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DRESSING DANCE–DANCING DRESS

Lived experience of dress and its agency in the collaborative process

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Introduction

This chapter considers the agency and experience of dress and costume in the creative and collaborative process of making contemporary dance work and exploring the complexity of its relationship to the body. Contemporary dance embraces aspects of other dance forms, including physical dance, modern, lyrical, and classical ballet, and is often experimental. It is understood differently in its cultural and socio-political contexts, and being a highly visual, abstract, and collaborative art form, the potential for new forms of costume or dress is vast.

In a climate of significant developments in costume in the broader field of performance and scenography, I question why there is a tendency in contemporary dance to perpetuate familiar styles and tropes of dress. Contemporary dance wear has remained largely body conscious, prioritizing ease of movement and functioning as visual enhancement, applied to the dance primarily through applications of color or texture in unitards and developments of everyday dress or rehearsal wear. Limited attention has been paid to the lived experience of dress from the perspectives of designers, wearers, and audiences, and this neglect I argue can result in the active and experiential potentials of costume being overlooked or poorly integrated into contemporary dance (Bugg 2014, 69).

Although dance and dress are visual and bodily mediums, a purely aesthetic or ergonomic approach to costume in dance overlooks the wider phenomenological potential of dress and, as F. Elizabeth Hart identifies, visual aspects of performance find "common ground … literally, within the human body-between semiotic and phenomenological approaches" (McConachie and Hart 2006, 9). Donatella Barbieri (2017, xxii) underscores the significance of such an approach, discussing how its "ability to communicate metaphorically and viscerally provides a direct, visual and embodied connection," for both the audience and the performer.

Over the past decade, the role and agency of costume in performance has started to come to the forefront in academic writing, particularly in studies of scenography with costume-related chapters and special editions of publications such as Collins and Nisbet (2010), McKinney and Palmer (2017), Bugg (2014), and Zoubir-Shaw (2016). Most recently

in 2016, the *Studies in Costume and Performance Journal*,[1] founded by Donatella Barbieri and Sofia Pantouvaki, has provided a much-needed dedicated space for academic writing on costume in performance. Key exhibitions—including *Extreme Costume*, Prague Quadrennial in the Czech Republic (2011); *Hollywood Costume* at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (2012); and the *Critical Costume International* conference and exhibition initiated in 2013—have supported the growing dialogue around the role of costume in performance. Costume, like fashion before it, is becoming elevated to a serious level of academic debate in the context of the body and performance.

There is a burgeoning research culture in costume within performance studies in the UK, Finland, and Australia, and the emergence of texts in the field: Barbieri (2017), Monks (2011), and Trimingham (2011). As Barbieri discusses, there is a noticeable lack of documentation of the experience of costume, or indeed of the costumes, in archives and museums. She also questions why costume remains at the margins in publications on performance despite its long history as a central scenographic element in the making of performance (Barbieri 2017, xxii).

Although dress in dance has started to find its voice in these broader contexts, it remains relatively unexplored with a few notable exceptions such as Fensham (2011),[2] Barbieri (2012, 2017), Monks (2011), Bugg (2014, 2016), and Mackrell (1997). Rachel Fensham's archival research into the effect of costume on natural movement technique in early twentieth century dance underscores this gap in knowledge, explaining that there is "little substantive literature on the use and representation of costume in dance" (Fensham 2011, 83.) Very little has been written on the lived experience of dress in contemporary dance in which the costume's relationship to the body is specifically potent, not only because of its abstracted aesthetic symbolism but also in its physical, experiential, and kinesthetic engagement with the body in movement. Despite a growing field of research on the body and dress in sociology, anthropology, art, fashion, and dance theory—Negrin (2013); Entwistle (2000); Entwistle and Wilson (2001); Cavallaro and Warwick (1998); and Johnson and Foster (2007)—little critical attention has been given systematically to the embodied and experiential potential of costume in contemporary dance.

