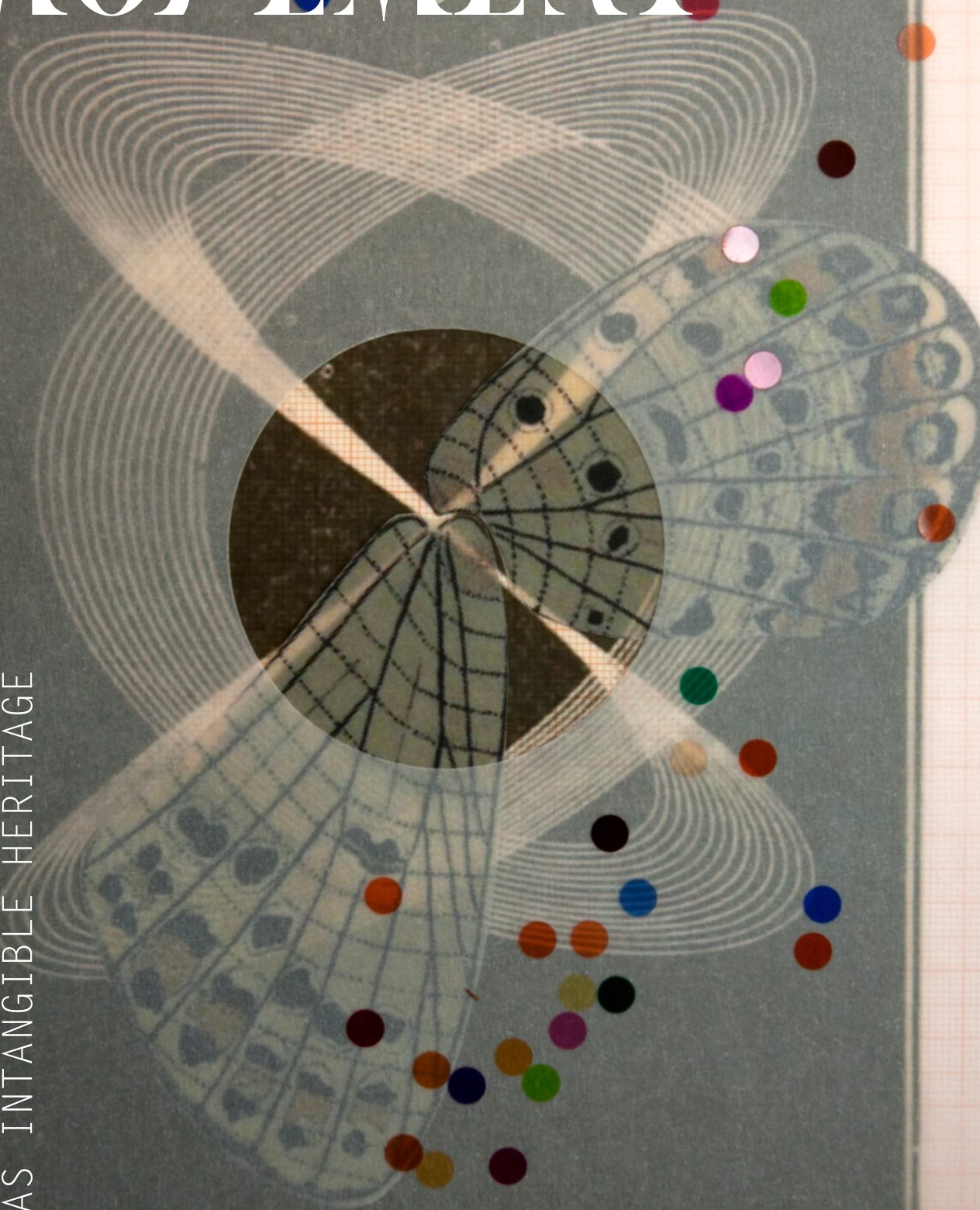


# MAINTAINING MOVEMENT

A GUIDE TO COLLECTING DANCE  
AS INTANGIBLE HERITAGE

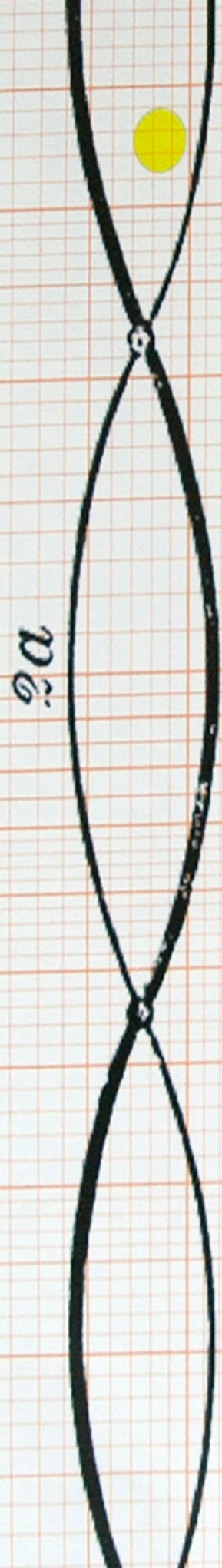
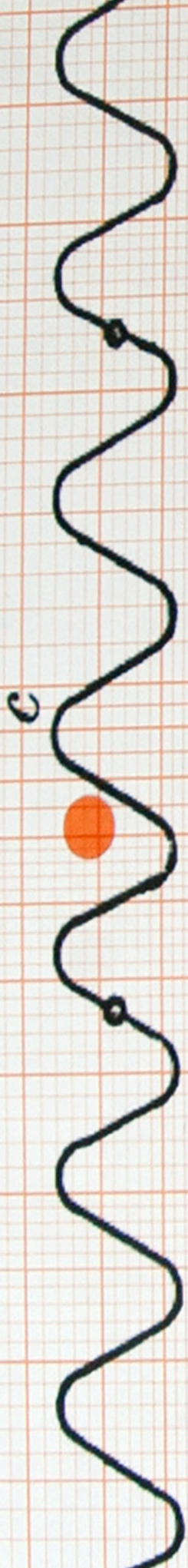
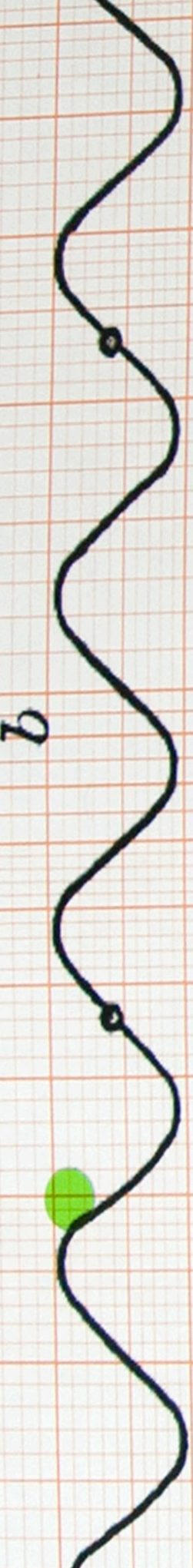




