

Dance: Archives as Inventions. Part I

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Abstract | The confluence of dance and the digital arts provides fertile ground for approaching archives as inventions. The aim of this article is to present some aspects from the digital platforms *Synchronous Object*, *Motion Bank* and *Choreographic Coding Labs* as potent tools for expanding notions of digital archives in dance.

KEYWORDS: Contemporary dance. Dance and technology. Digital archives

Dança: Arquivos com Invenções. Parte I

Resumo | O entrelaçamento da dança com as artes digitais oferece um campo fértil para a abordagem dos arquivos como invenções. O objetivo deste artigo é apresentar alguns aspectos das plataformas digitais, *Synchronous Object*, *Motion Bank* e os *Choreographic Coding Labs* como dispositivos potentes para ampliarmos as noções dos arquivos digitais em dança.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Dança Contemporânea. Dança e tecnologia. Arquivos Digitais.

Danza: Archivos como Invencciones. Parte I

Resumen | La imbricación de la danza y las artes digitales ofrece un terreno fértil para abordar los archivos como invenciones. El objetivo de este artículo es presentar algunos aspectos de las plataformas digitales *Synchronous Object*, *Motion Bank* y *Choreographic Coding Labs* como potentes dispositivos para ampliar las nociones de archivos digitales en danza.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Danza contemporánea. Danza y tecnología. Archivos digitales.

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Archives as Inventions

The question here is not "What can we extract from a body?" or "How can we subvert it?", but rather "How readily can we accept the unexpected, even when it doesn't seem to relate to the initial commitment?"¹ (CAGE, 1985, p.113).

Introduction

In this article I will approach the notions of the archive body, dynamic archives and choreographic objects as a way of situating what I have been calling archives as inventions. This idea was developed in my doctoral thesis², "Dance: archives as inventions", defended in 2020, in the line of research Technological Poetics at UFMG's School of Fine Arts. In the thesis, I take a long look at various digital platforms in dance that corroborate this hypothesis and, above all, I demonstrate how some of the current methodologies dedicated to digital documentation in dance are linked to an embodied experience. Choreographic thoughts and practices will be the triggers and the main focus of research in these interdisciplinary groups. Although choreographic laboratories and residencies can be characterised by the use of sophisticated systems for capturing movements, cameras, sensors and software for analysing movements, the body and choreography will always be the central axis for these connections.

When we look at the interactions between movements and computers, it will be possible to recognise some of the results of the visualisations of the choreographies as inventions generated from these encounters. Using unique methodologies and devices, the projects and digital platforms *Synchronous Object*³ (SO 2009), *Motion Bank* (MB 2010-2013) and *Choreographic Coding Lab* (CCL 2013) are responsible for expanding notions about dance archives and documentation.

Here, we will look at how the choreographies, the organising principles of movements, will instigate and be the initial trigger for interdisciplinary work teams to be provoked into proposing different ways of relating to, archiving and visualising the choreographies. These are the main propositions of the digital platforms mentioned above. The three projects were objects of study in my doctoral research, and as well as getting involved with an extensive bibliography on these platforms and dedicating myself over four years to studying much of

¹ Translated from the author's version: "A questão aqui não é 'O que podemos extrair de um corpo?' ou 'Como podemos subvertê-lo?', mas sim 'Quão prontamente podemos aceitar o inesperado, mesmo quando ele parece não se relacionar com o compromisso inicial?'"

² (ROSA, 2020) Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/1843/38052>. Accessed on: December 01, 2024.

³ The first two digital dance platforms are linked to the North-American choreographer William Forsythe. The CCL came into being at the end of the *Motion Bank* in order to create conditions for the continuity of meetings and research into digital movement archives. Available at: <https://synchronousobjects.osu.edu/> <https://choreographiccoding.org/#/> Accessed on: 01 Dec 2024.

the online material available on them, I was also responsible for organising the *Motion Bank Lab Brazil*⁴ (2019) and two editions of *CCL* (2016/2024). The three residencies were organised in partnership with Scott deLahunt⁵, one of the coordinators of *MB* and *CCL*. The first two editions of the Labs were held at SESC Palladium in Belo Horizonte and the last edition of the *CCL*, in 2024, at TUSP, at the University of São Paulo. This edition was organised in partnership with Júlia Abs, a choreographer and researcher who holds a PhD from the Inter-University Postgraduate Programme in Aesthetics and Art History at the University of São Paulo.

Both *CCL* and *MB* are characterised by bringing together professionals from dance, digital arts, computing, anthropologists, linguists and related areas so that together they can navigate issues related to digital documentation in dance. The interrelationship between choreographic thinking and other knowledge has been one of the focuses of these platforms, which use a multiplicity of tools and different technologies to document choreography. In general, *Motion Bank* makes multiple recordings, digital annotations, interviews, online scores and the creation of choreographic objects in order to delve into choreographic thoughts and carry out robust documentation of the works.

