fundamentally exploring the mediality and corporeality of dance and other art forms in the contemporary realm and in the Weimar era. Furthermore, she has been working as a dramaturge and academic consultant, a.o. for Helena Botto, Isabelle Schad, Meg Stuart, and Jeremy Wade. Her new monograph *On Remnants and Vestiges. Negotiating Persistence and Ephemerality in the Performing Arts* will be published with Routledge in 2023.

Jitka Pavlišová graduated in the field of Theatre Studies at Masaryk University in Brno. In the years 2010–2013 she underwent scientific research placements at the Institute of German Studies at the University of Vienna and at the Institute of Cultural Studies and History at Austrian Academy of Sciences under the patronage of OeAD. Since 2013 she has worked at the Department of Theatre and Film Studies at Palacký University in Olomouc as an assistant professor with specialisation in German speaking theatre and contemporary dance and performance. She has also cooperated with the international *Flora Theatre Festival* in Olomouc as a curator of the dance and performance programme. Currently, she runs the scientific research project 'Transcultural Body Identities in Contemporary Dance and Performance' at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Frankfurt am Main funded by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.

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Professor Susanne Foellmer. © Studio Menarc. Photo courtesy of Susanne Foellmer.

[JP] Ever since the 1990s, the arrival of the so-called New Choreography and the tendency of dance towards its increasingly intensive development of self-reflexive strategies and its own discursivity have been discussed in connection with theatre dance. In relation to these characteristics, a certain potential of (theatre) dance is then discussed, namely, to consider dance as a specific culture of knowledge, which is particularly significant for the field of Humanities in general.

The German dance and theatre scholar, Susanne Foellmer, with whom we will focus on various concepts of the body in relation to the archive, has herself contributed to this discourse, among other outputs, with her dissertation and subsequent publication *Am Rand der Körper. Inventuren des Unabgeschlossenen im zeitgenössischen Tanz* [At the Edge of the Bodies. Inventories of the Unfinished in Contemporary Dance] (FOELLMER 2009). Here, she dealt with the phenomenon of the unfinished (body) especially focusing on the topos of the grotesque and on the concepts associated with it (among others, Mikhail Bakhtin's). For her dissertation Susanne Foellmer received the Tiburtius Prize of the Berlin Universities in 2009.

Are the essential theses, focal points, and results of this outstanding research still at the heart of your more recent projects?

[SF] No, not necessarily. One of my current research topics rather deals with the question of 'remnants' in the performing arts, that is, exploring the material remains of past performances or generally residues within performance art. In a DFG (German Research Foundation) research project which I oversaw, the specific attention

was focused on the questions about documents and archives within these time-based arts, which are thus commonly regarded as ephemeral, although such a view has been strongly debated and questioned in the past, in particular by Rebecca Schneider (2011).

In this context, we also looked again into the field of reenactments: one of the aspects that was significant for me was the role of witnesses. Contemporary witnesses are often understood as a guarantee for a specific performance to be reconstructed in detail. But time and time again, dancers who were involved in the corresponding performance were unable to give exhaustive accounts of who, when, where, what, and how (they) exactly danced (for instance, due to their own positioning on the stage, they may not have been able to see the dancers in question, but only to hear them). Moreover, the subjectivity of testimony is also to be understood as temporally situated, since it changes over time and people remember an event differently after 30 or 40 years, for example. Nevertheless, these contemporary witnesses play an important role, if only to discuss documents found and consulted in the archive for the purposes of reconstruction. This brings into play the dialogical moment that, in my opinion, always unfolds when dealing with past dance events: whether it is on the interpersonal level, as mentioned above, or also in dialogical, intermedial relationships between different objects discovered in the archive, such as diary entries, choreographic sketches, or photographs. Those dialogues between what happened in the past (commonly the dance/theatre performance or performance art event) and what remains of it then bring forth the event again, albeit in different medial and discursive forms. For example, we can see that in the references visitors have to make in exhibitions of and by performance artists, such as past performances exhibited by the artist ORLAN and with it the remnants she left behind. Or we can observe it in shifts of genres such as in the case of a past performance 'prop' used in a gallery: This is what interested me in the reconstruction and display of Trisha Brown's *Floor of the Forest* (1970) in the exhibition *Move. Choreographing You* (a.o. Hayward Gallery 2009/2010). Once a day, a clothing rack – which served as a kind of three-dimensional score for dancers to perform in – was used as a prop to perform in it, as 'originally' done. In the remaining time, however, it transformed into an object of art, an installation to behold. Currently, I am subjecting such dialogical relations and the associated media transformations to a theoretical revision, which will be published as a monograph soon.

