

Tanzplan Deutschland, Yearbook 2009  
Dance and Archive:  
Prospects for a Cultural Heritage

## WORDS OF GREETING

I am delighted that alongside Tanzplan Deutschland, a project initiated by the *Kulturstiftung des Bundes* (the German Federal Cultural Foundation), we have now also been able to launch an initiative to consolidate the five most important dance archives in Germany. It has always been difficult for dance to record its own history and to utilise it. But there have been five significant dance archives in Germany for quite some time now, whose impressive inventory is of benefit to dancers, choreographers and academics working in the field of dance. The archives provide a comprehensive picture of dance history and show the particular influences German choreographers have had on the development of dance around the world. In doing so, they often rely on the initiatives of individuals who, with little public funding, have been continuing their difficult work of collecting and preserving over many years.

Supported by Tanzplan Deutschland, these archives have now been brought together in an association that will lobby for their cultural-political significance. The credo “together we are stronger” also applies in this case. Moreover, the archive material collected, which represents part of Germany’s cultural heritage, is being made available via the latest, media-based methods of knowledge transfer so that the information contained in the archives is as openly accessible as possible to young artists in their day-to-day activities. Finally, we have been familiar with the unimaginable scope offered by new media since – at the latest – the arrival of the much-lauded interactive CD-ROM, with which William Forsythe made it possible to learn and experience his vocabulary of movement. And it was, and remains, a requirement of the Kulturstiftung des Bundes that we communicate the cultural heritage in interesting and creative ways.

Together, the dance archives in Germany will succeed in setting their work on a yet more solid basis and in achieving the key role in Germany’s dance landscape that they deserve. I wish them every success with this.

**Hortensia Völckers**, Artistic Director of Kulturstiftung des Bundes

## FOREWORD

History is not something we own automatically. To be sure that we do own it, we need to keep acquiring it. Efforts towards this have been stepped up markedly in recent times. Commemoration, remembrance and preservation of our cultural heritage have become key terms in social discourse and reflect an increased awareness in the post-modern world of the significance of history.

In a process in which nature entirely has lost its central role in terms of defining our social identity and even the concept of State is losing its meaning, culture is now taking on a dominant position. What comprises culture, what a cultural canon could look like, is itself today, much more than before, a topic of discussion. What is undisputed, however, is that tangible and intangible cultural assets with historical significance must be protected and preserved in order to shape our present and our future.

It is against this backdrop that the new project Tanzplan Deutschland, which was launched by the Kulturstiftung des Bundes in 2005, has been given the key role of raising and promoting public awareness of Germany’s dance archives. The five dance archives contain a

comprehensive inventory in various forms that together map out the history of dance in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with all its significant and diverse developments.

From these archives, it becomes clear that Germany provided vital impetus for dance throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, starting with the foundation of the influential *Institut Rhythmik Hellerau* via the characteristics of German expressionist dance, the development of dance theatre and the conceptual orientation of contemporary dance. Artists and theorists made an extraordinarily significant contribution to the modernity of dance that has become important far beyond this art form and has initiated aesthetic innovation in other art forms.

The dance archives, to which private individuals often contributed, represent a significant cultural heritage that up until now has been insufficiently recognised, supported and exploited. We need to protect the institutions and make them sustainable; we need to tap into and use to a greater extent the cultural knowledge stored in the archives. The goal is to make this knowledge accessible to the public and thereby strengthen the role of dance in different areas – in the training of young talent, in academic research and in particular in the practice of the art itself.

Tanzplan Deutschland has initiated a working process to support efforts to maintain the archives, to formulate the role of the archives and to develop closer working partnerships. In order to achieve this, the five archives have been brought together as the ›Association of German Dance Archives‹.

It was, from the start, part of the main focus of the meetings organised by Tanzplan Deutschland in Berlin, Bremen and Leipzig in 2007 and 2008 to acquire expert knowledge and to learn from the experiences of other institutions and countries. The volume you have before you documents the process so far and brings together the contributions of guest speakers (Wolfgang Ernst and Michelle Potter). The contributions are complemented by thematically relevant essays on the issues of archiving, movement and artistic practice (Barbara Büscher, Franz Anton Cramer, Reinhild Hoffmann, Xavier Le Roy and Laurent Sebilotte) as well as procedures for securing public funding to support the needs of dance archives (Claire Rousier). In his commentary, the president of the Goethe Institute, Klaus-Dieter Lehmann, emphasises the significance of the archives for the development of dance in Germany and calls for sustainable sponsorship of the archiving work.

The “appeal” being launched by the Association of German Dance Archives and which is attached to this annual report provides a brief breakdown of the various profiles of the archives and spells out their common needs. These include a joint research platform, training, and art and knowledge development in the form of a national information centre for dance, something other European countries established a long time ago.

The process of consolidating the dance archives in Germany has only just begun. It must continue until these institutes and their importance receive the recognition that dance and its cultural status deserves, including at the political level.

Tanzplan Deutschland would like to make a contribution to this with this publication.

***Madeline Ritter, Project Director Tanzplan Deutschland***

## COMMENTARY

As an agent for international culture and training policy, the Goethe Institute supports the maintenance and development of the German dance archives. With their various forms of information, they are the first point of contact for interested parties at home and abroad. The archives also deal, in an in-depth, academic way, with German dance culture past and present.

In our institutes in 83 countries, we present professional ensembles from Germany and support international artistic partnerships through guest productions, co-productions and new projects to promote young talent. Alongside this, in Germany we also support guest performances from outstanding ensembles from developing and transition countries and work together with German festivals and organisers. The results of these productions and partnerships in turn find their way into the dance archives. Next to the archiving and documenting of history and the contemporary world, making records accessible and dealing with suggestions from international partnerships is also part of our work.

On our homepage (<http://www.goethe.de>), we present 50 brief portraits of important representatives of contemporary dance in Germany. The portraits were created as part of *Tanzplattform Deutschland* [German Dance Platform] in 2004, 2006 and 2008 in partnership with the International Theatre Institute. They are complemented by video sequences chosen by the choreographers themselves and added to on an on-going basis.

Dance projects such as “Rhythm is it!” by the Berlin Philharmonic under Sir Simon Rattle receive a great deal of media attention. Their popularity is possible not least because of the cinematic documentation of them. It is necessary to awaken enthusiasm for the dance and ballet stories that are stored in the dance archives as part of the cultural heritage and to create awareness about maintaining them. The archives serve as a place of commemoration, reminiscence, documentation and academic digressions for the most fleeting of all art forms, namely dance. Alongside considerations of aesthetics and art history, the dance archives also serve a special research purpose in terms of providing a view on the heritage of movement in society and the many forms in which movement manifests itself in culture.

The wealth of material, in particular about dance history in Germany in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, offers a wide approach but poses great challenges for the dance archives in terms of maintaining the archives and how they are handled academically, something that can only be achieved with on-going financial support and qualified specialists in the field.

The Goethe Institute, with its activities in the area of dance, is involved at the outset of new works and supports contemporary adaptations and new interpretations. By recording the choreographic works, they become independent of time and place and can be made accessible and allow for cultural discourse. In this way, supporting the archives is also a very contemporary concern as it serves to preserve the art of dance and to reflect on it.

*Prof. Dr. h. c. Klaus-Dieter Lehmann, President of the Goethe Institute*

## THEMES

### Transitory Archives. A Machine-Oriented Look at Movement

by Wolfgang Ernst

The following contribution discusses the extent to which archives of movement *as* movement and *through* movement can be maintained. In doing so, the line of argument does not primarily push the specifically aesthetic phenomenon of dance into the foreground but rather the kinetic element that has been neglected up until now in archive terminology and practice.

It can be assumed that archives of movement are also subject to movement. Are conventional archives, i.e. primarily spatial and classificatory installations, in a position to become a reliable means of preserving medial temporalities, i.e. temporary dynamics, as they are required, to a special extent, for dance archives?

Or is it more sensible to separate the two functions in practice?

Alongside the indispensable function of conventional archive activities (administrative documentation of processes in the form of preserving the accompanying textual sources over the long term), the option of “new”, i.e. of genuinely media-based archives, opens up for dance archives in a special way: in chrono-/photographic, then cinematographic and finally electronic form. The movement events themselves (i.e. the kinematic indexicality) will not only be able to be documented for the first time, but also embodied and implemented in media.

#### Fleeting events, transitory archives, transitions

In terms of all diversification of their content, traditional archives rely extensively on a standard carrier medium format: paper and print (script). Later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, there was a diversification of the archive medium itself: script, sound, image, alpha-numeric code. Allowances had to be made in terms of a differentiation of archives according to the individual medial right (and not just in legal terms). One example of this is a phrase in the report of the *Wissenschaftsrat* [German Science and Humanities Council] from 25 May 2007 called *Recommendations for the Further Development of Communication and Media Sciences in Germany*: With the development of electronic and then digital technologies “the issue of archiving that had been resolved in classical bibliography has re-emerged”.<sup>1</sup> It is expressly advocated to improve the archive situation for scientific work with and in audio-visual archives.

