Igniting Creativity:

Art, Education, Transformation and Change

Northern School of Contemporary Dance

Wednesday 8 January 2025

9.30am	Registration and coffee			
10.00 – 11.00	**Welcome** **Speaker 1: Darren Carr** Vice Principal and Director of Higher Education, NSCD – Welcome, opening thoughts and general housekeeping for the conference **Speaker 2: Dr Sharon Watson, MBE, DL CEO & Principal, NSCD** – Welcome to Northern School of Contemporary Dance **Speaker 3: Key Note speaker – Helen Pheby** Head of Culture, Heritage and Sport, West Yorkshire Combined Authority			
11.00 – 11.15	Break			
11.15 – 12.15	**Session 1** **Option A: Presentations (Riley Theatre)** **Collaborative studio practice as rehearsals for progressing from governance to stewardship** John Chan London Contemporary Dance School **A Space to Observe, Play and Respond** Stephanie Schober and Takeshi Matsumoto (online) Trinity Laban Conservatoire for Music and Dance	**Session 1** **Option B: Presentations (Studio 3)** **Opportunities and challenges in digital infrastructure development within dance organisations: A Knowledge Transfer Partnership case study** Sally Doughty, Ebenezer Apata and Dr Hiu Man Chan De Montfort University **How do HE dance education and dance research provide vital skills for the Creative Industries?** Dr Vipavinee Artpradid Centre for Dance Research, Coventry University	**Session 1** **Option C: Presentations (Seminar Room)** **Inclusive Practice & Performance: The Opening Doors Context** Ilona Baldacchino Opening Doors Association **Challenging HE policy: the transformative benefits of NSCD dance outreach activities in widening participation and supporting the attainment raising agenda in schools** Tracy Witney, Philippa Ranger, Jade Aitchison and Samantha Child Northern School of Contemporary Dance	**Session 1** **Option D: Presentation (Studio 5)** **From the Education of the Senses to Creative Health: Reimagining Aesthetic Education for the 21st Century** Dr John Cussans University of Worcester

12.30 – 1.15	**Session 2** **Option A: Discussion (Studio 3)** **The Future of Critical Dance Pedagogy** Prof. Angela Pickard, Dr Wendy Timmons, Dr Kathryn Stamp, Darren Carr and Dr Aoife McGrath	**Session 2** **Option B: Discussion (Studio 2)** **An inquiry into how to develop a deeper level of ownership and co-agency in a contemporary dance technique class using reflective practice** Azzurra Ardovini Northern School of Contemporary Dance	**Session 2** **Option C: Discussion (Room TBC)** Georgia Cooper & Helen Madden Northern School of Contemporary Dance and Friends of the Future		
1.15 – 2.00	Lunch (Café and Studio 3)				
	Poster Presentation (Café and Studio 3) **I see you; I hear you; Diversity in Motion** Lisa Norris Shockout Arts		**Poster Presentation (Café and Studio 3)** **Commercial Dance and the Metamodernism** Dr Garry William Clarke Independent Artist		
2.00 – 3.00	**Session 3** **Option A: Presentations (Riley Theatre)** **The Significance of the 'Feeling Function' in Creativity and Bringing Awareness to It in the Education Processes in Higher Education of Dance** Yoana Stoeva Middlesex University **Power-dynamic-aware-consent-based Pedagogy** Lauren Williams Performers College Birmingham - BIMM University	**Session 3** **Option B: Presentations (Studio 3)** **Creative and participatory methods as critical tools for co-learning and action** Marianne Matusz University of Leeds	**Session 3** **Option C: Interactive Workshop (Studio 6)** **Advancing safe dance: implications for policy, research and practice** Phillippa Kyle Newcastle University Business School	**Session 3** **Option D: Interactive Workshop (Studio 4)** **Culture as a Catalyst for Artistic and Creative Reimagination** Antonio Bukhar Ssebuuma Northern School of Contemporary Dance	**Session 3** **Option E: Discussion (Room TBC)** Georgia Cooper & Helen Madden Northern School of Contemporary Dance and Friends of the Future
3.00 – 3.15	Break				