In our DFG project, we have identified another, immaterial kind of 'remnants' in the forms of a return. Maria Katharina Schmidt explored the possibility of quotation in dance in her doctoral thesis, a return that she described in the mode of *déjà-vu*. This is not necessarily supposed to be understood as a deliberate quotation on the part of the artists, but rather as a perceptual phenomenon on the level of the spectator, in the sense of 'I've seen that somewhere else before' (SCHMIDT 2020). And in this context, my research on unfinished bodies would come into play again. Here, my thesis was that, in contemporary dance, certain significant body patterns are crystalising over time, gaining prevalence and circulating within other, future performances.

[JP] I would like to return to the contemporary witnesses that you have mentioned as a specific phenomenon. Here I find an interesting strategic difference between theatre and dance, namely in the way these witnesses are involved in a performance. In theatre, it is very often about witnesses called 'experts of everyday life', i.e., people without a theatre education who, nevertheless, make a significant contribution to the theme through their experience and willingness to pass it on. In contrast, in dance, I very often find that the witnessing is carried out through the bodies and testimonies of professional dancers and choreographers. There is a direct link to dance history and related personalities, events, and styles – especially in the 20th century. Could you therefore describe in more detail how you worked with these witnesses and perhaps with which ones specifically?

[SF] The reflections on contemporary witnesses were my contribution (FOELLMER 2017) to *The Oxford Handbook of Dance and Reenactment*, a volume edited by Mark Franko (2017). The basis was a piece by Christina Ciupke and Anna Till, *undo, redo and repeat* (2014), where they worked with various artists and colleagues in order to reconstruct choreographies by Mary Wigman, Kurt Jooss, Dore Hoyer, William Forsythe, and Pina Bausch. The focus was on various methods of transferring selected dance pieces: namely through the testimonies of Irene Sieben, Reinhild Hoffmann, Martin Nachbar, and Thomas McManus¹. Finally, they had contacted a large number of spectators who gave testimony on performances of Pina Bausch's Tanztheater, especially on *Kontakthof*. The project was mostly about 'second-hand' transfers, if you will. This means, for example, that Martin Nachbar passed on something that had previously been passed on to himself: the *Affectos Humanos* by Dore Hoyer, which he researched and after all worked on with Hoyer's lifelong partner Waltraud Luley. In this sense, Irene Sieben also acted as a mediator by passing on what she had learned as Mary Wigman's student. Similarly, Reinhild Hoffmann was to relay a piece by Kurt Jooss in which she had danced a role in the 1960s. However, she could hardly remember it because it had been such a long time ago. Therefore, she avoided the idea of passing it on to Ciupke and Till and handed down a later piece choreographed by herself, thus circumventing the basic concept and opting for a first-hand transfer instead.

In *undo, redo and repeat*, I was particularly interested in the work with the second-hand contemporary witnesses. For instance, the case of Martin Nachbar who was not a contemporary witness to the *Affectos Humanos*. Therefore, he collaborated with Waltraud Luley who was Hoyer's 'eye' witness.

Another example of contemporary witnessing is the reenactment of Mary Wigman's *Sacre du Printemps* (1957), *The Rite of Spring*. That was a relatively large-scale production in collaboration with the Theatre in Osnabrück (2014) and it was also performed

1 Irene Sieben was a student of Mary Wigman and is one of her three former students who have been chosen by the Mary Wigman Society to be responsible for movement coaching for dancers reconstructing Wigman's dances; Reinhild Hoffmann received her dance training at the Folkwang-Hochschule in Essen under Kurt Jooss and belongs to pioneers of German Tanztheater; Martin Nachbar is a dancer and choreographer based in Berlin, who completed the reconstruction of the *Affectos Humanos* by Dore Hoyer for his dance solo *Urheben Aufheben*; Thomas McManus spent 13 years as a dancer being formed by and helping to realise William Forsythe's choreographic work at the Ballett Frankfurt.

during the conference *Tanz über Gräben. 100 Jahre Le Sacre du Printemps* [Dance over Trenches. The 100th Anniversary of Le Sacre du Printemps].² The next morning, after the show, there was a discussion with Patricia Stöckemann and Henrietta Horn among others, who assisted the reconstruction in Osnabrück. At one moment of the Q&A, questions were put to Emma Lewis Thomas, who was among the audience, listening to the conversation. She had also worked as a consultant on the production as she used to dance in Wigman's *Sacre*, and being a contemporary witness, her knowledge was in demand. For example, she was asked about the solo of The Chosen Victim at the end of the piece. However, Thomas simply had to admit that, on that matter, she could not give much information as she had danced with her back to the protagonist throughout the full length of the solo.

