

Dance-*que-te-quiero*-dance

Colophon

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This is an invitation to dance along with mora jara, caterina daniela.
Dance-*que-te-quiero*-dance. 21 April 2026.

To Alma.
To the teachers and the students.
To the Swedish winter, warmed by
cumbia circling my hips in the
kitchen.
To the dances.

En memoria de Orlando Ravandoni,
quien me abrió las puertas de B58.
En memoria de Renate Schottelius.
En memoria de Pacha Brandolino.
En memoria de Luis Biasotto.
En memoria de Natalia Caamaño.

*Within these lines, the bodies of my dance over the last five years.
I invite you to dance among them with a final count of 6-7-8.
To anticipate the dance is already to begin dancing.
Yes, you can also choose not to have a count.
In this case, you must create your own way of accessing the dance.*

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Introduction

Overview

Dance-que-te-quiero-dance is the archived documentation for the PhD in Performative and Mediated Practices, with a specialization in Choreography, at Stockholm University of the Arts. Its title, referring to the active love of dancing¹, reflects an enduring interest, insistence, and passion for dancing while in migration².

The project *Conflicted Embodiment: Dancing Transatlantic Migrant Dances* departs from the experience of a migrant dance practitioner, who, upon entering the European dance and performance field, finds their artistic work becomes a site of intricate historical and colonial entanglements. The research introduces Conflicted Embodiment as both a concept and a set of practices that foster critical subjectivity in dance, performance, and education.

The main argument of this work centres on the *dancer's* experience navigating various contexts of *dance* as artistic research. Therefore, the research focuses on the embodied experience and activity of those who consider themselves *dancers* and are interested in the practice of *dancing* in a broad sense.

If the practice of *dancing* unfolds across various contexts in which *dance* assumes specific functions and meanings, then the term *dance* refers to a situated practice that occurs within an institutional, spatial, and/or social setting that defines *dance* as a field. Hence, this research acknowledges the friction and relations between specific artistic and disciplinary areas such as contemporary dance, dance studies, dance education, and choreography, which study, practise, and contextualise dance.

Grounded in collaborative dialogues and local exchanges, this artistic research contributes to the field of dance through critical practices and methodologies of dancing, scripting, dance education, fabulation, choreography, and auto-ethnographic writing. The project presents my experience as an example of a migrating dancer's subjectivity, focusing on the crossing of national, continental, linguistic, and dance genre boundaries. Working from these points of transition, the artistic proposal promotes the juxtaposition, disjunction, and differentiation of dance traditions and practices, studying how migration, practices, epistemologies, economies, politics, and canons encounter, clash with, and reconfigure one another.

This artistic research proposes a decolonial critique of the contemporary European and Western dance field by engaging with the persistent tensions of translation and the mash-up of different dance traditions. It provides an embodied approach to the ongoing struggle of coloniality and the challenges of migrating from the souths to the norths. Through the concept and practices of Conflicted Embodiment, the project develops a specific vocabulary for practitioners to address the effort involved in orientation, translation and crossing borders. By approaching conflict from a generative perspective, Conflicted Embodiment aims to investigate the constitutive tensions of acts of embodiment in dance practices.

¹ Possible translations of the title would be *Dance, I love you, dance*; or *Dance, you rock, dance!*

² I was born in the south of Argentina to a Chilean mother. I first migrated to Buenos Aires in 2009, then to Europe: to Brussels in 2018 and to Stockholm in 2021.

Entry points

Dance and Coloniality

“And here I am, with the tango, attempting to decolonize myself” (Savigliano, 1995, p. 4). With this quote from the introduction of the book *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion*, Argentine dance scholar Marta Savigliano made a pioneering contribution to dance studies in the United States. Published more than thirty years ago in English, this research analyses tango³ through a decolonial attempt, framing tango as a cultural practice involved in processes of emotional capital (feelings treated as resources) consumed as Exotic Culture (1995, p. 2) and intertwined with imperialist circulation. Aligned with Savigliano’s contribution, this project also critically engages with North-South relations⁴.

Savigliano’s critical engagement on dance constitutes an early critique of coloniality, foreshadowing the *decolonial turn*. As an approach to episteme thoughts, the *decolonial turn* began to take shape in **Abya Yala**⁵ the early 1990s through the efforts of the Modernity/Coloniality Group and its individual scholars, supported by publications, conferences, and initiatives organised and resourced by CLACSO (Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales) (Castro-Gómez & Grosfoguel, 2007).

By coloniality, this PhD research project refers to a power system rooted in racial and ethnic hierarchies, which operates both as a structural framework and as a social process that organizes and sustains entrenched inequalities. Peruvian sociologist Anibal Quijano describes the coloniality of power (2000) as a system originating from the ‘discovery’ of so-called *Americas*⁶ and the rise of Eurocentric knowledge and institutions, embedding a global order that continues to shape social, political, and economic relations today.

This research is informed by decolonial thought, specifically the Modernity/Coloniality Group and its core concepts: the coloniality of power, knowledge, and being (Quijano, 2000), the coloniality of gender (Lugones, 2007), and the coloniality of doing (Martínez Andrade, 2011). As constitutive of modernity, Quijano proposes the notion of Eurocentrism as a perspective of knowledge and rational understanding, which holds that cultural forms emerge from a Eurocentric viewpoint⁷ (Quijano, 2020, p. 218). This perpetuates the idea that developments occur first in Europe

³ Names of dance forms are italicised unless they are widely used in English. Terms such as tango and salsa are therefore not italicised, while names of dances such as *zamba* are.

⁴ I recognise that one of the main critiques of decolonial thinking is that scholars from the Global South, often funded by institutions in the Global North, predominantly publish in English. In an effort to bridge this gap, I initially intended for this text to be bilingual, but this was not feasible due to time constraints. For this work, a Spanish translation will be published by the specialised dance publisher *Segunda En Papel* from Argentina.

⁵ Words marked with an asterisk (*) and in bold appear in the Glossary.

⁶ See Glossary entry: Abya Yala.

⁷ From the original “Eurocentrismo es, aquí, el nombre de una perspectiva de conocimiento cuya elaboración sistemática comenzó en Europa Occidental antes de mediados del siglo XVII, aunque algunas de sus raíces son sin duda más viejas, incluso antiguas, y que en las centurias siguientes se hizo mundialmente hegemónica recorriendo el mismo cauce del dominio de la Europa burguesa” (Quijano, 2020, p. 218).

My translation: “Eurocentrism is, here, the name of a knowledge perspective whose systematic development began in Western Europe before the mid-17th century, although some of its roots are

and subsequently elsewhere. This research is situated within these frameworks and engages in dialogue with later critiques by Bolivian activist and sociologist Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (2012), allowing for a nuanced understanding of how colonial power structures persist in the core of Abya Yala, rendering indigenous practices invisible.

Paying particular attention to situating this research within decolonial discourse, this project also remains attentive to and critical about the practical implementation and institutionalization of decolonial practices in northern European contexts.

By examining how the **embodiment*** of dance forms through learning and educational processes reproduce colonial value systems and inscribes logics of hierarchy, this work investigates coloniality as a process of ongoing power structuring. Those processes shape national imperatives and socially constructed hierarchies of race, gender, class, age, and ability within dance.

If dancing, as defined by the dancer, is an embodied experience that may or may not be intended for public performance, then dance, as defined by the observer, encompasses not only the movement of bodies – including migration – but also the movement of dances themselves (cultural migration), creating a space where multiple inequalities related to access, power, value, and gender, among others, intersect.

This project aims to look at the dancer dancing in the context of dance attuned to the persistent operations of coloniality in this field. Such a relationship between dance and coloniality can be traced back to the origins of dance research and the institutionalization of Western **concert dance***.

Other recent scholarly examples that focus on this topic include *Danza, herencias y provocaciones decoloniales – Dance, heritages, and decolonial provocations*, edited by Mexican researcher Haydee Lachino and Argentinian scholar Eugenia Cadús (2024), and *Heat and Alterity in Contemporary Dance: South-South Choreographies* by Indian dancer and scholar Ananya Chatterjea (2020).

Performance artists, artistic practices, and other forms of artistic output or processes that stage, narrate, denounce, or otherwise make visible coloniality within the performing arts have informed this research project. The following examples not only confront aspects of coloniality but also generate critical frameworks that unsettle, reconfigure, and make perceptible the structures they critique. They are: *Improvável Produções*⁸ (Marcela Levi and Lucía Russo, Brazil/Argentina); Pedro Lemebel and Francisco Casas⁹ (Chile); *Colectivo LASTESIS*¹⁰ (Chile); *Grupo KRAPP*¹¹ (Argentina);

undoubtedly much older, even ancient, and which, in the following centuries, became globally hegemonic, following the same path as the dominance of bourgeois Europe.”

⁸ The work of *Improvável Produções* has significantly inspired this research by exposing bodily cracks in modernity and what escapes from it, revealing these cracks as dramaturgical fractures, and making instability and dissonance central elements of stage dramaturgy in pieces such as *Boca de Ferro* (2016) and *grrRoUNd* (2021).

⁹ Pedro Lemebel for his poetic and politically committed denunciations of dictatorship. His writing such as *Tengo miedo, torero* (2001) and collaborative work in *Las Yeguas del Apocalipsis* with Francisco Casas, which foreground LGBTQ+ activism and give voice to queer identities, are important references.

¹⁰ The activist group *Colectivo LASTESIS* transforms public spaces into collective acts of protest by engaging with the structural operations of gender coloniality.

¹¹ *Grupo KRAPP*, co-directed by Luciana Acuña and Luis Biasotto, interrogates representation through performances such as *Adónde van los muertos, Lado A* (2011) and *Adónde van los muertos, Lado B* (2010). Their work, along with their individual pieces, also engages with modes of production in relation to coloniality, as well as the relationship between language and dance, as seen in Biasotto's piece *Octubre, un blanco en escena* (2009).

Fabián Gandini¹² (Argentina), Ana Gurbanov¹³ (Argentina); Lola Arias¹⁴ (Argentina, currently working in Berlin); the *Compañía de Funciones Patrióticas*¹⁵ (Argentina).

Taking as its starting point the ongoing challenges faced by dancers, this work examines how coloniality as a framework influences institutional knowledge shaping values inscribed in bodies, studying how bodies are stereotyped or excluded, and considering how migrant dancers from the **souths*** navigate the expectations and norms of dance while moving across contexts. **Conflicted Embodiment** aims to highlight, question, and **resist*** colonial history by asking: How does a dancer's body hold and embody the agonism it encounters in migration?

To address these questions, several conceptual operations must be articulated. A key concern is the need to understand conflict as a constitutive element of identities in Abya Yala. Conflicts within social and historical contexts continue to structure coloniality and determine identities. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the legacy of Abya Yala thinkers who have already articulated the **conflicted*** experience of being in coloniality and who are committed to thinking through, questioning, and articulating colonial structures. Bodies situated between different value systems – bodies that inhabit multiple worlds or epistemes – experience often paradoxical conditions. These experiences of inclusion and belonging occur as such bodies navigate the demands of the modern imperative and the contradictions it produces.

A wide range of conceptual categories have emerged to account for the contradictions, dilemmas, and/or binaries that colonial systems impose on bodies. To name only a few: the Mexico-US border is conceptualised as both a space and a metaphor in *Borderlands/La Frontera* (Anzaldúa, 1987) and the space in between refers to *nepantla* (Anzaldúa, 2015); the *ajiacó* (Ortiz, 1963), a traditional Cuban stew, serves as a metaphor for Cuban identity, representing a dynamic blend of diverse cultural influences; *hybridization* (García Canclini, 1990) describes the dynamic mixing of cultural forms that challenges rigid boundaries between local and global; the *mestizo of Nuestra América* (Martí, 2010) refers to the historical and political mixture of Indigenous, African, and European roots as a symbol of Latin American identity; *opacity* (Glissant, 1990) emphasizes the recognition of difference without demanding full comprehension; the affectable and “difference without separability” (da Silva, 2016) refers to the co-constitution and relationality of identities; the logic of purity and impurity (Lugones, 1994) exposes hierarchical and exclusionary systems; and *ch'ixi* (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2012) acknowledges the coexistence of heterogeneity without merging.

More specifically, concepts from dance studies and dance history aim to articulate the experience of conflict while dancing, such as the *confusion* proposed by Argentinian dance scholar Eugenia Cadús (2025), the *historiographies of abandonment* discussed by Brazilian dance scholar Rafael Guarato (2019), and the concept of spatial *mestizaje* (2023) by Mexican dance scholar José Luis Reynoso Bello. While these frameworks are valuable for addressing the colonial problem, they remain largely conceptual rather than practice-based and therefore do not offer tools grounded in embodied or choreographic methodologies.

¹² The compositional work of Fabián Gandini constructs metareferential narratives that question representation, as in *Pieza para pequeño efecto* (2009).

¹³ Ana Gurbanov for her inventive use of humour through engagement with historical dance quotations, as in *Perra Calma* (2024).

¹⁴ Lola Arias for her interdisciplinary work (writer, filmmaker, and theatre-maker) that looks into tensions between the singular/collective and representation/metareferential, as seen in pieces such as *Campo Minado* (theatre, 2016; film, 2018) and *Reas* (film, 2024).

¹⁵ The *Compañía de Funciones Patrióticas* links narratives to access class formations and national narratives, using a critical historical approach to memory and politics.

Informed by these theorizations, this project examines, from my personal perspective, the process by which dancers become practitioners and how they dance under conditions already shaped by the complexities they encounter through migration. Ballet¹⁶, modern dance¹⁷, and Flying Low¹⁸ (Zambrano, n.d.), for example, represent three dance forms that may be considered as having migrated, which I embodied well before my own experience of voluntary migration. To unpack processes of migration, it is first necessary to understand migration as an embodied encounter – one in which the body is confronted with and reconfigured by unfamiliar conditions. This embodied confrontation intensifies and further complicates the already conflict-laden experience of dancing, opening new dimensions in the practice of dance as it unfolds in migratory contexts.

Migration from the Global South to the Global North produces a confrontation that can be understood through the metaphor of a double-sided mirror – one that reflects both an ‘original’ and its ‘replica’. This mirror performs a dual function: on the one hand, it allows some practices of dance such as *contemporary dance*, modern dance or ballet to be brought back to Europe and presented as a colonial form, highlighting its historical and cultural legacies; on the other hand, it carries the unintended effect of re-centring Europe as the point of origin.

Dance migrates with bodies within the colonial framework. As dancers move – whether through displacement, economic migration, or artistic exchange – their bodies carry traces of origin, adaptation, and negotiation, so that dance itself migrates along with these embodied histories.

Dance matters to migration because dancing bodies both carry and make visible the enduring marks of colonial legacies and the ongoing projects of modern nation-states. Migration matters to dance because migrant dancers circulate, replicate, and transform dance practices across borders. These three factors – the specificity of the dancer-practitioner, the subjective embodied experience of migration, and the migration of dance in colonial frameworks – are central to what this project seeks to address.

This research advocates for a sensitive, embodied, and fleshy engagement with social, historical, and political inequalities through dance: dances that travel with migrant bodies, dances that persist through enjoyment, dances that are barely or not at all evident, dances that are almost forgotten, dances that are hyper-recognizable or dances that belong to bodies from another time and place. By tracing and making visible my experience as a migrant dancer and other migrant fellow dancers through the lens of *Conflicted Embodiment*, this work offers a hands-on, practice-based approach to addressing challenges imposed by colonial frameworks, such as the reinforcement of stereotypes and restrictive subject positions.

¹⁶ Ballet was codified in the French court before spreading north and east to Russia and becoming globally institutionalised.

¹⁷ Modern dance emerged in the United States with pioneers such as Isadora Duncan and Martha Graham. Early training companies like Denishawn (c. 1915) laid the foundation for the development of 1930s-40s exponents including Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, and Charles Weidman, who later influenced figures such as Lester Horton, Merce Cunningham, José Limón. From the US, these approaches spread to Europe and beyond, shaping the global evolution of modern dance.

¹⁸ David Zambrano migrated from Venezuela to the US to study computer science, then to New York's postmodern and improvisational dance scene, where he developed a reputation as a performer, improviser, and teacher. He later moved to the Netherlands and subsequently to Belgium. His artistic legacy includes a teaching form that has spread worldwide.

Since this research is situated within the practices associated with *contemporary dance*, this project requires a critical understanding of it. Since the 1990s, *contemporary dance* has been a diverse and multidisciplinary field, shaped by self-reflection, methodological diversity, digitalization, collaboration, and increasing research possibilities for higher education and research in dance and performance (Monni, 2023). *Contemporary dance* fosters models of multinational working groups and residencies, and conceptual approaches, with artists defining their own starting points. Professionalism is characterised by freelance, flexible work and multiple artistic trajectories rather than a uniform career path.

Definitions of *contemporary dance* challenge the concepts of field and genre, depending on which dance community is defining the concept. On the one hand, this research aligns with the perspectives in the publication resulting from the research project on diversity in European Higher Dance Education institutions¹⁹ (Schenker & Rosa, 2025). In this publication, *contemporary dance* is defined “as a genre primarily made for the stage, performed by some and watched by others, that values criticality, experimentation, and authorship” (Schenker & Rosa, 2025, p. 22). This can be understood as an effort from practitioners to ‘provincialize’ *contemporary dance* in the context of European dance education, echoing Dipesh Chakrabarty’s call to reconsider the universalising assumptions of Europe in *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (2000).

On the other hand, this research engages with the “global field of contemporary dance”, as termed by Chatterjea (2020). According to her, *contemporary dance* is associated with notions of innovation, experimentation, and cutting-edge (Chatterjea, 2020, p. 1), and is shaped largely by, and reproduces, inequalities strongly influenced by Eurocentric and North American, white-dominated aesthetic standards.

Furthermore, as dancer and dance scholar SanSan Kwan (2017) notes in her article “When Is Contemporary Dance?” (Kwan, 2017), *contemporary dance* evokes “both recognition and anxiety” across concert dance – encompassing *avant-garde*, process-based forms evolved from modern and postmodern dance – commercial dance, and the **world dance*** stages shaped by the dance market. In these contexts, *contemporary dance* can encompass multiple practices: “Western contemporary dance performed by non-Western dancers, ethnic dance fused with Western contemporary vocabulary and/or compositional techniques, or innovations on a traditional non-Western form” (Kwan, 2017, p. 48).

The tension between *genre* and *field* in contemporary dance is central to this research, as I practice diverse dance traditions that do not always align with notions of *contemporary dance*. Recognizing this friction, without attempting to resolve it, is an integral part of the positionality of this project. Categories such as folklore, social, popular, academic, style, and genre play a role in defining – or challenging – the boundaries of what and when constitutes *contemporary dance*.

The *contemporary dance* market is dominated by international production circuits, while also relying on national ones. Within this context, experimentation often functions as a key criterion for recognition and value (Chatterjea, 2020).

Another aspect examines the status of contemporaneity in contemporary dance, exploring its temporal and aesthetic characteristics from a philosophical perspective (SanSan Kwan, 2017). In this context, discussions focus on the conditions and implications of *contemporaneity* – for instance, its connection to remix culture (Babich, 2025), Arthur Danto’s ontological inquiries into what constitutes art, and Giorgio Agamben’s reflections on *contemporariness*, which consider awareness of the present in relation to a time beyond (SanSan Kwan, 2017).

¹⁹ The Manufacture in Lausanne, Stockholm University of the Arts (SKH) in Stockholm, and Performing Arts Research and Training Studios (P.A.R.T.S.) in Brussels.

It is also relevant to mention that in the local context of Stockholm and at SKH²⁰. The concept of Expanded Choreography is associated with *contemporary dance* and is widely used in the Nordic and Central European context due to its development in the field. However, I am critical of this term for two main reasons. First, the term relies on a narrow understanding of choreography that is often insufficiently grounded in specific contexts (see Manson, 2016). Second, it draws on a particular interpretation of Rosalind Krauss's "Sculpture in the Expanded Field"²¹, where artistic practice is structured through oppositional categories that extend beyond medium-specific definitions (Krauss, 1979). This risks reducing choreography to an abstract logic of positions rather than a situated practice. For these reasons, I avoid using this concept.

Largely sustained by freelance labour, *contemporary dance* in Europe has been profoundly shaped by neoliberal modes of production (Kunst, 2015), which valorise flexibility, self-management, passion, mobility, and permanent availability. Qualities once heralded as emancipatory for artistic practice that have increasingly become aligned with the imperatives of capitalist productivity. Within this regime, dancers are expected to meet demands placed upon them and to perform at a high level at any moment, under any conditions. This expectation has been widely discussed in the field, particularly through the notion of *flexible performativity* (Van Assche & Schaffer, 2023), a term that underscores how contemporary dancers must be highly adaptable and capable of negotiating diverse contexts and aesthetic demands.

Dance artists frequently shift roles and develop movement material collaboratively, thereby challenging fixed notions of technique, style, and traditional understandings of the choreographer–performer relationship. As dance scholar Annelies Van Assche (2020) notes, dance artists "develop movement material in collaboration, thus abandoning notions such as technique or style" (p. 194-195). While some scholars describe this flexibility as an effect of the structural conditions of *contemporary dance* production, it can also reflect a deliberate and desired collaborativeness in artistic processes and creative development (Van Assche, 2020).

The dancing body in *contemporary dance* is often constructed as a vessel able to traverse distinct traditions and styles. This is considered a value. This project draws attention to this, especially as the experience of migration has made this requirement more evident. Thus, moving across cultural and technical boundaries can be observed in dancers who engage with multiple dance traditions, styles, or techniques, often with apparent ease, regardless of the depth of their prior knowledge or training.

Consequently, this project examines what happens to the body when navigating styles, ways of dancing, dance traditions, techniques, methodologies, or practices rooted in experiential anatomy – commonly referred to as somatic practices, 'release', or body work. Somatic practices (from the Greek *sōma*, meaning 'body') emphasize embodied experience and knowledge rooted in the body. In *contemporary dance* pedagogy and practice, methods such as the Alexander Technique, Klein Technique, and the Feldenkrais Method are used to develop awareness of movement and bodily sensation, reflecting a broader shift towards the body as lived and experiential. By prioritising internal sensation, efficiency, and individual creativity over external form and muscular mastery, those practices facilitate an artistic approach that values a different kind of embodied knowledge, thereby fitting the description of a 'de-skilling' practice in the context of traditional dance pedagogy.

Framing migration as traversal draws attention to the bodily labour, affective intensities, and sensory negotiations involved in crossing territorial and administrative thresholds. If dancing engages with (dis)orientation, direction, tonalities, sensation, rhythm, time, and space, each dance tradition, style, or methodology develops its own specific ways of working with these concepts. These

²⁰ Back then it was called DOCH (School of Dance and Circus).

²¹ For further insight Ölme (2017), the original article by Rosalind Krauss (1979), and the work of Andreas Berchtold on folk dance (2022).

embodied logics travel with migrant dancers, who carry – and continually renegotiate – their sensory, kinetic, and epistemic orientations as they move across borders.

A Note on Argentine Dance Education

One of the origin myths of Argentine national identity, especially in Buenos Aires, is the belief that it is the leading nation in Abya Yala, considering itself the most European and the most Europeanising (Dussel, 2004). The concept of dance as an erudite theatrical art was developed in Argentina with the arrival of ballet, through sporadic ballet ensembles, and shortly afterwards, modern dance.

Traditional historicism conceptualises historical time as a measure of cultural and developmental distance between Europe and the rest of the world (Cadús, 2020, p. 19). Within this framework, Europe is positioned as the origin of aesthetic and cultural innovation, leading to the assumption of “first in Europe, then elsewhere”²² (2020, p.21). This linear and diffusionist model, in which developments originate in Europe and subsequently spread to other regions, underpins cultural practices in non-European places as outdated, dependent, or undeveloped.

In the city of Buenos Aires, the capital and ‘cultural centre’ of the country, the upper classes determined the first cultural agenda of dance performed for an audience, the aforementioned concert dance, according to their wishes. The field was initially shaped by irregular visits from several dance ensembles. Ballet companies from Italy and France began performing in 1832. The ensemble *Les Ballets Russes* performed between 1909 and 1929 (Cadús, 2020), and Isadora Duncan visited Buenos Aires in 1916 (Zuain, 2021).

The first dance school was founded in 1919 with Natalio Vitulli as its teacher (Cadús, 2021). Its main objective was to train dancers for the first official ballet company, the Ballet Estable, founded in 1925. In 1944, Miriam Winslow, a dancer and choreographer from the US who studied modern dance at *Denishawn* school, established herself as a representative of modern dance and *Ausdruckstanz* after previous visits to the country. She introduced her vision into a scene that had never experienced a systematisation of modern dance, founding Ballet Winslow, where she trained the pioneers of ‘modern dance’ in Argentina.

In this process of first modernization (Cadús, 2020, p. 36), modern dance did not emerge as a direct opposition to the hegemony of ballet, but rather as an alternative practice. By the time Winslow introduced her version into the local field, modern dance had already become somewhat established in Europe. In Argentina, however, no distinct strands of modern dance existed as an ongoing practice; instead, there were only occasional visits and temporary engagements.

The creation of dance education programmes was supported by the implementation of governmental policies. During the democratisation process proposed by Juan Domingo Perón’s government, elected in 1946, a cultural plan emerged in which dance was no longer perceived as a cultural asset of the upper classes, but as something accessible to the general public. This cultural plan thus became the impetus for Argentine concert folkloric dance as a means of consolidating national cultural identity. It is not coincidental that Angelita Vélez founded the *Compañía Folclórica Argentina* in the same year, a dance company specifically dedicated to staging Argentine folklore and building a national repertory of dances with national themes.

During Perón’s government, the consolidation of concert dance, which refers to ballet, modern dance, and folklore, also created specific spaces and audiences. The democratisation of access to education has made it possible to study dance in public institutions, reflecting a broader characteristic of Argentina’s educational system. At this moment, there is a transition towards the legitimisation of ballet and modern dance as cultured, erudite art, separated from popular dances such as tango.

²² From the original “Primero en Europa, después en otro lugar”(2020) - My translation.

Deeply embedded in this division of dance styles, my education also corresponds to these two characteristics. On the one hand, as an Argentinian and as a consequence of the public education system, I have been able to study dance in public institutions alongside regular primary and higher education (both free educational systems). On the other hand, these spaces were designed as separate spaces with separate frames, as my dance education programme included dance styles as separate subjects.

While the separation of dance styles in my education mirrors the broader division of subjects in formal schooling, its impact on dance is more than structural. By framing each style or genre as a distinct discipline, the learning process shapes specific ways of relating to dancing.

Migrations

Migrants exist because borders exist. Borders exist because nation-states exist and thus determine their limits, which are enforced through various control techniques. These borders differentiate people, leading to the emergence of 'migrant' as a political and administrative category for analysis, measurement, identification, and study. Moreover, the academic field of migration studies has developed the concept of the migrant-subject: "The migrant body is positioned as a container full of data to be extracted: its fertility, sexuality, health, or strength (labour force)" (Khosravi, 2024).

Critical discussions in migration studies challenge the understanding of migration as merely cross-border movement and question perspectives that frame migration as a problem. They also interrogate the Eurocentric bias embedded in the field, where funding and research are largely concentrated in the Global North, producing predominantly European and North American viewpoints that frame migration primarily as a movement from the Global South to the Global North. Building on this critique, such approaches examine how migration forms circuits of extraction and incorporation as inclusion, and how it produces intelligible objects of governance through practices of quantification, categorisation, and visualisation. They further explore how migration is entangled with relations of debt and shaped by governing nation-state frameworks, often leading to the erasure of particularities within migration processes (Amelung et al., 2024).

This project moves away from the dominant focus on north-north cross-migration discourses in dance studies, which are primarily represented by the United States (New York) and European metropolises (Paris, Berlin, London) (Chatterjea, 2020). For this project, the **south***-north-south relationship is defined by a continual struggle for **translation*** and orientation – a dialogue that sometimes shifts north-south and moves back and forth, unsettling perceptions of westernisation.

Migrant dancers encounter borders not only when physically crossing countries but also when navigating the boundaries between different dance techniques, styles, and pedagogical frameworks. These 'borders' often play a role in the *contemporary dance* field. Drawing on Paulo Freire's insight in *Pedagogia do oprimido* (Pedagogy of the Oppressed) – "Who better than the oppressed will be prepared to understand the terrible meaning of an oppressive society?"²³ – one can see that such experiences of 'otherness' provide a heightened awareness of structural hierarchies.

In my own journey, this consciousness existed long before my voluntary transcontinental migration, but it was only upon settling in Europe that the lens through which I had understood dance – the implicit assumptions and even my own aesthetic values shaped by Eurocentrism – was demystified. Confronted with these differing cultural expectations and institutional frameworks, I was able to reflect critically on my training, my professionalisation as a dancer, and the ways in which the field of dance practices reproduce or challenge social and artistic hierarchies.

²³ From the original "Quem, melhor que os oprimidos, se encontrará preparado para entender o significado terrível de uma sociedade opressora" (1970) – my translation.

The process of professionalisation as a dancer is never peaceful; it is marked by expectations, fears, opinions, personal perspectives, and negotiations over who holds authority in the space. Historically, in Western concert dance and choreography, there has been little tradition of centering the dancer's perspective (Parkinson, 2018); it has rarely been foregrounded or thoroughly examined. Authority in the dance field has typically rested with choreographers, teachers, curators, critics, and audience members. Additionally, a long-standing tradition of dance theory has relied on observation rather than embodied engagement.

Dancers speak from within dance itself. In this context, we can trace precedents that emphasize the subjectivity of the dancer's body. The publication *Material of Movement and Thought: Reflections on the Dancer's Practice and Corporeality* (Foultier & Roos, 2013) conceptualizes the dancer's artistic process through reflections grounded in choreographic practice. The contributions frame the dancer's work as a site of knowledge.

The work of Chrysa Parkinson focuses on the knowledge and value carried and generated by dancers (2016) by proposing the concept of Experiential Authorship (2018). This concept addresses the struggle and the negotiation of control and authorship in dance processes.

The pedagogical approach of Argentinian dancer Melina Seldes has deeply engaged with the dancer's body and voice as technical tools for interpretation. In the programme *El Intérprete_The Performer* (Seldes, n.d.), she emphasises the performer's work with the use of gaze, transformation, and the re-experiencing of sensations in her teaching and artistic practice.

The *Walk + Talk* series initiated by Austrian choreographer Philipp Gehmacher in 2008 foregrounds practitioners speaking about their work while performing. In these lecture-performances, movement and spoken explanation occur simultaneously, allowing artists to articulate and demonstrate their concepts of the body in motion as they share their movement research. In Gehmacher's words, the series "is an imperative to find not just visibility yet to become audible" (Sarma, n.d.).

I am particularly interested in associating the amplification of the dancer's voice with autoethnographic practice. In the *Introduction* to the *Handbook of Autoethnography*, Holman Jones, Adams, and Ellis (2013) outline autoethnography as a methodology grounded in relationality, reflexivity, and critical engagement:

While all personal writing could be considered examinations of culture, not all personal writing is autoethnographic; there are additional characteristics that distinguish autoethnography from other kinds of personal work. These include (1) purposefully commenting on/critiquing of culture and cultural practices, (2) making contributions to existing research, (3) embracing vulnerability with purpose, and (4) creating a reciprocal relationship with audiences in order to compel a response.

Throughout this research, dance practices appear in various forms and with different voices. These practices are approached as autoethnographic exercises that recount the development of my dance education while situating it in relation to the broader experiences of other migrating dancers²⁴ through the lens of Conflicted Embodiment. In this setting, shared conflicts, tensions, and challenges are collectively explored through investigating processes of transmission in dance contexts.

As will be presented, the practice of a 'we' functions as one methodological strategy, and scripts have emerged to support performances through *desacatadas fabulations**, serving as a record of continuous translation and negotiation while performing. The dancer's *sensorial CV** and the articulation of *chasing dances** are approaches that foreground the back-and-forth processes inherent

²⁴ See Annex III, list of workshops and mini-festivals.

in questioning what is taken as known while seeking orientation in dancing. These narratives trace the pursuit and transformation of dance across time, space as embodied experiences.

Figurations

The writing practices attending to the dancer's body and voice converge in the figuration of Conflicted Embodiment.

The operation of figuration draws on the research of Spanish philosopher Victoria Pérez Royo, who proposes the figure as a research tool because it "facilitates access to the complexity of the modes of affect and mobilization activated through the body" (2022, p. 22). Highlighting that embodiment is culturally mediated, Pérez Royo has reflected on the various ways in which bodies can be explored in the performing arts. Figurations are conceptual and analytical tools that capture the interrelation of memories, affects, and historical tensions, engaging in dialogue with possibilities for resistance and critical reconfiguration.

Pérez Royo emphasises that "bodies are made of flesh and imagination. We observe and construct them through a dense web of fables and figurations" (Pérez Royo, 2025). In this sense, *figuraciones* (figuralities or figurations) describe the dynamic, situated ways in which bodies and performative practices generate visibility and meaning.

The concept and set of practices of Conflicted Embodiment emerged as a figuration to encompass the various ways in which a dancer's critical subjectivity can be articulated. Between 2022 and 2023 I invited peers, understood as **research participants**^{*}, to engage in developing a deep and shared understanding of Conflicted Embodiment. This meant that I was accompanied by temporary communities of migrant artists²⁵ who participated in studio-based exchanges, where through dialogue and shared practices, I developed a collective format to bring Conflicted Embodiment into being as a figured, relational research process.

When referring to temporary communities of migrant artists, I intentionally use the term *research participants* rather than *research subjects*, emphasizing their active role in shaping the research process. They were invited because of their experience as migrant artists, dancers or performers from different contexts of the souths.