3.15 – 3.50	**Session 4** **Option A: Discussion (Studio 3)** **Dance and Creativity – How do we measure it?** Ali Golding Movementworks.org		**Session 4** **Option B: Discussion (Studio 2)** **Active Engagement vs. Passive Observation: Transforming Dance Class Dynamics for Creative Growth** Stephanie De'Ath, Dr Elsa Urmston and Dr Sarah Needham-Beck London Contemporary Dance School		
4.00 – 5.00	**Session 5** **Option A: Discussion (Riley Theatre)** **Tender Steps - A Dance Film Raising Awareness of Babyloss** Alice Marshall University of Derby **B a l m: A Call for Heart-Led Art that Embraces Healing and Transformation** Rachel Calleja and Angela Bettoni (online) Independent Artists	**Session 5** **Option B: Discussion (Studio 3)** **Coaching intrapersonal intelligence through reflective practice: enhancing creativity with undergraduate dance students engaged in choreographic learning** Dennie Wilson Royal Academy of Dance **Creativity in Contexts of Biopolitical Precarity** Dr Campbell Edinborough University of Leeds	**Session 5** **Option C: Discussion (Seminar Room)** **Pedagogy, Practice & 21st Century Relevance: The Pedestal Effect & (mis)alignment** ***(TBC - Working Title)*** Dr Garry William Clarke Independent Artist	**Session 5** **Option D: Interactive Workshop (Studio 4)** **Dialogues of bodies, sound and space: music and dance teaching techniques** Dr Helen Kindred - Northern School of Contemporary Dance, Siân Hopkins - ISTD affiliate and Tom Kirkpatrick - Independent Artist	**Studio 5:** Quiet space available for delegates
5.00 6.00	**Session 6** **Option A: Interactive Workshop/Performance (Riley Theatre)** **IZIQALEKISO Zobomi / The Curses of Life Production** Thimna Sitokisi and Mthetheleli Dlakavu Versatile Youth Company	**Session 6** **Option B: Discussion (Studio 3)** **Beyond the Auditorium: Sparking creativity and innovation through learning guides and resources** Susie Ferguson University of Sheffield **Inculcating a relationship of correspondence in contemporary dance training through dialogue and creative reflection** Dr Rachel Rimmer-Piekarczyk Manchester Metropolitan University	**Session 6** **Option C: Interactive Workshop (Studio 4)** **Transforming Heritage: Reimagining Chinese Calligraphy and Classical Opera Dance in Creative Eco-Somatic Practice** Xueting Luo University of Leeds	**Session 6** **Option D: Interactive Workshop (Room TBC)** **Guided Meditation session**	

6.05 – 7.00	**Plenary**
	Performance by VERVE
7.00	END

Igniting Creativity:
Art, Education, Transformation and Change

Welcome | 10.00 - 11.00

Welcome and Keynote speakers (Riley Theatre)

Darren Carr, Vice Principal and Director of Studies, NSCD
Sharon Watson MBE, DL, CEO & Principal, NSCD

Session 1 | 11.15 – 12.15

Option A - Presentations (Riley Theatre)

Collaborative studio practice as rehearsals for progressing from governance to stewardship

From schools and companies to community centers and independent projects, the studio is a fertile ground for practicing decolonial and value-driven governance models where leaders and future leaders practice embracing collective actions and leaning into interdependence.

John drew on his experiences as a cultural strategist in running social imagination projects across migrant and queer scenes, as well as inspirations from his marine biology career, derive sets of tools and principles for reimagining the studio space for valuing diverse knowledge and challenging mainstream narratives, acknowledging and breaking down power structures, and practicing being accountable for damages caused by one's action.

The research explores the potential for one to position themselves as cultural worker in the late capitalist system where collective survival is key to developing a new culture where we thrive under symbiosis.

