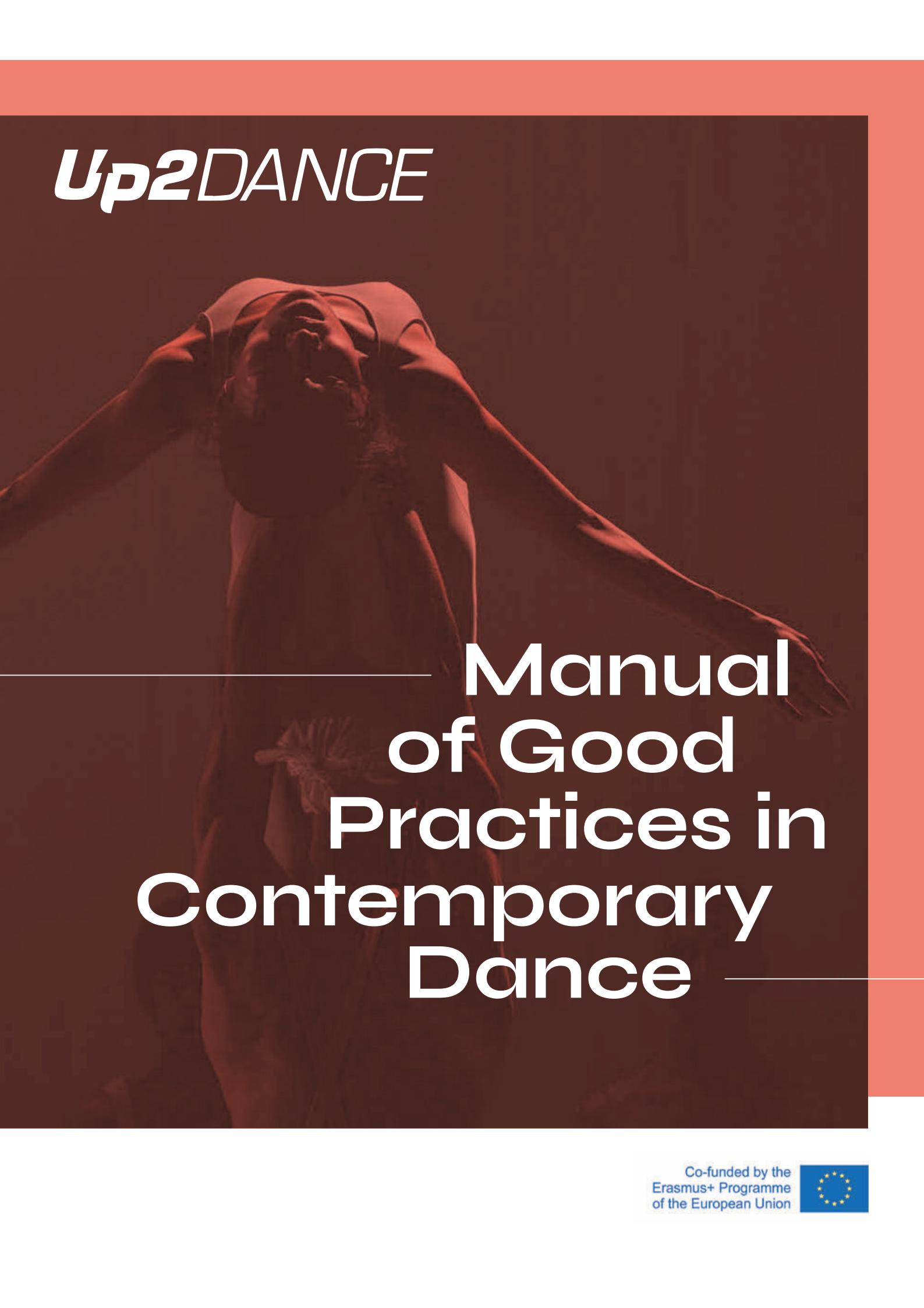


# **Up2DANCE**

A black and white photograph of a female dancer in a dynamic pose. She is wearing a dark, form-fitting leotard. Her back is arched, and her head is tucked down towards her chest. Her arms are raised and bent, with her hands near her head. The background is dark and out of focus.

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# Manual of Good Practices in Contemporary Dance

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Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



## Introduction

# Up2DANCE



photos: Andrzej Grabowski

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## Conclusion

# Introduction

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The successful creation and management of dance programs requires a lot of creativity and artistry along with careful and knowledgeable planning, implementation, and operation. Such programs encompass the association of different dance professionals who need to interrelate towards the achievement of common goals. The final result will depend on the collective involvement and competences of the different professionals implicated in the process.

The “UP2DANCE: Updating professional profiles towards contemporary dance” project aimed “to outline the key professional profiles involved in the contemporary dance industry and boost a process for the recognition and validation of their knowledge, competences and skills”. The present document is the result of the research conducted within this project between December 2019 and November 2021 with the cooperation of dance professionals from each of the partner organizations participating in the project: Balletto di Roma (Italy), Derida Dance Center/Art Link Foundation (Bulgaria), Polish Dance Theatre (Poland), Companhia de Dança de Almada (Portugal), Magenta Consultoria Projects (Spain) and ICK (Netherlands). A project that was co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union.

and educational situation for each professional role. The second phase was concerned with the development of this Manual of Good Practices. Several meetings between the partners addressed this subject. The key point was to create a common ground between all the different partner organizations and look for ways to implement all the good models shared without forgetting political and cultural differences. Furthermore, relevant professionals in each country were called to collaborate, participating in a good number of roundtables for the discussion of each of the topics presented in this document.

This Manual of Good Practices in Dance is designed to support both individual professionals and dance organizations in the management of programs and individual careers, as well as to contribute to passing awareness and understanding about the importance of developing and regulating national and European performing arts systems. For many years, little has been done to establish on a European level the need for structuring and socially supporting the very important professional roles in dance in general and in contemporary dance in particular. This document is not intended to be a definitive document, but rather contribute as a guide that brings an approach to a subject that is in deep need for further research and sustenance.

The initiative included two components: A Comparative Analysis addressing the situation of each profession in the countries of the partners involved in the project; The elaboration of a Manual of Good Practices concerning each of the professions addressed in the project. The mission started with several meetings (starting face-to-face and later regularly via skype) between all the participants. The first phase led to a Comparative Analysis document addressing the situation in each country concerning the regulation

# The role of the dancer

# 1.1

## Definition of the professional role

A contemporary dancer is someone who performs in contemporary choreographic performances or in other presentations such as site-specific performances, installations, lectures, screen dance, etc. He/she can act in the frame of dance companies or independent projects for live or on-screen presentations. The contemporary dancer is someone who develops dance and performing skills, maintains physical conditions necessary for the dance, observing an appropriate training and prepares for the participation in various types of stage, or other performance situations. The role of the dancer has evolved a lot in the last decades: the dancer is frequently called to be an active intervenor in the creation of dance performances, for which it is necessary to be aware of the whole creative process and present artistic tendencies in the performing arts and the cultural context where they are developed. This means he/she cannot stay within the studio space only; it is important to be an active ambassador of the art form, possibly a visionary, a politician, an intellectual, an athlete, a social worker, etc., in service of the art of dance.

The dancer usually rehearses and/or delivers the necessary material under the direction or in collaboration with the choreographer or choreographer assistant, rehearsal director or repetiteur, except in the cases where the dancer is also the creator and therefore can work with a rehearsal director or rehearse by himself/herself. In any case the dancer has some improvisational qualities that can be demanded by the choreographer.

When in a company or collective work, the dancer works in collaboration with dance partners, discussing with them any possible problems or possibilities, open to try different solutions, adapting to the space and harmonizing the movements.

The dancer researches opportunities and acts in order to maintain and develop performing skills and physical abilities. He/she is knowledgeable and reflective about the current scene in contemporary performance, so he/she can interpret the choreographer's intention in the light of the present aesthetics.

Concerning the figure of the contemporary dancer there may still be some uncertainty with respect to the specificities required for the profession, since in the contemporary dance field many different approaches to dance and performance techniques are possible. Despite the many different approaches to contemporary dance performance, and the constant evolving of the artistic scene, there are many common aspects that characterize the profession of the dancer, which we will address next.



photo: Andrzej Grabowski

## 1.2 Competences (knowledge, skills, and abilities)

From our study, we understand that there are not many specific national frameworks that define the competences of the contemporary dancer. In the Netherlands this area is quite developed and we could find a framework defined for dance graduates that includes different dance professional roles, and in Poland there is a national framework that refers to ballet dancers. The following is a revised adaptation of the Polish Qualifications Framework / European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the Netherlands National competencies for a BA in Dance.

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### a) Competences of the contemporary dancer in terms of creativity:

- The dancer is able to give meaning to choreographic work from a personal perspective.
- The dancer can demonstrate in his performance imaginative power, inventiveness, and individual colour.
- The dancer finds self-inspiration and is able to work with it.
- The dancer develops a personal signature in the interpretation of a dance piece.
- The dancer can place his/her work in a broader intercultural, societal, and international perspective.

photo: Gabriela Majda



**b) Competences of the contemporary dancer in terms of craftsmanship:**

- The dancer has control over the body and has a good body consciousness; he/she shows this by power, flexibility, stamina, and dynamic capacities.
- The dancer masters various dance techniques and can conciliate them in a choreographic discourse.
- The dancer must be open and versatile.
- The dancer has musical and motor coordination and memory.
- The dancer demonstrates in the practice of dance the knowledge of international cultural history, repertoire, and developments in the contemporary cultural landscape.

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**c) Competences of the contemporary dancer in terms of knowledge about the art of dance:**

- The dancer is knowledgeable and reflective about the development of the art of dance at region, nation, and world level.
- The dancer embodies what resists verbalization.
- The dancer defends artistic principles and is able to resist the status quo.
- The dancer is in command of international dance vocabulary.
- The dancer has to be aware of digital technologies used in the dance field and in theatres.

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**d) Competences of the contemporary dancer in terms of professionalization:**

- The dancer positions him/herself in the working field as a performing artist.
- The dancer takes charge of the necessary professional services to be active on a long term as a dance artist.
- The dancer is able to negotiate about organizational, financial, content related aspects of the working field with employers and other stakeholders.
- The dancer knows the reality of his profession and is reflexive about it.
- The dancer should be aware of how a theatre works, what are the relations between technical team, choreographer, director of lights and other theatre team members.
- The dancer understands the necessary steps to create a dance piece, namely through the rehearsal process with a choreographer and/or repetiteur.
- The dancer has a good visual and kinaesthetic memory to be able to perform the required choreography and deal with any critical or unexpected situation during a stage performance.



photo: Andrzej Grabowski

In a more global and complex perspective we can also recommend the ICK vision of the ideal contemporary dancer, who should:

- + work with the intuitive body, in an interspace between a virtuoso and a conceptual body, between the concrete and the imaginary body, between instinctive movement and movement controlled by the brain.
- + work with maturity of agency and multi-layered artistic sensibility.
- + be a visionary.
- + be in the process of becoming avatars.
- + become a new human being.
- + be in touch with their creative source.
- + embody what resists verbalization.
- + be a worker, athlete, intellectual, politician.
- + move boundaries.
- + defend artistic principles and at the same time defeat the status quo.
- + not repeat gestures but reinvoke the meaning of it.
- + find self-inspiration and work with it in an autodidact way.
- + consider dance techniques as a cultural knowledge.
- + be curious and never stop learning.

