

iCoDaCo Online Conference: Body Politics in Contemporary Dance

Monday, 8 December, 16:00 – 18:00 CET

Online (Zoom with live captioning and livestreamed on HowlRound) in English

Organised by: FACE – Fresh Arts Coalition Europe for iCoDaCo – International Contemporary Dance Collective

In collaboration with: Europe Beyond Access and HowlRound

Co-funded by the European Union

Registration:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/nzwBjNCIR0eQGD1Fg2KY2A#/registration>

Body Politics in Contemporary Dance

The body has always been a site of political expression, a canvas for resistance, and a medium through which power, identity, and agency are negotiated. In contemporary dance, the body is not merely an instrument of artistic expression but also a vehicle for challenging norms, interrogating power structures, and redefining societal boundaries. From disability aesthetics to gender fluidity, from decolonial movements to environmental activism, dance artists are increasingly using their practice to engage with urgent political and social questions.

This online conference, organised by iCoDaCo in collaboration with Europe Beyond Access, brings together dance artists, choreographers, researchers, and cultural practitioners to explore the theme of Body Politics in Contemporary Dance. The event will examine how dance as an art form can disrupt, provoke, and reimagine the political dimensions of embodiment.

Through inspiring keynote presentations, artist talks, and interactive discussions, this conference will explore the dynamic relationship between dance and political activism, with a particular focus on disability, race, gender, and class. It will also highlight innovative artistic practices that challenge and redefine conventional representations of the body.

The event will feature guest artists from iCoDaCo and Europe Beyond Access, two initiatives that are at the forefront of supporting experimental, inclusive, and politically engaged dance practices in Europe. By centring the voices of artists who are pushing boundaries—both aesthetically and politically—this conference aims to inspire

dialogue, foster solidarity, and provoke critical reflection on the future of dance as a tool for social change.

Why Body Politics?

The politicisation of the body is not a new phenomenon, but in recent years, it has taken on new urgencies. The global rise of authoritarianism, the backlash against gender and queer rights, the climate crisis, and the ongoing struggles for racial and disability justice have all brought the body to the forefront of political discourse. Dance, as a visceral and immediate art form, is uniquely positioned to respond to these challenges—not only as a form of protest or resistance but also as a means of reimagining what bodies can do, how they can move, and who gets to occupy space.

This conference will delve into the intricate relationship between dance and political activism, focusing on how contemporary dance artists engage with and respond to the political dimensions of the body. For artists in this field, the body is not merely a vehicle for artistic expression but is also deeply influenced by the political, economic, and cultural contexts in which they create and perform. The body becomes a site of negotiation, where questions of identity, power, and agency are constantly at play.

The event seeks to unpack these layered dynamics, exploring how dance can challenge conventional representations of the body and redefine its role in a world marked by growing polarisation. What does it mean to create work that is politically engaged in such a climate? How can dance disrupt normative narratives and reclaim the body as a space for resistance, advocacy, and transformation? These are the questions at the heart of the conference, as it examines the ways in which artists navigate the complexities of creating work that is both artistically bold and socially resonant.

By bringing together artists from iCoDaCo and Europe Beyond Access, this conference will foster critical dialogue on the potential of dance to interrogate power structures, amplify marginalised experiences, and inspire collective action toward a more inclusive and equitable cultural landscape.

Programme

1. Introductory remarks (16:00 – 16:10 CET)

Welcome words:

- **Yohann Floch**, FACE – Fresh Arts Coalition Europe (he/his)

Yohann Floch is the Director of FACE, a resource platform that facilitates European capacity-building programmes in the contemporary performing arts field, and the Director of Operations at On the Move, the international network dedicated to artistic and cultural mobility. Throughout his career, Yohann has

designed, coordinated, and contributed to numerous European cooperation projects and pilot international collaborations while working for independent arts organisations and cultural institutions. He serves governmental bodies and private foundations as an external expert and leads or co-authors cultural policy reports. Previously, Yohann held various leadership positions, including Secretary General of the European Dancehouse Network, Director of Skåne's International Resource Office, Coordinator of Dansehallerne's Nordic dance network, and Coordinator of the Circostrada network.