This is why Conflicted Embodiment manifests both in the practitioners' experiences and in the development of the concept as a practical framework for action and analysis. Its materialization as a concept and a set of practices can be understood in two interrelated ways: as a potential figuration and as the figure it produces. In the first sense, Conflicted Embodiment emerges within the practitioner's own body, where tensions in embodied acts become material for practice, generating written reflections, scripts, or choreographic material that render these tensions tangible for others. In the second sense, Conflicted Embodiment produces the figure of attuning-to-conflict, framing it as a relational and responsive practice.

Embodying Personas and Selves

Migrating across borders creates a rupture in bodily experiences. The dancing also experiences this rupture, and the need to address the struggle of differences becomes a performative tool in this research. To speak in the voice of a dancer who is migrating (and translating), this writing uses a performative tool I have practised for the past six years.

²⁵ Most of them are migrant artists, with one local artist in Stockholm. See Annex III for the list of research participants.

The performative tool refers to dancing with different **personas*** and different selves. As a performance strategy, it refers to the struggle of having one voice and many voices shaping this research.

Three personas inspire performance practices. This process has accompanied the work from the outset. Their presence requires engagement with multiplicity as a path to embodying and becoming other personas.

The female historical personas I engage with – Aphra Behn, Marie Geneviève, and Maria Baderna – are each significant for different reasons, particularly in their connections to migration, translation, and dance. By working with them, I seek to expand the boundaries of the ‘I’ and explore performance as a practice of being accompanied by others. Through processes of studying, becoming, and being-with these historical figures, the research has been pushed to confront ethical questions, particularly those related to the erasure of voices and histories.

During this research, I destabilised my own experience as an artist researcher²⁶ in a context where I encountered a multiplicity of shifting roles within my own body. As a consequence of my work in a strip club, I encountered the need for another self. Thalía then emerged as my stripper self, in tension with my researcher or artist self and the civilian name required to inhabit public space. These three selves intersect and collide. The use of multiple pronouns serves as the locus for the conflicted singular person. Due to the multiplicity of selves, the practice of ‘we’ emerged as a fabulation to address tensions around ambition, authenticity, anonymity, and authorship.

As the status of personas shifts and the defined spaces of dance are crossed, dancing with and embodying three female historical personas and three selves unsettles fixed identity categories. Through different modes of relating to these personas, and various ways of inhabiting roles, the subject of this research emerges as a multiplicity of ‘I’, in keeping with the idea that identity resists singular definition.

Conflicted Embodiment

The term ‘conflicted’ evokes tensions, struggles, negotiations, and dichotomies, while ‘embodiment’ brings forth concepts of incorporation, manifestation, incarnation, representation, **opacity***, and achievement. Together, these two words form a practice that blends an analytical and compositional tool for dance and performance practitioners, bringing diverse dance traditions, foregrounds the struggle to have a voice, and grapples with the challenges of translation.

This project invites participants to speak up and resist the unification of subjectivity, to disrupt dances, to feel the border and the limit and blur them again, and to revisit bodily experiences of the past in order to recombine them – to stay with the trouble (Haraway, 2016) of troubling dances.

Conflicted Embodiment frames conflict as a productive field, characterized by ambiguous trajectories and diverse strategies for coexistence. It takes the inheritance of tensions within dance learning processes and operates within the frictions of the canon – sometimes inside, sometimes outside established norms – so as to question, critique, and reformulate them.

The concept was already part of the title of this PhD project from its earliest stages. It became more tangible and relevant as my language proficiency in French and English improved after two years of research. The term Conflicted Embodiment does not aim to pacify linguistic development;

²⁶ My research and artistic self uses the name ‘caterina daniela mora jara’ without capital letters. It is the name I acquired when I adopted my Chilean citizenship, since my mother is from Chile and my family history is rooted there as well. In this format, my name includes my mother's last name, which is not customary in Argentina. I began using it as my artistic name in 2021, as a way to honor my mother and to follow the gesture of inscribing myself in the genealogies of pedagogues such as val flores, who follows bell hooks.

My legal name is Caterina Daniela Mora.

rather, it functions as a concept that is continuously translated and rearticulated, particularly since the concept of 'embodiment' does not exist in my mother tongue.

Conflicted Embodiment explores the convergence of dances performed and traversed on both sides of the Atlantic as a *rejunte* (assemblage, gathering – a term derived from the Portuguese *reunir*, meaning to reunite, and *juntar*, meaning to join) of dances. A *quilombo* (from Bantu languages – Kimbundu/Umbundu in present-day Angola [or *kilombo*] refers to a landing place, camp, or settlement; in Brazil, it came to mean independent communities formed by escaped enslaved people – *quilombolas* – symbolising resistance to slavery; in Argentina, it is used informally to mean chaos or disorder) of dances. A *baderna* (used only in Brazil, connoting public disorder) of dances. Un *bardo* (conflict, disorder, from French *barda*, meaning a covering or shelter, later associated with dispute, used in Argentina); a *despelote* (disorder, chaos, an Argentine slang term implying a total mess). Un *enredo* (complicated situation, from Latin *inretiare*, meaning to entangle, used in Chile). While addressing each dance in its specificity, the *meollo* (core, from Latin *medullae*, meaning marrow) of this research unpacks this coming together to examine the positionality of dancing there, explore why the choice of dances matters and consider how migration shapes the dancing of those dances.

The questions of this project are how to work with and through conflict without being dragged into it, without pacifying it, and without escalating it. Attuning to conflict in this research is an effort to acknowledge a volumetric space for artistic research through dance that practises "difference without separability" (2016), a concept elaborated by Brazilian philosopher Denise Ferreira da Silva. The research approaches otherness by seeking ways to provide dancers with a vocabulary that treats friction as a generative source, while also valuing pleasure and effort.

Dance Transmission as a Site of Conflict

The process of learning dance takes place through participation. This project engages with educational contexts in dance, where conflict is a continuous, embodied process. Dance education is a field of research for this project because conflicts are set, marked, or may simply arise during exposure through participation.

Learning dance takes place through demonstration, repetition, imitation, and sometimes correction. This project examines how the results of learning dance processes unfold across diverse contexts, exploring how different settings – including studios, performances, and social contexts of dance – shape bodily practices, learning processes, and the ways dancers engage with movement. It considers how repeated participation in these environments moulds, frames, and creates boundaries for those involved.

The interest in dance transmission and dance education arises from the struggle of embodying conflicting ethnic, gender, age, and class values in my body while dancing. Conflicted Embodiment investigates the transmission of dance practices, highlighting how structures of coloniality surface within the very mechanisms, relations, and hierarchies through which dance is taught, circulated, and embodied.

This project is inspired by artists who bring pedagogical and critical perspectives from Abya Yala into European artistic contexts. One such artist is Fabián Barba (Ecuador), a dancer and pedagogue active in various dance schools across Central Europe. Their work engages in the emotional labour of unpacking coloniality in dance, critically reflecting on how marginal positions are shaped by power centres. In doing so, Barba fosters a dialogue that bridges artistic and theoretical perspectives between Abya Yala and Europe. Likewise, pedagogue and art educator and performing artist Flavio Ferreira Orzari Ferreira (Brazil), currently working at Erg (*École de recherche graphique*) in Brussels. His institutional commitment to conflict has both informed and inspired this project, exemplifying approaches that integrate critique into artistic and educational practice.

Aiming to destabilise hierarchies in Western concert dance, Conflicted Embodiment draws on practices and processes in dance learning contexts while revisiting dance traditions. It serves as a

context that questions disciplinary boundaries, attends to the practice of dancing, and engages with critical ways of transmitting dance. Emerging from and looking into dance learning contexts, this research emphasizes relationality, continually shaping and redirecting both learning and research.

Structure of this text

The practices of dancing, writing, and teaching are organised and grouped according to their function in the project.

Chapter I presents an autoethnographic exercise²⁷ exploring how I became this particular dancer/researcher body, situated between my dance education and my family. The *Dancer's Sensorial CV* and the *Chasing Dances* sections are followed by a list of conflicts that form the personal path which helps to conceptualise Conflicted Embodiment.

Chapter II presents practices related to dancing and performing for an audience: dancing as translating (engaging with normative notions of dance and embracing the ongoing effort of translation); dancing as performing and lecturing; dancing as embodying female bodies (engaging with the historical female personas in this research); and dancing as scripting (the writing process of *desacatadas* fabulations).

Chapter III presents the pedagogical approach of Conflicted Embodiment developed during the PhD: dancing as training (developing endurance); dancing as chasing sensations (diversifying and nourishing my own dancing); dancing as re-embodying sensation (learning to sense the dance anew); dancing as reconfiguring the archive (transforming sensations into choreographic material); dancing as teaching and transmitting, committed to the redistribution of resources by proposing a **feminist financing of the research budget***, with workshops and mini-festivals as spaces for dialogue and support among migrant performing artists.

Chapter IV presents Conflicted Embodiment as an exercise of figuration (Victoria Pérez Royo), offering it as a lens through which to relate with the performing arts. The chapter explores how the concept and the set of practices unfold by emphasising embodiment as a dynamic and ongoing process.

In the **Conclusions** chapter, final considerations are addressed, using the 'we' as locus of enunciation.

The **Glossary** introduces key terms related to this research; some are explored in depth, while others are entry points, providing another way to engage with the work.

After the **References**, some primary sources for this research can be found in the following **Annexes**. The first is an "almost complete list" of the **Bastard-Cheap*** lecture-performance series. I may have forgotten some presentations over the years, this is why it is called an "almost complete list". The second is the ethical template for informed consent. The third is an "almost complete list" of workshops (including the list of **research workshops***). I may have forgotten some workshops over the years, this is why it is called an "almost complete list". The fourth is an interview by Belgian artist Simon Baetens, conducted during the last research workshop, which situates the middle phase of this research. It is followed by the last mini-festival programme. The fifth consists of the planning and organisational documents related to the publication of this PhD.

²⁷ The notion of autoethnography, as mentioned, is taken from Holman Jones, Adams, and Ellis (2013).

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Chapter I: On dancing as dance-*que-te-quiero*-dance

This chapter describes how my dancing body developed as an artist/researcher and encompasses both intimate and professional dance contexts. Drawing on my curriculum vitae through an autoethnographic approach, I trace key conflicts in my dance education and critically reflect on their significance. Situated within my background as an Argentinian and Chilean citizen, the chapter also addresses the cultural and educational context that shaped this trajectory. It then outlines the artistic research methodology of Chasing Dances as a way to address my relationship to dancing practices. Finally, the chapter elaborates on a series of conflicts already traceable and grounded in A Dancer's Sensorial CV.

This chapter positions conflict as a starting point and a site of inquiry. The final section examines the tensions among values, roles, selves, and perspectives that give rise to Conflicted Embodiment through experiences of dancing, dance education, and migration.

1. A Dancer's Sensorial CV (2026-1988)

21 April 2026. 1 p.m., Brinnelvägen 58, Stockholm, the capital of Sweden. This text becomes public, along with other practices. I am already dancing in Studio 16 while people enter the space. I practise Conflicted Embodiment, focusing on the transitions between one dance and another. I perform a bastard-cheap translation from ballet to *cumbia*²⁸, more specifically from Kitri's variation (female protagonist of Don Quixote) to the *Wachiturros*²⁹. I will say *tjena tjena*³⁰ around 2:15 p.m.. I am surrounded by friends, my sister is close to me. Chrysa, my primary supervisor, is here. Eleonora, my second supervisor, is on another continent. I savour the English language in my mouth, which I began speaking eight years ago. I spice it with *merquén*³¹. I mix it up with French, Portuguese, Italian and my mother tongue, Spanish. I dance for this public in the context of contemporary dance³² with a handmade *tutu* of silver paper and a plastic crown. I throw glossy paper in the air, smiling. I am a swan, *baderna*, **Translatress***, the teacher, Thalía, the writer and one of the dancers of this event. I organise space and time, guiding your attention for three hours or more. I distribute my research budget to practitioners. My office is on the other side of this dance studio. This PhD celebration starts with the song *No es mi despedida* (This is not a farewell), a *cumbia* by Gilda (1997). The next song is *La cumbia de los aburridos* by Calle 13 (2007).

²⁸ *Cumbia* is an Abya-Yala music and dance style that originated in Colombia, influenced by African, Indigenous, and Spanish traditions. It spread throughout the continent, on different characteristics in each country, it can be danced alone, in couples, or in groups. I have practised *cumbia* for as long as I can remember.

²⁹ *Los Wachiturros* is a *cumbia* music band from Argentina.

³⁰ Casual way to say hello in Sweden.

³¹ *Merquén* or *merkén* is a blend of dried and smoked chili peppers, mainly *ají cacho de cabra*, a type of red chili typical of Chile.

³² From now on, contemporary dance is written without italics.

2 March 2026. I no longer need the notes³³ I had always kept open on my desk, with the list of new English words I collected during my first two years in this program. Writing in English today is confidently defective, always containing mistakes but still understandable. I know I rely too much on InstaText, the advanced editing assistant and proofreader I paid for with the PhD budget, which has reviewed all my writing pieces since 2023 and is improving this text. However, I also learned to be cautious about AI, and the text you are reading now has actually been reviewed several times by the editor, my supervisors, the co-presenter of this text and the proofreader. As a dancer pursuing a doctorate in artistic research with a focus on choreography, I constantly police myself, worrying that my explanations are unclear. I often feel embarrassed and ashamed about not knowing specific dance and anatomy terminologies in English. I bought the Anatomy Coloring Book (Kapit and Elson, 2014) to learn anatomical terms in English by colouring. My language, as a site of struggle, has become my site of research, and finishing this PhD also feels like completing an advanced English course. Song: *Sacar la voz* (Speak Out) by Ana Tijoux (2012).

February 2026. I cannot jump or impact my foot. I stop moving, training and dancing. I am still healing from a fracture in my first metatarsal from a few months ago. Being injured prompts me to write. The doctor said recovery will take between 3 and 6 months. I write while I feel pain in my right foot. I write in the kitchen of the apartment I rent from SSSB³⁴ in the Lapis neighbourhood.

11 January 2026. I trace significant moments in my sensorial dancer curricula being inspired by Documenting Experiential Authorship (Parkinson, 2018) and Félix Gonzalez-Torres's practice of portraits that uses different materialities for portrayals. There are so many events that any selection will be incomplete and unfair. I will try to keep it brief. I remember that I moved to Stockholm exactly five years ago. I still receive a regular income that changed everything for me: from my living conditions to my expectations of time and efficiency, from having hobbies (swimming and ukulele) to being able to take holidays, from publishing in English to feeling that I have a voice. I struggle, some days more than others, with the anxiety of letting go of this stability and privilege. In Argentina, the research I am conducting would not be possible under current conditions (Weman, 2025).

December 2025. News reports indicate that this December has seen less than one hour of sunlight, a record. Swedish weather tangles up my body. My psoas muscles are knotted, my eyes are dry from staring at the computer and require regular artificial tears. I should stop hibernating and accelerate my work for the final sprint of this PhD journey.

15 November 2025. I am living the dream I had at 27 – getting paid to dance and traveling because of it. At 37, I replace a cast member in *Casino's* piece by Ofelia Jarl Ortega (2024). I am now at Tanzquartier in Vienna, performing for the last time after having performed in three cities. I walk into the theatre dressing rooms, knowing that nothing is expected of me but dancing. I use salsa high heels, specially bought for this piece. The heel is 7.6 cm, which makes dancing painful and uncomfortable because of my injury. I can tolerate the pain, so I keep dancing. I take just one painkiller so as not to feel the pain as much. I will realise too late that I have grown accustomed to pain. I push my foot too far during the piece. I will later discover that I had made the healing of my fracture harder.

³³ From my notes, some words between 2021 and 2022 are odd, canvas, crain, crane, nasty, nest, damp, bliss, debris, flair.

³⁴ I rent an apartment from SSSB, Sweden's largest student housing provider in Stockholm, known in Swedish as *Stiftelsen Stockholms Studentbostäder* (Stockholm Student Housing Foundation).

September 2025. My voice no longer breaks from nervousness while speaking. My voice has changed since I was accepted into this PhD programme, as has the way I experience dance. During this time, I have not felt the need to produce dance pieces. I can pay for entry tickets to *milongas*³⁵. Now that I have trained my English voice, you can hear it coming from a specific place and direction. It is the voice of a dancer from the souths of Abya Yala.

August 2025. I start going to the pool at GIH in Stockholm and learning to swim for the first time in my life. Swimming helps me to train my diaphragm endurance to perform eccentric circuits to avoid losing the dynamic connection of my muscular chains.

July 2025. I dance salsa in La Placita de Santurce in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Someone asks me if I'm Puerto Rican, and when I say no, it still feels like the greatest compliment of my life. On several occasions, I think I see Bad Bunny³⁶ in the streets. In fact, I believe I do.

30 June 2025. I visit New York City for the first time after attending the Dance Studies Association Congress in Washington, DC, where I presented my work. I go to the MET (Metropolitan Museum) and walk through this enormous archive. I do not exactly have a good time until I see her. She stands before me in a small atrium: the original sculpture by Edgar Degas from 1880, *The Little Fourteen-Year-Old Dancer*. My heart accelerates, I know the name of the model of the sculpture I have in front of me: Marie Geneviève van Goethem. As a sculpture, it is a famous work. As a person being portrayed in a sculpture, she is one of the foundations of my research. Many people walk around her, talk about her, and take photos. There are other famous paintings by Degas around this sculpture. I think I can recognize her in one of the nearby paintings. I also see the smaller sculptures that Degas created for his sculptural works. From naked ballerinas, which are actually smaller versions of Marie, to horses. Degas was preoccupied with capturing movement and had several versions of the same work, always interested in depicting movement and dance. Looking at the original sculpture in the museum, it takes me a while to appreciate the auratic impression of standing in front of the original. I have mixed feelings and sensations. In 1880, this sculpture was criticised as a work of art, but it is now one of the most iconic representations of dance. I don't know if I want to take a photo of myself posing in front of it, and I can't stop thinking about the small replica I have of this sculpture. While people are taking photos of the sculpture, I want to ask everyone if they know that the protagonist was a child who disappeared from the records.

29 June 2025. In New York, I chase house with Sekou Heru in Peridance. I feel disoriented. It is the first class in my life where the teacher does not speak at all for a bit more than one hour. He demonstrates something, and we in the class imitate him from behind and around. He explains with his body. I embody, with a delay, the changes in weight and the position of the hips as he does.

April 2025. I share this research in Argentina in four different cities: Buenos Aires, Córdoba, Neuquén, and **Fiske Menuco***. I gain confidence in this artistic process while listening to *Buen Viaje* (Have a good trip) by Fémina (2014).

1 March 2025. I go to Carnival in Brazil alone, to chase dances. Sometimes, the sheer size of the party makes my loneliness hit hard. I chase *frevo*³⁷ in Olinda, getting out of my axis, moving as if

³⁵ *Milongas* are popular events for listening and dancing tango, *milonga* and *vals*.

³⁶ Famous Puerto Rican artist, song of reference: *Yo perreo sola*.

³⁷ *Frevo* is a jump-friendly dance and music style of Recife and Olinda, Brazil, typically associated with Carnival.

the floor were on fire, shifting my weight in lightning-fast steps and jumping as high as I can. I chase *tecnobrega pop*³⁸ in Recife with my friend Pontus from Sweden, who dances *farró*³⁹. We weave through the crowd, trying to follow the choreography of the chorus of *São de Amores* by Pablló Vittar⁴⁰. After the concert someone approaches me from the side, knee first, aiming for my small pack. I rotate my upper body, change weight, spin on myself, jump, and sprint away as fast as I can. My friend runs, too.

January 2025. I begin the final year of my employment contract at SKH with laser eye surgery. This frees me from dependence on glasses or contact lenses. I can dance without fear of damaging my glasses. My head is lighter, it has one prop less. During the recovery time, I start playing the ukulele. I consider this another hobby.

May 2024. I find myself in front of one of the few authorized transmitters of Klein TechniqueTM⁴¹ (Klein TechniqueTM, n.d.), a movement-based **somatic*** practice. It is 2024 and I am studying with Karin Munters Jameson, who has taught extensively in the Northern European and North American professional dance communities. Karin describes how she has taught this somatic practice and developed artistic methods of working with it. I admire her dedication to transmission. I try to repeat the slow almost endless count from one to eight twice that Karin does for us in the dance studio. My legs start shaking, I know it is an involuntary reaction. When I count by myself, I always do it faster. Studying Klein with Karin makes me feel close to a legitimate and authorized transmission of knowledge. The sense of authorised dance education is relatively new to me. What feels new is that many of my previous teachers referred to a distant source as the primary and legitimate reference. With Karin, however, there is a direct line of legitimation. What effect does this have on my dance? Perhaps not much. Dance is always learned through others – teachers shaped by generations of knowledge passed from one body to another. Yet, in my own dance education, the source was often distant, in another continent, in another language, with another (stable) economy. Since I met Karin, I have been fascinated by her pedagogical perspective and commitment to dance. The issue lies in the relational forces: my relationship with Karin reflects my own dance education, which instilled in me a need for legitimisation from external sources, such as centres of knowledge or people authorised to grant legitimisation, while apologising for not being sufficiently authorised.

March 2023. Thalía's appearance disrupts my sense of self in this research. Since then, I have started using she/we as pronouns. It is confusing because I sometimes write 'we' instead of 'I', using the pronoun 'we' to problematise our position, because our 'I' is more than one and our 'we' is conflicted. Thalía plays Nathy Peluso in *Bzrp Music Sessions, Vol. 36* (2020). Thalía uses too much perfume, and I do not enjoy it much. Somehow, I have adapted to the local Swedish custom of avoiding perfumes due to allergies.

³⁸ *Tecnobrega pop* blends *brega*, electronic beats, and pop influences. It is especially popular in northern Brazil.

³⁹ *Farró* is a popular music and partner dance style from northeastern Brazil. I have been practising it sporadically since my second trip to Brazil, when I was 34 years old.

⁴⁰ Concert accessible via this link; the song *São de Amores* starts at 1:01:38: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IuYX0SsYDMw&list=RDluYX0SsYDMw&start_radio=1

⁴¹ Klein TechniqueTM is a somatic practice developed by dancers that can be used to analyse the technical aspects of dance practices.

June 2023. I move between the dance studio and dance cultures with the same dance. I dance tango⁴² in the dance studio and at a *milonga*. I dance *samba*⁴³ in the dance studio remembering the *samba* I danced in Brazil. I dance Argentinian folklore⁴⁴ alone at SKH, but it has been several years since I last attended a *peña*⁴⁵. I have been involved in folklore for most of my life, but how can I avoid romanticising the experience of folk dance? When, and how long, can my body claim a practice as its own? What inscriptions does a practice leave on a body? What does it inscribe into my body, and how does that shape the way I perceive myself and my world(s)? If a dance has been inscribed in this body, does that grant this body the right to speak from it? Can I claim an embodied experience of ballet today even if I haven't practiced for years? Can I claim a practice when I am out of practice? When is a body entitled to speak from a dance experience? Does a dance recalibrate my sense of timing? How long do I remain silent in a group before feeling excluded, or how attuned do I become to someone else's silence?

February 2023. I start repeatedly going to the dance studio alone. This practice will remain active until 2026. In the dance studio I once again feel the fanaticism of the dances I dance coming into the studio with me. I am immersed in *cumbia*, tango, Passing Through⁴⁶, Asymmetrical Motion⁴⁷,

⁴² Tango is a music style and partner dance that emerged in the late 19th century in the Río de la Plata region. There is much to say about tango, but I quote from Argentinian scholar Marta Savigliano: "The worldwide popularity of the tango has been associated with scandal: the public display of passion performed by a heterosexual couple, the symbol of which is a tight embrace and suggestive, intricate footwork" (Savigliano, 1995, p. 11).

I have practised choreographic tango since I was five years old and improvised tango (*tango salón*) since I was twelve. I have chosen not to italicize the word tango, since it is commonly used by English speakers.

⁴³ *Samba* is a Brazilian music and dance tradition with deep Afro-Brazilian roots. The dance originated as a solo dance (*samba no pé*), consisting of fast footwork. Depending on the style, it can be danced alone, in couples, in small or larger groups.

⁴⁴ Folklore refers to rural music, including structures such as *chacarera*, *chamamé*, *gato*, and *zamba*, among others. Folklore can be categorised according to provincial and regional criteria. Here, I refer to folklore as Argentine folkloric dance, distinct from tango. The distinction between tango and folklore reflects common usage but can also be viewed as a struggle. In common usage, tango is associated with 'urban' music.

⁴⁵ *Peñas* are popular events where the folkloric rhythms are sung, danced, and/or played, and regional food is served.

⁴⁶ Passing Through is a movement approach developed by Venezuelan dancer David Zambrano, in conjunction with his Flying Low dance technique. In his words, "this technique uses guided exercises like 'under-over-around' and continuous leader-follower switches" (Zambrano, n.d., <https://davidzambrano.org/passing-through-workshop/>).

I practised Passing Through intermittently in Buenos Aires between 2013 and 2016.

⁴⁷ Asymmetrical Motion is a movement methodology that investigates the "agility of the body as it moves in and through space" (Asymmetrical Motion, n.d.), created by Argentine dancer Lucas Condró. I studied it with Lucas in Buenos Aires.

release technique⁴⁸, Graham Technique⁴⁹, *forró*, salsa⁵⁰, *zamba*⁵¹, *samba*, *malambo*⁵², and my friend's choreographies. I am dizzy, desperate, drunk and calm with dances. My body has become better at moving through them and training their combination has become central to my research.

October 2022. I co-designed the free-standing course at SKH titled *Canon and Visibility: Hacking the Hegemony* (2023). I am the course leader. As part of the course, I invited Eugenia Cadús from Argentina, a friend and my *Licenciatura* supervisor, to teach. I also propose the screening of *El escarabajo de oro* (The Golden Bug) directed by Alejo Mogueillansky (2014), which is one of my favourite films. The movie addresses questions of coloniality through the story of a quest for a hidden treasure in a northern Argentine province. It offers a reimagining of Edgar Allan Poe's classic, using it as a lens to explore the economic and aesthetic power dynamics between Europe, North America, and the Southern Cone, while critically examining the enduring effects of colonialism. Over the years, I have dedicated myself to bringing people and artistic references from the south into the SKH context, a practice that embodies my epistemic cause of sharing south's perspectives.

April 2022. Pleasure! I am able to work in an office, I am able to book a dance studio and train. The SKH building has fifteen dance studios of various sizes, all fully equipped for dancing. I keep returning to my favourite dance studio, Studio Four. Light enters from the roof. The size is perfect, whether alone or with others: 84.3 square metres, a piano, a mirror with electric curtains that can be raised or lowered, a board on the wall, and a full PA system. Perhaps it is my favourite dance studio because it was the first dance studio where the Head of Programme for the Master in Choreography,

⁴⁸ Release technique emerged in the 1960s in the US. I studied it in Buenos Aires with Melina Seldes, who studied with Mary O'Donnell Fulkerson in the Netherlands. Seldes emphasises that in Release, "imagination forms the basis for movement" (Manrique, 2023, my translation).

In conversation with my supervisor, Chrysa Parkinson, she notes that "the phrase 'release practice' relates to how broad the categories 'release' and 'practice' are in dance, body-work, and experiential anatomy contexts. 'Release' is often used to refer to some variation of Skinner Releasing (<http://www.skinnerreleasing.com/>) and sometimes to Myofascial Release. There are many somatic and experiential anatomy approaches to analyse and support movement underlying what people refer to as 'release.'" (Chrysa Parkinson, personal communication, 15 March 2026).

⁴⁹ Graham Technique is a modern dance form developed by US choreographer Martha Graham (1894–1991). It centres on the dynamic interplay between contraction and release. I trained intensively in this technique from the ages of 16 to 21.

⁵⁰ Salsa is a partner dance and music style characterized by fast footwork, turns, and rhythmic movement. Like tango, there is much to say about salsa. I quote US dance scholar Juliet McMains that summarizes its roots: "Salsa is a hybrid of many Caribbean musical forms – mambo, *son*, *danzón*, rumba, *bomba*, *plena* – which were themselves syncretises of Spanish, African, and indigenous traditions that shaped Spanish Caribbean culture" (McMains, 2015, p. 2). I have danced salsa intermittently since I was 13 years old.

⁵¹ *Zamba* is an Argentine folkloric couple dance and music, performed with handkerchiefs.

⁵² *Malambo* is a traditional Argentine folk dance and musical style, typically performed by the gauchos (Argentine cowboys). It is usually danced as a competition dance (there are several conquests and festivals) with rhythmic footwork, usually in solo or quartet format, whose styles are divided into geographical origins: North and South. The presence of women in *malambo* and special training for women has increased in recent years. However, I must say that I learned it despite spending only a short time practising it at dance school and also observed it in the *peñas*, where I danced regularly.

Jennifer Lacey, invited me to present my project when I had just arrived. During this session, I met four of my friends⁵³.

October 2021. It is a weird lockdown in Sweden. I am living in a nature reserve on an island in Stockholm during my first years of the PhD. I sail a boat and I get mice out of my house with a cage; I do not kill them. The mice return several times. I get lost in the forest, fully covered by snow, and do not dare to take off my gloves because it is freezing. I take saunas alone in this house and realize how isolated I am. I lit the chimney and nearly suffocated twice because I didn't know how to vent the smoke properly. Sometimes I am afraid of being alone. At least the mice like me, I say to myself while watching the *zarpada* film *La Flor* (2018) by Mariano Llinás, the longest film in the history of Argentine cinema, with a duration of 808 minutes excluding intermissions.

16 May 2021. It is my birthday and I receive bad news. My choreographic composition teacher, Luis Biasotto, passed away from Covid-19. He remains one of my favourite artists.

11 January 2021. I arrive in Stockholm in the middle of a heavy snowstorm. It is 2021, and I am starting the program during Covid-19; everything is layered with cold, ice, and darkness. I meet Chrysa, my main supervisor for the first time during a walk around an island at minus five degrees. I still do not understand how I entered a third cycle of academic training in Europe without taking an English test. Soon, I will begin receiving invitations to conferences, where I will speak within the Nordic academic environment.

June 2020. Full lockdown in Brussels, I have shaved. Sometimes I am happy and selfish: the entire machinery of the art market has been forced to stop – no touring, no residencies. I am accepted into two PhD-in-practice programmes. I receive this piece of information in the house where I live. I choose the programme at SKH's Dance Department. This is part of the institution previously known as DOCH⁵⁴. It is a fundamental decision for my life because I know it will determine my career, and I am not sure whether to undertake another voluntary migration. I decide to move to Stockholm after speaking with Anne Juren in a call and asking about the programme there.

February 2020. In Brussels, I am an artist with side jobs to make a living, and I stubbornly respond 'no' to open calls. I work as a life model and as a dance teacher for children during the holiday period. As a life model, I use my body as my work tool without needing to speak; instead, I listen, observe, and learn French while remaining still in position in the humid and cold studios. As a dance teacher, working with children, by contrast, helps me develop my vocabulary. They laugh at my mistakes and accent, making me aware of both my progress and my vulnerability. Coping with the frustration of lacking the vocabulary is often difficult.

September 2019. I finish the post-master's programme at a pass in Brussels, which lasted one and a half years. I learn to articulate my migration process by incorporating translation into my artistic practice. My artistic references are absent. I am unable to explain myself or make myself understood. My wishes and dreams for my professional life have manifested in Eurocentrism, but I am unable to speak the language of the European art market. I can't prove my experience. I feel like an amateur or non-professional because I have not been paid enough to make a living from art before coming to Europe. I am called an emerging artist.

⁵³ Mariana Costa (Brazil), Andrea Diaz Ghiretti (Perú), Stella Kruusamägi (Estonia), and Nefeli Gioti (Greece).

⁵⁴ DOCH included Dance Pedagogy and Circus and Dance.

December 2019. At age 31, I can't afford the entry fee to a *milonga* in Brussels. Tango in Europe creates tension between local and global Argentine tango and is very expensive, but it remains a regular need for me. Practising tango feels like being at home – a home that no longer exists – yet it is still a strange mirror, with costly high heels and outfits.

December 2018. I feel a bit ashamed that I only realize, upon arriving in Brussels, that Impulstanz is a major festival focused on contemporary dance. It feels awkward to learn about it at age 28.

May 2018. I start the postgraduate program a.pass and I am amazed by the a.pass context for artistic research, which, unfortunately, will disappear a few years later. a.pass is located in the Molenbeek neighborhood. It consists of two spaces: one large hall and the administrative offices downstairs. The smell is sometimes unpleasant. I experience English language shock (mora jara, 2022), my brain hurts. After a few months, I will start making friends and socialising in Brussels. My friends will repeat what they said when I ask them what they said. With my friend Diego we see in a.pass a mouse dying from poison in front of us, awful. I dance on the dance floor that I installed with the help of my friend, the technician, Steven Jouwersma. I build a ballet barre for myself with the help of my friend. I spend long periods in this space. I have mentoring sessions, I cook there, enjoy the view, and take many naps.

January 2018. I have a persistent headache as I feel my brain cells developing, stretching, multiplying, and painfully learning to live in new languages. I experience a French language shock with the people in the house where I live in Brussels. I am not yet able to police my own language use because my language skills are not advanced enough to check whether I am making sense with my language.

September 2017. At 27, I dream of my migration to Europe in the coming months. In Buenos Aires, I wonder: What is it like to make a living from dance? What does a theatre in Europe smell like? How does it feel like to be paid to dance? To receive a fee in euros? To acquire a Belgian artist's status⁵⁵?

