

Playing past and future: knowledge as revealed by artist and scholar

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Abstract

History is not often regarded as a location to search for practice-based artistic researchers, since its relatively recent academic acceptance designates this activity as 'new' or of a pioneering nature leaping forward from the confines of history. However, the space devoted to Picasso's 1957 ruminations upon or fierce dialogues with Diego Velasquez's *Las Meninas* (1656) at the Museu Picasso, Barcelona, presented evidence of an artist probing into thinking-in-practice. These paintings demonstrate how an artist pursues knowledge about representation that immediately interconnected with memories of Foucault's (1970) play, in the introduction to *Les mots et des choses*, of the very same Velasquez art work. In using a classical art work as the touchstone for investigation, both researchers trusted in painterly vision as a viable mode of knowledge. This interrelationship between excavating what came before (Foucault) with what the future may hold (Picasso) is reflected in dance scholarship and its processes and choreographies.

Keywords: Foucault, historical continuity and ruptures, Picasso, practice as research, Velasquez.



Las Meninas by Diego Velasquez (1656); Museo del Prado, Madrid, Konstantinidis (2012).

History or the past is not often regarded as a location to search for practice-based artistic researchers. Legitimized artistic practices as scholarship have only been viable in the last twenty years or so, generating a certain mindset which designates such activity as 'new' or of a pioneering nature leaping forward from the confines of history. For instance, a legitimate, though not exhaustive, search courtesy of Ken Gasmier, librarian at the Edith Cowan University, Western Australia, places the first traceable 'dance' thesis in Johann Peter Gruenenburg's (1791) exploration of the 'moral and ethical aspects' of dance in his *Dissertatiotheologica circularis de saltatione christiano licita: Ob einem christen zu tantzen sey?* Whatever Gruenenburg had to say about the value (or otherwise) of the dancing Christian did not leave much of an impression on the next three centuries and the development of higher degree studies in Australia did not emerge until 1964, when Elizabeth M.C. Blake produced a treatise on *Britten's The Prince of the Pagodas* in which dance was a kind of accidental partner to the music. Actual embodied dance did not enter into postgraduate studies until the first Masters of Choreography involving practice began to appear in 1996 and, not far behind, doctorates in 1999/2000 (Phillips, Stock & Vincs, 2008/9, p. 6). This view is a mere sketch of dance's entry into academia and admittedly from an Australian context, but as a progression from a position of licentiousness, through assimilation into other disciplines and into its current tenuous status in scholarship, the pattern conveys much of the uneasy relationship which dancing is viewed in terms of knowledge. However, a visit to Museu Picasso in Barcelona (2013) turned that assumption in my mindset upside-down.

When I entered the room devoted to Pablo Picasso's 1957 ruminations upon or fierce dialogues with Diego Velasquez's *Las Meninas* (1656), evidence of an artist probing into thinking-in-practice surrounded me. These paintings vividly demonstrated how an artist pursues, obsessively in this instance, knowledge about representation that immediately interconnected with memories of Michel Foucault's play, in the introduction to *Les mots et des choses* (*The Order of Things*, 1970), with the very same Velasquez art work. One of my immediate questions centred on whether these two men were aware of each other's penetrations into the surfaces of Velasquez' image, sensing even in the ignorance of that moment that there was more to any explicit or serendipitous meeting of minds than would appear from the coincidence. Perhaps, most of all, I was struck by the ephemeral dance of what could be seen, intertwined both within and beyond Picasso's documentation. I have since learnt that the editors of a new volume on Foucault's unpublished papers have attributed a similar sensation to Foucault's address to Picasso.

The rhythm of the discussion reminds us of a dance or at least a kind of performance, where the actors come and go, unfolding a story. However, the story remains unclear at this stage, as if the grandeur of Picasso could not be fully grasped by Foucault himself (Artières et al., cited in Dillet, 2011, p. 201).

Amidst the scratchings and erasures, confronted by the twisted and folded shapes and colour skids of the 58 canvases, I experienced the artist, infanta, dove and dog vying for centrality in a visual cacophony of strokes to make thought visible. Curiously, some 30 years before the *Las Meninas*' experiments, Picasso flatly declared his opposition to research:

To find is the thing. Among the several sins that I have been accused of committing, none is more false than the one that I have, as the principal objective in my work, that spirit of research. When I paint, my object is to show what I have found, not what I am looking for (cited in Frayling, 1993/4, p. 2).

