



EDITORIAL

AN URGENCY TO (RE)IMAGINE DANCE IN THE AGE OF DISTANCE

BY: *Rose Martin, NTNU Norwegian University of Science and Technology*
Alfdaniels Mabingo, University of Auckland

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DOI: 10.5324/da.v7i1.4124 *CORRESPONDENCE TO: rosemary.k.martin@ntnu.no

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AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Rose Martin (PhD) is Professor of Arts Education with a focus on Dance and Multiculturalism, at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU). She also holds a position as Professor II at Nord University. She is part of many international research consortiums, and has published widely, authoring over 60 peer reviewed journal articles, book chapters, and books.

Alfdaniels Mabingo (PhD) was born and raised in his ancestral village, Mbuukiro, on the shores of Lake Victoria in Uganda. He is a Lecturer of Dance at the University of Auckland specializing in pedagogies of African dances and dance and decolonisation. Mabingo also lectures dance at Makerere University in Uganda. He has conducted research internationally and has published more than 30 journal articles, chapters in anthologies, and books.

This special issue has been motivated by the transformation the world has experienced in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Major upheavals and change have occurred in light of this pandemic and there is now a forced reconsideration demanded of what dance is and how dance practitioners, educators, and researchers might continue their work in sustainable, relevant and accessible ways. With such change comes the possibility for dance to be transformed, reconsidered, and reimagined in ways that have implications for meanings, enactment, contexts, communities, practice, education, policy, and application.

This special issue called for articles that were attending to critical queries such as:

- How are we sustaining relationships and global dialogues within dance?
- What might be new ways of engaging in dance research and practice in a socially and physically distanced context?
- How are we becoming creative and innovative with our dance teaching, learning, making, performing, and researching within this time of online engagement?
- How are we reimagining the meanings of dance and redefining the body in online spaces? Where were the dominant voices coming from in these digital dance encounters?
- What relations and communities emerge through dance in the age of distance?
- And, how can we look at opportunities for valuable virtual mobility within these times?

In response to these motivating questions, we received submissions from around the globe, each with their own focus and specific considerations of the broader COVID-19 context that we are living within. Some of the articles choose to dive into research that has emerged in response to activities taking place due to the pandemic. Other articles reflect on existing practices and while considering histories, they also question what these might look like moving into the future. This special issue is comprised of five articles, and below we offer a brief insight to what each offers.

Dancing someone else's movements through someone else's body: The process of commodification of the digital dancing body and the arising tensions with intellectual property regimes, authored by Jorge Poveda Yáñez and Nina Davies, explores dances across digital spaces and ask pertinent questions regarding conventional Intellectual Property Regimes (IPR) in relation to dance in virtual spaces. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic we have seen a proliferation of dance mediated by communication technologies such as Zoom, TikTok, and other digital spaces. With this dynamic shift deeper into the digital world, issues of ownership, authorship, attribution, and legalities of dance must be carefully considered. Davies and Poveda Yáñez carefully examine intellectual property laws and offer suggestions of how new technologies can protect dance moving into the future.

Cecilia Ferm Almqvist delivers an article titled, *Distance dance as an actor network: Issues of human and non-human becoming in virtual dance workshops for older adults during the Covid-19 pandemic*. Ferm Almqvist offers reflections on the delivery of online dance workshops for older adults during the first year of the pandemic. The article specifically takes a post

- ▶ human perspective on digital dance, exploring notions of connectedness, entanglement, and change that might occur in the Anthropocene because of such practices and theoretical considerations. The article by Ferm Almqvist shares a timely reminder that the COVID-19 pandemic has forced new digital alternatives for aesthetic experiences.

From street dance to hip hop: Performance as a tactic to maintain cultural meanings, by Rafael Guarato shares a historicization of the concept of street dance (dança de rua), by showing distances and approaches in relation to hip hop, specifically in the context of the city of Uberlândia, MG, Brazil. Guarato's writings explore how such dance practices have the potential of inform construction of urban identities and shape community. In the times of COVID-19 we can reflect on both identities and community in relation to dance, and how practices that have relied significantly on a collective in person movement practice have had substantial impacts as a result of the pandemic.

Emma Cosgrave presents an article titled, *Reconstructing dancer identities: Implications of a global pandemic for freelance contemporary dancers in Aotearoa/New Zealand*. Cosgrave examines how the Covid-19 event has caused freelance contemporary dancers in New Zealand to experience alienation and adaptability. The article reveals how events such as the Covid-19 pandemic can push dancers and choreographers to question their professional identities, embody precarities, and disrupt a sense of security because of massive shifts in ways and processes of creating, rehearsing, and staging dance.

In the article *Performing the Pandemics: The intermingling creation of a dance festival and a community amidst a global emergency*, Jorge Poveda Yáñez, María José Bejarano Salazar, Naiara Müssnich, Rotta Gomes de Assunção and Subhashini Goda Venkataramani reflect on their creative experiences of "Emergency Festival", which occurred in early 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic. The authors map how dance practitioners can negotiate a radical alterity of territory, time, and community as a phenomenon of dance through distance. The article highlights the place of dance in varied mediums and the way forward to create and study it in a period of global disruption.

With this special issue the five articles critically and creatively discuss, define, and give examples of how dance practice, histories, legalities, identities, and communities are being reimagined in the age of distance. The uncertainty we face and the challenges that the current climate of the world brings now and, into the future, presents several social, political, and economic concerns. What can be observed occurring around the world over the past months illustrate how dance and dance practitioners can offer hope, relief, change, or an alternative view of the world in these turbulent times. This can remind us that dance holds a place within the future we are collectively shaping.