I'm interested in discussing how these methodologies, their results and the various ways of viewing choreographies online are able to encourage us to recognise and name new ways of conceptualising digital archives. Often coming to establish archives as inventions, which can be digital adaptations, online scores or choreographic objects that are created from choreographic thoughts.

In order to exemplify this process of documentation and digital visualisation, I cite the score by American choreographer Deborah Hay, *Using the Sky*.⁶ The *online* score and its documentation process is available on the *Motion Bank* website. Seven versions of the choreography were recorded, danced by three dancers and, based on the collection of this data, Frankfurt-based designer Amin Weber created his digital adaptation of the choreography, called *No time to fly*. This digital version is not a translation of the choreography, nor does it aim to make it explicit in another medium. Rather, it is an invention based on the encounter with Hay's choreographic thinking and the documentation

⁴ *Motion Bank Lab Brazil* (2019) Available at: <https://scores.motionbank.org/brazillab2019/#/> Accessed on: December 02, 2024.

⁵ Scott deLahunta is currently a lecturer and researcher at the Centre for Dance Research at Coventry University in England and co-director of *Motion Bank* with Florian Jenett. Available at: <http://www.sdela.dds.nl/>. Accessed on: December 02, 2024.

⁶ *Using the Sky*. Available at: <https://scores.motionbank.org/dh/#/set/sets>. Accessed on: December 01, 2024.

and records of the choreography *Using the Sky*. The movement data captured from this choreography and from various other choreographers who took part in the project is available in the *Motion Bank* movement database. Thus, through other creative laboratories and residencies, especially at the *CCLs*, this data can be continually reactivated, generating new files or choreographic objects.

It is in this sense that these platforms dynamize the archives, as they have the chance to continue in a continuous flow, producing new creations in different contexts and with other groups of artists and researchers. This, in turn, could lead to a new look at the "original" work or the inaugural work to which this new archive refers.

The *CCLs*, as well as being opportunities to reactivate databases of previously selected movements, are also stimulants for instigating new documentation, creations with digital devices and infinite transmissions of everything that can be generated as a dance archive. It's a model of mutual collaboration, anchored in constellations that are grouped together by affinity, with the aim of expanding the devices for creation and documentation linked to dance and new technologies.

Choreographic Objects

In proposing the idea of "Records and Archives as Inventions", I am referring in particular to "Choreographic Objects" - a term used by William Forsythe (North-American choreographer) to describe both his installations and the objects that emerge from research between choreography and transdisciplinary groups dedicated to the study of movement. By collaborating with professionals from a variety of fields - from programmers to anthropologists - Forsythe encourages a collective deepening of the idea that dance can be materialised in different forms and products, questioning what we mean by an archive in the digital age.

Forsythe describes the notion of choreographic objects as tools capable of instigating and materialising aspects of choreographic thinking, standing out as a research practice that implements the creation of new visualisations, which can be digital, traces or artefacts incited by choreography. This reflection emerges from a transdisciplinary research group whose coordinator for several projects has been Scott deLahunta, some of them in partnership with anthropologist James Leach (2013), who is investigating the cultural and economic implications of these objects within the knowledge economy. This is an essential question for the continuity of the archive projects at dance: how can these initiatives be sustained? How can we ensure that the inventions resulting from artistic and scientific

practices can be sustained in the long term?

This issue of financial sustainability, although not the focus of this article, is an important point. We know that funding for the arts is limited, especially in the field of contemporary dance. While digital dance content is widely available on platforms such as YouTube and Vimeo, it rarely manages to attract significant monetisation and funding. Social networks, which have become an indispensable form of visibility for artists, often fail to provide the necessary sustainability for their research and practice. As a result, dance artists who are unable to manage their own digital archives often run the risk of becoming invisible. This invisibility is a phenomenon that deserves attention, as it directly impacts the continuity and development of artistic work and choreographic research.

In an effort to redefine the concept of choreographic objects, it is worth mentioning the research of Hetty Blades. In her doctoral thesis "*Scoring Dance: The Ontological Implications of Choreographic Objects*" (2015), Blades discusses how each project and artist appropriates this concept in a unique way. She analyses projects such as the publication *Choreographic Score*⁷, by Belgrade-based performance theorist and musicologist Bojana Cvejić and Belgian choreographer Anne Teresa de Keersmaecker; as well as the projects already mentioned in this article, *Synchronous Objects* and *Using the Sky*, by Deborah Hay, available on the *Motion Bank* website. Blades demonstrates how these initiatives and others transform dance recording into a living and inventive practice.