My own practice-led research has used such approaches to the subject to extend communication between designers, dancers, and viewers and to elevate the role of dress in dance. This work is extended here through analysis of interviews with choreographers, designers, and dancers to understand the role of dress in the collaborative process of making contemporary dance. Through analysis of the interviews, I expose how a deeper engagement with the corporeal experience of dress can activate costume as more than an applied visual overlay or at worse as a disconnected scenographic interference to an already existing choreography.

Methods for understanding bodily experience of dress in dance

I have sought to achieve a more integrated approach to clothing design and movement in the production of short dance and dress-based films that seek to extend communication through an embodied understanding of dress in performance. Over a period of seven years I worked with one dancer from Random Dance Company on sustained, research-focused collaborations that aimed to destabilize hierarchical methods of design and production by introducing costume from the start as an active agent in the development of dance. The aim of this research was to understand lived experience of dress in dance from the perspective of the designer, wearer and potentially, the viewer. By integrating theory, practice, and social science methods, I explored how design and dance can be generated through approaches that symbiotically produce embodied knowledge, movement, and dress to achieve more integrated works.

The research process used a grounded theory approach, in which, rather than beginning with a "pre-conceived theory in mind" (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 12), I started with a broader field of investigation. In this case, an exploration of the relationship between dress and dance, and how dress could be more actively engaged in the making of contemporary dance. The data were generated through practice from which theory emerged, and this iterative dialogue continued in feedback loop. The research was undertaken in an experimental laboratory situation using methods of observational visual analysis, reflective practice, open-ended interviews, and critical analysis. It focused on the single performer's phenomenological experience and the impact of embodied approaches to design as well as the audience's reception of the final works. Although this approach enabled me to be reflective as both the researcher/observer and designer/observer (Thomas 2003, 77), I recognized a need for greater subjectivity and an understanding of dance in a professional context rather than from a visual arts research perspective. By undertaking interviews with a broader sample of dancers, designers, and choreographers, as discussed, has facilitated a deeper understanding of the experience, perception, and agency of dress in the production of contemporary dance works.[3] The interviews form part of the overall phenomenological approach, seeking to understand how garments are perceived and "experienced first-hand by those involved" (Denscombe 2003, 97). They are informed by my own experience and that of the dancer I worked with in my research. This approach enabled me to question and uncover my own assumptions and to understand my "role as a social actor in the research" (Thomas 1993, 76).

Three key areas emerged through analysis of my previous research: First, the presence and absence of dress in dance and the impact of how and when costume is integrated in the choreographic process. Second, the agency of dress and the embodied, sensory, kinesthetic, and perceptual experience of the participants. Finally, questions about how collaborations function when working with dress in contemporary dance and how it is integrated into overall communication of the work. These focus areas inform the structure of the interviews and this chapter develops an analysis of the main themes emerging from the interviews.

To date, 15 in-depth, 60-minute, semi-structured interviews have been conducted over 4 years with 6 contemporary choreographers, 5 designers, and 4 dancers. These have been audio recorded and transcribed to enable the researcher to revisit them as knowledge has been attained and to ensure that a true account of the individual's experience has been presented (Denscombe 2003, 175). Interviews were not always conducted in a linear manner, and when valuable conversation emerged, this conversation also has been captured and informs the subsequent interview. Ten open-ended questions were drawn out in relation to the key themes that provided a framework for the interviews and have been targeted to the nuances of the participants' discipline. This method facilitated a deeper understanding of the way collaborations involving costume function from the different perspectives. A qualitative content analysis has focused on drawing out repetitive themes and patterns, and quantitative analysis also was used to identify the key areas of focus for the interviewees. This was followed by a comparative analysis across the data, enabling comparisons among the experience of dancers, designers, and choreographers. AQ 1

