

CN D FOR A TIMELINE TO BE — GENEALOGIES OF DANCE AS ART PRACTICE IN PORTUGAL

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RÉSUMÉ DU PROJET

« For a TIMELINE TO BE — genealogies of dance as art practice in Portugal », par Ana Bigotte Vieira, Carlos Manuel Oliveira et João dos Santos Martins

[constitution d'autres types de ressources]

For there to be a Timeline of dance¹

Having taken different formats in each of its editions, the research project For a TIMELINE TO BE — genealogies of dance as art practice in Portugal started as a performative exercise for the activation of memories, but soon became a way of mapping the scarcely published material about dance in the country², in the context of national history, canonic narratives of dance, occidental art, and global history at large — having become a device that exhibits the ongoing mapping of these many relations in order to problematize them. An overview of the XX and XXI centuries, till today, has been cast into chronological time, also into space, such that the comparison between what happened in Portugal and the great canonic narratives of the History of Dance, and the comparison with a cultural history *latu sensu*, is possible. Being a repository apt to host ever more entries, this is a device that also exhibits negatively the absences, contributing to an informed perspective over the narrativist logics that compose the “official History,” opening the past to multiple readings and inciting possible rewritings. Its first systematic installation, at the municipal theater in the city of Santarém, consisted of the installation, on 15 meters wall, of a chronological Timeline that could be read from left to right, starting in the year of 1900 and reaching till 2017 – the present moment at the time –, allowing for an overview of what is known as the XX century and for a series of other partial and combined readings. Being that this project aimed at constructing a tool which would allow for looking at specific contexts in relation to others, calling into discussion events that don't strictly concern the art of dance but that nonetheless frame and condition it, continuously inquiring into what can and what cannot be considered as dance or art, the following categories, with associated colours, were created:

YELLOW: Works - choreographers, dancers, companies and collectives: giving prevalence to presentation, it includes references to particular works and their authors, as well as to critical receptions which have contributed to a “common culture” of dance as artistic practice in Portugal.

¹ This article follows closely the text presented at the Transincorporados conference - building networks for internationalization in dance, organized in Rio de Janeiro in 2017 by the Critics Laboratory of the Department of Body Art at UFRJ (LabCrítica), in partnership with the Panorama Festival and the Museum of Art of Rio. Participation in this conference was possible thanks to the support of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

² Such as Fazenda, Ribeiro, Lepecki, Tércio, Ribas, Roubaud, Sasportes, amongst others. See bibliography.

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PINK: Pedagogues and schools, pedagogical institutions and educational projects: it inquires into the transmissions of dance-related knowledge and their evolving procedures in Portugal.

SALMON: Cultural events, transformations, and general culture in Portugal: it includes both the reference to events fundamental for a reading of cultural transformations in Portugal, as well as the reference to cultural events determinant for the affirmation, dissemination and legitimization of dance as an artistic practice in Portugal.

GREEN: Great narratives from the History of Dance and Art in the West: it includes keystone events from the western history of art that may be fundamental for a relational and comparative reading of the contents from the remaining categories.

RED: National and World History: it includes great social, political and cultural events, both national and global.

Creating categories with distinct colours, in order to allow for cross-readings of all these temporal trajectories, aims at articulating a formalist idea of art: attentive both to the specificities proposed by artworks and to the social and cultural contexts where they take place, as well as to the ideologies and worldviews conveyed by them, not excluding how they act discursively and affectively in the world. It also aims at distancing itself from a kind of historiography that sees in the particular Portuguese “delay” the cause, engine, and justification of the events, being closer to approaches that understand terms such as “modern,” “modernization” and “modernism” as being disputable and operative (rather than fixed and immutable), and therefore understanding “modernisms” in a plural sense and contributing for the study of what has been called “decentered modernities.”

Not standing for any kind of rigid imperative, the categories created do not bound events by distinguishing the social from the cultural from the artistic, but rather work as provisory constructs, available for problematization, discussion, and critique. Likewise, the textual entries created are not bound to any particular mode of discourse, but range across a variety of sources, from texts written in first-person, to book excerpts, photos, drawings, scores and descriptive narrations. Each textual entry has its intrinsic stand-alone value due to what it tells, exhibiting a point of view, a particular episode or a series of events, being always indexed with a corresponding date.

Unfoldings: a reproducible and modular mechanism for collective research

The research methodology developed for this project is twofold:

1. On the one hand, and given the scarce existence of systematic and all-encompassing approaches to dance in Portugal during the XX century, a focus was put on facts and events already studied and documented, elaborating a “state of the art” drawn from published material, then distributing it across textual entries, with the source being properly identified.

