

DANCE4

4WORDS

ISSUE N° 1

APRIL 2019

RESEARCH AT DANCE4

INTRODUCTION

Written by Paul Russ,
Chief Executive and Artistic Director,
Dance4

We're approaching our third birthday at the international Centre for Choreography (iC4C), three years that have been full of discovery. There are many new adventures ahead and this new freesheet, 4WORDS, is one way to explore the work of Dance4, the artists we work with and the activity at iC4C. This is a new place for many voices to share ideas, ask questions and for us at Dance4 to share what excites us about the present and future of dance and choreography.

2019 brings a new focus of direction for Dance4 and our work at iC4C. Our curatorial policy underpins decisions we make in supporting artists bringing their ideas to Nottingham. It feels important that we offer everyone an insight into what intrigues us about dance, how dance makes a contribution to our lives and the conversations that will influence the perspectives of dance and the world around us.

We support artists that contribute new ideas and approaches in choreography and place, including with galleries, museums and public spaces, exploring different ways we encounter and watch dance.

We continue to create an environment that brings artists and non-professionals together in the creation and presentation of new dance works. And at a time when the world is ever more divided, we have a desire to enable artists to bring urgent social and political questions to our building, and conversations with many people. It feels vital that artists are the activists and pivotal thinkers in helping us all question and see the world differently.

Looking into the coming weeks, months and years we're excited about the ideas, conversations and choreography that are emerging by incredible artists. For many years we have dreamt of having spaces like this that can support artists and their ideas, meeting our neighbouring communities in Sneinton, Nottingham and beyond. The kettle is always on at iC4C and we welcome you to come and share in the inspiring work and conversations that take place here daily.



Dance4's International Centre for Choreography (iC4C)
Photographer Scott Sawyer

In our first edition of 4WORDS we are revealing a little about the artistic research activities Dance4 is supporting and the artists deeply involved in this area of work.

We've invited contributions from artists Katye Coe and Matthias Sperling who are associated to our research programme. They share their thoughts about what they're doing, questions they have and contributions they're making to Dance4, to Nottingham and to dance.

In addition, we have invited our long-term partners Critical Path in Sydney to comment on the importance of international connections in supporting artists in research activities and we also hear from Pepa Uberta, a UK based artist we've supported to undertake a research residency in Australia.

Expect to hear from us more regularly through further editions of 4WORDS. It would be wonderful to also hear from you about ideas you may have for what to include in the future.

You can find out more by visiting our website www.dance4.co.uk

KATYE COE

I am a dancer. My research reflects some long-standing and ever deeper beliefs that dancing is a transformative practice that is potent and a change maker in the world. The work I am doing happens in the studio and through projects with practitioners in related fields, such as midwifery and end of life care. I have been working with broad themes of 'surrender' and also with what happens in the immediate 'afterwards'. These come from my own experiences of performing.

I am activating this research in a day care hospice setting in Nottingham. I am talking to people and finding out how the hospice is organised, how it operates and noticing how care and attention happens. Over time, I will introduce simple movement structures that might shine a light on the community of care that is at work there. I am discovering that the specific and intuitive ways of listening and giving attention that I work with when I dance can relate to those that people in care settings work with too.

For example; the role of the midwife, and other roles that involve attending to others and to change are vital, ancient and deeply intuitive. The midwife attends quietly and follows the journey of the woman she is with, intervening only when called, and practices making room for a live birth process. This active listening signposts some common ground between the states or tones that a dancer activates through dancing and those that a midwife follows and draws on in her own work and attention.

In dancing I am attending, actively listening through all my senses so that I can be ready to change, dive deeper, take external instruction from a choreographer or director, and filter the myriad of emotional/physical/relational and image responses that are constantly passing by as I practice/rehearse/perform.

At iC4C, I lead a regular monthly research class where dance and movement provide a way to learn to think through the senses. I am able to bring my own current questions and practice to this teaching. The class has a growing and diverse community of dancers of all ages, from professional performers to those who are simply curious and enjoy moving. We spend time investigating what dancing changes.

**Katye's monthly classes continue at iC4C on Thursdays 10am - 12pm on the following dates:
18 April, 16 May, 20 June, 11 July, 15 August.**

MATTHIAS SPERLING

I'm an artist (and choreographer and performer). What I do is artistic research, in the form of making, performing and reflecting on what I'm doing, which includes writing about it, speaking about it and thinking about how it relates to other things going on in the field and in the world.

Since 2017, I've been continuing my artistic research in the more formalised support-structure of a practice-based PhD. Although I've had lots of involvement in academic research contexts in the past as an artist, doing the PhD is a development of those experiences, and it expands my relationship with the world of research.