#### e) Competences of the contemporary dancer in terms of communication and ability to collaborate:

- 14     • The dancer maintains good verbal and non-verbal communication with choreographer / repetiteur, peer dancers and other team members.
- The dancer is able to articulate his/her artistic identity, ideas, ambitions, and qualities towards third parties inside and outside of the artistic process.
- The dancer gives and receives feedback in a constructive way.
- The dancer can work as a team member, contributing to his/her function to the realization of an artistic product.
- The dancer can stand up for his/her professional values and needs in an adequate manner.
- The dancer can act as a cultural ambassador in the promotion of the art form in the community and among institutional bodies.

### 1.3

## Education and Training

To prepare to become a professional contemporary dancer there are many possibilities in the different countries, but the situation varies a lot since contemporary dance forms are much more divulged, for instance, in northern Europe than in southern or eastern countries. Also, different approaches to contemporary dance imply different needs in terms of technical performance. From public or private dance schools to conservatories, from dance companies to independent studios, dance training is offered in many different modalities, leaving many options to the student, but also leading to some confusion concerning the best options. In some countries, like Bulgaria, for example, training for ballet artists is well defined at national level, beginning in childhood or at the latest when entering a specialized school in fifth grade, for training in the profession of "Ballet and/or Folk dancer" with acquisition of a third degree of professional qualification. The same kind of regulation does not exist in what concerns contemporary dance training where there are no public guidelines towards getting a qualification as a dancer, which is a problem for dancers in this field.<sup>17</sup>

Also in Italy, ballet training is much more developed than contemporary, and the main public institution supervising training for the profession of dancer, Accademia Nazionale di Danza, is more concerned with ballet and its specific requirements than contemporary dance training.

In Spain, like in other countries, there are several public entities and well-recognized private institutions that offer titles in the dancing arts, though most of them are not concentrated in contemporary dance forms. The same thing happens in Portugal where vocational dance education is regulated by the Ministry of Education, but not specifically addressing contemporary dance forms which is always a choice of the school.



photo: Joana Casado

In the Netherlands, the number of dance training institutions with emphasis on contemporary dance is very significant and the system is quite organized at different levels, with the fundamental contribution of dance professional associations, though the profession of the dancer is not always addressed separately from other dance professions. Still, this system appears as a good example that could be followed in other countries: The student can choose between the different existing dance schools and, after graduation, will receive a diploma issued by the educational institute. The institutes regularly undergo accreditation and evaluation procedures by the government. The NL competencies for the BA level education of a professional dancer have been defined and mentioned above. It is also possible to obtain an Europass certificate for the MBO (qualification as a "dancer" under the larger qualification framework of "artist"). The profile of skills and competencies required for this level of education contains these main points:

- Core task 1: Shows professional craftsmanship.
- Core task 2: Positions himself as a professional artist and maintains and organizes his own (net)work.
- Core task 3: Dances in a (professional) production.

This regulation is put forward by the Ministry for Education, Culture and Science, the national authority in the field of education, culture, and science. They provide accreditation and recognition of certificates, diplomas, and educational institutes /vocational education providers. The Accreditation Organization of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) is a quality assurance agency that safeguards the quality of higher education in the Netherlands and Flanders, in an expert and independent manner, and that fosters the quality culture pursued within the higher education institutions in the Netherlands and Flanders. It accredits existing and new programmes, and assesses the quality assurance of higher education institutions. There is also a "CROHO Code" given by the Central Register of Higher Education where one can look up the

accreditation status of the educational institutes that provide the education. Also, the Dutch Union for Higher Education (Vereniging Hogescholen) provides the qualification standards, meaning the national frameworks for competencies for different layers of education.

It is important to understand that all of these regulating organizations do not interfere with the independence of the different dance academies that, filling in the nationally given standards for competencies in various professions, always act in line with their own vision of dance.



photo: Andrzej Grabowski

## Professional status

Most professionals perceive that there is a lack of regulations within the dancing world and also regarding the joining of the labour market once studies are finished. Students are trained to be competitive professionals but the lack of regulations, nationally or at European level, makes it difficult for them to enter the workforce within a dance company or choreographic project. We also found there is a general lack of awareness regarding the needs of the sector and the difficulties that individuals go through in the different stages of a training course and subsequent working environment.

The main problem that arises in the performing arts is that the validation and recognition of the competencies in dancing is not well regulated. Also, the internships that should be developed within any training in dancing are difficult to carry out, and the lack of this experience makes the entering of the labour market even more difficult.

It is debatable whether it is necessary to have a title in order to become a professional dancer. Some mention that a title is not strictly needed to become a dancer and that there is quality training offered by public and private institutions that can train capable and competitive dancers. The issue arises when they step from training to actual labour insertion which is difficult and chaotic for many. This unfortunate situation is also closely related to the economic situation of possible scholarship beneficiaries. If the training is not regulated, students may not be able to benefit from the scholarship that they deserve and should be able to get.

<sup>20</sup> When trying to regulate the actual panorama it should be taken into consideration that the specific considerations of a dancing company are not the same as a regular company in other sectors. There is the need to produce a thorough analysis with a pedagogic point of view of the situation that allows people to understand who the professionals are, what they do and what their specific needs are. There is frequently a gap between the artistic branches and the formal world of the education entities. Artistic studies should be implemented into education from a very young age and they should be considered an option as valid as any other. Also, bureaucracy and administration tasks that affect the performing arts should be developed by specialists, people who are in contact with the world they are working on and have specific knowledge about the structures and dynamics of that reality.

It would be important to implement guidelines for the professional enrolment of dancers such as it already exists in NL, where a collective workers agreement (CAO Toneel en Dans 2020) developed by NAPK (Netherlands Association for Performing Arts) and the

Kunstenbond determines the guidelines for salaries and contracts for professionals in Theatre and Performing Arts in the Netherlands. It also contains brief descriptions about the knowledge, competences and skills expected from different profiles in the professional field.

In NL, not everybody can apply for a contract in a dance company. Often, background in schooling already determines whether a student is admitted to an audition. The level of technical mastery, artistic sensibility, professional maturity as well as affinity with the aesthetic and artistic paradigm of different companies eventually determine whether a dancer is being given a contract. Many layers of choice making are based on artistic and highly specialized intuitions of the choreographers.

It seems very important that clear regulation of the dance field, such as what happens in the Netherlands, is implemented in other countries and at European level, to guarantee the professional and social stability of dancers in contemporary dance, as well as possible circulation according to artistic interest. It should be noted, though, that over regulation can also have a negative impact on artistic working spirit and dedication, which are sometimes stronger in contexts where the regulations are not too rigorous, leaving more enough space to individual creativity.

## 1.5

# National and international recommendations for the profession

We would like to recommend that the entities providing dance training should always keep their students curious and interested by implementing innovative ways of training, promoting the generation of bridges and connections among the different specializations of the performing and dancing arts. It is fundamental to implement knowledge at a social and institutional level regarding the needs of professionals within the dancing world. Also, as to the academies regarding the arts it is indispensable that they focus on the future labour insertion of their students.

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We believe institutions should come together in order to reach a common goal and allow students to have a future that allows them to experience the professional dancing world establishing recognition rules both at national and European levels. Not only young people would benefit from some standardization, but professionals with a well-established career will also be able to move around freely among countries or come back to their own.

As an example, in Spain, the creation of a platform at state level that includes several autonomies and analyses the situation regarding the reality of their dancing professionals has helped the overall dancing picture in Spain to grow and create a more equal and established framework. This platform still needs to be developed but they are looking forward to creating clear goals that will help students to acquire a title that can allow them to enter the workforce in a more direct and clear way. The main goal is to standardize the titles in the dancing community so that the titles can be recognised at a national and international level, without restraining individual growth.



Les Cygnes et Les Autres by Emilio Greco | Pieter C.Scholten, photo Alwin Poiana

The possible establishment of a body of artists independent from the government could also be a great idea in order to standardise the training and titles regarding the arts. The relevance of associations within the dance world as well as the development and establishment of the artist's statute are two milestones in the establishment of regulation towards a fairer and more logical system. We have hope that the efforts that have been made by many to be heard by policy makers will bring more stability and recognition to their professions.

The intermittency of the profession brings up the issue of a steady income and the fact that the statutes need to acknowledge the inactivity periods of these professionals. The universality of the language of dancing is something that allows dancers to travel and be able to work everywhere at a global scale.

Age within the performing arts, especially for dancers is also an important topic to be addressed. People with different ages can create powerful stories and they highlight the importance of getting to know the human body through different experiences, but that is still not always taken in consideration, and only a few companies composed of older dancers prove that age is not determinant. In addition to recognizing the different professional profiles in the field of dance, it is extremely important to think about the ability of professional reorientation in the cases where dancing on stage is no longer physically possible. For example, it is important to facilitate and define how to convert a dancer into a choreographer/rehearsal director, a dance teacher or other dance related profession.

It should be noted that the development of the art is not homogeneous in all of Europe. There is a natural tendency for dancers to choose to work in regions where the state of the art is more developed or more up to date, this resulting in a big loss for the countries where there was an investment into the professional training and education without reaching the same levels of achievement. New aesthetic styles and tendencies are constantly surging in the

performing arts and it is extremely important for educational systems to keep up with the contemporary stage scene.

It will be important to develop the offer of BA Dance courses in all countries on a comparable level, for the training of well-educated dancers and to implement professionalization and eventual circulation between countries. This could be a good step towards strengthening relations between EU countries not only in what concerns dance profiles but also towards other disciplines.

Finally, it is necessary to highlight that the language of dance being so universal, it is a primordial means to connect different cultures, overcoming verbal language barriers. Dance could and should, therefore, be included in any cultural diplomacy programs, using dancers and choreographers competencies to implement inter/transcultural initiatives.