2. On the other hand, given the contrast between the dance boom in the recently democratic Portugal and the relative inexistence of studies about the issues that such boom raises, new contributions with stories, narratives, and episodes were commissioned from people that either have been implicated in the events they were asked to write about or are particularly apt to research and write about a determinate subject.

The first of these approaches has been conducted with the support of several researchers through collecting documents and editing textual sources. There exists a clear contrast between the bibliography belonging to the pre-democratic period and that belonging to the democratic period, being the former relatively well identified, though this research revealed primary sources about events that remain scarcely documented, such as the various occurrences of dance at what were, at the time, ultra-maritime colonies. Gathering and reading the few published works that reflect on the history of dance in Portugal until the 1990s (the period when the so called New Portuguese Dance movement began to make itself known in the Europe markets), it is noticeable how much, from that moment onwards, primary sources are spread across a variety of supports and formats, such as books of laudatory critique that “make history” in momentum, celebratory publications, and publications with the aim of exporting the Portuguese arts into the world, and thousands of untreated contents located online (the collection and treatment of which does not go without the necessity for new organizational criteria). If the research concerning the beginning of the XX century can be thorough because it refers only to a limited number of artworks, authors, artists, venues, etc., from the 1990s onwards, with the proliferation of activities across the country, it becomes impossible to reference all that has been produced without making the exhibition device illegible.

The second task, of commissioning specific texts to a variety of agents, specialists, and researchers has been carried out since the beginning of the project, resulting in an accumulation of contributions. Invitees are asked to reflect upon a particular subject, but also to suggest any content they might find pertinent or any author, artist, or spectator they might think can contribute with a knowledge apt to fill the absences found in journalistic, essayistic and event-based history writing. It follows that this Timeline, indefinitely “to be,” realizes a kind of research that can only be carried out by a collective: it activates a sort of collaborative general intellect, not for the completion of a finished work, but rather for a better comprehension of a context that is common to a variety of agents, with its research, narration and reading remaining open and its exhibition being but one possible way of sharing such contents. This is one of the project’s main characteristics.

The Timeline’s timeline

The project has gained a renewed momentum from 2019 onwards, after a series of events occurring throughout the previous years: the already mentioned proto-edition in Viseu (2016), within the scope

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of Reencontro³, a performance by João Santos Martins with Vera Mantero, João Fiadeiro, Clara Andermatt and Paulo Ribeiro; the inaugural edition in Santarém (2017) within the cycle Nova–Velha Dança⁴, in which artists shown at the festival have “activated” the exhibition; the return to Viseu, to install the exhibition at Teatro Viriato within the context of the New Age New Time festival; and a talk in Rio de Janeiro (2017) at the Trans-In-Corporados conference.

April to June 2019: Higher School of Dance, Lisbon

From April to June 2019, by initiative of Materiais Diversos cultural association and in collaboration with the Higher School of Dance, in Lisbon, a weekly seminar was organized so that, together with a group of 13 dance students, all the Timeline contents written and collected up to that point were placed along a series of walls, totalling 30 meters in length.

Such placement occurred at the pace of the seminars, each dedicated to a decade, where every textual entry was collectively read according to the suggested categorical and chronological organization, allowing for the group to go through periods, movements, and figures together and, whenever possible, to draw new relationships and genealogies. It was possible to test the Timeline as a pedagogical tool, specifically in a scholarly and academic context, and assess the type of learning that it facilitates. The spatialization of contents was particularly important because of its duration, over three months long, once a week, three hours per session, allowing for a pace of installation that had never before been available and, consequently, for the possibility of both synchronous and diachronic new readings. A whole set of relations that were yet to be identified came to the fore, allowing for the recognition of genealogies with relationships of descent, varying between types such as: “studied with,” “danced with,” “derived from,” “gave rise to,” etc. Long genealogical lines have been identified, such as that of the Ballet Gulbenkian or that of the National Ballet Company, from which many others descend; or that of figures that endure and extend their influence over time, such as choreographers Rui Horta and Madalena Vitorino, who cross four decades of dance by maintaining a regular activity, just to mention two examples amongst several. Because of the long installment period, it was possible to think collectively about the exhibition device and the genealogies it presents, not only with the group of students, but also with a series of guests and colleagues with whom the project was discussed, assessing possible readings of the contents on display, pointing out faults, curiosities, problems and drawing new relationships. Together with authors such as José Sasportes, Daniel Tércio and David Guéniot, also

³ Held on the occasion of the dance day in 2016, Reencontro consisted of an invitation to choreographer João dos Santos Martins for, 20 years later, choreographing Vera Mantero, João Fiadeiro, Paulo Ribeiro and Clara Andermatt, who in 1996 had shared the program Quatro Árias de Opera for the Gulbenkian Ballet, with a set by Álvaro Siza Vieira. About this, see the show bill, available at: <https://jds.m.hotglue.me/reencontro> (accessed in December 2019).

