

Research of Good Practice examples

In the frame of the project Lights on stAGE, project partners* conducted six face-to-face interviews with practitioners of community and participatory dance activities with seniors, both in Vienna and in Barcelona. Getting to know these different and enriching approaches to participatory dance projects with older people, partners could broaden their perspective on the issue and use it as a starting point to develop their own concept (see Handbook Lights on stAGE).



* A.R.E.A. Associació per a la Recerca Educativa en els Arts Escèniques
queraum. queraum. cultural and social research

Grupo artístico comunitario del Antic Teatre, Barcelona

Name of the project leader

**Marta Galán Sala
y Montserrat Irazo i Domingo**

Timeframe of the project

Since 2011 - ongoing

Timeframe and number of sessions

**Weekly 2 hour sessions,
production period of 3 weeks
with daily rehearsals**

Age and number of the participants

70 - 86 years, 9 participants

Form of research

(interview, literature study, etc.)

**Interview,
participation in session,
Claudia Auzinger**

Describe the personal approach and motivation of the project leader

The project emerged from the request of the district to confront isolation of older people in the city center and the political aspiration and response of Antic Teatre to connect art to the neighborhood. The two coordinators and facilitators of the social-artistic project come from different professional backgrounds: Marta is specialized in the field of dramaturgy and also works as artist-educator and cultural manager whereas Montserrat is dance therapist, choreographer, dance researcher and social worker. They complement each other very well with their knowledge within the project, responding to artistic and social needs (facilitation of collective, co-creation processes).

Describe the artistic interest of the project

The project, although having a big social impact on the participants, is designed as an artistic practice. Each year the group produces a piece, which is shown in public. The project coordinators guarantee an all-embracing production with proper light and sound design as well as giving importance to costumes. They want to offer a proper stage production to enable participants to show all their potentials and beauty.

Describe the way of working

During the ongoing weekly training session, wishes and needs of participants are heard and addressed, both in the frame of the training as well as an impulse for the yearly artistic production. The latest piece "Les Vedettes" (starlets) emerged from the wishes of participants to work on drama and cabaret. In the piece personal stories of participants regarding their artistic biography were set into relation to the genre of musicales, as presented in the universe of choreographer Bob Fosse. The participants' personal stories derived from the so-called "archaeology of everyday life", a methodology that proposes the recovery of living memory based on a document, object or photograph.

Describe the format (structure and content of the classes, workshops, rehearsals, etc.)

During the whole year there is an ongoing training (movement and other artistic practices) with weekly encounters of two hours. Besides working on movement and expression through movement, the group also works on text and speech. On the other hand, each year there is a scenic production process, which culminates in a creation lab of 3 weeks of rehearsals with daily sessions of 5 hours.

Place to share public materials of the project (websites, documentation, etc.)

[→ VISIT LINK](#)

Barris en dansa

Name of the project leader

Álvaro de la Peña

Timeframe of the project

2011 - 2020

Timeframe and number of sessions

The creation period lasts three months. Two sessions per week of 2.5 hours

Age and number of the participants

There is no age stipulated for participation. The number of participants ranges from 50 to 90

Form of research
(interview, literature study, etc.)

**Interview and research,
Iris Claramunt**

Describe the personal approach and motivation of the project leader

After having a long career as a dancer and creator in companies at a professional level, the founder of the project, Alvaro de la Peña, sees the need to bring dance and movement to anyone, whatever their physical condition. Thus being able to decentralize dance only at the professional level and establish a method in which the inputs of creation arise from what the participants propose from their own experiences.

Describe the artistic interest of the project

The main interest is to integrate dance and movement for everyone, taking into account all conditions and groups; age, physical and psychological condition and the range of different possibilities. Working with such a diverse and non-professional group of people is the focus of ideas for creation.

Describe the way of working

The project always took place in 3 different neighborhoods of the city of Barcelona, with three different groups of people, being the rehearsals in civic centers, schools or dance spaces. This was a way to bring dance to any area. During three months, research was done around an idea that emerged from the movement proposals of the participants

themselves, stimulated by guidelines and dynamics established by the choreographer. In the last month, rehearsals were held with the 3 groups together and from all the proposals the final piece was generated.

Describe the format (structure and content of the classes, workshops, rehearsals, etc.)

During the first two months, each group had two weekly sessions of 2.5 hours. The sessions began with an intense warm-up and then gave way to the research laboratory, with guidelines and dynamics of creation proposed by the choreographer. The last month, the rehearsals were with the 3 groups together. These sessions were focused on generating and concretizing the structure of the piece.

Describe further observations and interesting details

It is very interesting to see how a professional piece can be developed through non-professional performers. How, through the experiences and proposals of each person, you can generate a joint creation and taking into account all the different conditions. It is a good example of how dance can be a powerful tool for expression and community building, not only reserved for a specific professional audience.