MAINTAINING MOVEMENT

A Guide to Collecting dance as Intangible Heritage



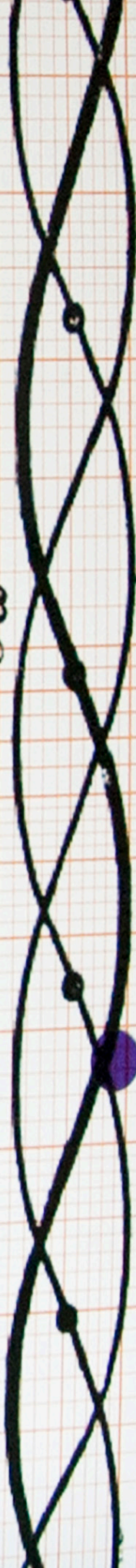




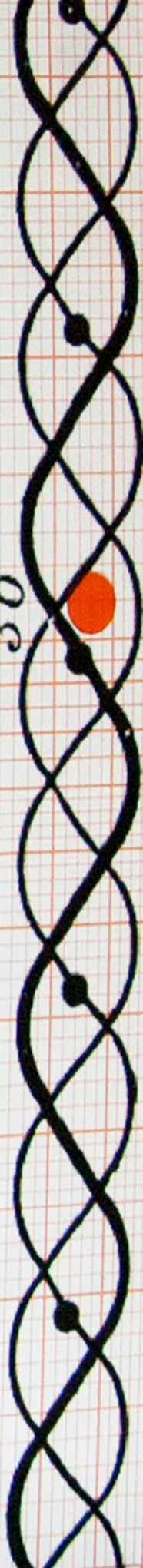
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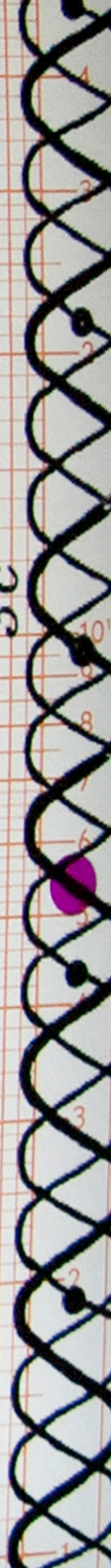
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# ABOUT THE MAINTAINING MOVEMENT PROJECT

Maintaining Movement is a development project for the preservation and archiving of contemporary dance as intangible heritage, funded by the Swedish Arts Council and Skånes Dansteater between 2020 and 2023.

Maintaining Movement's mission is to combine the intangibility of dance with the permanence of the archive in order to:

- document the scope and nuance of dance material in archives; and
- strengthen the preservation, visibility, and accessibility of dance heritage in Sweden.

The method was designed for contemporary dance, but can be adapted to any form of dance and performing arts, and indeed any intangible heritage such as arts and crafts, cooking, or vanishing professions.

Maintaining Movement collects material on a production-by-production basis, primarily in an interview format. Interviews are conducted with three groups – the audience, the dancers, and the artistic team – in order to document each dance production from three distinct perspectives. The artistic team provide the background and intention; the dancers explain the process; and the audience describe the experience associated with the reception of the work. All three perspectives contextualise each dance work and form a picture of the times we live in.


In this guide we share what we have learned from the project and hope to inspire others to document dance for the future.






## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

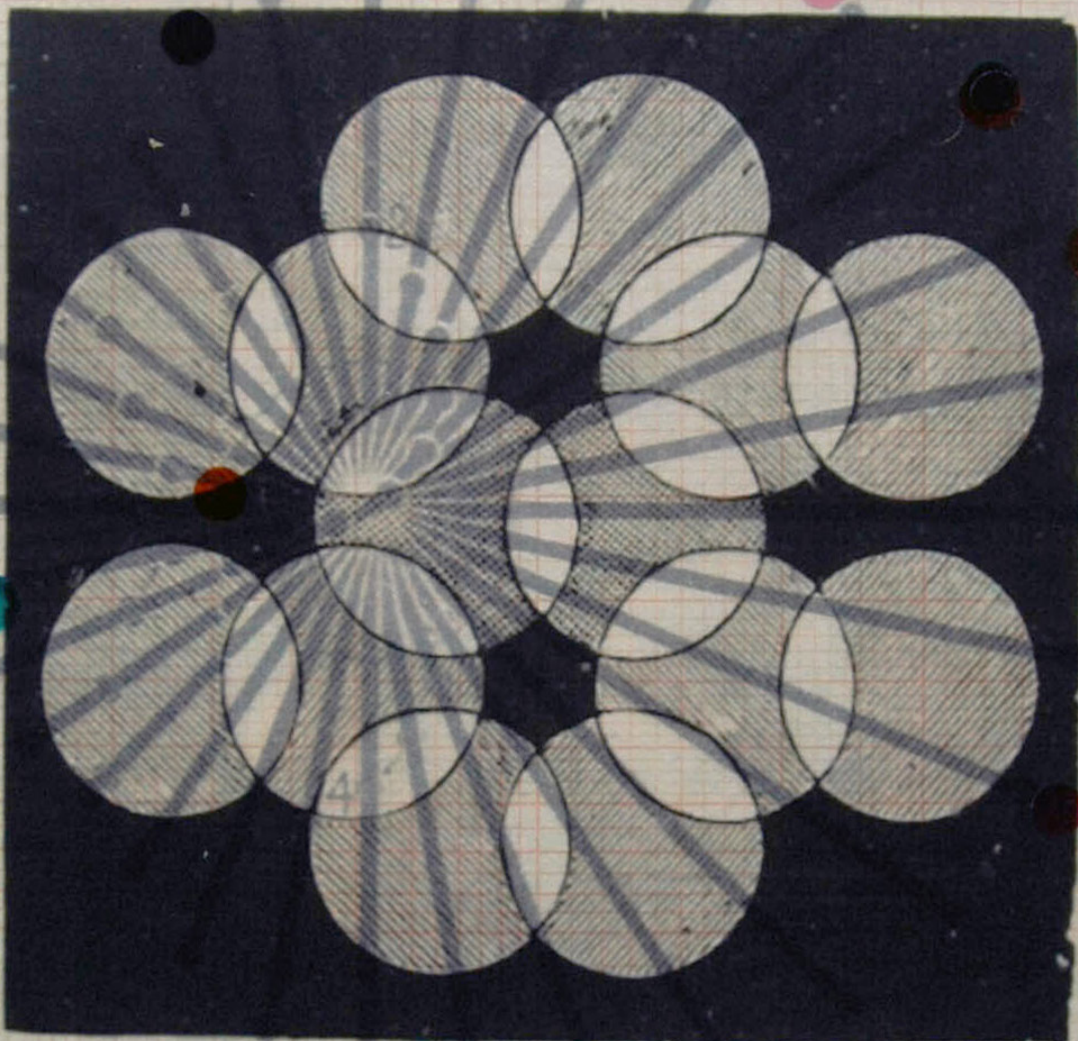
This guide, like the project, uses a method based on three theories: postmodern archival theory, oral history theory and phenomenology. Postmodern archival theory queries traditional archival concepts in the belief that archival practice is undergoing a paradigm shift. It opens the way for broader definitions of what an archive can be and what an archivist's work can and should be, such as a more active acquisition policy in collaboration with various groups.



Oral history grew from the tradition of highlighting alternative stories to complement and nuance the official historiography. The living oral stories that make up the sources are co-created by historians or archivists in interviews. Oral history can access the subjective, emotional aspects of life. In the transmission and recording of experience, it brings it into focus and has the power to move us. Oral history also reveals the plurality of events.

Phenomenology is a philosophical theory and method derived from how we perceive the world around us. It is simply the description of reality as it appears to us. Phenomenology holds that we move through a perceived external world with the body as our reference point. It is with our bodies that we understand and experience the world. Language can be a limitation when describing an experience that can never be fully expressed in words or understood on an intellectual level. With phenomenological methods, we can go beyond cognitive understanding despite using language.





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FIG. 17



# INTERVIEWS AS A METHOD OF DOCUMENTING MOVEMENT

## *Quantity*

The scope of interview-based archival holdings will depend on capacity. The more interviewees the better – including as many perspectives as possible for a diversity of coverage. The number of interviews must of course be adapted to the resources. Even a few interviews will be better than none.

## *Selection*

Aim for the broadest possible representation in terms of age, gender identity, disability, and cultural and socio-economic background. Try to interview audiences with different experiences, covering the entire spectrum from people who have never been to a dance performance before to regular audience members.

## *Forms of documentation*

Filmed interviews are richer material because they include movement, body language, and facial expressions. However, depending on how it is filmed (the location of the camera, whether someone is behind the camera, etc.), video can disrupt the intimacy of the conversation and make interviewees self-consciousness, stopping them from speaking freely.

Maintaining Movement has found that audio recording is less stressful for interviewees. The voice has many strong communicative aspects apart from

words. Tone, pitch, rate, and pausing all have the power to communicate an experience. Audio is also easier to store, manage, and curate than video.


Written documentation is a good complement. It gives the person greater control over what they want to share and how. To tap into an experience, for example, you can ask audience members to free-write responses immediately after a performance. Asking a dancer to write a process journal specifically to be archived is a way of accessing their experiences of the creative process.

Like other art forms such as painting and poetry, dance can take us to a pre-verbal stage where as yet there are no words to express experience. It can be an accurate reflection of the dance and a useful addition to the archive to express the experience of a dance work in painting or free-writing, while at the same time being educational for audiences.

Supplementary material such as rehearsal photographs or videos and other associated records are valuable in conjunction with the interview material.