<https://fresh-europe.org/>

2. Inspiring presentations (16:10 – 16:30 CET)

Following the introduction to the conference, the opening segment will showcase two speakers—an artist from iCoDaCo and another from Europe Beyond Access. Each will explore the concept of 'body politics' through the lens of their artistic and research practices, offering unique insights into how their work engages with, challenges, and redefines the political dimensions of embodiment in contemporary dance.

- iCoDaCo artist **Khamlane Halsackda** (he/his/they)

Khamlane Halsackda was born in Laos, grew up in the UK, and now lives in Malmö, Sweden. He has worked within dance for 30 years, and this, as well as turning 50 recently, ignites his reflections on ageing, queerness, connection, community, ecology, and sustainability. Recently Khamlane took up asking "How can all our perspectives exist in one place at the same time?" He leans on this philosophical question as a way to welcome diverse perspectives and lived experiences into his creative work, embracing dialogue and curiosity. He's most recent project is *Lost and Found*, a collaboration with choreographer/dancer Skye Reynolds. *Lost and Found* is an exhibition of archived research material revealing their artistic process (and therefore their evolving relationship) across 6 years. Within this Khamlane and Skye periodically perform live stirring up questions around their ageing body, memory, permanence, and impermanence. The premiere is April 2026 at Moderna Museet Malmö, Sweden.

<https://khamlane.nyarorelsen.com/>

- EBA artist **Filip Pawlak**:

Filip Pawlak is a theatre maker, self-advocate for artists with disabilities, independent curator and producer. Graduate of the Film School in Katowice and Malmö Theatre Academy / Lund University. Since 2025, PhD student in art at the Krzysztof Kieślowski Film School at the University of Silesia. Involved in the international project Europe Beyond Access as an ambassador and expert. Together with Łukasz Ronduda, author of the multidisciplinary project "Freak show" realised, among others, in the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw. In 2024, scholarship holder of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage in the "Young Poland" programme. In 2024 artist-at-residence at the European Art Centre Hellerau in Dresden, Komuna Warsaw, and in 2025 at Skanes Dansteater. Experienced in the institutional and independent arts sector. Member of the Advisory Committee of the IETM International Network for Contemporary Performing Arts since 2023.

<https://filippawlak.com/>

Their presentations will set the tone for the broader discussions that follow, grounding the conference in real-world artistic experiences and critical reflections.

3. Breakout sessions (16:30 – 17:00 CET)

The second segment will be interactive, inviting participants to engage in smaller breakout discussions on key aspects emerging from the presentations. These discussions will be facilitated by moderators, with the goal of highlighting the diverse ways in which contemporary dance can interrogate, challenge, and reimagine the political dimensions of the body, offering practical insights and thought-provoking reflections on how artistic practice intersects with broader social and cultural discourses.

Facilitators:

- **Israel Aloni**, iLDance, Sweden (they/them)

Israel Aloni serves as Artistic Director of iLDance (Sweden), architect of the International Contemporary Dance Collective (iCoDaCo), and Artistic Director of COMPASS, a national platform supporting emerging artists. They are also a researcher for the EU's *Cultural Transformation Movement Project*, coordinated by Trans Europe Halles. Their latest publication, *MILON QUIS – Words for Dance*, a “dictionary in flux,” draws from their movement research practice, *The I.Aloni Experience*, and was published by Circadian (Berlin). In 2025, Aloni created a modular, site-specific work for archaeological sites as part of the EU project *Dancing History(y)ies*. Their durational performance *Boys Just Want To Have Fun* toured Europe with support from Perform Europe, and *PASSING*—a collaboration with five local artists—premiered in Sofia, commissioned by Toplocentrala.

<https://www.ildance.se/>

- **Teresa Camarinha**, Instável – Centro Coreográfico, Portugal (she/her)

Teresa Camarinha is a creative producer with a background in theatre, dance, and music. She holds a degree in Theatre Studies from the University of Évora and has extensive experience in production, project management, and artistic coordination across Portugal and Europe. She has worked with organisations including Acting for Climate, Erva Daninha, Visões Úteis, and HE Teatro. Currently, she is producing iCoDaCo for Instável – Centro Coreográfico and collaborating with Diagonal Animal and bactéria AC. Her work reflects a commitment to supporting innovative artistic practices, fostering collaboration, and connecting artists across disciplines and borders.