Place to share public materials of the project (websites, documentation, etc.)

[→ VISIT LINK](#)

Numerosos seréis desierto, Triología Bekristen/Cristianos

Name of the project leader

Luz Arcas (La Fármaco)

Timeframe of the project

Since 2019 - ongoing

Timeframe and number of sessions

2 hour sessions in 6 days, distributed in 2 weeks

Age and number of the participants

+65 years, 14 participants

Form of research

(interview, literature study, etc.)

Interview and as show audience, Sílvia Cepero

Describe the personal approach and motivation of the project leader

It is a trilogy, a journey through different ages marked by the idea of progress and productivity, values that Luz considers to be spiritual for capitalism. The choreographer wanted to close the trilogy by paying attention to the violence of the system, which subjects bodies with these almost religious values. The expulsion of "the old" "is useless" is very occidental, before the old people were the wise people. Luz thinks that it is something linked to the political and cultural system. Another aspect that motivated this part of the investigation was her grandmother during the covid. She saw the infantilization of the elderly (f.e children's hats for birthdays in residences). Luz just watches, not from the moral high ground. And she explains that it also connects with her fear of getting sick and being out of the game. The project began in 2017 in Equatorial Guinea and Ecuador, both territories were Spanish colonies.

Describe the artistic interest of the project

The objective is to show this violence in a scenic way, which becomes more visible with the bodies of older people. It is not a moralistic criticism, it is an observation. Bodies are exposed to this violence and are subjected to the inertia of other bodies. Somehow, choreography has been thought of but it is performed by the wrong bodies. Anyway, there is beauty. Paint the passage and make the viewer think and feel. Luz is not interested in the doctrines on stage. She tried to bring

the bodies to an intense physical place. Sensuality, eroticism, bigorexia. She is very impressed by the mental openness that the older people who have participated (+65) have and their bodily possibilities, from a very strong connection. Explains that they are bodies that know a lot, beautiful physicalities, overwhelming, terribly human, strong, charged with meaning and necessity. Thinks that "this is what you have to see in a theater". To finish she added that there has been a lot of progress from the genre but not in ageism.

Describe the way of working

The methodology consists of entering the body, very pleasant, from the breath, sensory, internal, from the inside out, imagination and a very subjective relationship with movement. And then participants work with their own impulses. Luz is not interested in marking choreography, or putting her body as a choreographic reference. Is giving slogans about what is coming out of them, then cleaning and giving roles that go in favor. She is very bored marking gestures and setting choreography. As a choreographer, she used to work from her body to that of others. Now she wants to draw more from gestures that come from people. She considers that it is a more enriching job, the interpreters have more power on stage because they understand where the movement comes from and it gives them a lot of security and she also allows herself to be surprised.

Describe the format (structure and content of the classes, workshops, rehearsals, etc.)

Six days of creation in two-hour sessions because it was very physical and she didn't want to tire them out too much. The first chapter of the trilogy was a work with a quartet of young, strong, beautiful and very virtuous professional dancers. The second chapter is about Luz with a dancer and actress over fifty years old, along with a trans dancer. In this second part there was still dance but the compositional work was already broken. And the third chapter is this work with people +65. She considers that the participants have given a lot. She believes that there is something very powerful in working with people who have neither a professional nor financial relationship with dance and at the same time give everything for the personal enrichment that dance has. After this 7-year investigation, an audition of dancers will now be called to create the final piece that will last 3 hours and that will premiere at Teatros del Canal in Madrid in November 2023.

Place to share public materials of the project (websites, documentation, etc.)

→ [Website](#)

→ [Premiere](#)

→ [Open convocatory](#)

Catch the Moment

Name of the project leader

**Manfred Aichinger,
choreographer
and dance teacher**

Timeframe of the project

1 year

Timeframe and number of sessions

90 min/week

Age and number of the participants

13 women, 60-80 years

Form of research
(interview, literature study, etc.)

Interview, Simone Kühle

Describe the personal approach and motivation of the project leader

Manfred Aichinger gives classes for adults (45+) since 30 years. After 10 years of teaching, his participants turned older and at the same time he accompanied his mother when she was suffering from dementia. He feels the wish to concentrate more detailed on this age group. Since 20 years he gave dance classes to the age group 65+.

Describe the artistic interest of the project

Actually he likes to work process oriented. But 2019 he was asked to show a short piece on stage with his 65+ dance group. The participants were willing and excited and wanted to take the challenge. So he started the creation process with some moments which happened in his class during improvisation, which interested him as an artist and together they built them further to a stage work.

Describe the way of working

Aichinger is interested in making the inner energetic flow tangible as a substance for movement. Older people can also increase this flow and use it for dynamic movements. He starts to give improvisational tasks on self-perception, perception of others and perception of space. And brings the participants into very sensual and physical moments.

Describe the format (structure and content of the classes, workshops, rehearsals, etc.)