The digital information world gives rise henceforth to dynamic objects drawn from the static classification logic of archives – currently a problem for the fleeting works of what is known as media art. In the course of Web 2.0 economics, the Internet is producing completely new and “anarch(iv)ic” knowledge memories and moving image memories that serve as “anarchic archives”, such as Youtube, unmonitored in terms of development of the inventories, but monitored via software and protocols. If we differentiate here between the surface (what is available to our eyes and ears via interfaces) and its condition of possibility, then it means that the source codes (the Internet’s own intrinsic “archive”) also need to be archived.

Allow me to make a trend diagnosis at this point: The aesthetic of interim archives is now taking the place of long-term archiving. Linked to this is another, dynamic cultural concept

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.wissenschaftsrat.de/texte/7901-07.pdf>, p. 53

that is not primarily related to saving but to a permanent transfer – a form of updating *as* data management (cf. Ernst 2006).

We must therefore prepare ourselves for transitory archive forms. Theatre and dance are already transitory at the moment they are being performed. Let us then move the discussion from mobilising the archive to the archiving of what is mobile. Dance is not only a physical form of movement art, but also kinetic knowledge and kinaesthesia. A more comprehensive, epistemological problem, another knowledge horizon, therefore emerges alongside the pragmatic issues and problems of dance archiving.

For their part, dance archives as archives of movement require storage media that is capable of storing movement, and they are therefore, via the concrete dance form and beyond, of paradigmatic importance. It was the emergence of cinematography that made the no longer merely symbolic recording of movement possible – and at the same time its scientific analysis (see, for example, van Schaik 1996).

Alongside the administrative archive work (for litigable documents, documents on paper, correspondence, etc.), which continues to be essential, is the work of archiving the movement itself, which, before the days of cinematographic media, could only be retained in symbolic terms, as, as movement performed in real time, it was as fleeting as the voice. Phonography and cinematography changed all this abruptly and produced the famous effects in the paintings of Italian Futurism or in Marcel Duchamp's portrayal of strident movement.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century generated dynamic archives and archives of the dynamic that related to one another transitively. One critical question in relation to this is the extent to which, in its tighter meaning, it should refer to an art form or a kinesis of bodies. Comparable with the poetry of associated discourse and in contrast to prose (such as a classical telephone directory), dance means aesthetically arranged movement (*technè*). Media archaeology however determines the condition of possibility of dance, i.e. in terms of the physical cinematic as the teaching of movement, the teaching of the distribution of energy, while dance theory concentrates mostly on the art form, i.e. the cultural semantics of movement. In ancient Greece, dance belonged to the notion of *mousikè* and was part of a general knowledge of well-ordered *harmonía*. Indeed “to arithmetic research [...] came the physical side, first through Descartes and Mersenne, than through Saveurs [...] and later Helmholtz” (Ducout 1940: 12), underlines Marcel Stanislas Ducout in his blueprint for a veritable media dance, which sonified radio-electrically the movement of the dancer with the help of a device called “movline” (cf. Ducout 1940: 165 et seq). This coupling of a dancing human and electronics is part of an epistemological form of dramatic art because it breaks with an occidental tradition, whereby the human body, when faced with technology, was always afforded a controlling role. In contrast to this was a cybernetically closed loop with the aptitude for feedback. In this way, the dancing body learns something about the structure of the media, as a means of carrying out an analysis of media archaeology. It would be the function of movement archives to render this training comprehensible.

### **Film museums and the *Encyclopaedia Cinematographica***

Dance archives as a memory of movement, which for its part requires storage media that is capable of storing movement, are more allied to film archives than conventional file archives in terms of the problem of backing up the inventory, as well as the forms of automation (Müller-Gellert 1969); this can lead to options for movement research based on the moving image that are genuinely suitable in terms of media. Pan shots and film cuts, for example, are easily traceable because they can be coded as video compression picture types.

For the opening of the permanent exhibition at the Film Museum in Berlin in September 2000, Georg Seeßlen referred to two storage media with opposing destinies. A film museum is firstly something of an oxymoron, the unification of two movements in the cultural history of the last century that run in opposite directions: “On the one hand, there is the impetus to record, categorise, enframe and label [...]. On the other hand, there is also the impetus to dislocate everything in movement, to overcome spatial and temporal limits.” (Seeßlen 2000)

The extent to which the duty of the museum has moved from preservation and archiving to exposing and staging shows it is moving closer to the nature of film. “The focus is on motion”, said a guide sheet on the permanent exhibition: a media-archaeological case history of cinematography. The difference between cinema time and museum time however lies in the fact that the visitor to museum space determines the rhythm of his/her viewing; this form of viewing with additional moving images is only possible when you go to the video screen.

The undertaking of the Institute for Academic Film in Göttingen is valid as an ambitious forerunner project. Under the direction of the behavioural researcher Konrad Lorenz, it was attempted to put the entire world of motion onto celluloid. Around 4,000 films were made, each of which recorded the motional process of a species. And this cinematographic archive has a more expansive, epistemological not to mention provocative notion of motion: “Not only animal species, of course, but also plant species or something from the field of technology, the mechanical strain on steel and so on.”<sup>2</sup>

Each film is, by itself, an archive of motions; even if (seemingly) nothing is moving in the picture, the celluloid is moving – and is therefore a *movie*. Manifestations of life are regular events in the passage of time, but these, paradoxically, are fixed in step-by-step frames in film. Mechanical-cinematic movements have been the test case for dance for a long time: With jerky, *avant la lettre* cinematographic movements, the robot Olimpia in E. T. A. Hoffmann’s novel *Der Sandmann* / [*The Sandman*](1816) lowers her head and repeats the same gesture over and again. Irritated, her human counterpart switches her off; the puppet freezes. The situation escalates in the ballet *Coppélia* (Arthur Saint-Léon, 1870), based on the book: “A dancer mimics a clockwork dancing doll simulating a dancer. The imitating movements, dancing twice removed, are predictably ‘mechanical’, given the discrepancies of outward resemblance between clockwork dancers and real ones.” (Danto 1980: 428)

Early cinematography (the camera-projector of the Lumière brothers der Kamera-Projektor der Gebrüder Lumière) is driven (synchronised) by the same mechanical clockwork as a spring mechanism, only that the function of this mechanism is not to show time but to record motion. “These discrepancies may diminish to zero with the technological progress of clockwork, until a dancer mimicking a clockwork dancer simulating a dancer may present a spectacle of three indiscernible dancers engaged in a *pas de trois*. By behavioral criteria, nothing would enable us to identify which is the doll, and the lingering question of whether the clockwork doll is really dancing or only seeming to seems merely verbal.” (Danto 1980: 428)

### **Long-term and duration, dance und time**

Are cinematographic media a failed archive of motion? More in the analytical-measuring sense than in the cinematographic-narrative sense, Etienne Jules Marey’s and Eadweard Muybridge’s series photography undertakes a discretisation of life that only becomes an

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<sup>2</sup> C. Carlson, documentalist at the Institute for Academic Film, Göttingen, Germany, interviewed by Christoph Keller, 1998, in: Christoph Keller, *Lost / Unfound: Archives As Objects As Monuments*, in the catalogue *ars viva 00/01 - Kunst und Wissenschaft*, Berlin 2000.

antecedent of cinema in the retrospective perspectives of media history. Marey undertakes motion studies, not as a way of fooling the eye, but exactly the opposite, to dismantle motion into individual images analytically. The media-archaeological view becomes the camera's privilege, to look behind the optical illusion. In the era of technical perception, motion becomes a function of its discrete measurement. The techniques for storing motion open up the possibility that they be made available for extensive, additional uses for the specific, embodied and kinetic knowledge contained within them.

