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Teaching, research, and management: Dance at the intersection of knowledge

*Ensino, pesquisa e gestão:
A Dança na encruzilhada de saberes*

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ABSTRACT


In my academic journey, I have been exploring research paths on the scenic body, corporal preparation, and forms of performing writing related to somatic studies in dance. In my research and professional relationships, I have prioritized the power of body language, self-awareness, and love based on the notion of encounter and a network of affection. The actions I have been developing throughout my trajectory at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), coordinating research groups, conducting classes, and carrying out functions in coordination positions, have led me to understand a holistic conception of the body in a fluid relationship of affection with people and contexts in space and time. By integrating the experience of an artistic demonstration into this writing, I aim to discuss encounter and love as the basis for possible methodologies in creating relationships in dance.

KEYWORDS: Dance; Teaching. Love; Research.

RESUMO

Em minha trajetória acadêmica, venho trilhando caminhos de investigação sobre o corpo cênico, a preparação corporal e formas de escritas performativas relacionadas aos estudos somáticos em dança. Em minhas pesquisas e relações de trabalho tenho priorizado a potência da linguagem corporal, o autoconhecimento e o amor a partir da noção de encontro e de rede de afetos. As ações que venho desenvolvendo ao longo de minha trajetória na UFRJ, coordenando grupos de pesquisa, conduzindo aulas e exercendo funções em cargos de coordenação, me conduziram ao entendimento de uma concepção holística do corpo em relação fluída de afecção com pessoas e contextos no espaço e no tempo. Integrando a essa escrita, a experiência de uma demonstração artística, tenho como objetivo discutir o encontro e o amor como base de possíveis metodologias na criação de relações em dança.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Dança; Ensino; Amor; Pesquisa.



Teaching, research, and management: Dance at the intersec- tion of knowledge

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1. When the beginning is already the end: journeys, encounters, body, and love.

Brasilia, October 13th, 2023, was the last committee meeting day at the National Association of Researchers in Dance's (ANDA) VII National Congress of Researchers in Dance. In a dancing room at the Federal Institute of Brasilia, in the middle of a circle of people from the Experience Reports Committee, I present my communication with an artistic demonstration. In bare feet, wearing a dress with many colorful flowers, I begin my presentation by enunciating the name of my work - Teaching, research, and management: Dance at the intersection of knowledge.

I go up to my mobile, connect to a speaker, play my recording, and a recorded text accompanies my dancing actions. I smoothly take my dress off and wear pants and a black t-shirt while my audio description was going on: "I am a 56-year-old woman, a white, cisgender woman, with very long curly hair; I wear big purplish glasses; eleventh child of a northeastern couple; the ninth Maria; married twice, with two sons; solo mother".

I begin a dance along with the speech that filled the room because that is how I recognize and reveal myself as a researcher guided by a sensitive practice, which prizes an ethics of horizontality that remains networked in an intersection of knowledge, a crossing of emotions and experiences that shape, transform and feed me. Practices of love: "We need a map to guide us in our journey to love – starting from where we know what we mean when we speak of love." (hooks, 2021, p.56). In my working hours at UFRJ, I aim to understand this place of reference to live and talk about love.

In continuing my presentation, after changing clothes, I begin a ritual of making a kind of cat's cradle with a yellow string. I give someone the end of the string looking into their eyes, as a first meeting, a request for a dance, to dance together, a request by being present, in power, wish, strong will by the request made: eyes open and the genuine handing over of a string that connects me to the person, to that place at that moment. I keep crossing glances

and strings, going through the center of the circle permeated by the energies of the people coming across and their connected strings, by the intersection of presence states. I keep on this dancing action and develop my path, my poetic project, in which life and art embrace each other, mingle, and are complementary. An improvisation in which I express through movements, from the swirling time connections, the embodied memories of the learning carried out from life encounters.