## AUDIENCE INTERVIEWS



Audience interviews largely consist of identifying things that particularly engage the interviewee and reflecting on why. Start with three main categories: feelings, thoughts, and physical sensations. The conversation should be free and dynamic. The chronology of each interview will be unique, reflecting the requirement not to cut off the interviewee mid flow.

Identify the sections of the performance which elicited a particularly strong response and the parts that have stayed with them. It might be a vivid, poignant, insightful, touching, or upsetting moment. It could be anything from the entire experience, and not necessarily something that happened during the performance itself.

It often comes down to a moment in the performance that sparked something special in them, which they then consider and process. The interview is then an opportunity to reflect and to internalise it. It might be a memory; it might be an insight about oneself as a person or the world we live in. The conversation strengthens the performance experience retrospectively, with the interviewee often discovering new depths to their experience when talking about it.



# INTERVIEW SCRIPT – AUDIENCE

## Introduction

- Today's date.
- Context: How long before the interview the person saw the performance.
- Familiarity: 'How often do you go to dance performances: frequently, some times, rarely, or never?' Or open the conversation by asking about the person's relationship with dance.
- Ask if they have any questions before you start.

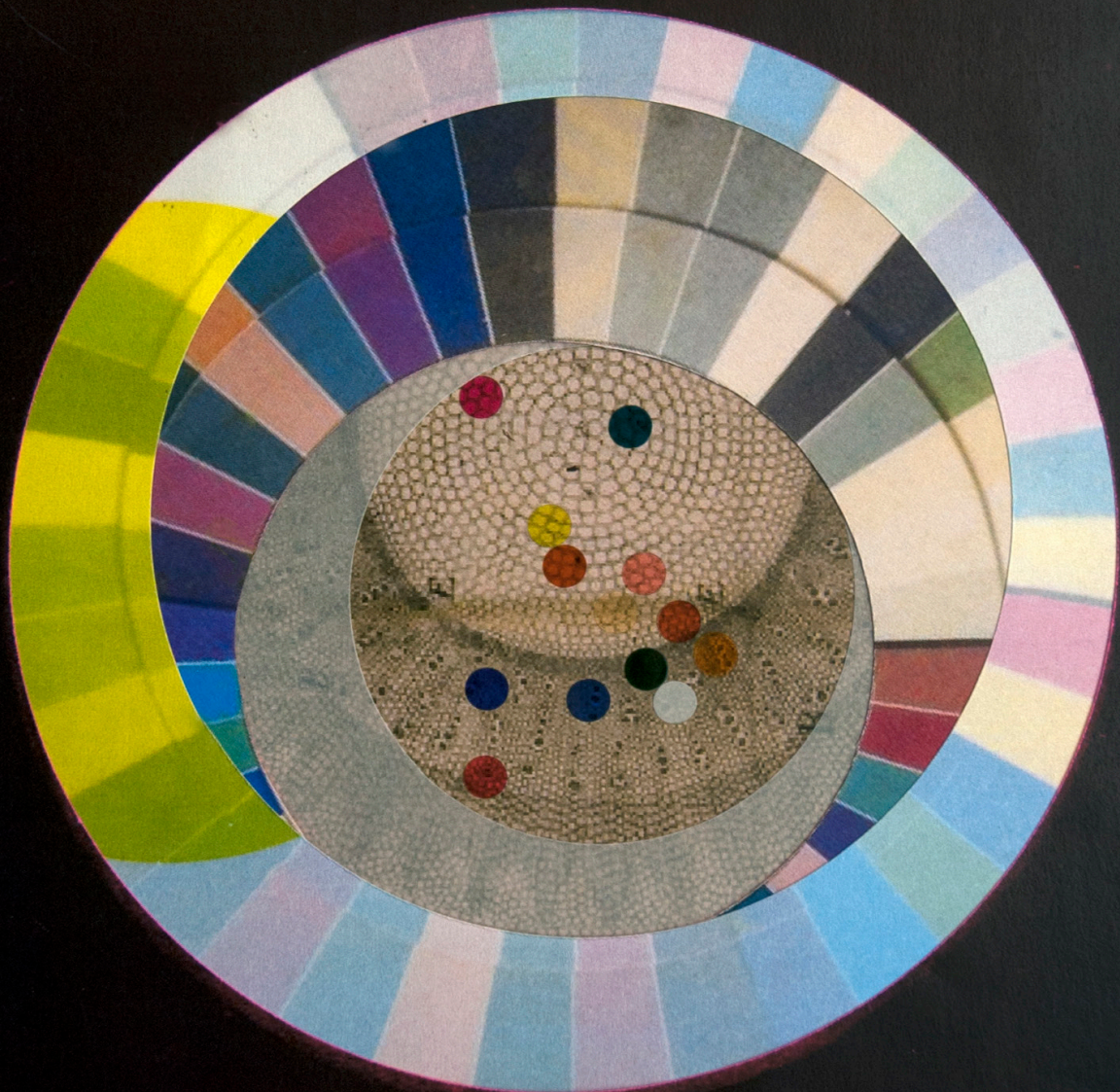
## Questions

1. What was it like watching the performance? Tell me about your experience.
2. How did the performance leave you/how did the performance affect you?
3. Tell me about the thoughts, associations, and memories it evoked.
4. How did you feel after the performance?
5. What will you take with you from the performance? Why?
6. Is there any part of your experience that we have not talked about?

## In the interview

- Go by the interviewee's thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations.
- Mirror the person and what they think and feel.
- Take the things that stand out and ask the person to describe them in greater depth and detail.







## DANCER AND ARTISTIC TEAM INTERVIEWS

Interviews with dancers and artistic team are similar but offer different perspectives. The dancer provides an inside perspective; the artistic team provides background and an overall perspective.