There is, however, an epistemological veto in Henri Bergson's question about the extent to which technological media grasp the essence of motion in a measurable way or directly fall short of it. In contrast to the cinematographic chopping up of motion into the smallest moments of time, which is able to hide the listlessness of the perception of human motion itself, we have the time exposure, which lets us see what evades the fleeting glance, which is focussed on the present. When Hiroshi Sugimoto had the idea in a cinema one evening, to photograph an entire film with a single camera view, it was clear that this had to boil down to white noise, a white square on the silver screen, into which each motion in the exposure disappeared (cf Flügge et al. 2007: 304 et seq.). Only static forms can be measured (in terms of the human timescale) over the long term. What humans appreciate as motion and the passing of time in contrast to other creatures is only a matter of scale. Karl Ernst von Baer defined as quasi-cinematic the "awareness of changes in our imagination": "In one second, we have on average about six life moments, ten at the most." (Baer 1907: 141) The time exposure for works of dance theatre transforms the usual optic experience into a drawn out, patient view that is only possible photographically and which, via the camera, clenches together the activity sequence from scene to scene and bundles it simultaneously into a sculpture of light. Photography does not freeze here for more than a moment but, as a time exposure, opens up as a long shot of time itself. Maybe this is indeed the key element that makes it worthy of archiving: drama as a time span. Theatre and dance as the oldest time-based arts enter into an alliance with the technological time-based media. The media-archaeological view of motion gets its chance to become part of the archiving of media if it (as Dziga Vertov put it) is no longer simply a human means of looking but the dispassionate view of the camera itself – *theoría*, which here actually becomes media theory (cf. Begrich and Preussler 2004). The optical media that accelerates and condenses time *give* insights into the essence of motion that remain closed to human perception because their time window only memorises the immediate present (two to four seconds).

In his treatise *Laokoon* (1766), Gotthold Ephraim Lessing for the first time differentiated strictly time-based art from space-based art for the first time. Dance cuts across both areas, however: Loïe Fuller had time-frame photographs made of her dances. Does time mean the dynamic integration of motion and number? The chrono- and cinematography slices up motion and "counts" (not arithmetically but in terms of physical media) the motion as time in the sense of its Aristotelean definition.

Camera choreographies merit special attention in dance archive collections. In video dance, dilatory time and time axis manipulation come into play as a genuine option for electronic-mathematic space in order to create movements that can only develop in their time form in this medium and not on the real, body-focussed stage (with its Aristotelean limitation of the entity in space and time and action): compression and acceleration, fading in and fading out.<sup>3</sup> This form of time manipulation as superposition (overlay of temporality, or on the time-critical level: supra-position, "underlay") started essentially with a defect in

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<sup>3</sup> An example of video dance is *Topic I & II*, France 1990, director: Pascal Baes, choreography: Sara Denizot.



early photography, with time exposure, in which people, in contrast to still objects such as architecture and sculpture, were only visible as pale shadows or strips.

### **Dance of the electrons**

Kinematics (formulated systematically at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, for example by Reuleaux) means media theatre, but also thermodynamics (the Brownian motion). Early electrotechnology meant exclusively “den Mechanismus, nach dem sich die Elektronen ‚zu gemeinsamem Tanze ordnen“ / [“the mechanism according to which the electrons ‘arrange themselves in a common dance’”] (Möller 1930: 411). The electron tube used in computers is in fact a choreography of materiality and codification and this algorithmic dance on the screen of the image storing tube was hardly visible to the programming engineer: "Meaning can only be given to the 'mad dance' of the picture dots on the Mark I." (Link 2006: 42)

In 1904, Loïe Fuller, a friend of Marie and Pierre Curie, used the luminosity of radium in her dance that featured butterfly wings from fluorescent substances to produce the *Radium Dance*. If light becomes a main actor on the stage (Adolphe Appia), only light-sensitive media can preserve this ultra-fleeting memory; written notation is no longer capable of it.

### **Mathematics in motion**

Dance archives, considered on the basis of the media process, share a “comfortable symbolic relationship” (according to Lessing) with their purpose: motion. Early forms of a suitable dance notation dabbled with this. Rudolf von Laban freed dance from its attachment to the (ancient Greek) *mousikè*; he considered dance as a combination of impetus and motion, i.e. more in terms of physics. For the archiving of all forms of movement, the notation he developed understood itself to be, in the wider sense, suitable Labanotation in symbols (Laban 1991). Laban coined the concept of kinesphere. Today, movement recording media are available beyond the written-graphic notation: electronic (analogue video) or digital.

In order to improve it, graphic indexing of working motion was developed along the lines of symbolic dance notation; the Fordism of factory work generated its own motion aesthetic (cf. Pias 2002). The counterpart to it in the early period of the Soviet Union was Gastev's “Time League”. It is only one more step from the graphic methods of 19<sup>th</sup> century physiology to video dance. And in taking it we move closer to the oscillograph screen, in the centre of which the electronic beam dances. The electronic image on the other hand is not only made up only of 24 small photographs per second, like film, but each individual image is made up of time, in terms of television then more than 600 lines per second that are recorded by a pixel that never stops running.

Whilst cinematographic media still cut up dance motion, it is an electronic media that is in a position to record real body movement – the condition of possibility of all archiving. Only moving media can record movements in their vibrancy; in contrast to cinematography, which is discrete and mechanical, electromagnetic recording (on video) is a differential, a dynamic bridging of sequences of movement.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Italian Futurist Antonio Giulio Bragaglia founded the antithesis to early cinematography. In contrast to the analytical, discretionary aesthetics of chronophotography, “fotodinamismo futurista” located the photographic compression of a movement, that is to say its collective singular, on the frontier of frequency analysis and the aesthetics of the electromagnetic field, so that he staged material, space and time as, concurrently, a homogenous and differential arrangement, as a fundamental ephemeral, as a passage, as a traject (Hülk and Erstic 2005: 52 et seq.).

## Time to think of virtual archives: the differential archive

In contrast to the spatial classification of static documents in archives of the past, the archive of motion is confronted with the challenge of integrating memory according to time. The time-critical element of motion can be understood mathematically (limiting value  $\Delta t \rightarrow 0$ ). Mathematics puts us (through analysis) in a position to master time processes analytically (via deduction according to time). Mathematics itself, however, cannot implement time. For this, we need a special, literally programmatic form of dance. It is only one step further from the mathematical analysis of movement to its resynthesis in a mathematised medium, namely the computer. In contrast to cinematography, which is only able to record and reproduce movement, operational mathematics can create motion from nothing. In his book *Dem Archiv verschrieben*, Jacques Derrida called for the concept of the archive to be stretched to include the virtual world. In the strictest sense, however, virtual spaces mean calculated spaces, i.e. those images, sounds and movements that are formed exclusively on a computer via algorithms. Does the conventional archive collapse in this signal-processing medium, which defines the rhythm of our contemporary culture to a greater extent than any other?

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## Moving Access

by Barbara Büscher and Franz Anton Cramer

### I. Media as an archive for the performing arts

A growing interest in performance art forms has been observed in the arts and museums business for the last few years. From the *After the Act* show in Vienna in 2005<sup>4</sup> up to documenta XII in 2007, an inquisitive glance was thrown on “the current socio-political and cultural desire to appropriate actionist gestures from the past.” (Clausen 2006: 9). In the centre of this “re-vision” of performative developments in art, which has been taking place since 1960, lies the problem of exactly which traces, documents, statements and media artefacts in fact refer back to the history or histories of performance art or, more generally, the performing arts. This question links into considerations about archiving practices, about storing, collecting, preserving and classifying in the digital media era. And it reverts back to a notion of archiving put forward by Michel Foucault, who no longer identified the public institution with a judicial duty but took archive to mean a fundamental condition for writing history within the system of its discursive practices: “The archive is firstly the law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events. But the archive is also that which determines that all these things (...) are grouped together in distinct figures, composed together in accordance with multiple relations, affirmed or blurred in accordance with specific regularities.” (Foucault 1981: 186 – 188).

Current reflections on archives bring together discussions on media theory with calls for a moving access to past events and their dynamic acquisition. Accreditation strategies that distinguish statements and physical objects as documents form part of the debate and thereby also the foundations of a preservation culture.

### II. Performance as a physical object

According to the performance artist Marina Abramovic, the narratives relating to performances of the 1960s and 1970s are full of mystification and speculation (Abramovic 2007: 10). Often performed in small circles of friends, in front of few witnesses, rarely recorded satisfactorily by the artists themselves, a few emblematic photographs remaining, in the perception of posterity they have become traces of an event. With her *Seven Easy Pieces* project, which she presented in 2005, initially at the Guggenheim Museum New York, Marina Abramovic suggested a way in which these stories could be read in a new and different way. She understood her re-enactment of six earlier performances by Bruce Nauman, Vito Acconci, VALIE EXPORT, Gina Pane and Joseph Beuys, as well as her own, to be a re-acquisition that should follow defined rules in order to deal afresh with issues of authorship: “Obtain the artist’s approval. Pay the artist for the rights. Perform a new

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<sup>4</sup> *After the Act. (Re)Präsentation der Performancekunst* [Re-presentation of Performance Art], Vienna, Museum of Modern Art. Exhibition from 4 November – 4 Dezember 2005; Symposium from 4 – 6 November 2005.

interpretation of the work. Exhibit the original material: photos, video, objects, exhibit a new interpretation of the work.” (Abramovic 2007: 11, own translation into English)

Abramovic reads all the material about previous performances as if it were a musical score. And, similar to a performance based on a musical score, time and duration play an important role in her *Seven Easy Pieces*. They refer to the shared experience of performer and spectator. Babette Mangolte, who has been recording New York’s experimental scene in photographs and on film since 1970, has made a 95-minute film from seven hours of performance material recorded from seven performances. The film is now doing the rounds as, artistically speaking, an archive artefact of the second order.