In my academic journey in the Dance field, I have been treading investigatory paths about the scenic body, body preparation, and ways of performative writing related to somatic studies. Permeated by the practical experience that dialogue with Brazilian artists' ideas, especially Dudude Herrmann, Eleonora Fabião, and Verônica Fabrini, my interest has been focusing on the notion of state of presence and the availability of the body in the production of meaning in dance. Based on these kinds of cartographies that insert me in the world and that deal with poetics and corporeity with emphasis on a sensitive deed, I have been prioritizing, in my artistic research and my working relationships, the power of body language, the self-knowledge, and love based on the notion of encounters and network of affections. All the actions that I have been developing throughout my course at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, coordinating research groups, conducting classes, and holding roles in coordination posts, led me to understand a holistic concept of the body in a fluid relationship of affection with people and contexts in space and time.

The thoughts I present in this text arose when reading the book "All About Love" by bell hooks (2021) and from the experiences related to the ways of working the body to perform a movement in a state of attention and presence integrated into the setting, to the affectionate meeting with people and to the other elements and materialities. Integrating the carrying out of an artistic demonstration into this writing has the purpose of detaching the encounter and the love as a basis for possible methodologies in dance creation. Practices of love that constitute and transform me. I go on feeding off and maturing from the differences on the path. The con-

cerns that arose from the artistic experiences through my professional path are primarily associated with how the body works to perform the movement in a state of attention and presence integrated into the setting, the meetings with people, and the other elements and materialities present.

According to Bogart and Landau (2017, p. 36): “The exploration of a subject, the discovery of staging and language broadening, for instance, can be a collective act in which ideas are proposed, and adjustments are made everywhere.” In this regard, in my professional performance, the collective exercise of imagination is essential in all the duties that I perform in the academic setting to the extent that the collective works for the greater understanding of the position of the body in motion, in attitude, in decision and concerning space and time. I understood in my presentation that the subject of my experience report could be potentialized with the artistic demonstration of a dancing improvisation of this body, that despite the advancing of a chronological lifetime, is not attached to these numbers but keeps on longing for reverberating its potency in the form of dance, the one that comprises me; a love dance, poetry, that comes pervaded by the sense of collectivity and difference in its existence.

The aim of this paper- performance- communication is to share actions and sensations that came about and come naturally in my academic life due to the need to be together, in a collective, in group, in bunch, creating, making potencies, integrating ideas and actions for continuity and resistance in the field of movement, of art, of politics and of the affections. I didn't get her by myself, so I bring, at this moment, the words, voices, ideas, and dances from different people, artists, researchers, authors, working and research partners who follow along with me, close though far-off. Proximities are built on the ground of love.

Social isolation brought us a strong feeling of loneliness due to the lack of meetings that generated friction of ideas and creative disruptions. Many times, lost in a painful feeling from the terror of being forgotten, I found myself in the exercise of otherness carried out on computer screens.

How could I go on if what always instigated me was the moving in the meeting, the gathering of ideas, utopias, generations, frustrations, sensibilities, skins, and affections? In this way, the action of setting up a meeting through the application Zoom, preparing the setting at home, opening the virtual room, and having the possibility of looking at each person made artists, researchers, graduation and post-graduation students remember that keeping our dances alive was already the continuity of many projects itself. It was through the affection triggered in these meetings that I recreated myself in my senses, and I clung to people's virtual presence: I had to come up with new ways of relating which showed me vitality and reverberated the meaning of my art and my existence in creations and the academic and paperwork. Love for doing together. Love to resist in dancing.

bell hooks (2021) in her book "All About Love," draws our attention:

Imagine how much easier it would be to learn how to love if we began with a shared definition. The word "love" is most often defined as a noun, yet all the more astute theorists of love acknowledge that we would all love better if we used it as a verb. I spent years searching for a meaningful definition of "love" and was deeply relieved when I found One in psychiatrist Scott Peck's classic self-help book *The Road Less Traveled*, first published in 1978. Echoing the work of Erich Fromm, he defines love as "the will to extend one's self to nurture one's own or another's spiritual growth." Explaining further, he continues: "Love is as love does. Love is an act of will—an intention and an action. Will also implies choice. We do not have to love. We choose to love." Since the choice must be made to nurture growth, this definition counters the more widely accepted assumption that we love instinctually (hooks, 2021, p. 46, 47).