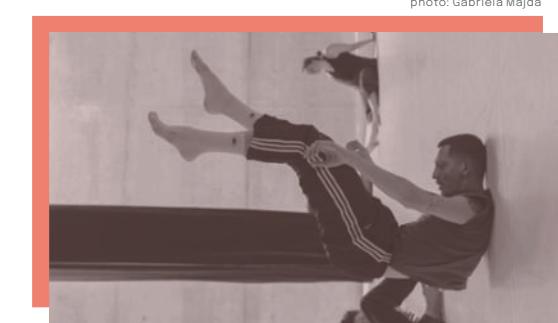
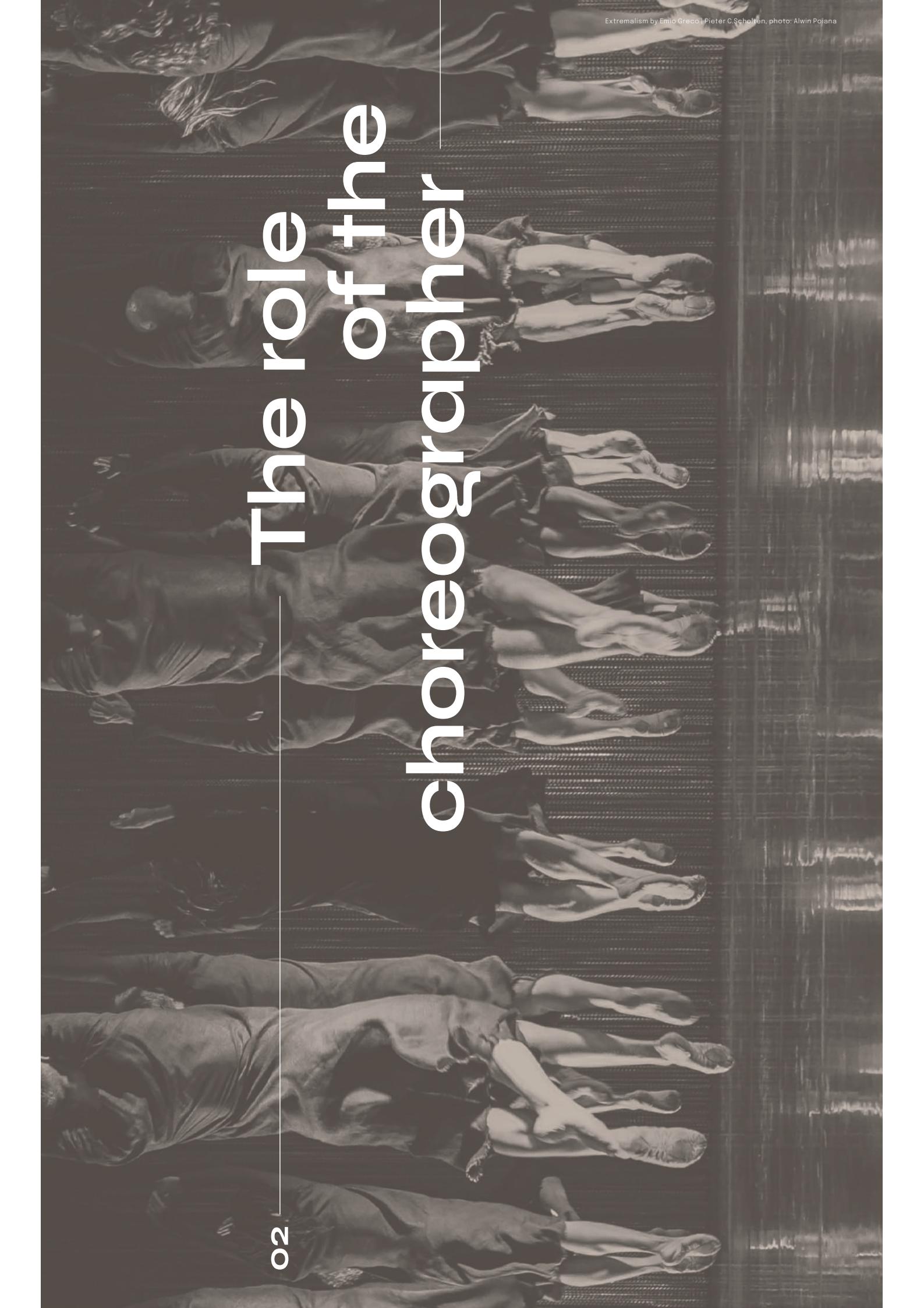


photo: Gabriela Majda



# The role of the choreographer

## 2.1 Definition of the professional role

Though the role of the choreographer is probably the best recognized in the dance area, the exact profile of the professional choreographer in contemporary dance is not very clear due to the many different approaches to contemporary dance that we face in the present.

The choreographer must be able to create a dance, either from personal initiative, being responsible for the conception of the project, or in collaboration with other artists.

Choreographers can work on their own projects, accumulating, or not, with the role of artistic director. They can participate in collective projects in collaboration with other artists, or they can work in a dance company as resident or guest choreographer, invited by the artistic director.

Professional choreographers should have experience in working with different groups of dancers from solo, to small or larger groups in dance companies.



photo: Andrzej Grabowski

## 2.2 Competences

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The choreographer profile should include knowledge and competences related to dance and to the performing arts as well as basic knowledge and competences related to project managing, and performance producing.

Choreographers should be familiar with the functioning of a theatre (ballet, opera), its structure, stage (how it is built, organized, how it is perceived by performers and by the audience), working environment, etc. They should have basic knowledge about light, props, costumes, and scenography designing. Also, it is important to be acquainted with the history of choreography, different choreography techniques, training methods (based on the knowledge of the human anatomy with psychological insight) as well as wide knowledge in culture, visual art, philosophy and reflexion towards the future, that could be used as a base for creating performance and a way of finding new contexts for it.

Choreographers should be knowledgeable about their audiences, to whom they are directing their message.



ICK, photo: Alwin Poiana

Team working, managing a group of people, communication skills and understanding the language of composers, dancers, directors who also work on the performance are also fundamental. Professional choreographers should have experience in working with different groups of dancers from solo, small groups to more than 10 dancer groups in dance companies.

Competence in preparing grant applications is needed especially for freelancers that very often have to look for financial support of their project individually.

Talent is a factor that always underlines the discussion about the choreographer's work. Talent could be described as creativity, mind openness, ability to express ideas, thoughts or narratives through dance, artistic movement as well as presenting different topics in an artistic way, using dance tools. Choreographers should express openness for artistic interpretation, improvisation and have knowledge about movement and music composition. They should know how to merge information and practice from different kinds of art (literature, music, visual art, dance).

## 2.3 Education and Training

There is a need to clarify an educational and career path for choreographers in most of the countries. Even if nowadays many choreographers are chosen based on their curriculum by presenting a portfolio, previous creations being the most important item, courses on dance studies, even if not centred exclusively in the profile of the choreographer are certainly recommended for future choreographers because it is important for this professional to have a wide knowledge about the area.

University/academic studies focused on dance frequently address the theme of choreography, but not always concentrate on the profile of the choreographer. In countries like Portugal, we have recently witnessed the introduction of master's degrees centred on the profile of the choreographer, even with focus on contemporary performance, and this seems to be an important step towards the development of the profession. Nevertheless, it is fundamental that these courses are not isolated in an academic theoretical system, they should always be aware of the developments implemented by the practitioners in the field. The dialogue between the university/academy and the professional/artistic field is fundamental for the development of new proficient and articulated choreographers

Academic studies are frequently not enough and it is very important that the future choreographer keeps an inquiring and creative attitude to always be aware of new tendencies in the artistic world.

It is difficult to finish the choreographer's education without some kind of internship in a company or the conclusion of an independent project with a professional team.



photo: Andrzej Grabowski

## 2.4

# National and international recommendations for the profession

It is important to note that artists can have a fundamental role in the development of society and the environment. If you leave the artists with their free spirit and creativity in different regions or areas of the city or other they can positively affect the environment, the community, even the urbanization. The regulating institutions should be aware of this fact and work to enable and support artists to develop their vision towards the future of their community. On the counterpart the creators and companies should be aware of their audiences and work towards meeting their needs and aspirations.

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Contemporary Dance Art still has problems of recognition by the audience and society in many European regions. The life cycle of many contemporary dance performances is frequently quite short. For more presentations there has to be an audience that has interest in dance. This may be related to the fact that there is often a lack of proper dance education in basic general schools. Dance very often is mixed with fitness or sport activities within the primary school educational programs. Preparing for watching, appreciating, and understanding dance performances is an important skill for each culture participant. Developing dance art and choreography will be possible with an educated society that is prepared to receive what theatres, opera, ballet, choreographers, dancers offer them. Therefore, educational programs for general schools should be wider in basic art dance education.

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photo: Matteo Carratoni

The role of the choreographer, like all professions related to the arts, has to be perceived as a real profession, which, as well as other professions, guarantees financial independence. Building structures for presenting performances and developing skills will help in achieving this goal.

Choreographers, especially those not permanently related to an institution, need space for creating, working, and presenting their performances. Therefore, they need structures that allow them to present the effects of their creativity. The creation of art spaces that can serve as relevant infrastructures for performance creation and presentation may be extremely important to facilitate the work of independent choreographers or small companies. Such spaces can include creation and audience development activities or other activities like performance presentation, artistic residencies, educational workshops, dancer training, coaching, research in the arts field or community work. A dream come true for many choreographers would be the creation of production houses with technical infrastructure and staff (producers and managers, sound engineers, lighting directors, costume designers) that also bring competencies and experience in performance production and fundraising and could help young choreographers in creating their pieces.

Grant opportunities for choreographers are still insufficient in many regions. Long term grants that give choreographers the possibility to develop their artistic career in a coherent and sustainable way are desired to be included in culture support programs. Also, it is fundamental to assure social security to all professionals. Nowadays, especially those who work on a freelance basis, are frequently left out of their national security system. It is fundamental that their work is recognised nationally, and also when they work in a different European country.

Networks for the support of the circulation of productions and artistic exchange are very important both on national and European levels. They should be open to institutional theatres as

well as companies, independent artists, and creative producers. They can also work on the documentation of creative processes, which is important to articulate dance values from within the art practice. These networks could also work towards stimulating the creation of more and new audiences.

This type of organizations, as well as professional associations, which are active in the sector at national and at European levels, can give concrete directions for the institutions responsible for regulating the system.

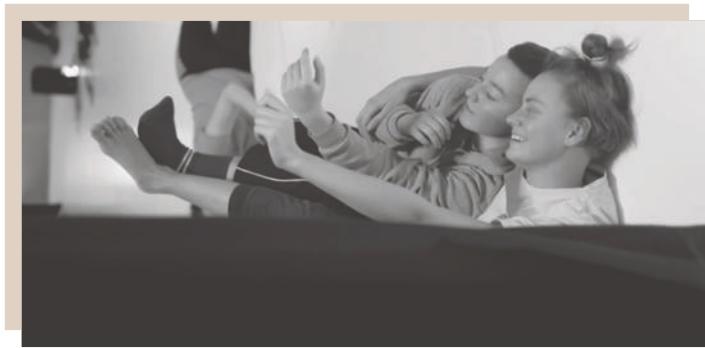


photo: Gabriela Majda



# The role of the vocational dance teacher

## 3.1 Definition of the professional role

The profession of Dance Teacher can be developed in many different contexts, directed to a variety of populations and goals. In any case, the role involves using dance as a learning tool and /or a main goal. We can find two main paths for dance teachers: One who teaches dance in general in educational environments, and the other concerned with training professional dancers.