### III. The media of movement (arts)

The notion of movement as a medium of knowledge emerged in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This kinetic process of development in the modern world was accelerated via new media, through which the recording of movement as movement became possible. At the same time, the emergence of moving picture media offered a new approach to describing, measuring and analysing bodily movement. The movement arts served continually as material for all kinds of kinetographic experiments. This can be seen in early films where the international correspondents, whose work the Lumière brothers could support for a time, were happy to return home with films about dance in other cultures. But also when – as in Nam June Paik’s *Global Groove* (1973) – the dancing movement in front the camera mixes with the camera’s own movement and, using the new possibilities for electronic image processing, operates with the movement of the pixels.

Performance art as well as artistic work with video both had their beginnings in the 1960s and 1970s, running in parallel with each other time-wise. Early performance art stressed the process-like and ephemeral nature of actions that apparently denied themselves documentation. Only those present could verify the event, their participation and their perception becoming a creative event. Herein lay a delineation strategy against the idolisation of what is object-like in the art and theatre business.

At the same time, on the basis of its special technical features, when compared to film, the new medium of video was used not only as a possibility of recording or documenting movement, action or performance, but also to create reflection on the configuration of perception in media – as in Joan Jonas’s *Organic Honey* series (1972 et seq.) where the simultaneity of live performance and media transformations in mirror, monitor and projection – as well as in numerous closed circuit installations – is reflected as an interaction with the medium (cf. Kolesch und Lehmann 2006). The relationship between what is present or not is permanently available. Performances that take place solely in front of the video camera (for example by Bruce Nauman) and are only performed in a form stored in media cancel out of the aura of the authentic, one-off experience. Such interfaces between performance development and video art open up the question about the relationship between what can be read as a media document and what can be read as an artistic artefact.

The archiving of video art has also become a current topic. The expansive *40jahrevideokunst.de* project, which comprises a series of five exhibitions as a study DVD edition, gave rise in 2005 to an archive of earlier (German) media art, which confronted conservational necessities and set an indispensable collection of work in motion, discussion of which remains outstanding, however. In any case, the edition gave a larger section of the public, and for the first time, access to 59 video tapes chosen from between 1963 to 2004. The Gateway to Archives of Media Art (GAMA), the latest network association of European museums and media art locations to be founded, talks of the “digitalising and documenting of ephemeral forms of art and presentation” (see <http://www.gama-gateway.eu/>). Here it

becomes apparent that both areas – the archive of media art as well as the archive of performance – could develop a noteworthy intersection of common problems concerning eventfulness, forms of performance and presentation, the breakdown of works into processes and public participation.

The recording and transformation of movement into media artefacts via photography, film and video cut into the establishment of archives of (not only) artistic movement cultures. They widen the repertoire of text, script and score media to include sound and image and cross over into movement and the moving image. In doing so they allow for a new way of looking at movement that took place in the past.

The extent to which the aesthetics of contemporary film and TV is represented in such documents can be seen in the film that the director Arne Arnbohm did in 1965 in a co-production between NDR and Swedish Television for, about and with John Cage and Merce Cunningham's legendary *Variations V* production (New York 1965). Up until today, it is difficult to gain access to such artefacts.

#### **IV. Re-doing, re-enactment, reconstruction – re-acquisition of past eventfulness**

That strategies of re-enactment have a role to play in art, even beyond the re-acquisition of performance history, could be seen most recently in the *History will repeat itself* exhibition (Dortmund and Berlin, 2007). According to the curator Inke Arns, the great desire for repetitions of historical events set in scene is also to be understood as a reaction to and reflection on worldly experience that is increasingly only imparted by the media (Arns 2007: 42). At the same time, it became clear that the pictorial traces of historical events were often constituted as a result of re-enactment: The storming of the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg in 1917 or the taking of the Reichstag by Soviet Troops in 1945 have been recorded iconographically via re-enactments in cultural memory.

Artistic re-enactments are very often used to question historical knowledge, to acquire new perspectives and to clarify the media's presentation of collective memory. The exhibition also showed that these positions can in turn only be presented in media formats. It is precisely this transformation of the authentic that sparks an apparently wide interest and has led to numerous projects, the beginnings of performance art in Happening and Fluxus and also its link to post-modern dance (for example the Judson Dance Group) and to re-establishing the relationship with performative practices that appeared in early video art in front of and with the camera.

At the interface between the carrying out of movement as an artistic moment, configuration of moving images in digital media and the presentation of this dual outcome in museum space, the issue of archiving as a contemporary creation process has become a current one. The kinetic and self-realising (performative) structures of performance arts reflect the crossovers from preservation to consuming, from work to process. With this, movement moves to the centre of the archiving debate and poses questions about kinetic quality, about movable access to mobilised cultural formations.

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## Documenting Dance: the Archive as Method by Laurent Sebillotte

We, at least most of us, are – like the archaeologist – “driven by this unexpressed dream, which is like the secret promise that something is resisting extinction, that its footprint will survive”. If the archaeologist occasionally considers the sludge “in which all objects [risk falling] into pieces as soon as one tries to extricate them”, or even, after having spotted a mark in the clay – while wanting to save it – is driven to destroy it<sup>5</sup>, then in terms of visibility we don’t even have this footprint, not even this imprint that moves us, because the soil of the set or the stage is never soft enough to be able to record (even minimally) traces of movement and weight there. Dance, explains Laurence Louppe<sup>6</sup>, does not produce any “fixed shapes”: “It creates *acts*. The analysis and the transmission of the *act* does not occur as a *sign* but via the contamination between the “states” in which the movement develops the degrees and the characteristics of energy, the tonalities. The capturing and the reading of such data can only be immediate.”

As a result, in terms of dance, and according to the artists and theorists, the essential memory is that of the body. It is certainly true: the show, because it “is an act”, “can in no way be detached from the time when it takes place”<sup>7</sup>. Its reproduction, its recording, like the claim of the archive to *re-present* it, is an illusion, which would also be the case with other *living* realities or, for example, scenery. By profession, the archivist has quickly convinced him- or herself that the representation is thus self-referential, whilst the sources are not and are “traces”. S/he knows that the representation cannot be represented, that “the theatrical representation is its own exposition and its own heritage”, as Laurent Rossion

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. Laurent Olivier, *Le sombre abîme du temps : Mémoire et archéologie*, Paris : Seuil (La couleur des idées), 2008, p.11-14.

<sup>6</sup> In *Danses tracées*, Paris : Dis voir, 1994, p.10.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Frédéric Pouillaude, “Le spectacle et l’absence d’œuvre” in *Cahiers philosophiques*, n°106, June 2006, p.14.

emphasised<sup>8</sup>. In short, the archivist is concerned not so much with the choreographic heritage but the documentary heritage (in its wide sense). What can the archivist say to those who doubt the truth or, worse perhaps for us, the use of these documents that have become *consecutive* and *residual*?

If those storing the movement (i.e. the archivists) are complaining, what are they complaining of? Certainly of the powerlessness to produce these traces which, to them, are relevant, accurate and important, not in themselves but by virtue of whichever possible use they would like to make of them, or make possible: acquire, reassemble, renew, transmit, realise the “binding” reality of movement. From their point of view, the archive’s defence is its uses: which memory for whom? Which *effective* memory? An expert when it comes to documents, the archivist enjoys them without using them, if I dare say so, and proceeds as s/he would do to archive any other human activity: contextualise, classify, describe, link the document and – rather than pointing out what is missing – s/he tries to emphasise all the information contained in it.

The archive, a substitute that says only that something has been, an indicator of an event, an illusion that acts as a reminder that something once lived, only contains remnants. The archivist’s goal is not this ephemeral factor that thwarts all ambitions to re-present, but rather these material *traces*, set down intentionally or not, without which there is no immaterial persistence, no *memorial footprint*, no individual souvenir, shared possibly in a collective memory, to take back from historians their own distinctions<sup>9</sup>.

The show, theatrical or choreographic, only produces, as direct traces, dead skins and marks that are quickly removed from the carpet of the stage. But it does deliver up some indirect traces, sources for analysis: documents bearing witness to the “authors” of the show, records of activity and documents related to representations, “theatre” documents (rough sketches and mock-ups of costumes or décor, posters, programmes “and everything the shows produce on a daily basis”) and “elements of the show”, and finally the documents that have “resulted from the representation”: musical scores, director’s notes, photos, press cuttings and sometimes some “show substitutes”: films, videos, recordings, graphic representations<sup>10</sup>.