If love is a choice, and, in this regard, is an act of will, by what means can this love be present at the intersection of our journeys of the meetings in research and communication deeds in dancing in the workplace?

2. The dance at the knowledge intersections.

In the pandemic emptiness between 2020 and 2022, recognizing the will to love with the primary intention to continue, my

deeds were carried out by creating new relationships from the meaning production in aesthetic possibilities that differ from that dance of yore. I found out *corpoesias* that pervaded and leveraged audiovisual productions, academic research, orientation meetings, and ways of coordinating courses due to the need to carry out the continuity. "Many of us wish love but lack the courage to take risks. Although we are obsessed with love, the truth is that most of us lead a decent living, relatively satisfactory, even though we feel the lack of love." (hooks, 2021, p. 53). During the pandemic, the fear of losing my relationships was within the scope of my activities as a professor of graduation and post-graduation courses in Dance at UFRJ, which reinforced my will to build up more production and affection networks in dance.

In the loneliness of the social isolation, I found out in the gesture of dancing a human revealing/transforming/transgressive attitude, which could be in any act: lying on the floor, observing a set of objects, writing, and analyzing an administrative process, evaluating an academic work in a board, acting ordinarily with the routine body in aligned relationships which only sustained themselves in the exercise of love. Integrating ANDA's management (2021-2023) was one of the deeds that brought me closer to people from universities in different regions of Brazil. The experiences and affections verified at this stage of my life brought me the maturity to create equal relations within a wide range of cultures, knowledge, and ways of being. It was necessary to create dances in insurgent form, revealing other ways of being, acting, listening, and deciding. The Congress program was widely discussed; the duties, tasks, and responsibilities were decentralized, and the corporate body created a presentation event with the strength of the long-awaited reunion. There were three years of remote events and online meetings that made us resist and persist so that we would not forget who we are: artists, researchers of the body, people immersed in an affective setting that investigate issues that permeate the body and that are related to culture, politics, to the creation, to self-care and to diversity.



Pic. 1. Image of the people who comprise ANDA's management (2021-2023) at the VII National Congress of Researchers on Dance held at the Federal Institute of Brasilia (Brasília/DF), 2023. Source/Photographer: Luís Silva. **Audio description of the image:** Photo in a horizontal plane. From left to right, they are: Prof. Dr. Carmen Anita Hoffmann (UFPel) with arms opened up; Prof. Dr. Yara dos Santos Costa Passos (UEA) with the left arm lifted up and the other embracing Carmen; Secretary Marcelo Silvio Santos with the left arm open to the side and the other one touching Yara; crouching at the front, still on the left, Prof. Dr. Maria Ines Galvao Souza (UFRJ) with arms open with the trunk inclined to the left; beside, Prof. Dr. Diego Pizarro (IFB/UFBA) kneeling with the right arm flexed and the left one lifted up; sitting next to him, Prof. Dr. Marco Aurelio da Cruz Souza (UFPEL) with the right arm flexed up and the other in front of the body; Prof. Dr. Ligia Losada Tourinho (UFRJ) sitting next to Marco with the arms lifted up; also sitting down, Prof. Dr. Meireane Rodrigues Ribeiro de Carvalho (UEA), with the right arm raised in front of the body and the other up; beside, Prof. Ms. Márcia Feijo (FAV) standing sideways with the right arm lifted up and the left one to the front; Prof. Dr. Jesse da Cruz (UFSM), standing with both arms lifted up; Prof. Dr. Vanilto Alves de Freitas (UFU) standing with the trunk inclined to the front, left arm to the front and the other embraces Jessé; Prof. Dr. Alysson Amâncio de Souza (URCA) standing sideways, with the right arm embracing Vanilto and the left one lifted up. The background of the image is a big red panel in which it is written: on the left, above, ANDA's logo; on the right, VII National Congress of Researchers on Dance; and in the center, with bigger letters, Dancing as an Insurgency and Creation of other ways of being. Everyone is smiling.