Dress in dance–presence and absence

Costume has been more obviously present or absent in the choreographic process at different times in history and engaged by choreographers to perform different functions to suit choreographic styles and approaches. It has been employed to enhance or enable movement, provide symbolism in performance, communicate character, or mirror everyday dress to

extend the aesthetic of the dance and, occasionally as a tool, to extend the dance. Despite these diverse functions, dress in contemporary dance has tended to be used as a visual or functional support for the dance (Bugg 2014, 69). This trend is seen in the use of body-conscious, second-skin garments, such as leotards and tights or the brightly colored unitard that was, as Judith Mackrell (1997, 223–224) notes, popularized with the introduction of Lycra in the 1970s, but also "maximised freedom with minimum movement distraction." Perhaps the most prevailing trope is that of rehearsal wear, jeans, and T-shirts or ergonomically cut developments of everyday dress. This focus on functional dress harks back to the 1960s and 1970s, when, Mackrell explains, it took the form of garments such as dance pajamas or track pants, depending on the focus and approach of the work. By the 1980s "the concept of ordinariness or the anti-dance uniform had become more glamorous" (Mackrell 1997, 224).

This preference for everyday dress in one form or another seems to have prevailed ever since. Discussing this preference with interviewees, I asked if they thought costume repeated certain cuts, styles, and forms, and if so, why this may be. Although there was little consensus among the choreographers interviewed as to why more progress has not been made in this area of dance, all acknowledged this to be the case. British choreographer Lea Anderson MBE, artistic director of The Cholmondeleys and The Featherstonehaughs, both of which she founded in the 1980s, has developed integrated and highly experimental approaches that use the transformative qualities of costume (Connolly 2017, 9). Anderson strongly believes that dance costume has become less innovative than in the 1980s and 1990s when there was a strong correlation between the club scene and new forms of cabaret and dance in London. She explains that at the time there was,

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> a bit of anti-dance thinking" and new approaches were emerging that were exciting. I will not present anything in dance pyjamas and I will not present anything in bare feet, I just don't understand what that means apart from you just got out of bed or I'm not dressed? (Anderson 2016)

Three of the choreographers spoke of an ongoing trend toward "non-costume" or "pedestrian" costume. Interdisciplinary dance artist Marie-Gabrielle Rotie works closely in collaboration with designers, developing costume and choreography through devised processes. She discussed how the absence of costume in contemporary dance could be attributed to the enduring influence of postmodern dance approaches in the 1960s and 1970s that prioritized movement and everyday aesthetics and led to a "stripping away of theatre and theatricalization" (Rotie 2016). She noted that scenographic and visual aspects of dance became perhaps less important, and that increasingly,

> postmodern dance languages have infiltrated into a language of the pedestrian by nature of association. Dancers can walk, they can run, they can sit, they can stand therefore there is a tendency to use every day costume as well. (2016)

Australian independent choreographer Siobhan Murphy, for whom costume has not been such a central concern in her practice, echoed this shift away from costume toward a preference for dress. She discussed how "there is an anti-costume practice present in independent practice that is about finding something that can look un-costumed" (Murphy 2017). Dancer Lilian Steiner who works for Australian choreographers I have interviewed, including Lucy Guerin, Philip Adams, and Shelley Lasica, reinforced the tendency to use every day dress (Steiner 2018).

British choreographer Shobana Jeyasingh (2014) outlined how her own work draws inspiration from ballet, bharatnatyam, and contemporary dance. She is very much aware of the importance of costume but "it really depends on whether it is a narrative led dance or pure abstract dance; that's what makes the difference as to how the costume is deployed." She notes how the use of loose and comfortable clothes was the classic choice for early contemporary choreographers. On the other hand, companies like Wayne Mc Gregor's *Random Dance* focused on "the minimally clothed dancer" where "the body itself became the text of the dance" (Jeyasingh 2014). She compared these approaches to more theatrical contemporary, narrative led dance, for example, the work of Akram Khan, in which the intention of the dance influences the way costume is approached. The role of costume, she considers, is "to communicate the concept; it also has to function in a way that the lines and whatever you want to tell with the body is possible" (Jeyasingh 2014).