As Christopher Frayling observes, Picasso's statement of 'what I have found' reveals the artist thinking-in-practice which, ironically, does capture incisively the spirit of artistic research. Picasso is very clear about the significance of acts of discovery, as opposed to a delimiting scholastic process of analysis about which he was suspicious and, even more tellingly, of disassociating himself from identification with flighty imaginative ends. The driving desire is to delve into what is already there in human experience, to probe that which is not necessarily known before the act/s of discovery. This drive was exemplified with clarity being present in that room in the Museu Picasso. I had the urge to cry out to my university's gatekeepers, so which theorist/explorer is the real researcher?

Post Barcelona, the volumes dedicated to this research trinity of Velasquez, Picasso and Foucault emerged, particularly those commentaries dedicated to the work of the two 20th century representatives through widely diverse interpretations which point invariably to their correspondences: Picasso's *Las Meninas*' series reveal 'the workings of his inner mind' (Erenkrantz, 2010, n.p.) and Foucault's forgotten papers, reviews and a hinted-at cinema script on Picasso's *Meninas* (1966/7) together with the refined arguments of the introduction of Foucault's oeuvre 'transport the reader into Foucault's head' (Dillet, 2011, p. 203). Arresting resonances percolate through research modes to confound the separation between practice and theory, fusing painter and writer as articulators of human knowledge. In spite of their distinct purposes, both men's endeavours vibrate with a sense of what a mere individual might know and how ideas might be circumscribed (or indeed enlarged) by the time and space of his quest for knowledge.

In using a classical art work as the touchstone for investigation, both thinkers trusted in a 300 year-old painterly vision as a viable mode of knowledge. For instance, Foucault (1970) scans the image for its intersecting lines of sight.

From the eyes of the painter to what he is observing there runs a compelling line that we, the onlookers, have no power of evading: it runs through the real picture and emerges from its surface to join the place from which we see the painter observing us; this dotted line reaches out to us ineluctably, and links us to the representation of the picture (p. 4).

Arguably, Foucault examines the image for its 'polyhedron of intelligibility' (cited in Rajchman, 1988, p. 107) through perspectival relationships drawn linguistically across time, while Picasso 'handles' the image (Bolt cited in Barrett, 2006), to test the limits of re-presentation. This interrelationship between excavating what came before (Foucault) with what the future may hold (Picasso) is reflected in dance scholarship, in the tensions between dance/performance studies and choreographic and practice-based research. Susan Melrose (2006) frames time as the qualifier in these two incommensurable 'expert' systems. The 'spectating' academic looks back to arrive at knowledge whereas, in her terms, the artist practitioner's imaginative

interrogations project forwards towards potential ‘transformative events’ in the production of knowledge. Even while Melrose posits this telling distinction, she does not dismiss the expert practitioner’s accumulation of resources from the past, the very resources, which enable re-creative interventions into what might not yet be known. Time and its entrapment within space create ever proliferating labyrinths in which understanding spins off-balance—deliciously of course. In retrieving the past, Velasquez’s image, both Foucault and Picasso delve into pursuits of the visibility/invisibility partnership and both, I suggest, contribute to expressions of human thought.

Thought is the primordial ground, chaotic and amorphous, on which knowledge stands. Thinking-in-practice, as noted above, operates through all modalities of form and expression, whether in the moving, seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, or sensing of the present or in the recall of recording/writing. Until thought shifts through the initial communication impulses into some sort of articulation or form, thought remains within its own potentiality. Very few commentators or artists would contest the idea of the arts as modes of materialised thought and most would concede, as does Foucault, that artistic thinking (which is much more complex than my simple configuration may suggest here) is knowledge. However, how this knowledge might be accepted and acknowledged depends on constraints imposed upon or imprisoned within the controlling rules and regulations of discursivity, again an incisive Foucaultian insight.