A third example would be Boris Charmatz's *50 Years of Dance* (2010). As a quasi-score for this piece, he used David Vaughan's picture book celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company (VAUGHAN 1997). The photos were then re-enacted in collaboration with former members of the Cunningham Dance Company: Starting with posing in a kind of *tableaux vivant*, they then continued by re-imagining how the choreography would eventually have proceeded. Some of the ensemble members still had this knowledge because they had danced in the pieces themselves. Two of them were Valda Setterfield and Gus Solomons Jr., members of the company in the 1960s and thus contemporary witnesses. Solomons Jr. was 71 years old at the time of Charmatz's *50 Years of Dance*. He had memorised the movements, steps, and sequences excellently. However, the Cunningham technique can be very physically demanding, especially affecting the joints such as the hips, and this became quite obvious in Solomons Jr.'s movements. Therefore, although he could still remember the steps very well, he could no longer dance them in the way he used to do. Consequently, it can be said that *50 Years of Dance* in this case demonstrated how certain dance techniques affect the body: an embodied testimony evidencing the signs of ageing that dance has left behind. For me, the question also arose as to what kind of epistemological category such contemporary witnesses represent. Contemporary witnesses gain their importance because they were there, simply spoken, up close and in physical co-presence, and this is what constitutes the concept of witnessing, also in the legal sense, i.e., 'having been there', having seen something 'with your own eyes'. Contemporary witnesses have a past/passed knowledge, they have a higher level of trust: you rely on this person because you know that he/she/they was there *in person*. Again, this plays an important role in various reconstructions: one hopes these witnesses possess an enhanced knowledge, i.e., (mostly embodied) experiential knowledge that can reach beyond a photo, a document, a piece of writing, or a choreographic sketch. One expects that the contemporary witnesses can give more information, that they could tell us how it 'really' was. But, of course, that can be a misjudgement, because the witnessing may have happened quite a long time ago. For example, the testified event happened almost 50 years ago in the

2 A project by Gabriele Brandstetter and Zentrum für Bewegungsforschung [Centre of Movement Research], supported by Kulturstiftung des Bundes [German Federal Cultural Foundation] and hosted at the Radialsystem in Berlin, Germany.

case of Reinhild Hoffmann who simply could not remember it anymore. Or in the case of Gus Solomons Jr. who could still remember the dances and choreographies quite well, but could no longer perform the movements ‘correctly’, that is, fluently. And Emma Lewis Thomas was there; she could remember it well, but unfortunately, she did not see the solo in question as it wasn’t danced in front of her.

Apart from that, contemporary witnesses themselves also see their role quite critically. For example, Irene Sieben: she deliberately left out certain aspects of Wigman’s dance practice because, as a student, she could not find an access to her work with hands. That was an important part of Wigman’s dance *oeuvre*, but Sieben found herself unable to pass it on. So, there are also witnesses who refuse to hand down certain elements – and yet, as dancers, they still carry all this ‘ballast’ of knowledge with them, so to speak. In this regard, the messenger model by philosopher Sybille Krämer is productive (KRÄMER 2015): she conceives of transmission by way of the physicality, the materiality of the medium, in this case of the messenger. A message is never transmitted ‘purely’ as such, it is always linked to the carrier medium. This no longer relates to McLuhan’s idea, ‘the medium is the message’ (MCLUHAN 1964). Rather, the carrier medium ‘contaminates’ the message. In dance, again, embodiment is central in the process of transmission, and it is a good example of media transfer *per se*: the medium always changes/shifts the message or omits something specific. On another level, the temporality of the testimony is crucial: it changes over time, or it may no longer exist at all. So far, I have found it exciting to take a closer look at what kind of knowledge category we are then actually dealing with in dance, that is: what levels of knowledge we are confronted with and what one actually expects to gain from a testimony to which great hopes are often attached. My thesis is that contemporary witnesses are basically not that different from documents. Because there are always gaps in the knowledge, regardless of whether we are dealing with a person who was directly present, or whether we are consulting a document, seeking information in photographs, films or other records: you always have to deal with gaps. And that means: even if we can consult contemporary witnesses, it does not mean that we have ‘full’ access to that part of dance history we are explicitly investigating or searching for. In this respect, one could say that contemporary witnesses are actually a comparably difficult and always incomplete knowledge ‘category’, just like the (traditional) archive and the remnants you can find there.