This focus on the choreographer's vision and the requirements of the movement is one of the most discussed aspects in the interviews. Most choreographers drew attention to the fact that designers need to be prepared to alter and change their work in relation to the movement. Although choreographers and designers also are focused on the functionality of dress in dance, it is not such a prevalent issue, rather the aesthetics and symbolism of dress are the most discussed theme across all the interviews.

Choreographer Siobhan Murphy (2017) spoke of her desire to capture a sense of ordinariness with costume to extend the flow of register between audience and performer. Along with others she tries to negotiate what neutral dress is, highlighting the agency of dress in performance where "nothing is neutral, just like there is no body that is uninscribed by history and culture and so on." She uses clothing in her choreography to create context for the reading of the work. Most choreographers indicated that the designer's role is to enhance the visual symbolism or aesthetic experience for audiences through costume. Four of the choreographers specifically stated that not only does costume need to make sense in the context of the movement, it must also look good or contemporary. Lucy Guerin, artistic director of Lucy Guerin Inc. (2018), talked about her work in Australia and earlier in New York when she worked more often with costume than she does now. Early on in her career she designed and made her own costumes, wanting "to shift away a little from traditional dance costumes like track pants or unitards," and seeking "gentle stylistic statement."

The problem that emerges is, although dress can add a stylistic statement to the work, it also has greater agency through its semiotic resonance and the performative nature of the image. Judith Mackrell identifies that dance and fashion are connected, but choreographers who do not want to "give out confusing signals of character, style, period, particularly in plotless work, will generally dress their dance in as uniform a style as possible (1997, 215). This method enables them to get away from associations to a specific place or time.

Three of the choreographers talked about how they seek out a contemporary aesthetic. Fashionable clothing can perhaps offer a direct means of accessing the "stylistic statement" referred to by Guerin (2018). This trend also may be why there has been a proliferation of collaborations between fashion designers and dance in recent years. Most of these have focused on applying a highly visual approach and in some cases have added a rich visual texture to the dance. In others the costume's aesthetic has distracted from the movement or complicated the reading of the work (Bugg 2016, 174). The interviews have revealed that although links to contemporary aesthetics and fashion are important for choreographers, the style and needs of the choreography dictate how and if dress or costume is used.

The visual and/or physical interference of costume in the dance is the central preoccupation for both designers and choreographers. This preoccupation is clearly illustrated in Lucy

Guerin's comments in which she explained how her relationship with costume has become more complex because audiences already "find dance difficult to interpret and are constantly looking for clues." Guerin's frustration is palpable in her comments that "in some works I wish I didn't need a costume at all, that it wasn't part of the work. It is so loaded and disruptive. There's nothing that doesn't have huge connotations" (Guerin 2018). One of her dancers also finds the aesthetic symbolism of costume difficult to navigate, describing a tension between the aesthetic of the movement and the body, and the aesthetic or semiotic effect of the costume:

> I feel it is quite a tricky thing because it is such a big part of the image of a work. Costume influences the way an observer reads into the bigger intentions of a work. It is partially the way dress effects the viewing of the body's movements but also the references that clothing or adornment load on top of what can essentially be abstract movement. (Steiner 2018)