We could then make a distinction in another way: the intimate and/or personal archives that one treats as belonging to those who are learned or erudite, writers, or eminent personalities in the eyes of the community; the archives linked to the production and “commercial” activities of the works (the companies or theatres understood as *enterprises*), with a certain legal or economic status.

From this point of view, the traces of choreographic work differ from those of performers working in the field one refers to as plastic art. According to Gina Pane, for example, the “cooking up of an action” comprises three phases: the “preparation” phase, “evidenced by a series of drawings, texts and pre-photography; the phase embodying “the confrontation between two realities, interior and exterior : the action itself”; the phase in which the artist proceeds to the selection “photographs of the action and to directing the colours to the

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<sup>8</sup> “Lettres, scène, musée... le nécessaire dialogue de la culture” in *Performing arts collections on the offensive = Les collections d’arts du spectacle passent à l’offensive* (from the 26th Sibmas congress) Frankfurt am Main : Peter Lang, 2007, p.248-9.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Jean-Luc Bonniol et Maryline Crivello in *Façonner le passé : représentations et cultures de l’histoire XVIe-XXI siècle*, Aix-en-Provence : Publications de l’Université de Provence (Le temps de l’histoire), 2004, p.7-8.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Noëlle Guibert, “La Comédie-Française et ses collections : les techniques documentaires à la rencontre de trois siècles d’histoire du theatre” in *Documentation des arts du spectacle dans une société en mutation*, from the 19<sup>th</sup> Sibmas congress (Lisbon, 7-11 septembre 1992), s.l. : Sibmas, 1994, p.67.

laboratory”<sup>11</sup>. The action is not accomplished when its materialisation does not count, beyond the definition of the project and its production *in situ*, putting it into a series of consecutive images. In the field of dance, we are far away from the production of an archive (reflection or product of the activity) “fixing each step of the creation” and allowing for or giving the impression (or deliberately producing the illusion) or allowing “the unfolding of the action to be read”<sup>12</sup>. But a reflection as much of the intention and of the collecting process as of the referent that it evokes or maybe reproduces, the archive nevertheless arrives to render legible the context and history of a human adventure, the *intention* of the works, the conditions of their social emergence and their reception, their dramatic ingredients.

Without confusing “the future of a work recorded during the live show and the process of “becoming traces”<sup>13</sup>, the archivist works in this way for the historian who has not seen and for whom the analysis and the reconstruction of works takes place necessarily via traces preserved beyond the event”<sup>14</sup>. The archivist is the guarantor of the most mundane reality of the material, as if s/he was charged with attaching it as closely as possible to its place of origin before even starting to make it speak. As the archivist is firstly charged with narrating how the document has been or was able to be produced, and by whom, and how it is linked to the other documents in an “archives fund”, defined as the ensemble of all kinds of documents that an administrative body, an organisation or an individual has produced and brought together as part of his/her functions or activity.

From here we get the key notion in the business of archiving of the “producer of the archive”, a producer who sometimes “has difficulty imagining that one will find, with this evidence alone, the chain of the facts, and that [his/her papers] [...] may be useful in history in general<sup>15</sup>, as is often the case with the choreographer (or the manager of a company), who rarely asks himself/herself what s/he *should* produce and leave as a souvenir. If s/he sometimes comes to deplore the lack of this, it is often when it is too late. It is why the relationship to the archive during the course of the artist’s activity, its production and its preservation, organised to a lesser or greater extent, also says a great deal about his/her state of mind and working conditions, his/her nomadic nature, the relationship to the writing, his/her capacity to organise his/her work and to preserve the traces of it, but also on the media interest that he/she brings about or the solicitations of all kinds he/she receives.

There are often several purposes to a document: the archivist will first look to determine from which activities it has sprung. And s/he will respect what the linking of the activities, as revealed by the organic structure of the archives fund, says about the producer of the archive.

Another difficulty, and at the same an essential necessity of the act of archiving, is the “classification” of the documents. In putting into order a archives fund, the professional will always try to follow the fundamental principles of his/her discipline: respect for the fund, respect for the origin, respect for the integrity, respect for the organic structure, respect for the original order... When no order exists, we aim to rediscover the initial organic order,

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<sup>11</sup> Gina Pane, “La cuisine d'une action”, *Artitudes International*, n°39/44, April-November 1977, p. 38.

Reproduced in *Lettre à un(e) inconnu(e)*, Paris: Ecole nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts (Écrits d'artiste), 2004, p.35-6.

<sup>12</sup> On this point, see François Rouquet (p.10) or Janick Béjoc and Nathalie Boulouch (p.45-60) in *L'exploitation scientifique des archives*, Rennes : Apogée, 2005.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Noëlle Guibert, “La mémoire du spectacle à l'état de veille...”, in *Revue de la Bibliothèque nationale de France*, n°5, “Archives, patrimoine et spectacle vivant”, June 2000, p.25.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Janick Béjoc and Nathalie Boulouch, *op.cit.*, p.45.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *Manuel d'archivistique*, Paris : Direction des archives de France, 1970, p.109.



relying on the knowledge of the producer of the archives to do this, or even on the understanding that one has of his/her operational methods, as geneticists of text do for literary works.

And if there is still debate, we clarify it and we will take yet further into account the predominant motivations at the transmission of the archives because, as with the archaeologist's treasure, they are traces as much of the present (which constitutes them as accessible archives) as of the past (vestiges). Régine Chopinot, the same person who said previously: "There is very little for me in the cinema of remembrance", says today, on setting down the documents stemming from her work: "There is this need [to look at the past] to continue to be relevant, anchored in a single, continuous present."<sup>16</sup> In addition, as we look at the numerous documents the choreographer Francine Lancelot left after her death, seemingly an impossible puzzle, we remember what she said to us, that she used to be troubled sometimes by the idea that, perhaps, the dissemination of her archives was going to anchor in posterity the idea that she was a jack of all trades, whilst, on the contrary, she wanted to show how the breaking down of her work into different registers (theatre then dance and music, folklore, and choreographic creation, ballet and contemporary dance, transcribing oral memory, historical reconstruction and invention, etc.), was, rather than a dispersal, much more a sign that she carried out her research fully each time.

No, truly, "there is nothing innocent in acts of preservation, of retrospectives, of revision" as Hélène Cixous said about Ariane Mnouchkine and the "leftovers" of shows of the Théâtre du Soleil<sup>17</sup>. As Charles Merewether says, on the notion of the archive<sup>18</sup>: "On the one hand, the trace is intrinsically tied to its initial referent, this unique moment of truth that took place before the separation of the origin and its representation." On the other hand, while the event or object has happened or disappeared, the trace exists and remains. Separated from the past, it belongs to the future, but to a future that is already determined. A void or space lodged in the registration itself, a site of differentiation that occurs between the past and the future, an abysmal space, a ghostly trace that constitutes the present." And a trace whose bulk and edges only rarely coincide with forgotten elements (or omissions) of memory. Because at the time when the words of the artist turn *by right* the vision of today onto the works of yesterday, the archive organises itself or allows itself to be structured ordinarily according to objective criteria: documentary typology, numbering or alphabetic classification and chronological scale. The archives of an originator or of a company, such as those of most human organisations (structures, systems, etc.), fatally – but fortunately too – show the passage of time, the articulation of projects and productions. The archive, in fact, has the advantage of keeping the times and the successive desires together, something that, among artists, never seems to be either superimposed or clearly linked. It is perhaps in this way that the role of the archive can "be seen as a form of participation and active interpretation"<sup>19</sup>.

So here we are invested with a strange freedom: directing a look – between two aspects, between living creation from the past and the future reading of it, as from a work *never*

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<sup>16</sup> Cf. Laurent Sebillotte, "Régine Chopinot et les dépouilles du spectacle" in *Jean-Paul Gautier-Régine Chopinot: Le Défilé*, Paris : Les Arts décoratifs, 2007, p.36-46.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. "Germes, gestes, restes" in *Revue de la Bibliothèque nationale de France*, n°5, « Archives, patrimoine et spectacle vivant », June 2000, p.82.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Charles Merewether, "L'invention de l'archive" [our translation] in *Archivo Pons Artxiboa*, San Sebastián : Koldo Mitxelena Kulturunea, 2002, p.69.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Lioba Reddeker, "'Making of' – Ateliers et archives dans la dynamique de la production documentaire" in *Les artistes contemporains et l'archive*, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2004, p.30.