[JP] The metaphor/approximation of the archive in contemporary dance and performance is not meant as an institution or depository, rather it is about its function, i.e., (exploring) research, searching for traces. In this way, it is also treated as dynamic and contingent in relation to the body; archive is to be perceived as a situation, as a figure of thought for the body. Researching an archive in this way is particularly reminiscent of the concepts of Michel Foucault (1969) and Jacques Derrida (1995). In the last two decades, their concepts have been processed analytically in detail in the field of Art and Dance Studies by Rebecca Schneider (2011), André Lepecki (2010), or Mark Franko (2017; 2019), among others. Are

there new relevant concepts nowadays that direct the existing postulates towards new focal points and developments or even transform the perspective of these research approaches altogether?

[SF] As you say, the approach of the body as an archive and with it a blurring of the traditional notion of archive is dominant in Dance Studies (and also, Theatre Studies) and for good reasons, which you mention. However, what seems to somewhat recede into the background is the fact that a certain hegemonic knowledge is still associated with the archive.

On the one hand, this is already based on the etymology of the term, which is linked to governance and thus rule (over knowledge and the access to it). On the other hand, archives as institutions in dance are still important guarantors for the safeguarding of history(ies) about and in dance. This becomes poignantly clear when institutions are endangered, which once again highlights the precariousness of dance as an art form in particular: e.g., the Leipzig Dance Archive, which basically no longer exists and whose contents has been absorbed into the University Library in Leipzig, which is admittedly subject to completely different conventions of searching and finding. Or the recent merger of the theatre and dance departments of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (V&A) under the new label of a 'Performance, Furniture, Textiles, and Fashion Department'. Here again, performance becomes a mere appendix of material cultures, and the question arises: How could such dance forms and styles create memory in cases where they do not even produce artefacts? And this means too: Who and what is able to leave material traces at all? Which bodies and cultures are then visible and will be remembered?

In both cases, again, people become important: in Leipzig, it is the missing archivist³ who, to a certain extent, incorporated the knowledge of collecting and finding and could open pathways for the researchers, trails that might have been left undiscovered when only using a catalogue index. In the second case, the one of the V&A, again, what is missing are dancers and their bodies whereas the activities of collecting and exhibiting concentrate merely on the material aspects of performance.⁴ In this respect, unfortunately, the focus then also lies again on the colonial origins of the 'findings' of such museums, which are currently still too little debated in the UK. And in this context, it is crucial to ask: What about these archives of performing arts then, as they are also precarious since many of them are closing due to lack of funding? The V&A is not an archive *per se*, but there are archivists who deal with objects or new acquisitions. Now departments have been merged simply for financial reasons, indeed under the same narrative: 'we assemble all of these strands under material cultures, but performance is also important. Somehow.' Hence, the problem here is that performance becomes an appendix of material cultures such as fashion and it only comes into play to a certain extent when, for instance, clothes or

3 Gabriele Ruiz, long-time employee and bearer of networked knowledge in the Leipzig Dance Archive, retired a few years ago.

4 However, the V&A eventually hosts events such as the Performance Festival 2022 (which focused on dance), though usually not connected to the collection.

costumes are to be presented. At least that was the rather depressing statement during the launch of the newly created department in London (22 April 2022).

From this perspective, the question of the archive in the field of dance and theatre is important with regard to the following issue: What becomes of performances that do not produce any tangible materials or documents? Will they be simply neglected when it comes to collection, as far as the V&A is concerned? What about oral cultures and their modes of transmission, for example? Moreover, the question of power then is pivotal, again: The archive as a proven institution of (mostly material) knowledge that selects and chooses what is deemed important. In accordance with Derrida, this would be an archive enacting its authority, its governance over certain types and artefacts of knowledge.

