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## Editors' Note

The present special issue, entitled *In and Out of Norden: Dance and the Migratory Condition*, focuses on dance moving in and out of a specific location in the world – more specifically the geopolitical region in Northern Europe known as “Norden” in the Scandinavian languages. In the context of dance, the concept of migration has always been relevant. Professional dancers, teachers and choreographers have been travelling people and in many cases this professional mobility has neither been voluntarily nor casually chosen. But more generally, whether for economic, political, religious or other reasons, the mobility of people in the world has been an important factor in the diasporic patterns of all dance genres and forms. In the context of dance scholarship, the issue of migration was brought to the fore when in 2008 two separate publications highlighted the issue. The essays in the winter issue of *Dance Research Journal*, focused on “ways in which the experience and conditions of migration inform dance performance and reception” (Scolieri 2008, v) in the context of Mexican *danzas chuscas*, taxi dancehalls, and works of choreographers such as Jerzy Starzyrski, Sophiline Cheam Shapiro, and Bill T. Jones. In *Migrations of Gesture* (Noland and Ness 2008), the contributors addressed ways in which gestures migrate from body to body, from one medium to another, and between cultural contexts of dance practices such as ballet and classical Indian dance. Characterizing the notion of “migration” as opposed to “gesture,” Ness stated that migration denotes a kind of movement that necessarily covers ground. “While a gesture may involve no change of the gesturer’s place whatsoever, migrations, by definition, are movements that progress through territory, in and through realms that, regardless of their

actual size, are relatively vast with respect to the entities doing the traveling” (2008, 260). More importantly the chapters in *Migrations of Gesture* highlighted that migration may occur in the actual world as well as in a virtual realm such as filmic worlds or the internet. The years surrounding 2008 were actually a time in which the world wide web was increasingly discussed – not least at the annual *Web 2.0 Summit* 2004-2011 (originally known as the *Web 2.0 Conference*) in San Francisco, California, USA. In line with these discussions, dance scholar Harmony Bench introduced the concepts of “Screendance 2.0: Social Dance-Media,” identifying “viral choreographies” as specific dancing in viral videos in which social media users contribute with re-performances of specific choreography (2010). Thus, focusing on ways in which technologies facilitate the circulation and transmission of movements and gestures, Bench pointed to the importance of encounters between bodies and media technologies as an important factor of a general migratory condition.

Needless to say, the first decades of the new millennium have seen an increasing interest in gaining a comprehensive understanding of the opportunities and challenges presented by international migration. By means of methodological approaches from humanities and social sciences, scholars are looking into the patterns, causes and effects of international migration asking questions such as the following: How will global warming affect human mobility in the future? And what has been the fate of refugees seeking to escape the conflicts in Northern Africa and the Middle East? At the same time, a growing amount of regional studies have connected insights across academic disciplines in an attempt to understand how and why economic and political processes and outcomes are contingent upon regional and local circumstances. In the context of this present issue, it ought to be

highlighted that we as guest editors represent members of the former research group Dance in Nordic Spaces, which was formally established in 2007 in connection with the larger research program Nordic Spaces that ran until 2012 (O'Connor, Fauve-Chamoux and Wahlén 2014). The group included dance scholars from Denmark (Inger Damsholt and Karen Vedel), Finland (Petri Hoppu and Inka Välipakka), Norway (Egil Bakka and Anne Fiskvik) and Sweden (Lena Hammergren and Mats Nilsson). The outcome of the work carried out by the group within the framework of the larger project was published in two separate edited collections, one of which was included in a larger Routledge series entitled *The Nordic Experience* (Routledge). The first edited collection, *Dance and the Formation of Norden: Emergences and Struggles* (Vedel 2011), focused on the role of dance in the formation of Norden and ways in which the concept of Norden has been constituted and contested through dance. By juxtaposing material relating to theatrical, folkloric and social dancing in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, members of the research group examined emerging nations, canon building, local variations of global trends and democratic practices in the arts. The second edited collection, entitled *Nordic Dance Spaces: Practicing and Imagining a Region* (Vedel and Hoppu 2014), focused on ways in which different dance phenomena have either engaged with or dismantled notions of Nordicness. Looking into the ways in which dancers and dance forms move between different locations, organizations and networks of individuals, the authors considered how similarities and differences between the Nordic countries could be discerned. Investigating patterns of reception at the arrival of dance forms from outside of Norden, as well as how dance from the Nordic countries is received in other parts of the world, the research group gradually became more and more interested in the issue of migration. Thus, combining dance studies, regional studies and

migration studies, members of the Nordic group gradually began to focus on the migratory condition as it manifests itself in dance in Nordic spaces.