<https://www.instavel.pt/>

- **Anikó Rácz**, SÍN Arts Centre, Czech Republic (she/her)

Anikó Rácz is the artistic director of SÍN Arts Centre in Budapest, Hungary. She has been working with independent dance makers for 20 years now on their project and career development. She is also a certified coach and facilitator, leading workshops and trainings on career development, internationalization, collaboration and leadership with structures such as Aerowaves, EDN, IETM, Ice Hot, Stockholm University of the Arts and other international organizations. Her main focus of interest is the facilitation of horizontal, transparent, value-based collaborations within teams and with external partners, creating space for discussions and reflections about good practices and lessons to learn.

<https://en.sinarts.org/>

- **Jasper van Luijk**, SHIFFT, The Netherlands (he/his)

Jasper van Luijk is a choreographer based in Utrecht. Since 2017, he has been working under his own dance company, SHIFFT. Van Luijk studied dance at the ArtEZ Dance Academy in Arnhem. In 2012, shortly after graduating, he won the ITS Choreography Award as a promising emerging choreographic talent. He has created earlier works under the wings of organizations such as Generale Oost, Het Huis Utrecht, Korzo, and Maaspodium. In his performances, the physical body and its relationship to the (theatrical) space take centre stage. Van Luijk seeks dialogue with other art forms and contemporary developments, turning his performances into total sensory experiences. He has also been active as a programmer and artistic director for the Café Theater Festival, the ITS Festival, and the Moving Futures Festival. In 2019, he delivered the State of Dance address.

<https://shifftutrecht.com/>

[short break]

4. Interactive discussion (17:10 – 17:50 CET)

The guest artists—two from iCoDaCo and two from Europe Beyond Access—will each share their takeaways from the breakout room they followed, drawing on their personal and professional experiences of engaging with body politics in their work.

Facilitator:

- **Gwyn Emberton**, Skånes Dansteater, Sweden (he/him)

Gwyn Emberton has worked in dance for over 25 years as a choreographer, performer, producer, teacher and dramaturg across the UK and internationally. He is the artistic director and founder of Jones the Dance, an independent dance company in Wales and a creative producer and choreographer at Skånes Dansteater, Sweden. For Skånes Dansteater, Gwyn focuses his work towards people who have historically been excluded from mainstream contemporary dance producing projects such as Europe Beyond Access that aim to elevate the voices and work of disabled and Deaf dancers across Europe and creating work with and for Malmö's LGBTQIA+ community. Gwyn is also currently working on a new, multi-dimensional project *Autobiography of the Body* - that includes a methodology to reclaim our long-forgotten histories of our bodies - with iterations in Sweden and Wales coming in Autumn and Spring.

<https://www.skandesdansteater.se/en>

Guest rapporteurs:

- iCoDaCo **Anna Szepes** (she/her)

Anna Szepes is a theatre maker and facilitator developing community based participatory projects. Graduating as a Drama Instructor from the University of Theatre and Film Arts Budapest, she worked on theatre education projects in rural Hungary, on documentary- and forum theatre performances with the Cross Border Project in Madrid and studied Applied Theatre at the Universität Mozarteum Salzburg. Her work focuses on social- and political issues through long term collaborations with marginalized groups and experts. Anna is intrigued by the theatricality of public spaces, reversed hierarchies, somatic interactions and gentle methods of practicing resistance. Currently she works as a founding member of DePart Collective (artivism), as the co-leader of the participatory theatre department of Trafó House and is part of the movement research with the Hungarian Icodaco collective.