October 2014. I am 26 years old, I graduate from the *Licenciatura en Composición Coreográfica*⁵⁶, *mención Danza-Teatro*⁵⁷ at the Department of Movement located at the Universidad Nacional de las Artes (UNA), in Buenos Aires. This five- to six-year degree program includes a total of forty-five subjects, among them: four semesters of ballet, seven semesters of modern dance, seven semesters of choreographic composition, one semester of tango, one semester of *clown*⁵⁸, one semester of Contact Improvisation and no optional subject. The education is largely segmented, which means that a student can follow their own path and interrupt their studies at any time. In one class in Buenos Aires, sometimes we are thirty students in a room with no air conditioning and no toilet paper in the restrooms. It is rare to meet your fellow students in multiple subjects. During my studies, I often

⁵⁵ The *statut d'artiste* (French) or *kunstenaarsstatuut* (Dutch) both refer to a special social-security status for artists in Belgium (Kunstenpunt, n.d.).

⁵⁶ https://movimiento.una.edu.ar/carreras/licenciatura-en-composicion-coreografica_16631

⁵⁷ An approximate translation of this diploma could be a Degree in Choreographic Composition with a major in dance-theatre.

⁵⁸ I took *clown* lessons with Melina Seldes, who was also my teacher in *release* and Technique of the Performer.

asked: why is ballet taught three times a week in this curriculum and why does it have four consecutive levels? Why are there only two lessons of tango per week in this curriculum and during one semester only? Why does contact have two lessons per week in this curriculum and why is it given its English name?

May 2013. I am 25 and I practise Tensegrity training (González Solá), which inspires me to change my training routine. I enjoy dancing *cumbia* on the street, at gatherings with friends, at family parties, at *La Bomba de Tiempo*⁵⁹, and at salsa and *reguetón*⁶⁰ events. Because of *cumbia*, I go to sleep at 11 p.m. and wake up at 3 a.m. to go to the club. Because of *reguetón*, my body vibrates every beat. To embody *reguetón* while embodying pleasure feels conflicted: am I servicing the male gaze while dancing it?

April 2013. I watch *El Loro y el Cisne* (2013) by Alejo Moguillansky, a film about dance in Argentina, which stages a fictional documentary about dance, interweaving questions among experimental, contemporary and classical dances. In the final scene, Luis Biasotto dances 'a toda máquina' ("at full speed") and stops⁶¹. He jumps, flying like a wardrobe, a closet soaring through the air. I practise those kinds of jumps without much success.

July 2012. I ask myself: What is the relationship between 'embody' and 'my style'? How does dancing a specific style, such as Argentine folklore, so frequently affect my embodiment?

December 2011. With Argentine *zamba*, I learned about seduction through touch using a handkerchief.

April 2011. At 23, I enter *Puán*, the Faculty of Philosophy and Literature at the Universidad de Buenos Aires (UBA). I enter the realms of 'big knowledge' - or 'Knowledge', with a capital K. I am taking an additional course on dance and representation at UBA with María Martha Gigena. With this course, I will begin asking: Why, in Argentina, do we study more about European dance history than Europeans themselves do? Why do we feel the need to be something different or project our expectations onto Europe? This question will become increasingly insistent throughout my career.

May 2010. At 22 years old in Buenos Aires, I let go of the symbolic value of becoming a dancer in a contemporary dance company. I abandon it and it frees me. I understand that a contemporary dance company is not the place for experimental formats. It is clear that I am more interested in smaller formats, sometimes referred to as "independent contemporary dance". I study choreographic composition as experimental formats with the founders of Grupo Krapp, Luis Biasotto and Luciana Acuña, as teachers at the Universidad Nacional de las Artes (UNA) in Buenos Aires.

February 2009. I move to Buenos Aires to start the *Licenciatura* at UNA. I live in Calle Corrientes, near the *Obelisco*, in downtown. I walk for hours in La Ciudad de la Furia (*The City of Fury*, as people call Buenos Aires), getting lost at night and often feeling afraid of those around me.

⁵⁹ *La Bomba de Tiempo* is a percussion collective based in Buenos Aires, Argentina, that combines percussion rhythms with collective improvisation.

⁶⁰ In Spanish we say and write *reguetón*, while in English it is reggaeton. For this text, I have chosen the version in my mother tongue.

⁶¹ You can see the final scene of the film in the *La muerte no existe* ("Death doesn't exist", my translation) homage at minute 28:40 by Gabriela Gobbi, Luciana Acuña, Alejo Moguillansky and Gabriel Chwojnik: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HuldTJ43Tgo>

December 2008. At 20 years old in Fiske Menuco, the city where I come from, I let go of the symbolic value of making ballet my purpose in life.

December 2007. At 19, I complete a *Profesorado Superior Nacional de Danzas Clásicas y Contemporáneas* (Teaching Qualification in Classical and Contemporary Dance) in Fiske Menuco at IUPA (*Instituto Universitario Patagónico de las Artes*)⁶². A rough translation of this course of studies could be a teaching qualification in classical and contemporary dance, which means that I specialised in classical and contemporary dance forms, namely ballet from the Vaganova school (my teachers are Russian migrants), Graham technique and Cunningham technique. After 11 years of subjecting my body to a high level of discipline, I can't say that I am a specialist in the field of 'contemporary dance'. I waver between being suspicious about this career and believing I truly know something. I know there is so much dance to see, but I am afraid of leaving this place. I am beginning to feel a hunger for more, but where should I start looking for information? Buenos Aires seems to be the best option to pursue my education. In 2026, the specific programme I study no longer exists, but has split into three different tracks, which can be found on the university's website⁶³ (IUPA, 2025).

November 2007. During my final ballet exam, I dance in pain because I sprained my foot but still have to perform a variation on pointe. At this moment, I begin dancing in pain, which continues for several more years. At this age, I accept this violence toward my own body as something that should be a rule. I see how this value is passed from teacher to student, and then from teacher to student again. By this time, I have already internalized that ballet was the path to becoming a professional dancer, and I am obsessed with the ideal of perfection. Ballet trained me in coordination, endurance, stage control, and a high degree of rhythmic precision.

September 2006. At 18, a boy tells me in a nightclub, "Oh, look, you do not have breasts, little girl. What are you doing in a nightclub?" After that I will start using fake breasts in my bras for several years.

June 2006. "If there is something a parent could give to their children as capital – symbolic capital – it would be education." I still hear my parents repeating this throughout my childhood and into my late twenties. When I think of education, I immediately associate 'public education' with walls covered in pamphlets, graffiti or stickers, promoting activism, cultural activities, evidence of strikes, and no fees. 'Public education' suggests doors without locks, a constant flow of people through the corridors, and the potential interruption of lessons for massive demonstrations demanding more funding. Little did my parents know that this simple comment would shape my understanding of education for life – and that the concept of 'public' continues to influence my research today.

August 2005. By 17 my obsession with the mirror leads to symptoms of eating disorders and isolates me from the world, except from dance. I do not menstruate. I do not overeat or experience extreme eating episodes. I do suffer when I look at myself in the mirror. I compare my body with others. I see myself as fat, though I am very skinny. I dislike school in the morning because it drains my energy for dancing. It is hard for me to have friends at school; I am not a good friend there, I am not generous. At school no one understands my obsession with dancing. I experience episodes of anxiety when I am in front of food. My sister helps me out of this desperate state. She takes me out of

⁶² Instituto Universitario Patagónico de las Artes, website: <https://iupa.edu.ar/>

⁶³ The four different tracks can also be divided into current university and non-university tracks. Here you can find the current degree programmes at the academic institution: https://iupa.edu.ar/sitio/carreras/?fwp_categories=artes-del-movimiento

the toilet if I vomit. These episodes of anxiety will return in the future for different reasons. My obsessions have multiplied. In dance, I silently compete with my friends to see who eats the least. I quietly measure bodies among bodies when we are all naked in the changing rooms. I am ashamed if I am not shaved. I am still fixated on virtuosic dancing, trapped in classicism, binarism, and drama: Who lifts their leg higher and who turns more today, or yesterday or tomorrow. I look stubbornly in the mirror, trying to find differences in my body hour after hour, day after day, week after week. I get annoyed if my body changes. I get annoyed if my body does not change. I constantly think about how clothes make my bones visible. I do not like the curves in my body; I want to be like a line. I envy my tall friends who look like a long line. I am short, always the first in any queue. My ass takes up too much space and, in any queue, also attracts too much attention. I struggle to find clothes for this body that I do not appreciate. I cover myself as much as I can because I have stopped tolerating my body. I have constipation. I do not enjoy eating. I am not the only one; I am one of many, and we all hide and are somewhat proud of this obsession with the mirror.

October 2004. At 16, I realize I will not become a 'first ballerina'. My teacher, Norita Constanzo, shows me a VHS video of a contemporary dance group in Buenos Aires that fascinates me: Grupo KRAPP. I decide that I want to study with them. I understand that I will have to move away from the south.

September 2004. At 16, the *reguetón* hit *Gasolina* is played on every radio station, at every family gathering, in every nightclub, at every party. I go to nightclubs, a culture I embrace every Friday and Saturday night to experience dancing with others. I dance the phenomenon of *reguetón* surrounded by my friends, making gyrating movements with my hips, moving my legs between other people's legs and singing the song with a beer in my hand. I am aware that my dance is extremely sexualised, and I have fun doing it. I am also aware that unwelcome hands might be placed around my hips during these dances. My friends and I look out for each other because we know the nightclub is a place for rubbing hips, moaning, and partying.

March 2004. I learn *malambo* by watching, I silently transfer the kinesthetic sensation of my friends tapping their feet against the floor to myself. I study the angles and the accents of their knees approaching the floor and the rhythm of dissociation between the right and left leg. I admire how ankles twist and the movement of the hips. It has always been performed by men only. It is uncommon for a woman to dance *malambo*.

September 2003. By age 15, my professor calls us (me and my peers) 'cows' while my ribs shows through my ballet leotard. I stop and return to dance many times because of injuries in my knees and Achilles tendons. The tendonitis is caused by putting excessive pressure on my feet, even torturing them under a piano. The chronic injury persists for several years until I eventually change my entire technique for stretching my feet: instead of extending while tensing and contracting inward, I extend while lengthening, without pushing back into myself.

February 2003. At age 14, I go to Buenos Aires for the first time with my friend Silvana Rossi to take ballet lessons during the summer. We travel from Lomas de Zamora, where I have family that can host us, to Belgrano. It takes about 1 hour and 45 minutes by public transport to get there. I am impressed by the size of the city, the size of the streets, the size of the sidewalks, the buildings next to each other and going up, the endless stream of people in the city, constantly appearing like ants. I am struck by the rubbish smell of El Riachuelo, the river that crosses the city and flows into the Río de la Plata.

December 2001. Argentina has seven presidents in one week. I see it all on TV. I am at home, paralyzed. I don't leave my house.

March 2001. Argentine filmmaker Lucrecia Martel premieres *La Ciénaga*, one of my favourite films for its uncanny anticipation of the social malaise that would emerge during the crisis months later. The film is oracular. I would discover it years later, when my fascination with dance expands into a critical engagement with contemporary art, deepening my appreciation of cinema.

October 1998. At age 10, my tolerance for mistakes and errors begins to decrease. In a few years, it will vanish. My tolerance for mistakes will be accompanied by a sensory fixation on comparison. I start to become fixated on my appearance in the mirror. It starts almost without me noticing, from comparing myself in dance class to other bodies, to replicating the comparisons my teachers make in class, to comparing myself alone to myself alone yesterday, to extending these comparisons to my classmates at school who have no idea what I do in dance class. Who gets higher legs, higher jumps, less pain, multiple turns on one leg and hyper coordination in footwork.

Spring 1997. South Hemisphere. At age 9, I win 'Miss Elegance' in an Argentinian folklore competition. I believe I won because my spine was very straight while dancing folklore. At this age, ballet causes shame in some aspects of my dancing. The ballet teacher said, "If you want to dance anything, you have to dance ballet. Ballet is the universal dance, and if you can dance ballet, you will be able to dance anything." She told me that the posture of flamenco and the foot-stomping wouldn't suit my ballet training. My love for melodrama and *telenovelas* made me stop dancing flamenco altogether: I stopped 'for good'. I internalized her comment and, as a result, began dismissing other dance styles, giving full value and priority to studying ballet. From this moment on, I will reduce my dose of tango and Argentine folklore and keep them hidden on my CV.

January 1997. I dance in front of my family, I can't remember what. Family dance presentations remain central to my life until my late teens, when I consider myself 'too old' to perform, though family expectations persist. My relationship to dance is shaped in two primary ways by my large family. First, there is always an audience for you. Second, my family is passionate about dance; dancing is integrated into our existence. My whole family carries a strong, complicit and spiritual connection to dance that shapes how I experience dancing. Dancing is celebration and sharing. Dancing re-enchants the dance⁶⁴.

March 1996. At age 8, my institutional dance education begins. In this first part of my career, I mainly study ballet, Graham technique and Cunningham technique at IUPA in Fiske Menuco, while I also practise tango and Argentine folklore in social events called *milongas* and *peñas*.

October 28. 1995. At age 7, I give my first major performance at my cousin's wedding in Chile. I dance a Spanish dance, closing my eyes and spinning again and again in a never-ending motion, feeling the rhythm in a dizzy sensation. In my family, dance permeates celebrations and daily routines: New Year's Eve, Christmas, birthdays, graduations, weddings, breakfasts, and dinners, often accompanied by *cumbias*, *rancheras*⁶⁵, and *cuecas*⁶⁶, with abundant alcohol. I still remember my

⁶⁴ Regarding reenchantment, see the work *Encantamento: sobre política de vida* (2020) by Luiz Antonio Simas and Luiz Rufino.

⁶⁵ *Ranchera* is a traditional Mexican music style that arrived in Chile between the 1940s and 1960s and was adopted in the southern and rural areas of the country. It is mainly danced by couples.

⁶⁶ The *cueca* I refer to is a traditional folk music and dance from Chile, performed in pairs with a handkerchief, and is a playful courtship dance. It is the national Chilean dance, with Spanish, Indigenous, and African influences. In various forms, it is also performed in Bolivia, Peru, and Argentina.

seventy-year-old uncle dancing all night at a wedding and me going to bed exhausted. Loud, unrestrained, vibrant laughter characterizes the relationship between dancing and physical endurance in my family. I embrace every opportunity to perform for my relatives. From an early age, I receive consistent feedback and encouragement each summer from my family, which includes 14 aunts and uncles and 56 first cousins, not counting their descendants. Just on my mother's side, there are currently more than 150 descendants from my maternal grandparents.

Summer 1993. South Hemisphere. My regular closest audience is my immediate family, which includes my mother, father, sister, and a history of about 20 cats, 2 dogs, and 2 turtles. Additionally, my sister likes to imitate me, so I enjoy teaching her some steps, and we often perform for our immediate family. She stands behind me and copies my moves. I do not see her, but she is so confident that I begin teaching her complete set material for specific dances. For example we perform *sevillanas*⁶⁷ together, transforming the spaces of the house into the stage we need. The living room is perfect for dramatic dances, the kitchen is for *telenovela* imitations, and the garden is for full scenarios including animals. This initial audience quickly expands to include my extended family.

December 1989. I am one and a half years old, and a foundational myth says that my father recognizes my passion for dancing with my very first steps in Fiske Menuco. It is a sentimental image: my father trying to pull me away from the speaker. I hold onto the speaker, I imitate the beats with my body, I let the music flow through my skin. When my father tries to take me away, drama: a little one screaming uncontrollably, fighting furiously to return to the dance and hold the beat.

2. Chasing Dances

It is 2 December 2023, Dia Nacional do Samba (National Samba Day) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. It is 6.37 p.m. and I am in Rio's main train station. The station is huge, and I am looking specifically for the *Trem do Samba*⁶⁸ (Samba Train). I am alone in the middle of a crowd.

I have a rice bag in my backpack and feel ready to board the samba train. I exchange this non-perishable food for my entry ticket. Unfortunately, when I arrive at the ticket counter at the station, they tell me my rice is only half a kilo. I am embarrassed—it is too little. I give them half a kilo of rice anyway. Then I realize I can buy a ticket for the *Trem do Samba* at another counter. If I remember correctly, I pay five *reais*.

I board the train by following a crowd of people. I pick a random carriage that is about to depart. The time does not match what I understood, but that no longer matters—I am on the train. The train is full; I am standing close to others. People drink beer at the entrance to the carriage. I buy a beer too. It is almost summer, the air is very hot, and we are all sweating. Once inside, we head toward Madureira, one of the neighbourhoods where samba emerged, mostly inhabited by working-class families and known as an intense commercial area.

The moment the door closes, the train becomes another drum for the samba being played there. I almost didn't notice, but in this carriage, in fact in every carriage, there is a different samba group. People are singing, drumming and dancing so that the train moves slowly forward, but mostly from side to side, in irregular shaking, and we even have the feeling that we could be going

⁶⁷ Paired dance from Andalucía structured in four short distinct sections.

⁶⁸ It is possible to access the program of the 2023 edition via this link: <https://en.prefeitura.rio/cultura/no-dia-do-mais-tradicional-ritmo-musical-brasileiro-trem-do-samba-comemora-com-muita-musica-da-central-do-brasil-a-oswaldocruz/>

backwards. Sometimes the vibration is so strong that I only know we are going forwards because when I look out of the window, I can confirm that we are moving forwards. The feeling of festivity and celebration is huge. Our songs move the train in so many directions that it is better to dance and follow the movement of the train than to try to stay in one fixed place and collide with the border of the wagon. I don't recognize the sambas being played, only the song *Meu lugar* by Arlindo Cruz⁶⁹, which sings about the Madureira neighbourhood.

When we arrive at Madureira station, there are thousands of people on the ground, three large scenes and many *rodas de samba* in the streets. The event takes over the whole neighborhood and I stand right next to people's houses. I walk through the streets and chase *sambas*. I do this for many hours. After trying for an hour, I finally can go back with an Uber to the centre of Rio de Janeiro.

I chase dances. My goal is to embody them, experience their liveliness and immerse myself in them alive. I know that I cannot chase after them to have or possess them, so I am also careful to keep them alive. My chase always implies an object in motion: dances. Dances are in constant movement. I enjoy the process and effort of being near them, of approaching and embracing this closeness. As I practise chasing, I simultaneously study the dances that I later want to perform in other contexts: how the bodies host the dances, what the repeated patterns are, the key leaps and accents, what the distance between people is, how space is being used. It is a careful endeavour to keep dances alive so that they can later be alive in other contexts. It's important for me to pay attention to the exact times, spaces and specific outfits that these dances require. Dances are slippery, and they are adept at disguising themselves. The dances I like best are surprising, explosive, and chaotic. But I also like the dances that are a bit boring, predictable and regular. Chasing dances can be seen as an insistence on experiences, on the search for bodies that inhabit dances. It is also another way to name what dancers often are: curious. And I do not hesitate to affirm this: I chase dances because I love dancing.

How do I chase dances? I move towards them, which means that I chase dances as a relational exercise: in relation to other people, spaces, entities. As I chase dances, my body, this body, tries to re-embody and move with a multiplicity of bodies that move. This is what I look for at dance lessons, dance sessions, dance events, live concerts with dance and/or on the street. On the way from a dance class held indoors to a social dance event taking place on the street, I have discovered a fascination for the minimal unit of dance: the steps. In English, we say 'step', meaning the smallest unit of walking; in Spanish, we say 'paso'. The etymology in French refers to "a step in dancing" or a 'passage'.

Depending on the dance tradition, I can find different ways of approaching the steps. So, when I chase dances, I also learn how to do these steps. For some dances, I try to understand not only how the dance is being danced, but also what is the sensation in terms of the proximity, sociality and endurance this dance evokes.

Like *samba*, there are some dances whose main aim is to vary the same step in rhythm, intensity, direction, accent, and space, to name but a few parameters.

There are also other dance forms where there are no specific steps, but certain ways of approaching the rhythm while walking the steps, like *cumbia*, for example. We can debate whether *cumbia* has certain steps or not, and it all depends on what kind of *cumbia* we are talking about.

Chasing dances is determined by the context in which I find myself. Sometimes it is trickier to chase some dances than others. There are dance forms that have specific ways of denoting a specific movement and ballet is specialized in that. For example, there is a ballet step called *chassé*, which means 'chased' in French. In *chassé*, one leg chases the other in a continuous movement that always provokes a negotiation of the entire body axis between balance and imbalance, and so on. Sliding and gliding along the floor. There are many *chassé* variations that can be performed in different directions and degrees of coordination challenge, including turns and jumps.

⁶⁹ Written by Arlindo Domingos da Cruz Filho and José Mauro Diniz, released in the album *Mtv Ao Vivo Arlindo Cruz*, Cd 1, 2009.

In ballet, *chassé* can start from fifth position. Begin by bending both legs in a *demi plié*, then slide one foot in one direction, let's say forward (but it can be sideways or backwards), while shifting your weight between both legs. Deepen the *plié* and shift your weight forward. Shift your weight further onto the front leg while straightening both knees. The second leg chases the first. The mechanism must flow together from the starting position to the end position as a continuous movement and always ends with a generous *plié*, a bending of the knees because it requires a firm base, as the next step is performed from there. Even if *chassé* can be used as a connecting step, that is, as a *chassé*, as a unit, one *chassé* is not enough to convey the image of *chassé*. To convey the image of movement in space, *chassé* requires several successive units of the same step. I chase dances with the same intention that is needed to perform *chassé*: chasing one leg after the other, in persistent movement.

Chasing dances looks for the experience of pleasure in dancing. It started as a regular practice more than ten years ago, when I returned to dancing after a long break. Over the years of my research, however, it became increasingly clear that this way of engaging with dance follows a 'performative program'. Drawing from Eleonora Fabião's *programa performativo* (performative programme), Fabião's concept is understood as a catalyst of experience, a compositional procedure in which the artist's intentions, expectations, and actions are critical tools to reactivate the conditions of experience⁷⁰. Here the performative program I perform everywhere I go, to trigger dance and life experiences:

Wherever you are, chase the dance that might be happening around you.

In cities, go to the centre.

In the countryside, check the street posters.

Get involved in the social environment: talk to people, ask details about the dance, and inquire about other places to continue chasing dances.

The search is endless. (mora jara, personal notes, 2 September 2023)

Over time, the regular practice of chasing dances has developed into a specific artistic methodology. When I use the word 'chase', I use it in the sense of driving or sending out by force. However, I know that 'to chase' can also mean to run after a person or an animal, and that there is a full spectrum of dispositions associated with it⁷¹, this is, the act of chasing also determines that something can be chased.

My hypothesis is that I chase dances for the thrill of chasing rather than the thrill of catching. Since my goal lies in motion, I am interested in chasing as an impulse and as a poetic operation. By chasing dances, I want to feel grounded in the territory I am in, yet I long for the dances of the land I come from, and for the deep sense of rootedness that comes from the dances of a specific place.

⁷⁰ For Fabião, the performative programme is the enunciation of performance: "a set of previously stipulated actions – clearly articulated and conceptually polished – that will be carried out by the artist(s), by others, or by both without any prior rehearsal" (my translation). In the original: "*o programa é o enunciado da performance: um conjunto de ações previamente estipuladas [...] a ser realizado pelo artista, pelo público ou por ambos sem ensaio prévio*" (Fabião, 2013, p. 4). Distinct from choreography, improvisation, or rehearsal, the performative program enables, orients, and drives experimentation.

⁷¹ In Argentina, the verb 'to chase' carries historical significance. In Patagonia, the term is linked to the colonial national project so-called the "Conquest of the Desert". This period was marked by state violence, forced displacement, and the persecution of Indigenous peoples. Historically, 'to chase' evokes oppression, appropriation, and death, rather than harmless play. My aim, however, is to reclaim the term in the context of dance, giving chasing dances a connotation that challenges these colonial associations.

There is a life in a dance that precedes, exceeds and goes beyond my own body's practice of that dance. In other words, *samba* exists outside of me, it has preceded me and will continue to exist without me. I follow the words of writer and performing arts curator Daniel Blanga Dubai:

Dance is a movement in which the bodies occupy the movement. In this sense we can say that dance does not coincide with the life of the movement, but rather visualises the life of the movement at a certain moment. A life that exists independently on (sic) me dancing that movement. (Blanga Dubai, 2020)

While chasing dances, my body is obsessed with providing a container for a dance to exist. In this container, which Blanga Dubai refers to as life, I am interested in what is activated to make the chase appear: proximity, attentive elbows, direction of the foot in circulation on the dance floor, humble invitation to the movement, specific shoes, particular ways of moving the axis, range of steps, speed of weight change, speed of turns, change of hands, change of pushing and pulling directions, accent in the knees, heels on the ground, pauses, when breathing is happening, what smiling does. How is the gaze related to movement in the moment, prior to, or after the movement? Is the gaze focused on a specific part of the body during the movement, directed towards another person and observing them, directed towards another person or part of the space but unfocused and reflective, or is the gaze imitating another person, or are the eyes closed?

Every dance organizes a specific collective thinking that is supra-individual and shared by the moving bodies. I chase dances to experience how steps arrange themselves before, after and in between other steps. I chase dances to be part of temporary communities because I value their transience and want to be part of them, even if the feeling of belonging is temporary.

As a migrant from Argentina and Chile, I crave *cumbia* and am curious about dances that bring me joy. But what happens when it is difficult to find dances that bring pleasure? For instance, I have an uneasy time with rave as a social dance. I don't like electronic music, I almost hate it, I can't listen to it, I can't enjoy the social instance where this music is played. In Europe, I have felt very isolated by electronic music and the rave culture that surrounds it. I refuse to join a context and to dance if I don't like it.

Where could I dance then? I'd like to share some chases from the last six months.

I chase *cumbia* in my daily life, but it is rare to find it in a party in Europe, except for Spain.

I chase tango, and it is relatively more possible for me because information is shared on Facebook, which I still use. Tango events in Europe are very expensive. I chase tango with a tight embrace, with not too many steps, with a deep interweaving of weights, which can continue until 5 o'clock in the morning. However, dancing tango at 5 a.m. in Europe is really rare. I enjoy the queer tango community in Stockholm, but after dancing again in Argentina in March and April 2025, I find it hard to chase tango again in Europe.

I chase *reguetón* but information about *reguetón* is usually spread via Instagram, a social network that I don't use. I long for *reguetón*.

I chase salsa and was amazed by how big the salsa community in Stockholm is.

I look for these dances in the cities I visit because, as a dancer with a migration background, I long for these dances. Also, I am curious about how dances manifest themselves abroad. I spend a lot of time looking for dances such as tango, *cumbia*, salsa or *reguetón* in every new environment.

In the contexts where I have chased dances, I don't ask for permission and just go with it. I put myself in the situation of chasing dances, but I don't explain it too much to the people around me. I am curious about the sensation that these dances convey, it is a subjective, personal and contextual experience: context and experience have no boundaries, they are interrelated in the task itself.

The curiosity to chase dances led me to a Strip Club. Here, too, I repeated the same methodology of chasing dances, this time stripping. Dancing for others, mediated by value, exchange, and expectation, had significant implications for this artistic research. The complex processes of commodification through which I explored eroticism taught me about time and proximity. Sensuality

became my currency: how far to stand, how quickly to approach, how much attention to give, how to speak, how to insist, how to look at the others. Touch became potentially dangerous.

After this experience everything exploded: my sense of self, my own voice as an artist, the status of my dancing as work, the concept of audience, and my understanding of research ethics.

To dance in the space of the strip club, I was required by the management to use a name other than my own. I was required not to use my legal name, 'Caterina', or my artistic name, that adds my mum's surname. I had to create another 'I': Thalía. The new 'I' then started a battle with the 'I' of the artistic research. I was no longer just one self, but three – a 'we' made up of cate, Daniela, and Thalía.

cate is the one who struggles navigating all the dance contexts she wishes to participate in. cate is the short form of caterina daniela mora jara and contains my legal name and the researcher persona.

However, in public spaces, Daniela replaced Caterina to protect both the researcher and the stripper, enabling me to inhabit the public realm while negotiating the boundaries between private identity and performative roles.

Thalía is the stripper.

Stripping made a fissure in myself; the singular became three as an experience of the self that must adapt to different contexts. The splitting and multiplication of the 'I' is the most important result of this experience.

Over time, this multiplicity of self has become a practice of being many, a practice of plurality. I call it 'we'. We chase the quickened rhythm at the end of a dance. We chase dances to run with the dances, to become the dances by embracing their ferality. We chase. Closing our eyes with another body, whether very close or very far away. We chase dances jumping together to the same pulse, We chase the interplay between drums, shoes and legs. We chase sweating among the bodies as they create space for us to move between them, to raise our body temperature. We chase to carry this memory into other contexts. By letting ourselves be danced by the dances in a continuous mashup, we chase our research. As the dances move us, we raise the heat generated by multiple selves with multiple dances. In the mashup in between the individual and the plurality, our research happens.

3. Naming Conflicts

One: Borders

Oh, body, this body experiences the boundaries that dance styles, techniques and methodologies create. To critique *reguetón*, this body dances *reguetón*. To critique contemporary dance, this body dances contemporary dance. In doing so, it confronts the friction of moving across genres, styles, and traditions – the struggle of inhabiting their borders.

At the same time, there is both struggle and the potential in inhabiting these borders – the challenge of remaining longer at the frontiers as I dance, of stretching them through my movement. When I work at the frontiers of dance traditions – creating friction, tension, and play; blurring boundaries; experimenting with combinations and rearrangements; and reconfiguring relationships with different grounds, spaces, times, tempos, with ourselves, and with others – do those dance traditions themselves become reconfigured?

Genre-queering practices and aesthetics within contemporary dance reveal how entangled it is to value the movement between forms. The field of dance remains structured by these value separations, even as such experimental practices challenge and transform them.

Two: Ballet

My early institutional dance education has motivated a process of 'becoming' different dances. The dances I studied then evoked different perceptions in my body and of my body.

I studied ballet for about 18 years in total. I cannot deny that ballet had entered my marrow; it seeped into my blood like a plasma, hard to remove.

During my institutional career in my early adolescence, I internalized the belief that I needed to displace other dances in order to embody The Dance, which was ballet. Using the Eurocentric attitude towards knowledge – that things first happen in Europe and then elsewhere – I realised in retrospect that I had internalised a similar mission: first a dance from Europe, then something else from another place.

As a tool of my body, a part of my past, and an honourable entry on my CV, ballet appears sacred in my biography. Sometimes it suffocates me. I cannot escape the new yearly competence of the *Prix de Lausanne*⁷². I drowned in its classicism and was exhausted by my inability to achieve that idealised classicism.

Ballet gave me a reflective ability in dancing but also limited my own conception of dance. In time, when ballet became not a dance but The Dance, the only place where I could resist and discuss it was my own body. After exploring other dance styles and reflecting on the inscriptions that ballet leaves on my sensory experience, I can now say that ballet serves as a tool to disarm its hegemony over my body.

Feeling and thinking ballet made me recognize my wounds and my knowledge. To embody ballet today within the context of contemporary art invokes racialization (Winship, 2020): ballet is still ballet, is still regarded as the universal body, and I, as a body from Abya Yala, have been asked, why do you need ballet?

Ballet exceeds me, and I exceed ballet. I use ballet itself to extricate myself from it; I over-identify with it in order to pass through the balletic regime without becoming trapped in it or enacting its violences on others. I spice the ballet with Dionysus and with questions about the body, so it appears as both a trace of pain and a site for thought.

Because my curriculum was shaped by my ballet education, this topic can be extended to the question of what influences dance education today. If I had to start studying dance again, what would my options be now?

I need ballet to reflect with it, by twisting it into a survival strategy against the tyranny of the mirror regime. To push the norm of ballet until it no longer resists its code. To need ballet to honour the pain of the wound. To reiterate ballet in order to transform it. To think ballet critically, with its fairies, princesses and witches. To find the re-enchanting spell out of its stereotypical mode of production. To live ballet as something popular.

Three: Other's gaze

Reguetón became extremely popular during the time of my arrival in Brussels. Since I moved to Europe, I have been playing famous songs during my warm-up and training exercises in the dance studio. The rhythm became a companion to my dancing, teasing the spaces I come from. Through my institutional dance education, I have found that, although I enjoyed dancing in a nightclub, it was laborious to bring this joy into the dance studio.

A dance studio involves social interaction, especially when people work or learn in groups, and is therefore a social context. However, its primary aim is to practise, learn, and transmit dance with value regarding what is practised.

A nightclub is also a social context where dance happens, with more emphasis on social interaction.

What happens to my experience when I feel the gaze of other people on me while dancing *reguetón* in the dance studio and in the nightclub?

⁷² The *Prix de Lausanne* is an international ballet competition held annually in Lausanne, Switzerland, offering young dancers scholarships and access to leading professional training institutions (Prix de Lausanne, n.d.).

Embodied pleasure can become something to be seen. When clubbing is taken out of context, there is a risk of objectification; this is the consequence of decontextualising practices from their primary contexts. I speak of this when I consider the dry, bright, quiet, and spacious dance studio as a place where pleasure and exposure to a gaze require different technical tools from the performer. Of course, I am not the only practitioner who has noticed and tries to address the question of gaze, pleasure, transmission, and to challenge the ways we see each other as dance artists in the studio.

With the gaze from the nightclub and the dance studio I ask: how has my dance education helped me deal with these problems of gaze? The practice of *clown* gave me specific replies about this question: how to transform the attention and the focus of the gaze, and how to be ready to react by transforming sensory inputs into performance.

How can we laugh and work with our gaze?

Four: Exceeds

Through my institutional dance education, I understood that dances impose different rules, patterns and ways of subjecting a body to specific forms and sometimes even sensations. This experience is never pure: When I dance ballet, I sometimes also dance a bit of *farró*. When I dance *cumbia*, I sometimes dance a bit of Cunningham. When I do Klein technique, I also dance salsa. In my performer body I can perceive a trace of the body of ballet, a trace of the body of *reguetón*, a trace of the body of tango, a trace of the body of contact improvisation, a trace of the body of folklore and so on. And these dances never have strict boundaries.