These reflections are part of experiences brought about by the intensification of activities of the groups to which I belong, such as ANDA's management (2021-2023). These are projects and projections of actions for continuity and resistance, such as collegiate of graduation and post-graduation, research groups and teaching, guidance, and creation exercises. It is an exercise of love.

There are many cases of children being punished for answering honestly to a question presented by an authority figure. From an early age, it is etched in their consciousness that telling the truth will bring pain. They learn that lying is a way of avoiding hurting themselves or others. (hooks, 2021, p. 77)

We are often punished for expressing the truth about our fears, weaknesses, and ignorance. Thereby, I look for the truth, the transparency, the reception, the affection in the exercise of love. In the warmth of ideas, we created honest dialogue and expanded the ethics of love

through meeting other people who seek to share and debate their research and creations, searching with, dancing with, in alignment, and loving.

My gesture in dance, in line with the culmination of this academic trajectory, is revealed in the development of my artistic demonstration: gestures that are expressed as an attitude based on past experiences recorded in my body, which are updated in investigative processes, turning into expressive and relational possibilities. The cat's cradle tied in the hands of the Experience Reports Committee researchers contextualized my body in a dancing gesture that seeks connections, intertwined actions in the constant affections of the intersected relationships established among all people. I understand that these gestures let themselves undergo current materialities and affections, and these memories, images, and sensations are refreshed in the body.

All these belong to the ground of the unutterable, and they may even seem unimportant and meaningless at this point. But I no longer believe in other ways of conducting life and my relationships in the world. In ethics committed to the loyalty to human senses that provoke the different forms of expression, I feel like looking for a sensitive ambiance that favors the pleasure of being and following along in working power, in love.

When we see love as a combination of confidence, commitment, care, respect, knowledge, and responsibility, we can work to develop these qualities, or, if they are already part of who we are, we can learn to extend them to ourselves. (hooks, 2021, p. 94).

In this intersection of affections among many duties performed at the university, I wish to develop, experiment, and go through my existence, dredging up, sifting through, and trying to let it make/expel what touches and transforms me. Love as present and dancing action. Group experiences characterize my studies on the scene, and I am searching for new methodologies of scenic creation that expand the possibilities of body expression as a producer of signs related to words, gestures, singing, and musicality in general. What I look for in the extended practical experiences in dancing in the research group that I coordinate is to challenge people calling the form into question, introducing human contents that seek to prevent it from emptying, or from being just a mechanical act, virtuous or

standard action. My theoretical production mingles with practical experimentation in a constant feedback process.

I believe that the creation processes of the artists on the scene organically relate to the sensibilization/formation processes of the human being. I understand that to enter the creative universe, it is essential to talk about a humanity that sometimes escapes us. This humanity would be generous and listen to the world's movement with everything it presents to us: organization, disorganization, nature, artificiality, tragedies, solutions, wishes, lives, and deaths. In this regard, creating means promoting a direct connection between this human being inserted in the world and this artist in the research process.

3. Final Steps and the desire to expand affections at the intersections of the dances.

It is in the context of these reflections that the “self-writing” of the ancient Greeks stands out as one of the constitutive activities of the “arts of existence,” that is, as one of the technologies by which the individual structures himself in the milestones of an essentially ethical activity, experienced as a practice of freedom, not as subjection to disciplinary practices (Foucault, 2004^a). “Self-writing” is understood as caring about yourself and openness towards oneself, as the work about oneself in a relational context, having in mind to reconstitute an ethics of the self. (Rago, 2013, p.50)

I feel that I present in this text my own humanity that condenses into the creative act: complexity, contradiction, and sensation. Without passion, desire, affection, and human relationships, I couldn't tread this professional path with much-needed ethics and sensitivity to teaching and artistic research.

The maturity of my gesture is revealed in the first foundation of authenticity in what I want to communicate, but it is not necessarily understandable; it is only felt, being provocative, questioning, reflexive, and an act of love.