A dance teacher must be open to constantly learning. He/she has to be creative, perceptive, focused on the students. Dance teacher must have knowledge about human anatomy, motor skills and psychological insight. This is a profession that needs pedagogical predisposition and knowledge.

<sup>38</sup> The dance teacher involved in vocational education with the aim of training professional dancers must have a deep knowledge about dance practice, and should be a former dancer familiar to performing on stage, to be able to pass that experience and explain how a movement should be made and why.



photo: Gabriela Majda

## 3.2 Competences

<sup>39</sup> From the different contributions during this research, a lot of discussion came out about the better ways of teaching dance and the most important competencies needed to be a good dance teacher. Since there are quite different possible approaches to dance and performance technique, the approaches to teaching and training also vary.

Finally, we seemed to come to a consensus that every dance teacher, in any type of dance, must be:

- A creative, reflective, practitioner, cultivating the many ways we can learn through experience.
- A dance professional using sources from diverse contexts and giving form to his/her artistic vision through art concepts, movement materials and choreographies.
- Someone who follows personalized (and customizable) models for the training of performers.



photo: Andrzej Grabowski

- Providing dancers with a structure that reinforces their neuromuscular response and establish important key concepts concerning a panoramic view of the training integrating knowledge from different areas: Technical, Physical, Psychological, Biological, Cultural, Artistic, Choreographic.

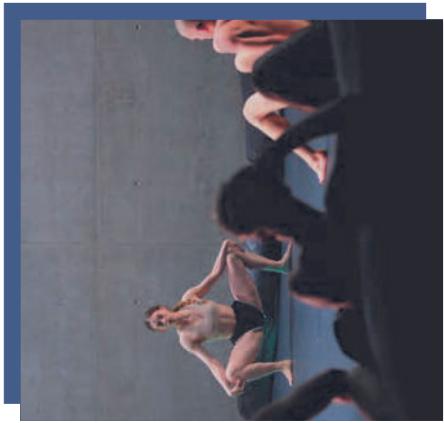
- Someone who adequately handles a broad scale of dance knowledge, technical abilities, and theatrical means, and uses the elements of dance in a creative way.
- Someone who uses his/her knowledge as a dancer to pass it on to the students, using appropriate teaching methodologies and promoting a good atmosphere in class.

- Someone with music knowledge and understanding of the interaction of movement and choreography with sound and rhythm.
- Someone who prepares students to be effective when faced with new situations and unexpected events, able to adapt to the dizzying pace of the world in which we live today.

- Bearer of an intellectual mastery of dance concepts and vocabulary.

- Someone who clearly defines discipline, based on love rather than rigidity, being tolerant, while maintaining firmness.
- Someone with the ability to understand when and why something is not working successfully.
- Someone who “opens doors”, encouraging the curiosity and will to learn of the students.
- Able to plan a curricular program according to the objectives and the characteristics of the students.

- Someone who has, and transmits the passion for dance to inspire students to give their maximum, respecting each one's personality and capacities.
- Someone who acts publicly with self-control, respect, and communication skills.
- Able to motivate students and with ability to encourage.
- Able to use new technologies and take advantage of complementary techniques.
- Knowledgeable of how to critically analyse movement and the quality of dance in relation to its intrinsic values.
- Knowledgeable about the experience of being on stage and able to transmit it.
- Able to permanently understand what is happening in the dance field and society and incorporate this into the teaching.



### 3.3 Education and Training

In most countries, there are several public entities as well as well recognized private institutions that offer titles in the dancing arts, with a particular focus on dance pedagogy.

In the dance area the profession of teacher is the most regulated in all of the countries we approached. Dance teacher is a profession that is related not only to the responsibility for future dancers, and their training but also deals with the students' physical and psychological health. This is recognized by most regulators, and educational institutions that pay special attention to this profession.

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At university level the goals and competencies necessary regarding the role of the dance teacher have been the subject to a good amount of research and inclusion in the academic curricula. These programs are normally subject to independent evaluation concerning curricula, educational staff, professional outcomes, and premises and equipment, which guarantees minimum quality. In some regions, the offer by different schools gives the students the possibility of choosing the approach to dance of their preference.



Blasphemy Rhapsody | ICK, photo: Alwin Poiana

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## 3.4

# National and international recommendations for the profession

The EQF is a learning framework that covers all types of qualifications ranging from those acquired at the end of compulsory education (Level 1) to the highest qualifications such as Doctorate (Level 8). There is no framework regarding the dancing world in many of our countries, so each academy or institution that offers dancing should have an EQF European framework that would guide the education of dance teachers. In Spain, for example, the 4 years of basic dance training have already been regulated and this is a first step towards the regulation of the professional future in this area. After the basic training students usually specialize in a specific dancing area or they decide to leave the country searching for a more well-established training system but risking the fact that their achievements may not be recognized once they are back in their country.

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The EQF levels system can contribute to clarify the current situation of the dancing and performing arts worlds, but it needs to be established internationally, assuring students that they will be recognized and their skills will be acknowledged. It is very important that both students and teachers have the opportunity to be involved in national and international exchange of knowledge and experience in the dance field. Visiting different schools, knowing what the challenges of students and teachers in other schools are, and other countries, how they work, how they understand movement, what kind of methodology they use is very important. This kind of interaction contributes to the development and progress in the profession and contributes to the insertion in the international dance community.

Besides these fundamental structural recommendations for the development of the profession, many different aspects should be taken in consideration, such as:

- Students in dance schools training to become vocational dance teachers should be able to have internships in a professional structure.  
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- The evolution of the arts and knowledge about performance indicate that it is fundamental to encourage and facilitate lifelong learning for dance teachers.
- Structural funding combined with offering opportunities of time and space to do research by and for dance teachers is fundamental.
- National and international research on dance and dancers, usually developed in academic institutions should be better communicated with the professional dance world. The art field could be more supported by that kind of research, but the professional dance field usually does not have access to that kind of research. There is a kind of isolation of different fields of knowledge which is prejudicial to the art. Creating an ecology of knowledge practices, an active living bridging between different fields in the professional field and academia, organizing crossovers between institutions and organizations would be very important.
- Forming associations, networks and/or agencies that mobilize the sector and strengthen the community towards the governmental and political structures, yet maintain and even give more emphasis to individual differences is fundamental to be developed at regional, national, and European level.

# The role of the rehearsal director / répétiteur

## 4.1 Definition of the professional role

Concerning the professions related to the management and running of rehearsals, we found out there is no consensus in relation to the use of the term or to the way different tasks are assumed in different companies. The same functions may be designated to the rehearsal director or to the répétiteur and they may sometimes be overlapping and related to those of choreographer assistant and ballet master. In any case, it is important to work towards the recognition of the roles as very important professions in the presentation of dance performances. The quality of every dance performance depends on the work developed during rehearsals, which indicates the importance of the person who is in charge of them. Nevertheless, outside the companies' circle, the role is very much undervalued, when compared, for instance with those of the dancer or the choreographer. And since the roles are usually not well defined, there are no training courses and there is little literature about the subject. So, it is still necessary to:

- Characterize the professional profiles.
- Define fundamental knowledge, techniques, and skills for practicing the profession.
- Develop training possibilities for the role.
- Evaluate difficulties in the practice of the répétiteur/rehearsal director.

The functions related with organizing and keeping the dancers prepared, supporting them, as well as organizing and running rehearsals are distributed in different manners according to the characteristics of the company or project. Required competencies depend on whether it is a repertoire company, an author's company, a small or large independent project or a commissioned work. In many cases, particularly in small contemporary dance

companies, the role does not exist independently and all the functions are assumed by the choreographer, eventually with the help of a designated dancer, more knowledgeable about a particular piece. Nevertheless, it is important to identify all of these functions related to the profile. We present a tentative differentiation between rehearsal director, choreographer assistant, and répétiteur, though it is known that all of these roles are not exactly the same in different companies and competences sometimes overlap.

photo: Andrzej Grabowski



Rehearsal directors work for companies and are channelling, maintaining, and organizing rehearsals. They are in charge of maintaining the creative process. Usually, they work full time in a company or are assigned for a specific project, and are in charge of planning, scheduling, and organizing rehearsals, with the purpose of maintaining the repertoire of many different artistic signatures, as well as preparing the dancers for the programmed performances. In many cases the rehearsal director also assumes functions of a répétiteur.

Choreographer assistants are mostly experts in one choreographic signature. They are often invited to different companies to set pieces. They can be seen as "oracles" of the choreographers. They often work in collaboration with peer professionals from the company on which the piece is being set. Also, the assistant can work with the choreographer during the creation of the piece,

taking notes about the specificities of each dancer's interpretation and necessary improvements, so that, after the choreographer has left, or cannot be present, he/she can continue with the rehearsals. The assistant choreographer is also very helpful when the choreographer is also dancing in the piece, with a need for an external eye.

Repetiteurs work for companies and are responsible for transmitting choreography to the dancers. A repetiteur is someone in charge of maintaining the company's repertoire, along with the rehearsal director, and in charge of leading rehearsals, helping dancers with learning roles and guarding and preserving the technical and artistic quality of the dance. In many cases (mostly in classical companies), these functions are assumed by the ballet master, and, in other cases the repetiteur also assumes functions of rehearsal director.

Though in most countries the professions specifically related to running dance rehearsals are not recognized or registered for social or financial purposes, in the Netherlands, the function of the repetiteur/ballet master is defined in the CAO (collective workers agreement) as being under the direction of an artistic director, the goal being to transmit existing choreographies to dancers. The document includes a description of the corresponding result areas and criteria, as well as the following core activities expected from the professional:

**b) Accompanying dancers during performances/tours:**

- Giving training classes during (international) tours.
- Giving instructions to the dancers in relation to artistic and dance technical execution and choreographies during performances/tours.

**c) Selection of dancers casted for the performance:**

- Contributing to the selection of dancers during auditions.
- Advising choreographers/artistic directors on casting of dancers.
- Setting up (daily) work and rehearsal schedules in dialogue with the choreographer/artistic director.
- Aligning schedules within the organization and taking care of the communication towards the dancers.

**d) View on developments in the field/discipline:**

- Maintaining developments in own discipline.
- Discussing new developments with the direction/choreographers.

**a) Contribution to the development of choreography and artistic policy:**

- Rehearsing existing choreographies/repertoire in dialogue with the artistic director.
  - Assisting choreographers during the creation process of new choreographies.
  - Hiring dance teachers for training, informing them on choreography and artistic policy.
- This description is, nevertheless, quite debatable, since it seems to be one-directional, focused more on transmitting from the direction to the dancers, whereas we believe it should be more like a bridge between the company and the dancers and vice-versa. Also, contemporary dance is open to different approaches and, in many cases the role is not standard, or does not exist independently.

