

PhD Abstract

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Technique concerns: ballet practice against the Western archive

From 2010 to 2021, the researcher delved into Janet Panetta's unique dance pedagogy, exploring her distinctive position at the crossroads of classical and contemporary dance aesthetics in New York City and Western Europe. Central to her teaching is "Ballet for Contemporary Dancers," a technique inspired by the Italian Cecchetti method, creatively tailored to dancers less inclined towards virtuosity and high art. The researcher, having immersed himself in Panetta's movement philosophy as both performer and practitioner, established a devoted, if informal, mentorship with Panetta herself.

This research project's primary objective is to create an archive of the emergent technique while engaging in an abstract dialogue with the absent teacher, Janet Panetta. Employing embodied research methodologies, the project probes the consequences of shedding the expectations of virtuosity within the dancer's body, with a particular focus on the tangible pathways carved by embodied technique. The project's significance lies in its examination of ballet knowledge that can be transferred and replicated, contributing to an archive of unconventional ballet pedagogy.

Furthermore, this research project seeks to contextualize Janet Panetta's approach within the broader cultural and political landscape. It elucidates how her methodology embodies a symbolic struggle between the postmodern dance movement of the 1960s and the entrenched virtuosic imperatives inherent in traditional ballet technique.

This study serves as a multifaceted exploration of dance pedagogy and documentation, offering both practical insights and a nuanced perspective on the evolving relationship between contemporary and classical dance forms.