⁴ Nova–Velha Dança was a cycle spread over five months and consisted of shows, exhibitions, conversations and workshops, which “parasitized” the cultural activity of the city of Santarém in 2017. It proposed a visit to various aesthetic and social contexts of choreographic production from the democratic Portugal. If, on the one hand, works of reference from the so-called New Portuguese Dance were presented, on the other hand, the current production was promoted, showing pieces by choreographers whose work has been confirmed in the last decade in independent circuits. The complete program can be seen at https://issuu.com/parasita/docs/nova_velha_danca_programa_issue (accessed in December 2019).

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artists/researchers such as Ana Mira, Sílvia Pinto Coelho and Paula Caspão were invited. Special mention should be made of the visit by choreographer Francisco Camacho, a central figure of 1990s scene of dance in Portugal, who recalled narratives where he's been the protagonist by reading texts on the wall in which he is directly or indirectly involved. This activated a sort of performativity of the Timeline, as multiple as the number of readings made by those portrayed in it, with stories, narratives, and genealogies that are thus present both on paper and in body.

July 2019: RE.AL's Des|Ocupação, Lisbon



Des|Ocupação do Atelier Real, julho 2019 © João dos Santos Martins.

At the invitation of choreographer João Fiadeiro, the Timeline partook in the event Des|Ocupação, which marked the extinction of Atelier RE.AL⁵. To this end, and given the short time available for setting up the installation, only texts already exhibited in Santarém's 2017 edition, relating to the activity of João Fiadeiro's production company, from 1990 to the present, were used. These were arranged along a chronology drawn on four walls of one of the Atelier's rooms, aside which a series of documents from RE.AL's archive was also exhibited. These documents, which showed RE.AL's history through many of the activities it promoted and the projects it produced over the years, juxtaposed with the Timeline's yellow contents, which told a variety of stories about dance as an artistic practice in Portugal, allowed for visualizing the artistic contexts in which RE.AL came to affirm itself and, above all, the way in which the transformation of such contexts was

accompanied by RE.AL's transformations, both in the aesthetics of its works and their modes of production. Among the documents from RE.AL's archive were programs referring to performance cycles and artistic residencies, photographs of performance pieces, press and critique articles, artist texts, newspapers, worksheets and different sorts of publications. These, juxtaposed with the yellow entries, made it possible to activate the Timeline's dialectical function, through the dialogue created between different sources and registers, as well as its critical function, as a space for memory and discussion. As described above in the case of Francisco Camacho, these "activations" are particularly expressive when one of the artists referred to in the texts reviews and revisits its personal history, putting its memory in

⁵ Atelier REAL, located at Rua do Poço dos Negros 55, "home" to the RE.AL company led by choreographer João Fiadeiro, was a central place for experimentation in Lisbon in the early 2000s. About its troubled end, see the news from 2019 <https://www.publico.pt/2019/07/27/culturaipilon/noticia/chegou-fim-projecto-danca-real-choreografo-joao-fiadeiro-1881466> (accessed in December 2019), and from 2015 <https://www.dn.pt/artes/sem-apoios-joao-fiadeiro-fecha-a-real-e-processa-o-estado--4625668.html> (accessed in December 2019).

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dialogue with the information on display. Inevitably, one of the great protagonists in the history of Atelier REAL is João Fiadeiro, and this one installment served the choreographer's rereading of his own history, reaffirming the Timeline's capacity to work as a sophisticated mnemonic tool. Here, the device was once again a space for the New Portuguese Dance's protagonists to revisit their history, as it had happened in Viseu 2016's proto-edition.