A dancer has a strong connection with their body and can give detailed descriptions of how their body and mind respond in different situations, which is an invaluable record for an archive. In dancer interviews the focus is the creative process, and what the collaboration and dynamic between dancer and choreographer have been like. It is also interesting to chart how the dancer in all their individuality leaves their mark on the work and vice versa – how the artistic process affects and develops the dancer. The questions for dancers are thus based on four themes: the process, collaboration/co-creation, subjective views, and lessons learned/experiences.

Individuals in the artistic team make their mark on a dance piece according to their background and personality, so it is useful to open the interview with their approach and role in the team. Intention and vision are important when capturing sources of inspiration, philosophical thoughts, and ideas in general. The questions for the artistic team centre on the themes of background, process, method, and collaboration.

The questions should be adapted to the stage in the process when the interview takes place. It is worth having three interviews with a dancer to get several snapshots of the process: one early in the process, one part way, and a third during the performance period. The same applies for the choreographer, depending of course on how much time there is.

# INTERVIEW SCRIPT – DANCERS AND ARTISTIC TEAM

## Introduction

- Today's date.
- Context: The name of the interviewee, the dance work, the choreographer, and the stage in the process when they are being interviewed.
- Background: Tell me about yourself as an artist/dancer.

## General questions

- *Process*  
Where are you in the process?  
What does the process feel like at the moment?  
Describe the artistic process.  
What is unique about this process?
- *Collaboration/co-creation*  
Tell me about the collaboration.  
What is it like in rehearsal?  
Has there been a special moment/occasion you would like to share?  
Tell me about the group dynamic.
- *Lessons learned/experiences*  
Tell me about the challenges in this particular production process.  
Have you learned anything new?  
What will you take away from this process?  
How are you affected by this particular dance piece?





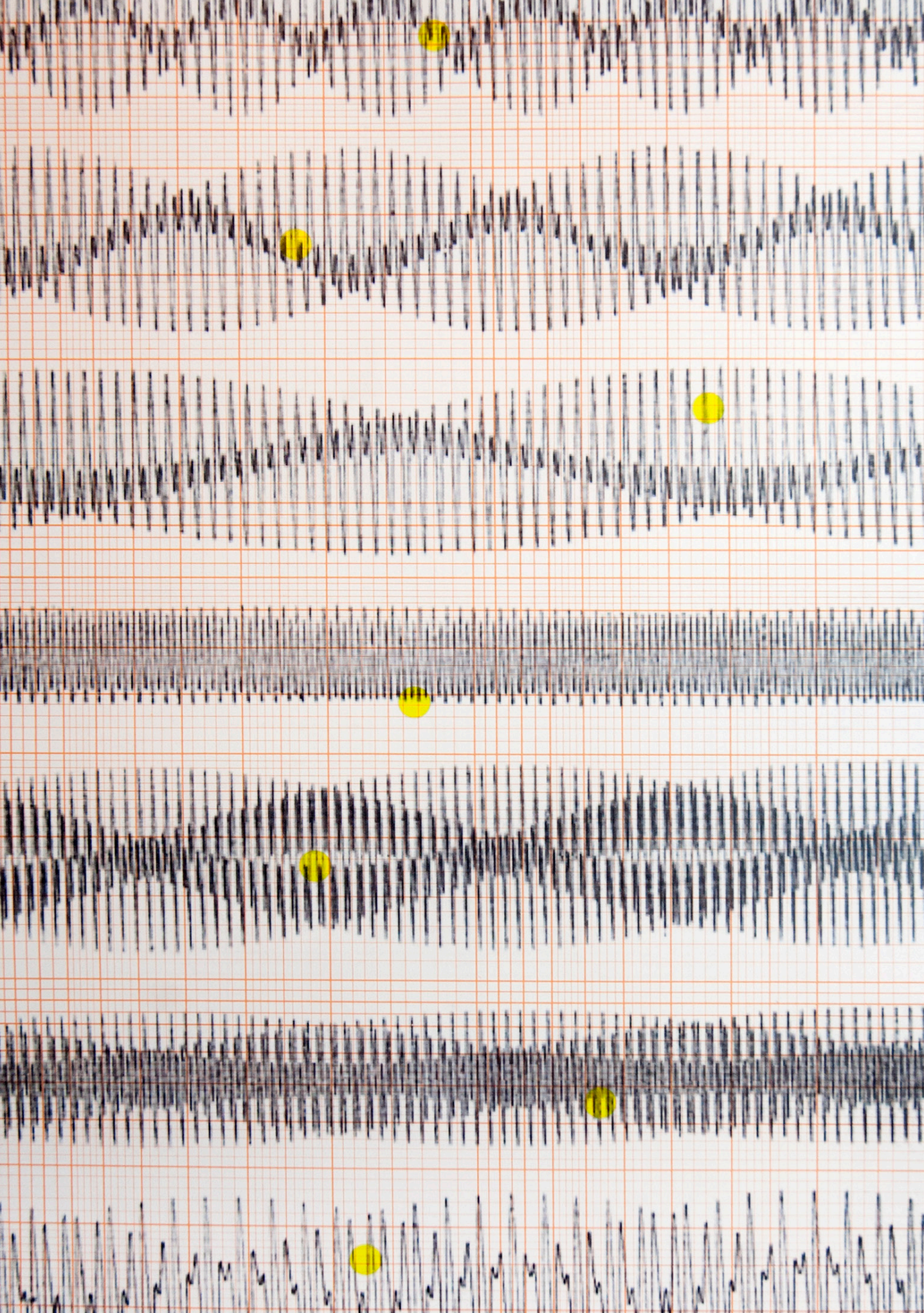
## Specific questions – Dancers

- *Process*  
What does the process feel like physically at the moment?
- *Collaboration/co-creation*  
What is it like working with this choreographer?
- *Subjective views*  
How do you feel when you dance this piece?  
How does it feel physically?  
What do you think about when dancing it?  
Describe this particular dance work from your perspective. What does it mean to you?