He subordinates his improvisations to the theme „space“. He chooses strong images that appear in improvisation and develops them further in the process. In the process of the development of the stage work he wanted to keep the piece very pure. Only the bodies should tell their story. He also wanted everyone to be honest, personal and individual in pursuing their improvisational tasks.

Describe further observations and interesting details

He was surprised how much old people tend to perceive only themselves and start to circle around only themselves. He was wondering how he can deal with it. In his regular classes, he tries to bring them into the physical moments and helps them to observe their presence.

Place to share public materials of the project (websites, documentation, etc.)

[→ VISIT LINK](#)

Age Company

Name of the project leader

Nicole Caccivio

Timeframe of the project

Running since 13 years

Timeframe and number of sessions

Project oriented, rehearsals for yearly performances

Age and number of the participants

60+ age, 18 participants

Form of research
(interview, literature study, etc.)

Interview, Olivia Hild

Describe the personal approach and motivation of the project leader

Nicole Caccivio is a dance teacher for a long time and when her course-participants became older, she offered courses for older people. In addition she was asked by older female dancers to make a company for and with them, to create dance works together and present them on stage - this was the moment AGE COMPANY was created. Caccivio demands that the work is professional, also when working in the amateur field.

Describe the artistic interest of the project

On the website of AGE COMPANY it says the slogan that dance makes ageing better, but age makes also the dancing better. The company is a contemporary dance performance group, consisting of people from various professional backgrounds. They see the body as an archive for experiences and memories. They question the meaning of dance in the context of an ageing body and are interested in lust, crazyness and acceptance.

Describe the way of working

Their activities run since 13 years. They meet to rehearse for stage productions. Usually they have at least one production per year, sometimes more. They create dance performances for stages, the public space and cultural and social institutions. The AGE COMPANY is independent and finances itself.

Describe the format (structure and content of the classes, workshops, rehearsals, etc.)

The group consists of various levels of dance experience. They meet and rehearse in blocks, several blocks for each performance. Caccivio works a lot with structured improvisations. She implements watching each other early on into each process. She keeps exercises to a short amount of time, like 5 min for each and then the focus is shifting already. .

Describe further observations and interesting details

Nicole Caccivio observes her elderly participants often blossoming up. Be it after an operation, after a show, or other events in their lives. Often when they dance they “open up like flowers”. Also Caccivio observed that sometimes participants can get angry or frustrated in challenging processes and she thinks that reflection and conversation really help in resolving those moments after they occurred.

Place to share public materials of the project (websites, documentation, etc.)

[→ VISIT LINK](#)

Und

Name of the project leader

Doris Uhlich

Timeframe of the project

Premiere: 14. 03. 2007

Timeframe and number of sessions

6 months

Age and number of the participants

60 - 89 / 12 participants

Form of research
(interview, literature study, etc.)

Interview, Barbara Kirnbauer

Describe the personal approach and motivation of the project leader

Doris Uhlich was inspired by her grandmother and touched by older people and interested in their stories since childhood. She wanted to do research, like an archaeologist, on what's inside older people. In an older body many "body histories" are collected and experiences are stored. She asked herself the question: "What kind of fragility and what kind of robustness is in an elderly person?"

Describe the artistic interest of the project

The ambition was to create an artistic work with older people without exposing them. Doris wanted to use their potentials - older people are forced to a kind of minimalism, the movements become reduced. "From older bodies you can learn a lot about slackening and reduction. I love fragile movements." The slow people in our rushing world are more in the peripherie and not in the centre of our interest. Uhlich wanted to put the focus on them.

Describe the way of working

Doris searched seniors in the street, went do senior fairs: "Which bodies appeal to me? Who do I want to exchange with to create a poetic piece?" Doris Uhlich worked out the material with them in their own apartments, before they met in the rehearsal room. First connecting with the individuals and then going into the

collective. The group built up little by little. She worked very reduced with walking, standing, sitting, lying down. She wanted to work with gravity and not against it.

Describe the format (structure and content of the classes, workshops, rehearsals, etc.)

Doris Uhlich worked with structured improvisations and asked questions like "What is a natural tremor, or how is effort visible in a body?" She searched for movements that may feel strange, but are artistically interesting. "What can I try out where we can all be surprised?" "What is dance and what is not?" She wanted to lead the participants to new perspectives and innovative experiences.

Describe further observations and interesting details

For Doris Uhlich it was a project of the heart. She wanted to work with people who are much older than her and amateurs, who are not yet shaped by certain dance steps and ideas of dance. The elderly have a lot of time behind them and less ahead of them, exactly the opposite to children. Working with older people in dance was still very new in 2007 – the piece "und" had great success and it had a political dimension – it was even invited to the congress: "Politics in free theater".

BEWÄHRTE VERFAHREN

Place to share public materials of the project (websites, documentation, etc.)

→ VISIT LINK



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