This broader understanding of the aesthetic role of costume's form, color, and texture in relation to kinesthetic and sensory experience is discussed by Rachel Fensham in her writing on natural movement and costume. She explains how the new modern dance approaches in the first part of the twentieth century were not so much about the way costume looked but rather how its materiality contributed to "a natural movement aesthetic" (2011, 83). She noted how the draped floating scarves and costumes favored by choreographer and teacher Madge Atkinson not only enabled this expanded notion of aesthetic but also drew attention to the importance of how the fabric felt on the body, which then became a source of the dance experience (2011, 84–85). Such embodied investigation of dress in the making of dance works is best illustrated in Martha Graham's work in the 1930s, when she made her own costumes to use as a tool in her choreography. In *Lamentation* (1930), for example, Graham's costumes enabled her to extend the abstracted exploration of grief that was embodied through her interaction with the costume. Here the sensory potential of clothing extends the performer's ideation and kinesthetic exploration that, in turn, sparks the emotional, sensory, and physical experience of both performer and viewer. Maxine Sheets-Johnstone explains that "we don't just see a story of grief," rather we see "its felt form" (2009, 300). Such historical precedents of experimental and embodied uses of costume go as far back as the 1890s and Loie Fuller's pioneering works. Fuller's *Danse Serpentine* (1896) employed voluminous swathes of cloth, sticks, and lighting (Banes 1987, 2) to extend the aesthetic potential of the body in movement, creating transformative visual spectacle in the site of her body.

These precedents demonstrate how costume can enhance and develop the dance, not only through the semiotic or aesthetic communication but also by engaging with the wider sensory and experiential potential. Despite this, the interviews have exposed that some choreographers are wary of the agency of dress in the making of works. As Rotie pointed out, in early modern dance "dress was something that accentuated movement, whereas in contemporary dance there is a sense that the movement is everything and is prior to any other considerations" (Rotie 2016).

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Philip Adams, artistic director of the Australian company BalletLab, uses scenography and dress in a range of innovative and experimental ways to explore the boundaries of what dance and dress can be. He points to the underlying tension between the two, discussing the performer's relationship to the garment in which the impact of costume on the work is sometimes problematic and even overpowering. This same tension emerges through most of the interviews with choreographers, highlighting an ever-present potential for dress to hinder

the performer, obscuring or upstaging the body and technique or derailing the choreographer's vision of the work. He noted that costume can "take too much responsibility for what the viewer is seeing as they encounter the work" (Adams 2013).

If a designer is sensitive to the needs of the dance and the choreographer understands the potential of dress in performance, a unified aesthetic and communication can be attained. Clothing has the potential to connect wearers and viewers through performance; it is central to our experience of being in the world. Dancers, designers, and choreographers are all acutely aware that costume can have both positive and negative agency in the work.

Agency and embodiment of dress in dance

Costume and dress have significant and unstable agency in their direct relationship to the body, and this, as Melissa Trimingham observes, is "nowhere more so than when it transforms the human body visually, physically, in motion and in the charged context of shared performance" (2017, 137). Like the body, costume or dress is never neutral; its meanings are interpreted in social and cultural context/s as well as in the individual's experience and are "subject to interpretations which are themselves the product of ideologies and belief systems rooted in a particular place and moment in time" (Collins and Nisbet 2010, 231).

As I have argued elsewhere clothing in dance can become inseparable from the body and its meanings in performance (Bugg 2016, 189). Dani Cavallaro and Alexandra Warwick write that dress is both "part of the subject and as objects for the subject, which are not accommodated within the body and yet cannot be conceived of as totally separate from it" (1998, 44). More than this, Llewellyn Negrin states, "When we act in the world, we do not act just as bodies, but as clothed bodies, in which our attire becomes an integral part of our corporeal schema" (2016, 130). Indeed, our kinesthetic, haptic, and sensory experience is heightened in which the agency of dress in dance becomes "the enactment of iterative changes to practices through the dynamics of intra-activity" (Barad 2003, 827). This experience creates a performative dynamic not only between the performer and the garment or the dancer and the audience, but between designers, wearers, choreographers, and audiences in the production and the reception of the work.