Delivered by John Chan, London Contemporary Dance School

A Space to Observe, Play and Respond

Choreographer and dance movement psychotherapist Takeshi Matsumoto and I involved our BA (Hons) Contemporary Dance students in creating and performing dance works with and for primary school children. Two works already produced in 2023 and 2024 with a third planned in 2025, we want to share our reflections on putting community engagement and inclusive practices at the centre of vocational dance training within HE. During the 5-week long creative processes, Takeshi and the student dancers regularly visited St Stephen's Primary School in Lewisham to test initial ideas and to create some of the movement and choreography with the children. The children then saw the premier performance, an immersive multi-media event, at Trinity Laban. As rehearsal director I took one of the works on tour to 5 other local primary schools. Each performance was supported by a Q&A. Based on our project evaluation we will share its positive impact on the school children's wellbeing capturing their joy of seeing their own creativity reflected and developed in the work (often their first experience with the art form). We will discuss our students' growth as versatile and socially conscious dance artists nurtured through a space to observe, play and respond.

Delivered by Stephanie Schober and Takeshi Matsumoto (online), Trinity Laban Conservatoire for Music and Dance

Option B - Presentations (Studio 3)

Opportunities and challenges in digital infrastructure development within dance organisations: A Knowledge Transfer Partnership case study

This paper/presentation responds to the conference theme of ‘Creative Leadership and Organisational Transformation’ by sharing insights and findings to date from a Management Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) (funded by Innovate UK) between De Montfort University (DMU) and FABRIC, a dance development organisation based in the Midlands.

We focus specifically on the project’s objective to investigate the different possibilities for, and positioning of a Customer Relation Management system that enables new business opportunities and income streams for FABRIC. We align this with the Arts Council England’s Digital Culture Network policy, highlighting its relevance to organisational transformation and using it as a lens to discuss the work undertaken on the KTP.

Using a case study methodology we identify issues faced and solutions posed by the project team around embracing the digital with informed decision-making, and discuss how these experiences have potential to inform the practices of artists, organisations and universities in a climate of ever decreasing budgets for the sector.

Delivered by Sally Doughty, Ebenezer Apata and Dr Hiu Man Chan, De Montfort University

How do HE dance education and dance research provide vital skills for the Creative Industries?

I share key points arising from the discussion panel ‘How do HE dance education and dance research provide vital skills for the Creative Industries?’ that took place during the AHRC Dance Research Matters Networks programme mid-point event in September 2024. The event theme was ‘Making dance research legible in the Creative Industries and beyond’. Members of the panel included Angela Pickard, Michela Vecchi, and Kate Marsh. Sarah Whatley moderated the session.

Key points included 1) how crip and disabled artists are located in the Creative Industries before or without engagement in dance research and dance 2) Dance as physical capital that has exchange value and uses in other fields, with uses including creating generative disruption and change in and beyond the field, and 3) Dance practice in relation to creativity, productivity, and innovation.

I will also raise for discussion and critique the notion of dance research allyship as the space created by practitioners and researchers who may professionally be categorised outside of the field of dance but who engage with dance artists and dance research as vital to their work. This notion arises from the Q&A on the topic of what it means to position dance, dance artists, and dance researchers at the centre of a research project.

Delivered by Dr Vipavinee Artpradid, Centre for Dance Research - Coventry University

Option C - Presentations (Seminar Room)

Inclusive Practice & Performance: The Opening Doors Context

Inclusive performance practice is still in its infancy in Malta’s performing arts scene. At its core, this practice intends to bring together individuals with and without disabilities who can learn, develop and transform performance together. This paper investigates the significance and potential of inclusive practice as an emerging approach towards acceptance, valuing difference, empowerment and access to training and performance opportunities.

Reference will be made to Opening Doors Association, a Maltese arts organisation set up for adults with intellectual disabilities, offering its members the possibility of accessing training within the performing arts - in dance, theatre, and music. Since 2021 the organisation has collaborated on several inclusive performances, performed in theatres and national festivals in Malta, of which will be discussed during the presentation.

This paper aims to develop further awareness of inclusive approaches, creating leading practices, developing training, performance opportunities and responding to the emerging needs of artists, whilst also acknowledging the challenges encountered to reach the objectives highlighted.