In the context of dance, of course, the idea of the body as archive is relevant: namely in the cases of reenactments or similar formats, as practices that collect, select and pass on as well. The question then is, however, whether the term archive makes sense here. Possibly at the level of selection, for example, because even in reenactments there is a certain hegemonic knowledge at play to which not everybody has permanent access, for one could have missed the performance or one cannot afford the ticket, for instance. There are also certain gatekeepers, for instance in the form of the sponsors of such dance projects:⁵ Funding institutions or their selection panels decide whether to approve of the money for a reenactment project. In this way, there is already a pre-selection of what is deemed to be 'worthy' to be preserved and to be passed on. In this respect, it is essential to always discuss diverging concepts of the archive within the dynamics of power structures. So, it is not just about the archive as a house, as a building with mostly textual or pictorial materials, but also about other types of archives, especially in the performing arts, which in turn cannot simply be collected – that is why, in recent years, there is a focus on reconstructions and/or reenactments as archive or archival, historiographic practice. Importantly though, these are not happening in a 'neutral zone', that is, they are always already entangled in power relations and hegemonic structures. However, the traditional model of the archive and its dynamics are challenged by dance and theatre through their own inherent temporality and precariousness.

[JP] As far as dance reenactments, revisions, or reconstructions are concerned, in the field of Dance Studies, these are viewed analytically almost exclusively through the prism of dance as archive. Then, I see a similar concept, namely the body as archive, connected rather to the 'multiple layers' of the body, whereby the bodies here are always reflected as plural, (trans) cultural and socio-politically conditioned. Since the so-called 'archival' or 'historic turn', both prisms have already been extensively analysed and dealt with in detail in the last 20 years. Here, too, the question would then be whether these concepts are still as current and present in contemporary cultural as well as academic discourse, or whether they are now being viewed and focused on in a different way?

⁵ For instance, Tanzfonds Erbe in Germany (2011–2019).

[SF] I don't think that these discussions are over. As I said, the concept of the archive has increasingly expanded in most recent discourses. It is no longer just about this one idea of the archive with its physical documents, which are usually found in a place that one has to enter (mostly physically) and where documents are handed over (digital archives aside). It is a truism that archives for the performing arts, i.e., for all the time-based and body-based genres, pose very different challenges as opposed to those dedicated to literature or other material-based (art) forms. Janine Schulze already mentioned these special requirements for the archive when she was still head of the Dance Archive in Leipzig, which – as already mentioned – no longer exists. Schulze (2010) speaks of 'performing the archive': going into the archive is a performative act, also with regard to the ways in which the materials are produced in the very moment when they are found and used. Because documents do not just lie around as such, 'waiting' to be dealt with. They become documentary when they are consulted, placed in relation to other documents. Or materials only become documents, that is, being created as a document, for example, when something is transcribed. De Certeau (2009) emphasises this performativity of the document. And as seekers, researchers, finders, we make a certain performative contribution to such momentary documents, we produce them again so that, in ever-changing contexts and locations, they become historical.

That is the question of materials and documents. The other one is of course: how to preserve art that is generally perceived as ephemeral – although the ephemeral is fundamentally debated and questioned, as in Rebecca Schneider's (2011) or Philip Auslander's (1999) arguments, and rightly so, as the aim is to fundamentally rethink the opposition of ephemerality and duration. Ultimately, this is another field of tension that I am currently dealing with in my monograph. In my opinion, what cannot be denied is the fact that there is always a media difference between the performance and its remnants (documents or otherwise). Whether being a performance (on stage) or a document in the archive: in terms of medium, we always deal with different situations and hence, distinctive media dispositions. Of course, one can say: 'away with the dualisms', emphasising that duration and ephemerality are blurred states of appearance, that they liquefy or stretch out over the duration of a 'deep time' that contextualises liveness in a completely different way, as Schneider recently suggested (see JUCAN et al. 2019). That is to say: liveness is also attached to the findings in a museum or in an archive. Following Schneider's thought, liveness then no longer includes just the one moment of the performance but reaches much further into history; in this sense, she speaks of 'geological time'. If this concerns the materials that 'remain', then the concept of the body as an archive or, as Schneider (2011) would say, (the) 'performing remains', is again a relevant instance in this theoretical realm, that is: performances create or are remainders themselves. With this, however, also comes the aspect of the traces that remain through bodily practices – and, of course, the question of how to access these. I would like to rethink this idea though: Well, we do say that 'performance remains' – but then what exactly is the status of actual remains, of material remnants, especially, if liveness too is attributed to what is remaining? From the medial point of view, it seems to me relatively clear that we are talking about something completely different if, say,

we hold a ticket to a past theatre performance in our hands or if we have watched this performance ourselves. There is a fundamental media difference. This disparity is not necessarily an ontological one – that would be yet another discussion that would fundamentally question temporality and liveness. But it makes a media difference whether, for example, I am holding one of Anna Pavlova's shoes in my hand or if I had seen her dance live – if that had been still possible.