Dress can be remembered or experienced through the body and can trigger sensory, cognitive, and kinesthetic processing that presents opportunities for reimagining and embodiment when experienced in and through movement. Maxine Sheets-Johnstone explains this devised approach as "thinking in movement … the work of an existentially resonant body" (2009, 35). Moreover she suggests that "perception is interlaced with movement and to the point where it is impossible to separate out where perception begins and movement ends" (39). I extend this thinking to include the inseparability of the garment and the body, where dress can no longer be "designated as an attribute of either 'subject' or 'object' as they do not pre-exist as such" (Barad 2003, 827).

From the dancer's point of view, dress becomes resonant in its relations and interactions with bodies. As Lilian Steiner explained in her interview, "the costume gives you access to a different experience you wouldn't necessarily carry without the costume" (2018). Carrie Noland's understanding of agency as "the power to alter … behaviors and beliefs for purposes that may be reactive (resistant) or collaborative (innovative)" (2009, 9), is useful here. It highlights how dress changes the experience of the dancer in movement, and this experience can disrupt or extend the dance. These active, unstable, and transformative qualities create potential as well as pitfalls in the creative and collaborative process of making dance.

Collaborating in dance through the body and dress

Despite the undeniable agency of dress in dance, the interviews expose the fact that costume is a secondary consideration for many choreographers and often is not introduced until late in the process of production. Lea Anderson (2016) explained that this is because, unlike herself, many choreographers "are not focused on the costume, they filter out costume." She continued to say that the lack of awareness of costume generally can result in poor costume. Interestingly, she and two other choreographers drew attention to the fact that dancers and choreographers are not taught to think about costume in their training and therefore, it is rarely discussed or considered. One of the choreographers also made the point that collaboration skills in working with scenographic elements are not taught in depth, and another expanded on this, noting that students are also wary of collaborations with visual designers.

The choreographer's awareness and perspective on costume significantly impacts how and if it is integrated into the work. Three designers spoke of the restrictions imposed on the design by some choreographers. Sofia Pantouvaki (2016) observed that this restriction can mean that some designers may revert to "standard types of garments" perhaps because "they have been tested before and proven to work." She underscores the importance of functionality and explained that "if you know that it is comfortable and allows movement then you can focus on details of cut, pattern, and fabrics." In her own experience whether working in design for classical ballet or contemporary dance she explained that she has always "found inspiration in contributing to the overall work" through what she terms as "embodied story telling."

Dress is activated in the site of the feeling and experiencing body, it touches the body physically, sensorially, cognitively, and kinesthetically. If we understand senses to include "feelings, emotions, memories, impressions, responses and sensations we associate with dress" (Johnson and Foster 2007, 2), then this affords a more embodied and sensory understanding of dress in dance. It enables us to move beyond a Cartesian split of mind-body dualism toward a "more personal and mindful body that acts and resists" in response to the experience of dress in movement (115). I have explored with interviewees the visual, physical, sensory, and embodied experience of dress in their work. The visual and symbolic aspects are most commonly discussed across all the interviews. All dancers are aware of how they look and, as one dancer noted, "Although we are aware of how we might look, it is most important to feel comfortable in movement and to be confident that the costuming adds to the visual and kinesthetic experience of the work" (Steiner 2018). Dancer Sarah Augieras revealed how she mediates between her felt experience and the external reading of her physicality and visuality in and through movement. If she is wearing something floaty she feels "more airy and my movement is much more circular. But when you perform in something quite tight you do feel like you are lines and you are so aware of each part of the skin and how it is in space, the lines you create" (2017).

In a discussion of her solo work *Mythic* (2012), Marie-Gabrielle Rotie (2016) described the role of visual and kinesthetic exploration in her work as a soloist, observing that images are not purely aesthetic, they are part of how she feels and visualizes herself in the act of performing. This kinesthetic engagement with images, ideas, and movement is echoed in Cynthia Cohen Bull's description of her experience of dancing. She says it "stirs very personal associations and images within me as I move," they stem from "life experiences in cultural settings, both theoretical and social" (1997, 269). Dancers' comments in the interviews suggest that dress can contribute to this awareness of their own bodies as they perform.