*performed* – starting from documents that, contrarily, are at this point registered in their original time so that they accentuate the anchoring of works in this same time which has passed by, whose link from that time to today remains undecipherable as it most often isn't noted or commented upon by the artist. "I really hope to leave traces in people's imagination, in their neurones. An impression here is much stronger than on a cassette, a disc or on paper..." said Régine Chopinot en 1993<sup>20</sup>; in the same year, Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker said: "The only important things should be traces that the representations leave behind in the head, on the body and above all in the space that they create in the mind."<sup>21</sup> And, in fact, what the memory produces, rarely a common memory, is perhaps solely and essentially the construction of the thought – at the interface between "deletion" and "conservation"<sup>22</sup>.

"A work is something that one saves from the shipwreck of the impossible" said the poet Claude Michel Cluny, adding: "Every work is the pursuit of something incomplete"<sup>23</sup>. One dares to affirm here, from the viewpoint of an equally fundamental ambition, and because one does not stand in the way of the artist but one aspires to serve him/her, that we *strive* as archivists, in our own unconsciousness, to make an equal claim. And this claim of our profession, backed up by our *contemporary* environment, stipulates that our goal, the document, the only *realisation* of the archive outside of memory (which is worth an equal amount of specious evidence), is also what we *save from the shipwreck of the impossible* (the persistence of a life moment) and which is, in turn, *the pursuit of a something incomplete* (the activity of creating).

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<sup>20</sup> In *L'Express*, 11 November 1993, p.105-6.

<sup>21</sup> In *Rosas : album*, Amsterdam : Theater Instituut Nederland, 1993, p.118.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Tzvetan Todorov, *Les Abus de la mémoire*, Paris : Arléa, 1995, p.14.

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## STATEMENTS

Xavier Le Roy

### **In which ways were archive sources important for your artistic work?**

If the question is purely about sources that are directly related to choreographic works, then I can mention the work on *Continuous Project Altered Daily* by Yvonne Rainer and *Satisfyin' Lover* by Steve Paxton with the [French company] Quatuor Albrecht Knust, where we used such documents. We used musical scores, books and two or three extracts from filmed rehearsal recordings, also the most varied sources about the authors, for example the catalogue *Works* by Yvonne Rainer, and all sorts of sources relating to this time period, for example about the Judson Church.

In analysing these documents, we had to get to grips with the context in which these works came about and at the same time derive direct instructions from them, in order to choreograph individual sequences from the piece that we wanted to use for our project, a type of revival of *Continuous Project Altered Daily* and *Satisfyin' Lover*. This work was only really possible for us because these pieces had been recorded in the form of scores that we could see in the archives.

A more recent example is the work on *Le Sacre du Printemps* when I worked directly with archive material about dance, for example with the various choreographies that were created for this composition, in order to analyse the correlations between music and the respective works.

It is a stroke of luck to be able to work on a piece for which there are so many documents available; you can take a lot from them. It meant, for example, that I was able to learn dance sections that later helped me to understand the musical composition, going the indirect way using movements that choreographers have developed to particular sections of the music.

### **Can the reality of dance be carried over into other media in a meaningful and “truthful” way?**

I don't know exactly what that “the reality of dance” means. Furthermore, we should really be speaking here in the plural. Generally speaking, reality denotes those characteristics indicating that something actually exists, in contrast to something imagined, dreamed or fictitious. When used in relation to dance, this definition becomes problematic, however, because dances often open up into processes of the imagination and fictionalisation, which, in my opinion, have a direct role to play in the reality of these dances. This opinion may seem a little paradoxical, but it is a specific feature of dance that makes the issue of archiving it extremely complex.

But if we agree that the common reality of dances is the fact that they are a living art (*un art vivant*), then it is apparent that their transfer occurs in a round about way via various media that conveys them mostly from one reality into another. In accordance with the principle, these transfers can never take place without transmutations, but they are necessary. For these reasons, it seems difficult to me to speak of a more or less “truthful” or “meaningful” transfer. On the other hand, I think it is important to point out, however, that these transfers can embody some very comprehensive statements about how diverse understanding can be and how different interpretations can be of something that arises from and is included in each individual dance. It is particularly important to include these parameters in the preservation of dances.

### **Is a “truthful” recording even desirable or necessary then?**

It is definitely desirable in order to make future work possible and to give people the opportunity to find out information about dances that are no longer performed. Both works that I mentioned in my first answer are just two examples among many that show how important archiving is and how important it also is to think of ways of ensuring choreographic works remain accessible after their premieres and their tours. This alone allows research to be carried out and contemporary productions to be related to the specific field of knowledge from which they arise.

### **What would be the appropriate way of archiving your own work?**

You would have to try to bring all the sources together, from whichever medium, and store them together in their entirety. In order to preserve works and make them accessible, you would indeed need to go through each piece and use all the documents that arose after the production and not just the recordings and notes that precede the piece as there is a danger that these will be viewed later as the source and only reality. The archiving must encourage interpretations and transformations in order to avoid a situation in which one version is awarded a “valid reference” status. At the moment, the best way to preserve all the works I have developed is to continue to perform them. In this way a type of repertoire is created. The works themselves then represent a living and an accessible form of archiving. Incidentally, you could also of course develop an Internet site for this purpose, but it would require a lot of in-depth thought and at the moment I simply don’t have the time, alongside my other activities, to deal with it in more detail.

*Xavier le Roy is a choreographer. From 2006 to 2008, he was artist in residence at the Centre Choréographique National de Montpellier / Languedoc-Roussillon.*

## **Reinhild Hoffmann**

### **In which ways were archive sources important for your artistic work?**

As a matter of fact, I have only ever been to an archive once: during my study visit to New York, I visited the Public Library for the Performing Arts. I didn’t know then what to expect and what I could actually find there, but I had great difficulties with the system, the organisation and how to find things, so I preferred going to the office of Hanya Holm in the Juilliard School, where she taught, to get to know her. Hanya Holm was a central figure in terms of propagating German traditions in American dance.

Issues like these were otherwise really more filed under dance history. For we students, an introduction into archive work was not part of the curriculum, however. But today I think that it should form part of this type of teaching today. As far as I can remember, in our day, the Folkwang School did not have its own archive that was available to us for our own research.

When I was later involved with the Bochum Theatre with my dance work, a couple of students came to me of their own volition and asked whether I had any material relating to my work. They wanted to collect documents about the history of the school. In my day, there was the office of Kurt Jooss, the long-time intimate and assistant of Rudolf von Laban, with a large number of book shelves, and the snug “writing room” of Albrecht Knust, who continued working on kinetography in the famous “spire” of the school building.

In preparation of a teaching unit with Betty Jones, who had danced the part of Desdemona in the premiere of *The Moor’s Pavane* by José Limón, we saw the film with Limón as Othello. And the fact that a story was told in the strict form of a pavane impressed me back then. In this way, the film actually made it possible for me to meet this work and this choreographic form.

### **Can the reality of dance be carried over into other media in a meaningful way?**

That is a conflict I have been grappling with my whole life. On the one hand, I am happy that something has been put on record at all; on the other hand, you have to realise that film cannot replicate the effect of a live performance. Laban-notation has not become recognised to the point that it is in general use. But development in video technology is moving so rapidly forward that it is today very easy to work with the camera in the dance studio. Beforehand, it used to be a battle to get hold of the technical equipment. But for me, this became essential from a definite point in time: I had built up a repertoire, there were guest performances, the dancers came and went, so I had to transfer the roles and parts to others, and to do so I needed documentation.

Heide-Marie Härtel, with whom I was involved in the same ensemble, later specialised in documenting choreography. In doing so, she started to record even my first choreographic attempts with the earliest pieces of technical equipment. In this way, she has documented my entire oeuvre almost without any gaps. The recording of an oeuvre or a work should not be carried out under time pressure and should not take place if there is any need for it to be sold. If documentalists were better paid, there would be the possibility to get to know the piece first, to explore it, to discover the best way of documenting it, rather than holding the camera up to it straight away. If the wrong way of recording a work is chosen, the entire magic of the performance can be lost.

### **Is a “truthful” recording even desirable or necessary, then?**

The decision is whether I would like to compile documentation or make my own artistic film. I am currently dealing with this issue in great detail because I am preparing a contribution for January 2009 for the “*Politische Körper*” (Political Body) series in the *Akademie der Künste*. I will exhibit cinematic documents in an installation. These elements will, through the simultaneousness, taken on their own artistic aspect. And the installation will document 30 years of choreographic creation; in doing so it provides information about an aspect of dance history. And that is exactly the task set by the *Akademie der Künste*: living memory.

**Reinhild Hoffmann** is a dancer, choreographer and director.

## CASE STUDIES

### Archiving Dance Materials: the Australian Experience by Michelle Potter

One of the expressions that is consistently used by Australians to describe Australia, their homeland, is 'the wide, brown land'. The words come from a romantically patriotic poem with the title *I love a sunburnt country*, written in the very early years of the twentieth century by Dorothea McKellar. The expression is appropriate. 'Brown' is particularly so at the moment as the country struggles with the effects of drought, and 'wide' will forever be appropriate. Australia is a vast continent whose current, relatively small population of around 21.2 million is thinly dispersed, largely around the country's extensive coastline.