Delivered by Ilona Baldacchino, Opening Doors Association

Challenging HE policy: the transformative benefits of NSCD dance outreach activities in widening participation and supporting the attainment raising agenda in schools

This presentation explores the discord between Higher Education (HE) policy and dance outreach activities. Strong emphasis is placed on the need for HE providers to contribute to supporting schools to improve academic attainment, removing barriers for under-represented groups to progress to university whilst also affecting the gender attainment gap.

Regulatory and sector guidance stress the value of a wide range of approaches in doing this, yet no mention is made to the value of arts-based activities such as dance in supporting academic attainment. There is extensive educational research which highlights the substantial value of dance and other arts-based activities in supporting the development of key skills central to attainment such as resilience, wellbeing, communication skills.

The purpose of this research was to shine a light on the value of dance activities delivered by NSCD in supporting the attainment raising agenda. The presentation presents insights into a mixed methods research project undertaken during 2023-24 which sought to understand and evidence the value of a range of NSCD outreach dance activities on young people. Focusing on six dance activities for young people aged between 7-18, all delivered by NCSD, this research sought to examine the effectiveness of the activities and interventions within schools in addressing this attainment raising agenda, specifically when engaging the below groups:

- Underrepresented young people
- Boys/ male-identifying young people
- Young people from IMD/POLAR/TUNDRA Q1-2

Delivered by Tracy Witney, Philippa Ranger, Jade Aitchison and Samantha Child, Northern School of Contemporary Dance

Option D - Presentation (Studio 5)

From the Education of the Senses to Creative Health: Reimagining Aesthetic Education for the 21st Century

Dr John Cussans, University of Worcester

Session 2 | 12.30 – 1.15

Option A - Presentations (Riley Theatre)

The Future of Critical Dance Pedagogy

This follows the symposiums and artists labs of 2023/24 with an overview of change

Delivered by Prof. Angela Pickard, Dr Wendy Timmons, Dr Kathryn Stamp, Darren Carr and Dr Aoife McGrath

Option B - Discussion (Studio 2)

An inquiry into how to develop a deeper level of ownership and co-agency in a contemporary dance technique class using reflective practice

My research investigates student engagement and ownership in technique classes through targeted teaching strategies and reflective practice; pedagogical considerations and theoretical frameworks that promote active interpretation of set material are examined. Grounded in qualitative dance research, this practitioner-led study focuses on how students can actively find their own interpretation instead of replicating steps. By employing an inquiry-based learning approach, the study aims to enhance self-awareness and deepen understanding of interpretation within set material to emphasise the interrogation of movements. The process is based upon a reciprocal and relational exchange between the researcher and the dancers, where the students are seen as participants and co-owners of the space and the content offered. Reflective practice serves as a crucial tool, linking reflection with learning and helping students become more self-sufficient. This work offers insights into teaching approaches prioritising student involvement and promoting a more dynamic and interactive learning atmosphere in technique classes.

Delivered by Azzurra Ardovini, Northern School of Contemporary Dance

Option C - Discussion (Room TBC)

Georgia Cooper & Helen Madden, Northern School of Contemporary Dance and Friends of the Future

Session 3 | 2.00 – 3.00

Option A - Presentations (Riley Theatre)

The Significance of the 'Feeling Function' in Creativity and Bringing Awareness to It in the Education Processes in Higher Education of Dance

This presentation is a sharing of a current PhD research that explores the significance of the 'feeling function', or the ability to feel, in relation to creativity and mental health in Higher Education of Dance. It aims to discover how teachers feel and what they need to better assist students' artistic endeavours and mental health management. The research consists of workshops and interviews with professionals, to understand teachers' perception of the 'feeling function' and to explore possible tools from somatic therapy and Jungian psychoanalysis that could be used to better connect with it. It has a goal to provide time and space for teachers to 'destress' from their demanding everyday life and to feel the deeper layers of their being. Simultaneously, it will attempt to raise awareness among these professionals about how the 'feeling function' can be a source of creativity and a way to process emotions through dance. Connecting to the feeling self brings fulfilment, joy and peace that can heal and transform. The presentation touches upon the thin line between dance education and therapy, and ethical considerations of using these tools with students.