So, in addition to the writings of researchers and the testimonies of artists, this article incorporates experiences and reflections from my own experiences in the field of dance, especially the practices that tension and move around the notions of choreographic objects, the body as an archive and the performance of the archive.

Synchronous Objects

I'll return to a brief description of the *Synchronous Objects for one flat thing reproduced* (SO) platform because it was an inaugural project, realised in 2009, responsible for establishing the notion of choreographic objects based on the recording of the choreography *One flat thing, reproduced*⁸ (2000) by William Forsythe. The recording of the choreography was made by Belgian musician and video artist Thierry de Mey in 2006, for MK2K and the *Art France* TV channel. When browsing the SO website, you can choose how

⁷ See: <<https://www.rosas.be/en/publications/425-a-choreographer-s-score-fase-rosas-danst-rosas-elena-s-aria-bartok>>.

⁸ *One flat thing reproduced* (2000) was choreography by North-American choreographer William Forsythe. Available at: <<https://synchronousobjects.osu.edu/>>. Accessed on: December 02, 2024.

you want to see and hear the choreography; by selecting the top, frontal or close-up shot. To listen to it, there are four options that can even be combined. These are: the original soundtrack composed by Thom Willems, the ambient sounds, Forsythe's comments and his humming of the choreography's rhythm, a practice used by many choreographers to strengthen the dynamic they want to establish for the sequence of movements. On this platform, twenty choreographic objects were generated from just one choreography in order to expand and broaden the understanding of the complexity of choreographic making.

This project was carried out in partnership with the *Forsythe Dance Company*, the dance department of Ohio State University, coordinated by Norah Zuninga Shaw, and the technology department of the Advanced Computing Centre for the Arts and Design (ACCAD), coordinated by animation specialist Maria Pallazzi.

In addition to this creative nucleus, the OS had the participation of undergraduate students from Ohio University, coming from areas of knowledge such as Geography, Digital Arts, Computer Science, among others. According to Forsythe (apud Shaw, 2017) the intention was not to recreate the experience of the piece, nor to go to its genesis, but rather to demonstrate the choreographic complexity and make it possible to visualise it in other ways.

Motion Bank

At the end of the OS in 2009, Forsythe decided to expand this possibility of digital documentation and choreographic visualisation to other choreographers, which is how *Motion Bank* came about. The works of Deborah Hay, Jonathan Burrows & Matheu Fargion, Bebe Miller & Thomas Hauert, renowned contemporary dance choreographers based in Europe and the United States, formed the basis of MB's research from 2010 to 2013. In addition to various other seminars and workshops open to the research of creative processes carried out with other choreographers. Full references to the works and choreographers can be found on the Motion Bank website.

It's worth mentioning that this project was approved for four years by the German Federal Cultural Foundation, as part of the *TanzPlan*⁹, a cultural policy aimed at dance of the German government, which invested twenty-one million euros in dance projects between 2010 and 2015. In addition to this funding, the *Motion Bank* was funded by Ohio

⁹ On the *TanzPlan Deutschland* website you can see the proposal of this cultural policy for dance, the artists and institutions funded, the results achieved and its continuity. Available at: <https://www.kulturstiftung-des-bundes.de/en/programmes_projects/theatre_and_movement/detail/tanzplan_deutschland.html>. Accessed on: December 02, 2024.

University (USA), following in partnership with the *Synchronous Object* team, and by various other public and private institutions, such as the Volkswagen Foundation, which subsidised the *Dance Engaging Science* programme, with a series of interdisciplinary meetings and workshops that had dance as their main theme. This information can be found in the article on *MB* written by deLahunta (2017) in the book *Transmission in Motion* (BLEEKER, 2017). I'd like to take this opportunity to emphasise that this publication is essential in the field of dance and technology; some of the main European projects in this area, developed over the last twenty years, are brought together in this collection. Most of the articles are written by researchers and artists directly involved in the conception and creation of their digital documentation projects, platforms and artistic research in dance and digital devices.

I return to *MB*'s sources of funding, because I understand that the establishment of online digital dance collections and open platforms like this depends on funding and a specialised team that can dedicate itself to the project over time. The labs we have done in Brazil in partnership with the *MB* team have been sporadic and discontinued actions, the result of insistence and resilience. In two Brazilian editions we had the support of the Goethe Institute and Pro Helvetia in Switzerland, as well as the University of São Paulo, Unicamp and SESC Palladium. These are one-off grants that only make the LABs possible, but they are far from being a cultural policy. Unlike the long-term *MB* projects, which are extensively documented and receive funding for one to four years, guaranteeing their continuity and the formation of an excellent team that can dedicate itself to the project. There is also a guarantee that the artists who will make up the digital platforms, teach the workshops and other digital artists involved in these creations will be paid for their work.