December 2019: Rumo do Fumo's 20th anniversary, Lisbon

Not long after, in December 2019, a new installment was carried out, also operating a dialogue with archival materials, this time on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of O Rumo do Fumo, a production structure representative of artists Vera Mantero, Miguel Pereira and André Guedes, among others. After some research in Rumo's archive, at Espaço da Penha, Travessa do Calado, in Lisbon, a set of business cards made with photographs from Rumo's several productions were selected. These were arranged along the chronology according to their production dates, in juxtaposition to a diagram of genealogies representing the set of relationships already described: "originated from," "derived from," "studied with," "danced with," "turned into," etc. This diagram, in the tradition of the flowcharts representing artistic movements, outlined part of the ongoing investigation and tried to contextualize the independent dance movement identified as New Portuguese Dance, having only its artistic production for reference. Made up of written names linked together by lines, the diagram was organized from right to left, allowing for a reading of the whole XX century in the light of today, going from present to past. Although all names were arranged chronologically, dates were only tagged to companies and events when it was possible to identify their "beginning." The lack of bibliography regarding the XXI century signaled an inability for a systematic and global reading of these couple of decades, in which the multiplication of artists, production structures, and national and international training centers



Timeline view at Rumo do Fumo's 20th Anniversary, December 2019
© Valentino Coragem

makes the sketching of genealogical lines all the more difficult, reinforcing the inability to capture the whole picture that this exercise of synthesis tends to show. The incompleteness of the investigation at the time led the diagram to be presented in process, which is nonetheless in tune with the project's nature, signaling the mapping of a constellation in motion, which can be portrayed in as many ways as the investigations performed. For this reason, the diagram was opened to public participation and visitors were invited to draw, in pencil, absent genealogies that they

might know off. Aside the diagram with the photos of works by O Rumo do Fumo between its lines, a frieze of newspaper clippings was placed on the same wall, but highlighted, giving account to O Rumo

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do Fumo's activity throughout the years and its public reception, in particular by the critique. As in the case of the installation carried out on the occasion of the end of Atelier REAL, a space for critical remembrance was created here, which, with the possibility of public participation through writing, reiterated the dimension of collective thinking that the project has been summoning since its beginning.

October 2019: At Materiais Diversos Festival, Cultural Center of Cartaxo

It is important to note that the diagram previously mentioned had already been exhibited before, on the occasion of the Materiais Diversos Festival, in September 2019, at the Cultural Center of Cartaxo, for which it was first devised. This occasion marked the end of the working period at the Higher School of Dance, as described above. In this edition, the diagram was presented as an autonomous object, the



View of the diagram installed at Cartaxo Cultural Center © João dos Santos Martins

reading of which was to be articulated with that of another object, also created for this occasion: a set of 12 boards (roughly one per decade), each including 20 to 30 images and a text. Strictly speaking, the texts explained less the images than the period, contexts, and dances to which they referred. The historical periods were organized around “key years,” one per decade, in which 1900, 1917, 1925, 1931, 1940, 1956, 1968, 1974, 1984, 1991, 2000, 2011 were presented as stopping points in a continuous narrative marked chronologically. In addition to the textual readings, the juxtaposition of images in their epochal ensemble offered

readings of an iconographic nature, be it for the relationships used to select this particular set of images or for the unanticipated relations emerging from that same proximity. Examples of this are the aesthetic

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View of the image boards installed at Cartaxo Cultural Center © João dos Santos Martins

tendencies that could be recognized with the visualization of numerous groups of images, such as the tendency to deform and create monstrous bodies in the dance of the 1990s, or the tendency to use objects on stage throughout the 2000s. In this sense, these image boards offered the possibility of iconographic readings, by resonance and analogy, somewhat in the style of the Warburgian method.

April 2020: At the Museum of Contemporary Art of the Serralves Foundation — postponed to April 2021, Porto

For this exhibition, which is the biggest endeavour of the project so far, we have tried to cross the different materials collected and systematized in previous editions, combining them in a in a single diagram, schematic links, images, and texts that dialogue between each other, arranged chronologically year by year, from 1900 till today. Thus, documents of a different nature are juxtaposed: information found in specialized books, personal statements and primary sources (constituting a kind of “state of the art,” in process, about dance in Portugal); signed “author” texts (commissioned from specialists), and re-printings of archival images. Occasionally, there are also original documents and moving images. The division of these contents into categories, marked by colours, has been guiding the project since the first edition and remains, thus allowing for a reading of dance in its multiple contexts. Wall after wall, in a space that visitors can walk through, a three-dimensional diagram of the connection between documents is drawn with lines that do not correspond to a single logic, but rather try to locate “generations,” mark relationships, and make tendencies explicit. In some cases, as with the passage into the 1990s, when the New Portuguese Dance movement emerges, the profusion of lines is such that the events and their protagonists seem to be less at stake than the relationships established with what preceded and succeeded them. Also here, the lack of a critical bibliography regarding artistic output from 2000 onwards is a fundamental reason for, in face of the difficulties related to generating an all-encompassing reading and analysis, giving privilege to the indication of first occurrences (e.g. the first presentation of a show or a festival’s first edition), this being nonetheless a problematic choice in itself. The difficulty of synthesizing the genealogies present in these last decades results directly from a multiplication of events, artists, production structures, training centers, cultural networks, and so on,

regarding which there is not yet enough distance and critical analysis to allow for a clear and overarching perspective.