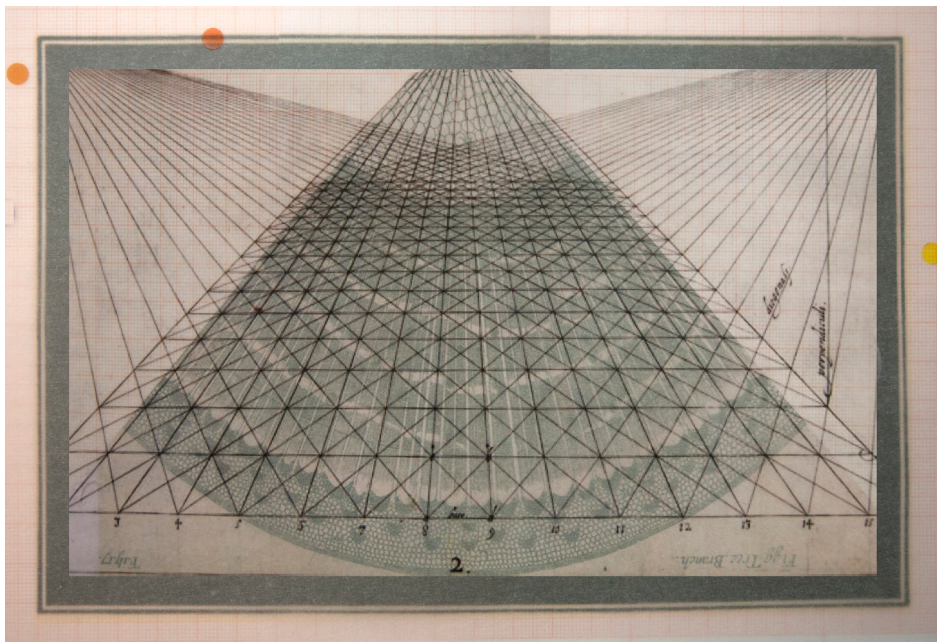
## Specific questions – Artistic team

- *Process*  
Describe your role.  
What is it like to create this work?
- *Collaboration/co-creation*  
Tell me about the artistic team's collaboration.
- *Background*  
Tell me about the intention and initial idea for the work.  
Tell me about the thoughts and ideas you want to explore with the work.  
Tell me about your vision.  
What does the title of the work communicate?  
What do you want the audience to experience?















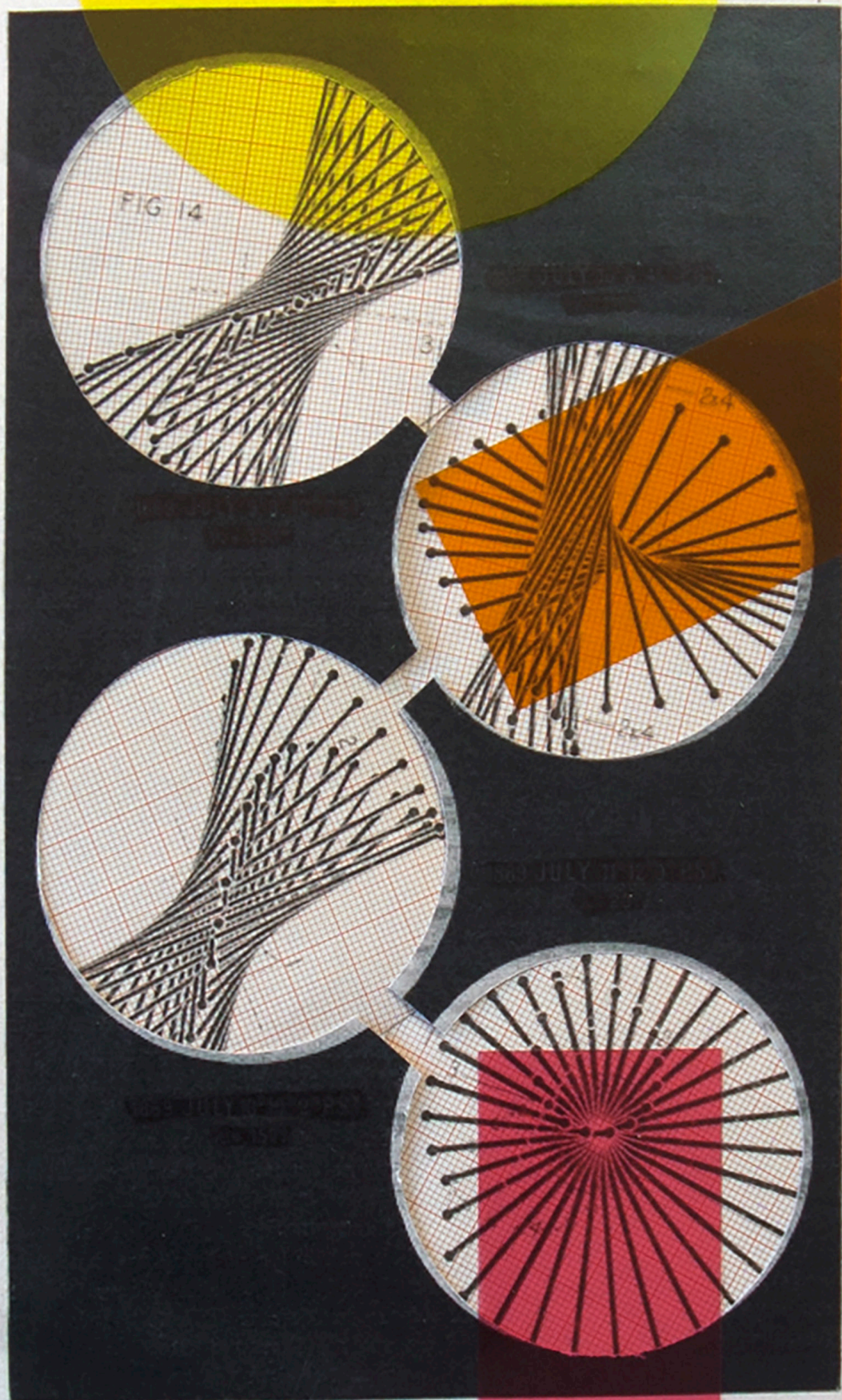
## EFFECTIVE IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