One of the primary concerns for the designers and choreographers interviewed is how the costume feels for the dancer, but this tends to be focused on fit and movement as opposed to the wider phenomenological engagement with dress. All designers mentioned the importance of fittings as a critical time. For Sandy Powell (2016) "the designing happens in the fitting room on a body not at a desk." It clearly emerged that costume is not a key concern in the production of a performance and often is introduced late in the process. Lucy Guerin (2018) explained that costume is seldom part of her work, but she described a recent award-winning performance, *The Dark Chorus* (2016), that "was one of the first times that an idea was more costume based." These costumes were designed by one of her dancers, Ben Handcock, in collaboration with designer Harriet Oxley. This knowledge of the body in movement and the choreography that the dancer brought to the process perhaps assisted in the sensitivity of the costume to the dance.

Several examples emerged in which choreographers have developed their own costumes, working on their own bodies. Some designers, who also had experience as dancers, talked about how this informed their knowledge and empathy for the performers and their understanding of design in movement. Some made a point of working with dress in the process of developing the work, as Rotie explains:

> I have a toile made of some kind or bring in garments that are like the shape of the thing you will be wearing. I usually ask for things to be made on my body or on the body of who I am working with, so I can see and move how that idea is going to unfold further. (2016)

Dress in the context of the moving and experiencing body can enter a dialogue with the body in motion. This dialog demonstrates that dancers are quite prepared to work with extreme costumes so long as they are well integrated within the performance-making process, as opposed to being introduced at the last minute in rehearsals. One dancer who performed in Anderson's *Hand in Glove* (2016) discussed how costume is usually introduced a week before the performance to enable the dancers to get used to it. Conversely, she explained how costume was introduced from the start of the production process in *Hand in Glove* (2016), and this enabled it to contribute and to change the movement (Augieras 2017). Jo Butterworth's research into human perception, action, and cognition highlights the potential of engaging dancers with devised approaches to costume in dance. She explains devising as "the dialectic between the act of making and doing, of creating and performing, and of being an artist and/or interpreter" (2009, 189). By thinking about costume in this way, as an embodied and unfolding form, it follows that dress in dance needs to be introduced early to enable dancers and choreographers to use and explore its agency in the work.

In another example, Anderson's *Russian Roulette* (2008) was made up of six highly costumed performances with 163 costumes. Designer Simon Vincenzi's bulbous shimmering body-morphing creations for the dance encased the whole body and extended the dancers' bodies into otherworldly forms as they gestured and gyrated in movement. Vincenzi explained how Lea would work for two weeks and then he would go in and watch a run and introduce the costumes. Together with the dancers, they worked for weeks in a room "packed full of the costumes that we were going to use" (Vincenzi 2016). This dialogue between bodies and material enables the costume to inform the movement through an experiential exchange in the making of the work. Anderson discussed how the dancers were complaining after a series of rehearsals about how painful, hot, and disgusting the costumes were to wear. Vincenzi referred to the need to engage dancers creatively

in the development of the work (2016). Costume, no matter how restrictive, can positively engage the performer, but the way it is introduced in the collaborative process is important.

Time, funding, and trust

From the interviews with choreographers, funding and lack of time impacts the way collaborations are developed, and subsequently how costume is approached. Finnish designer Karolina Kaiso-Kantilla (2016) observed that the fit of the costume is always tested to determine the ease of movement, but this is done during rehearsals in the actual training space or in the locker room. One choreographer identified that costume is often the lowest priority in the budget, always coming after the lighting that is central to dance. Dancer and choreographer Sanna Myllylahti (2016) explained that time is very limited, as is contact with costume designers or scenographic designers generally, unless working in a big theater environment. Lea Anderson supported this saying that not until she was in a proper theater company could she really make the breakthrough with costume. She pointed out that grants and funding to support innovation are not easily available, and buying time is perhaps the most valuable way of integrating designers and their work into the production of dance. Costume designers do not necessarily need to be present the whole time but, as all the designers have identified, they do need to be there at key points during the production process.