Foucault’s play with Velasquez’ *Las Meninas*, marks the beginnings of his formulation of what is commonly known as the social constructed-ness of knowledge. John Rajchman (1988) argues that this concept of knowledge is bound by societal perspectives and emerged because Foucault discovered a kind of “impossibility” that was not logical but historical: ... of what is no longer or not yet possible to think; not what is meaningless, but what is not yet or no longer meaningful’ (p. 116). Resonances of Picasso’s determined findings echo through these words. Pictorial perspective was the lynchpin upon which Foucault hooked his thinking about what a painted image might make visible and represent tendencies of change in the context of the tensions between 17th century European values and their ruptures. On an alternative take of the same point of departure, Picasso, near the end of his career, handles perspective as a springboard for representation, questioning the extent to which invisibility contains visibility, using his paintwork to find where the demarcating line between the two may lie. Foucault uses Velasquez to excavate the invisible interconnections between ideas across disciplines, institutions and human behaviour (epistemes), while Picasso experiments in how far recognition can be stretched before invisibility, by way of 20th century disintegration, erases a sense of the difficult and yet necessary continuity in understanding.

The past has to be embedded dialogically in the present to enable a sense of meaning to exist. Picasso does not have to concur with Velasquez’s values/ideas about representation or even explicitly address the old within the new as he does with his *Meninas* but, to make a contribution to human experience of pictorial representation, his brushwork has to ‘know’ and engage with the ‘thing-ness’ of representation in historical occurrences. This explanation appears at odds with the more conventional legacy of the avant garde’s privileging of rupture as suggested

by Carlos Rodriguez Sutil's (2012) observation that Picasso is 'an example of what Ortega y Gasset ... called 'the dehumanization of contemporary art' (p. 11), when the 'realization of the ideas took charge against the faithful (conventional) representation of reality and its objects' (p. 11). The variances seem to me to be less of a contest between which explanation may be conceded as authoritative knowledge than to indicate the architectonic structuring of knowledge itself. What can be apprehended depends on the angle and window of apprehension and knowledge is nothing short of a phantasmagorical construction of rooms and passageways of slippage.

The crucial problem lies in how a twenty-first century artistic researcher can—or needs to—present his or her thinking and knowledge? Can playing past and futures reveal the artist in the scholar and the scholar in the artist? Evidence, that practice-based artistic research operates in tandem with the past (diachronically) and across disciplines in a particular moment of present (synchronically), does not necessarily translate into what university research contexts consider to be valid knowledge. Picasso, even being the formidable celebrity that he is in western consciousness, stands on shaky grounds when assessed as a knowledge-maker beside Foucault who has acquired (perhaps much to his chagrin) an equivalent celebrity status in scholastic domains. The placement of practice-based research in the university too often involves confounding artistic knowledge/thought with that of science on the part of artists, who strive for legitimacy or is pressured into management processes and outcomes by university administrators and lecturers. The parameters of knowledge imposed by the latter tend to undermine the processes of experimentation which Picasso pursued in his re-handling of Velasquez. Who knows/thinks tends to be replaced by who has the authority to know or even think. Foucault, operating within the precincts of scholarship and in spite of his efforts (and many others) to turn the whole theoretical enterprise on its head, produced writings which have become a theoretical 'methodology' to be imposed on artists. The irony that his thinking explored an artist's work at the beginnings of his elevation as a theoretical guru is lost in most academic procedures.

However, the most important thrust of this paper is not on the ongoing problems confronted by artists wishing to legitimise their knowledge in terms of scholarship but to offer perspectives of artists who generate knowledge through their practices which probe that elusive and seemingly ever challenging boundary between what has been known and what can be known within the different contexts of time. As intimated above, an exhaustive interrogation of practice-based artistic research through the myriad rooms of knowledge is impossible. Here, I will take three small, spatially differentiated steps to graze lightly over those walls of thought which have arisen from my encounters with the trinity of Velasquez, Picasso and Foucault: play, singularity and continuity in artistic research.

Playing to find

Play is used deliberately as a term I have come to recognise as an often invisible element of thought which enables knowledge. If the human species had not played or danced or improvised, knowledge may have remained securely fixed in the expert scavenging for food of our ancestors or even further back in unchanging vibrations of energy poetically conceived as the void before time and space 'burped' to form

matter. Play and vibrations may indeed be related and not that speculatively distant from current neurological ideas surfacing in the science of embodied cognition. While a terminology like play with its frivolous connotations seems unacceptable in scientific denominations, I suspect that play lurks beneath the surface of the still mysterious interactions between the body and its mentation: 'no fracture [operates] between cognition, the agent's body, and real-life contexts [...] the body intrinsically constrains, regulates and shapes the nature of mental activity' (Foglia & Wilson, 2013, p. 319). Why choose the pathologically loaded terms of 'constrains, regulates and shapes' to describe the porous and non-linear interaction of body/mind? Surely, some playful whimsy or pleasure is also involved? But I wish to begin this examination of play with Picasso and Foucault.