The more you give in interest and commitment, the more you will get back in the form of rich interview material. Acting on the responsibility for the framing and ethics of the interview is also an important contribution you can make as interviewer. The aim of the interview should be to access a person's subjective view and put it into words. Here are some factors to bear in mind which create the conditions for a rewarding interview.

- Open the conversation by noting the importance and value of the person's experiences and reflections. It will encourage them to be more engaged and detailed in what they share. *'Your experiences and views have a unique historical value and contribute to the knowledge base.'*
- Be curious. Genuine interest will encourage the interviewee to invest in the conversation.
- Create a sense of security with clear boundaries. Be clear about how the interview material will be used and stored. Where will it be saved and for how long? How will it be in use? *'I want you to know how the interview will be used—'* Ask that they sign a consent form after the interview. Tell them how long the interview will take. Find a quiet place for the interview where you will not be disturbed.
- Spell out the interviewee's anonymity and rights. If the material will be anonymised, explain how. In terms of rights, the interviewee can break off whenever they want, and they can withdraw their participation and consent to be included in the archive at any point. Alternatively, the material (or parts of it) can be made confidential for a specified period after the interview.
- Welcome and accommodate emotion. A strong element in the transmission and archiving of an experience is when the interviewee expresses emotion. Be as open and accepting of emotional reactions as anything else the person communicates.
- Cultivate the relationship you strike up in the conversation (this is especially true of audience interviews). This can take the form of feedback, further interviews, or including the interviewee in other suitable contexts.

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- Put the interview script to the back of your mind during the interview and concentrate on listening. What matters is not covering all the questions, but being engaged and asking follow-up questions that advance the conversation.
  - Listen carefully. Where do you want the conversation to lead? If you want the interviewee to describe something in more detail, repeat it back to them in your own words and ask if you have understood correctly, as that often results in them adding, changing, and nuancing a fuller answer. *‘Would it be right to say—?’* *‘It sounds as if—’* Mirroring also establishes rapport with the person, which can take the conversation into less familiar territory. It can reveal things the interviewee ‘didn’t know they knew’. It is valuable both for the interviewee and the archive.
  - Allow silent moments in the conversation. Silences have the effect of deepening the conversation and nuancing the subject under discussion.
  - To elicit more details, use openers such as *‘Tell me more about—?’* *‘How is it that—?’* *‘Tell me about a typical day in the studio’*, or *‘Tell me about a special moment’*.
  - When it comes to the audience, stay with their experience and avoid questions about interpretation such as *‘What was the performance about?’* Interpretation can be limiting and put pressure on the interviewee to ‘understand’ the performance’s message. It tends to detach the interviewee from their own experiences, which is counterproductive. The interview as a whole will answer the question of what they thought the performance was about.
  - One or more questions can be the same in all the interviews to promote researchability. This requires that the question is formulated in the same way in every interview.
  - The interview can be seen as a gift or donation to the archive. The contents of the interview are not something you can fully control. The interviewee chooses what to share and what not.
  - Be transparent about your own role in the interview. You are a co-creator in a conversation that will go on to be part of an archive.





Der Planet Jupiter im Jahre 1889

Nach vier Beobachtungen von James C. Keeler auf der Sid-Sternwarte (Kalkferris)



# HANDLING INTERVIEW MATERIAL

In order for an archive to receive collected materials more easily, they should be structured. Create an Excel file which you fill in as you collect material. Metadata thought significant for the collection process should be arranged in a table. It should be easy to understand and have clear references to the archival material. Suggestions for the key metadata: interviewee, interviewee's role, date, interview location, interviewer, format, length, contents, and description.

## Example

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Interviewee	Interviewees role	Location	Date	Interviewer	File Format	Content
2	Tero Saarinen	Choreographer	Malmö	9/9/20	Celine Orman	mp3	Interview about "Trar
3	Tero Saarinen	Choreographer	Malmö	10/2/20	Celine Orman	mp3	Interview about "Trar
4	Teemu Muurimäki	Costume design	Malmö	9/17/20	Celine Orman	mp3	Interview about "Trar
5	David Scarantino	Assistant choreographer	Malmö	8/26/20	Celine Orman	mp3	Interview about "Trar
6	Tuomas Norvio	Sound Design	Malmö	9/24/20	Celine Orman	mp3	Interview about "Trar
7	Jens Johansson	Light master SDT	Malmö	10/20/20	Celine Orman	mp3	Interview about "Trar
8	Belinda Nusser	Rehearsal director	Malmö	9/10/20	Celine Orman	mp3	Interview about "Trar
9	Anette Jelline	Dancer	Malmö	10/22/20	Celine Orman	mp3	Interview about "Trar
10	Ange Clementine Hiroki	Dancer	Malmö	10/14/20	Celine Orman	mp3	Interview about "Trar
11	Dario Minoia	Dancer	Malmö	9/10/20	Celine Orman	mp3	Interview about "Trar
12	Jeanne Delsus	Dancer	Malmö	9/10/20	Celine Orman	mp3	Interview about "Trar