In order to help visitors navigate through the exhibition, four major “narratives” were outlined in order to suggest possible approaches to the exhibited documents and address certain aspects of XX century dance History, focusing on the Portuguese case in particular. This focus, displayed both at the exhibition’s entrance, next to the introductory text, and in the exhibition leaflet, is intended to help visitors approach specific documents in the exhibition, guiding the experience. The four narratives proposed can be summarized as follows:

1. The Portuguese people have no body

Here, (the question of) the body is seen as being absent in Portugal. This idea echoes a widely spread narrative of Portuguese backwardness, according to which there is no art, no dance, no artistic practices, and no critique in Portugal. Backwardness, or “developmental delay”, is seen as reasons and consequence of such an absent body, while simultaneously working as a powerful impediment to further investigation on the country’s actual conditions, capacities, and occurrences. Nonetheless, after the Portuguese revolution, such a narrative came to be progressively revealed, acknowledged and reversed by a critique that questions the invisibility of issues such as the country's colonial past, misogyny, machism, homophobia, racial violence, and fascism.

2. “Portuguesely” Dancing

This narrative traces the efforts made in order to stabilize what a “Portuguese dance” would “be” or “look like.” Investigating choreographic State-projects, such as Mocidade Portuguesa and Bailados Portugueses Verde Gaio, as well as the brief national acclaim of the New Portuguese Dance during times of European mega-events, such as Lisbon Culture Capital and EXPO 98, it traces back topoi and discussions about “portugueseness” across colonial territories, European markets, and global economies.

3. Cosmopolitanisms and ideas of freedom

By inquiring into how ideas of freedom are said to be at work in certain dance and bodily practices, this narrative investigates bodily techniques and ideas of freedom by placing them in contexts of their emergence, such as the invasion stages by nude bodies in the “Roaring 20’s,” the proliferation of rhythmic gymnastics in the aristocratic society, or the sudden presence of North American Modern Dance in the 50’s as a result of USA’s foreign policies, which made use of cultural exportation in order to promote the nation’s multiraciality and gregariousness, equal in rights and opportunities.

4. The colonial history of the “colonial colonial” dance

The almost total absence of information concerning dance as a cultural practice in the Portuguese ex-colonies is here seen as a way of addressing the Portuguese cultural amnesia

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concerning its colonial past. Is also a point of departure for further investigation and location of missing archives.

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Ongoing: A website for the ongoing project or the website as a new project?

The construction of a website followed the conception and design of the Serralves exhibition, and has thus been accordingly devised and extended. As the internet has its proper rules and logics, crafting a website is often a project of its own. If an exhibition project such as the one just described owes much to the internet and the ways in which it makes data available, it is not linearly evident how to create its online avatar.

By suggestion of web programmer and designer Sara Orsi, all information was gathered in one online spreadsheet, which serves as the database from which the website's frontend draws. This database is organized into categories, allowing for multiple configurations of the data and a simplicity in the ways to update the website's content.

After testing several website templates that could — in different manners, via different functionalities — resemble our imagined website, we opted for distancing the website's appearance from that of the exhibition, while privileging the creation of a tool that works both as an archive for all of the collected