Creating a proposal for a special issue of *Dance Research Journal*, our intention as guest editors has been to encourage scholars, from inside as well as outside the Nordic countries, to contribute with research representing different perspectives on migratory dance practices in relation to the specific region Norden. Migratory dance practices are here understood as changing in location and as integrative to processes of becoming, thus embracing both the migration of dance practitioners, the international mobility of people travelling for business or pleasure, as well as the diffusion of dance ideas, dance forms or dance elements through imagery disseminated via photos, films and video. In reference to Arjun Appadurai's notion of the circulation of cultural forms, we highlight the dispersion of dance through a mediascape including social media on the internet (1990, 301). The issue includes articles on the migratory condition as it relates to many different kinds of dancing, including theatrical genres such as ballet and modern dance as well as popular social and folkdance genres such as lindy hop, polska and halling. Furthermore, it includes K-pop and African-derived dancing that represent genres and concepts coming from outside the most obvious Euro-American categories. It should be highlighted that since the 1960s and 1970s, Norden has appeared as a model of democracy and equality, welcoming immigrants from different parts of the world. However, within more recent decades, different patterns of migration have created a more hostile and xenophobic atmosphere, following anti-immigration trends that have emerged in Europe. The articles in the present issue address questions related to broader issues of gender, ethnicity, race, appropriation, national identity and dissensus with respect to

their relevance to and impact on the Nordic countries in a global perspective. As it occurs all of the authors examine how dancing interacts with history and society both on local and regional levels and in a global context thus illuminating critical questions such as the following: How does circulation and connectivity manifest itself in dance in our era of migration and globalization? How does participation in different dance practices inform the production of identities and vice versa? What forms of embodied agency can be located in migratory dance practices and how can their potential effects be articulated?

In “A Contested Corporeality: Solidarity, Self-fulfillment and Transformation through African-Derived Dancing” Lena Hammergren investigates cultural transmission, generated by the circulation of both dance forms and people in an era of migration and globalization. She traces how two different migratory dance practices, respectively originating in West Africa and the USA, have produced new cultural and political meanings, surrounding the questions of appropriation and ownership in dance, as these have been introduced and practiced in a local Swedish context from the 1960s until our time. The emphasis of her analysis is on particular pedagogical and communicative situations in which the dance practices take place, and the detailed ways in which movements are verbally and corporeally performed and communicated. The study shows that the practices under investigation have contributed to a focus on an embodied self-fulfillment, rather than an interest in learning about cultural and historical specificity. Moreover, it shows that the existing socio-cultural power differences between immigrant teachers and non-immigrant students underline the inevitable framework of cultural appropriation. Hammergren, however, suggests a potential deconstruction of cultural appropriation and structural racism, by pointing to the fact that more recent pedagogical approaches invite students’

critical reflection on the movement material whilst it is practiced in the dance studio.

Thus, such new approaches may in fact result in more reflective and negotiating ways of dealing with cultural encounters in dance.

With Chuyun Oh's article "From Seoul to Copenhagen: Migrating K-pop Cover Dance and Performing Diasporic Youth in Social Media," the focus changes to a different form of circulation of dance forms. Contrary to the examples provided by Hammergren, dancers do not need to have teachers travelling from one country to another, in this case from Korea to Denmark, in order to learn new dances. Thus K-pop dance – best known from the viral dance video "Gangnam style" - is effectively and sufficiently distributed through the channels of different social media, and YouTube in particular. Focusing on dance moving in and out of Denmark, Oh examines how COED9, a Danish teenager K-pop dance crew based in Copenhagen, constructs a diasporic, hybridized and alternative cultural identity through the adaptation of K-pop fandom culture. Danish K-pop fans socialize, build friendships, and perform different personae, becoming parts of a viral community and transnational mediascape, through which they learn, perform and share dance with global audiences, extending and traversing a cultural location of dance within a fixed geography.