## Example of a description

Documentation of the dance production Zero–Zero performed by Skånes Dans-teater, a double bill with Franzén/Nuutinen at Skånes Dansteater, 27 October to 14 December 2022. The documentation is part of the dance archive project 'Skånes Dansteater: Maintaining Movement'. Choreography: Johanna Nuutinen. Music: Tuomas Norvio. Costumes: Helle Carlsson. Set design: Jason Southgate. Assistant choreographer: Jenia Kasatkina. Dancers: Ange-Clémentine Hiroki, Maria Pilar Abaurrea Zardoya, Michael Marques, Berta Ramirez.

Anonymise the members of the audience and cite using numbers. Suggested format:

1. Woman, aged 39, from Malmö.
2. Man, aged 71, from Höör.
3. Woman, aged 19, from Lund.

In order for interview material to be archived and made accessible, written consent must be obtained from interviewees and archived with the rest of the material.

## USING INTERVIEW MATERIAL

Skånes Dansteater has used interview material generated by the Maintaining Movement project in various ways. For each production, brief films are made with excerpts from the interview material, which are then published online. It is designed to spotlight the experience of dance and communicate the benefits of talking about the experience. Excerpts of interviews with dancers and the artistic team are occasionally used in the pre-performance talks.

Other areas where they have been used include:

- Marketing the revival of an existing production.
- As the basis for an audio description of a work.
- Evaluating production processes.
- As audience feedback for dancers and the artistic team.

### **Community outreach**

Audience interview methods can be integrated into various audience outreach contexts and thus serve both archival and community learning functions. Examples of formats trialled by Maintaining Movement are workshops, post-performance talks, and live-streamed interviews with members of the artistic team.

The kind of interview depends on its use and aim. There is a difference between an interview in front of an audience and a personal interview designed to be archived. In the latter case, the choreographer, for example, does not have the same responsibility to the dance company or the audience. It means things can be discussed that otherwise would not be mentioned, which is invaluable for archives and research. Be transparent in the metadata, whatever the interview's context: it is important background information for future archive users.



## Accessibility

Donating collected material to an archive that can acquire, manage, protect, and provide public access to the archival holding is central. The material is searchable in archive databases and becomes part of the national heritage. The Music and Theatre Library of Sweden (MTB) in Stockholm is the official archive for the performing arts and is a possible repository. Dansmuseet (the Museum of Dance) in Stockholm also accepts donations of records; however, there is no published acquisitions policy and resources limit what they can accept. If the material relates to their existing collection there is more reason for them to accept it. Some regional archives will also accept material if it has local connections. It is recommended that MTB is contacted for initial advice about the relevance of the material and possible repositories.

When archiving dance pieces, the copyright always remains with the creators. For example, if a researcher wants to publish a photo or audiovisual material, they must contact the copyright owner themselves.

Maintaining Movement's archive is held by MTB. Related material such as films, photos, and process materials are currently available at Skånes Dansteater. For access, contact Skånes Dansteater.

An archive collection must have an archival description to contextualise its contents and make it more accessible. The description should include its *provenance*: how and when the archive was created, in what context, and under what conditions. Which individual or organisation is the *creator*? It is also important to describe the *contents* and *scope*. Include references to any *related material* (video, photographs, reviews, programmes, etc.) and where it is located.

### **The archive is present – think long term**

There is much about a work process that is interesting from an archival perspective. Archiving thus does not have to be an extra step, nor does it require an archivist or someone with special responsibility. It is more about working methods where the archiving function is integral.

That said, a collection of this kind would be useful for any organisation or group. Community outreach events such as live-streamed interviews and workshops become part of the archive and are knowledge-generating activities at the same time.

An interview is a meeting that can be beneficial to both parties. In many cases, an interview has been an opportunity to pause and reflect on experiences or work – something that dancers have said is valuable, for example. It raises awareness of the experience of dance and increases with every conversation. Ultimately, it strengthens dance's importance and potential in the here and now. In future it will form a more distinct heritage, as a basis for research.

### **Further reading and inspiration**

Minnesjägarna: Handbok i samtidsdokumentation, by Hampus Busk ('Memory Hunters: A Guide to Contemporary Collecting').

For inspiration, see the dance archives at Dansmuseet, the Music and Theatre Library of Sweden, Nordiska Museet, the Institute for Language and Folklore, and Kulturen in Lund.





**Celine Orman** is head of the Maintaining Movement project at Skånes Dansteater. She has an MA in archive, library and museum studies (ALM) with information science and museology, and previously studied literature, photography, and film.

She has a background as a dancer and for the past 15 years has pursued a particular interest in somatic practices. She has studied dance and movement therapy and gives courses in Authentic Movement.

Celine is fascinated by the bridges between non-verbal physical experience and cognitive verbal language and how together they can help develop both the individual and the community. She takes an active listening approach in her work to conserve dance experiences in a unique, living archival format, in order to promote dance's relevance, research, and heritage.





Text by **Celine Orman**  
Design by **Hanna Hedström**  
Illustrations by **Jessica Helbach**  
Photo by **Carl Johan Folkesson Karlidag**  
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