My PhD research is about questioning the relationship that my choreographic practice has to embodied knowledge-generation. For me, this is about conjuring knowing through moving. I am weaving together my interests in embodied cognitive science, hypnosis, shamanic practices, critical theory and humour to conjure up a choreographic work that invites experiential reflection on how a dance performance may be a place where certain kinds of knowledge-generation can and do happen. The choreographic work is called *No-How Generator* and embarks from the (both serious and mischievous) question: If knowledge-generation is a fundamentally embodied process, can we see and experience it happening in a dance performance?

Part of what my research proposes is the urgency of simply 'remembering the body' as integral to how we conceive of knowing and intelligence, and asking what the implications of this are for dance and choreography. Though this sounds incredibly basic, my view (and my experience) is that embodiment and its implications are still profoundly excluded from conceptions of knowledge that are operative in many contexts, at least in Western cultures. This is, of course, not an abstract or innocent question at all, but one that has very potent connections with questions about what parts of our human capacities are systematically de-valued in a given cultural context, and whose bodies, intelligences and contributions that serves to exclude and disempower.

I'm interested in recognising that knowing spans a wide range of modes that includes tacit, felt, intuitive and non-linear forms of knowing, as well as the conventionally acknowledged forms that are more explicit, languaged, rational and linear. I'm intrigued that cognitive scientists such as Guy Claxton emphasise that intelligence and learning only happen through the bridging of both of these modes, not merely through one or the other. I see this bridging as a strength that is embedded in embodied practices of dance and choreography, and I'm also curious about how hypnosis and forms of shamanism might be considered to be practices that similarly bridge this spectrum of modes, and so have significant kinships with dance.

You will be able to see this work at Nottdance 2019

CLAIRE HICKS DIRECTOR, CRITICAL PATH

Critical Path works to support the artistic practice of choreographic artists in NSW (we are based in Sydney) and across Australia. What's the thinking then in inviting an artist to come from the UK to further their own research?

Artistic practice, like all other aspects of life, does not happen in isolation, despite what our governments often seem to think. If we are to reflect, interrogate, disrupt and contribute to the world/s in which we live we have to do this as part of a global practice. By this I mean that we, arts practitioners, should engage in exchange but perhaps more vitally in interchange with other artists and the contexts in which they are working.

The international artists we invite to Critical Path are encouraged to think deeply and openly about their practice and about how this and the ideas and approaches they are pursuing meet those here in Australia. This can be through interaction with other artists, through visiting particular places and organisations, through learning about the world from a different perspective; in the case of artists from Europe literally from the other side of the world.

This is not about artists coming to Australia and teaching us, nor about taking but rather around mutual exploration and understanding. We encourage the visiting artist to come for an extended period to engage in different ways and places – being in a space (even one as beautiful as the Drill) working alone cannot be the sole focus of an international residency.

Critical Path knows that through these slower, often quiet, interactions benefits come, to the guest artist but also to us here in Australia. These can be philosophical and emotional in relation to one's practice, pragmatic and practical with new knowledge and connections, relational both of people and of art making.

DANCE4
IC4C, 2 DAKEYNE STREET,
NOTTINGHAM NG3 2AR

info@dance4.co.uk
0115 924 2016

Registered Charity No:
1015437



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

**Nottingham
City Council**

Sign up to receive the
Dance4 newsletter at
www.dance4.co.uk



@Dance_4



Dance4



@wearedance4



Free Dance4 app

PEPA UBERA

I arrived in Sydney on Friday 18th of January for four weeks and a very heavy jet lag clung to me while observing a new society. The sun, the light gave me energy to come back to consciousness...

I think of choreography as a diverse practice and what I make depends on the amount of time I give to the different practices I establish. In the last weeks in Sydney I have read chapters from 'Staying with the Trouble' by Donna Haraway, Posthuman theories and some of my old notebooks. I have been observing and writing about the problems that the city of Sydney offers with this information in mind. I moved with these ideas, confusions and contradictions in my body everyday. It has been an emotional ride to embody all of this.

My way of understanding the trouble we are in is by using the body as a lens through which to see the problems by observing, thinking and sensing. I have been looking for those that stop people from being sensitive, aware and connected to others and themselves. In my practice I am thinking of my body as a multidimensional space, a sensorial landscape, a place to understand the context and other lives around me. In part, this stems from how technology has redefined the use of the body in public spaces. These days, on public transport you are surrounded by people looking down to their handsets, operating so self-sufficiently, that they become insensitive in the world. I am interested in how we can use the body as a 'Tool for Care' to counter this.

Charco is a call for care in order to deal with the anthropogenic changes that WE, humans have caused on Earth. I have been searching and designing choreographies that challenge places of stagnation in society (charcos) and the behaviours that stop us from thinking of life as a space of wonder and experimentation. This research embraces choreography as the capacity to read the body of society in an anthropological way, to recognise what is currently at stake, to see which problems need attention and how social constraints are supported by the body. Choreography establishes relationships while also holding opposites in order to bring visibility to the energetic field that lies in between.

From the body we think, from there we act, from there we can transform.

Dance4 reserves the right to change specifications without prior notice.
Cover photo: Martine Hamilton Knight