Chrysa Parkinson talks about a physical experience through the body as a fact and she uses it as a metaphor to refer to the idea of what exceeds borders within the embodied experience, like blurring, spilling and bleeding.

My body has never embodied a pure style, technique or methodology, but mixes them in different ways. This project attempts to deepen this idea further and proposes that I include these different dances in a relational practice. The combination is circumstantial, sometimes arbitrary and sometimes directed by me. I have a body that hosts many dances, and I recognise conflict as a constitutive part of it. I am interested in talking about what I call Conflicted Embodiment because it conceives and experiences conflict as a generative source and force.

Considering my body – each body, our bodies – as a historical site shaped by the history and politics of dance and dance education: How does this body traverse different techniques, methods, and styles of dance? To what extent are these skills for practitioners of the performing arts? I have understood that the conflicts I am dealing with may not even be perceived because they present themselves as something mixed in one body. Does this happen at the level of representation? If my body has gone through a training process, ergo has become better at navigating different dance traditions, connecting them through me, ergo has developed a mastery of mixing dances: do the audience perceive the conflict? Does a performed articulation of embodied conflicted dance styles pacify the conflicts that they carry? Or in other words: does the fact that the conflicts are presented perhaps erase the conflict?

Five: Gender

My starting point already assumes a gendered situation. Firstly, femininity plays a significant role in the context of concert dance. Secondly, gender is vividly expressed and codified in some dances I am working with, such as *reguetón*. Thirdly, gender difference is evident in actual dance practices.

As the North American philosopher and gender theorist Judith Butler argues, the categories of 'female' and 'woman' are no longer stable notions; their meanings, being troubled and unfixed, gain significance only as relational terms (1990). This research understands gender as produced through relations rather than as fixed categories, inscribed in intersecting genealogies shaped by historical women.

Throughout this research, I evoke three women that faced conflicts related to gender, social and professional status in their historical times: Aphra Behn, Marie Genèvieve van Goethem, and Marietta Baderna. Their stories condense aspects of value, migration and racialization that address transformation as transgression. Meeting them energises and activates this project to propose what I call **erotic justice***: the idea of justice through subversive narratives that reconfigure their stories.

It is also important to acknowledge that embodying different historical female personas is not the same as working with fictional characters. The fact that the women I work with were real people, gives another full status to ethical discussions and questions of embodiment.

Lastly, the split of my 'self' into more than one selves had consequences for my artistic research. What was the status of the feminine 'I'? This newly formed 'we' came into conflict with the 'I' of my artistic practice also in terms of gender. The relations between Daniela, Thalía and cate increased the friction of conflicted embodiment considering how each performs gender in different ways.

Working between these different experiences catalyses and orientates this research, as it is shaped by the ongoing complexities of inhabiting womanhood.

Six: Migration

Administration and bureaucracies remind me of my own Conflicted Embodiment. I constantly navigate the privilege and responsibility I experience as a migrant, while being continually reminded of my migrant status under constant scrutiny. In January 2026, a sleepy *hej*⁷³ and a misstatement about my origin upon arrival in Sweden triggered intense questioning by the border police. A stark reminder that, despite my legal residency, I am still read as an outsider in Europe.

I am a PhD candidate in artistic research in the subject area of dance which means I have a student visa. I study Artistic Research at the Research Centre, taking courses, completing credits, and progressing in my doctoral programme. I always travel with my Argentine passport, and depending on where I am travelling to, I show my Belgian identity card next to my passport, as I was married to a European citizen in Belgium, or my Swedish identity card as a student in Sweden.

As a non-EU citizen, I feel closer to non-EU students, because my visa corresponds to the fact that I am first a student – and it must be full-time, so 100% – and only then an employee. PhD students with EU citizenship can reduce their study percentage to pursue job opportunities. Unless they need to take sick leave or family leave, non-EU students cannot do so, which means I do not have the same job opportunities as my European peers.

As a citizen with a migrant background who is working and is worried about the conditions of my employment, I can work up to the maximum permitted working hours, which is 20%. This can therefore extend my employment contract.

This gives me and my PhD peers a special position in the institution: I have advantages because I am a student – which I think is the best role you can have in a Nordic country – and at the same time, I receive a regular salary. In other words, I am a colleague of the people who usually hold hierarchical positions in institutions, the so-called employees, and I am also a colleague of the students I sometimes teach.

As a migrant, I am constantly negotiating my privilege and responsibility, the jealousy and admiration my position evokes, and the anxious, unsettling reality of what comes next.

Seven: Conflicted Embodiment

Attuning to conflict is a continual process. Anyone who crosses spaces, institutions, or unspoken boundaries inevitably encounters it. Conflicted Embodiment accompanies us, yet it resists precise location. If you find it somewhere, let me know.

⁷³ *Hej* in Swedish means 'hi'.

As a concept in motion, this framework for artistic research welcomes destabilisation across different tempos – between slower and faster volumes and spaces. Relationality, understood as a fleshy and bodily experience, constantly shifts and reorients the research itself.

Conflicted Embodiment emerges from repeated moments of shame, unspoken tensions, and the social dynamics of dancing that shape systems of value – processes that can sometimes be painful. Who has not encountered a border while dancing? A border such as the access that class can grant or deny, a perception of gender that produces rejection or acceptance in a community, an external judgment or internal doubt about dancing the dance correctly, or even an outfit that does not meet the expectations of a tradition.

Borders between dance forms, styles, or techniques already exist. Conflicted Embodiment is a way of discussing, studying, and transforming them. By asking questions about a performer's embodiment, I ask: how does something frame and shape a body – somebody and anybody? And what agency exists in what is perceived as conflicted? Conflicted Embodiment proposes conflict as a field, with blurred directions and multiple ways of negotiating coexistence, while acknowledging the inherited tensions embedded in dance training and transmission.

This project does not attempt to resolve conflict but to remain attentive to it. Conflict becomes a method and a way of staying in relation. What emerges, then, is not a stable position but an ongoing practice of negotiation – one that allows different dances and bodies to coexist, even when they do not fully settle.

My position in this project is also one of constant struggle. My 'we' introduces complexity in naming; I am composed of more than one self. I, as a 'we', work within the friction of the canon of contemporary dance associated with Global North practices – sometimes inside it, sometimes outside it – to question and reformulate it. I add to the canon by practising dances that lie beyond its boundaries, so that we may compose our own.

Chapter II: Artistic Practices

This chapter discusses the artistic practices of this doctoral project: the dance translations, the emergence of the Bastard-Cheap Lecture-Performance series (BCLPs) and the *desacatadas* fabulations materialized in script creation. Even though these practices are presented separately for study purposes, they operate within the interrelated exercise of translating, scripting and performing.

In **Annex I** there is “an almost complete list” of the BCLPs performed between 2019 and 2025.

1. Translations

a. Overview

The performance practice of translation broadens the common understanding of translation beyond language. In this project, translation is considered as movement between dance practices, including questions related to linguistic systems. Translations from dance to dance are the entry point of this PhD, with the focus on translating from one dance form or style to another.

Translations are conceived and performed as an active exercise in modulation when moving between contexts, cultures, and languages. They propose a specific reconfiguration of the imaginary that surrounds the act of naming and transposing meaning. The dance practice engages with generative curiosity. These acts of translation contribute to the discussion of Conflicted Embodiment by enabling the breaking and reconfiguration of the rules and codes of dances within another dance spectrum of meaning and codification. They host tension in the movement between states of in-betweenness.

My struggle with language has taken a central role in my artistic practice since I arrived in Europe eight years ago. As a result, my work treats language as always requiring translation. At that time, translation was not only a personal necessity but also a practice involving movement back and forth, forward and in reverse, with both language and dance. More importantly, it helped rearticulate and reconfigure the power dynamics of dance in relation to gender, class, and racialization by reconfiguring the relationships between different dance traditions. For instance, this process involved the displacement and transformation of stereotypical female protagonists – like the Swan Lake figure, whose fate is traditionally predetermined – into a protagonist with agency, who finds a voice and creates new possibilities through movement and steps.

As translanguaging acts – moving from one language to another – the practice of translating from dance-to-dance focuses on the idea that, historically, dance was regarded as a text to be read (Franko, 2015). This is important because the regime of visibility in academic dance later followed this mandate: a body that needs to be read, and an argument that needs to be recognizable in the body's inscriptions. This mandate shapes the practice and understanding of various dance forms and cultures. Such questions are later embedded in national tensions, gender perspectives, racial differentiation, class access, ableism, and age.

Translation as practice became meaningful because I could expose the normativity through which languages and dances have established power. The directionality and adequacy of translation, referring to the movement from one thing to another, are activated when something is understood and becomes recognizable. Therefore, dance-to-dance translations provoke a ‘fitting’ into another narrative, which creates a clash. Sometimes this clash produces a certain stability, sometimes predictably, sometimes it results in a stereotypical transposition, and sometimes in a chaotic reconfiguration.

The questions that arose from this directionality were: How can one translate while maintaining complexity? What happens when translation keeps the readable in abeyance? How can one translate without being recognizable?

I took the opportunity to question my approach to translation: Am I actually reproducing a certain understanding of norms when I translate? Am I establishing a new way of realigning a

disciplinary field? That is, am I taking power relations in dance and transferring them to a different way of reconfiguring power relations? Am I producing or reproducing rules and codes that determine hierarchies in dance-to-dance translations?

Practicing translation remains relevant because it reveals how context shapes ways of translating. As Katie Briggs proposes in *This Little Art* (2017), we need new translations every 25 years, mainly because cultural understanding, values, and the way status is conferred on a text change rapidly within a given context.

From a gender perspective in Translation Studies, the book *Gender in Translation* (1996) by Sherry Simon states:

The meaning attributed to the task of the translator is circumscribed by a series of tensions which are continually rearticulated: tensions between 'high' and 'low' genres, between the prestigious languages of antiquity and national vernaculars, between creative and derivative writing, between dominant and subordinate cultures (1996, p. 40-41).

What comes first: translations or the role of the translator? Translations from one dance to another, especially between dances with different statuses, and the role of the translator are intertwined. To reflect on it, in the following section I introduce the figure of the Translatress, Aphra Behn, who lived in seventeenth-century London, Belgium, and Surinam, and who inspires this work.

The first translations I made from dance to dance arose from my insecurity with language, my need for translation, a prompt from a Translatress, and my desire to integrate my dance background to create something joyful. These translations ranged from ballet to *reguetón*, marking the beginning of the Bastard-Cheap lecture performance series.

b. The Bastard-Cheap Lecture-Performance series

A Bastard-Cheap Lecture-Performance (BCLP) is a solo in which the protagonist dances at least two dances while speaking. Once I began practising lecturing while performing, that is, dancing and explaining the translations as a live exercise, I realised that this format would continue over time. I named them Bastard-Cheap Lecture-Performances.

The performances address hierarchies and systems of value in dance, seeking to cross academic dance and the so-called 'world dance' through mash-up and friction strategies. The protagonists are female historical figures in dialogue with myself, and the works unfold through their/our stories, voices, and embodied perspectives. These performances are self-critical attempts to theorize while dancing, proposing that entertainment is something to be continuously problematized through self-reflective and fictional storytelling.

The BCLPs present the research as an ongoing practice of rehearsing, scripting, performing, composing, and publishing. Unfolding nonlinearly across chapters and versions, these performances echo, contaminate, and nourish one another.

The different series of BCLP are the result of research, grouped by topic. And within this PhD, the BCLPs are a method: they practise and share the questions and negotiations of Conflicted Embodiment.

Serialization

Serialization allows the research to be made public as it is carried out. This operation arose from the need to communicate research as it is conducted in an ever-changing manner – structured

enough, yet open to modification. Because of the volume of research material that needed to be organized and delivered, it became necessary to divide the material to make it shareable and transmissible. Each public presentation in various contexts, from a residency opening to participation in a congress, is considered part of the series, as each represents a specific approach to the broader research project.

The serialization process contains four seasons of the Bastard-Cheap lecture-performances, listed in an “almost complete list” in **Annex I**.

Lecture-performances as a practice

As a genre, lecture-performance combines a lecture with live performance. This format blurs the boundaries between academic and artistic contexts (Landnar, 2014). I am interested in the lecture-performance format because it allows me to question the legitimacy of knowledge and authorial power through artistic operations. Who speaks, what is said, and how it is recognized as relevant have called my attention since I was sixteen years old and I met choreographer and dance scholar Susana Tambutti⁷⁴ in Fiske Menuco. Through her teaching I understood how internal colonialism shaped my own thinking, framing hierarchies between capitals and provinces, centers and peripheries, Abya Yala and Europe (Tambutti & Gigena, 2022-2023).

My master's thesis⁷⁵ (UNA, 2016) consists of a lecture-performance and a written thesis that reflects on it. The work examines the friction involved in constructing the authorial figure between the author of the text and myself. I took the iconic text of the lecture-performance *Product of Circumstances*, written by Xavier Le Roy, which was published by the Instituto de Investigación del Departamento de Artes del Movimiento⁷⁶ (Universidad Nacional de las Artes [UNA], 2013). I asked his permission and re-instantiated this autobiographical text in my own body which generated friction in between my voice and the authorial value of the speech.

During my post-master studies at a.pass, while attending a workshop with Austrian choreographer and dancer Philipp Gehmacher, initiator of the *Walk and Talk Series* (Sarma, n.d.), I realized the need to return to the format of this earlier work, in which I danced and spoke simultaneously. The lecture-performance format emerged as a practice at that time: a way to think through the body while articulating theoretical questions aloud, allowing dancing and speaking to function both discursively and physically.

This is why I started to practice lecturing and performing simultaneously. I embraced the dislocation of **tonguering*** while dancing, attempting to speak while struggling. The material of my performance practice became a site of research: dancing and talking simultaneously while delivering the research material, embracing the ‘imperfect’ speech of the migrant as material for a performance about dance and languages. The practice of DJing dances serves as a mashup of dance cultures and explores, from a performer's point of view, the interruptions, self-corrections, and displacements that occur in live performance and live translation.

Conceived and performed between 2019 and 2026, they share the following characteristics:

⁷⁴ I met Susana Tambutti in the creation process of her piece *Muerte Prevista en el Guion*. Her dedication to studying dance in Argentina has had a profound impact on the country's contemporary dance scene. Here is a brief interview with her: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dPu0UL3F3wo>

⁷⁵ Thesis title: “La construcción de la figura de autor en la obra *XLROYxCM* (Xavier Le Roy por Caterina Mora): derroteros en torno a la performatividad” (Mora, 2019). English translation: *The construction of the author figure in the lecture-performance XLROYxCM (Xavier Le Roy by Caterina Mora): paths toward performativity*.

⁷⁶ Translation: Institute for Research in the Movement Arts of the Department of Movement Arts.

- Set up:
 - o The ideal space rejects a black box. Corridors, passageways, a dance studio, a space leading to a dance studio are preferred. Any objects present are minimal, leaving room for the dances to unfold.
 - o All technical elements – sound, light, subtitles – are operated by the performer, highlighting authorship, labour, and exposure.
 - o Ideally, performances take place during the day, avoiding the need for theatrical light design and reinforcing a sense of rehearsal.
 - o The work is never intended for a large audience; it operates in close proximity. The ideal distance is no more than one and a half meters, allowing intimacy, vulnerability, and shared presence.

- *Bastard* refers to the historical perception of translation as a practice of lesser status (Simon, 1998) – illegitimate, derivative, the result of mixture, or something born outside institutional legitimacy. On the one hand, bastard refers to the act of translation itself; on the other hand, it indicates a lower status of authorship, originality, and ownership. In this sense, the bastardisation associated with illegitimacy problematises legibility.

- *Cheap* refers to an embrace of rough or unpolished results and precarious production strategies. It rejects economic profit and luxurious material conditions, instead acknowledging fragility, effort, and the possibility of failure as productive forces. *Cheap* becomes a method for working with what is available, rather than aspiring to overly manufactured or pretentious results.

- Technique of performance practice⁷⁷:
 - o Dancing is narrated and narrations are danced; the relationship between them remains inseparable, constantly shifting, colliding, and rewriting each other.
 - o The work is neither improvised nor fully scripted. The score remains open and responsive, allowing movement within its structure according to the encounters with contexts and audiences.
 - o It borrows from clowning: it is always ready to transform and integrate accidents, interruptions, the need for self-correction, and failures, treating them not as errors but as material for the performer. It remains acutely aware of its effects on the audience and the relational space it creates.
 - o It borrows from double role tango: there are some patterns to follow, but according to the dance, it switches between the roles of leader and follower. Sometimes the leader dances in relation to the speech; sometimes the follower

⁷⁷ The *Technique of performance practice* draws inspiration on *The Performer*, a three-month workshop I studied with Melina Seldes in Buenos Aires. The programme is intended to identify and develop skills as a performer.

does. Sometimes the logic of the dance takes over the performance, guiding its rhythm and flow. At other times, it works the other way around, and I must pause my dancing to explain or reflect on something.

- o It borrows from ballet: drawing lines in space and coordinating the timing of beginnings and endings.

- o It draws on critical discourses of *flexible performativity* (Van Assche & Schaffer, 2023) in dance practices and self-awareness in contemporary art (Danto, 2013). Thus, it engages with metareferential discourses on performativity that address adaptability by bringing together several dances, while remaining critical of a progressive, linear historical narrative in the arts.

c. Example: from Ballet to *Reguetón*

Translations range *from ballet to reguetón* because, at the beginning of the a.pass post-master, I aimed to unpack the imaginary surrounding migrant people from Abya Yala in Europe⁷⁸. In particular, my goal was to examine how the famous song *Despacito* (2017), which at that time became one of the most successful and most streamed videos on YouTube, played a role in the context of Brussels.

When I arrived in Belgium, the ubiquity of *Despacito* reached a point where I could no longer listen to it. I was fed up, yet at the same time, it was my mother tongue, easily recognized through the lyrics. Although I grew up with *reguetón* and engaged with it extensively in nightclub culture, this song sparked an artistic interest in unpacking what *latinity* meant in Europe. This identity conflict became the starting point of my research at a.pass: I aimed to critique the stereotypes related to ethnicity, class, and gender that *reguetón* as a genre reproduced, while also creating *reguetón* songs that perpetuated them.

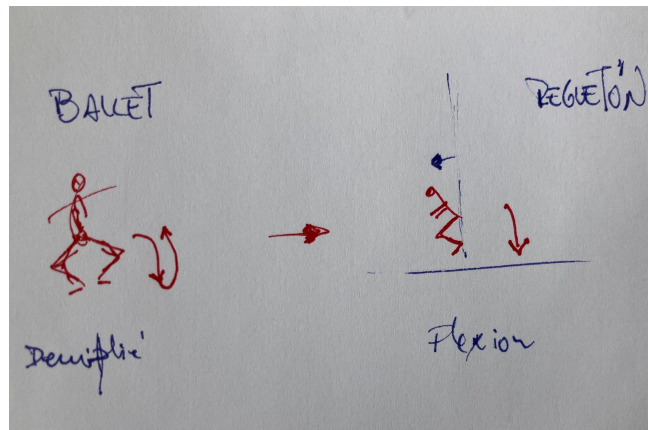
Translations emerged as a way to, first, unpack *reguetón* and avoid simply reproducing it, and second, as a strategy to integrate my ballet background into my research while creating a context in which I could study both French and English, even if the two languages became intertwined in my thinking.

They began as a step-by-step exercise. In ballet, *demi-plié* refers to a flexion of the knees with heels on the floor, usually performed with external rotation⁷⁹, as it structures the way the body is consistently trained.

In the translation to *reguetón*, *demi-plié* is translated as flexion of the knees without external rotation, with the axis aligned forward, allowing the pelvic cage to move with greater range.

⁷⁸ During my first block in a.pass I started creating *reguetón* songs.

⁷⁹ In ballet, the parallel position (6th position) is used in *pliés* in the Vaganova style, Bournonville method, and Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) training, whereas the Cecchetti method does not use it.



Demi-plié translation: from ballet to reguetón

From this exercise of taking the minimum unit of this dance and translating it into another, the translations from ballet to *reguetón* became very prolific, using some ballet vocabulary. I was then required to create a discourse around it, as it was not enough to translate step by step, phrase by phrase, or even paragraph by paragraph. The need for a critical understanding of translation became evident.

In the words of Mariana Pessino: “The text you translate determines which translation theory you have to use” (personal communication, 2021). For this project, this meant I had to deeply consider what my text – my first source – was: ballet. I approached these dances with a critical perspective, adopting a gendered and colonial critical approach in my translation work, because my goal was to uncover the similarities and shared structures between them.

Reguetón

Reguetón as a genre emerged from the cross-border migration of rhythms among Jamaica, Panama, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Miami, and Puerto Rico. Originating from a marginalized Caribbean culture and defined as a mix between hip-hop and reggae, the use of Spanish in *reguetón* lyrics represents a gesture of resistance through cultural identification within the Abya Yala territory. Since the first phenomenon of *Gasolina* (2004), *reguetón* has become a genre that animated debates around issues of race, nation, class, gender, sexuality and language. I agree with music scholar Paul Harkins, who states: “the danger is that these usual subjects contribute to a determinism which dominates certain disciplines and are only of secondary importance to its musicians and fans” (2010, p. 489). He cautions that focusing solely on these categories risks determinism and may overshadow the priorities of musicians and fans.

The typical dance of *reguetón* is called *perreo*, a pelvic movement performed in duos or groups in back-to-front positions that are also common in Jamaican dancehalls and the bump and grind of R&B. There are no specific rules or choreographed steps for the *perreo*, knees are bent because of the need to move the buttocks. The eroticism of the dance has been a controversial issue, and there has been even efforts to censor it. More recently, the discussion about the *perreo* has taken a central role in the discourse on women's empowerment⁸⁰.

The shaking of *perreo* functions as a way of dealing with eroticism and *desacato* (contempt, defiance), so I see these translations as a way of heating up dances. With the vibration of the stiff

⁸⁰ Many artists are engaging with these themes. For a deeper exploration of *perreo* as a politically charged practice of “moving the ass” and reclaiming joy and celebration, see the concept of *desculonización*, developed by Jenny Granado ‘Kebra’ (Prior, 2023).

ballet body, the *reguetón*'s translations provoke a clash of coded gender norms on both genres' sides until they break.

Ballet

Rooted in the court traditions of 17th-century France, the model of ballet has long established dance as an art form historically regarded as high culture, institutionalized by French royalty as a practice that aims to make the body open and legible.

Ballet employs the prototype of a linguistic model by codifying advanced techniques for controlling and training the body. Its practice aims to establish power relationships within the body, among other bodies, and in space. Its codified vocabulary and emphasis on formal training helped define what was considered 'legitimate' dance, elevating it above other dance forms in cultural hierarchies.

By addressing the struggle of "dance as text" (Franko, 2015), the translations challenge the internalization of geometric and pattern norms. They operate by questioning and rearticulating the connections between the meaning of ballet vocabulary in French, forms in body schemas, and their representations in drawing.

The translations engage with the famous narratives of ballet proposing an exercise of *desacatadas* fabulation of these well-known stories. By examining archetypal expressions and representations of female roles, the translation exercises took some important protagonists in ballet – such as Odile and Odette from *Swan Lake*, Nikya from *La Bayèdere*, and Kitri from *Don Quixote* – to revisit and adapt their narratives in other stories.

d. Discussion

Translation happens in performance, not in written documents. I approach translation as an exercise in reconfiguring the relationships among personal schemas, notation, vocabulary, and meanings in dance. This process brings together the historicity of different dances with invisible voices and forgotten ghosts, while also questioning the consequences of miscegenation (*mestizaje*) among Afro-descendants, Indigenous peoples, and colonizers. Through this practice, I aim to reclaim the power of the untranslatable, challenge the ideal of perfection, and critique the disciplinary authority embedded in the expanded, universal regime of ballet.

Translations resist the colonial body control programme by inquiring into other possible relationships between movement, meaning, and narratives. From the perspective of the *Translatress*, I translate to speak and to play with and between the dances. I unpack the problems I encountered in reproducing *reguetón* and the research challenges related to internalised dance norms by intersecting distant approaches and presentations of dance.

I am still captivated by translation, not only because I am constantly translating myself, but also because I am interested in the historical perception of translation as a practice of degraded authorship. Translation as a practice has been associated with weakness, secondary status, lack of originality, lack of authority, and unfaithfulness. Therefore, considering translation from a gender perspective has encouraged me to take a position on the practice of translating and on the role of the translator. In consequence, I conceptualise dance-to-dance translations as an exercise that questions authorship, that foregrounds the weak, that is unauthorised and unfaithful.

The practice of translation demands moving back and forth between texts, reversing and repeating. The practice invites remaining in the clash produced by a movement in between directions. Unauthorized translations are problematic, unfinished, hyper-personal, conflictual and playful because they strive to transmit signs and codes in ways that are sometimes overly pretentious or impossible. In them, the power of the untranslatable and the resistance to any linear, clear, and understandable translation are revealed.

As a way of dealing with the uncomfortable gesture of re-enacting dances that are considered elitist, dancing as translating is a practice to inhabit internalized norms of corporeality and reconfigure them into another “impossible system”.

In translating and incorporating other dance styles, techniques and methodologies, a resistance to translation eventually became apparent. What was resisting in the translations? Were they particular steps, narratives, movement phrases, contexts or certain words? In trying to complexify the resistance to translation, I have come to comprehend that some things were untranslatable or that they resisted translation. However, there is also a risk in constructing a binary opposition between the translatable and the untranslatable. How, instead, can this spectrum be rendered opaque – that is, resistant to clear readability and categorization, open to ambiguity and attentive to what exceeds full comprehension or equivalence?

As French philosopher and philologist Barbara Cassin suggests in the introduction to the Dictionary of *Untranslatables* (2014), the untranslatable is not what cannot be translated, but rather “what one keeps on (not) translating” (p. xvii). This formulation shifts the focus from a fixed limit to an ongoing effort. The practice then becomes: how can we account for this continuous process of negotiation and reconfiguration without reducing it to a stable, immovable concept?

Conceived as a gesture of resistance challenging cultural hegemony and constructions of authority, the translations confront the strictly normative process of academisation in dance (ballet par excellence) with forms of resistance and critique. It is both a challenge and a gesture of confrontation for ‘high culture’ and ‘popular dances’. Rather than creating an equivalent dance system, the translations are a kind of cannibalistic gesture that promotes a clash in the encounter between what is considered sublime and elevated and what is considered mundane.

As for ballet, translations engage with ballet’s own historical relationship to novelty. Through this reclamation, ballet is displaced from its normative narratives: it becomes a ballet that does not injure the knees, a ballet that invites movement rather than restriction, a ballet where **wind*** can enter, where multiple *dehors* are possible, where biomechanics matter, and where pointe shoes are no longer mandatory.

The translations embody ballet as a tool to disarm its hegemony over a body. To inhabit the classical canon, then, is also to disregard its measures, proportions, and geometries – to play with the canon that ballet has inscribed in our gaze. This play extends to cultural canons more broadly, including the canon of the smile, the Mona Lisa smile. The Bastard-Cheap intervenes in the canon, understood as a hegemonic norm, resisting the idea of the canon as an armour of war that defends phallic structures such as castles and monarchies. The canon becomes a cannon: hard, erect, cylindrical, monolithic, metallic, carrying a bomb inside. A cannon canon. A canon as a cannon – meant to explode.

Translations explode the ballet canon and, with it, the dominant aesthetic norms that have functioned as cannons against other dance traditions. This explosion also targets the technologies of vision—the cameras and Canon lenses—that have shaped and restricted the way we see.

I am often asked why I continue to use ballet – a gendered, monarchical dance form that appears outdated and politically compromised. It is precisely this tension – this accumulation of historical weight and discomfort – that makes ballet a provocative site for critique, and one that calls for transformation.

I have done exercises to translate from *reguetón* to Cunningham technique, from Graham technique to *zumba*, and from the contemporary ballet work *Arenal* by Spanish choreographer Nacho Duato to Argentine folklore. However, after the proliferation of translations from ballet to *reguetón*, I encounter a limitation in the ability to experiment with other styles or dance methods. No other combination revealed as strong a contradiction as ballet-*reguetón*. After translating from ballet to *reguetón*, how can the process of translation continue?

As a consequence of the translations, problems concerning the legibility, readability, and literacy of dance were revealed. Legibility concerns whether something can be perceived and distinguished at a basic level: is a movement recognizable as movement, as a particular style, as a

gendered gesture, as a trained body, as a professional dancer? Legibility is often imposed by dominant regimes of perception, and something can be legible without being understood. For example, can the audience identify that what I am doing is a combination of Graham technique and ballet?

Readability refers to interpretation and meaning-making once something is legible. It concerns what is read into movement – sense, narrative, intention – and answers the question: what does this mean to me? A movement can be legible yet read in contradictory or unintended ways.

Literacy designates the learned capacity to read, interpret, and contextualise what is legible. It shapes what kinds of readings are possible at all and is historically and politically unevenly distributed. Dance literacy may include familiarity with certain techniques, knowledge of choreographic conventions, or institutional training. A lack of literacy does not imply a lack of perception, but rather different modes of perceiving.

What did I learn about Conflicted Embodiment from the practice of translation?

I learned that if legibility is about being recognizable at a basic level, some translations refuse to be legible. If readability is about being interpreted or ‘read’ then the practice reveals the generative potential of opacity: some gestures resist being read, deliberately or inherently. And if literacy is about having learned how to interpret, then translation exposes the tension between learning and the persistence of the untranslatable.

These three concepts – legibility, readability, and literacy – friction with the preexisting notion of opacity. Alongside them, concepts such as intelligibility, recognition, and untranslatability highlight how Conflicted Embodiment operates at the intersection of conflict within interpretation. They help explain why certain embodied conflicts remain invisible, misread, or deliberately resistant to interpretation.

This brings the focus to spectatorship: To what extent can a performer make their work legible to an audience? In general, performers cannot fully know how they will be read. “They can be aware of many potentials, but they cannot know for certain how something they do (embody or enact) will be interpreted, because they cannot know the interpreter’s experience” (Parkinson, personal communication). How does the performer make something readable? To what extent is readability tied to logocentrism, and how might movement challenge logocentric expectations? Can an audience read a movement texture, a spatial relation, or the embodiment of a memory – such as dancing while recalling a party with friends listening to *reguetón*? How do spectators recognise the processes unfolding within the body?

Increasingly, I am interested in resisting legibility and readability. When dance becomes recognizable, it can prematurely predict and limit the range of possible meanings, and close off ambiguity. Dances are political: they carry the politics of the body imaginary, different ways of marking or tolerating error, the gaze, collectivity, class, gender, and race. Dance traditions themselves are shaped by historical conflicts.

What happens when these conflicts are presented in a skillful way? My proposal is then to engage with conflicts to foster opacity, enabling these conflicts to be re-politicized. Does this occur through language, or does another politics emerge from the act of placing different dance traditions together? My interest lies in making dance traditions coexist while foregrounding difference as a source of embodiment rather than dissolving it into harmony.

2. *Desacatadas* Fabulation in Conflicted Scripting

a. Overview

Conflicted Embodiment proposes scripting *desacatadas* fabulations as one of its research methodologies. Those scripts later become the raw material that nourishes and rewrites the BCLPs.

The use of the term fabulations draws on the writing method and historical inquiry known as critical fabulation, coined by scholar of African American literature and cultural history Saidiya Hartman (2008), which combines archival research with imaginative reconstruction in response to incomplete or violent archives, particularly those documenting marginalized or erased lives. Drawing on this operation, I propose *desacatadas*, an adjective in Spanish derivative of the noun *desacato*. The term *desacato* can be translated as contempt, disrespect, disobedience, nonconformity, defiance, unruliness, or subversion. In some contexts, it may also refer to a certain pleasure associated with such contempt.

What *desacatadas* fabulations aim to put into practice is treating archival gaps as potential spaces for imagination, attempting ethical speculation and narration of what might have been, and foregrounding the experiences and subjectivities of women.

There are several artistic examples that inspire this operation. To name a few, the work of Argentine teacher, writer and queer feminist val flores, in *Una lengua cosida de relámpagos* (2019), uses the metaphor of a tongue in the desert to reject canonical rules. Similarly, Dolores Reyes, Argentine novelist and author of *Cometierra* (2021), and Chilean artist and activist Pedro Lemebel, in the novel *Tengo miedo, torero* (2001), use narratives to denounce marginalized, erased, or fragmented histories, blending imaginative, ethical, and performative registers. In cinema, the short film *El affaire Miu Miu* by Argentine film director Laura Citarella challenges colonial legacies and Eurocentrism, while the film *Denominación de origen* by Chilean film director Tomás Alzamora Muñoz elaborates on local struggles concerning ideas of authority and legitimation.

Desacatadas fabulations generate scripts to be used as a precursor and later communicated in embodied presentations. Through scripting, the research enables different female protagonists to speak through The Bastard-Cheap lecture-performances. Aphra Behn, Marie Genèvieve van Goethem, and Marietta Baderna were the first protagonists of this methodology. Over time, as I became 'we' (cate, Caterina Daniela, and Thalía), this voice also became integrated into the scripts.

b. On Embodying Womanhood as *Desacatadas* Fabulations

One: The *Translatress*



A sketch of Aphra Behn by George Scharf from a portrait believed to be lost (1873), extracted from Wikipedia. Public Domain.

Aphra (1640–1689, London) was a spy, novelist, playwright, poet, editor, and translator. She was among the first English women to earn a living entirely from writing, asserting women's presence in the theater through her authorship. During her lifetime, women were not permitted to act on the English stage until 1660, when Charles II's Restoration lifted the ban. Before that, female roles were performed by men. Behn's significance lies in her assertion of authorship and pursuit of professional recognition in a male-dominated literary and theatrical world. She not only wrote plays but also insisted that her name appear on them, at a time when women writers were often anonymous or used pseudonyms. By doing so, she reclaimed creative authority in a cultural space where women were typically excluded from both acting and authorship, asserting that women could be publicly recognized creators.