PARA UMA TIMELINE A HAVER

António Cabrita	Chrysa Parkinson	Eugenio Frankly	Hofesh Shechter	José Gil	Madalena Victoria	Miko Sparemblek	Rafael Alvarez	Suely Rolnik	Yvonne Georgi
António Campos	Ciclo Iniciação	Eugénia Vasques	Howard Sonnenklar	José Laginha	Madalena Victorino	Milorad Miskovitch	Rafael Alvarez e Teresa	Susan Bulge	Yvonne Rainer
Rosado	Coreográfica	Ezequiel Santos	Hubert Godard	José Leirão de Barros	Madalena Vitorino	Min Kyung Lee	Prima	Susan Foster	Yvonne Rainer e
António Capelo	Claes Oldenburg	Fabrizio Monteverde	Hugo Chávez	José Limon	Madame Britton	Ministério da Cultura	Rafael Leitão	Susan Sonntag	Martha Graham
António Chainho	Claire Bishop	Faria de Vasconcelos	Humberto Delgado	José Manuel Durão	Madame Schau	Mme Britton	Rafael Toral	Susana Chioocca	Zeca Nunes
António Câmara	Clara Amaral	Faustini Linyekula	Humberto de Itália	Barroso	Magda Henriques	Molissa Penley	Raimund Hoghe	Susana Gaspar	de Marcelo Evelin
Manuel	Clara Andermatt	Fernanda Canossa	1 Humberto d'Ávila	José Manuel Oliveira e	Maguy Marin	Monique Solal	Rainha D. Maria II	Susana Mendes	7
António Emilliano	Clara Andermatt	Fernanda Castro	1 Ian Fleming	Rui Horta	Man Ray	Mota Pinto e David	Rao Kiao	Susanne Linke	von Calhau
António Ferro	Clara Sena	Fernanda Eugénio	Ibon Salvador	José Manuel de	Manoel Barbosa	Mourão Ferreira	Raquel Ribeiro	Suzanne Linke	Agueda Sena
António Guterres	Claude Bromachon	Fernanda Lapa	Ida Hofmann	Oliveira	Manoel de Oliveira	Moussorgsky	Raul Lino	Suzie Byk	Alvaro Cassuto
António Júlio	Claude Brumachon	Fernanda Ló	Igor Gandra	José Pacheco	Manoel de Sousa Pinto	Mussolini	Raya Lee	Suzie Heijari	Angela Ferreira
António Júlio de Brito	Claude Debusay	Fernanda de Paiva	Ine Rietstap	José Ribeiro da Fonte	Manoel Brito	Márcia Lança	Raymonde Carasco	São Castro	1
António Lagarto	Clement Atlee	Tomás	Inoé Bozza	José Saspote	Manoel Maria Carriho	Mário Pereira	Rebecca Schneider	Sérgio Callisto	2
António Laginha	Ciclotide Sakharoff	Fernando Aguiar	Inés Barahona	José de Figueiredo	Manoel Reis	Mário Paulo Cardoso	Red Grooms	Sérgio Pelágio	3
António Lopes Ribeiro	Claudia Dias	Fernando Almeida	Inés Campos	José Augusto França	Manoel Santos Maia	Mário Soares	Regina Guimarães	Silvia Pinto Coelho	4
António Nuno	Claudia Figueiredo	Fernando Calhau	Inés Godinho	João	Manoel Trindade	Mário de Sá-Carneiro	Regina Ramsil	Silvia Real	5
Barreiros	Claudia Galhós	Fernando Corrêa de	Inés Jacques	João Botelho	D'Assumpção	Márten Spångberg	Rainald Hoffmann	Sócrates	6
António Otaio	Claudia Madeira	Oliveira			Manoel de Falla	Mónica Calle	Remond e Caporossi	Sónia Baptista	7
								Igor Stravinsky	

FILTROS

INFO EN

Região

2 Açores

2 África

1 Alentejo

1 América Central

2 América do Norte

1 América do Sul

17 Ásia

1 Caribe

25 Europa

1 Madeira

1 Magrebe

2 Médio Oriente

1 Mundo

2 Norte de África

6 Ocidente

1 São Miguel

1 Vermont

Países

2 África do Sul

2 Alemanha

1 Angola

1 Argélia

1 Argentina

1 Áustria

1 Bélgica

1 Brasil

1 Canadá

1 Chile

2 China

1 Cuba

1 Escócia

1 Espanha

1 Estados Unidos da América

1 Estados Unidos da América

1 Estados Unidos da América

1 EUA

40 França

2 Guiné-Bissau

1 Holanda

2 Índia

1 Indonésia

1 Inglaterra

1 Irão

2 Iraque

1 Islândia

1 Israel

1 Itália

1 Japão

2 Jugoslávia

1 Lisboa

1 Luxemburgo

1 Macau

1 Madeira

1 Maputo

22 Portugal

12 Reino Unido

2 Suécia

1 Suíça

1 teste

1 Timor

1 Tunísia

1 Ucrânia

1 URSS

1 Venezuela

1 Vietnam

Print-screen of website prototype designed and programmed by Sara Orsi, December 2020

materials and as an interface with its proper navigational and querying characteristics.