For Australian collecting institutions this kind of population dispersal causes many headaches. Most Australian institutions take pride in the collections they have built up over many years and aim to maintain the integrity of those collections. But most also see access as a responsibility that is absolutely essential to any institution's ongoing effectiveness, and even to its ongoing existence. In the 21st century accessibility is an issue of strategic importance. But the question of how best to provide access to material, especially unique material as opposed to published items, to potential users on the other side of the continent, or even to those in other major cities on the same side of the continent, is one that constantly engages the attention of Australian curators and managers. An institution's strategic directions and service charter will almost inevitably have a focus on access: the National Library of Australia, for example, frequently uses the words 'a library for all Australians' in its reports and public statements. It does not believe that its location in Canberra, the nation's capital but a relatively small city of around 340,000 people, should stand in the way of a user's wish to access collection material from anywhere in the country in the most simple, fast and effective manner possible in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In fact, the geographical isolation of Australian collecting institutions from each other has had unexpected benefits, especially for dance at the National Library. The Library appointed a Curator of Dance in 2002. It was seen as a bold move and the Library was, in fact, the first major Australian collecting institution to single out dance as a collecting area worthy of such special focus. At the present time the Library's collection development policy for dance states:

Since dance by its nature is not well represented in notated forms, it is necessary to actively encourage the systematic documentation and collection of Australia's dance culture. For this reason, the Library is committed to a special focus on dance within its oral history and folklore, manuscript, pictures, ephemera and music collection development policies ...”<sup>1</sup>

How did this happen? Although the Library had been collecting dance materials in something of an ad hoc way over several decades, building on a particular strength it has always had in the wider performing arts, it had never given specific focus to dance. But in 1997, as a result of an initiative by Ausdance, the peak industry body for dance in Australia and a strong advocacy organisation, a grant was awarded from the Australia Council for the Arts to the National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA) and the National Library to partner with Ausdance to advance the cause of archiving dance materials. The brief was in part a collecting one but in a broader sense it was also a brief to consider a strategy for the long term preservation of Australia's dance heritage. The two collecting institutions – the NFSA and the National Library – had separate preservation strengths and each complemented the other. The NFSA

focused on film and video material, although it also had a strong collection of audio items. The Library, by contrast, focused largely on paper-based materials and had a major oral history collection. Both institutions were located in Canberra and, although each had extensive and significant collections of material, both also suffered somewhat from being in Canberra, a city that by virtue of the fact that it is the political hub of the nation often seems inaccessible and 'stuffy' to Australians elsewhere in the country. The dance community, through Ausdance, had the foresight, however, to see how the institutions could work together to produce benefits for dance.

The project was given the name Keep dancing! and was initially located at the NFSA. In the first four years there was a strong focus on locating, preserving and copying dance film and video material. Some was already in the collection of the NFSA and just need preservation treatment and cataloguing. But a good deal more came to the NFSA during those four years. It came from choreographers, dancers and collectors who had been waiting for just such a project. Out it came from garages, from under beds, from all kinds of places. All was special. But a real highlight of this period was the acquisition of footage on 16mm film taken by two medical doctors between 1936 and 1940. Keen amateur cinematographers, Dr Joseph Ringland Anderson, a Melbourne-based ophthalmologist, and Dr Ewan Murray-Will, a Sydney-based dermatologist, were fascinated by the Ballets Russes companies on tour in Australia during that period. They each recorded many hours of footage of performances, classes and leisure time activities. It came to the collection of the NFSA courtesy of the copyright owners, heirs to the estates of the two doctors. It is now seen as a real treasure and has found its way into many documentaries already, including, *The Ballets Russes in Australia: an avalanche of dancing*, an NFSA documentary produced in 1999, and the 2005 Geller/Goldfine release, *Ballets Russes*.

Along with collection development and preservation, the third component of the project's brief concerned accessibility. The Library's role in these early years was to establish an online dance database of this material, in which materials across the two collecting institutions were linked: film from the NFSA and oral histories, pictures, manuscript items, theatre programs and other ephemera from the Library. The collection that was highlighted in this way became known as the Australian Dance Collection and the database was the start of a virtual dance collection located in two institutions but linked conceptually in electronic form.

After four years the project moved to the Library where the database, which then was a modest affair with a very limited searching capacity, was rebuilt into a much more sophisticated portal, Australia Dancing [www.australiadancing.org](http://www.australiadancing.org). The service, which is a relatively small site by comparison to other more general Library websites, has grown beyond expectations. In 2007 visits to Australia Dancing generated 2.6million page views with many visits originating outside Australia. This compares with around 29,000 visits per year that were received by the original database at the end of the first four year period. It is a massive increase and demonstrates the extent to which such a service was and is needed and appreciated in Australia and across the world.

But Australia Dancing cannot stand still if it is to maintain its current role as an outstanding online research tool for Australian dance. The inexorable march of digital technology does not make what was achieved collaboratively in the early years of the project obsolete, but it does mean that the portal already appears outmoded. Simple descriptive links across institutions are a beginning only and must now be supplemented with digital material, including audio and moving image material.



The National Library has long been at the forefront of digital initiatives as far as images are concerned and Australian Dancing has always benefited from being able to illustrate its records with handsome online imagery. Images on Australia Dancing link directly back to the Library's catalogue records and to its document supply service. It has always been possible to find a picture on Australia Dancing and, copyright restrictions permitting, buy it online. But moving on from there, the Australia Dancing portal was built with the capacity to incorporate online audio and moving image delivery as soon as it became available, or possible from a participating institution. The Library will shortly release its audio delivery system and it will soon be possible for dance oral histories to be delivered online. In addition, in mid 2007 the NFSA digitised parts of its heritage film and video material, including some dance material, and made it available on a new website called Australian Screen – <http://australianscreen.com.au/> . A big future step for Australia Dancing is to link to these film clips. So, for example, a link would be made from the subject entry 'Aboriginal Islander Dance Theatre' on Australia Dancing – <http://www.australiadancing.org/subjects/3081.html> – to clips from performances by that group on Australian Screen – <http://australianscreen.com.au/titles/mimi-evening-aboriginal-dance/>. In this way, Australia Dancing can become a true one stop shop for all the diverse formats of material that make up a national dance collection.

Looking back, the Australia Council's sponsorship of the project for five years – four years at the National Film and Sound Archive and one year at the National Library – was a critical step without which the Australia Dancing portal would never have been born. The story of the portal's genesis also says as much about the grit and determination of the Australian dance community through its advocacy organisation Ausdance. It was also a leap of faith by the National Library to create the position of Curator of Dance after the Australia Council was unable to continue funding the job. The Curator's position is still, in 2008, part of the Library's staffing structure. The outcomes and ongoing development of the project to date have by no means been without their problems and funding issues are likely in the future to make future growth more difficult than has been the case so far. Collection growth will undoubtedly continue, however, as will the preservation of that material according to best practice standards. As for accessibility, it is a key direction and is likely to remain one well into the future for all responsible collecting institutions. The Australian project, and in particular the Australia Dancing portal, warrants examination as a model for dance archiving practices, a model that marries the need to make material accessible with the wish also to maintain the integrity of collections. The Australian example focuses on just two partner institutions but the capacity to include a wide range of institutions as partners is built into the concept. Collaboration across institutions is the key in an age when digital technology and web delivery is the accepted standard.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The text of the National Library of Australia's Collection Development Policy can be found on the Library's website: <http://www.nla.gov.au/policy/cdp/>

*Dr Michelle Potter was inaugural Curator of Dance at the National Library of Australia between 2002 and 2006 and Curator of the Jerome Robbins Dance Division, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts from 2006 to 2008.*

**From Access to Sources to the Development of Knowledge about Dance, cf.  
France<sup>24</sup>  
by Claire Rousier**

It took almost a decade of deliberation, planning and decision-making before the *Centre National de Danse*, France's national dance centre could be established as an independent, national body. In 1991, the *Conseil Supérieur de la Danse* [French high council for dance], part of the Ministry of Culture and Communication, had already produced a report on the status of dance in France which highlighted the richness of choreographic creativity on the one hand, but on the other hand lamented the public's lack of recognition of it, an assessment that was taken up by the Ministry of Culture and Communication.

The dance department and the scientific service at the Ministry for Culture and Communication therefore carried out a joint study between 1993 and 1995 in co-ordination with the dance community and the public which, in its conclusion, suggested the establishment of a national dance centre. A cabinet decision to establish the *Centre National de Danse* (CND) was taken on 27 February 1997. The statutes came into force following their publication in the *Journal Officiel de la République Française*, France's official gazette, on 8 January 1998.