She mainly lived in London, traveled to Surinam in 1663 – where she found inspiration for her novel *Oroonoko* (1688) – and later engaged in espionage in Antwerp during the 1660s. She defined herself as a *Translatress* and through this gesture she shapes, stimulates, and re-enchants my role as an artist researcher. Using poetry as a strategy to reclaim self-autonomy, Behn emphasizes the use of 'vulgar languages' and the female voice as a gesture of resistance in defence of creation (Simon 1996).

Encountering the persona of Aphra allowed me to assume the role of *Translatress* in this research. This helped my research to find a way to express itself by engaging in the historical process of cultural transmission and navigating histories of subordination and power dynamics. On the one hand, I dare to speak through translation; on the other hand, I do so playfully.

Over time, scripting and embodying the *Translatress* became a kind of cannibalistic practice – I devoured the persona and dances I invoked. The concept of the cannibal *Translatress* draws on Brazilian translator and scholar Álvaro Faleiros's notion of cannibal translations (2019), an approach to translation that encompasses transcreation, adaptation, and imitation. Building on the legacy of the Anthropophagic Movement⁸¹ and reelaborations from an Amerindian perspective, *cannibal translations* can be understood as a way of multiplying places of enunciation⁸².

For this research, the cannibal *Translatress* offers a way to respond to cultural colonialism. By mobilising her figure, translation becomes a transformative cultural process, in which ingesting an opponent symbolises the absorption of their knowledge and strength. The cannibal *Translatress* exercises of *desacatadas* fabulations bring female personas who have been rendered invisible, forgotten, defamed, or crystallized in stereotypes through various narratives. The cannibal dancer *Translatress* engages with other corporealities, eats other histories and, by doing that, generates performance as regenerative practice.

Whereas embodying the *Translatress* once required only two dances of different status to enact translations, I gradually found myself drawn to require more dances. At the same time, themes surrounding Aphra Behn's life, such as the place of poetry, the political presence of her voice in theatre, and the use of vulgar language in translations, began to take on a central role in this research, guiding both my inquiry and my practice.

Two: The Little Rat

⁸¹ The Brazilian anthropophagic movement refers to the aesthetic and political artistic strategy of symbolically devouring and digesting foreign influences. Inspired by the cannibalistic rituals practised by some Indigenous Brazilian groups, the concept redefines cultural exchange as a transformative act. Initiated by Oswald de Andrade in the *Manifesto Antropófago* "Anthropophagic Manifesto" (1928), from the 1980s onwards, anthropophagic movement became influential in Translation Studies (Faleiros, 2019).

⁸² In the shamanic ritual, the shaman sings by voicing not only their own voice, but also the voices of deceased people, the relationships between them, and those between gods (Faleiros, 2019).



July 2025, at the MET (Metropolitan Museum).
A kind-of-a-selfie with the original sculpture from 1880.

Marie Geneviève van Goethem (1865-unknown) was the model for the French artist Edgar Degas (Hilaire-Germain-Edgar Degas, 1834–1917) in his sculpture entitled *The Little Fourteen-Year-Old Dancer*. I got a 25 cm high replica of this sculpture as a gift for one of my birthdays accompanied by a novel⁸³, which bears the same name as the sculpture. The novel by Camille Laurens (2017) narrates Marie's life in relation to the sculpture.

Through the novel, I discovered the life and working conditions of Marie Geneviève van Goethem at the Paris Opera. The protagonist, whom I refer to as Marie, is one of the most famous 'little rats' (*petit rat* in French). The term does not have a positive connotation. The 'little rats' were young ballet students at the Paris Opera dance school who worked as extras at the Opera, scurried around the stage, and lived like dirty animals between the aisles.

For many families in Paris in the 19th century, the children's work in the ballet's machinery was an opportunity to find better conditions for the entire family. Young ballet students received money for their roles as extras in the opera. They were the subject of financial transactions behind the scenes, they had to entertain rich sponsors, provide companionship or sexual favours. What we would call child slavery today was practiced back then in the name of the family benefits and their careers, when deals were negotiated with patrons in the foyer of the opera.

Degas's famous wax sculpture, featuring human hair, fabric clothing, and real accessories, provoked press reactions ranging from racist and discriminatory comments to questions about whether the sculpture was really art. Did these comments influence the life of the protagonist in Degas's sculpture? No one knows. What is certain is that there are no records of her soon after modelling for Degas. According to the author of the book, the Opéra de Paris only had records about a sister and her mother.

In the creation process of *In the Name of Another Bastard-Cheap Lecture-Performance*, I propose a trilingual narrative combining English, French, and Spanish, in which the voices of Marie Geneviève and mine speak to each other. On the one hand, there is Marie, a ballet student who speaks French and works as a life model for the famous sculptor. On the other hand, while creating the piece, I was working as a life model in my first temporary job in Brussels after my transcontinental migration.

⁸³ The novel and the sculpture replica are on the third shelf of the bookshelf I have set up in my office at SKH in Stockholm at Brinelvägen 58.

Additionally, at fourteen, I, a Spanish speaker, was obsessed with the ballet variation of Kitri, the protagonist of the ballet *Don Quixote*. The final part of the performance is later presented mainly in English, continuing the translations from ballet to *malambo*.

While asking what Marie's life might have been like after Degas' sculpture, I formulated a speculative path for her in Argentina, as a pioneer of ballet in Buenos Aires. Moreover, the narrative imagines the continuation of Marie's life in the Circo Criollo⁸⁴, suggesting a translation from ballet to Argentinian *malambo*. Drawing on what this sculpture represented for the art community in the context in which it was created in France, the *desacatadas* fabulations, I try to imagine what could have happened in her life. By bringing back her persona and seeking to honour her role in the lecture-performance, I propose an attempt to restore and disseminate her voice.

Travelling with the sculpture replica was possible; it fits perfectly in my 10 kg luggage, and I had several performances with the sculpture. Yet I began to worry: What if she disapproved of my version for the afterlife? At some point, I felt so close to her that performing as Marie Geneviève became increasingly charged. I felt physically affected by embodying her. This time, it was unclear how to navigate the emotional and ethical responsibilities involved in handling information embedded in the embodiment of someone whose bodily knowledge remains unknown or inaccessible.

I needed to rethink and reconfigure my relationship with the persona I was performing. This process of *desacatadas* fabulation – of evoking and embodying another's body – brought me to the ethical issues inherent in erasure. How can performance unintentionally miswrite or overwrite the histories and subjectivities of others? As a result, I decided to stop embodying Marie.

Three: B/baderna



Marietta Baderna, principal dancer at Teatro alla Scala, in 1846, aged sixteen.
Image extracted from Wikipedia. Public Domain.

⁸⁴ The Circo Criollo were nomadic circus companies that began to use nationalist narratives in their shows, which meant that they raised identitarian issues about the Río de la Plata area.

Marietta Baderna (1828–c. 1892) was a famous Italian dancer. At age 16, she was the principal dancer at La Scala in Milan and moved to Abya Yala at the end of 1849 and the beginning of 1850. Later known as Maria in Brazil, she performed as a principal dancer with the company formed for the season at Teatro São Pedro do Rio de Janeiro, today known as the João Caetano Theatre.

Maria performed both ballet and *lundu* in the company's performances. Specifically, the company's presentations had a hybrid format and offered a variety of performance forms, reflecting a nineteenth-century theatrical style characterised by strong musical foundations and a theatricality that challenged gender barriers (Rabetti & Alcure, 2015).

Lundu is a rhythm that originated during African enslavement in Brazil and traces its genealogy to Bantu regions. It is known as one of the *danças de umbigadas* (belly button bump dances), referring to the belly impact of two bodies, and specifically two belly buttons⁸⁵. The inclusion of *lundu* in these types of performances called the attention of the audience. She attracted many fans, who began to acclaim her, leading her surname to become an adjective, *baderneiros* (referring to her surname 'Baderna'). Over time, this adjective changed into a noun. Today, *baderna* means disorder, mess, tumult, or uproar in Brazil.

I wanted to see the theatre where she danced. So, in December 2022, I went to visit Teatro João Caetano, the oldest in Rio de Janeiro. It was the time of the World Cup in Qatar, and everyone was watching the Brazilian team playing. There were homeless people living in front of the theatre, and I stayed there for about an hour, alone. I stayed outside because it was closed and there was no program.

I write B/baderna with a slash in the middle to refer to both: a concept and a historical female dancer. Encountering B/baderna marked a turning point in my research and PhD journey. On the one hand, the transformation of her surname into an adjective and eventually into a noun became a source of inspiration for this research. On the other hand, engaging with a context close to my own origins – Brazil – had a profound impact on the question about what my work required at the moment. I realized I needed to critically integrate my own experience of migration and acknowledge the privilege and the responsibility of being able to move between the Global North and the Global South.

After a year and a half into my PhD, I asked in relation to translations: what does this practice require now? Translation was once an exercise of inhabiting the in-between spaces – pushing extremes and consolidating boundaries. Then my trip to Brazil promoted the possibility of transforming translation into a different field of research, allowing it to exist and resonate in another context, which will be discussed in the next chapter: Conflicted Embodiment. However, the transition to this framework needs to be unpacked.

While being aware of those questions about translations and inspired by *baderna*, in September 2022, I began combining different dances together, but from a sequential and formal approach. My focus was on sequencing one dance form after another. I struggled with the dance sequence because I was able to reproduce the dance forms but not to position those dances within a critical perspective of embodiment. I tried to enjoy it but could not really enjoy it. Embodiment then became more a practice of becoming a form rather than becoming a body.

During my visit to Rio de Janeiro in 2022, I shared a dance sequence in the living room of my second supervisor, Eleonora Fabião. We discussed the need to revive the idea of *B/baderna* as a force that celebrates dance – not only as joy and communal being, but also as political revolt, especially within a context of extreme urban violence.

⁸⁵ During my trips to Brazil for doctoral research (December 2022, December 2023, and March 2025), I chased *danças de umbigada* (specifically *lundu*, *jongo*, *tambor de crioula*). I also chased *capoeira*, *forró*, *samba no pé*, *samba de roda*, *frevo*, *axé*, *funk*, and *passinho*.

After performing the sequence, I reflected on my own struggle to inhabit and enjoy the dances. Presented one after the other, the movements felt as if they had been absorbed into my body, yet something was missing. We spoke about how I could bring back the sensations of dancing. What did I learn from this trip to Brazil? What were the sensations of the city itself?

My response to the last question was “misery and party.” Misery because poverty and violence in the streets of Rio de Janeiro coexist with the constant celebration of dance at street parties. From this insight, I decided to integrate live sensation directly into my practice. The ongoing task became: *Eu sinto tudo todo o tempo* – “I feel everything all the time.” Here, the task functions on two levels: It is both the reactivation of sensation and the transformation of sensation into material. By *material*, I refer to the tangible elements through which a performative body comes into being: movement dynamics, qualities, spatial orientation, and directional choices – the very components that constitute dancing.

Back in Europe, from January 2023, I began to practise this task on the dance floor in relation to the dances in my body-archive. I approached dance training by remaining within the process of embodying the sensations of dancing before crystallising and making each dance legible for myself. I shifted the focus from a formal approach to a more fleshy approach. I began to linger and savour the sensations of dancing, exploring each dance sensation before shaping it into a specific form, dynamic or movement.

I started to embody one dance sensation as a performance practice for an extended period. The warm-up always involved listening to music I enjoyed, so I could enter the sensation more easily. Gradually, I began to practise this in silence. Perhaps my best effort was embodying 40 minutes of *samba* afterwards without music.

Inspired by *B/baderna*, I began to bring more than one dance together simultaneously. I embodied two dance sensations simultaneously within the same body but this opened up a whole spectrum of questions: What does a single dance sensation contain and how does it become legible? What do two dance sensations imply and how do they combine?

Over time, this training led me to the performance practice of embodying sensation. It explores how to re-enact, re-sense, and re-embody the sensations of different dance traditions simultaneously. Through this practice, I found guidance in my research: I engage in radical embodiment by transforming everything I experience into dancing, which for me is also associated with a philosophical joy – the pleasure of dancing.

With *B/baderna*, I welcomed sensations as a radical experience of dancing, bringing the boundaries of different dances together in one body and attempting to combine them in various ways. With *B/baderna*, I research perceptions that migrate across bodies and determine realities and the ways they are named.

Four: I, She and We

As I studied dance, I became interested in the idea of becoming a professional nightclub dancer for whom the purpose of embodying a dance was to have pleasure, income and recognition. I knew from the beginning that I should not essentialise pleasure or romanticise working at night. But the fantasy of earning money through dancing in the nightlife context, knowing that this possibility is so limited in the dance field, had been there since my early twenties. However, out of fear, ignorance of the context, a desire to be part of contemporary dance or simply a fear of what it would ‘look like’, I never insisted too much on this idea, even though it was hidden in my wish list.

So, when I entered a strip club, I prepared to dance and to engage in a practice long familiar from the dance studio and social dance settings: performing under a gaze. However, participation required disidentifying myself and inventing a name. Subjectivity was no longer singular but fragmented: between the researcher and the stripper, an additional identity was needed to navigate this space. So, we are three: *caterina daniela mora jara*: the artist and researcher, who includes

Caterina Daniela Mora, my legal name; Daniela: the civilian who protects caterina and Thalía by using cate's second name; and Thalía: the stripper. I chose the name Thalía, with an accent mark in the *í*, in honour of the famous Mexican singer and actress Thalía. When I was a child, I used to listen to her Latin pop songs and watch the *telenovelas* she starred in. In Greek mythology, Thalia is one of the Three Graces, associated with festivity and joy.

Thalía's appearance integrated the power of the erotic into my dance practice and the heavy burden of being seen. I learned to manage proximity at a skilled tempo that sustains interest. I became erotically engaged with my own dancing as I understood how to draw attention to a specific part of my body or to a particular space. Thalía gave me the opportunity to perform dances I never dared to perform. By pushing my 'I' into a 'she', Thalía compels the context to create a friction in between different roles in dancing. She heightened the friction throughout the PhD process as I was required not to be the researcher. Who was I? Her presence revealed a tension that I later developed into a practice.

The different roles brought me in conflict with the contexts of my work. The experience as a dancer/performer in a strip club brought up many questions: how does the motivation to 'stay dancing' raise questions about who has access to the institutionalised field of contemporary dance? What if stripping is a way of dancing that challenges all my previous experience in dancing? Have I done extractivist research to nourish my artistic practice through this experience since I did not mention to anybody in the club that I was doing research? After a month of experience as a stripper, a question arose: how do I avoid instrumentalising this experience?

Dancing in a nightclub as a stripper led to the transformation of 'I' into 'we'. Since then, the practice of an 'I', 'she' and 'we' explores the fact that our 'I' is more than one and our 'we' is in constant negotiation. I began to explore the 'we' as a practice through teaching, writing, and lecturing. I began using it as a tool for scripting performances, employing it as a dramaturgical strategy to write different perspectives in dialogue for lecture-performances.

The appearance of this 'we' then became a struggle: not only confusing and disorienting, but also raising the question, who is this 'we'? Does the 'we' unify the three? What is the status and dance status of each one in relation to the 'we'? Do the 'I's belong to separate spaces, or do they master different dances? Does agonism run through their shared pursuit of dancing?

The 'we' is the result of a process motivated by operations we have gone through in order to be able to dance and it manifests in different ways. A 'we' refers to a split or a multiplied 'I', frictioning my positionality in this research. Each version of the self has specific working hours, distinct goals, and a different audience. Each devotes more or less time to outfits and makeup, and each assigns a different value to working hours and sleep. Yet the synchronicity between them emerges in the dance: the three of them inhabit the same body, pushing it to its limits until exhaustion.

The first-person plural spreads and splits the individual by tensioning the distance or proximity in between living experiences. The 'we' destabilises our sense of what is shared, affects our sense of our body, and raises questions about how that might affect another person's sense of their own body. 'We' brings multiple selves into relation, shaping how the individual connects and transforming those connections. It functions both as a strategy of enclosure and as a strategy that emphasises crossing boundaries. 'We' as a practice emerges through the shared pleasure of dance, where collective experience both unifies and complicates our positions, increasing the friction in positionality towards our artistic methodology: We chase dances to deal with the tensions between dances by creating spaces for negotiating steps, hand turns and mingling.

The practice of speaking and dancing using 'she', 'I', and 'we' emerged as a way to inhabit fantasy and contempt. It took me some time to understand that this was an embodied practice, not an identity crisis or split. I could stop at any time and return to the context of origin for Thalía, so I realised that her occasional appearance was not a constraint on reality. Consequently, the *desacataadas* fabulations address the struggle of having one voice and many voices, shaping the research, dancing,

and writing by adopting various pronouns and perspectives that shift and change according to context.

c. Script example

This script was published as an article called *Conflicted Embodiment. A sensory report of a 15-minute performed paper* (mora jara, 2024). The text emerges from a paper on Conflicted Embodiment performed at the Performance Studies International conference in London, June 2024. It gathers a never-ending, always incomplete, sensorial register of the sensations, pauses, feelings, contradictions, thoughts and different voices that are implicated in the process of text embodiment. In other words, it is proposed as a radical sensitivity: sensing everything, anytime, anywhere. This writing attempts to register the practice, as well as the transformation of this sensation into material for the performer and for performance. The practice of embodying sensation as a radical sensitivity exercise began in January 2023 and was first shared at the Conditions of Spectatorship Symposium in Brussels in March 2023.

The following sensorial report is organized in three columns: the text, which consists of the presented paper; the actions and space demarcations; the sensations and thoughts. In addition, the script presents the three voices of the current research: caterina, the researcher; Daniela, the citizen; and Thalía, the stripper. The voices are different versions of the 'I' and are marked in bold in the script. When the voice includes all three, the pronoun 'we' is used.

Conflicted Embodiment.

A sensory report of a 15-minute performed paper

caterina daniela mora jara

This contribution emerges from a paper on Conflicted Embodiment performed at the Performance Studies International conference in London, June 2024. It gathers a never-ending, always incomplete, sensorial register of the sensations, pauses, feelings, contradictions, thoughts and different voices that are implicated in the process of text embodiment. In other words, it is proposed as a radical sensitivity: sensing everything, anytime, anywhere. This writing attempts to register the practice, as well as the transformation of this sensation into material for the performer. Developed since January 2023, the radical sensitivity practice was shared for the first time during the Conditions of Spectatorship Symposium in Brussels, March 2023.

The following sensorial report is organized in three columns: the text, which consists of the presented paper; the actions and space demarcations; and sensations and thoughts. In addition, the script presents the three voices of the current research: caterina, the researcher; Daniela, the citizen; and Thalia, the stripper. The voices are different versions of the I and in the script they are marked in bold. In cases where the voice is made out of the three of them, the we pronoun is used.

	Text out loud	Actions / space	Sensations / thoughts
W A R M - U P I N T R O (C U R R E N T P O S I T I O N)	<p>caterina: Speaking Hola a todos! Welcome to a sensory report that gathers the script of a 15-minutes paper, presented at Performance Studies international (London, 2024).</p> <p>Can we do this presentation from here? Gracias for being here.</p> <p>We would like to begin this presentation with our current struggle, which problematizes my own position in research. We went dancing in a strip club, and there we encountered a split in my own personhood. caterina, the researcher/academic, transformed herself into an anonymous persona in order to go to the club. She was asked to hide her real name and adopt an alias. So caterina became Thalia, the stripper who is not here at the moment, she belongs to the night. Between caterina and Thalia there is Daniela. Daniela, the middle figure, the citizen in between, who connects the two and is the mediator between them.</p> <p>We will speak from this 'we', using it as a position that emerges from the splitting of the I.</p> <p>As another way to start, we would like to recognise the territory in which we currently find ourselves. Two hundred years ago, not far from here, the first loan began, the first Argentine debt of the Rivadavia's Presidential government, which was not paid for another one hundred and twenty years.</p> <p>caterina: Speaking We, so caterina, Daniela and Thalia, want to articulate the complexity of dance on both sides of the Atlantic as a movement: The movement between cities: from Fiske Menuco (Argentinian Patagonia) to Buenos Aires, then to Brussels and later to Stockholm.</p>	<p>caterina: Putting lipstick on Thalia.</p> <p>We: Saliva test.</p> <p>Thalia: Looking at everyone in the audience, almost smiling.</p> <p>Daniela: Inquiring to the moderator, who agrees.</p> <p>Thalia: Smiling without showing her teeth.</p> <p>Daniela: Sitting with our asses in the Senate House, London.</p> <p>We: We draw an imaginary triangle after the names.</p> <p>Daniela: Emphasizing the 'we' with her hands.</p> <p>caterina: Pointing with her right arm in the right direction.</p>	<p>We: Overproduction of saliva. Saliva is wet. We swallow saliva.</p> <p>Thalia: No one responds to our smiles. There are about 13 people in this room. I am one of the last in presenting, this is the big end of the conference, maybe.</p> <p>Daniela: We should stop smiling if people don't smile.</p> <p>caterina: Better be serious for this presentation?</p> <p>We: We enjoy this moment of confusion, usually people open their eyes when we mention this operation in the I.</p> <p>Thalia: Laughing inside, trying to not make it visible to others, checking gazes of the audience.</p> <p>Daniela: Internal anger that we suffocate by breathing deeply.</p> <p>We: Our chest is tight.</p> <p>Daniela: Someone took a photo.</p> <p>Thalia: Nobody is getting my drawing. But! I have my ass in the Senate! Yay! What does this mean? Is anyone enjoying this as much as I am?</p>

<p>C E N T R A L</p> <p>P O I N T S</p>	<p>The movement between cities: from Fiske Menuco (Argentinian Patagonia) to Buenos Aires, then to Brussels and later to Stockholm.</p> <p>The movement between continents: from Abya Yala to the European continent.</p> <p>The movement between urban densities: from the desert almost to the countryside, past three capitals.</p> <p>The movement between different dance practices: From ballet to reggaeton; From tango to Contact Improvisation; From salsa to Graham technique; From malambo to Flying Low.</p> <p>We are interested in the perspective of the dancer/performer as a researcher. Our voice seeks to speak to, with and for the performing arts field.</p> <p>In this field it is rare to have a permanent job, a position. We are mostly an army of freelancers. So having time to think and reflect on this practice is a luxury. And that's why we are grateful for the framework conditions that make this possible: a doctoral position for artistic research at the Stockholm University of the Arts and a budget that is earmarked for our research.</p>	<p>Thalia: Emphasizing the 'we' making a circle with her hands.</p> <p>Daniela: Imaginary drawing of the cities in an imaginary planisphere in front of us.</p> <p>Thalia: Imaginary drawing of the continents that ends up in a form of what is codified as a 2nd position in ballet. Our head looks at our hands and we accompany the movement of our head and arms towards what is codified as a 3rd position in ballet, Vaganova School. We briefly pause and put our arms as if we had an invisible tango partner. We briefly pause and rotate our arms with palms towards the audience, tense fingers, and we make a contraction, which is a spine movement coming from the Graham Technique. We briefly pause and lower our hands, dropping them towards the hips.</p>	<p>enjoying this as much as I am?</p> <p>Daniela: Are we confusing people with so many images?</p> <p>caterina: Are we confusing people with this presentation?</p> <p>Thalia: What if the 'we' in this presentation is not speaking to this audience? Another attempt: What if I do not speak to this audience in this presentation? Another attempt: What if Daniela does not speak to this audience in this presentation? Is there a conflict in the fact of speaking in this context and this audience?</p>
<p>1 S T</p> <p>P A R T</p>	<p>caterina: Speaking So we ask in this research: How is our embodiment triggered by migration? How does this "conflicted" appear? Well, through an embodiment that is already conflicted: our embodiment is in itself conflicted. We propose Conflicted Embodiment as a device for artistic research. Conflicted Embodiment brings together several different performing dance traditions together as a way to question hegemonic ways of understanding learning processes in performing arts.</p> <p>At this moment we are also very attentive to the fact that perhaps the concept itself is in conflict and needs to be reconsidered.</p> <p>However, let's try to hold this notion together, through the practice of it. We invite you to pay attention to</p>	<p>Thalia: Calling attention while moving her hand making eights.</p> <p>Daniela: Looking at the audience.</p> <p>Thalia: Looking at the audience, suspending attention in those gazes. Moving hand until forming a gun with thumb and forefinger. Pause in that position for three seconds and later continue moving.</p> <p>We: Briefly pause, frozen position. Check the paper and speak slower than before.</p>	<p>Daniela: Feeling fragile speaking in English.</p> <p>caterina: Are people understanding my pronunciation?</p> <p>Thalia: I don't care about language. There are a few people that don't care a shit about what we are doing here. Others seem to be interested.</p> <p>caterina: Could Daniela and Thalia try to slow down the amount of thoughts? I am trying to give a lecture here.</p>

	<p>At this moment we are also very attentive to the fact that perhaps the concept itself is in conflict and needs to be reconsidered.</p> <p>However, let's try to hold this notion together, through the practice of it. We invite you to pay attention to your body, and combine at the same time two dance traditions, or two performing arts practices.</p> <p>We repeat: we invite you to feel at the same time two dance traditions or two performing arts practices.</p>	<p>We: Briefly pause, frozen position. Check the paper and speak slower than before.</p> <p>We: Swallowing saliva, slowly.</p>	<p>caterina: Could Daniela and Thalia try to slow down the amount of thoughts? I am trying to give a lecture here.</p> <p>Daniela: It is hard to focus on the paper.</p> <p>We: Realization we are sweating. Drops of sweat fall from our left armpit.</p>
P A U S E	<p>caterina: Speaking ¿Están conmigo? Si vous voulez je vous parle un petit peu en français, comme ça je recentre l'attention vers nous. Na mentira, pero ahí va, me abrieron los ojos.</p>	<p>Thalia: Looking at them and while doing that activates our right foot, lifting the leg a bit, as if we're taking a step.</p>	<p>Daniela: Feeling the audience's gaze, sustaining the gaze among all of us and them. We should have incorporated one of the words we learnt in this congress, like 'vagrant' or 'busking' or 'endeavors'.</p>
2 N D P A R T	<p>caterina: Speaking At this moment, for example, we are with cumbia and Passing Through. Have any of you been able to read or see or perceive this? As you can experience, we are busy with the fact of seeing and being seen in performing arts practice. Here are some of the current questions of the research: - How does our accent and our mother tongue play a role in this research? We are not speaking about language itself, we're rather asking: as performers, what is our mother tongue? How has our accent been influenced by the place we come from? - What triggers the fact that our embodiment is never fully accessible? - How does the performer develop a sense of legibility and allow themselves to be "read" in a certain way? -What does resist legibility? -What happens when one perceives virtuosity in a practice that deals with conflict? How can virtuosity appropriate conflict? It is also important to clarify that this research locates a philosophical pleasure in dancing. We love being on stage, but at the same time we encounter so many restrictions on access (as migrants) to the stage and so many problems with how the art market appropriates critical discussions of these issues.</p>	<p>caterina: Moving arms slowly in front of the heart.</p> <p>Daniela: Balancing hips from one side to another.</p> <p>Thalia: Taking over the balancing and accelerating the rhythm.</p> <p>Daniela: Taking over the movement and embodying cumbia, alone.</p> <p>We: Smiling at one person, then another one. While sharing our nervousness, we move our hips in a continuous movement, feeling the change of weight in our foot. Our tongue tries to articulate as much as possible the language in which we are speaking. Sometimes we open our mouths bigger than necessary for the task.</p>	<p>Thalia: caterina, don't forget to check the time.</p> <p>caterina: Yes, Thalia is right.</p> <p>Thalia: Can I start inventing something?</p> <p>Daniela: Stick to the script, please, don't invent.</p> <p>Thalia: Why should I stick to the script?</p> <p>caterina: We will be misunderstood, shit.</p> <p>Daniela: caterina, don't forget to pronounce all the letters. Did you say parties? Like political parties? Or caterina, did you want to say "party as mother tongue"? Dancing alone in the cumbia is boring.</p> <p>We: Cumbia is in our stomach, moving our trochanters like simulating waves.</p> <p>caterina: Why did the organizers of this congress put me in a panel with theoretical researchers?</p> <p>Daniela: Because it is important to share this discussion in academic contexts.</p> <p>caterina: Why, Daniela? Why is that important?</p>

<p>3 R D P A R T</p>	<p>caterina: Speaking So we propose Conflicted Embodiment as a way of accepting the fact that the experience of dance is never pure. And as for the "conflictedness", we take two different approaches from two territories: the European approach and the Abya Yala approach. On the one hand, political theory considers Chantal Mouffe's agonistic approach. On the other hand, there's the notion of ch'ixi by Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui. The critic of the decolonial critic.</p> <p>We apologize that we do not have time to explain these concepts. What we can say is that we invite you to dig into the publication we launched in September 2023. We have some physical copies with us, but if you would like the PDF file, please contact us after we have finished this paper.</p>	<p>Thalia: Dancing in the in-betweenness with a little bit of ballet and reggaeton, and breathing with the calm of the Klein Technique.</p> <p>Daniela: Worrying about the volume of her voice. Making it louder.</p>	<p>Thalia: I hate the artificial light of this space, the acoustics are so horrible</p> <p>We: What does resist legibility?</p> <p>Thalia: Don't rush, caterina, rather say that there is no time than make an inaccurate statement.</p> <p>caterina: I wish I could have time to read something of our reflection on Mouffe's approach: "Conflicts can be described as agonistic or antagonistic. Agonistic conflict contains not only consensus and opposition, but also difference and dissent". Without time, I just don't say it.</p> <p>Thalia: caterina, you should rework your text to make it fit in 15 minutes.</p> <p>caterina: I wish I could have time to explain how we perceive the role of Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui in the current discourses around decolonial practices.</p>
<p>A S A W A Y O F E N D I N G</p>	<p>caterina: Speaking So, as a way of ending but not as an end, in the context of the artistic research we are busy with, we defend the right to opacity; we recognize the never-ending struggle of speaking and writing in English; we acknowledge the effort in the continuous exercise of translation; we question hegemonic ways of dealing with the error in performing arts practice; we keep dancing, as a way of provoking joy, and we problematize legibility while suspending recognition; we strip, as a way of provoking ethical and legal problems in the domain of research.</p> <p>We embrace the conflicted as generative resistance.</p> <p>Muchas gracias for your attention.</p>	<p>caterina: Checking the moderator. The moderator approves.</p> <p>Thalia: Smiling again with a bigger smile, like dedicating the words to the people who are listening. Sometimes if people reply with a gesture, like a gaze, or a chair movement, or swallowing saliva, I make them know that I see them.</p> <p>We: Looking at the audience and feedbacking it, by asserting with a gesture that says "yes, we see you".</p>	<p>Thalia: Calming down caterina and Daniela to reach the end of the presentation.</p> <p>Daniela: Imitating Thalia, calming down caterina to reach the end of the presentation.</p> <p>Thalia: There is another girl taking notes in front of us.</p> <p>We: We are pretty okay now in relation to time.</p> <p>caterina: This paper is going to finish soon.</p> <p>We: Fin, chau.</p>

d. Discussion

In moving with and from the Translatress, Marie Genèvieve, *baderna*, or my 'we', this research uses *desacatadas* fabulations as a method for engaging with multiple dances and female legacies simultaneously. Fabulation allows gaps in the archive to be filled with imaginary narratives, letting past practices coexist in the present body. Through this approach, I can be with multiple temporalities and movements simultaneously, without erasing the differences or producing hierarchies between them. Each dance carried distinct technical and cultural markers, and the borders where they intersected highlighted tensions and possibilities.

However, the process of scripting through *desacatadas* fabulations inscribed my body with traces of varying intensities, spanning experiences that felt at once like a laboratory and like an archive. Scripting created spatial needs for each female voice. While the Translatress and Marie

Genève could remain in one physical space of performance, for *baderna* and my 'we', it was clear that they needed to move from one space to another.

For this research, writing a script is to practise, repeat, and inhabit a narrative or an argument in relation to dance. I felt the resistance of letting knowledge settle into my muscles, posture, breath, and gestures. Some scripts were smoother and more easily integrated, while others strain the body, revealing limits with the contexts and friction with my own embodiment.

The multiplicity of presence, though generative, required decisions: which histories to continue and which to set aside. The choice was to confront an ethical dilemma: Can a body continue to inhabit someone whose body I increasingly question — both in its historical situatedness and in the material, environmental space it occupies? The answer is not evident; it shifts with proximity and context.

Chapter III: Teaching Practice

This chapter presents the main pedagogical output of this artistic research, designed to transmit *Conflicted Embodiment* as both a set of practices and a concept. The chapter is organized as follows: a general description providing an overview and context of the teaching practice, a typical two-day workshop, and a final discussion.

Developed through several workshops conducted during this research and within a context specifically created to develop this workshop in ethical frameworks, this pedagogical output is intended for dance or performing arts practitioners.

Two annexes are related to this chapter: **Annex II** contains the ethical consent template for research participants in the *Conflicted Embodiment* workshops, and **Annex III** provides a complete list of workshops facilitated during this doctoral research.

1. Overview

In the workshop titled "Conflicted Embodiment as Lens: Troubling Dance Legacies". I propose *Conflicted Embodiment* as an exploratory framework to investigate performing arts practices with the aim of troubling learning processes and relating them to the current practices of participants. The workshop is focused on re-remembering, articulating, and embodying previous contexts of learning dance processes. Its aim is to problematize what and how the learning process in the performing arts was, is and could be by exploring how acts of embodiment can host the 'conflicted' as a research device.

Structure

The workshop consists of five parts: Warm-up, **embodying the sensation***, a writing task, decision-making in embodying the sensation, and final reflection.