Delivered by Yoana Stoeva, Middlesex University

Power-dynamic-aware-consent-based Pedagogy

I am developing power-dynamic-aware-consent-based pedagogy to the field of performance training. I utilise autotheory as my methodology and acknowledged my gut-centred feminist approach to power and consent. In this Presentation, I start by examining the field of intimacy practice, then define consent-based pedagogy and examine why my proposed shift in pedagogy is needed in 2024 using existing literature. I will then explore developing the power-dynamic-aware layer to consent-based pedagogy by sharing my first realisation through embracing vulnerability as a pedagogue, power structures can begin to be dismantled within actor training. I am in the midst of investigating power and consent through analysing critical incidents that have occurred in my own practice whilst engaging with theory, demonstrating how they have furthered my development of power-dynamic-aware-consent-based pedagogy. I also am reflecting upon several exercises that I had used previously to address power-dynamics and consent as evidence for the need of my proposed pedagogy. In reflecting upon the work so far, I am navigating how it translates into all aspects of teaching. As a result of utilising this pedagogy, students gain autonomy to thrive within training.

Delivered by Lauren Williams, Performers College Birmingham - BIMM University

Option B - Presentations (Studio 3)

Creative and participatory methods as critical tools for co-learning and action

Collaborative and creative activities have enormous potential for how knowledge is produced, shared and 'put to use' within and outside the academy. Through my PhD project I am exploring grassroots applied arts practices in relation to UK arts infrastructure. Using feminist care ethics as a critical lens, I will interrogate policy and practice in relation to the interdependency, sustainability and urgency of community-based creative practices. This presentation will explore how reading groups and collaborative zine-making practices can act as critical pedagogical tools to reform the processes of knowledge exchange and mobilisation. I will describe how these methods, informed by ideas from popular education discourses (Paulo Freire) and feminist pedagogy (bell hooks, Ruth Wilson Gilmore), can help practitioners and applied researchers to understand and represent the complexities of applied arts practices. Both these activities have the potential to build solidarities, which in turn is vital to the facilitation of engaged learning and change. Reading groups and collaborative zine-making practices can be understood as forms of political and pedagogical praxis which hold possibilities to translate knowledge to real-world action.

Delivered by Marianne Matusz, University of Leeds

Option C - Interactive Workshop (Studio 6)

Advancing safe dance: implications for policy, research and practice

Maltreatment is a pervasive issue in dance. Emerging research has demonstrated the wide-ranging classifications and constituents of maltreatment experienced by dance professionals including physical, psychological/emotional, sexual and institutional abuse and neglect. However, empirical research on experiences of maltreatment in dance in the UK is in its infancy. The purpose of this study was to therefore explore classical ballet and contemporary dancer's experiences of maltreatment in the United Kingdom (UK). Life history interviews were conducted with fifty dance professionals (n=50). Data were analysed using interpretive coding. Findings highlight a high prevalence of maltreatment experienced by dance professionals in the UK, including physical, psychological/emotional, sexual, and institutional abuse, and neglect. This interactive workshop and lecture demonstration will explore with participants the implications of this study for policy, research and practice.

Delivered by Phillippa Kyle, Newcastle University Business School

Option D - Interactive Workshop (Studio 4)

Culture as a Catalyst for Artistic and Creative Reimagination

Antonio Bukhar Ssebuuma embarks on a deeper exploration of his cultural heritage to strengthen his interdisciplinary approach. This exhibition is a component of Antonio's MUTUBA project, an interdisciplinary performance that draws upon the conceptual consciousness of the Ficus Natalensis tree, locally known as the Mutuba in Uganda. The tree's bark is carefully harvested to create Lubugo (barkcloth), a unique, eco-friendly fabric that serves multiple purposes, including textiles for fashion and a canvas for visual artists as well as spiritual and cultural practices.

Antonio's research leverages the multifaceted uses of Lubugo and the regenerative properties of the Mutuba tree to investigate a central question: How can the culturally rich extraction of Lubugo and the tree's regenerative qualities inspire and inform creative practice, leading to interdisciplinary artistic work?