## 4.2 Competences

Since there is no consensus on the designation of the professional responsible for the rehearsals, we propose a cast of the competences necessary for the role of the rehearsal director and/or repetiteur.

### a) When rehearsing existing choreographies/repertoire:

- The professional has artistic knowledge and sensitivity to understand the piece and each dancer's role in it. The professional has technical knowledge and communication skills to transmit the dance in terms of concept, intention, and movement skills.
- The professional has technical knowledge and communication skills to communicate the dancer's needs and or ideas to the choreographer and or director.
- The professional can work from memory, documentation/ (an)notation, or video analysis of the original piece to interpret the intention of the creator, scrutinize what has changed over time due to different interpretations by dancers, and adjustments made by the choreographer.
- The professional has a "sharp eye" that allows the detection of any fails or mistakes in the dancers' performance and is able to work directly with him/her towards achieving the best performance.

### b) When assisting choreographers during the creation process of new work:

- The professional is able to embody the artistic vision of the choreographer.
- The professional is able to understand the dancers' needs and resources.



photo: Andrzej Grabowski

- The professional is able to give helpful input towards the creation of the piece.
- The professional is able to act as liaison between the interpreter (the dancer) and the choreographic work (the creator-choreographer).

**c) When preparing for the maintenance of different dance pieces:**

- The professional supports the dancers and guarantees regular training that prepares and sustains them throughout their working days.
- The professional masters the setting up daily or regular work and rehearsal schedules in dialogue with the dancers, choreographer and/or artistic director.
- The professional is able to embody the full experience of a choreography and transmit and maintain the sense of inspiration that transcends the mere execution of the movement materials.

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**d) When accompanying dancers during performances/ tours:**

- The professional is able to guarantee the proper training and warm up for the dancers before rehearsals and performances.
- The professional can work with the dancers on focusing on the particularities of each stage.
- The professional has knowledge of stage design, light design, light cues, musical cues, technical demands and is able to interact with the stage manager for the performance.

**e) During the whole work process:**

- The professional has a deep knowledge and experience of what it is to be a dancer, understanding the difficulties of interpreters/dancers.
- The professional has a deep knowledge and experience of working with different choreographers/choreographic languages.
- The professional has a notion of the particular needs of each person in the team.
  - The professional has good leadership skills.
  - The professional understands the complexity of contemporary choreographic work and is open to different working methods, aesthetic, and technical ideals.
- The professional deals with the dancers' sensitivities and is able to monitor and handle the pressure levels in the rehearsal room.
- The professional is able to bring a sense of motivation to the group, creating trust, and keeping the dancers stimulated and inspired to keep rehearsing and creating, aiming towards the best quality standard.
- The professional can manage the inner politics of a company, managing schedules, balancing the number of hours needed for the work with understanding how the company works and what pressures they are under, not making unreasonable demands.
- The professional can conciliate the interests of the company and those of the choreographer(s) and dancers, making sure that contractual agreements are followed.

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- + stimulates and cultivates a working climate in which the start of a rehearsal is the dancer's initiative.
- + proposes and indicates solutions.
- + stimulates the initiative of each individual and the group as a whole.

Furthermore, we would like to present ICK Amsterdam's vision about their ideals with regard to the role, which can also inform the definition of competences. In this organization it is considered that the ideal rehearsal director...

- + has the capacity to revive and to refresh energy, to make changes, to tilt the situation. Is able to adapt to any new situation and to the energy of people.
- + avoids replication of formats or working from preconceived ideas. Cultivates a spirit of re-enactment, recreation and searching.
- + needs to have an understanding of and the ability to work with, and cultivate the intuitive body through searching for it, on many levels simultaneously.
- + can enter a creative process as an outside eye, without much knowledge to give a fresh perspective (linked to the power of vulnerability).
- + engages regularly in reflective processes with the dancers (after working days or performances).
- + gives confidence to the dancers and is sensible towards shifting positions, context, and situations.
- + activates the dancer's agency by not taking all the responsibility and leaving the dancers in a rather passive mode.



photo: Gabriela Majda

**4.4**

## National and international recommendations for the profession

In repertoire companies, either classic or contemporary, the role of rehearsal director / répétiteur is inevitable due to the type of company itself. In an author's company it may seem dispensable, but the role is also justifiable due to the need to assist the choreographer and to maintain a repertoire, composed of previous works, while the choreographer works on upcoming creations.

It is important that a role with so much responsibility for maintaining the quality of all dance performances gets more recognition than what presently exists. It is recommended that this profile is included in dance programs, and the approach to the many functions related to managing and running rehearsals subject to more research and further educational actions.



photo: Joana Casado

## **4.3** Education and Training

We have found no education courses dedicated to the rehearsal roles and among the many dance degrees already existing in Europe very few seem to pay special attention to this function which is frequently forgotten in the definition of dance profiles.

Lack of education possibilities for rehearsal directors is felt in combination with the need for re-education of dancers that might consider reconverting to a related role.



photo: Kirk Donaldson

# Dance Management

## 5.1 Specificities of Dance Management

Dance Management is a specific area of Arts Management that needs a deep involvement in the specificity of dance in its cultural, artistic, social and educational approaches.

The Up2Dance project was conceived and partly developed by art managers who are deeply interested in creating and improving the appropriate conditions for dance workers to develop their work. For the dance artist, the management professional is fundamental at all levels of the dance intervention – creation, production, communication, and social involvement.

This project came in a moment when the cards changed on the table, in the sense that the Covid-19 pandemic affected the work in many instances and it is not sure yet how much that will become structural in our companies. But this is also a time where the vulnerability of art professionals was disclosed and the stability of the organisations was challenged, bringing out important issues that are very important to address.



photo: Andrzej Grabowski

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5.2

## The example of the Polish Dance Theatre (PDT)s

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Polish Dance Theatre (PDT) was founded in 1973, it is professional and autonomic collective, its countenance evolved from the ballet-shaped spectacle forms to contemporary genres: dance theatre, characterized by crossing over genres, as well as technical and stylistic borders, liberating itself from traditional methods of expression, leaning toward interdisciplinarity, pursuing new theatre spaces and improvisation-based process of creation.

PDT's program for 2021-2025 is designed as a natural history that gives a pro-ecological and technological artistic concept for substantive activities. It also brings an evolutionary proposal in which the new chapter in art opens through dance theatre tools.

Polish Dance Theatre is supported by the local government (Greater Poland Voivodship). Other financial resources, the PDT is gaining from operational programs of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, Music and Dance Institute and National Cultural Centre. A part of the PDT budget is the theatre income from performances of its repertoire.

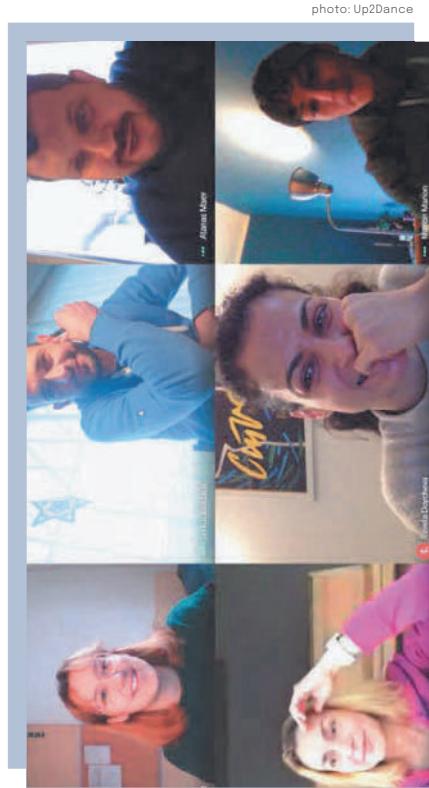


photo: Up2Dance

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PDT has 41 employees. The Artists Team is the most numerous with 16 dancers full-time and dancers on resident (1-2 persons). They create a group of the most recognizable and important representatives of dance theatre professionals on the cultural map of Poland. The Artistic Team is run by the Artistic Coordinator who manage the Artistic Team and plan the work schedule for each week in agreement with the PDT's Director. Assistant Choreographer is chosen from the Artistic Team each time by Choreographer engaged to create the performance.

The Artistic Team takes part in all performances in the PDT repertoire and choreographic movies produced by PDT. Dancers are also responsible for organizing workshops for the audience (young and adults). They use their creativity in different projects including those focused on important social issues like inclusive societies or gender equality. The Curatorial Department is run by the Manager - and Program Coordinator and consists of 1 Manager, 2 Multimedia Specialists and 1 PR Manager. Managers are responsible for preparing events and performance tours during artistic season, applications for grants, plan projects (including projects related to preparing premiere performance), budgets and expenses related to them, and/or settle projects financed through EU's programs. Managers also search for new institutional partners from Poland and abroad. PR Specialist is responsible for promotion via social media, contact with press and preparing texts for promotion materials. Multimedia specialist is responsible for a visual aspect of the promotion materials.

The Production Department, which will be expanded in the future, is now represented by 1 person, the Producer. Audience service (1 person) is under Producer supervision. The Production team consists of producer, technical team, choreographer (invited by theatre or from PDT) and director (usually invited by theatre). Six professionals work in the Technical Team (including Costume and Props Assistant, Accompanist, Sound Engineer and Light Engineer). The technical team is run by the technical coordinator. The management is headed by a Director (Iwona Pasińska) and Vice Director

(Adriana Mikolajczak). Administration includes HR, Archive and Financial Department (3 persons) and Building Administrator.

Artistic production is directly related to PDT's program created for each year. Program is designed by the theatre director and has to be approved by the local government (Greater Poland Voivodship) who is financing the theatre.

Production period (for dance creation): approx. 2 months.

A PR specialist is responsible for promotion (website, social media, newsletter) and public relations. She is supported by the Curatorial Department (Managers). Marketing Strategy (all promotion activities) must be accepted by PDT's Director. Promotional materials are created by specialists from the Curatorial Department or they are outsourced.

New stage and studio have been officially opened for the audience in April 2021. New stage is a new opportunity for audience development. Until March 31st, 2021, research (through on-line questionnaire) was conducted to better understand existing and potential audiences.



photo: Andrzej Grabowski

## 5.3 ————— The example of Balletto di Roma (BdR)

Before the pandemic Balletto di Roma had 45 people working, including not only the artistic and the training program but also the administration.