The warm-up focuses on what a performer needs to activate in order to perform and how to sustain sensation. Therefore, dance skill training includes responsiveness, multidirectionality, balance, coordination, and endurance, with conscious engagement of the diaphragm. The second section develops performance practices for reactivating the embodiment of sensation from previous dance education contexts through different entry points. The third part consists of a written exercise that traces key moments or events in the participant's dance education when they experienced something transformative in their learning process (related to A Dancer Sensorial's CV section). The fourth part offers compositional options to activate critical potential for recombining sensation. The fifth part reflects on the previous sections, considering the concepts of *agonism* by Chantal Mouffe and *chi'xi* by Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui.

Aims and questions

The workshop aims to complexify the binarism between official and non-official educational contexts, social and concert dances, legitimized or non-legitimized contexts, among others. Addressing the question "What embodiments does your practice embody?", the workshop explores how acts of embodiment were learned, how practices were stratified and/or hierarchized, and how expectations delineated the participant's educational process in the performing arts. The proposal unfolds embodied practices using methods associated with the sensorial CV, chasing dances, and *desacatadas* fabulations – acknowledging the discomfort of how territoriality is linked to demarcations of subjectivity – and somatic practices – focusing on the relations between sensing, imagining and embodiment⁸⁶.

⁸⁶ This research acknowledges artists who explore awareness or somatic practices as performance practices.

During the workshop, we look at how the gaze influences our dances and how proximity challenges the activity of the performers. We explore strategies for reactivating and combining dance. By investigating Conflicted Embodiment as a research tool, the proposal creates spaces of discomfort between doing, seeing, and feeling, based on questions around the value of statues of dances, such as folklore, popular culture, and academic dances.

Intended outcomes

- Apply somatic practices to develop a performance designed to be seen.
- Explore how the concept of conflict in acts of embodiment within dance education contexts can generate further questions in the performing arts as a source of creative potential.
- Develop a deep understanding of embodiment by questioning transparency and applying the lens of opacity⁸⁷.

Practicalities

- Location: A space for dance, it can be a dance studio.
- Proximity: Activities involve close physical engagement. Please wear comfortable clothing suitable for movement and shoes with clean soles for the warm-up.
- Duration: Classes can range from a minimum of 2 days (3 hours each) up to 3 weeks, depending on the process goal (e.g., preparing a public sharing).
- Timing: The workshop is best scheduled in the morning, before lunchtime.

2. Example: Work Plan for a Typical Two-Day

For a three-Hour-Per-Day Workshop

Day 1

Focus: Embodiment from the sensation: How to sense it again?

0 - *Arrival: grounding // 10 min*

Introduction to the workshop's context, followed by a round of names and pronouns to situate who is present, and an invitation for participants to position themselves in relation to the workshop context (expectations, fantasies, or imagined thoughts about it). Brief introduction of myself, contextualization of the workshop as a practice outcome: what does it mean symbolically and practically to do a PhD in artistic research at Stockholm University of the Arts?

Introduction to my practice, where I come from: learning ballet and contemporary dance, learning European and North American dances as well as social dance in different contexts, such as tango and *malambo*. Explanation of Conflicted Embodiment as a method and as an analytical tool to understand how the embodiment processes of dances frame a dancer.

Introductory questions for the group: how do different dances differ and how do they converge? How much are we influenced by the techniques and practices we learn? To what extent does a technique function as a structural reference for a dancer?

I recognise the pioneering work of Deborah Hay, whose practice focuses on *embodied perceptual awareness*. For further insight, see *RE-Perspective: Deborah Hay: Works from 1968 to the Present* (Hay, 2019), and Monni (2019).

Artist Frédéric Gies has developed the practice of Technosomatics since 2014, integrating somatic awareness into club dance. (Dance is Ancient, n.d.)

⁸⁷ This concept will be addressed in part c 'Discussion'.

- 1- *A local/global warm-up*⁸⁸ // 45-50 min
- a. 7 min: Warm-up circuit to activate the myofascial chains and retrain the diaphragm as a primary reflex.
 - b. 3 or 4 cycles: explosive circuit⁸⁹, in intermittent⁹⁰ format.
 - c. 3 or 4 cycles: eccentric circuit⁹¹, in intermittent format.

2- *Dance-guided tour of the traces of dance learning processes* // 40 min

I lead a vocally guided tour for participants to activate and track their training processes. The activation goes from sensation to imagination and visualization: "Let's look at the context of the learning process in relation to the performing arts", "How did you come to study/professionalize dance?"

The tour invites you to visualise and imagine the spaces inhabited, the memory of smells and people, and the colours of the places, the techniques or body styles that were practised, the training schedule, the exercises or rituals that were repeated, the ways of dressing, the images that shaped us. I say:

Bring traces of a dance learning context environment to this moment.

Bring the teacher's voice in that context.

Bring the textures, temperatures of the space, densities, memories, fantasies, the ghosts of many other bodies, and the politics of those spaces.

Bring the distance between people and the sensation of proximity.

At a certain point, there is a call to achieve a 'performative state' while enduring one single technique, style, imprint or practice.

We work with the insistence on a state reactivated by sensations that sometimes invite form, but also include sounds, colours, and images. "What are the tools related to space, to movement in this lineage of body knowledge? What do you need in order to activate them? Is it a movement, a text, a position, a dynamic?"

3- *Writing exercise: Sensorial CV and Chasing Dances* // 20 min

- a. Individual writing exercise that encourages you to retrace events from earlier dance learning contexts or moments when you found yourself chasing in dances as transformative tasks.
- b. Duo pairing and sharing of selected material.

→ If there is time: repeat the exercise "Dance-guided tour on the traces of dance learning processes".

⁸⁸ This warm-up approach was informed by Tensegrity Training (Amparo Gonzalez Solá) and developed in collaboration with Malena Albarracín, creator of Fluage, both of whom draw on the research carried out by Argentinian osteopath Dr. Andrea Manso Hoffman.

My friend Malena, dancer and artist trainer from Argentina who currently lives in Valencia (Spain) visited Stockholm twice for a residency to do research on the optimal way of training for my practice.

⁸⁹ The explosive circuit consists of fast, accelerated movements performed at high intensity over a brief period.

⁹⁰ Intermittent refers to irregular intervals of timekeeping structures in the practice, using a timer to guide a series of tasks at different stations for short, focused periods.

⁹¹ The eccentric circuit involves exercises that focus on eccentric contraction. This lengthens the muscles while under tension, promoting strength and resistance simultaneously.

4- *Communal sharing discussion // 20-30 min*

Topics to be addressed:

- Arc between form and sense: what are the differences, if any, between 'doing' and 'feeling' dance forms?
- What similarities are there in relation to dance/performing arts education?
- What are the strategies of 'performers' to activate this?
- Vocabulary questions: how to talk about this experience?

Day 2

Focus: Embodiment as performance practice: arriving at the exercise of Conflicted Embodiment

0- *Arrival // 5 min*

1- *Warm-up // 35 min*

Repeat the previous day, but with shorter explanations.

2- *Dance-guided tour of the traces of dance learning processes // 30 min*

This time the tour is based on the form of a particular dance tradition. How does one navigate from one form to another and what does each form require? We also refer to the fact that it is never possible to find a complete approach to embodiment; that embodiment itself is an opaque and complex process of legibility.

As this is the second time that the participants are trying out the same exercise, other factors are added, such as the possible inclusion of a music track, the division of the group into two groups so that there is an audience.

3- *Writing exercise: Sensorial CV and Chasing Dances // 15 min*

Revision of previous day writing and sharing with another person.

4- *Decision-making on embodying the sensation // 20 min*

Repeat the embodying the sensation task while introducing possible methods of composition.

- Temporal-related: fade in or fade out (scales of embodiment), drop, cut, pause, reverse, in quantic jump.
- Kinesphere-related: split (two or more sensations simultaneously); migration (from one part of the body).
- Compositionally related: saturation method (until the sensation cannot resist anymore).
- Use of the gaze: different planes/spaces/environments of the gaze and how I share what I am sensing through the gaze.

5- *Reading and reflection moment // 50 min*

Reading and reflecting on Chantal Mouffe's concept of *agonism* – the value of productive conflict in democracy, where disagreement serves as a driving force rather than aiming for consensus – and *ch'ixi* from Silva Rivera Cusicanqui, which refers to realities that coexist without merging, in relation to the previous practices⁹². Topics to discuss:

- What are the decisions you are most comfortable to make in this performative state?
- How are these decisions made? Do these decisions respond to dominance processes?
- The sensation of the performative state.

⁹² Those concepts will be addressed in the next chapter.

3. Discussion

The Conflicted Embodiment workshops provide a context for individual experimentation, collective sharing, and reflection. Revisiting past learning processes creates a space where we learn again from something we have learned before through the re-actualisation and transformation of lived experience. Central to the workshop's development is the individual dance practice of each participant, emphasizing knowledge grounded in performing practice rather than being choreographed. Questions of authorship and control emerge as follow-ups: how does the work relate to individual authorship, and to what extent can it be guided or held by the dancer?

The methodology foregrounds tensions, collisions, and struggles within acts of embodiment, asking: What is reactivated through performing? What conflicts are embodied in our practices? What potentials emerge from these conflicts? Which aspects of embodiment are chosen to be represented as conflicted, and do they reinforce identification, counter-identification, or both?

As dance scholar and researcher Sandra Noeth observes in her editorial *Introduction—Violence: Embodiment* (2022), discussions around embodiment challenge universalistic and transparent approaches, emphasizing how bodies, practices, and experiences resist complete legibility. She identifies two contentious dynamic approaches to embodiment. On the one hand, the term gives voice to political expression, resistance, and hope, offering a framework for understanding bodily action as a tool for individual and collective agency. On the other hand, embodiment is often used to legitimize national, cultural, and broader sociopolitical projects through dance and movement practices. In these contexts, embodiment is framed as authentic, transparent, with a pre-given essence and natural, thereby obscuring its historical, cultural, and ideological construction. Such framings rely on essentialist assumptions that posit the body as a stable source of truth, masking the ways bodies are trained, regulated, and instrumentalized.

Rather than offering resolutions, the workshops highlight the instability and value of embodied decisions. Within this frame, embodiment enacts what Martiniquais poet Édouard Glissant (1997) calls a *right to opacity* – a recognition of irreducible difference that cannot be fully accessed, illustrated, or interpreted. I emphasize this right to opacity in embodiment: it is never entirely readable, and this irreducibility constitutes both its richness and its challenge. Opacity enables embodiment to resist being fully captured by interpretation, representation, or judgment.

At a practical level in any workshop, attention to accessing and exiting sensations is fundamental, especially on the first day. Entry points to the sensations may be somatic, formal, or rhythmical/dynamic, while exiting may be gradual or abrupt. A recurring exercise places two dance sensations within the same body, prompting reflection: to what extent must one embody multiple sensations simultaneously, and how important is differentiating them? Here, differentiation does not imply separation but attentiveness to their coexistence within experience.

This resonates with Chrysa Parkinson's notion of synthesis in dance, which emphasizes that embodied experience is never pure. This concept of synthesis is perhaps the closest approach to Conflicted Embodiment from a practice-based perspective. She says: "we do not have pure bodies, we do not have pure experiences, there are no pure techniques and there are no pure expressions of anything; everything carries all of what it has touched" (Parkinson, personal communication, 27 August 2023). While synthesis describes the integration of difference into a dancing experience, Conflicted Embodiment foregrounds "difference without separability" (Ferreira da Silva), offering moments for re-experiencing dance while reflecting on conflict as a generative force. The aim is not homogeneity but differentiation without resolution.

The collective dimension of the workshops raises additional questions: what are the "wounds that travel" (Dewachi, 2015) into the studio, and how can they be acknowledged relationally without being resolved? Sharing wounds is sensitive; participants first engage in writing or paired reflection, and only afterwards do these processes become communicable as they enter a shared exchange.

Painful topics often relate to the value of dances, the status of bodies, or the difficulty of accessing certain sensations. Transformative moments occur when participants can articulate these experiences, even if assent is expressed silently.

Within this framework, the project examines dance as a practice that engages with the irreducible – and often constant conveyance – experience of conflict. Navigating the past in the present through movement requires careful attentiveness, as there is a delicate balance in working with conflicts that allows continued engagement. One may become suffocated, paralysed, or dragged by the conflict. There is a risk of neutralising it or inadvertently escalating it. Attuning to and dancing with conflict is emotionally demanding and calls for courage. Consequently, developing strategies for both individual and collective care is an essential part of the process, as participants are exposed – physically and emotionally – within the dance studio.

Chapter IV: Conflicted Embodiment

This chapter introduces Conflicted Embodiment as an exercise in figuration (Victoria Pérez Royo), proposing it as a concept for engaging with the set of practices outlined above. It thus presents Conflicted Embodiment as a conceptual lens for engaging with the performing arts.

The chapter includes a description of the uses and implications of the terms embodiment and conflicted, reflections on studying Conflicted Embodiment with groups in the dance studio. Additionally, this section includes specific examples of the creation process of the *Group Work Session on Conflicted Embodiment* (2025–2026) – Mariê Mazer, Natalia Perea Santana, Yari Stilo – and myself, followed by a final discussion.

1. Embodiment

Embodiment is a concept used in multiple fields. Adaptable and flexible, it functions as a conceptual joker. Across the many disciplines that engage with and apply embodiment – such as dance, philosophy, neuroscience, cognitive psychology, and anthropology – a common thread persists despite differing approaches: embodiment shapes knowledge through bodily experience.

My understanding of embodiment is rooted in dance practice. This means that this project does not reject definitions from other fields, but seeks to generate grounded knowledge through repetition, experimentation, and process – knowledge produced through doing – and through modes of dancing in which movement generates thought.

a. Etymology and translations

Etymologically, the English word *embodiment* contains the prefix *em-*, meaning ‘in’ or ‘into’, and *body*, referring to the structure of a person, animal, plant, or other organism or being. The prefix *em-* therefore signals a process of materialization: something takes form as a body, or a body is shaped according to something else. In my understanding, embodiment does not only refer to the capacity of having a body, but becoming a body that can represent or materialize a relation. Therefore, embodiment is a process that occurs within a relationship and refers to the materialisation of this relationship.

Embodiment became meaningful in this research because its multiple significances produce a continuous effort of translation – the dynamic process I experienced while conducting research in English and remaining in dialogue with my mother tongue, tonguering, and also engaging with Portuguese during my research trips to Brazil.

In Spanish, the translation of embodiment can refer, in the verb form, to *encarnar* (to incarnate) and to *corporeizar* (to make body), which are the most approximate translations of the term. However, embodiment can also refer to *personificar* (to personificate), *materializar* (to materialize), *manifestar* (to manifest). As for the term *encuerpar*, which can also be a tentative translation of embodiment, in the *Diccionario de Americanismos* (Dictionary of Americanisms) you will find the following: *engrosar, hacerse más grueso* (thicken, get thicker), that is, it refers to something that becomes more voluminous, that takes more space.

For instance, if I am working in Argentina and need to translate and operate with the concept of *embodiment*, I must be attentive to the local political and linguistic context. For example, in recent years, feminist movements have adopted the term and hashtag *#acuerpar* to describe collective forms of bodily involvement in women’s empowerment (Bardet, 2018), a usage that can be understood as putting the body on the line. This semantic and political resonance cannot be ignored.

The question of how to translate embodiment into other contexts has therefore required a prolonged process of negotiation, given its interdependence with the culture in which the term is

used. Treating embodiment as a translation struggle is also something of which I must remain constantly aware: the context to which I am speaking, the context from which it originates, how to adapt the term, and the potential meanings the word may have depending on the situations in which I apply it.

b. Embodiment as *incorporaciones*

While attempting to understand what *embodiment* means within my work, I was compelled to ask myself whether I had, at any point, developed an **attitude*** that reproduces a colonial logic – one in which concepts are first articulated in Europe and only later transferred elsewhere. Would this risk imposing meaning rather than attending to context-specificity? This raised further questions: What might a culturally situated translation of *embodiment* look like within my project if I aim to communicate it in the context of Abya Yala, where Spanish and Portuguese are dominant?

After years of back and forth between continents, I tried long-form translations of both terms⁹³, literal translation⁹⁴, and disobedient translation. I came to understand that the best option for translating *embodiment* in Spanish and Portuguese speaking contexts will be with the noun form and plural form of the verb *to incorporate* (*incorporaciones*). Actually, if we translate embodiment in Spanish using the prefix ‘em’ and ‘body’ the result will be *in* and *corpo*, therefore *incorporar*.

However, for a long time I resisted using this word as a translation of embodiment in my project because it is widely used in different contexts. For example, we could say *incorporar una pregunta* (to incorporate a question, meaning to integrate something into a process), *incorporar ingredientes* (to incorporate an ingredient, meaning to add), *incorporar un elemento* (to incorporate an element), or *incorporarse* (to rise up). But what if we expand the term and use it as a radical way of acknowledging what is being incorporated?

In Portuguese, *incorporar* also carries a bodily-spiritual resonance; it suggests that the spirit becomes embodied through the body. *Incorporar* can also mean *possuir* (to possess), *ser possuído* (to be possessed), or *entrar em transe* (to go into a trance).

In both languages, *incorporar* refers to a transformation, whether it emphasises possession, rupture, altered states, integration, or reception.

As a result of these various possibilities, the current Spanish translation of this project's name adopts the plural form of *incorporate*, namely: *Incorporaciones Conflictivas*⁹⁵.

c. In Practice

The practices of Conflicted Embodiment approach embodiment from the standpoint of sensation. When I articulate embodiment in a workshop, I refer to *becoming* a body as an act of *incorporating* – that is, the process of putting something into our body. In this sense, *becoming* and *incorporating* are usually linked.

But since we practise sensation, as a dancer I ask: *Where* and *how* do I work with embodying the sensation as material? Can the sensation be localised? I will address this issue in the section of “Studying the Dance Studio with Conflicted Embodiment”.

As for the *how*, over time I have come to understand that accessing sensation – as said before, the sensation of becoming a body in a previous dance learning process – manifests in different ways. Until a few months ago, I used to call those ways of approaching the task *logics* of the sensation, or

⁹³ I tried several long-form translations, such as “*activaciones corporales en estado de conflicto*”.

⁹⁴ “*Encarnación conflictiva*”.

⁹⁵ This is the name of the latest workshops in Argentina in 2025 (see Annex III).

ways of organising the sensation. I changed the terminology because the ideas of *logic* and *organising* are related to a rational approach to sensation, which contradicts the pedagogical environment I want to foster. So, I currently express this idea using the term ***tendencies of the sensation****.

To study these approaches, I identify and name three primary ways of engaging with the task. I found that having three tendencies promotes repeatability and orientation in the task. My personal tendencies when I train embodying the sensation are: feedback, temperature memory, and the bastard-cheap.

1. *Feedback* refers to the specific exchange of information in the particular context in which I perform. For example, if people position themselves far away or are laughing, all this information affects the performance. Here, notions of legibility and opacity are crucial, as I maintain my task of embodying the sensation while simultaneously observing how my dancing evolves in response to the feedback from my audience.
1. *Temperature memory* refers to embodying the specific 'temperature' or sense of heating of a dance tradition. This means tapping into the visceral, embodied knowledge that each tradition carries, becoming attuned to its waves, rhythm and flavour.
2. The *bastard-cheap* refers to a performing attitude that embraces DIY circumstances, transforming the vulnerability of proximity into a bold expression of inhabiting the wild, recycled dance space, where there is no limit to material transgression.

These tendencies are not fixed; they are what Conflicted Embodiment has cultivated in me. I encourage students/practitioners to explore and identify their own. Each practitioner's relationship to the task will inevitably differ, and understanding one's own tendencies is a crucial step towards deepening the practice.

A next step in the task of embodying the sensation in a group happens later: Are there shared tendencies? How do these shared tendencies differ for each practitioner, and do they also have synchronicities? What is the readability of these shared tendencies?

2. The Conflicted

As an adjective, 'conflicted' in this research describes and shapes the noun 'embodiment'. It signals tension, opposition, and uncertainty, where multiple internal and external forces – desires, values, sensations, or impulses – pull in different directions simultaneously. To speak of embodiment as conflicted is to recognize that the experience of inhabiting a body emerges through these tensions: the body is formed and sustained through negotiations and coexisting logics, sometimes constrained or unresolved. In this sense, conflict is constitutive of embodiment itself.

'Conflicted' can refer to inhabiting a conflict, being in conflict, or both. The spectrum of attitudes towards something conflicted can be diverse and vary in intensity. The concept of the conflicted as a constitutive condition of a body encompasses various perspectives: conflicted for what, by whom, in what context, and so on.

Studying conflict opens an expansive field of inquiry. To clarify, I am not interested in conflict that is represented, displayed, or made legible at a visual or symbolic level; this would be *Embodied Conflict*, which suggests that conflict exists first and is then expressed by the body. In contrast, in Conflicted Embodiment, conflict is not represented or added; it is constitutive and generative, emerging through the dynamics of embodiment itself. By foregrounding conflict as constitutive rather than representational, this research engages embodiment as a site of ongoing negotiation, relationality, and creative tension.

For this research, two key elements are particularly significant, each with its own historical and conceptual grounding. The first is conflict as constituting a mixture without merging; the second is conflict as constitutive of social dynamics. Both are foundational to my artistic practice and both arise from the epistemologies that shape me: one generated in Abya Yala, the other in Europe.

In the following section, I present the frameworks of Amerindian thought, as articulated by Bolivian sociologist Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, which helps me situate conflict within colonial experiences, and by Belgian political scientist Chantal Mouffe's political-agonistic perspective, which situates conflict within social processes.

a. Agonism

I was drawn to the intellectual work of the couple Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, Argentinian and Belgian political theorists, respectively. Their work provides a framework for understanding conflict not as a problem to be erased, but as a constitutive feature of social and political life. Quoting them, "the social is impossible," which refers to social order as always contingent and continuously shaped through struggles over meaning (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985; Mouffe, 2005).

Laclau and Mouffe (1985) argue that antagonism is inherent in society and cannot be eradicated. Antagonism refers to opposition in rivalry. The concept of antagonism was taken from Carl Schmitt (2007), who states that the essence of politics is the distinction between friends and enemies: politics arises when a group defines itself as 'we' by identifying another group as a potential existential threat or 'enemy'. In extreme cases, this conflict can become violent.

Instead of 'enemies', Mouffe proposes 'adversaries'. For her the goal of democratic politics is to transform antagonism into agonism. She proposes this transformation through her model of 'agonistic pluralism' as a critique for liberal democracy. By agonistic pluralism, Mouffe (2013) does not mean merely acknowledging multiplicity, that is, the idea that "we are many." Rather, she emphasizes the constitutive character of social division and the impossibility of final reconciliation. While antagonism seeks to remove the other from the sphere of political agency, agonism allows for the coexistence of opposing and conflicting agents within a continuous struggle.

Within this framework, Mouffe (2005) positions agonism as a way of dealing with conflict at the level of political practice. Agonism transforms antagonistic relations into interactions between adversaries rather than enemies. Conflict is neither eliminated nor fully resolved. Because it remains constantly threatened by a return to antagonism, agonism is understood as a precarious and contingent practice, rather than a stable resolution.

In practical terms, conflicts can be described as either antagonistic or agonistic. Antagonism produces a binary opposition: agents in conflict are considered enemies, and coexistence is impossible. Agonism, on the other hand, describes political encounters between legitimate adversaries who accept each other's right to exist while disagreeing on interpretation or priority of values. These non-destructive rivals share a commitment to fundamental principles such as equality and liberty, while continuing to differ in how they interpret these very concepts.

From an agonistic perspective, conflict inherently includes non-resolution. The notion of the agonistic articulates the political by acknowledging that conflict is not always resolved for everyone. Therefore, the agonistic approach refers to both consensus and dissent. Conflict is understood not as a problem to be universally solved, but as a constitutive element of political life. Mouffe (2002) explains:

In the agonistic model (...) the antagonistic dimension is always present; there is a constant struggle between opposing hegemonic projects which can never be reconciled rationally; one of them needs to be defeated. This is a real confrontation but one that is played out under conditions regulated by a set of democratic procedures accepted by the adversaries. (2002, p. 10)

Agonism provides a framework for engaging conflict productively, recognizing the usefulness of the concept permanence among different applications. In the field of arts, Mouffe herself has discussed the relationship between agonism, artistic practices, and public spaces, noting that cases of artistic activism can challenge existing consensus (2007). By intervening in public spaces through provocative, or disruptive practices, artists can disturb prevailing hegemonic narratives.

However, as Friederike Landau (2021) notes, Mouffe leaves unspecified where lines should be drawn and how agonistic subjects, both collective and individual, might be imagined within spatial contexts. In Landau's article on articulations of the agonistic in public space-making, particularly regarding museums as public spaces, she highlights the need to comprehend how to spatialise and constitute 'us' and 'them'.

Following Landau's criticism, post-foundational theories on the creation of political identities provide a useful vocabulary. In this regard, the author presents the concept of "constitutive outside": "the necessary externality to constitute or articulate an identity, which is *not* the outside, but a, however heterogeneous, inside, contributing to identity formation" (2021, pp. 156-157). A constitutive outsider enables and prevents the formation of collective identities, thus maintaining antagonism. Reflecting on Landau's contribution, it is noteworthy that the spatial dynamic introduced elaborates on antagonism, not-so-agonistic, and not-at-all agonistic, as referred to by the author.

In this line of thought: Where, then, should agonism be situated in the task of embodiment? What if I do not perceive any agonistic forces? Should I provoke these agonistic forces from a place within my body? Should I experience conflict due to my dance education? What if I do not? These topics are central to *Conflicted Embodiment* and are important questions that may arise during a workshop, as the 'location' of the conflict is sometimes understood as a need to relate to the task. I will address this issue in the next section.

Several artists employ the concept of agonism as a framework for thinking with or about artistic practices. Visual artist Mia Seppälä (2022) applies the concept to reflect on disagreements and agonism in public spaces. Questioning different implications of a 'gaze' of protest, artist-researcher ujjwal utkarsh proposes that a deep understanding of Mouffe could challenge the reproduction of a monolithic narrative of protest in his research (2024).

My approach to agonism proposes a practice in which antagonism and agonism can be reconfigured as continuous practices. The key point here is that *conflicted* is studied as a set of practices, in ongoing – accelerated, slowed down – reconfigurations.

Dance scholars such as Mark Franko, in *Toward a Choreopolitical Theory of Articulation* (2017), and Goran Petrović Lotina, in *Choreographing Agonism: Politics, Strategies and Performances of the Left* (2017), approach the study of dance and choreography through the lens of agonism. Their proposals focus respectively on dance reception and on *choreographing antagonism* and *agonistic objectification*. Although they align with my concerns, their work applies agonism as a theoretical concept to an external object, such as dance or choreography. This frames a specific mode of perception towards concepts applied to practices and does not function as a frame for sustained practice. Consequently, their approach offers a conceptual lens rather than a focus on practice, which is the aim of this contribution.

Drawing on Mouffe's concept of agonism, this research examines tensions in dance as they arise during the act of dancing. I do not use agonism to identify or apply it to an external object. Instead, *Conflicted Embodiment* investigates embodied practices while questioning and proposing that constitutive agonism is intrinsic to ongoing acts of embodiment. In this sense, an agonistic approach sustains a space in which different logics coexist as adversarial relations. Rehearsal decisions – regarding composition, movement qualities, spatial orientation, and relational dynamics – are contingent and shaped by power relations, institutional histories, and aesthetic conventions. The 'conflicted' embraces the suspension of resolution and the navigation of irresolvable tension, allowing conflict to account for itself.

b. Dancing with *ch'ixi*

In the Introduction, I referred to several concepts emerging from Abya Yala that account for bodily experiences already marked by conflict under colonial conditions. This research relates specifically to *ch'ixi* (pronounced 'CHEE-ksee'), if it helps to pronounce) because it names conflict not as a transitional stage or a problem to be resolved, but as a constitutive condition of existence shaped by colonial history. However, engaging *ch'ixi* within a Northern university also raises a methodological and ethical question: how can this concept be mobilised without promoting another act of colonial extraction from Indigenous knowledge?

I refuse to abstract *ch'ixi* from Aymara history, land, and language, and resist its transformation into a fashionable or universal theoretical framework. As Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui has repeatedly argued, Latin American and Indigenous concepts are often appropriated by Northern academia through processes of theoretical extraction that strip them of their political grounding and force. In this research, *ch'ixi* is approached as a concept that foregrounds an experiential, sensorial mode of observation and analysis, for which dancing provides a particularly apt medium.

Rivera Cusicanqui proposes *ch'ixi* to describe the "parallel coexistence of multiple cultural differences that do not extinguish but instead antagonise and complement each other" (2012). I return to this quote because it uses antagonism as an affirmation: yes, there is opposition, and yes, there is integration. *Ch'ixi* refers to differentiation within complementarity, coexistence without blending: there is neither synthesis nor mixture.

For this reason, *ch'ixi* is particularly relevant to identities and embodied experiences in Abya Yala, as it names distinction, tension, and irresolution as enduring conditions produced by colonisation. Tension is not something to be resolved; it is something to inhabit and relate to. In her words:

The notion of *ch'ixi*, like many others (*allqa*, *ayni*), reflects the Aymara idea of something that is and is not at the same time. It is the logic of the included third. A *ch'ixi* color gray is white but is not white at the same time; it is both white and its opposite, black. (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2012, p. 105)

This approach differs from concepts such as hybridity (García Canclini), *ajiaco* (Ortiz), *mestizaje* (Martí), or *borderlands/nepantla* (Gloria Anzaldúa), which tend to conceptualise cultural encounter through logics of mixture as transition. For Néstor García Canclini, hybridity designates processes through which previously distinct cultural practices are recombined into new, syncretic formations, generating transformed cultural products within modernity (García Canclini, 1990). Similarly, Fernando Ortiz's metaphor of the *ajiaco* imagines Cuban culture as a stew in which diverse ingredients gradually cook together, producing a new, composite national formation (Ortiz, 1940). In the case of *mestizaje*, articulated in different ways by thinkers such as José Martí, mixture becomes the foundation of a unifying national identity that symbolically resolves racial and cultural difference. The framework proposed by Gloria Anzaldúa in *Borderlands* (1987) and her concept of *nepantla* emphasise in-betweenness as a transformative, a transitional space in which subjectivities emerge through negotiation.

Ch'ixi describes the simultaneous coexistence of heterogeneous elements that do not fuse into a unity but remain in tension. It insists on the persistence of contradiction without subsumption. *Ch'ixi* recognises the superposition of heterogeneous temporalities in the present, insisting that unresolved colonial conflicts continue to shape us, it destabilises homogenising accounts of *mestizaje* and internal colonialism by restoring the complexity erased by projects of whitening and national integration.

Ch'ixi offers a situated and territorial vocabulary for understanding Conflicted Embodiment within specific historical and epistemic conditions, conceptualising conflict not as fragmentation or lack but as resistance to colonial demands for resolution. In her words:

The metaphor of *ch'ixi* assumes a double and contentious ancestry, one that is denied by the processes of acculturation and the "colonisation of the imaginary," but one that is also potentially harmonious and free if we liberate our half-Indian ancestry and develop dialogical forms for the construction of knowledge. (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2012, p. 106)

Dancing with *ch'ixi* gives situated insights from Abya Yala to Conflicted Embodiment. By bringing *ch'ixi* into this research, I am proposing a situated framework and specific vocabulary to the practice of performing arts. As a practice that brings the past into the present and the present into the past, Conflicted Embodiment resonates with *ch'ixi* as a way to inhibit spatial-temporal interwoven relations in order to question linear learning processes.

By attending to nuanced embodied practices and negotiating experiences shaped by colonialism as an ongoing problem, it provides a means of engaging with otherness. In this sense, acknowledging *ch'ixi* in dance practices provides a way to address unspoken conflicts, unconscious shame, and tensions produced by regimes of value, legitimacy, and visibility.

Rather than differentiating only between distinct acts of embodiment, this research attends to the forces and tensions *within* those acts. In this sense, *ch'ixi* can be approached as a strategy to articulate the 'conflicted' that emerges in the interaction of specific dance cultures, without neutralising their differences.

For this reason, the workshops developed within Conflicted Embodiment create a space in which participants are invited to ask: Which conflicts are embodied in our practices? How do we embody them? What potentials arise from these conflicts? The methodology develops through the sharing of individual dance practices, followed by group reflection aiming to critically address tensions arising from embodiment.

If *ch'ixi* can help practitioners to think through practice, it is evident for me that it helps to inhabit a conflict, to be with it. By mobilising difference from within the body, it invites the practitioner to acknowledge the histories and hierarchies that shape their embodiment.

This insistence presents a challenge in contemporary dance contexts, where stylistic boundaries are often dissolved and the genre has evolved to accommodate various dance traditions. In contrast, *ch'ixi* requires positionality while recognising the right to opacity. It is not only about incorporating difference, but also about negotiating its tension as a constitutive force within embodiment.

3. Studying the Dance Studio with Conflicted Embodiment

This section reflects on the Teaching Practice chapter, integrating previous remarks on *embodiment* and the *conflicted*. It addresses conversations, discussions, and reflections I have encountered while sharing the research. For this reason, it also includes testimonies from the three research participants whom I invited in September 2025 to take part in the final stage of this research process. The invitation was previously referred to as a *Group Bastard-Cheap Lecture Performance*, but it is now called the *Group Worksession on Conflicted Embodiment*⁹⁶, which will be performed during the Making Public of this PhD project.

The methodology of these sessions follows the same structure as previously explained: a warm-up, a dancer's sensorial CV practised in dialogue format, and the embodiment of sensation.

⁹⁶ For rehearsal planning of this process, see Annex V.