I think the unique thing about these three platforms is that they are not plastered with a single formula for performing and interacting with the choreographies. It's as if each choreographer's peculiar way of organising the choreography gives rise to a dynamic way of archiving that work or choreographic thought.

It is interesting to recognise the analogy between this research methodology and aspects discussed in Derrida's "Evil of Archives" (2011). The author proposes that "the technical structure of the *archiving* archive also determines the structure of the *archivable* content in its own emergence and in its relationship with the future". I believe that the digital platforms mentioned above operate within this logic, in a technical structure in which what is being archived also determines its content and gives rise to different relationships with the future.

The movement data captured by tools such as *Motion Capture*¹⁰ *MOCAP*, as well as

¹⁰ *Motion Capture* or *MOCAP* is a digital technology that transforms the surface of movements into numerical

the digital records and annotations of the choreographic pieces, and other documentation, are made available in movement databases so that they can be used continuously. What is at stake in digital archives and on platforms such as *Motion Bank* and *CCL* is a network of interactions that expands in different contexts and that has shown itself capable of broadening the notions of archives in dance. Thus, achieving *MB*'s initial goals which, according to deLahunta (2017), consisted of producing digital choreographic scores and producing a "new type of literature for dance", connecting dance with other fields of knowledge. In this way, the uniqueness of the archive, the place of the archive, shifts entirely to a temporal and dynamic scale, to the idea of continuity in the transmission of the archive.

These digital archive practices are anchored in the archive body, in a constant structural coupling with the environment and with others. In this way, the chance of dance records becoming dead archives is greatly reduced, because on these online platforms we are called upon to activate and reactivate digital records. This is choreographic making, in which choreographers, dancers, digital artists, programmers and others involved are entangled in unravelling their creative processes, committing themselves to documenting them and getting involved in the generation of choreographic objects and the creation of digital platforms.

This is the dynamism proposed in the *MB* and *CCL* meetings, the aim of which is precisely to look at choreographic thoughts and, based on choreographic practices, recognise ways of documenting the material to be archived. For this reason, each context, with choreographers and groups of artists and researchers from different backgrounds, will lead to activating the power of archives as inventions.

A methodology is adopted in which experience with the body, with experimentation in practices and with the organisational principles of movement become premises for generating records and digital archives. In some of these projects we have the participation of neuroscientists and researchers dedicated to the study of cognitive sciences, linguistics and artificial intelligence. This involves a vast field of research that encompasses studies on metaphors, the relationship between body, mind, brain, emotions, *embodiment* (or embodied experiences) and so many notions that are crucial to choreographic making. In addition to its documentation, it is above all a dive into technology that aims to produce

data. *MOCAP*'s optical capture records the points and trajectories of movements in a quantity and variety of data that can be processed in different ways. Due to the high quality resolution of this system, the variability of details, the data flows in this technology become a challenge both for storage and navigation (KARREMAN, 2017, p. 103).

embodied digital archives.

That's why the notion of the body being an archive and the archive being a body, as expounded by Andre Lepecki (2010), fits so well with the notion of digital archives in this research, because both refer to the reactivation of archives. They are not linked to the neurosis of erasure, but to the "desire for the archive." Lepecki suggests this term as an ability to identify, in works made in the past, creative fields that have not yet been exhausted. These are called embodied updates. This is also the case with the digital platforms I'm referring to, in which digital archives and choreographic objects are incorporated updates, which are made in body-to-body, in presence, in encounters, as an event that promotes and provokes the dynamism of the archives.

Archive Body _ Digital Archives

In *The body as archive - Will to Archive / Will to Reenact*, Lepecki (2010) refers to an archive fever that occurred at the turn of the 20th century into the 21st, in the sense of re-enacting, recreating landmark works of contemporary dance. The author Ramsay Burt (2006) has also reflected on the reactivations of iconic American postmodern dance performances created in the 1960s and 1970s by choreographers such as Yvonne Rainer and Steve Paxton, which have been re-enacted in Europe. Rainer is a choreographer, dancer and film-maker who founded the Judson Church Movement in New York and is one of the main references in American post-modern dance. Steve Paxton is the creator of *Contact Improvisation, Material for Spine*, whose technique is documented on a DVD, with digital arts resources for its visualisation, he was a member of the Judson Church, and danced in the company of choreographer Merce Cunningham, one of the founders of American post-modern dance.

Burt, when referring to the re-enacted pieces of these choreographers, considers them to be generative rather than imitative, in other words, an approximation to historical material. In his *PASTforward* project, the New York-based Russian choreographer and dancer Mikhail Baryshnikov both staged some of the pieces that inaugurated American post-modern dance and commissioned new pieces for his *Oak Dance Project*. This project was carried between 1990 and 2002, revering and referencing important choreographers who began their creations in the 1960s.