### a) The Institution and its Activities

In the words of Luciano Carratoni, Managing Director of Balletto di Roma “Our company was founded as a School and Company in 1960 during the Olympics in Rome. Balletto di Roma is one of the oldest schools in the country. I have been working for the school since 2000, so I have acquired a great deal of knowledge and experience over time on how the company is organized and how to make it work in the best way. During this time, I was able to do the unimaginable for this company, I was able to bring up the number of spectators of performances.”<sup>66</sup>

From 2000 to 2012 there was a great increment and then there was a slowing down, artistically, mostly because of the research that was made towards the development to reach out to an international market. In the last ten years, artistically speaking, we have opened quite a bit, starting off with new artistic directors Roberto Casarotto and then with Francesca Magnini. We tried to make the necessary changes to face the changing world.”<sup>67</sup>

### b) Internal Staff - Artistic and Technical

“The two basic aspects of the school are the training and production. The school is actually a very important aspect because it sustains the economy. The production can live thanks to what



photo: Balletto di Roma

we are able to do with the training. We are investing a lot in the training program even in terms of increasing the spaces in which we conduct our activities. We built two very large schools which are able to have between 300 - 350 students per year. We now have the most students in all of Italy. This is a very important aspect, because most of these students transferred from other schools and came to us because they are planning to dedicate themselves to dance. With the first lock-down we had to invert the importance of the two aspects from training to production. I immediately noticed the need for change and advised the staff to find a way, to find a solution to transfer the training program, to make it online. Not only were we able to keep the number of students, but we also added some. I think we succeeded because of all the technological investments that we made, because each studio is equipped with everything we need to communicate with students. Every week we have meetings to verify how the didactic plan is going. We are trying to present new techniques and new notions to all on a regular basis.

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In parallel to this experience, production also saw the same kind of activity. After the first suspension, in Autumn we resumed again with a new piece by Andrea Costanzo Martini in remote but with the dancers present. What we have been seeing is that the codes have been totally mixed up - between production and training, everything has changed. We saw that we needed to produce new professional figures to be able to cover what we wanted to do. Totally different, but we made this bet that we would be able to relaunch dance in a new way with these new tools and professional figures. I try to use this year as a year of opportunity to create new models of production and training. The idea is to look at what we've been using and create a new vision, a new role, to be able to give a new future to what we've currently been using. It is really all improvisation and experimentation. We are uniting forces in all phases between production and training and we need more people to be able to sustain, to complete this new process. There is a new vocabulary, new knowledge that is being developed right now. So, this really means there is an increase of cost, an increase of

budget and the biggest problem that we would need to resolve, we are going to need more professionals, so we can create together what is necessary to send us to the future. The technical problems we have today, tomorrow will be different. Basically, I would like our project to be such that we could widen the horizon of dance, reach out to wider audiences. We have a challenge online because our youth is being trained online. This confrontation that we are facing right now, we need to balance it. We can't assume that they are not going to use online resources to grow and to learn. There must be a balance between what is online and what is physical. The pandemic accelerated our possibility to foresee the future. No one knows what it will be, but we have to be prepared, and we have to be able to face the future as we did before. We have to reinvent the past and recreate the present, to be prepared for this future."

### c) BdR Staff

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Balletto di Roma is headed by the Managing Director and the Artistic Director of the Company. The staff is divided in different programs and departments:

- BDR School has one Artistic Director of the school, one didactic coordinator, 13 teachers of ballet and contemporary dance and 2 accompanying pianists.
- The BDR Professional Start-Up course (CAP), along with the company's activities, is headed by the artistic direction of the company, with 1 deputy director of the company, 1 maître de ballet and assistant and didactic coordinator.
- BDR Company (Artistic Production) is headed by the artistic direction of the company, with 1 deputy director of the company, 1 maître de ballet and assistant to the choreographers, a didactic coordinator, 1 accompanying pianist, 12/14 dancers and 3 resident choreographers

- General organization includes 1 production secretariat, 1 project and activity manager, 1 promotion and sale agent, 1 school secretariat, 1 digital content and communication manager and 1 web programmer
- The technical team includes 1 light designer, 1 stage manager, 1 costume manager, 1 technical support structure and warehouse

Other collaborators include 2 international project consultants, 1 MIC project consultants, 1 communication consultancy, 2 people in the legal department, 2 administrative and tax offices, 2 accounting officers and external fixed consultancy.

#### d) Facilities

The headquarters of Balletto di Roma are made of 8 dance spaces available for training and production, all equipped with technical instruments, useful for both face-to-face and online modalities. In these spaces, two strategic reference assets of Balletto di Roma (Training and Production) are usually developed.

- Is it possible to continue to give the same formative notions conceived in presence working on distance?
- What professional figures will be needed in the next future to achieve a stable system of training increasingly widespread on a large global scale?
- What kind of “independent” (autonomous) training does the web generate in the habits of new generations?
- How to manage the possible conflict between the training given by teachers and/or Masters in presence, in specific contexts and the “free” one found on the net?
- What advantages or disadvantages has the web brought to a larger idea of physicality (also regarding the creative process)?

Establishing new educational values means expanding the possibility of knowledge for future protagonists of the contemporary scene in the dance field and beyond.  
In this sense, perhaps it is necessary to rethink whether it is still necessary:

- to give the same training contents to those who in the last 20 years have been “contaminated” by the web offer and have been trained independently
- or review what new training codes we must expand and make available to new generations to acquire new knowledge in “artisanal” sectors such as those we represent.

Still, we are confident that some failure to update current professional skills can be, in this historical moment, overcome by new visions.

- Which training offer should we modify or which professional figures do we need to implement with respect to this new “on distance” experience in a wide sense?

## 5.4 The example of ICK Amsterdam

ICK (International Choreographic Arts Centre) is an Amsterdam-based organization dedicated to contemporary dance, led by Emio Greco and Pieter C. Scholten. With over 25 years of performances, research, and education activities, their mission is expanding the ICK centre of excellence to inspire people through the intuitive dancing body.

ICK works on the intuitive body from three perspectives: dance, creation, and research. These three perspectives are the basis for the work, the integrated approach, and the organization. ICK believes that the expressiveness of the moving body can "respond" to the complexity of society and that dance can play a role in social discourse. That is why they dream of a society in which dance has a natural place as an inspiring cultural form.

In order to achieve this, they disseminate movement and dance widely, through artistic production in a successful ICK Company, talent development in a fruitful ICK Artist Space and knowledge sharing in an innovative, vibrant ICK Academy. This ensures a sustainable and meaningful dance offer in Amsterdam, through theatres and stages in the country, and across borders.

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Disappearance by Emio Greco | Pieter C.Scholten, photo: Alwin Poiana

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### a) Key Activities

The main activities of ICK organization are:

- development of choreography and dance performances.
- production, execution, and support of performances.
- co-productions and partnerships.

- development of makers, dancers, audience.
- innovation, education, research.
- events including festivals (ICK FEST).
- workshops, educational toolkits, teacher trainings, repertoire.
- studios/facilities for development.

### c) Brand Identity

Based on the brand archetypes explorer and outlaw, the recognizability of ICK and its labels is made more explicit in form, photography, and tone. More Tarantinoesque, more challenging, more

<sup>74</sup> This happens on stage level, where dancers are stimulated to be themselves, and therefore slightly different from each other, and when various disciplines accompany and question each other. This also happens through synchronization on the organizational level, which has led to a characteristic, pluralistic and lean team of staff and many collaborations and partnerships. Through an evolving spiral that extends from dance practice, to research in body/spoken words/ written text, to transmission through education and talent development and from there back again to a new level of deepened and enriched dance practice, ICK Company, Artist Space and Academy grow together towards the future through mutual reinforcement.

### d) Staff

- Management: Pieter C. Scholten (Founder, General director, active in the studio as well as in the office), Emio Greco (Founder, director – mostly active in the studio);
- Artistic & research team: Suzy Blok (head of Artist Space)\*, Jesse Vanhoeck (dramaturge, sharing her knowledge in the Artist Space), Suzan Tunca (Head of ICK Academy and dance researcher, also was a dancer within the company), Marley Braaf (artistic coordinator Academy and head education), Dereck Cayla (artistic assistant/rehearsal director) Clifford Portier (head of Artistry, costume design, responsible for the look of ICK – visuals, posters, flyers), Mai-Marie Choon Dijksma (assistant costume);
- Dance company (2021: Victor Swank, Beatrice Cardamato, Denis Bruno, Maria Ribas, Hiroki Nunogaki, Sixtine Biron)
- Youth ensemble ICK Next (interns from national and international BA Dance education 2021: Louis Dobbs, Dennis van Herpen, Laurie Pascual, Marie Coutourier, Doreja Atkociunas, Claudio Murabito)
- Production: Chantal Mooij (responsible for the production from the dance company and with Gina for the Artist Spaces makers) Gina Broeders (responsible for the

\*Since 2021 ICK has integrated a production house (before Dansmakers Amsterdam) as one of the three pillars of the institute: Company, Artist Space and Academy. ICK has invested in talent development for dance artists since 2009 on a small scale. Since 2021 ICK has been given the responsibility by the municipality to also integrate the function of a production house. This implies integrating the ICK vision with talent development strategies and creating an even stronger and sustainable network within Amsterdam and also internationally.

- production of the ICK Academy education and research activities), Angelina van Groezen (interim production manager)
- Commercial & Community Affairs: Jaimy Stregels (marketing and communication, website, communication with theaters), Sohrab Bayat (Community manager curates a connections with your target groups and with the neighborhood)
- Business management & Financial administration: Pieter Haasnoot (money streams in the Netherlands and marketing advice), Harmen Spreen (Controller), Annet Huizing (fundraiser)
- Technical department: Henk Danner (light design), Maarten Heijdra (technical coordinator), Hugo van der Veldt (first inspector)

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- Playlist - with proof of the number of visitors or attendees for our fund-givers.
- Agenda - all major activities that are of importance for colleagues to know are noted in the agenda for everybody to see; overview of Studio use is also noted in the studio agenda.

### **g) Year Schedule**

- The year schedule is structured in three columns, one for each pillar in the organization.
- Management of schedules in advance for the upcoming four years. The production department follows up defining final dates in this planning.

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### **e) Artistic Production**

A producer at ICK works on enabling the practical aspects that are necessary for the synchronization of the various activities within the organization such as for example scheduling, administration and project management. A producer needs to seek for new possibilities while at the same time keeping a sharp eye on concrete realizability. The producer focuses on the why, what, who, when, where and on the budget.

### **h) Playlist**

- Important data description, for example:  
Place, date, time etc.  
Production name  
Premiere or regular performance  
Capacity theatre visitors  
Amount of audience

### **f) Planning**

- All Company, Artist Space and Academy activities are being noted in the:
- Year schedule - Overview for management and production.  
Planning 4 years in advance.

The following project management tools coordinated by the production team allowed ICK to structure the collective workflow. Everybody can see clearly where they are in the process and what still needs to be done.

- SharePoint - For storing communication, content, and production documents - cloud storage, 24/7 accessible, real time adaptable
- Microsoft Teams - To create a clear process overview of projects with current updates - with to do list integrated - Assign tasks to team members
- Outlook mail /agenda

#### j) Marketing Audiences

ICK aims to reach diverse audiences, ranging from art lovers to people going out, occasional visitors, local residents, professionals from the (dance) field, and expats, to target groups from the academy such as primary and secondary school students and their teachers, academics, social institutions, and students from dance academies.