In the article "From Local to Global: Reflections on Dance Dissemination and Migration within Polska and Lindy Hop Communities," Mats Nilsson invokes two more dance forms, the polska and the lindy hop, providing examples of how these forms move in and out of Norden. As argued by Nilsson, both forms were originally used in contexts of local community dancing: polska as a rural dance form in many European countries and Lindy hop as an urban form in the USA. Later, however, both forms have transformed

into being the turning point of transnational post-urban dancing communities connected to Sweden. The polska was revitalized in the context of Nordic folk dance revivals in the 1970s, and since then the Swedish polska dance movement has become a worldwide phenomenon. Lindy hop was revitalized in the context of the 1982 establishment of the annual Herräng Dance Camp in Sweden, featuring iconic lindy hop dancers such as Frankie Manning, and eventually growing into being the largest Swing dance event in the world. Dancers travelling to Sweden in order to participate in polska-dancing and lindy-dancing, exemplify transnational prefix-dance communities, as Nilsson terms them, referring to a need to define dancing as being focused on a specific dance form or belonging to a certain culture, ethnicity or nation.

The significance of nationality in relation to dance is further discussed in Anne Fiskvik's article "Re-negotiating Identity Markers in Contemporary Halling Practices." In this article Fiskvik investigates how the Norwegian dance form halling is re-articulated in theatre dance works by the Norwegian choreographers Hallgrim Hansegaard and Sigurd Johan Heide. Fiskvik examines what can happen with the halling, typically seen as a marker of Norwegian identity, when traditional "halling moves" are negotiated in an interplay between these and other moves and forms of dance from different cultures in a global context. Anne Fiskvik regards Hansegaard and Heide as wayfinding artists whose remix and re-articulation of halling problematizes the notion of halling as an ancient, fixed national dance form, while simultaneously challenging the power structures surrounding it within the Norwegian folkdance field. According to Fiskvik, Heide and Hansegaard experience their work as existing between two worlds, a national and local folkdance world as well as a global and international theatre dance world, and the two



choreographers manage to make artistic statements while still being able to negotiate halling from within the national folkdance community.

Finally, in Karen Vedel's "Migratory Choreography and Spaces of Resistance," the focus shifts back to the migration of people, or rather the ways in which theatrical dance can make statements on unidentified and/or silenced realities of immigrants. Vedel examines two contemporary dance works produced and premiered in Denmark in 2016, at the height of a European refugee crisis. *Uropa – An Asylum Ballet* featured six professional dancers from the Royal Danish Ballet and six asylum seekers from Eritrea, Syria, Burma, Pakistan and Uganda. *Republika* was an independently produced solo performed on stage by Edhem Jesenkovic, a Bosnian immigrant himself. Using the term migratory choreography, Vedel wants to avoid a supposedly consensual understanding of migration as a grace note in the history of an otherwise homogenous and unchanging culture, but instead, situates her analytical stance in an everyday life marked by the migration of people and its entailing cultural transitions. She underlines that *Uropa* and *Republika*, each in their own way, function as choreographic interventions into a non-consensual society focusing on the interrelationship between the choreographed articulation of the embodied experience of migration, recent restrictions in Danish immigration policies and the event of the performance as it is actualized in the encounter with an audience.

Inger Damsholt and Petri Hoppu

Guest Editors, *Dance Research Journal*.

## Note

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## **Biographies**

**Inger Damsholt**, Associate Professor, PhD, Head of Studies, Department of Arts and Cultural Studies, University of Copenhagen. From 2002-2006 she was Chairman of the board of the *Nordic Forum for Dance Research*. Her areas of expertise include theory and methodology in choreomusicology (including both theatrical and social dance

genres) and, more recently, her research has focused on popular music and dance in music video, on the live music stage and on the dance floor.

**Petri Hoppu** PhD, Principal Lecturer of dance at Oulu University of Applied Sciences, Adjunct Professor (Docent) in dance studies at the University of Tampere. In 2007–2012 he was the leader of the project *Dance in Nordic Spaces*. His areas of expertise include theory and methodology in dance anthropology as well as research of Finnish, Karelian and Saami vernacular dances and Nordic folk dance revitalization.