Since the 2000s, with the expansion made possible by access to new technologies, digital equipment and new technologies that have become more accessible, choreographers and dancers have increasingly set out to record and disseminate their work. A period began in which choreographic works and rehearsals were recorded on platforms such as YouTube,

Vimeo, social media and blogs. An avalanche of information means that part of the creative processes, among other reflections, are widely and chaotically accessible in the tsunami of networked information. Archive fever then moves from the analogue, from the body as a document, to the digital in a continuous, incessant and permanent flow.

It's no wonder that in contemporary times, the definitions of presence, absence and ubiquity are constantly changing. Reality and virtuality blend together, we live in an expanded, augmented and hyper-connected reality. In this context, dance archives must be thought of in a historiographical way¹¹, encompassing a perspective that includes both digital records and new interaction networks where time and experience carry more weight than physical space. The attempt to locate these records and legitimise dance archives in traditional institutions is dissolving in the face of new technologies.

Digital platforms face constant challenges, as the rapid evolution of software makes digital collections temporary and sometimes obsolete. The abundance of data on digital networks creates an excess of information, which can isolate these collections in limited niches, without fully reaching the dance community¹² and other cultural areas. This is why new challenges are being posed when it comes to cross-referencing data and activating digital dance archives.

The proposal is therefore to experiment with different ways of recording dance, exploring captured data that will expand understandings of dance and even instigate sensory experiences. New technologies, such as sensors and digital interfaces, enable an interpretation of movement that goes beyond the two-dimensional camera. By processing and interpreting movement data, choreography is transformed, allowing visualisations and analyses that were previously intangible.

Systems like *MOCAP* record movements with precision, transforming them into data, into thousands of points and connections capable of expanding visualisation options. They challenge the traditional perception of what we recognise as choreography. This type of recording emphasises the idea of presence and challenges the classic notion of performance by involving new relationships between the body, presence and absence. Through digital interfaces and virtual reality projects, we expand and broaden new connections, as well as

¹¹ "Historiography is the narrative of evolution. But evolution is another story: it has no beginning, since it is a process - it has an axis of occurrence. It has no direction, since it is uninterrupted - it has transitory states. It has no progress, since it is a "blind" project - it has gradual specialisations." (BRITTO, 2008, p.17). Our translation. "*A historiografia é a narrativa da evolução. Mas, evolução é outra história: não tem começo, dado que é processo – tem eixo de ocorrência. Não tem direção, dado que é ininterrupta – tem estados transitórios. Não tem progresso, dado que é um projeto "cego" – tem gradualidades de especialização*".

¹² This theme is one of the topics of the interview with Scott deLahunta (2019), which is available in Appendix A of my thesis. (ROSA, 2020) Available at: <<http://hdl.handle.net/1843/38052>>. Accessed on: December 01, 2024.

reaching a diverse audience that can enjoy and experience choreographic practices. This is one of the aspects emphasised in various dance and technology projects: accessing not only an audience accustomed to dance, but also introducing a less specialised audience to some tools and strategies for connecting with choreographic thoughts. *Synchronous Object* is a unique example in demonstrating the various analyses and approaches to the choreography *One flat thing*, reproduced by William Forsythe.

Inventions as shared conventions, games and collective experimentation

To propose archives as inventions, I use the meaning of this word as presented in the book "The Invention of Culture" by anthropologist Roy Wagner (2010). In it, the author argues that all understanding is a kind of invention and depends on shared conventions in order to make sense. For this reason, invention needs to be taken seriously and not remain in the realm of accident and randomness. According to Wagner, invention was placed in a materialistic and mechanistic worldview established by Newtonian determinism. Another author with whom I dialogue about the term invention is Canadian philosopher Brian Massumi (2017). For him, we construct our realities based on notions shared and experienced collectively, with play and games proving to be the most fruitful strategies for the invention of cultures. The artist residencies and digital platforms covered in this article are precisely spaces for sharing, for experiencing together from a horizontality of knowledge. Spaces for living well, for affecting and being affected.

In the movement of invention, the dynamic form of which is the affect of vitality, it is precisely the content of life that can end up being transformed. The affect of vitality is the dynamic form of expression of the movement of becoming that leads to the reinvention of the content of life." (MASSUMI, 2017, p. 162).¹³

Practical laboratory for creating Choreographic Objects

In order to exemplify and give you a flavour of this experience, I'll cite two examples of labs carried out during my doctoral research. One was the *Motion Bank Lab Brazil*¹⁴ (2019) in which we documented three works: *Parquear Bando*, *A Projetista* and *Bols & Wrop*. The

¹³ Translated from the author's version: "No movimento de invenção cuja forma dinâmica é do afeto de vitalidade é precisamente o conteúdo da vida que pode acabar transformado. O afeto de vitalidade é a forma dinâmica de expressão do movimento de devir que leva à reinvenção do conteúdo da vida".

