

CN D

CALL FOR PAPERS

International Symposium Dance(s) et Ritual(s)

Centre national de la danse, Pantin – France

8 > 11.04.2021

Can dance be perceived as a ritual?

How are ritualised actions created in dance practices?

What are their qualities or singularities?

What effects do they produce?

In what way can referring to a rite elucidate, modify or displace dance practices?

This international symposium aims to explore the different ways ritual raises questions about the processes of creation, transmission, staging and execution of dances, whether they are qualified as contemporary, urban, street, social, ballroom, ceremonial or otherwise. Over and above the similarities or differences that can be identified between ritual and danced actions, if the social, historical and cultural conditions that preside over their production are taken into account, questions arise about what concretely the rituals “are” and “do” once they have been identified and created by choreographers, teachers, as well as both professional and amateur dancers. Where, when and who does dance transform? How does it become a “power to act”?

At the heart of many anthropological, theological and philosophical debates, the notions of ritual and rite still today refer implicitly to a set of prescribed and repeated actions, which are recognised and acknowledged by a community of people. When envisaged either through its symbolic dimensions and functions, or else via its frame of action or modes of interaction, ritual and its identification remain problematic. The aim of this symposium is not to discuss such theoretical issues nor to deal with the ritual contexts in which dance appears: the point is rather to grasp how and why certain ways of producing and displaying dance are associated with rites, by those who practise and/or watch them.

The symposium intends to examine the points of dialogue and friction between multiple perspectives coming both from the artistic and scientific worlds, while remaining focused on dance practices. At a time when our relationships with the world are being profoundly put into question, and our gestures are tending to be reinvented, this event will also be an opportunity to (re)join together around a topic that calls for thinking and moving in concert. It is an invitation to its participants to contribute in a variety of ways, while adopting formats of different lengths, which may potentially be performative.

Centre national de la danse

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1, rue Victor-Hugo

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Several themes are proposed

THEME 1: Devices, gestures, artefacts

This theme is an invitation to shed light upon the gestures and protocols embedded in choreographic practices and which are recognised, experienced or named as being rites or rituals. How does a given choreographer or artist, or a community of dancers, put them into practice in dance? The point will be to examine why certain aspects of dance practice – such as the preparation or presentation of self, codes underlying the unfolding of a performance, or invitations to dance – are considered to be “rites”, as opposed to others which are not, or else less so. Furthermore, to what extent do the interactions between the participants, or with and between the spectators – either in public or private spaces, in a dance studio, a club, the street, or on stage – take part in a process of ritualisation?

While paying close attention to the gestural qualities, the dimensions of space (circulation, structures, places occupied), energy and time (duration, alternation, use of repetition) as well as the handling of artefacts (costumes, masks, props), the objective will be to probe practices so as to grasp the characteristics of this ritualisation, its conditions of production and its effects.

THEME 2: Sources, inventions, categorisations

This theme examines the resources used in the unending elaboration of rituals in dance. The aim will be to identify the various aesthetic, historical or filmic materials from which ritualistic imaginaries are constructed and then spread in the world of choreography. Proposals could, for example, investigate the way in which images from painting, photography, cinema (fictional or documentary), video clips or virtual worlds (video games, YouTube), provide prolific sources for the creation of rituals in dance. Or, on the contrary, how do audio-visual creations become sites for the invention of ritual? How do the choices for the framing or editing of dance take part in the ritualisation of gestures, of sites and of temporality?

At the heart of creative choreographic processes, these invented rituals are nevertheless not ideologically neutral and crystallise issues that are as much aesthetic, as political and institutional. To what extent can a reference to ritual become a tool for the recognition, legitimacy or the political positioning of choreographers, teachers or dancers? Or, on the contrary, when and why would they refuse to do so? What are the mechanisms that allow the inventions of rituals to explore, manipulate or misappropriate notions of the ancestral, of heritage or of authenticity? The aim will be to offer a critical examination of the notion of “ritual” or the utilisation of particular rites in the field of dance, so as to shed light on the issues of identification, categorisation, or even of labelling of ritual in dance. What traps for thinking or for dancing can references to ritual open up?

THEME 3: Summoning the invisible, evoking the unsayable

Dance practices provide powerful means to modify perception and temporalities, to summon other worlds and conjure up figures (imaginary beings, monsters, demons, witches, divinities, ghosts, sylphs). How does dance create novel relations with these dimensions? How does it treat the question of secrets, the unsaid, the dissimulated or simulated? The aim will be to examine precise examples which display in what way the evocation or materialisation of the invisible and the unsayable in the practice of dance take on a “ritual” quality.

What bodily, affective or cognitive intensities affect these subjects? How does dance mobilise techniques or gestures that profoundly transform them? For example, it would be interesting to analyse how multi-sensorial stimulations or the transcendence of physical limitations incite dancers “to exit” or “to enter” themselves. Why can these intensities that traverse the body be associated with a ritual type of experience? At what moments and under what conditions? What bonds are created between the dancers and the public?

Modes of presentation

This call for papers is open to researchers, teachers, Ph.D. students, artists and other professionals working in or on dance. The symposium will be held in French but simultaneous translation can be provided for contributors in English or Spanish (other languages are possible, please contact us for further details: colloque2021@cnd.fr).

Different formats for the contributions are possible:

- 1 conventional academic presentations (20 minutes, followed by 10 minutes of discussion);
- 2 contributions centred on dance practice: performance, workshop setting the public in motion, group practice or other creative formats (30 to 40 minutes);
- 3 interdisciplinary group panels: artists, teachers, practitioners, academics, etc. (1h to 1h30 for 3 to 6 participants);
- 4 audio-visual creations examining the articulation between dance and ritual (in particular, those providing a new perspective on ritual, based on the choices in the editing and framing of filmed dance; 1h max.);
- 5 Two-person dialogic presentations combining feedback on lived-through experiences and theoretical discussion (1h).

Various digital formats or innovative tools will be encouraged which resonate creatively with these different approaches.

Proposals (in French or English) *should be submitted before 15th August, at the following address: colloque2021@cnd.fr*

They should include:

- the surname(s), forename(s), affiliation(s) and electronic contact details of the author(s)
- the title of the paper
- the choice of format of the contribution and the theme to which it is attached
- an abstract of about 3,000 characters or 500 words

Financial support will be provided for the participants in the symposium (except for tenured academics). Assistance for travel and accommodation expenses may be provided, on a case by case basis, with priority being given to candidates having no institutional backing.

Selection of the contributors and results of the call for papers: **October 2020.**

Programme Committee in alphabetical order

Dominique Brun dancer and choreographer

T r sa Faucon habilitated lecturer at the Universit  Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris 3 in the aesthetics of cinema, film analysis and the theory of images

Laura Fl ty anthropologist associated to the CREM-LESC

Michael Houseman anthropologist, IMAF, EPHE-PSL, professor

Sophie Jacotot dancer, researcher into dance history

Sophiatou Kossoko dancer, choreographer and teacher

Mahalia Lassibille dance anthropologist, lecturer at the Universit  Paris 8

Loic Touz  dancer, choreographer and teacher

Georgiana Wierre-Gore anthropologist, emeritus professor, ACT , Universit  Clermont Auvergne

With the participation of *Latifa La bissi dancer and choreographer*

Scientific Coordination

Laurent Barr  head of the choreographic research and repertoires department / CN D

Laura Fl ty anthropologist associated to the CREM-LESC