The exhibition will feature a combination of abstract film, conceptual photography, and artefact installations. Its goal is to provoke dialogue on how culture can catalyze artistic and creative reimagination, offering new possibilities for interdisciplinary artistic practices that contribute to the cross-pollination of diverse audiences.

Delivered by Antonio Bukhar Ssebuuma, Northern School of Contemporary Dance

Option E - Discussion (Room TBC)

Georgia Cooper & Helen Madden, Northern School of Contemporary Dance and Friends of the Future

Session 4 | 3.15 – 3.50

Option A - Discussion (Studio 3)

Dance and Creativity – How do we measure it?

This round table explores challenges in defining creativity to support development and learning. Dance offers opportunities for development of imaginative play, problem solving, motor skills and initiation of social behaviors. Despite this, the International Classification of Functioning does not include a domain for creativity. Consequently, there are limited/no measures to evaluate benefits of arts programs for individuals with developmental disorders.

This round table aims to develop items and definitions for inclusion in a new Creativity in Development Outcomes Measure (CDOM).

Ali Golding will present data from a dance program for autistic children exploring perspectives of parents, teachers and dance practitioners highlighting behavior, skills, social interaction and environmental supports as important outcomes.

Dido Green will present data from a review of dance in neurorehabilitation which highlighted potential positive impacts on body functions, emotional expression, social participation, and attitudinal change.

These findings will be presented for round table discussion to consider items and definitions for concepts to be included in the CDOM for evaluation of creative therapeutic programs across different contexts.

Delivered by Ali Golding, Movementworks.org

Option B - Discussion (Studio 2)

Active Engagement vs. Passive Observation: Transforming Dance Class Dynamics for Creative Growth

At London Contemporary Dance School, periodisation has been a key pedagogical approach since 2021, moving students' training beyond skill acquisition towards critical education by integrating rest and recovery to prevent overtraining. This athletic model rethinks traditional dance training, placing student health at the core. In this session, we examine the balance of work-to-rest in students' training and the insights it provides. Observing 39 first-year classes over the year, we found active dancing comprises less than 30% of class time, with rest periods used for instruction, feedback, and observation. Active time was notably higher in composition classes (e.g., improvisation) than technique. Using a world café format, we'll engage delegates in discussions on how class-based work-to-rest ratios impact students' creative engagement, physical development, and experience. Provocations include managing individual learning in group settings and whether increasing active time enhances creativity. Participants will reflect on choices like pacing, rest, and engagement to support students' creative growth in their own contexts.

Delivered by Stephanie De'Ath, Dr Elsa Urmston and Dr Sarah Needham-Beck, London Contemporary Dance School

Session 5 | 4.00 – 5.00

Option A - Discussion (Riley Theatre)

Tender Steps - A Dance Film Raising Awareness of Babyloss

Tender Steps is a dance film created to raise awareness during Babyloss Awareness Week 2024. The piece uses dance as a medium for social change, inviting audiences into an intimate exploration of grief, healing, and remembrance. Addressing themes central to this conference this lived-experience performance offers a platform for acknowledging loss and embracing dialogue on a subject often unspoken.

This work highlights the role of digital media in extending the impact of dance, as Tender Steps transcended the stage to reach virtual audiences. Sitting within the conference themes of 'Creativity in the Digital Age' and 'Art as a Tool for Social Change', the film demonstrates how digital formats can enhance accessibility and participation generating empathy and awareness. Additionally, the work underscores the transformative role of art in mental health, creating a space for collective healing through embodied expression.

Tender Steps speaks to the conference's goal of utilising arts practice as a vehicle for both personal and social transformation, demonstrating how creativity can open conversations, harness community, and serve as a bridge toward understanding and support.