The first aspect of play or playfulness that I wish to consider here is almost synonymous with what the cultural geographer Yi-Fu Tuan labels as 'fantasy' in contradistinction to the hard (optically derived) facts of realism associated with objective scientific perspectives on experience. While raising the dangers of excesses of either approach, he observes that imagination, being a human attribute (for good or evil) is inextricable from the processes of real-ness. What might appear as monstrous or inhuman distortions in Picasso might actually demonstrate evocations of the multiple sensations of actuality. 'I've put in this still-life a box of leeks [...] I wanted my canvas to smell of leeks. I insist on likeness, a more profound likeness, more real than the real' (cited in Tuan, 1990, p. 438). In other words, what might seem fantastical on Picasso's part aims to encapsulate experience in a different modality of apperception.

The other aspect of play that I wish to consider is closer to jazz improvisation where patterns are circumscribed more by cognitive testing in computational configurations than by compulsions to reveal what might be subjectively felt. Ultimately, both aspects of play encompass possibilities which, in balance, Tuan concedes are inimical to human behaviour. Sensuousness meets meaning-making patterns in statements of knowledge.

I had come face to face with Foucault's patterned play when I was a novice undergraduate (of advanced age) and recall being impressed by discovering an important 'theorist' who used art to explain difficult ideas about thinking. Not only did Foucault play in a cognitive sense with the curious perspectival meanings of Velasquez's work, but his explorations touched on the play I knew as choreography, patterns, movement and dynamics that wrought a composition. I was much too naïve at the time to suggest that this connection was anything other than a personal accident. Now, I am aware that the compositional propensity which I recognised is not only crucial to aesthetic creations but applies in some form or another to all languages and that by which they are propelled, thought.

However, my Joycean epiphany only flared that day in the presence of Picasso's *Las Meninas* when play's fluctuations between conservatism and change were laid out not just to be seen as documented findings of the 70 year-old painter's research but were there to be experienced. This sense of embodiment came from the overlap of time, Velasquez's time, Picasso's time, the other visitors' time and my time as well as from the gallery space and its tourist traffic, shuffling, inclining, debating and musing. Play circulated around the canvases, through people and location, from object to

subject and back again, drawing all the intricate and intimate interconnections into this knowledge which was primarily but not exclusively aesthetic. Though embodied response may necessarily be a factor in each and every confrontation with research revelation, in Einstein's unveiling of his ideas about relativity for instance, I suspect that embodiment is more pronounced in artistic research where the body explicitly handles and plays with ideas.

One of Picasso's thematic plays is directed at the role of the artist and the genre of self-portraiture. How does the artist's own body feature in representation, why and what might the maker's self convey other than a display of self-aggrandisement? According to Foucault and a multiplicity of other commentators, Velasquez's self-portrayal questions the sovereignty of the king, in preparation for the appearance of man, who as 'an object of knowledge and as a subject that knows [...] appears in the place belonging to the king' (Foucault cited in Gugleta, 2011, p. 10). In Picasso's re-presentations, his body reverberates, literally in one instance, though not in relation to the king and subsequent relations of power and agency in socio-political contexts but rather through interconnections with the child figure of the princess who is thought to be the epitome of his sister's naivety or, perhaps, that of the down-to-earth basset hound of his childhood. The artist's self in the 20th century confronts other anxieties.



From the series of *Las Meninas* by Pablo Picasso (1957), Museu Picasso, Barcelona, 2014.

Play and its embodied character is emblematic in any form of practice-based research in dance, however, I do wish to emphasise the role of the body across

artistic research per se. Too often I find myself reminding postgraduate research students that, if they wish to be known as practice-based researchers, then it is the practice which excavates insight, not commentaries about that practice. In this respect, Picasso's *Meninas* are so exemplary and Foucault too because the latter, not being a practitioner, nevertheless recognised the significance of thought operating in manifold ways where human behaviour is concerned.