However, keeping the mediated-ness of performance in mind, as Schneider (2011) assumes, the idea of the body as an archive moves into a more central position, I think. It was reconceptualised in detail by Julia Wehren (2016) who focuses on the embodied, choreographic practices that render the body archival in terms of the idea of the archive as function, as you already mentioned. So, the body as archive is not a simple site but it's about the 'relational field of body, choreography, performance and audience' (WEHREN 2016: 165). In this respect, Stephan Brinkmann (2013) deals with questions of modes of memorising and remembering in the movement repertoire of Pina Bausch's Tanztheater, thus reminding of Diana Taylor's account of the 'archive and the repertoire' in performance (TAYLOR 2003). But, then again, when it comes to a reenactment, for example, of which I have not seen the 'original' performance(s), my question would be whether I have access to a body as an archive in the same way I would have to a traditional archive. Of course, one would argue that it is about the references and relations in which a reenactment takes place, as Wehren does, queering the times between then and now, and queering bodies and its techniques and practices that, of course, have changed over the decades. In that case, there surely is access to such an archival format, also, as often, reenactments are accompanied by artists' talks or publications, adding further context. For me, however, it is still not entirely clear what kind of archive the body is supposed to be, also in terms of its media-ness, and for whom the archive is intended and made. Is it an archive for spectators who go to a performance and then watch this particular way of historiography? A kind of historiography essentially based on embodied practices and manifested in numerous reconstructions and reenactments? However, these are often accompanied by writing and speech again, as said above, – by programme booklets or related articles which appear in corresponding journals, brochures, and anthologies. So, usually, the reenactments and reconstructions do not just exist by themselves, but there is almost always some form of publication connected to it that provides another level of discourse. So, would that still be the idea of the archive as a container in which something is collected and in front of which there is a gatekeeper as well, as I mentioned before?

As stated in the context of archive and hegemonic knowledge: the body then actually appears as a kind of traditional archive due to the function of selection and to the restrictive access, I would argue: artists opt for a reenactment because they are interested in a specific person, a dance form, or a particular historical context. If they are lucky (or unlucky) they can show it about four or five times in venues mostly based in the independent dance industries. They then might be invited to a guest performance, but beyond that, there is no longer any direct performance access to this kind of knowledge. As said, this touches on the previous question, namely that

of hegemonic knowledge – as the knowledge to which the artist who creates the performance usually has more significant access, and who also chooses how this knowledge will then be distributed (which of course also depends on the opportunities to perform, in which locations and venues, and the like). This means that artists (and panel members who approve of the money for the project) have a knowledge advantage over those who watch the piece then, i.e., the audience. Of course, among these, there is the so-called specialist audience that already has a professional dance affinity, but there are also spectators who may not have any previous experience: maybe the title of the piece appealed to them, or it is shown in their favourite venue. In this way we are dealing with an archive in the sense of a Foucauldian heterotopia: a place, or rather a situation here, to which basically everyone has access, but not everyone has an equally informed one.

[JP] I ask myself again and again when dealing with different forms of reenactments: if body/dance is to be accepted as a specific form of archive in theory as well as in practice, is it then necessary for the spectators themselves to have a certain prior knowledge so that this archive becomes 'accessible' for them? And 'which' knowledge would it be then?

[SF] Yes, that is a really exciting question, especially since it is about canonised knowledge in addition to the question of hegemonic knowledge. On the one hand, we can ask: What can be assumed? How much 'should' one know when watching dance? Interestingly, in literature, for example, a certain canon is presupposed, which is taught at school (so in Germany mostly Goethe, Schiller, then Heine, Frisch, mostly male authors, by the way). In dance, such canonised knowledge does not (yet) exist and the question would be: Why not start with it in schools? Dance Studies, on the other hand, would certainly not be what they are if they did not scrutinise the concept of the canon: How should one choose? What is considered 'essential', 'relevant' and should therefore 'belong' to the curriculum? That is where the problems begin. In many federal states of Germany, there are initiatives for dance education in schools. Organisations like TanzZeit – Zeit für Tanz in Schulen [Time for Dance in Schools] in Berlin mainly focus on dance practice, that is, on alternative forms of physical dialogue and of moving together. But the idea is also to introduce students to a repertoire of contemporary dance and to whet their appetite for attending dance performances. In an ideal world then, knowledge of and in dance will be gradually generated, thus enabling people to make connections and create contexts in this art form without having to prefer individual performances or artists by way of a canon. In addition, initiatives such as Tanzscout in Berlin aim to mediate contemporary dance, either before or after the performances, thus enabling contextual knowledge about dance to be passed on. Numerous initiatives have recently emerged in this field, mostly under the auspices of contemporary dance.⁶