The tasks entrusted to the CND as a result of this essentially cover three key areas:

1. National documentation centre dealing with knowledge development and research in the field of dance,
2. Sponsorship and promotion of choreographic works as well as the further education of the public,
3. Bundling of resources in the areas of dance education and dance-related extension courses for dance teachers and choreographers.

### **Expectations of the experience**

At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, an intense pre-occupation with the past emerged in the area of choreographic creation. This return to the roots took two directions: the reconstruction of works from the repertoire, starting from the often fragmented, but nonetheless still available, traces of the works (notations, comments from the creator of the work, audiovisual documents), as well as the acquisition of the dance-choreographic heritage up to the new creations for example *La Sylphide* by Pierre Lacotte or the works of the Quatuor Albrecht Knust and in more recent times the group Les Carnets Bagouet.

Apart from a few exceptions, at the time the *Centre National de la Danse* was established, there was only minimal interest among choreographers in preserving the traces of their work. But it quickly became clear to many companies how fragmentary and incomplete their own sources were, even in terms of maintaining their own repertoire. In addition, works themselves were dedicated increasingly to the question of tradition and memory as a component in the creation of choreographic works. Even the concept of the work itself has been radically challenged in the most recent dance creations.

Finally, dance education is confronted with the question about how dancers use these sources, styles, ideas, works and methods in order to make visible the diverse and rich

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<sup>24</sup> Extract from a speech given on 9 September 2004 at the 25th conference of the International Association of Libraries and Museums of the Performing Arts (SIBMAS) in Barcelona.

content of the resources for their work. Such topics have only emerged in recent times but nonetheless concern the creation of new works and the area of dance training alike. Today, more than before, dance courses and workshops about repertoire pieces have the task of opening up access to such knowledge.

### **The sources**

These diverse focuses and needs of the professional dance world render it necessary and indispensable to provide access to sources, both as documentary sources and those relating to performance practice. How do you develop an archive, however, and which sources are afforded greater priority: personal documents from the creator of the work? Documents providing information on the process involved in creating the work? Documents that record how the performances were received? Administrative documents?

The constitution of an archive can however also look at the need to develop new forms of discourse and forms of preservation that cater for the infinite diversity of the modes of experience of dance and in dance. This can also cover the personal experiences of dancers, aesthetic reference points, the conditions for the creation of the work, the recording of works and their reception by critics and the public, and lots more.

On the one hand, then, there is memory, which has registered itself as movement and also as choreographic texturing in the body of the dancer. On the other hand, there are written, iconographic and audiovisual documents that are detached from the body. The combination of both types of sources gives rise to the possibility a coming together of theory and practice, thoughts and movement. The place where these elements come together is where the essential sources for the development of a dance-related culture of knowledge become visible.

### **Development of knowledge about dance**

Through the creation of the *Centre National de la Danse*, Government departments have strengthened their will to respond to these new challenges, to give new or other answers to question about the commemoration of dance and about access to sources. A structure has developed that aims to create new and effective synergies between the areas of origination, training, preservation of the cultural heritage and research. The *Département du Développement de la Culture Choréographique* (DDCC) [Department for the Development of Choreographic Culture] has committed itself fully to this core duty<sup>25</sup>.

We have therefore worked hard to develop a global scope comprising the necessary tools, instruments and methods that will help meet the goals as specified in the following document:

“The Department has charged itself with defining and giving value to the heritage of dance, to make a greater knowledge of dance accessible to members of the public at all levels – professionals, amateurs and lay persons. The DDCC is open to all users and makes available all relevant information relating to all aspects of dance. [The Department] advises, supports and stipulates theoretical and practical research, in particular in the area of history and the aesthetics of dance. The work of the Department aims to create points of reference facilitating the access to choreographic works. Taken as a place of commemoration as well as innovation, the Department hereby contributes to making dance more visible and available in a written form.” (Agreement on objectives 2000 – 2003 for submission to the Ministry for Culture and Communication)

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<sup>25</sup> The *Département du Développement de la Culture Choréographique* will be redesigned as part of a restructuring of the CND department and which, among other things, envisages the outsourcing of the media centre. The media centre will be developed into a separate department with Laurent Sebillotte as its director.

## **Bundling diverse functions into a network of competency**

This complex project necessitated the development of a coherent plan of action in order to meet the various tasks and to be able to satisfy the expectations and needs, which are themselves very complex and different in character. The basis of this action plan and at the same its most visible element, is the media collection and the library (*médiathèque*), which aims to ensure systematic documentation of all areas of creativity in dance. At the same time, the media centre is responsible for ensuring that documents don't go missing or get destroyed. As a result of this core concern, we are creating an audiovisual archive, supervising academic and university work, staging symposia and exhibitions and publishing a comprehensive range of literature, with which we widen the spectrum of existing dance literature. Our overall aim with these measures is to facilitate access to choreographic works and ensure that their concerns are as widely conveyed and as widely read as possible.

Ultimately, our project is about drawing upon sources that are brought together and in part also manufactured by ourselves specifically for the purposes of developing a dynamic between the various elements of the knowledge inventory and of responding to the diverse needs. Part of this is the promotion of research work, which helps in terms of improving reach (for example through colloquia, publications or exhibitions) and to expand and enrich the inventory of documents itself, as well as the knowledge and academic cognition already in existence. These efforts should ultimately also spark interest and curiosity and keep them alive, without which no future or additional members of the public, from whichever level, can be won.

Alongside such documentary and academic topics, one of the departments tasks is also to reactivate individual pieces from a dance repertoire as part of specific projects and make them accessible for example via lecture demonstrations, speeches about dance or film showings. This opens up additional possibilities for access to and the preservation of choreographies and their histories.

This simultaneity of different operational forms for the purpose of meeting a common goal relies on the belief that, depending on the type of the underlying sources, different competencies and different specialist knowledge must be called upon to work together, thereby giving rise to a type of network of competency, the dynamic of which contributes to the promotion of knowledge development as well as academic research and the motivation of members of the public for the future.

## **The manufacture of documents**

Alongside the media centre / library, the CND also has a theatre and several dance studios, thereby fostering a new relationship between artists, works and the public. It means that the public can now observe the various stages of the creation of a choreography, understand the underlying processes and talk to the dancers. It offers the possibility of improving continuously the public's perception and knowledge of dance art. A wider cultural approach embracing performance analysis, an introduction to aesthetic trends, readings from artists' texts or theoretical papers is being offered to the public and in doing so is striving to emphasis both continuity, fractures and individual artistic positions within the work of choreographers. The various operational areas of the CND therefore interlock in such a way that they comment and shed light on each other, which results in an innovative form of artistic education.

Against this background, the core responsibility of the DDCC and the media centre lies not only in preserving and making accessible the documents and certificates entrusted to them and which they have collated, but also in participating actively in the development of a

commemoration of dance and in developing new forms of documentation. As a result, in 2002 the DDCC launched an audiovisual recording programme that, in conjunction with the centre's core activities in the fields of research, education and performance, strives to establish suitable forms of archiving.

### **Closing remarks**

The goals of the *Centre National de la Danse* revolve equally around artistic production as well as research and preservation of cultural heritage. In this way, the *Département du Développement de la Culture Choréographique* is situated in the centre of contemporary choreographical events. We take this role and function very seriously and develop our programme based on daily exchanges with the topics and concerns of the artists themselves. They rehearse in CND space and, during the development phase, carry out research in the media centre. The development of choreographic works can be documented in an almost "natural" way. At the same time and in this way, we enrich considerably our inventory of audiovisual documents. The strengths mentioned above can also be read as weaknesses, however. As a location, the CND has a heterogeneous identity in terms of its statutes: it is not a theatre, nor is it an archive, it is neither a museum, nor a library or university, and yet at the same time it is all these things. This sometimes makes it very complex and difficult to define and carry out the work and the projects of the CND.

*Claire Rousier is a former dancer and, since its launch, has been the director of the Département du Développement de la Culture Choréographique at the Centre National de la Danse.*

## **CONTENT**

2 **Words of Greeting** Hortensia Völckers

2 **Foreword** Madeline Ritter

4 **Commentary**, Klaus-Dieter Lehmann

## **THEMES**

5 Wolfgang Ernst, Transitory Archives. A Machine-Oriented Look at Movement

11 Barbara Büscher / Franz Anton Cramer, Moving Access

14 Laurent Sebilotte, Documenting Dance: the Archive as Method

## **STATEMENTS**

20 Xavier le Roy

21 Reinhild Hoffmann

## **CASE STUDIES**

23 Michelle Potter, Australia

26 Claire Rousier, France

## **IMPRINT**

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