<https://www.depart.community/>

- iCoDaCo artist **Destiny Af Kleen** (she/her)

Destiny af Kleen's work is rooted in social care, a genuine interest in people, and a clear activist and political perspective. She often uses "place" as her starting point and has created several participant-based projects that explore how we share and use public space. As the artistic leader of DansPlats Skog—an artist-run production space and dance stage—she curates the program and works deeply with ideas about place development, cultural geography and the urban norm. In recent years, she has created a series of installations and site-specific works across Gävleborg County, danced with horses, built dance floors in the forests of Hälsingland, planted 40 trees as acts of comfort, and created and patented two hugging machines.

www.yodestiny.com

- EBA artist **Alice Giuliani** (she/her)

Alice Giuliani is an Italian dance-performance artist based in Brussels. Her practice draws on interdisciplinary languages, placing the body and the voice at the centre—as sites of fantasy, vulnerability, and the affirmation of crip-spoonie and feminist narratives. Over the past ten years, she has collaborated as a performer in numerous dance and music productions across Europe. Since 2022, she has begun creating her own works, including *Ruggine* (work in progress) in collaboration with visual artist Winju; *And Everything Is Porous*, co-created with Camilla Strandhagen; and the solo piece *A.ROOM.POURED.OVER.ME*. She holds a master's degree from ISAC at ARBA-ESA in Brussels, as well as two bachelor's degrees in Performing Arts from Roma Tre University and Paris VIII University.

<http://a.room.poured.over.me/>

- EBA artist **Alessandro Schiattarella** (he/him)

Alessandro Schiattarella is a Swiss-Neapolitan choreographer, performer, and disability advocate based in Basel. After an international career as a solo dancer, he developed his own choreographic language, shaped by his lived experience with Hirayama disease and a commitment to anti-ableist aesthetics. His work explores the politics of the body, challenging normative ideals of ability and presence. Blending dance, text, sound, and spatial experimentation, his interdisciplinary pieces centre care, fragility, and interdependence as both artistic and political values. His creations are presented internationally, in theatres, site-specific locations, and festival contexts. Since 2024, he has been Artistic Co-Director of DISFRAME (formerly IntegrART), a Swiss network for inclusive performing arts. In this role, he works to expand accessibility and foster systemic change by supporting artists and curators engaged with disability discourse. Trained at Teatro alla Scala in Milan and Rudra Béjart Lausanne, Alessandro also holds a Master of Advanced Studies in Fine Arts from HGK FHNW and a Certificate of Advanced Studies in Dance Science from the University of Bern.

<https://www.schiattarella.info/>

5. Closing remarks (17:50 – 18:00 CET)

Conclusions and acknowledgments:

- **Yohann Floch**, FACE – Fresh Arts Coalition Europe (he/his)

How to Register

Registration for the conference is **free and open to all**. To secure your place, please [register via this link](#). Upon registration, you will receive a **Zoom link** automatically.

For any questions or accessibility requests, please contact:

Yohann Floch, info@fresh-europe.org

About the organisers and partners

FACE – Fresh Arts Coalition Europe

FACE is a resource platform dedicated to supporting the internationalisation of professional practices and fostering innovative, practice-based learning in the performing arts. Through a range of comprehensive workshops, mentoring programmes, mobility experiences, and capacity-building initiatives, FACE empowers artists, cultural professionals, institutions, and grassroots arts organisations

[.https://fresh-europe.org/](https://fresh-europe.org/)

iCoDaCo – International Contemporary Dance Collective

iCoDaCo is a Creative Europe-funded project that supports contemporary dance artists through collaborative research, professional development, and international exchange. The project focuses on fostering innovative, sustainable, and inclusive practices in contemporary dance, with a particular emphasis on cross-border collaboration and artistic experimentation.

<https://www.icodaco.com/>

EBA – Europe Beyond Access

Europe Beyond Access is a Creative Europe -funded initiative dedicated to supporting disabled artists to break the glass ceilings of the contemporary performing arts. The project provides residencies, commissions, and networking opportunities for disabled artists, while also advocating for systemic change in the cultural sector.

<https://www.europebeyondaccess.com/>

HowlRound TV

HowlRound TV is a global, commons-based, peer-produced, open-access live streaming and video archive project stewarded by the non-profit HowlRound. HowlRound TV is a free and shared resource for live conversations and performances relevant to the world's performing-arts and cultural fields. Its mission is to break geographic isolation, promote resource sharing, and develop our knowledge commons collectively.

<https://howlround.com/>