⁶ E.g., *mapping dance berlin* (2016–2020).

[JP] The question of a dance canon being highly virulent in the field of Dance Studies – at least in Germany – is something I got convinced of during the exhibition at the Akademie der Künste [Academy of Arts] in 2019. It was called *Das Jahrhunderts des Tanzes/The Century of Dance* and there was an anthology of the same name published on the occasion (ODENTHAL 2019). For this exhibition/publication, the curators selected a total of one hundred dancers and choreographers who were/are significant for the development of dance in the 20th century. But in my opinion, this is already a certain kind of selection, an attempt to create a canon in the field of theatre dance, isn't it?

[SF] If I have said that a dance canon did not exist yet, I meant, not in the way it exists in schools in literature or music, for example. And dance is also not a regular subject in schools. As mentioned before, the dance in schools initiatives existing in various federal states are based on the idea of moving together in a different way than in physical education, creatively and artistically, on one hand, and to form the audiences of tomorrow, on the other.

But within dance and Dance Studies, and certainly also in Theatre Studies, there is a canon, I would say. It is not officially specified as such, but it is flagrant that the same 1920s dances or modern dance artists (often *Ausdruckstanz*) are repeatedly the subjects of choice especially in reenactments: Mary Wigman, Gret Palucca, Isadora Duncan a little earlier, Martha Graham in the US-American sphere, Katherine Dunham, and so on. For *Tanztheater*, that would be Pina Bausch, Reinhild Hoffmann, Johann Kresnik, Susanne Linke, in particular. This is perfectly in order, in the first place. Nonetheless, the exhibition and publication you mentioned reminded me of a book by Jochen Schmidt that had appeared in the early noughties, *Tanzgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts in einem Band. Mit 101 Choreografenportraits* [Dance History of the 20th Century in One Volume. With 101 Choreographer Portraits] (SCHMIDT 2002). However, for some time now, such a person-centred historiography has been considered no longer up-to-date, that is: depicting history and dance canon by connecting it to individual names and a certain authorship, and thus determining what is deemed to be relevant and of importance. Therefore, I was surprised that, three years ago, the exhibition at the Akademie der Künste had committed to such a format, focusing on an appreciation of materials in the sense of the dances' 'remnants' (such as the displayed mask from Wigman's *Hexentanz*) – which also had had a strongly Eurocentric (German) emphasis.

Actually, there would have been a chance not to do the same thing again, in the sense of name dropping, but to rather outline styles, forms, and contexts. Certain modes of expression, patterns of movement, of bodies that are historically and culturally situated and intertwined in specific ways. Of course, this is most often linked to individual artists which cannot simply be denied. But the approach could be different. It seems to me that it is essential to look at the connections and references that form and shape certain types of dance. For example, in terms of geographic transfers, migratory movements of dance styles, and of course, in this context also past and prevailing colonial relations and appropriations of dance movements. This would mean to explicitly explore such connections and to situate them historically. The same applies to cross-genre

aspects, for instance, the links between Modern Dance and other artforms that were still 'young' at the time, such as film around the turn of the 20th century. And in general, considering the way dance dealt with new media, for example as Loïe Fuller did, or how dance influenced the visual arts and vice versa. This would showcase the pivotal position of dance as a (mostly) body-based art, as a time- and movement-centred performing art, especially since the historical avant-garde. And, of course, this would have to include how dance forms from Asian and African contexts impacted upon the development of Ausdruckstanz in Europe and Modern Dance in the US. And that is where a critique of canon would be important and well placed, also in order to think about canon models differently again, outside of literary or musicological categories – and outside of Europe-focused aesthetics and systems of knowledge as well. In this respect, dance and Dance Studies have a chance to not only rearticulate the concept of canon but to position dance centre-stage when discussing the arts.

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