¹⁴ *Motion Bank Lab Brazil* (2019) Available at: <<https://scores.motionbank.org/brazillab2019/#/>>. Accessed on: December 02, 2024.

full Lab and work file is available in its online documentation. In my thesis I discuss the stages of the Lab, its organisation and the documentation generated using MB's two tools, *Piecemaker* for digital annotations and *MoSys* for online publications.

Specifically, about *Parquear Bando*, I published an article with researcher Carla Fernandes in a special edition of *Performance Journal*¹⁵, entirely dedicated to various projects that used *Motion Bank*'s digital annotation tools. In it, I demonstrate some of the choreographic practices offered to students of digital arts, animation cinema and dance during their undergraduate studies at UFMG's School of Fine Arts. The proposal was precisely to experience the choreographic principles of *Parquear Bando* in the body, so that the students could then get involved in creating their own choreographic objects related to this choreographic practice. These activities were carried out over the course of a short *lab* in a discipline of the Technological Poetics research line, the same line in which I did my doctorate.

This brief description only emphasises the unprecedented aspect that takes place in each *Motion Bank* laboratory, especially in the synergy between the archivable, the archive and what will be launched and unfolded in the future. Although there is a methodology developed over more than a decade of *MB* and *CCL* recurrence, there is always the question of how to do it, with that specific group and in each new context. Although the software developed by the *Motion Bank* team is used in each residency, in each dance documentation process, these tools will always be used in line with the research of the choreographers whose creative processes are being documented. The website *Between Us*¹⁶ (2019), created by the *MB* team in partnership with the Finnish choreographer Taneli Torma, exemplifies the use of the two pieces of software mentioned for the documentation and online publication of the entire creation process of the piece *Effect*, choreographed by Torma with the company *tanzmainz*. Browsing the *MB* platform you can recognise the unique ways in which each digital documentation is used, although digital notes, interviews and choreographic visualisations are recurrent.

Challenges and Issues of Choreographic Records

The vast field we have explored here, made up of bodies in movement, digital technologies and their effects on dance, raises a series of fundamental questions: what

¹⁵ ROSA & FERNANDES (2020) Lab Brazil: *Parquear Bando* digital annotation: on digital scores for collective performance interventions in public spaces. Available at: <<https://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/4TXU3BBQSBWUEF6GPYSP/full?target=10.1080/14794713.2021.1885191>>.

¹⁶ *Between us*. Available at: <<https://betweenus.motionbank.org/>>. Accessed on: December 10, 2024.

really constitutes a record of a choreography? How can these records be accomplished, revisited and kept alive? How can new visualisations and modes of interaction in dance, which integrate digital arts, nurture diverse knowledge? What aspects emerge from these digital practices and experiments, bringing to the surface dimensions of data that were previously immersed in invisibility?

In this research, we delve into some essential issues for the field of dance and performance: the body as an archive, the performances that (re)interpret these archives and choreographic objects. We therefore seek a perspective that unites theory and practice in the creation of digital collections for dance. In dialogues with authors and artists such as Scott deLahunta, William Forsythe, Norah Zuniga Shaw, among others, we bring to light an investigative practice in which the relationship between practice and discourse, the "making-saying" (SETENTA, 2008)¹⁷ of the body, presents itself as essential to expanding the understanding of dance in the digital universe.

The archive body is a concept that, in practice, takes us back to the work of artists who propose autobiographical performances¹⁸ and explore a constant friction between fiction and reality. André Lepecki, in *The Body as Archive* (2010), describes a series of choreographic works in which the performer's body becomes an archive of previous choreographic pieces, chosen and experienced by the artist himself. This approach explores a curatorial practice of its own, not only exercised by external programmers or curators, but which emerges as an act intrinsic to the artist's own body. These curatorial processes focus on what should be preserved or forgotten, and dance historiography comes to incorporate a multiplicity of voices and choices.

In Brazil, some works and projects explore this relationship between the body and danced memory. I would highlight, for example, the work of São Paulo choreographer Cristian Duarte¹⁹ in *The Hot One Hundred* and the *Coreoversações* project by Thiago Granato²⁰, a Brazilian choreographer based in Berlin, which is based on dialogues between living choreographers, deceased choreographers and those yet to come. In these processes, the artists participate in the creation of a living archive, questioning and expanding what it means to archive dance, and who holds this responsibility. There are many projects that

¹⁷ Seventy refers to the making-saying of the body and dance as something inseparable, in other words, language is not representing something, it is made by saying it. The author presents this notion in dialogue with the philosopher J.L. Austin with his theory of speech acts, performativity and the understanding of language as action.

