

CURATORIAL POLICY: Nottedance 2019

Paul Russ and Matthias Sperling

Nottingham's festival of choreographic ideas foregrounding new works, discourse and research. Art activating public discussion. What is urgent now.

As the UK and rest of the world face social, economic and political challenges, what occupies the minds, bodies and actions of artists? Nottedance is a place where ideas and questions have an opportunity to be grappled with, a place where artists and the public respond to concerns about the world, the city, the neighbourhood our sense of connectedness or divide through art and art making.

The 2019 edition is an exciting development for the festival as it welcomes Matthias Sperling as co-curator alongside, Paul Russ, Artistic Director of Dance4. Through their collaborative dialogues they are seeking to highlight and bring together a sampling of the practices, urgencies and contexts that they each perceive as making vital contributions to the current field of dance and its ongoing evolution, with a focus on the ecology of practices in the UK.

Within this, Sperling has contributed a particular focus on 'Magic & Science': tuning into how a growing number of artists' current practices are concerned with conjuring bridges between the magical and the scientific, the imagined and the actual, the subjective and the objective, or – as Sperling explores in his own practice – mind and body.

The festival is the second in our home at the international Centre for Choreography (iC4C) as well as continuing to be presented in the inspiring and brilliant venues in Nottingham. Four days full of questions, ideas, challenges and dancing!

The term 'Magic & Science' comes from Aby Warburg (1866-1929, Germany), an art historian who placed movement at the centre of his way of understanding the world. Within this category, he gathered historical images that combined alchemy, sorcery, divination and prophecy, with chemistry, physiology, mathematics and medicine.

While Magic and Science might usually be considered opposites, if dance is considered as an embodied artistic medium, then it is always already navigating this zone in which subjective and objective, mind and body are inseparable. Part of what this edition of the festival celebrates is the different ways in which a number of artists could be seen to be exploring aspects of this evocative and generative zone in their practices, and the potent ways in which this engages dance with current political urgencies.

Sperling also proposes seeing each of the participating artists through the lens of another concept from Warburg: that of the practitioner as 'seismograph', a person who is tuning in to particular frequencies, resonances and ruptures that are vibrating in the environments around them, diagnosing their epicentres, and bringing them to light to be perceived. Each of the participating artists are selected for the different yet related tremblings that their works and practices bring to attention.

ABOUT NOTTDANCE

Embodying Dance4's philosophy of curiosity, risk and doubt has been at the heart of Nottedance in its near 30 years. Foregrounding current perspectives from artists across the world, the festival presents work of the time, views and works from artists that seek to unearth new knowledge, test ideas and challenge the status quo.

It is no surprise that the vision and programme of Nottedance emerged from a city such as Nottingham. The city's rich history of radical performance (across theatre, visual arts, live art and dance) has informed and contributed to the festival, making it the most relevant dance festival in the UK for many years.

In order to maintain the festival's position as the place for generating new knowledge and discourses in the field of choreography and dance, the organisation is continually trying to directly address the needs of the dance sector locally, nationally and internationally. The core aims of this work are:

- To reimagine the traditional notion of the dance festival by shifting the focus to maker, rather than work
- To create a presentation context for dance which truly reflects both the needs of the dance maker, and the unique infrastructure and history of Nottingham's arts scene
- To initiate a step-change in the conditions for dance making, producing and touring for those artists presenting contemporary movement practice in non-traditional contexts

As well as working in and through the international Centre for Choreography, the festival engages with partners and venues across the city. Engagement with the nationally significant visual arts sector in the city provides fertile contexts for choreographic practices in all forms to learn more about the impact of new ideas with artists and the public.

Nottedance presents the opportunity for dance makers to explore an alternative market for their work, one with a growing significance for movement makers interested in engaging with the audience in a non-theatre context. A chief vision for Nottedance is to provide a place for artists to meet, talk and share.

Nottedance seeks to establish itself as an anchor point for choreographic research in the UK, developing outcomes that will inform the field for the benefit of makers, pedagogues, learners and audiences.

Nottedance continues to position the voice of artists at the heart of the development of the festival. It is Dance4's ambition that the guest artist co-curator invites their successor.

Participation in Nottedance

Nottedance is produced by Dance4. The team at Dance4 keep abreast of current work at all times and attends performances, studio sharings, views online footage and collaborate with colleagues globally across the field of choreographic practice. Dance4 are continually open to building new relationships and getting to know artists who we are not currently in

connection with. We do this through Dance4's year-round programme of work, and host up to 6 residencies each year for new artists who embody the same philosophy and whose priorities match Dance4's.

There is no formal application process to be part of Nottedance, it is curated through invitation by the CEO/Artistic Director, Guest Artist Co-curator or Programme Director.

If you are an artist who relates to the vision and ethos of Dance4 and Nottedance and would like your choreographic practice to be considered in some way, then we are open to hearing from you. See Nottedance history to get an overview of previous programmed artists and work. Dance4 receive a high number of programming requests from artists across the world on a daily basis. All requests are read and considered by the programme team and are acted on accordingly. With no traditional venue and a festival every other year, we have a finite number of performance opportunities we can offer. A member of the team will be in touch with anyone who has made a request if we want to find out more.

The next edition of Nottedance is 09-13 October 2019 and then in October 2021.