Additionally, for this process, I invite participants to share what they are sensing through language while engaging in the exercise of embodying sensation. This is why some testimonies here came from interviews, while others were mentioned during the practice of embodying sensation.

One: Researching Conflicted Embodiment

I am convinced that embodiment becomes most compelling when each dancer or performer experiments and tries out an act of embodiment in a dance studio. Here, the term can be approached through both Spanish and Portuguese perspectives, taking into account all prior potentials without attempting to pacify, fix, or reduce embodiment to a single definition. In this exploratory space, we can ask:

- _ What is being materialized through a body?
- _ What is incarnated and possessed through a body?
- _ What is personified or animated through a body?
- _ What can you bring into your body and materialize?

The studio becomes a site of inquiry when researching embodiment implies desire and openness. Embodiment cannot be imposed; it depends on the performer's willingness to sense, notice, and dwell within experience rather than merely execute form. Without desire, the practice collapses into compliance. With desire, it becomes research.

This means that these internal conditions – desire and openness – sometimes come into friction with external instructions. Tasks place responsibility in the performer's body, which may be accustomed to entering a dance studio to be told what to do. This contrasts sharply with conventional studio hierarchies. In many institutional dance contexts, historically shaped by codified systems, the dancer's body is positioned as an instrument to be trained and shaped according to specific forms or values of movement. Authority resides outside their body.

Opened and desiring practices of embodiment relocate decision-making into the performer's sensing body. Tasks do not prescribe how to move; they create conditions that require the performer to negotiate attention, impulse, and memory. The dancer cannot rely on imitation; they must inhabit a relationship.

Researching Conflicted Embodiment requires the performer to become responsible for sensation, with tolerance for uncertainty. Openness then becomes a practical skill – the ability to remain with sensation without immediately organising it.

Excerpt from a studio conversation with Mariê Mazer

10.12.2025.

I am in the dance studio with Mariê Mazer (they/them). I have known Marie since 2021, when I began my employment contract at SKH. They attended the first workshop I facilitated as part of my PhD duties, and later participated in the 80% PhD workshop in April 2024 as a research participant.

This is our second session. We repeat the same rehearsal structure as the previous session: while I interview them, they move and we enter into a conversation about their learning dance processes.

Mariê is from Brazil and moved to Europe at the age of 19, after their first encounter with Impulstanz. Upon returning to Brazil between 2017 and 2018, they decided they wanted to live there. Therefore, they first moved to Italy to obtain their documents, then to Germany, and after to Stockholm, to start the Bachelor in Dance and Performance from which they graduated in 2021.

Mariê recounts how they began practising and studying ass-shaking techniques as a way to reconnect with the dances, especially Brazilian funk, they used to practise as a teenager and young adult in Brazil. They say: "I was chasing that sensation; the form brings the sensation, the sensation

brings the form. The technique of fat shaking in the ass gives me great pleasure” (Mazer, personal communication, 2025).

I resonate with Mariê, and they, without even knowing about the Chasing Dances article, resonate with me as well. Deepening into the conversation on their practices, they mention the different approaches they have to femininity and to masculinity. In their words:

I can find gender euphoria when I am stripping, the same way that I can feel gender euphoria when I have my boobs stuck and I'm doing a drag king (...) [Gender euphoria] has to do with feeling seen. The way that I am presenting myself is exactly the way I want to feel. And when I get some sort of validation from the audience, the people that I'm sharing that with. Whether I am the man in the club or with my gay friends at the drag show, I feel very excited about it. I understand that they are seeing me in a way that I want to present, and I manipulate that in a way.

So for example, when I'm at the club and I'm wearing, like, the hottest outfit, my boobs are feeling huge. I am feeling super sexy. I am very connected to my dance. I feel like I'm dancing (...), well performing, like I have some sort of flow. And I see that I enchanted everyone in the room, even if I don't fucking care about them. But I see that there is some sort of gravity pulled into my character, into what I'm presenting at that time. (Mazer, personal communication, 10 December 2025).

What Mariê describes as ‘gender euphoria’ can be understood through the lens of Conflicted Embodiment as the experience of inhabiting a practice that questions gender binaries. This euphoria is a generative process that allows Mariê to navigate and inhabit the space in between, but also the polarities of traditional notions of femininity and masculinity. Euphoria resonates across these practices, highlighting a consistent sense of visibility and pleasure. In this way, gender euphoria can be seen as both an embodied negotiation of tension and a creative means of self-articulation, offering insight into the ways individuals can inhabit and celebrate the complexity of their gendered selves.

Two: What embodiment – the performance or the compositional practice?

An understanding of embodiment from a performer’s perspective distinguishes two interrelated, non-fixed forms, both of which require continual re-experiencing of sensations through practice.

The first concerns dance performance practice and focuses on the processes of learning dance. What does a body embody through its dance learning? What conflicts arise from its subjection and/or emancipation to established techniques and practices? How do affective, psychic, and social forces shape the dancing body? In performance, which aspects of embodiment are re-activated, re-presented, or re-iterated?

This raises questions about the kinds of knowledge that can be drawn from dance and applied to other forms of practice. What insights generated through dance might serve as fruitful approaches for supporting experimentation – not only in defining what constitutes a practitioner or a performance context, but in shaping the dynamics and processes of artistic collaboration within groups?

The second aspect of embodiment addresses compositional practice, emerging at a later stage. Once a body has accumulated experience through performance practice, it begins to make decisions about what to put into motion while dancing or performing. Here, the question becomes: which aspects are chosen to be re-activated, re-presented, or re-iterated in a performance context?

These perspectives – performance practice and compositional practice – form the foundation of my pedagogical practice, revealing embodiment as a layered phenomenon, composed of identity categories, relational activations, and compositional choices.

Conflicted Embodiment engages with both forms of embodiment. However, it originates in – and primarily contributes to – the first form: performance practice. This means that, while compositional implications may arise later, the research is grounded first in understanding and cultivating embodied performance.

Excerpt from a studio conversation with Natalia Perea Santana

18.12.2025.

I have known Natalia Perea Santana (she/her) since September 2022, when she began her Bachelor's degree in Dance and Performance at SKH, which she completed in June 2025. We became closer as she was the Chair of the Student Union SUDPAC, in which I am currently enrolled.

We are in the dance studio. As with Mariê, this is our second session. We follow the same rehearsal structure as the previous session: while I interview Natalia, she moves, and we engage in a conversation about her dance learning processes.

Born in Valladolid and raised in Mallorca, Natalia is the daughter of Colombian and Peruvian parents, and her relationship with dance remains a key cultural connection through family traditions such as salsa, *champeta*, *cumbia* and *diablada* (all four dances from Abya Yala), as well as the influence of Latin music like *reguetón*. Reflecting on her dance background, she mentions that she began flamenco training in Sweden in 2017 with teachers from Seville, and later studied ballet with a more contemporary approach.

I invite her to the dance studio to try to combine her dance traditions. We attempt to assign one dance to one part of the body and another to a different part, splitting large segments (right, left, upper body or lower body) or even shorter segments (just one hand, or only the head).

She tried to embody the sensation of Tini (the Argentinian pop star) through the dance practice of Dan Johansson (Assistant Lecturer of Modern and Contemporary Dance, at Subject Area Dance Pedagogy, SKH). After that, we tried the pair flamenco and *champeta*. Speaking in English (even though our mother tongue is Spanish) about being with *champeta* and flamenco, she explains:

Because the *champeta* is very jumpy, if I went immediately to jump, or to have my feet, or this swinging, the bounce of the *champeta*, then the flamenco would be gone. I would then be more busy with how it looks, somehow.

So by not jumping or having the bounce of the *champeta*... That's why I kind of felt ugly, because I'm like...

I'm trying to do the steps of the *champeta* without doing the necessary bounce. Flamenco steps are very grounded, it is very down. And *champeta* is very up. So how do I balance and navigate that? And also the arms, I feel like they are loose [the *champeta's* arms], while in flamenco, they have this clear position on where I have them, but I feel like the arms were even more easy to position in where they should be (Perea Santana, personal communication, 18 December 2025).

Natalia describes the specific technical tools required to move from one tradition to another and to inhabit both simultaneously. While reflecting on performance practice, she necessarily describes the compositional decision-making process. Both are interrelated. However, the guiding process of the task comes back to refer to the sensation of performing the dance tradition, rather than the compositional sensation.

Three: Questioning a Dominant Understanding of Embodiment

Conflicted Embodiment is inspired and informed by somatic practices, as one of its pillars depart from the inner experience of the body. However, while somatic practices are developed to heighten the practitioner's awareness of their own body, Conflicted Embodiment works with performance and social dance forms, while also exploring how to share that sensation at the same time as sensing it.

In contemporary dance contexts, participants often arrive with prior experience in somatic practices – approaches that foreground the body as it is perceived from within rather than as an external object (Hanna, 1995). The term *somatic practices* refers to a constellation of methods that privilege first-person experience and cultivate awareness through internal sensing. Within these frameworks, embodiment is typically explored as an inward process: a deepening of sensation and self-awareness.

Central to somatic practices is the concept of the *soma*. From the Ancient Greek *sōma* (body), the term has been rearticulated to describe the lived body beyond the Cartesian body/mind dualism, proposing the body as experienced from within. In the book *Sensing, feeling, and action: The experiential anatomy of Body-Mind Centering®* (2008), movement educator Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, founder of Body-Mind Centering in the United States, outlines a progression toward embodiment that moves through visualization and somatization toward what she describes as cellular consciousness.

In her words, visualization functions as a guided process: the mind imagines anatomical structures, informing the body of its existence. Somatization shifts toward sensory experience: kinesthetic, proprioceptive, and tactile systems bring awareness to specific bodily regions. Embodiment, in Cohen's formulation:

There is no guide, no witness. There is the fully known consciousness of the experienced moment initiated from the cells themselves. In this instance, the brain is the last to know. There is complete knowing. There is peaceful comprehension. Out of this embodiment process emerges feeling, thinking, witnessing, understanding. (2008, p. 157)

Conflicted Embodiment intersects with, yet simultaneously diverges from, this lineage⁹⁷. While this project shares an interest in moving from sensation to awareness, Conflicted Embodiment is not oriented towards resolution or harmonious integration. Instead of dissolving tension, it engages with it. Instead of seeking clarity, it maintains opacity as part of embodiment. In this sense, opacity also serves as a tool for the performer by relieving the pressure to embody previous dance learning contexts. The embodiment of the task can sometimes be heavy and weighty, so the idea of opacity shakes this heaviness by creating space between legibility and representation. The practice cultivates a way of speaking about the frictions between states of sensing and performing, performing and being able to be legible.

This research recognises touch as a key aspect of somatic work. Its potential as a therapeutic, awareness-based, and artistic practice is therefore central to Conflicted Embodiment. For Conflicted Embodiment, touch is also a means of accessing sensation.

In somatic practices, memory and awareness are understood as dimensions of the therapeutic, insofar as they shape how the body relates to experience. Conflicted Embodiment is not positioned as a therapeutic practice. While it engages with processes often associated with therapy (attention to sensation, memory, and transformation), it remains grounded in an artistic and research framework.

⁹⁷ I do not have extensive experience in Body-Mind Centering as a practice, so I am responding to the published material of BMC, not to a lived experience of its practice.

Another key topic concerns the question of the audience. In many somatic contexts, the practitioner is both subject and witness; the idea of the practitioner is usually linked to the fact that it looks inwards. Gaze is often softened, diffused, or withdrawn – eyes semi-closed or fully closed – in order to privilege inward sensing. Although I do not claim this applies in the same way to all somatic approaches, inward orientation remains a dominant convention.

Conflicted Embodiment introduces friction precisely at this point. While sessions may comprise closed or semi-closed eyes, this is never the dominance of a Conflicted Embodiment session. Embodiment is trained as something that can persist under exposure. Gaze becomes an active component of the practice rather than an interference to it.

These starting points destabilize the assumption that embodiment must originate in inward imagery or subtle awareness. What matters is not the purity of inward access but the negotiation between sensing and dancing.

In Conflicted Embodiment, the process may begin with visualisation or somatisation, but it can also start from at least four alternative entry points: form (copying the form or a previous dance tradition), eccentric contraction (focusing on a slow contraction that lengthens the muscle to enter the sensation), sensation itself or a metaphor (such as a smell, a specific touch, or a quality of space), and tempo or rhythm (such as the speed of shifting foot weight).

In this framework, embodiment is not an internal condition; it is relational and opaque. It unfolds between bodies that negotiate proximity, touch, and attention. The practitioner simultaneously exercises sensing and sharing the sensation and consequently asks: Can embodiment persist when the body is being seen? Can sensation remain active under “the pressure of visibility”, as part of the experience of seeing and being seen?

Gaze complicates embodiment because it introduces value, projection, and judgment. Being seen can generate anxiety; the image one produces becomes charged with interpretation. For this reason, part of the practice involves training the capacity to sustain sensation over time, including the challenge of staying with the sensation during exposure. Strategies are developed to allow embodied experience to continue in the presence of others, without collapsing into performance anxiety or externalized self-monitoring.

Conflicted Embodiment therefore is concerned with what is sensed and with how sensing deals with relational encounters with others. Participants may choose how to position themselves in visibility, yet meaning always exceeds intention. What is shown does not necessarily coincide with what is sensed. Conflicted Embodiment then practises awareness under exposure.

Excerpt from a studio conversation with Yari Stilo

7.12.2025.

I have known Yari Stilo (he/him) since the beginning of his Master in New Performative Practices⁹⁸ In August 2022, he suggested we go tango dancing together.

I ask him about his relationship with dance. He explained that since his early dance education, he has been interested in roles where he could be both audience and performer. He develops the idea of embodying alternative masculinities in gendered and heteronormative spaces as one of his practices and shares with me specific examples. For instance, he expressed that as a *corps de ballet* member, he enjoyed having the role of watching other performers on stage, because he noted that “my passivity was considered a power” (Stilo, personal communication, 7 December, 2025).

In our conversation, Yari reflects on different ways of **gazing***. From watching himself, to directing his gaze towards the audience. He distinguished six types of gaze. I list them here, with the corresponding definitions he gave to each of them in brackets. The first is low or shy gaze (“when I perform shyness”); own gaze (“I am pointing out the experience I have”); aware gaze (“I am aware of

⁹⁸ There are two Master's programmes in the Subject Area of Dance at SKH: *New Performative Practices* and *Choreography*.

everything in the space, by virtue of the fact that I know everything, but I do not see everything and it is more fragmented"); egalitarian gaze ("I perform acknowledging the audience, but I do not impress you: we are here perhaps on the same level, just with different roles"); cool gaze ("I go with my gaze together with my belly: I am my belly, my belly is me, it is almost a coordination between shoulders, hips, eyes and feet; this can also be the commercial gaze"); and cold gaze ("this is the postmodern dance gaze, as if there is no audience").

Some gazes are associated with specific characters, repertoire, or roles. We work on these gazes to welcome stage practice as a context for dance learning. Later in February, I invite Yari to combine these gazes, for example, 50% Giselle⁹⁹ and 50% tango. Yari then narrates what Giselle sees: "She sees death, she is scared, or maybe she is also excited about it."

What if Conflicted Embodiment remains ungraspable in my descriptions? How can I describe it without resolving it? Are the reflections on gaze my over-interpretation of the task, or do they refer to a previous finding from Yari?

Four: Limits of Conflicted Embodiment

If embodiment is not a static condition but a process of becoming – of shaping and being shaped in relation with others – then to embody is to enter into a dynamic exchange: the performer's gestures, voice, posture, and affect are altered through engagement with another perspective, while at the same time the other dance style, persona, or character is inevitably reframed through one's own situated experience.

This reciprocity is ethically charged. What does it mean to embody someone or something else? When does such an act become an opening toward relation, and when does it risk appropriation, projection, or erasure?

The limit of embodiment is not simply a moral prohibition ("you cannot embody X"), but a recognition of opacity and asymmetry. Some experiences – trauma, cultural memory, systemic violence – cannot be fully accessed by those who have not lived them. Attempts to do so may reproduce harm if they presume transparency or universality. At the same time, refusing cross-identification would foreclose empathy. The ethical task, therefore, is to remain attentive to the relational forces and commitments activated through embodiment, alongside a situated understanding that such ethical tasks can be reformulated.

Two experiences

One. Dec. 2025

I have decided not to continue embodying Marie Geneviève van Goethem. My body can no longer accommodate her. This decision brings me back to the ethical dilemma of uncertainty surrounding her persona: pursuing her further risks chasing a figure whose historical and symbolic dimensions cannot be fully resolved. Yet, I can still engage with her. My question is: during the time I embodied her story, what kind of 'we' did I compose with her? Did I embody Marie herself, her story, or both? How does one navigate the paradoxical relationship between a performer and a character, figure, or persona? How are those different definitions – character, figure, persona – important in

⁹⁹ Giselle is the female protagonist of the romantic ballet *Giselle*. In the story, she is a young woman who loves to dance, despite having a weak heart. She might die of a heart attack from a broken heart when she discovers that she cannot marry Albrecht, or by suicide with Albrecht's sword. In the second act of the ballet, she reappears as a spirit, joining the Wilis – ghosting women that push men to dance until death.

relation to embodiment? What is the limit of my own embodiment? This highlights a central premise of Conflicted Embodiment: embodiment has borders and limits. Are there dances that could not enter my body? Which ones?

However, rather than asking which dances cannot enter a body, it may be more generative to ask: how do certain dances remain partially outside, and what does that distance produce? In that space of partial connection, friction, misalignment, or opacity, forms of relation within practice can emerge.

Two. 28.3.2026

I return to the dance studio after a recent injury. Embodying and being with *baderna* becomes a *ch'ixi* experience – where incompatible forces coexist within specific relational configurations without dissolving into unity. Translation remains an agonistic practice: I attempt to stay within the clash rather than resolve it. Yet, at the threshold of completing this PhD, I also allow the process to reach its own temporary configuration.

When I return to the dance studio, I am confronted with a tension: my body masters the processes of Conflicted Embodiment. Virtuosity, then, becomes a problem. Do I dare to be virtuosic while practising Conflicted Embodiment? How can the practice remain open to challenge rather than settle into mastery?

The notion of Chasing Dances becomes relevant here. By continually engaging with dances that are not yet 'mine,' and by resisting closure, the practice sustains itself through uncertainty rather than resolution. In this sense, Conflicted Embodiment is less concerned with producing a virtuosic outcome than with generating and replicating a learning situation that remains in process.

At the same time, I begin to question whether the conflicts I work with are still perceptible. As different techniques and traditions become absorbed into a single trained body, they may appear 'mixed', even seamless. Is this then a question of representation? If my body can fluently navigate multiple dance forms, does conflict still exist, or has it been pacified through skill? When the practice appears playful rather than tense, does this signal the disappearance of conflict, or has it simply been rendered invisible through competence?

The friction between practising Conflicted Embodiment and becoming increasingly virtuosic in combining dance traditions places pressure on the concept itself. It reveals a paradox: the more the body learns, the more it risks smoothing over the very tensions the practice seeks to sustain.

4. Discussion

Following Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, conflict constitutes me. Following Chantal Mouffe, conflict is inherent to the political. Researching Conflicted Embodiment as a practitioner requires acknowledging the ongoing process of reshaping relations within a body. Different entry points to embodiment generate distinct ways of moving, sensing, and being present, and these relations shift over time. In other words, a short, medium, or long period of time influences how the relationship to the practice of embodiment is experienced.

The task of embodying sensation is structured through exercises that rely on time and space to provide orientation. Participants may not immediately grasp the meaning of a particular orientation – and struggling with the task, or even not precisely grasping what the task is, is itself part of the process. The aim of the research, then, is to re- evoke sensation, transform it into material, and generate further embodied experiences.

I am curious about how processes of becoming shape and mould a body; therefore, I must also acknowledge that there are multiple ways to engage with this task. Asking about and naming different ways of engaging with the task, as well as what a body embodies, are part of the process.

Conflicted Embodiment sets in motion multiple identity categories within a body – class, gender, racialization, ability, age, religion, nationality, among others. In performance, these categories

do not remain separate; they influence, reinforce, and challenge one another. Yet, as I have explained, the focus here is not only on outward representation, but on how these layers – together with movement histories, motivations, and relational dynamics – shape a body from within and in relation to others.

Additionally, training might offer another entry point into Conflicted Embodiment: aren't we also trained into specific forms of embodiment through social and political contexts? Thinking through training allows Conflicted Embodiment to remain situated in practice, while still acknowledging how identity categories are inscribed in a body. It reframes these categories not as fixed descriptors, but as processes.

From the performer's perspective, two forms of embodiment emerge: first, the one that refers to learning dance processes – what a body absorbs, rehearses, and negotiates through training; and second, the ongoing relational engagement in decision making practice. In both cases, the notion of embodiment resists being fixed or universal.

Lastly, the friction between practising Conflicted Embodiment and achieving virtuosity in combining dance traditions highlights the need to prioritise ongoing engagement with the practice over mastery. Here, the notion of Chasing Dances is relevant: by continually engaging with dances that are not yet 'ours' and resisting closure, the practice is sustained by uncertainty. Learning through encountering, rather than mastery, becomes the guiding principle for the artist-researcher, emphasising ongoing experimentation. In this way, Conflicted Embodiment positions dance as a political and ethical space: one in which conflict is neither suppressed nor resolved but addressed.

Coda

A *coda* is the final part of a dance class, depending on the dance form, where *pirouettes* in ballet class or turns in a *cumbia* concert, as well as jumps and skills, are fully displayed. The term *coda* shares its root with the Latin *cauda*, meaning ‘tail’, suggesting both an ending and a bodily extension.

Through this writing process, my artist-researcher self has intensified her voice. *caterina daniela mora jara* increasingly occupied space over Daniela and Thalía. The friction surrounding the use of ‘we’ now seems like a distant memory and is less prevalent today; its use risks adopting a universal position. How can I remain consistent in the practice of Conflicted Embodiment? How can I restore the multiplicity of voices within the ‘we’?

As *caterina daniela*, my artist-researcher self, I have explored the intricacies of Conflicted Embodiment and its resonances within dance practices. Thalía's appearance reminded me that learning to dance is an ongoing process that shifts between formal and informal contexts. Daniela and Thalía, have accompanied my artist-researcher self in experiences of institutional mediation, conversations with artists and friends, attendance at conferences, in performing and transmitting this research.

In the first chapter, the Dancers' Sensorial CV discussed our dance education as a way to reconsider our background within a curriculum. Through autoethnographic writing, sensation has become a site to explore the complexities of learning dance processes. We unfolded our past curriculum as a range of various sensations and struggles related to systems of value, access, and visibility. In *Chasing Dances*, we have articulated the experience of dancing as a vital, urgent and sustained process of being within the dynamics of dances through participation in *milongas*, clubbing, *rodas de samba*, and other contexts. We approached our dance education as a site of conflict. By naming conflicts within acts of embodiment we address tensions, collisions, and struggles.

Through these experiences, Conflicted Embodiment has developed a constellation of artistic practices, which are presented in the second and third chapters. These include the back-and-forth translations; the embodiment of three historical female personas; the embodiment of different selves; the *On Mother Tongues* workshops and mini-festivals; and the Bastard-Cheap Lecture-Performance series. The latter aims to share research and generate scripts through *desacatadas* fabulations, which are imaginative approaches that voice the female personas inspiring this research. The pedagogical approach developed in the Conflicted Embodiment workshops proposes somatics as an activity that can be practised for an audience and integrated into performance practice. Writing and performing have developed in distinct yet interconnected ways: through auto-ethnographic texts, workshop descriptions, scripts and concept elaboration.

In the fourth chapter, we defined Conflicted Embodiment as a research area and as a lens for artistic research. Firstly, we examined how the concepts of ‘conflict’ and ‘embodiment’ operate in this research. We then explored how these concepts can jointly address the perspectives of individuals experiencing conflict in dance, challenging essentialist notions of embodiment in the process. As a consequence, Conflicted Embodiment is a way of “staying with the trouble” (Haraway, 2016) while dancing: it interrogates dance through dancing.

Conflicted Embodiment fosters a critical subjectivity in dance, performance, and education that creates connections across different geopolitical contexts. It questions Eurocentric epistemologies from within. It accommodates various intensities and hierarchies where conflict juxtaposes and collides, in slower or accelerated agonistic dynamics. Multiple conflicts coexist in the dancing body and its sensory experiences, functioning as generative tensions that propel the practice. Conflicted Embodiment dances, it welcomes destabilization of dance practices by inviting friction in the relational contexts it engages.

What forms of curriculum or pedagogical structures does Conflicted Embodiment call for? Conflicted Embodiment serves as a lens for artistic research through a critical approach to dance practice. Our ‘we’ relates past and present in dancing as a way to re-politicise our dancing as conflicted and as a constitutive condition of embodied dance practices. Conflicted Embodiment calls

for embodied stories, for reflection on big narratives of dances and fabulations in the dance studio. Conflicted Embodiment calls for a situated curriculum grounded in critical thinking. It is committed to a long-term learning process that encourages tonguering processes and regards the untranslatable as a site of study. It fosters a critical exchange between the souths and norths.

What forms of attention or attunement are required when dancing or learning dances to remain with Conflicted Embodiment? Staying with a conflict can be emotionally challenging. Therefore, the practice offers strategies to rest, pause, or reorient, working with opacity and critical engagement towards embodiment. Attunement to difference and tolerance, questioning legibility, and the ability to inhabit unresolved states— emerge as critical skills for contemporary performing arts practitioners engaged in artistic research as a practice of negotiation and becoming.

Conflict arises whenever bodies attempt to cross physical, institutional or unspoken boundaries. Conflict also arises when colonial structures are incorporated into curricula as internalised frameworks. Conflict can also arise from curiosity about seemingly incompatible dance traditions. What makes them seemingly incompatible? The internalised colonial gaze?

Conflict functions as potential. By encouraging the articulation of conflict, positions, and histories, this research can host conflicts as unstable, shaking situations. Conflict practised within an embodied practice commits to treating discomfort, hurt, embarrassment, and a sense of overwhelm as relational forces. In this sense, questions of escalation, irresolution, and neutralisation can become guiding concerns. How does conflict intensify or shift? When is it held open enough rather than resolved? When is it softened, displaced, or neutralised? These questions function as ethical compasses, shaping how practitioners attend to one another, to history, and to the conditions under which embodiment takes place.

In what ways does the capacity to inhabit unresolved states reshape our understanding of knowledge in artistic research? We have emphasised how Conflicted Embodiment both departs from and remains rooted in performance practice. How, then, might it transition into choreographic practices? The Making Public of this research rehearses an answer to this question by using dance learning processes as a means of unfolding and situating the body within its Conflicted Embodiment.

This final question brings our work over the past few years to a close. We are nervous about it because it makes the research unstable. Daniela reassures us: “through this PhD, I obtained a residency permit.” Thalía smiles, reminding us that we will always have dance and that there are more dances yet to come. In a final leap, Conflicted Embodiment turns once again, following us, dancing with other bodies.

Glossary

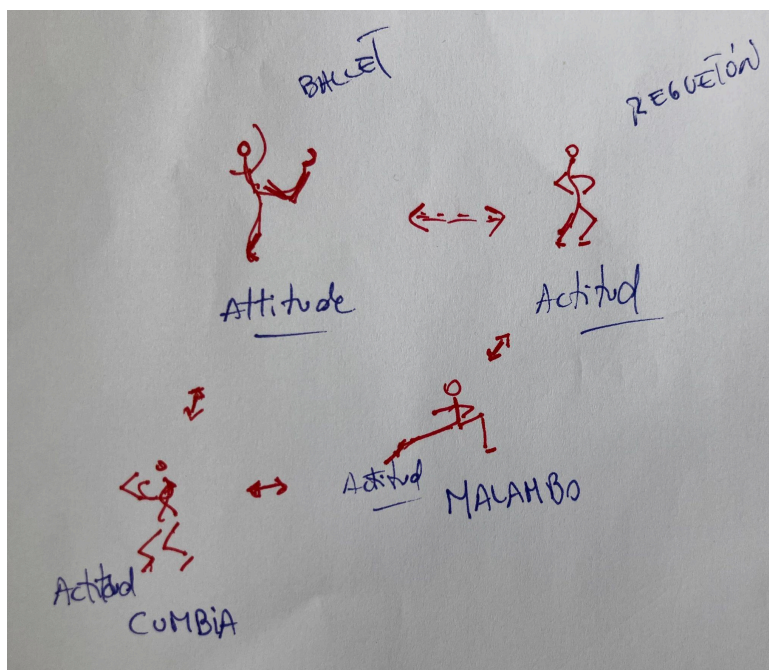
This section presents a selection of terms related to Conflicted Embodiment. These terms emerge from my practical-theoretical research: the practices and methodologies of Conflicted Embodiment.

Some of these terms are discussed in depth throughout the text, frequently used and reflected upon through practice. Other terms are introduced here as points of entry and association with this work. Together, as more or less developed concepts. Rather than offering definitive definitions, this glossary invites an alternative way of navigating the work through transversal readings and non-linear connections.

Abya Yala: Abya Yala, also spelled Abiyala or Abia Yala, is the term used by the Guna people to refer to the territory they historically inhabited, spanning what is now northwest Colombia and southeast Panama. It can be translated as “continent of life”, “land in its full maturity”, or “land of vital blood”. Using the name *Abya Yala* asserts a decolonial perspective, linking a transcontinental identity to a critique of imposed colonial names.

In contrast, the name *America* – or *the Americas* – was imposed by the Florentine explorer Amerigo Vespucci (1454-1512), who claimed this land in honour of himself. This name remains the dominant term in global usage today. An alternative decolonial naming proposal is *América Ladina* by Leila González (1988), which also seeks to challenge colonial legacies embedded in geographical nomenclature by referring to Afro-Latin America and Amerindian.

attitude: In French, English, and Spanish, *attitude* means more than posture; it describes a state of mind, feeling, or behaviour. It suggests an orientation or disposition toward someone or something.



Crossing translations of *attitude*

bastard-cheap: A hands-on strategy of solving technical problems cheaply, addressing aesthetic ones with the same frugality, disregarding grandiloquence. Eco-politically, it defends reuse, recycle, rejoin, reglue and reglue again.

chasing dances: Seeking dances wherever you go and seeking dance sensations as a form of political joy.

concert dance: Dance created for audiences to be viewed in venues such as concert halls and proscenium arch theatres, as well as the training and cultural industries that support this market.

conflicted: In process.

desacatadas fabulations: Imaginative acts of contempt oriented towards erotic justice.

dance displacement: What happens when you have to displace other dance techniques in your body to create a hegemony of one way of dancing over others.

embodiment: To eat, digest, and excrete multiple bodies within one body.

embodying the sensation: Practice of reiterating the sensation of dancing.

erotic justice: The collapse of boundaries between pleasure and politics. What is produced in terms of power relations when we pay attention to silenced or invisible voices that have advocated for the erotic.

Fiske Menuco: The city where I was born and raised does not appear as such on Google Maps. It is located in the north of the Province of Río Negro, 1,100 km from the city of Buenos Aires (this distance is slightly greater than that from Brussels to Vienna).

Summer is hot and dry, while winter is sunny and icy. When you sweat there, a thin layer of dust settles on your skin, making it feel crisp. The region I come from is a valley surrounded by desert, with a river crossing the arid land and creating a path of productivity and agriculture that leads to the Atlantic Ocean. I always miss the dry summers by the Río Negro. There, we often say, "huele a llanta" (it smells like a tyre), dragging the sound of the 'll' to 'sh,' because farmers burn rubber to prevent frost and protect fruit production.

Fiskü means 'fresh' or 'fresh air', and menuco, from 'menoko,' means 'swamp'. According to the Spanish-Mapuche Dictionary by Father Ernesto Wilhelm de Moesbach (1985), Fisque Menuco means 'fresh swamp'. Fiske Menuco, Fisque Menuco, Fvske Menuko, or Fvsks Menuko is the name given by the native populations to the area where I was raised, specifically to a place near what is now a city. These native populations – Mapuche, Tehuelche, Pampas, and Ranquel – were rounded up, persecuted, harassed, killed, exhibited in museums, displaced, dispossessed of their territories, and forced into labour. Many traces of their resistance remain, one of which is the continued use of the expression Fiske Menuco in the city's everyday language. However, this is not the official name of the town, which is now a city of about 102,000 inhabitants. The official name was given by the colonial enterprise with the founding name Fuerte General Roca (General Roca Fortress) on 1 September 1879, during the Campaign of the Desert, using the name of War Minister Julio Argentino Roca. To refer to unspoken deaths, organised genocide, forced displacement, land extraction, cultural persecution, and cultural imposition, I, in alignment with the community, use Fiske Menuco to resist the colonial roots of the city's official name.

feminist financing of budget: Publish your budget. Make administrative work and payments visible. Reallocate the European budget from the Global North to the Global South, if possible direct funds to individuals who are not paid in a stable currency. Inspired by the book *A Feminist Reading of Debt* by Luci Cavallero and Verónica Gago (2021).

gazing: The act of attending to and engaging with another's visual attention, whether real or imagined, when performing for an audience or alone. It involves remaining aware of the gaze directed at something, actively maintaining that attention, and sharing the embodied sensation.

inflation: A slow-burn of money in your hands, or being unable to save, or feeling anxious about grocery shopping, or seeing the value of working hours diminish, or no growth in the yearly balance, or experiencing declining purchasing power, or prioritising essential goods over other essential goods or disorientation in buying whatever, or just there are no words to describe the sensation.