¹⁸ I'm referring to artists who deal directly with autobiographical issues, such as Xavier LeRoy, Jérôme Bel, La Ribot, Eleonora Fabião, Ana Pi, as well as Raquel André's *Collections* series.

¹⁹ Available at: <<http://cristianduarte.net/trabalhos/the-hot-one-hundred-choreographers/>>. Accessed on: October 05, 2024.

²⁰ Available at: <<http://www.thiagogranato.com/choreoversations-project>>. Accessed on: October 05, 2024.

deal with the re-enactment of archives and with different ways of creating archives, but it is not the aim of this article to map this, although it is relevant to have a platform for work on archives in its most varied approaches.

My own body archive began in practical and theoretical research in this becoming between the researches for database of the now defunct *Rumos Dança Itaú Cultural Programme* (2000-2012), which was one of the first platforms to map contemporary dance in Brazil. As well as choreographic creation, which I embarked on in dance solos (2000-2010), inviting various Brazilian choreographers to be part of this composition at the same time. It's also a way of experiencing my body as an archive and repertoire. In my master's dissertation (ROSA, 2010) I discuss the creation of these solos: "*Ajuntamento*"²¹ (2002, with choreography by Adriana Banana, Dudude Herrmann, Luciana Gontijo and Rodrigo Pederneiras) and "*Confluir*"²² (2006, with choreography by Alejandro Ahmed and Rodrigo Pederneiras). The first solo was made with choreographers from different generations based in Belo Horizonte. Rodrigo Pederneiras is a choreographer with *Grupo Corpo*. Dudude is responsible for training several generations of dance artists, a teacher, choreographer and dancer dedicated to improvisation. She has her Atelier in Casa Branca (MG), where for more than a decade she has promoted various meetings and residencies with choreographers from all over the world, dedicated to improvisation. Adriana Banana is a dancer and choreographer who founded the International Dance Forum (FID) in Belo Horizonte in 1996. FID has energised the dance scene in Belo Horizonte for more than two decades. Together with Adriana Banana and choreographer and dancer Luciana Gontijo, we founded *Clube Ur=Hor*, and under Banana's direction, we created and toured various cities in Brazil and Ecuador with the shows *Creme* (1996) and *Magazin* (1999). Alejandro Ahmed, who choreographed in partnership with Rodrigo Pederneiras for the solo "Confluir", is the choreographer of *Grupo Cena 11*, based in Florianópolis, and the current director of *Balé da Cidade de São Paulo*.

In these two solos, research into creative processes and ways of generating archives were already present. Fermenting both my artistic and academic research, which have been intertwined since the beginning of my professional career in the late 1990s. No wonder I have dedicated myself to expanding these networks internationally, with *Motion Bank*, *CCL*, NOVA University Lisbon in the Performance & Cognition Group²³, coordinated by Carla

²¹ Available at: <<https://cargocollective.com/multiplex/Ajuntamento-2002>>. Accessed on: December 01, 2024.

²² Available at: <<https://cargocollective.com/multiplex/Confluir-2006>>. Accessed on: December 01, 2024.

²³ *Movement Computing, MOCO*, Available at: <<https://www.movementcomputing.org/>>. Accessed on: December 01, 2024.

Fernandes, with *Movement Computing*²⁴ (MOCO), among other groups related to this theme that expand the possibilities of archives as inventions. These are networks of affection and vitality that dynamize archives through multiple encounters in which theory and practice are intertwined.

Notes and Notations in Dance

The word choreography brings with it a legacy of records and notation systems developed over the centuries. Among these systems is *Labanotation*, one of the most widely recognised and used methods for choreographic records and scores. Based on Rudolf Laban's principles, various visualisations and systems have been developed that have been a reference in many dance and technology projects. One of these references is William Forsythe's *Improvisation Technologies* (1999), which became a milestone in the interaction between dance and technology, opening up new paths for the field.

Rebecca Stancliffe, in her article *Video Annotation for Articulation and Transmission of Dance* (2018), traces a genealogy of notation systems, from Thoinot Arbeaut's *Orchésographie* (1588) to Laban's *Chorégraphie* (1926). She observes that these systems evolve gradually, each one building on its predecessors. The publication of Laban's *Choreographie*, for example, honours Feuillet, a forerunner in dance notation. In addition to Labanotation, Stancliffe mentions *Danscript* (1928) by Margaret Morris, although this system is less well known compared to the icons of the 20th century: *Labanotation*, *Benesh Movement Notation* (BNM) and *Eshkol Wachmann Movement Notation* (EWMN).