Whereas the exhibition gathers and prioritizes the construction of possible narratives for dance in the XX century, the website privileges functions of indexation, query, and recombination. Initially crafted as a private research tool (mainly due to copyright issues concerning the images, but also to allow for further editing), the website aims at contributing to a better treatment of all the collected information, which allows for its thorough study.

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The website is therefore organized with a double chronology that is both vertical and horizontal, enabling users to easily select a specific date or simply scroll along the timetable. Moreover, a menu is available in order to enable viewing the following options:

1. View the overall 5 categories;
2. View each category separately;
3. View only titles;
4. View only associated images;
5. View combinations of the ones mentioned above;
6. Search for topics: protagonists, places, and spaces.

With these functionalities, the user is given the possibility of a comparative and selective reading that is impossible to attain while visiting the exhibition. While the exhibition proposes a spatial reading that is improvisational and exploratory, the website allows for a more intuitive and object-driven navigation, where specific information can be accessed by querying, instead of being found by chance.

Hopefully, in a second moment, it will be possible to continue working on the website to allow for the combination of both modes: exhibition and research tool. A third moment would be devoted to the extensive treatment of the images and the bureaucratic procedures concerning its (open source) display, an endeavour we started for Festival Materiais Diversos and continued for the Serralves exhibition, but which requires an encompassing approach to internet rules.

Though the online website is currently private, we plan to make it public after the Serralves exhibition, following the contents' full revision, both in Portuguese and English.



Print-screen of website prototype designed and programmed by Sara Orsi, December 2020

A tool for collective study, exercise and transmission: what can be read on the Timeline

Being that the central focus of the Timeline project is what is here being called “dance as an artistic practice,” that is, a discursive agent and form of thought anchored in its own time, where social and ethnographic dances, but also choreo-political projects, are included, it is worth noting the absence of references both to artistic dance and dance in general in the colonial and overseas Portugal, given the scarcity of dedicated studies.

Several narratives, often contradictory to each other, can be read on this Timeline: narratives of cosmopolitanism and modernity; of nationhood and Portugueseness; of negation and absence; of excess and of State-choreography of bodies; of gender and colonialism ... Among these, the narrative below summarizes a general reading of the “Portuguese case,” presented in Brazil in 2017, which should not be read univocally, for the same reasons why the project presented so far has been devised.

Even so, accepting the challenge of trying to outline a general narrative, it can be seen that in the 10s, 20s and until the mid-30s of the XX century the presence of dance in a relatively cosmopolitan Lisbon is notorious, where performances in theaters and variety shows succeed one another (with the likes of Josephine Baker, Loïe Fuller, jazz-band, Moorish dances, Ballets russes, modernism and Orpheu) and timidly appear private lessons in Eurythmics with foreign madames who sometimes teach in recreational spaces or cultural circles to a cultivated proletariat. In the 1940s, starting with the “spirit policy” of the then head of state António de Oliveira Salazar and advertising minister António Ferro, and following with the subsequent folklorization of the country, the most visible project seems to be the creation of the Portuguese Ballets Verde-Gaio, the invention of dancing the nation and its history, the myths of which were being reinvented by these and other means. From the 1950s onwards, even though the Portuguese dictatorship continues, the State cultural project seems to fade or just generally keep to the lines drawn in the 1930s (such as the sustenance of folkloric ranches), which from a cultural point of view will make an increasingly larger elite of the educated population (who reads newspapers and magazines, consumes films and foreign music and will adhere to the recently instituted television) distance itself from a regime that was said to be nationalist, anti-cosmopolitan, and anti-modern, without ever making any particular big investment in dance. In turn, dance as an artistic practice will eventually find its way in the 1960s into private institutions, such as the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, which founded the Gulbenkian Ballet Group (later to become the Ballet Gulbenkian), or thanks to the isolated work of certain pedagogues. In this decade, not only does the beginning of the colonial war and immigration make many people leave the country, but the two student crises and the lack of opportunities that followed lead to greater discontent with a regime that, as an example pertinent to this project, comes to lead Maurice Béjart to the border with Spain because of him explicitly affirming being antifascist (which will eventually push the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation to support the foundation of the Mudra dance school in Brussels, as a way to apologize for the Portuguese State procedure). The years leading up to the revolution marked the reformulation of the conservatory (which had not been reformed since the 1930s) and laid the ground for the future creation of the Higher Dance

School after the 25th of April of 1974, being that only in the 1980s, the time when the first modern art museum in the country inaugurates, will timidly begin to emerge an independent dance scene, later called the New Portuguese Dance movement, which boomed in the early 1990s when the results from Portugal's ingression into the European Economic Community began to be felt.