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Not everything has to be for everyone. But with its entire operation, ICK reaches a wide variety of people in Amsterdam: from young to old, from North to New-West, from the canals to the community centre in the suburbs. Choices for the target group are made based on the content (content or activity/program).

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#### k) Communication Strategy

A dance enthusiast needs to be inspired differently than a pupil or a professional. In order to get all target groups more involved in the brand, the marketing communication is sharpened on three levels:

- Strengthen brand identity from 'Rücksichtslos Idealisme': recognizable and memorable identity both on a corporate and production and activity level
- Build communities and segmented online channels from

- ICK's three pillars: ICK Dance Amsterdam, ICK Artist Space and ICK Academy
  - Activating audience groups from within the ICK program offerings

#### l) Process Management

For brand strategy and communication execution, there is periodic cooperation with marketing experts. The knowledge obtained is implemented in ICK's own processes and methods and thus continued internally.

The community approach also keeps communication - despite its versatility - manageable for the relatively small marketing and communication team (3 people). New content such as magazines and audio-visual products serve to enrich and layer the audience experience.

#### m) Community Manager

A dedicated community manager has been active since 2017 to strengthen the bond between ICK and local and national audiences. Through his presence and individual attention, visitors are engaged to develop personal connection with ICK.

The community manager explores connections with theatres and their environments in the context of national touring and initiates projects with a variety of audiences, from urban area residents to local schools.

- ICK aims toward organizing introductory afternoons with workshops and, if possible, a preview, in the month before their visit to a large auditorium, in order to create ambassadors for the performance. This makes ICK less dependent on online marketing for tours.

## n) Marketing

ICK employs a full-time marketeer to coordinate the audience activation campaigns for performances/activities with their own marketing plan. New target audiences are found and connected through the content of the performances but also through the partners.

The intensity of freelance recruitment is made dependent on the scale of a production or activity. Productions in the Randstad (four largest cities and their surroundings) are supported more intensively than activities in the province.

## o) Towards New Audiences

In Amsterdam, in their new Space for Dance Art, in Theatre De Meervaart and Podium De Vlugt, ICK has insight into who exactly they are reaching and can look for circuits where an audience unfamiliar with dance can get to know them (clubs, parks, shopping centres, etc.).

In Space for Dance Art, De Meervaart and Podium de Vlugt, ICK can experiment with experience formats and festivals and events such as for example What's cooking at ICK, what's cooking at ICK, Artist Café, FRA, You Better Move and ICK-Fest. The latter has grown into a popular social event with its own campaign and press event.

## p) Keeping the Old One

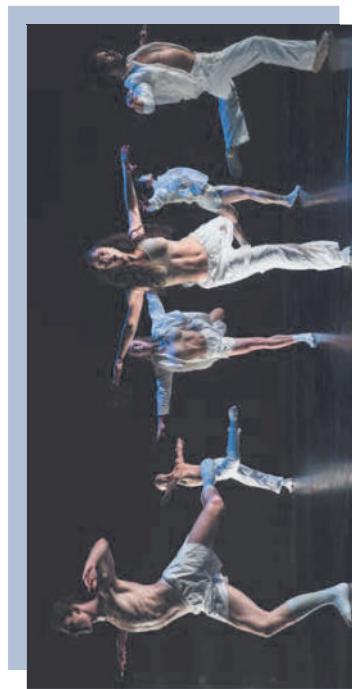
Customer journeys are tilted towards primarily keeping and attracting familiar audiences. With an online approach and social channels leading to the website and community base. Print and posters support the campaigns. For timing they distinguish between:

- target groups at a random moment of orientation (not specifically engaged)
- target groups who have already decided specifically for an ICK performance and are 'quickly led to the information' or via SEA.

With our education projects we strive to build strong and sustainable connections with art academies, schools and universities through transmission of repertoire, creating new performances and stimulating children and dance enthusiasts from all ages just to get acquainted with dance. We also offer research lectures and dance workshops at universities where we bring knowledge based on dance practice in dialogue with academic knowledge.

ICK also participates in a think tank and in cultural coaching projects that target specific schools.

With all our activities we aim to reach diverse and layered audiences and to include participants from various artistic, social or economic backgrounds and abilities.



ICK, photo: Alwin Poiana

## 5.5 ————— The example of the Derida Dance Center /Art Link Foundation

### a) History

In 2004 Atanas Maev and Jivko Jeliazkov met each other and decided to build a small dance company, but with big dreams. A bit later, Atanas started to take care of the project part. His background as an economist helped Jivko to put his ideas on paper.

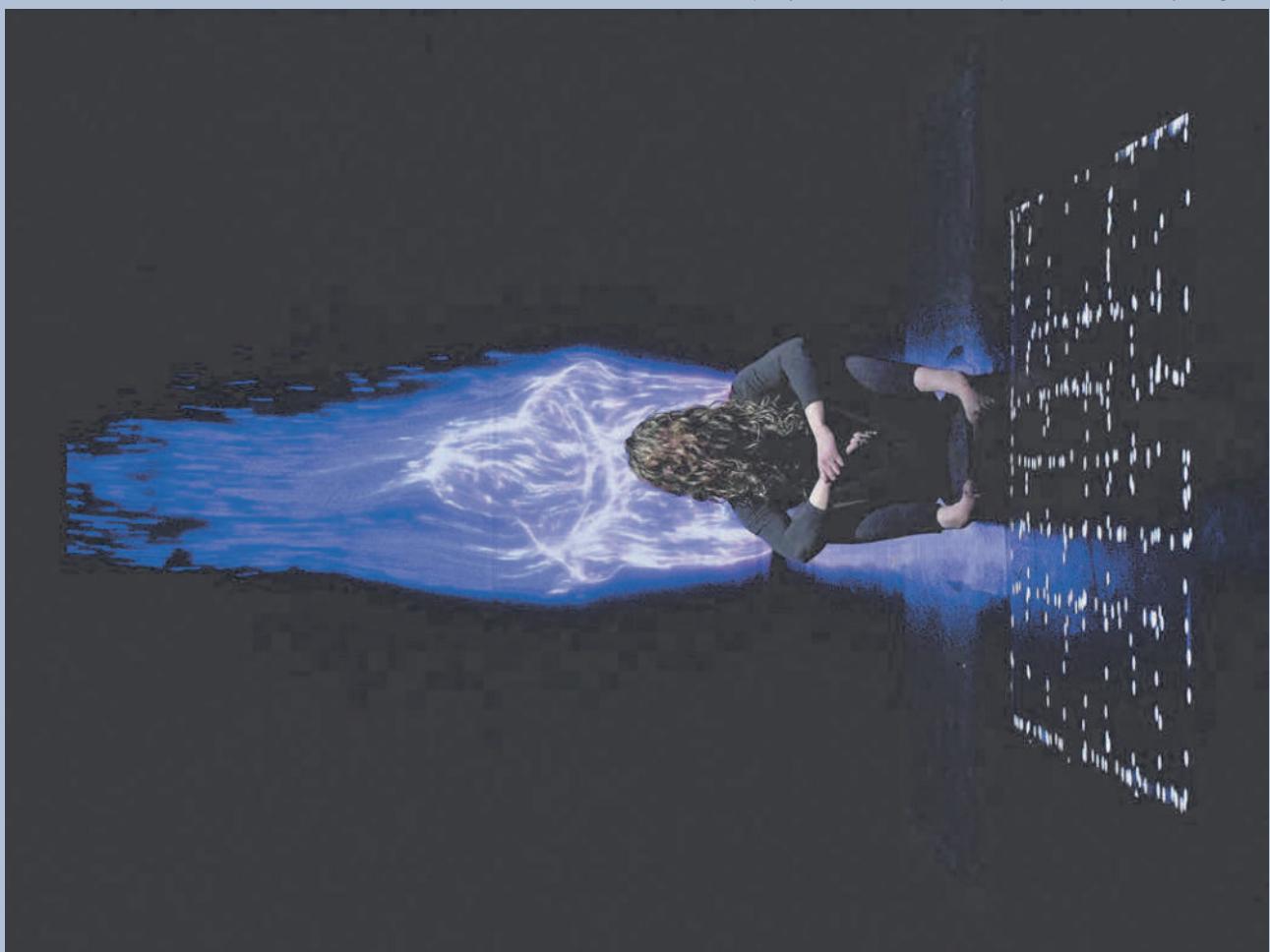
Also in 2004 a proposal from Spain came along - to put an idea of a project on paper and to supervise the construction of a theatre with two stages and its crew. Everything was made from scratch in the white village Benalup-Casas Viejas in the region of Cádiz.

In 2008, they decided to come back to Bulgaria and to invest in their own project. Two years later, in 2010, they created the first centre for contemporary dance in Bulgaria. The project was successful because of the clever business model and wise choice of the building they created the dance centre in. It was a business centre in a former refrigerator factory and the team of Derida had the chance to convince all the people working there that for personal success and physical balance they need to move and dance after their working time. So, the day of the dance centre was divided into two. Before 6 p.m. they worked on their contemporary dance projects, and after that they opened the centre for dance classes in more than 19 dance/movement techniques. This was a great way to sustain the centre and all the costs - rent, salaries etc.

The conditions provided by DDC were quite good and a good example of it is that even Lady Gaga's team rented the studios in 2012 for her European Tour.

Over time, the organization became well known and appreciated which naturally led to their moving to a more central location. In

Teleport by Jivko Jeliazkov & Studi.Phormatik, photo: Vladislav Iliev, Artist: Vyara Bolgradova



2012, they rented a former chocolate factory and made 3 studios, where one of them, they also used as a stage.

Unfortunately, one of the pandemic effects was losing the studios. Two of the most important projects of Derida Dance Center piloted in 2010:

- Derida Dance Center Residency Program - they created a residency program and shared the free time in the studios with national and international choreographers who also gave workshops to the students from Dance PORT Derida.
- Dance PORT Derida - an one-year educational and training program as an alternative to secondary and higher education in the country, a more practical one rather than theoretical.

As proof of successful development of the program, in 2014 they were invited by the European Commission to present in Brussels the model of their residency program. Afterwards the model was considered like a good practice example and included in "The Policy handbook on artists' residencies" by the OMC working group of EU member states experts as part of the "European agenda for culture / Working plan for culture 2011-2014". This led to more confidence and support by the Municipality of Sofia. The program has been realized for 12 consecutive years already.<sup>84</sup>

As a natural development of the organization and its activity in the field of contemporary art and culture, in 2019 they opened the only independent venue for dance - DERIDA Stage, where they present the work of the company, as well as the work of other national and international independent artists on 10 m x 10 m blackbox very well technically equipped stage.