Using annual CPI inflation data from TheGlobalEconomy.com (2026), cumulative inflation in Argentina since I arrived until now was approximately 8,000%. I do not actually know how to calculate this myself; I asked ChatGPT and it gave me this number. I then asked Google, which says 5,000%. It is frustrating to neither be able to determine the precise number nor describe the sensation of inflation in words.

objectification: It refers to the act of delimiting and defining something as an object to be perceived, and specifically to something difficult to avoid when practising embodied pleasure. I am unsure about including this term in the context of this research.

opacity: Celebration of the impossibility of complete legibility.

personas: Historical female references that inspire performance practices.

research participants: Paid role for participants in the research on Conflicted Embodiment.

research workshops: workshops contexts that function as sites for developing the research.

resist: What needs resting.

rest: What needs resisting.

sensorial CV: The act of capturing sensorially significant moments or periods in which you gained valuable insights as a dancer or made important decisions.

somatic sensation of the skin: bodily sensation that has four layers. One: the outer layer touches the immediate air and senses the temperature of my surroundings. This layer helps determine how far I am from something or someone. Two: the layer where dead skin is visible and is in direct contact with my clothes. This layer is easier to access than the others. Three: inner layer, which relates to the inner imaginary visualization of what there is inside my body. Four, the meta-level: another inner layer concerns what it means to experience the sensation of the sensation. I can't go more layered than that.

south: An orientation that disorganises.

souths: Term used as a political enunciation, as a recurring way of naming geopolitical categories such as the Global South, that refer to 'underdeveloped', 'periphery', the marginal. Souths is also a path for resistance.

In my personal use of the term, I say that I come from the souths because my ancestors, who were land workers, came from the southern part of Chile and Argentina.

tendencies of the sensation: It refers to the tendencies practitioners adopt to embody the sensation. The goal is to develop a situated vocabulary that captures how they engage with the task, enabling

the identification of commonalities and dominant patterns. Recognizing these tendencies becomes a tool for revisiting, refining, and rearticulating the task over time.

translation: Practice of shaking and opening meaning, as well as moving between dance practices.

Translatress: The departing female figure of this research, Aphra Behn (1640-1689), was one of the first women to earn a living from her writing. She was a dramatist, translator, spy, spouse, libertine, and author. The problem: she was a royalist.

tonguering: Struggling to speak while being able to speak.

wind: This research involves investigating the perception of wind direction, intensity, and variation. Where, when, and how does the wind arrive, and where, when, and how does it depart?

world dance: Definition of dances I struggle against. It suggests a shift from 'ethno' to 'world' (Katarinčić, 2015), which is problematic. While I do not adopt the term, I cannot ignore its presence in the dance field.

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Annexes

Annex I

An almost complete list of the Bastard-Cheap lecture-performance series.

_ The season of translations from ballet to *reguetón*

Description: Translation from ballet to *reguetón* inspired by Translatress Aphra Behn. Taking different ballet protagonists and stories and *reguetón* hits.

- 2019: 18 minutes of a Bastard Cheap lecture-performance. Brussels, a.pass at Performatik 2019 Kanal Pompidou. **Performed in English.**
- 2019: 32 minutes of a bastard cheap lecture performance. Brussels, a.pass
End presentation at a.pass postmaster. Full pas de deux of Swan Lake translation from ballet to *reguetón*. **Performed in English.**
- 2021: The translatress' note. Kortrijk, Buda. Translation from La Bayadere ballet to *reguetón*. **Performed in English.**
- 2021: 31 minutes of a Bastard-Cheap Lecture Performance. Naples - AltoFest 202X.
Translation from ballet to *reguetón*. **Performed in Italian.**

_ The season on methodologies: how do I research what I am researching?

- 2019: The Transversal Research Training Bastard-Cheap lecture-performance. Brussels, a.pass at paf. **Performed in English.**
- 2020: My bastard cheap lecture-performance, by Odile and Odette. Brussels, workspacebrussels. Mash-up accompanied by the Black Swan, Odile, and the White swan, Odette. The translation focused on the ballet step called *pas de bourrée couru* (running step) and pays attention to the Latin-American's mispronunciation of this French term. The result is 'Pa-küru', an invented word that has a sonorous similarity to the language of the native Patagonian people (Mapuche), 'mapudungun'. **Performed in French, Spanish and English.**
- 2021: My hello presentation at SKH. Research Week, SKH, Stockholm, Zoom. **Performed in English.**
- 2021: A jet-lagged presentation on Conflicted Embodiment Booklet. Research Week, SKH, Stockholm. **Performed in English.**
- 2024: In the name of Conflicted Embodiment. Oslo, Nordic Forum for Dance Research (NOFOD). **Performed in English.**
- 2024: Conflicted Embodiment: A paper from dancing on both sides of the Atlantic. London, Performance Studies International Congress. **Performed in English.**
- 2024: 7-minute notes on Conflicted Embodiment, SKH, Stockholm. Research Week. **Performed in English.**
- 2025: Uma atr promessa de outra conferência performática mais bastarda do que barata. GEDAL (Grupo de Estudios de Danzas Argentinas y Latinoamericanas), Buenos Aires, accesible <https://doi.org/10.5216/ac.v11i1.82475>. **Performed in Spanish.**
- 2025: Incorporaciones conflictivas. IUPA, Fiske Menuco. **Performed in Spanish.**
- 2025: A Final Seminar lecture on Conflicted Embodiment. Stockholm, Stockholm University of the Arts, PhD Final Seminar. **Performed in English.**

_ The season of translation from ballet to *malambo*

Description: Translation from ballet to *malambo*, relating my own live modeling in Brussels, which I did as a means of making a living, and the Degas sculpture called “La Petite Danseuse de Quatorze Ans” and her model's life, Marie Geneviève van Goethem.

- 2021: In the name of another bastard cheap lecture performance. Brussels: Kaaaitheater, residency (May) and Les Brigitines, residency (October). **Performed in French, Spanish and English.**
- 2021: In the name of another bastard cheap lecture performance. Spain, La Fabra, La Poderosa. **Performed in Spanish**
- 2022: In the name of another bastard cheap lecture performance. Copenhagen, Teatoren. **Performed in French, Spanish and English.**
- 2022: In the name of another bastard cheap lecture performance. Barcelona, Festival Salmón, Mercat des Flores. **Performed in Spanish and French.**
- 2022: In the name of another bastard cheap lecture performance. Dans i little festival, Stockholm University of the Arts. **Performed in Spanish, French and English.**
- 2022: Outra palestra-performance bastarda-barata. Rio de Janeiro, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro. Performed in **Portunhol** (mixed Spanish and Portuguese) **and French.**

_ The season based on promises

Description: The dancing promise of what is yet to come, its knowledge carried through radical sensitivity embodied and shared across different dance traditions.

- 2023: A 25:18-minute promise of a Bastard-Cheap lecture-performance. Brussels, Conditions of Spectatorship Symposium. **Performed without articulated language.**
- 2023: A 34:16-minute promise of another bastard-cheap lecture-performance. Stockholm, Stockholm University of the Arts, 50% doctoral seminar. **Performed without articulated language.**
- 2023: The 2nd promise of another bastard rather than cheap lecture-performance Brussels, closing event of the Research Center, a.pass. **Performed with a prerecorded audio in English and a singing in Spanish.**
- 2023: The 3rd promise of another bastard-cheap lecture-performance. Copenhagen, YC HAUT Festival. **Performed with a prerecorded audio in English and a singing in Spanish.**
- 2023. A promessa de mais de uma palestra-performance bastarda-barata. Rio de Janeiro, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro. **Performed in Portunhol.**
- 2023. Otra promesa bastarda-barata. Fiske Menuco, El Biombo. **Performed in Spanish.**
- 2024: The 5th promise of another bastard-cheap lecture-performance. Stockholm, Stockholm University of the Arts, 80% doctoral seminar. **Performed with a prerecorded audio in English and a singing in Spanish.**
- 2025: La 6ta promesa de otra conferencia performática más barata que bastarda. Buenos Aires, MOVAQ. Performed in Spanish.
- 2025: La 7ma promesa de otra conferencia performática más barata que bastarda. Córdoba, Universidad Provincial de Córdoba. **Performed in Spanish.**
- 2025: La 8va promesa de otra conferencia performática más barata que bastarda. Neuquén, Escuela Experimental de Danzas Contemporáneas. **Performed in Spanish.**

- 2025: La 8va promesa de otra conferencia performática más barata que bastarda. Fiske Menuco, Instituto Universitario Patagónico de Artes. **Performed in Spanish.**
- 2025. An ATM promise of a bastard rather than cheap lecture performance. Washington DC. Dance Studies Association Conference. **Performed in English.**

Ethical template: Informed consent for participation in a PhD project

STOCKHOLM UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS | STOCKHOLMS KONSTNÄRLIGA HÖGSKOLA

Date: _____ 2025
Stockholm, Kingdom of Sweden

Informed Consent form for participation and publication

Title of the project: **Conflicted Embodiment: Dancing Trans-Atlantic Migrant Dances**

I consent to participate as a performer in caterina daniela mora jara's PhD artistic research project at Stockholm University of the Arts (SKH).

I am aware of the purpose of the project, which will be performed and published during the public event on 21 April 2026 at Brinellvägen 58.

I understand that some aspects of the workshop process and its output will be filmed, recorded, or photographed and used for documentation.

I know I can ask any questions I may have and whom to contact: caterina daniela mora jara (in legal documents as Caterina Daniela Mora), +46 76 94 00 801, caterina.mora@uniarts.se.

Regarding publication and archiving, I am aware that video and audio material will be edited and that I will have access to the edited material before its publication. I understand that this material will only be made public with my consent and will be presented as part of the documentation of the artistic research project.

Regarding GDPR, I choose to participate in the artistic project and agree that Stockholm University of the Arts will process my personal data in accordance with applicable data protection legislation and the information provided. The contact for the University's data protection officer is gdpr@uniarts.se.

Place, date Signature in handwriting Name (printed)

Other comments:

BOX 24045, 104 50 STOCKHOLM
08- 49 400 000 UNIARTS.SE

Annex III

An almost complete list of workshops facilitated during my doctoral research that contributed to my understanding of learning contexts in dance and performance.

Not all workshops were conducted as research workshops; where applicable, this is clearly indicated. Some workshops provide a link to the event, its context or its description.

2021

_ March, five days, afternoon sessions. Subject Area Dance. Studio 11, SKH. Third-year BA Dance and Performance, SKH.

Conflicted embodiment: Transversal tools through erotic justice

Transmission process of embodying having fun with dancing and being a fan of dancing.

Rest* to resist.

_ November, two sessions, morning sessions. Subject Area Dance. Studio 2, SKH. MADE master.

Tango thermique

_ September, five days, afternoon sessions. Subject Area Dance. Studio 9, SKH. First-year BA Dance and Performance, SKH.

Translating dance, untranslatable problems

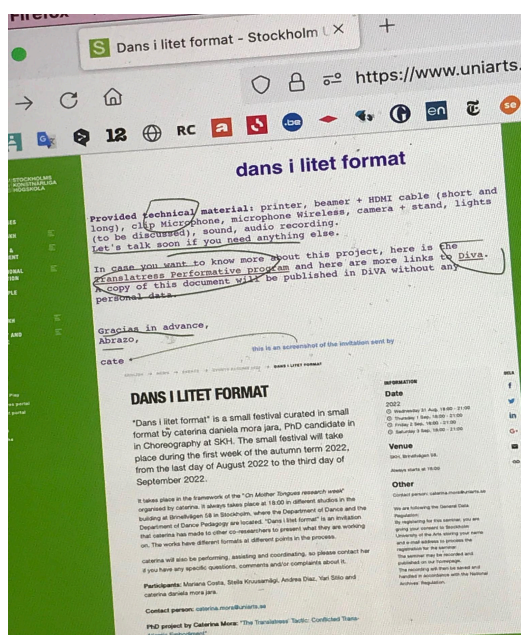
2022

_ Fall: Co-course leader of Free-Standing Course, SKH.

Canon and Visibility: Hacking the Hegemony, 7,5 credits.

_ 23 April, one morning session. *Open Studios workspacebrussels*, Kaaistudios, Brussels.

Tango thermique: TaNG@ Thermique: Transversal tools for cha(LLE)nging roles and warming up conversations (mora jara, 2022).



Screenshot of the communication for the first mini-festival

_ 29 August to 3 September, 14:00-17:00 and 1 October. Subject Area Dance. Studio 9, SKH.

On Mother Tongues, I reiteration-Stockholm _ **Research Workshop**.

Research participants: Andrea Diaz, Robert Malmberg, Stella Kruusamägi, Yari Stilo, Mariana Da Costa and Martin Sonderkamp.

Exposition in Research Catalogue: <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1770609/1770610>

This workshop was accompanied by a *Dans i litet format* mini-festival, where artists could share their research process if they wanted.

Artists who presented their work: Andrea Diaz, Stella Kruusamägi, Yari Stilo and Mariana Da Costa.

_ 30 November and 1 December, 10:00–13:00, at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), Rio de Janeiro.

Línguas maternas: danças e traduções _ **Research Workshop**, in presence of my second supervisor Eleonora Fabião.

Transmission process to performing arts artists at different levels (graduate and postgraduate performing arts students).

2023

_ 7 to 11 February, 3 hours each day. Teaterøen, produced by HAUT, Copenhagen.

On Mother Tongues, II reiteration-Copenhagen _ **Research Workshop**

Research participants: Jupiter Child, Felis Dos, Abdul Dube and Bantu Barly Lhirba.

This workshop was accompanied by the *Bevægelse i lille format* mini-festival, where artists shared their research process. All the invited artists presented their work.

Reportage of residency, workshop and mini-festival by Karin Hald:

<https://bastard.blog/on-mother-tongues-haut/>

_ 16 February to 2 March (six sessions). Concert studio at Kaaistudios, produced by Workspacebrussels, Brussels.

On Mother Tongues, III Reiteration-Brussels _ **Research Workshop**

This was a six-day workshop, each session lasting four hours.

Research participants: Loucka Fiagan, Jimena Perez Salerno, Túlio Rosa, Marie Paule Mugeni, and Larissa Ballarotti.

This workshop was accompanied by the *Dances-in little format* mini-festival in April, where artists shared their research process. All the invited artists presented their work.

<https://www.workspacebrussels.be/en/projects/dances-in-little-format>

_ April, two-week workshop, afternoon session. Subject Area Dance, Studio 9, SKH and Dansmuseet, Stockholm. First-year students, BA Dance and Performance, SKH.

Dances of Intrigue

Open sharing of the workshop on 13, 14, and 15 April.

<https://dansmuseet.se/program/dances-of-intrigue/2023-04-13/2/>

_ 16 May, 10:00–12:00. Subject Area Dance, Studio 8, SKH _ **Research Workshop**

Workshop as part of my 50% PhD seminar titled *Conflicted Embodiment: A 49.2% Doctoral Seminar*, in presence of opponent (Victoria Pérez Royo) and supervisor Chrysa Parkinson.

<https://www.uniarts.se/english/news/events/events-spring-2023/caterina-mora-s-50-seminar/>

_ Autumn: Co-course leader of Free-Standing Course, SKH.
Canon and Visibility: Hacking the Hegemony, 7,5 credits.

_ 25 november, morning session. YC Festival, organized by HAUT.
Conflicted Embodiment

_ 29 and 30 November, 10:00–13:00, at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), Rio de Janeiro.
Corporificação conflituosa _ **Research Workshop**, in presence of my second supervisor Eleonora Fabião.
Transmission process to performing arts artists at different levels (graduate and postgraduate performing arts students).

2024

_ January, five sessions. Subject Area Dance, Studio 6, SKH, Stockholm. Students of Performative New Practices Master.

Conflicted Embodiment: troubling dance legacies

_ April, one session. Open Studios, workspacebrussels, Brussels.

Conflicted Embodiment: a study session

Link: <https://www.workspacebrussels.be/en/shows/conflicted-embodiment-a-study-session>

_ 29 and 30 April, 10:00–12:00. Subject Area Dance, Studio 7, SKH _ **Research Workshop**
Workshop as part of my 80% PhD seminar titled *Conflicted Embodiment. An eighty one zero seven per cent Doctoral Seminar*, in presence of opponent (Sandra Noeth) and supervisor Chrysa Parkinson.

Link: <https://www.uniarts.se/english/news/events/events-spring-2024/caterina-moras-80-seminar/>

_ September, one session. Studio C, SKH. Second-year Teachers Program Students, Dance Pedagogy, SKH.

Desk sessions on conflicted Embodiment

_ October, two sessions. Studio 7, SKH. First-years student BA programme in Dance Pedagogy, SKH.

Sessions on conflicted Embodiment

_ October, five days. First-year and third-year students, BA Dance and Performance, SKH.

Conflicted Embodiment

_ Fall, Intermittent sessions. Subject Area Dance, studio 16. First-year and third-year students, BA Dance and Performance, SKH.

Training based on eccentric and explosive circuits.

2025

_ January, five sessions, Subject Area Dance. Studio 10, SKH. Master's student in Choreography, SKH.

Conflicted Embodiment: troubling dance legacies

_ February, two sessions. Subject Area Dance Pedagogy. Studio 6, SKH. Fourth-year Teachers Program Students, SKH.

_ March, two sessions at Universidad Provincial de Córdoba, Córdoba, produced by PlataformaVA.
Incorporaciones bastardas: Bordes e Hilachas

_ March, one session. CePIA-Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, produced by PlataformaVA.
From the Practices: legitimating artistic practices in academia

_ March, one session, with Micaela Moreno, at La Casa de las Bestias, produced by PlataformaVA.
Ethics, modes of working together and self-evaluation

_ 12 April, one session, at Escuela Experimental de Danzas Contemporáneas, Neuquén, produced by Pro danza Patagonia
Incorporaciones conflictivas: Bordes e Hilachas

_ 14 to 17 April, morning sessions. Instituto Universitario Patagónico de las Artes, Fiske Menuco.
Incorporaciones conflictivas: de sujeciones, bordes e hilachas con danza

_ May, one-week workshop, afternoon sessions (continuation of workshop from previous semester). Subject Area Dance, Studio 9, SKH and Accelerator, Stockholm. First-year students BA Dance and Performance, SKH.

Conflicted Embodiment

Open sharing of the workshop on Saturday 10 May in the STHLM DANS Festival: *The Dances that Dance us*

Linked to event: <https://www.sthlmdans.se/performance/dances-that-dance-us/>

_ August, online session. Master in Choreography at DASPA (The Danish National School of Performing Arts) Copenhagen.

On Lecture-performance, study case: The Bastard-Cheap Lecture-Performance series

_ September, three sessions, Subject Area Dance. Studio 11, SKH. Master's student in New Performative Practices, SKH.

Conflicted Embodiment: troubling dance legacies

_ 1 October, one session. Subject Area Dance Pedagogy. Studio 6, BA Dance Pedagogy.

Conflicted Embodiment

2026

_ February, two morning sessions, Studio 16, BA Dance and Performance BA Dance Pedagogy, SKH
Tango thermique

Annex IV

Interview by Simon Baetens, 14 November 2022.

The link to the interview and this format of the left programme has been removed, but it can still be accessed.

<https://www.workspacebrussels.be/files/Open-Studios/2023/Dances-in-little-format-1-programma-en-interview.pdf>



DANCES IN LITTLE FORMAT IN CONVERSATION WITH CATERINA DANIELA MORA JARA



From 2020 to 2023, caterina daniela mora jara is one of the house artists at workspacebrussels. During this collaboration, which focuses on the development of artistic practices rather than on creating concrete output, caterina is frequently in residency in the studios and builds a dialogue with the team and other artists. Caterina has roots in Argentina and Chili, and is now living between Brussels and Stockholm.

How would you describe your artistic practice to someone who doesn't have the habit of watching performances?

Very practically speaking: I dance, move and talk at the same time. Usually, I am alone on stage and often work with a catwalk setup with people sitting on two or three sides of it. In terms of content, I try to embody erotic justice: I try to speak with the voices of women who have been made invisible, who are unrecognised or were persecuted. I sort of take their place on stage. These voices are not limited to language, they can also be dance or movement.

Where does the erotic element have a place in this?

It's me trying to answer the question of what it means to warm up. How to get closer and raise the temperature. I like small audiences in an intimate setup. The erotic is for me in the in-between: in between people, but also in between the forms I use: publication, songs, dance. I approach them with an erotic quality in mind.

Which themes are central to your work?

I work with translation. There is a big discourse going about translation and I try to be very specific about what it means to me, without being

exclusive. I start from the problem of dance as language. I try to hack the very present idea of dance being a language by translating dances to other dances. Another element that is crucial to my work is space: how spaces and territoriality determine thinking, practices, ways of being, networking. My guiding question that's at the core of everything I do is: How to deal with context? How to bring the context on stage, how to talk to it, be infected by it.

What do you mean when you say 'context'?

A concrete example is production context. Who is giving me space, who is supporting my work, who is managing my production time? But also: who cleans the space I work in and how, that's also context to me. I try to acknowledge everything that is present. This is what I call context: the visible and invisible parameters that define my work.

If you would write an autobiography, what would be its title?

La Gota Gorda, which means 'the fat blob', or a drop of sweat. This phrase comes from Julio Bocca, a famous Argentinian ballet dancer. I don't relate to him artistically but he was very present in my childhood. It reminds me of how you always take a second t-shirt to the dance studio, because you will get sweaty. So, my second option for the title of the book is *Second t-shirt*. As a dancer you always have one in your bag!

Which artworks have made a lasting impression on you?

The first one is a book by dancer and philosopher Marie Bardet called *Perder la cara*, which would translate to *Losing the face*. Her work is about navigating Western binaries and it's been very interesting for my practice. The second one is another book, *Romper el corazón del mundo* (in English: *To break the heart of the world*) by Val Flores, who is from the same area in the Upper Valley of Rio Negro I am from and I feel very connected to her. She writes about how the desert is connected to extractivism and other ways of epistemology.

Then there is a film, *La Flor (The Flower)* by Mariano Llinás. It lasts about 12 hours and the construction and composition is fantastic. It explores different genres within one film from

comedy to thriller. It took 10 years to make and I would call it a masterpiece. Another film, made by a director who is part of the same collective, *El Pampero cine* as Llinás, is *El Loro Y El Cisne (The parrot and the swan)* by Alejo Moguillansky, a director who I follow closely. It is a retelling of *Swan Lake* through the rehearsal of several Argentinian dance companies and it is composed extremely well.

There is an Argentinian dance group called Grupo Krapp and they recently made a performance called *La última cinta (The last track)* which they made in memory of Luis Biasotto, a member of the collective who died from covid. I saw the piece on YouTube and I was really moved by it.

Is there someone, dead or alive, fictional or real, that you would like to collaborate with?

Not really. I mean: when I want to work with someone, I just do it. And there are a lot of people present in the dramaturgy of my pieces, often through fantasy and fabulation, but they are there. Figures like Aphra Behn, Kitri, Odille et Odette, Maria Baderna, Marie Geneviève van Goethem, my mom, my sister, my dad and my professors are always surrounding me.

If you think back five years and try to remember how you saw your future then, how does that image relate to where you are at right now?

That's an emotional question. Today is November 15. If you go back 5 years and 2 weeks from today, you find yourself on the exact day I arrived in Brussels. I remember the cold. I didn't have any suitable winter clothes with me. I remember feeling lost. I couldn't talk: I didn't speak any French or English. At all. It's so emotional to think back because back then I wouldn't have dared to even dream of what I have now. I am just amazed by everything that has happened since then. My aim was to situate myself a bit, to share my work. Now everything has changed. My idea of what my work is, my way of networking, everything. It's another life.

I'm reminded of a saying my dad likes to use. A loose translation from Spanish to English would be something like: "Be careful not to desire something too much, because life can give it to you twice." I

constantly remind myself that 5 five years ago, the life I live today was a promise. I am very grateful for that, but it's also scary, because I need to find new dreams now.

What are the most significant steps you have taken in your work during the period in which you were a house artist at workspacebrussels?

A realisation that is extremely important to me, is that I don't need to be exposed all the time. Going public is not as crucial for my work as I thought it was. It's thanks to the luxury of having support and time that I can look at my work in this way. I get to decide when I want to share what I do with other people, which is a very politically charged power to have. Related to that is my incessant impulse to challenge my position in the art market: I am both part of it and outside of it at the same time. There are many roles I can play as an artist, and being on stage is just one of them.

You also share the time and resources you have with other artists. How is your practice evolving from a solitary one to a shared one?

I think it was during the pandemic that I started to seriously question what I wanted to do with the money I had access to, especially since the obvious option of performing wasn't possible at that time. Paying other artists and practitioners seemed like the best choice. There was also a frustration about having little presentation dates, which I managed to turn upside down by organising a small festival within the context of being in residency somewhere. So there was a desire for me to be alone while still being surrounded by other people, the option to redistribute means and the creation of my own contexts for presenting work, both my own and other artists' work.

Who would play you in a movie about your life?

A good friend of mine, called Lucila Sol Roberto. She is an amazing dancer who just like me got married for papers and she has a similar movement energy to me. She'd be perfect for the role.

What is something you think every student should learn in art school?

There are two things. The first one is critical historicism, which is very important but hard to find. Secondly, I would have loved to have more information about networking, project making and positioning oneself in the art world. You can learn the second thing after graduation too, the first should be an integral part of every arts education. I work as a teacher and PhD researcher and I co-developed a free-standing course with Maipelo Gabang at SKH called Canon and Visibility: Hacking the Hegemony which hacks the idea of Western dance canon from a Global South perspective.

Is there a part of your life that a lot of people don't know about or that you don't often talk about within the performing arts world?

Motherhood and sustainability. Those topics are always present for me but the contexts I work in don't always allow space for them.

If you hadn't become an artist, what would you do for a living?

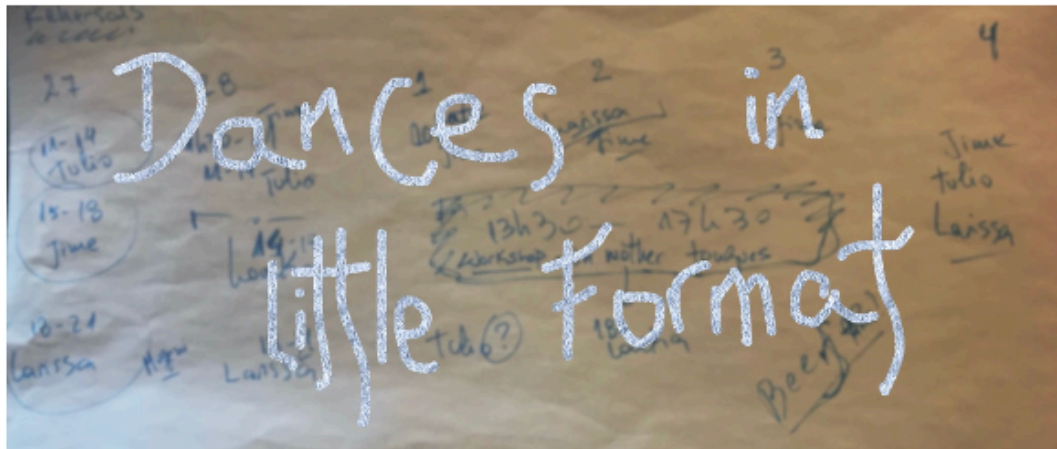
I would be an electrician. Before getting into the PhD programme, I almost started a formation to become an electrician. My father is an electrician and I think it's such a beautiful and important profession. It's so practical: how to create light? I grew up hearing conversations about cables and outlets and it stuck with me.

What songs or artists are on your current playlist?

Baja a La Tierra by Kevin Johanssen and *Maldigo del Alto Cielo* by Violeta Parra.

Choosing to work as an artist is not an evident choice, and it can be very challenging. What keeps bringing you back to art?

Transformation. The question of when and how to transform something. And hope. Art gives me hope.



double bill 1

caterina daniela mora jara & Loucka Fiagan

21.04.2023 - 20:30 - Kaaistudio's

pre-talk

caterina daniela mora jara & Elodie Mugrefya

22.04.2023 - 18:00 - Kaaistudio's

double bill 2

Jimena Pérez Salerno & Mugeni

22.04.2023 - 19:00 - Kaaistudio's

double bill 3

Larissa Ballarotti & Túlio Rosa

22.04.2023 - 21:30 - Kaaistudio's

The Open Studios programme is curated by workspacebrussels in dialogue with associated artists caterina daniela mora jara and the collective Dancing at the Crossroads (As We Walk). A big thank you goes to the team of Kaaitheater, and especially to Christian, Eva, Frank, Geertje, Geni, Godfried, Helena, Jan, Jonas, Lieselot and William for making this happen.

Workspacebrussels is structurally supported by Kaaitheater, Rosas, Ultima Vez, Les Brigittines, the Flemish Community and the Flemish Community Commission.

KAAI
THEATER

Rosas



ULTIMA VEZ



Vlaanderen
verbeelding werkt



Annex V

First source material related to the artistic outputs presented at the Making Public event on 21 April 2026.

1. Rehearsal planning for the *Group Work Session on Conflicted Embodiment*.
6 full days (48 hours in total, 14 rehearsals and the practice presentation)

	hours	day	who - hours	what	additional
1	3	17. 11 9.12 17.12	Yari from 9:00 to 12:00 Marie from 14:00 to 17:00 Naty from 14:30 to 17:30	solo solo solo	St 5 st 6 st 16
2	3	7.12 10.12 18.12	Yari from 11:00 to 14:00 Marie from 15:00 to 18:00 Nati from 10:00 to 13:00	solo solo solo	st 16 st 16 st 11
3	3,5	11.12	all: 13:00-16:30	all + Vladimir (1)	st 11 (from 12:00)
4	3,5	12.12	all: 15:00-18:30	all + Vladimir (2)	st 11
5	3	4.3 5.3	Yari: 9:00-12:00 Natalia: 10:00-13:00 Marie: 14:00-17:00	solo solo solo	4.3: St G from 9:00-18:00 5.3: St G 9-12
6	3	6.3	Yari: 9:00-12:00 Natalia: 11:30-14:30 Marie: 14:00-17:00	solo solo solo	6.3: St 15 from 9:00-18:00. → -1h
7	3	9.3	all: 14:00-16:00	all	St 16: 13:00-17:00
8	3	10.3 12.3	Yari: 10:00-13:00 Marie: 15:00-19:00 Natalia: 10:30-13:30	solo solo solo	st 16 + 13 st 16
9	3	12.3	all: 14:00-16:00	all - cancelled (reallocated to 11.4)	St 16 14:00-18:00
10	7	30.3	all: 11:00-18:30	all + Vladimir (3) all confirmed	28, 29 + 30 St 16
11	3	31.3	all: 10:00-13:00	all + Vladimir (4) all confirmed	St 16
12	2	9.4	all: 16:00-18:00	all	St 16 full day
13	2	19.4	all: 14:00-16:00	all	St 16
14	2	20.4	all: 14:00-16:00	general reh+Nef	St 16

	hours	day	who - hours	what	additional
1	3	17. 11 9.12 17.12	Yari from 9:00 to 12:00 Marie from 14:00 to 17:00 Naty from 14:30 to 17:30	solo solo solo	St 5 st 6 st 16
2	3	7.12 10.12 18.12	Yari from 11:00 to 14:00 Marie from 15:00 to 18:00 Nati from 10:00 to 13:00	solo solo solo	st 16 st 16 st 11
3	3,5	11.12	all: 13:00-16:30	all + Vladimir (1)	st 11 (from 12:00)
4	3,5	12.12	all: 15:00-18:30	all + Vladimir (2)	st 11
15	3	21.4	all: 12:00-15:00	Perfo 13:00	St 16

2. Floor plan of Studio 16



Drawing by cate

3. Communication in the website

Conflicted Embodiment: Practices of Making Public

The PhD project *Conflicted Embodiment: Dancing Transatlantic Migrant Dances* introduces Conflicted Embodiment as both a concept and a set of practices.

The practices comprise:

13:00_ Performance practice: Solo and Group Work Session on Conflicted Embodiment

Break

14:15 _ Writing practice: Presentation of the *Dance-que-te-quiero-dance*'s text

Break

15:15_ Transmission practice: A Conflicted Embodiment workshop for practitioners

Practical Information

- _ Fika and breaks: Yes, there will be both.
- _ Documentation: There will be a camera recording the event for research purposes.
- _ Proximity: Yes, there will be moments of physical proximity.
- _ Touch: Yes, touch may occur, always based on prior consent.
- _ Language: English, with interjections in Swedish, Spanish, French, Italian, and Portuguese.
- _ Shoes: Street shoes are not allowed in any of the dance studios at this venue. Clean indoor shoes, flip-flops, or socks may be worn inside.
- _ The venue is fully accessible.

Credits:

- _ Dramaturg of the event and editor of the written component: Vladimir Miller
- _ Proofreader: Mariana Pessino
- _ Dancers: Natalia Perea Santana, Mariê Mazer, Yari Stilo and cate.
- _ Co-presenter of the written component: Nefeli Gioti
- _ Technique: Carl Amnert and Olle Axén
- _ Script assistance: Aphra Behn, Marie Geneviève van Goethem and Maria Baderna
- _ Special thanks for studio bookings and space arrangements: Ingela Stefaniak Öhman, David Meyer and Jasmin Dedic.
- _ Thanks for the support: SUDPAC student Union, Subject Area Dance STAFF, *Segunda Cuadernos de Danza*, Eugenia Cadús, my mum, my dad, my sister, Aquarela and Vara.

___ Dedicated to the dances ___

This text is presented on 21 April 2026 during the event
Conflicted Embodiment: Practices of Making Public,
starting at 1 pm in Studio 16, at Brinellvägen 58, Stockholm.

For a fleshy and conversational presentation of this text,
I invited my friend Nefeli Gioti.

The final writing period took place intensively between January and April 2026,
usually beginning before sunrise.

I watched the days lengthen as spring approached.

As I write this 117 pages with *mate*,

I am accompanied by Aquarela, a cat

who has been with me throughout this writing journey.

We usually dance together in the kitchen around 6:05 am.