Delivered by Alice Marshall, University of Derby

B a l m: A Call for Heart-Led Art that Embraces Healing and Transformation

In this presentation, choreographer Rachel Calleja and performer and advocate Angela Bettoni explore B a l m, a heart-led, mixed-ability choreography performed in Malta and Venice in 2024. B a l m was created from Angela's monologues, documenting her experiences as a woman with Down syndrome in a society she experiences as

ableist, centered on her feeling of not being truly ‘seen’. The arts offer a unique space for people to feel genuinely witnessed, and through a process prioritising safety, openness, and vulnerability, Angela was able to transmute her experience. Angela’s growth through the process was continual, culminating in a spontaneous catharsis during the final performance as she felt seen in the presence of a live audience.

Reflecting on B a l m, we realised that what we created was not a product but a living process—one that evolved and grew through its creation. This expansive approach challenged conventional artistic structures, both internally and externally. This presentation invites us to rethink systems in which art exists. By prioritising process over product and expression over form, we can reshape support systems, audience perceptions, education, and policy, fostering an arts culture that truly serves all.

Delivered by Rachel Calleja and Angela Bettoni (online), Independent Artists

Option B - Discussion (Studio 3)

Coaching intrapersonal intelligence through reflective practice: enhancing creativity with undergraduate dance students engaged in choreographic learning

Through the lens of a dance artist, educator and researcher, this presentation draws on ‘PRACTISE’ framework (Wilson & Richards, 2022) which is a positional performance coaching framework focused on the empowerment of dancers and dance educators. Exploring critically how, or if systems of learning and/or training explicitly develop, nurture and support the dancer as someone with, or requiring intrapersonal intelligence. The presentation draws on the lead author’s application of reflective pedagogy, when leading a fifteen-week choreography module with level five undergraduate dance students. Reflections and discoveries are presented to facilitate discussion as to how a coaching approach to learning can foster creativity and reflexivity when developing dance students as choreographers and performance makers. The presentation is informed by the interconnectivity between the presenter’s professional doctoral research, and fulltime career working in dance and teacher training.

Delivered by Dennie Wilson, Royal Academy of Dance

Creativity in Contexts of Biopolitical Precarity

This oral presentation will examine how arts institutions and educators can help foster resilient forms of creativity

Delivered by Dr Campbell Edinborough, University of Leeds

Option C - Discussion (Seminar Room)

Pedagogy, Practice & 21st Century Relevance: The Pedestal Effect & (mis)alignment (TBC - Working Title)

Utilising a qualitative research approach this research shares findings and results from a completed doctoral study surrounding the currency & relevancy of pedagogical practices for today's dancers training in HE & conservatoire settings. The data reflects upon and highlights a hierarchy perceived within the dance field between ‘traditional’ Western concert dance forms and those that sit under the commercial and popular dance umbrella. Furthermore, this study highlights the negative long-term impact that authoritarian and 'traditional' didactic dance pedagogies can have on students and graduates, caused by the pedestal effect and teaching through fear.

The findings of this research establish that recent technological advancements, coupled with cultural, societal and broader educational landscape shifts, have significantly impacted student expectations and responses alongside how the dance and dance training sector operates. The study concludes and highlights the need for a co-created and co-constructed approach to pedagogy and curriculum design with greater consideration afforded to the learning cultures of 21st-century students with an approach of constructive (mis)alignment to curriculum design and delivery.

Delivered by Dr Garry William Clarke, Independent Artist

Option D - Interactive Workshop (Studio 4)

Dialogues of bodies, sound and space: music and dance teaching techniques

An interactive presentation that aims to develop discussions through, of and in, practice between dance practitioners and musicians/accompanists around pedagogies of music and dance in dance technique training. Centred in an interdisciplinary culture of collaboration the presenters question the roles of Function and Expression as key concepts in the relationships nurtured through dance teaching and live musical accompaniment. The presentation will share a working research practice that the presenters have been developing over the past year and invite responses to ways in which we might create more rigorous yet intuitive frameworks for music and dance collaborations in teaching.

Delivered by Dr Helen Kindred - Northern School of Contemporary Dance, Siân Hopkins - ISTD affiliate and Tom Kirkpatrick - Independent Artist

Session 6 | 5.00 – 6.00

Option A - Discussion (Riley Theatre)

IZIQALEKISO Zobomi / The Curses of Life Production

Versatile Youth Company based in South Africa , Cape Town is a youth led contemporary based company that offers artistic skills and pre professional performance training opportunities to youth from the townships.