We must tell ourselves and others the truth to get to know love. Creating a false “me” to mask our fears and insecurities has become so common that many forget who we are and what we feel under the pretense. Breaking with this denial is always the first step to discovering our desire to be honest and straightforward. Lies and secrets burden and stress us. If an individual has always lied, he is unaware that telling the truth can deliver him from this heavy burden. To figure that out, it is necessary to give up lying. (hooks, 2021, p. 90)

Finding a beginning for this writing performance mobilized me for a long time. I began to wonder what would matter in a report production that interests me most: to talk about love in the academic and research space. It would be much better if you accompanied this paper and could be in a new dance talk. Thereby, I dare replace this presence with my conscience, and, talking to those memories, I gradually get close to you in this kind of dramaturgy of affective and productive actions in the academic space. There are stories and confidences of an artist who began to understand, in the intersections and courses of life, what we call potency and presence in the act of dancing each work that concerns human relationships.

A desire to remember all the words heard and spoken, all the senses emphasized during the experience of this artistic demonstration that involves a life project. A willingness to register paths, the chaos of each process, and the poetry found in the space during the experiments sculpted on the body.

During my presentation, I found a world of arranged sensations through a ball of string. When the ends meet, and the crossings are formed, a memory network in energy flows moves the body and energizes the soul. With all the reverberations of the meetings held at the VII National Congress of Researchers on Dance at the Federal Institute of Brasília, I write and keep finding other possibilities for integrating knowledge and people. I wanted to tell other stories and tell what I found in this path in which I have accumulated many memories and experiences that still transform me today.

Dancing for me currently means to open myself to encounter paths and possibilities in the present moment. An intersection of affections, ideas, and wills to create firm grounds for those coming, honoring ancestry, projecting disruptive actions and diversities, affirming and giving visibility to knowledge and artists. My dances come from this intersection of affections, ideas, subjects, and relations with the world.

Ubuntu is an African philosophy present in the culture of groups in sub-Saharan Africa, whose meaning refers to humanity concerning other people. Ubuntu is a broad concept, and it is the human ability to understand, accept, and treat others well, a similar idea to “love of neighbor.”

Ubuntu (Cavalcante, 2020) for me synthesizes the idea that I am because the other exists, and thus, we are. My existence, job, and life projects depend on the relationships I establish with people. My dancing made me remind myself who I am and try naively to move worlds and lives.

My dances reverberate in love for the work I do, for the people, for life, for the many dances of the world ...from all over the world.

I remember here in this final act the poetic ideas by Fernando Pessoa (Silveira, 2020), and, more than ever, I feel that there's no precision in living. Life has been ravishingly inaccurate. The plan does not exist; it is just what is ongoing each instant.

I feel permeated by the emotional rollercoaster of participating in ANDA's Seventh Congress in the in-person format. These emotions unfold into disruptive layers of affection, and thereby, here and now, I am sure that I am in dance. I express myself in a gesture of generosity that is not repeated. Everything is new and carries over me at each instant of this dance, and here, with your testimony, in a deep love for living this moment, I report my own story, sharing experiences that aim to transmit the need to talk about love in the academic universe.

Speaking to Marcílio Vieira (2022), the artist Dudude highlighted essential aspects of his art:

Art is my way of seeing the world, and the movement is my way of reading and writing. I want to go to the place I haven't been yet, the unknown. What is dancing for a screen? One day, I wonder what it is. It is movement. I love life, I love doing things, so I use movement. For me, freedom is the main ingredient for making art in person or on screen. (Dudude, 2022, p. 102)

Words and expressions that resound and contribute to the reflections developed here: freedom, seeing and reading the world, unknown, action... I work with research guided by practice, and from it, I dive into the imaginary universe sharpened by the desire to express myself with the body.

After feeling bubbles in my blood, butterflies in my stomach, and an itch in my head, this dance of love was born, speaking about this intersection of affections and ideas. I'm not alone; I speak together with many voices, and tomorrow, it will be a different dance and a different text. I wish for all people that each dance be more than a set of synchronized

actions in space; they are moments of transformation for all people participating in this experience of love with and for dance.

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