### b) Structure

The main team that works on long-term contracts consists of three people - Atanas Maev (General Manager), Jivko Jeliazkov (Artistic

Director), and Isabel Mitkova (Assistant Project and Operations Manager).

Atanas researches the needs of the artistic team and tries to find resources to create the needed conditions. All curatorial tasks and the educational program are responsibilities of Jivko.

All the dancers' contracts are project related. Visual artists, light designers, stage technicians, or composers are also contracted project based.

DERIDA Stage is one of the few stages in Bulgaria that is open for independent artists - for contemporary dance projects and independent theatre. Its sustainability is being assured by providing the space for rent for different events and also working as a club - an instrument to develop social activities and community as well.

### c) Supporting Organizations and Partners

The main local institutional partnerships that DDC obtains are: Ministry of Culture, Sofia Municipality and National Culture Fund.

The organization was also partnering with Free Sofia Tour, who give free tours of Sofia to tourists. Before the pandemic, the Stage was one of the spaces they visited on a cultural tour.

The organization that supported the start of the educational program was America for Bulgaria Foundation and they kept supporting it for 7 years.

Derida Stage is one of the venues where festivals and competitions take place. For example, some of these partners are the Antistatic - International festival for contemporary dance, ACT festival, The theatre of wonder festival and Linkage - international competition for contemporary dance.

Via the European Commission a lot of partnerships were made, like those in regard to CLASH! Project and, of course, UP2DANCE. Part of those partnerships are also those with Aerowaves and EDN.

DDC also works with the Israeli Embassy and the China Embassy.

With Israel they maintain a shared educational and training program with MASH. For instance, such a project was the exchange of dancers that go there and work with Israeli emerging choreographers, and then also come to Sofia. Other important partnerships are those with the French culture institute and Goethe Institute.

A very strategic partnership is that with Trust for Mutual Understanding, NY. All the projects connected to America in the last 6 years were supported by them. This partnership made another one possible – that with platform GPS – Global Practice Sharing – the link between Central-East Europe and the USA. Gibney Dance Center in NY is also a very important example of a fruitful partnership with their 23 studios in the core of Manhattan.

A collaborative project with ICPNA – Instituto Cultural Peruano Norteamericano, Peru, Lima was suspended because of the pandemic but with pending realization.

Two of most important international long term collaborations are with the two most essential EU platforms for dance: Aerowaves-dance across Europe where DDC has been a Bulgarian partner since 2012 and co-produced in Sofia the Spring forward festival in 2018 and with The European Dancehouse Network – EDN, where it became a member in 2020.

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#### d) Sustainable Audience and Social Engagement

Social engagement is the base of all the projects that DDC develops. A crucial mission of the organization is to find the social importance and to make positive change. The importance of art is in the messages that are being mediated towards the audience.

Such a cause is the use of animals' fur for accessories, clothes, shoes etc. The artistic team of S INNER (awarded IKAR 2017 for best contemporary dance performance and in 2018 with award of the City of Sofia for bright achievements in culture) stood behind the cause to close farms for animals' fur by performing on the street during a protest. Another example is the engagement that DDC

has in terms of domestic violence. The topic was the foundation of developing the collaboration with Gibney Dance Center, who couldn't come because of the pandemic. Such a performance was also made by one of the Bulgarian artists in residency.

Furthermore, DDC also works on productions focused on climate change and the consequences derived from them. For instance – SYNTHETICS, which talks about the transformation of human beings into plastic creatures.

#### e) Strategy To Cope with Pandemic Issues

DDC took part in brainstorming working groups with the Ministry of Culture on a national level by initiating the start with other independent artists and organizations not only in the field of contemporary dance, but also in the field of contemporary art as a whole which led to the creation of new funding programs. On an international level DDC participates in different network events for sharing good practices. DDC also made some internal reconstructing and focused on digitalization (Virtual Reality Technology), arts cross-collaborations, and outdoor activities (Dancing Sofia).

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Fractus by Derida Company, photo: Vladislav Iliev



## 5.6 The example of Companhia de Dança de Almada (Ca.DA)

Companhia de Dança de Almada (Ca.DA) is a professional Contemporary Dance company, in Almada - Portugal, financed by the City Council and the Portuguese Ministry of Culture. It started its activity in 1990. Since then, it has been developing continuously, in the areas of:

- Creation.
- Dance Training.
- Production of Contemporary Dance.
- National and international circulation.
- Support for emerging projects.
- Community intervention.

### a) Ca.DA - The Company

The main purpose of the company is the creation and production of choreographic work, mostly for the stage, but also alternating with site specific productions. Regularly, the company presents two new programs every year, alternating between the invitation of established choreographers and newcomers, and between night long creations and divided programs composed of shorter dance pieces, as a way to encourage young upcoming choreographers.

Almost every year the company has also presented a creation for younger audiences. This seems to be very important because these creations have not only brought a lot of school children to

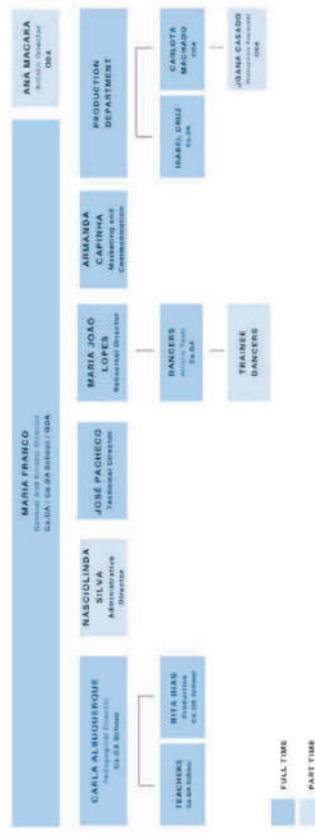


the theatre, but also have reached to many parents that were not used to watching dance performances, and were attracted to very accessible work, with great success.

#### b) Ca.DA School

In 1996, in a small dance centre provided by the City Council, Maria Franco founded a school for the company, teaching ballet and contemporary dance at different levels, to different age groups. Currently, Ca.DA School offers a dance training program comprising both vocational and non-vocational dance courses. Since 2018/19, it offers a vocational Integrated Dance Course accredited by the Portuguese Ministry of Education.

- Open and non-vocational courses are intended for all who have the objective of learning dance as a complement to their artistic training or simply as a physical and recreational activity.
- Vocational courses are designed for students who choose regular and intensive professional artistic training.
- The Integrated Dance Course, incorporated in the educational system, in a regime of articulation with local basic and secondary schools, aims to provide a complete professional training, both in terms of interpretation and creation, in the areas of Classical Dance and Contemporary Dance.



Progressively, it became focused exclusively on Contemporary Dance. Nowadays, besides performances, the festival offers a wide range of dance related activities, such as workshops, exhibitions, meetings, screen dance events, etc.

The curatorial line of QDA can be characterized by the value that is given to the heritage of Contemporary Dance technique and aesthetics. Besides the value given to innovation/creativity and unique expression of creators, it is curated based on solid technical basis and conceptually strong proposals.

#### d) Organizational Structure

In the company the dancers are selected through auditions. Choreographers are invited by recognition of work and CV. Besides the founders of the company which have been collaborating since the beginning, the administrative staff has been admitted by public tender.

#### e) Staff Recruitment

##### c) International Dance Festival

In 1992, Ca.DA organised the 1st edition of Quinzena de Dança de Almada, one of the first dance festivals in Portugal. It started off as a Dance Festival open to different genres, in response to the lack of dance platforms in Portugal, and as an extension of the company.

## f) Artistic Training

On a regular basis, dancers work daily from 10h to 15h. There are warm-up classes every day - Classical or Contemporary Dance - followed by rehearsals (repertoire/new creations).

On performance days, dancers have a scheduled work plan:

- Warm-up session
- Spacing and technical rehearsal
- General rehearsal
- Ca.DA's new creations normally involve two months of rehearsals and preparation, available to tour for 2 years.

## g) Marketing and Communications

In addition to the national and international public that the company reaches, Ca.DA's target audience is also the local community, in Almada, those who are most aware and engaged with cultural activities.

Therefore, it has been important to guarantee:

- the presentation of creations in spaces with programming habits and loyal audiences.
- organisation of commemorative events.
- Q&A sessions after performances.
- organised local group visits to Ca.DA - audiences are invited to attend rehearsals and have the opportunity to talk with creators and dancers.

f) The communication plan for the various creative activities is developed based on the performances that are being produced, the growth of Ca.DA's audiences, and the acquisition of new subscribers and followers on the company's digital platforms.

In this sense, the communication of premieres, for example, is made through the following actions:

- information to the press, through a press note and advice
- information to local and regional agendas, through emailing
- information to schools, through emailing
- online advertising, through the boost of events on Facebook Ads
- digital marketing actions (e.g., short competitions on social media platforms for ticket discount or offer)
- For the creation of promotional material and content for media channels, photographic and video materials are collected during the whole process.

INVERNO, photo: Miguel Estima





# Conclusion

This Manual of Good Practices comes as a reflection on much of what was shared and discussed during the realization of the Up2Dance project. Most of what was discussed and experienced by the participants during the process does not fit in a manual, but it is something that will certainly be incorporated in future practices and shared within the cultural and social communities.



photo: Matteo Carratoni



Non Solo Medea by Emio Greco | Pieter C.Scholten; photo: Alwin Poiana



Many innovative projects are being implemented by all of the companies involved in this project, always striving to create the best conditions for dance artists to create and disseminate their work. But, most importantly, it is fundamental to defend our professionals, especially those that, working as freelancers or in independent companies, are still not well protected by social security systems. A register of active artists is one of the most important measures at local and European levels that can contribute to the insertion of all the professionals in the cultural and social systems.

The situation being very different in the various countries, it is important to follow the best examples that have already been implemented and thrive for a European regulation about the dance professions that facilitates the circulation between countries and the definition of best national and European regulations that assure the social recognition of the work of all dance professionals.

A driving idea of the UP2DANCE project and all other collaborative projects is the need for the development of cultural diplomacy. Its fundamental to assert the importance of contemporary dance in the cultural development of each of our countries and in the whole European stage. As a universal language, dance can become one of the best means to bring together different national or regional cultures. In many cases it can become an essential element of the transmission of the country's culture.

The EQF levels system can be a good contribution for the current somehow chaotic situation of the dancing and performing arts worlds, but it needs to be established internationally assuring students that they will be recognized and their skills will be acknowledged. It is very important that both students and teachers have the opportunity to be involved in national and international exchange of knowledge and experience in the dance field.

Europe can only grow in dialogue. International connections are very important and implementing strategic networking is fundamental.

At local or international levels, it is important to find new ways of developing dance organizations and professionals. Suggestions on how to achieve this, go from finding new ways for financing, such as crowdfunding, getting further involved in community projects, getting organized with other disciplines to the need for creating a bigger political impact.



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