We are excited to present one of our contemporary works titled “IZIQALEKISO zobomi/ The Curses of Life” - a 30 minute continuous contemporary trilogy of dance with powerful theatrical elements that collectively bring the story to life and it consists of challenges faced from internal and external challenges that we constantly have to face and encounter with the hope of overcoming them and the progression of triumph and resilience at the end of the piece . “Curses of life can be seen as the challenges, struggles and hardships that people face in their lives”

Delivered by Thimna Sitokisi and Mthetheleli Dlakavu, Versatile Youth Company

Option B - Discussion (Studio 3)

Beyond the Auditorium: Sparking creativity and innovation through learning guides and resources

This presentation considers the role of theatre production learning guides in fostering innovation and creativity. Drawing on materials from the National Theatre’s (NT) productions of 'War Horse' (2007-2024) and 'Small Island' (2019 & 2022), this paper charts the evolution of written and digital learning material, providing provocations on how institutions can record their productions and inspire responses from the theatre makers of tomorrow.

'War Horse' now represents the NT, and its Learning Department, on a global stage. The 2024-5 tour introduces significant changes to the original production, including a wider representation of war’s impact on combatants and non-combatants. As the production has evolved, so too have its accompanying learning materials which now provide a greater breadth of opportunities to explore and create artistic responses to the conflict, as well as reflecting more fully the diversity of the nation.

By comparing the educational framing of 'War Horse' and 'Small Island', and reflecting on classroom and teacher training experience, I explore the demands of the current Drama & Theatre curriculum and how to ensure that learning provision is innovative, generative and empowering.

Delivered by Susie Ferguson, University of Sheffield

Inculcating a relationship of correspondence in contemporary dance training through dialogue and creative reflection

This presentation will share findings from a series of practice-as-research workshops that utilised a 'Reflexive-Dialogical' approach to teaching contemporary dance. Using verbal dialogue and creative activities such as writing, drawing and mark-making to cultivate critical reflection amongst students, the approach positions dancing and reflecting as acts that 'twist around one another' (Ingold, 2022: 246) inducing what anthropologist Tim Ingold refers to as a state of 'correspondence' (ibid). Through reflection on self and reflexive awareness of the broader socio-cultural and political structures at play within the training space, this creative approach offers dance students the agency to construct their own individual knowledge.

Evolving from my previous research in this area (2017 – 2024), which was situated in an undergraduate dance training environment, this recent phase of workshops took place in May 2024 as an extra-curricular activity for undergraduate and postgraduate Performance students at Manchester Metropolitan University. Working with this demographic of students has revealed the possibility of using the RD approach in other learning environments as a method of challenging traditional educational systems.

Delivered by Dr Rachel Rimmer-Piekarczyk, Manchester Metropolitan University

Option C - Interactive Workshop (Studio 4)

Transforming Heritage: Reimagining Chinese Calligraphy and Classical Opera Dance in Creative Eco-Somatic Practice

This workshop, derived from my doctoral research at the University of Leeds, explores how traditional Chinese calligraphy and Classical Opera Dance can be creatively transformed into eco-somatic practice. Both art forms share a cultural symbiosis rooted in their expressive connection to natural forces and offer potential for creative reinterpretation in modern movement. By transforming these heritage forms, participants will see how cultural traditions can be adapted as pedagogical tools to inspire creative learning, embodied awareness, and innovative movement approaches.

Participants will draw inspiration from calligraphic strokes and classical movement forms, reimagining these elements through Laban/Bartenieff Movement Studies into somatic movement that fosters creativity, emotional depth, ecological awareness, and overall well-being.

This workshop invites participants to engage with the traditional arts not as static historical forms but as dynamic traditions that enrich contemporary somatic practice. By creatively merging heritage with somatic awareness, we celebrate the dialogue between tradition and innovation—bridging cultural wisdom with modern creativity for both personal and collective transformation.

Delivered by Xueting Luo, University of Leeds

Option D - Interactive Workshop (Room TBC)

Guided Meditation session