Singular personal histories

The second step, a *pas de bourée* transitional step perhaps, is the significance of personal history in an artistic researcher's journey. Here, the macro history, like the 300 years that lie between Velasquez and Picasso is cross-fertilised with the micro journey of singularity. The Finnish writer Tuomas Nevanlinna observes that artistic research is 'knowledge about *the singular*. It cannot be generalized into laws in itself, and it applies only to the unique, but it is knowledge nevertheless and makes truth 'happen' in a singular way' (Nevanlinna, 2004, p. 84). Picasso first viewed *Las Meninas* when he was fourteen years old which, Justin Erenkrantz has posited, coincides a few months later with the death of his seven-year old sister María de la Concepción from diphtheria. At 16, Picasso produced his first sketch relating to *Las Meninas*. 'It is no coincidence that both the infanta and his sister were blond. Yet, his greatest works directly concerning the infanta and *Las Meninas* were decades away' (Erenkrantz, 2010, n.p.). Many arts commentators have made much of Picasso's identification of the Infanta Margarita with his sister, principally through the old man's concern with 'innocence' said to be explored in his *Meninas*' series (Erenkrantz, 2010; Nair Rohera, 2012). Whether filtered through juxtaposition, loss, the acknowledgement of his own frailty in relation to life's purpose and/or allusions to life's beginnings being inimical with its closure, Picasso, unconstrained by university protocols, was able to give attention to re-presenting experience. Instead of Foucault's concern with the materiality of painting and its alignment with institutionalised values, Picasso's *Meninas* explore an individual's inner anxieties and vulnerabilities which mark the isolation of one man's process of knowing, inextricable from socio-cultural contexts. This is not to say, as may be inferred by current social media, that we all have a right to spill life stories as valid contributions to research but that artists who have come to terms with the handling of their ideas in the context of the wider socio-cultural circulation of ideas, can use the potency of the singular experience to provoke experiential thought in others. Surrounded by Picasso's *Meninas*, I may not have interpreted his ideas 'correctly' but I was touched, explosively, by what those canvases could convey.

Dance research, time and continuity

Step three addresses dance explicitly, with apologies for the long detours metaphorically twisting and turning through this study of the trinity of researchers. Another paper might address Picasso's direct incursion into the discipline through his scenographic contributions to Diaghilev's Ballets Russes by way of designs for *Le Tricorne* and *Parade* and question how much the painter's ideas were indebted to dance instead of the usual story which highlights Diaghilev's capacity to draw on a constellation of famous artists to fuel his modern ideas about the genre of ballet. However, my concern here pays attention to research practices and temporal

interconnections. In current westernised dance histories, the tendency is to focus on the ruptures of what came before, to celebrate innovation and underplay the strong pull of recognisable understandings that actually enable us to make meaning and which Picasso's experiments in representation make clear. This positioning may seem conservative, and is to a certain extent, except that in order to enact the so-called rupture, an individual or a society is constrained by, or played within what establishment there is to rupture.

Swan Lake, the Petipa/Ivanov ballet, after innumerable versions becomes a classic in the balletic genre of the late nineteenth century. A Russian tale about power struggles between aristocracy and sorcery generates through its narrative of engagement and deceit, its compositional material of virtuosic brilliance and folk/ethnic movement and its reliance on the potent Tchaikovsky score, a kind of load-stone for later choreographers, not unlike the Velasquez image for visual practitioners. The temporal enactment of the original, passed down through dancers, carries, in movements and their presentational relationships, meanings that convey the values of its time of composition. This form of transmission of technical and societal knowledge through bodies particularises dance as an art form: the absence of an enduring object and a reliable notation/text sets dance apart from the sister arts so that dancing bodies conform more aptly to the conventions of orality. To be maintained, a dance has to be practised. If transmitting form in this way encompasses the inevitable differences between the movement capacities of the carrying bodies, the embodied conventions of oral-like maintenance are also remarkably faithful to origins, especially when displacement from its origins in Franco-Russian contexts across a plethora of other cultures is taken into account. Diana Taylor (2006) points to the 'vertical' history stored in dancers' bodies wherein performance's 'iterative, recurrent quality functions through repeats, yet breaks out of them—it is always alive, now' (p. 83). This perspective positions the performance event as an historical event both affirming and breaking away from its origins.