Stancliffe (2018) points out that both Laban and Morris recognised the limitations of their systems; both knew that they wouldn't be able to capture all aspects of dance. Laban, for example, also developed *Coreutics*, or *Spatial Harmony*, as a complementary approach. *Labanotation*, focussed on fixed positions, is enriched by *Coreútica*, which examines the body's relationship with space. As US Laban specialist Preston-Dunlop pointed out, pen and paper - the technologies available at the time - were limited to Laban's imaginative reach.

In addition to manual annotations, Stancliffe (2018) suggests that video annotations are an important tool for capturing not only the movement, but also the choreographer's thoughts. With the advance of digital technologies in the 2000s, new devices made more complex and interactive dance recordings possible, such as the *Capturing Intention* project²⁵

²⁴ ICNOVA Performance & Cognition Group, NOVA University Lisbon. Available at: <<https://www.icnova.fcsh.unl.pt/grupos-de-investigacao/performance-e-cognicao/>>. Accessed on: December 01, 2024.

²⁵ *INSIDE Movement Knowledge*. Available at: <<http://insidemovementknowledge.net/>>. Accessed on October 10, 2024.

, (2004-2008), coordinated by dancer and researcher Bertha Bermudez in partnership with Companhia Emio Greco | PC²⁶ and the *Amsterdam School of Arts*. This project combined interactive installations, artist residencies and an in-depth study of the choreographic principles of the duo Emio Greco and Pieter C. Scholten, resulting in a book, a documentary and a magazine called *Notation*, with much of the material available online.

Projects such as *Capturing Intention Improvisational Technologies*, *Synchronous Objects* and *Motion Bank* have reinforced the perspective of US notation specialist Anne Huttchinson, who emphasises the importance of the presence of choreographers and dancers in the documentation process. Many dance notation projects combine the presence of the creators with digital recording, capturing the creative processes in a unique combination of knowledge and experience.

In Brazil, initiatives such as *Grupo Corpo* and *Grupo Cena 11* have explored the potential of digital media to record and share choreographic processes. *Grupo Corpo*, for example, has used its YouTube channel²⁷ to publicise videos of the assembly and reassembly of its works, while *Cena 11* has developed the "Virtual Anatomy" series²⁸, with video tutorials on the company's concepts and techniques. These actions are relevant not only for preservation and documentation, but also to bring contemporary dance closer to the public, using social networks as a means of disseminating and sharing choreographic thinking.

Final considerations

This article provides clues for approaching the notion adopted in my thesis of archives as inventions, navigating the notions of the archive body, and dynamic archives, which are characterised by performing and reperforming in a constant update, making archives not watertight, but living archives. I have highlighted a variety of projects and initiatives, both national and international, which expand the understanding of choreography, of choreographic thoughts, encompassing digital records and choreographic objects as practices yet to be widely experienced.

²⁶Emio Greco and Pieter Scholten, based in Amsterdam. Available at: <<https://www.ickamsterdam.com/en/company/choreographers-ick-associate-artists/emio-greco-pieter-c-scholten-1>>. Accessed on December 02, 2024.

²⁷GRUPO Corpo; *Bach* remake. Available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kCbqQRX--Xo>>. Accessed on: September 10, 2019. Montage of *Gira*. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=elazasZa_aI>. Accessed on: September 10, 2019.

²⁸CENA 11; "*Anatomia Virtual*" (Virtual Anatomy). Available at: <<https://www.cena11.com.br/anatomia-virtual>>. Accessed on: September 10, 2019.

Choreographic archives, which might once have been seen only as passive records of past works, are transformed here into active creations that challenge and reconstruct our relationship with movement, memory and time. The alliance with digital technologies - from sensors to platforms for notation and visualisation of movement data - allows us to reimagine the practices for documenting a dance and challenges us to think of the archive as an open field for invention.

However, as mentioned, the continuity of these initiatives depends on sustainable support and funding, which are still scarce for digital dance projects, especially in Brazil and Latin America. The formation of a Brazilian platform for dance and technology is an essential step towards strengthening the network of researchers and artists in this field, allowing new projects to develop and the practice of dance combined with the digital arts to gain greater visibility and relevance on the global stage.

In this context, each event, residency or collaboration is an opportunity to renew our breath and open up new possibilities for continuity and expansion. By launching this invitation to strengthen a digital dance network, I hope to contribute to the creation of a collaborative and fertile environment where recording and invention practices continue to expand, both locally and internationally. May we together transform the archive into a space for active creation, where dance continually reinvents itself in dialogue with technologies and with the body itself as a living archive.

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