The New Portuguese Dance, often composed of dancers trained in (and diverging from) private institutions existing at the time, will be characterized as constituting a privileged platform for what André Lepecki describes as the complicated process of "activating a dancing body, immersed in contemporaneity and reflective about the anxiety of history" (2001)⁶. This movement will have rapid acclaim, also fueled by a governmental need to make Portuguese culture known in the recently joined Europe (which at the time coincided with modernity). Unfortunately, this acclaim will not have institutional correspondence, since the main dance institutions in the country will continue having relatively conservative matrices, being contemporary training relegated to the informality of festivals, production structures associated with choreographers and other private structures founded by artists. Despite this, there is a proliferation of choreographers and various presentation contexts, most of which are underfunded, leading to great precarity and, simultaneously, to large waves of emigration by national artists in search of better social security systems and more funding for artistic projects. The fetish for young artists and artists from the old New Portuguese Dance movement persists today, but without much critical discourse reflecting on the aesthetics and politics of the scene. With the opening of Portuguese institutions to European networks, there are also tendencies towards a monoculture of aesthetics (i.e. the official aesthetic) that circulates globally through systems which facilitate the programming of certain artistic agents to the detriment of others.

This reading, in positive, allows a reading in negative, especially when made from the hesitations and specific stories contained and narrated in the commissioned texts, the ways in which terms such as "new," "modern" and "modernity," referring to concrete practices, have often been disputed and used as opposed to other terms, being important to understand who uses them, in what contexts, and to what are they opposed. For example, the modernity discursively denied, in a modern way, by Salazar on the radio, in 1932, is a State choreo-political project, as is the modernity defended by Prime Minister Cavaco Silva in the 1980s: a rhythm, a set of choreographies, certain cadences, are all imposed on the population. Whether being late (or trying to be late, like in the first case in which Salazar "refuses" modernity), or running (like in the second case, in which Cavaco Silva exhorts to run towards it, synchronizing the pace with Europe) modernity is, first of all, a logic, a set of discourses in which the referent is always beyond reach. Such discourses generate a movement and prompt a biased reading of the past, creating distortions. In fact, there is a whole reading of history and the history of dance in Portugal that is done in the light of a supposed delay, in parallel to the discourses of common sense and

⁶ "What was called 'New Portuguese Danse' is neither a movement nor a style, but rather the name given to the heterogeneous set of works by a group of choreographers who started producing their works in the late eighties, early nineties." (Lepecki, 2001).

academia, “which allow themselves to get trapped almost unconsciously into this narrative,” whether by choosing as an object of study “that same distance from Portugal in relation to an ideal,” or to “tell a kind of Portuguese version of the history of Europe from objects that in Portugal are irrelevant” (Trindade, 2004).

The “new” in New Portuguese Dance refers to the affirmation of a kind of independent dance that had hitherto little existed, but also to what in Europe followed the “wave” of the New French Dance and the New Belgian Dance, in anticipation to the New Eastern Dance, all names coined to facilitate a particular kind of international circulation, particularly strong after the Maastricht Treaty, which sought to unify and bring Europe together economically and culturally.

In Continuation....

In conclusion, here are some notes on why it was possible to do this project now and why it might be interesting to continue:

- there is the need for an overview of the XX century, putting it in perspective in order to look again into it; and to do so by tracing a history of the transformations of corporeality and the choreopolitics associated with it. Contingently, this was much done with the available technology — the internet —, from which a project like this is inseparable;
- the study tool that this exercise generates is of undeniable interest; as its emphasis is, not only on the possibility of accretion, correction, and removal of textual entries, but also on the possibility of future novel associations between them. The narrative character of each entry, capable of holding and transmitting a small story, should be kept whenever possible. Historiographically, it is difficult to make periodizations visible without losing the capacity to create a network of overlays; whereas abiding to the Warburgian temptation to create image boards, outside of history, to allow for the reading of formal resonances, remains a potent exercise.
- the possibility of developing and studying specific sections of the Timeline in stages, covering in detail decades, authors, companies, events, etc., allowing for deepening and clarifying the research already done, and proposing new arrangements;
- likewise, the possibility of physically and performatively moving through time, walking along the wall, face to face with history, in turn fragmented into stories related to one another; and the pedagogical-fictional possibility of creating tours across the Timeline with (un)trained guides, who propose readings of these narratives.

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