When Mats Ek, Matthew Bourne and Garry Stewart begin to play with and probe into *Swan Lake*, these choreographers not only have to know this classic ballet themselves (whether as dancers, students or audiences) but they also have to be satisfied that some 'idea' of the ballet is available to the public who will witness the new versions couched in late 20th rather than 19th century values. Each choreographer responds to the question of '[w]hat re-memorizations shall [he] invent in order to bring about new work?' (Launay et al., 2012, p. 65). Launay's reflection pertains to an investigation of the tensions encountered between re-production and maintenance through a project which re-versioned Nijinsky's *Après Midi d'un faun*. Picasso relied on the same predicate, if by way of an alternative art form. In the context of *Swan Lake*, Ek delves into psychological perspectives, intimating gender instability and the symbolic trickery encoded in black and white swans who are, indiscriminately, men and women permeated with psychic anxieties. The original ballet's edit from the Queen Mother to her son to find a bride seems to be Ek's fertilising germ which he refracts through 20th century sexual identity ambivalences. Bourne takes the same mother and son relationship on a more playful route in his re-memorization of the ballet, manipulating expectations of masculinity and femininity to penetrate fatal flaws in class privileges which still pervade British dispositions. Stewart's *Birdbrain* directly parodies the aesthetic form of the original ballet with

T-shirted swans and princes to dispute hierarchies of virtuosity, class and genre in dance performance. In this 'mash-up' of ballet technique and conventions, Stewart targets the dance medium itself, intimating that fractured physicality and non-committal emotional perspectives appeal as much to current audiences as did the delineated sparkle of the original to their forebears. Each choreographer, as they draw on transpositions of the old into the new, deserves much more scrutiny than accorded here. I can but acknowledge their research to point out how choreographic works, like paintings, provide rich veins of investigations into thought, the stuttering, swirling thought of movement grounded in the past.

One distinction between the Picasso re-presentations and that undertaken by the choreographers cited here involves the difference between a stable object standing unchanged in its frame for 300 years and an unstable dance retained over 100 years only because it is practiced. Secondly, although the processes of re-investigating a tradition may be similar, the new choreographies cannot easily be placed in a single room unfolding side by side to demonstrate interpretative variations, either in terms of three artists working on the same problem of testing representational limits or the trial-and-error processes of their making. Together, these two points illustrate the challenge which, I believe, current practice-based artist researchers must face with all the daring of their embodiment, play and historical and personal insight because one crucial discrepancy between research sanctioned by the profession and that legitimated in academic frames concerns the visibility of articulation and its durable documentation. The 'thingness' of movement thought is in the world: to be acknowledged, it needs to be danced into societal means of evaluation.

When an audacious dance researcher comes along and finds a way to enact his or her interrogations into the patterns of thought embodied in, for example, the rippling of an arm/wing/flight in an equivalence to Picasso's *Meninas*, then the force of that arm will co-opt another sympathetic scholar-like Foucault to draw that flight, that temporal momentum, across disciplinary divides towards a Kuhnian paradigm shift from knowledge conceived spatially to knowledge conceived temporally. The Picasso/Foucault paradigm in cultural studies is defined by spatial structuration: Picasso experimenting with lines stretched and buckled in space, Foucault interconnecting institutional controls across diverse disciplines. Curiously though, time has demonstrated that perspectives falling apart from Velasquez's questioning can convey and be meaningful in science, linguistics, sociology and aesthetics. Moreover, the meanings revealed in the spatiality of Picasso's brushstrokes or scratchings did not impede him thinking about time and capturing glimpses of its loss in his images even if he was constrained by his 'timeless' medium. Time is danced and depends on the epistemological and ontological insights of those who dance to reveal the labyrinths of meanings pertinent to human behaviour that the phenomenon of time instantiates. Scientists and cultural studies experts are aware of the mysteries of time and its spatial inseparability but perhaps they do not possess the experience to apprehend its complex dynamics, felt, embodied and, thus, known? That responsibility lies with dance research practice where artists commit themselves to remember and reinvent in play and pain and, most significantly, in thinking in continuity through a past which abides in the present.

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Biography

Associate Professor **Maggi Phillips** PhD (1944–2015) was coordinator of Research and Creative Practice at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, a position in which she enabled daily access to the integration of artistic innovation and research. Her life path crossed many disciplines and worldviews, from dancer to a world literature doctorate, from circus ring to university boardroom. She led an Australian Learning and Teaching Council grant, *Dancing between Diversity and Consistency: Refining Assessment in Post Graduate Degrees in Dance* and has been published in a number of international journals advocating the validity of artistic knowledge.