Anderson (2016) again described how working with designers has extended her own work and spoke of her "eureka moment of dance and costume," *Flesh and Blood* (1989), costumed by Sandy Powell. Sandy attended all the rehearsals and saw the work which had a lot of "floor work, up down up down rolling around and really complex precision stuff" (Anderson 2016). Powell suggested long dresses to the floor made from very expensive silver fabric. While acutely aware of the impact of the movement on the dresses and the way it would affect the performance, she had to rethink the choreography, working the costume into the piece with a far more interesting result, highlighting and working with the movement of clothes.

This type of communication and dialogue takes time, and many choreographers, like Anderson, work with the same costume designers building trust and ways to collaborate, with rules and parameters agreed up front for the specific performance. Communication needs to stay open, collaboration must be reflexive, discursive, and iterative, and all the interviews have unearthed the potential of such relationships to expand the practices of all collaborators.

Conclusion

This research used interviews within a phenomenological methodology to uncover the experience of dress in the context of the moving, sensing, and experiencing body for dancers, choreographers, and designers. Dress and dance are, as I have demonstrated, inextricably interconnected through lived experiences of the bodies that move with and within them, and in movement they can become symbiotic. This interconnection presents new understandings and opportunities that can inform the development of the work. Dress in contemporary dance is far more than a practical or visual application. It is fundamentally phenomenological, resonating in its relationship to the bodies that wear, view, and experience it in both the production and reception of the work.

The interviews reveal that a better understanding between the creative approaches and methods of all collaborators is required. A lack of awareness or openness on the part of the choreographer, designer, or indeed the dancer can derail the integration of costume within dance, resulting in all the collaborators reverting to their own familiar methods and training.

More than this, there needs to be an awareness of the different agencies of the body that pertain to each discipline and an understanding of what this may mean for the specific work.

I have discussed how, by introducing dress into the development of dance early in the process, as opposed to later in the final dress rehearsals, the lived experience of dancers and the agency of dress in the context of the body can be leveraged. This approach not only offers the opportunity for more integrated approaches to costume in dance but also can offer a greater potential for discovery, ideation, and communication in the production process and in the communication of the work. Collaborating with dress in the site of the body offers opportunities to take all participants somewhere new through an experiential and embodied exchange that is unique to each collaboration.

In order to engage in effective collaborations that open up new approaches and outcomes, it is imperative that there is understanding and trust between the disciplines involved. The necessity of building more time into the process of creation has been highlighted, and this requires funding. Traditional processes, hierarchies, timelines, and financial constraints can preclude depth of collaboration. These constraints contribute to a growing tendency to avoid costume innovation or to repeat tried and tested approaches. As such, costume can be rendered as an insignificant element in the dance work, or as a visual or functional support to the performance, rather than considering its potential agenic function. One of the most significant findings from the interviews was the positive and the negative agency that dress can have. I propose that this could be why some choreographers avoid engaging with dress in dance in more innovative ways and that this lack of engagement with costume's agency and embodied potential often results in poorly integrated costume. The interviews have shown that the most successful collaborations work with, rather than against, this agency and with the phenomenological potential of dress in its relationship to the dancing and experiencing body.

Notes

1 See: https://www.intellectbooks.com/studies-in-costume-performance.
2 See also Carter and Fensham (2011).
3 This was undertaken with RMIT University ethics approval "Dancing Dress-Dressing Dance" Reference: 0000019661-09/15.

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AQ 4 Lasica, Shelley. 2013. Interviewed by the author in Melbourne, Australia. April 15.
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Author Query Sheet

Chapter No.: 25

Query No.	Queries	Response
AQ 1	What do you mean by "This" in the sentence "This was followed by a…"?	
AQ 2	Please provide corresponding opening quote.	
AQ 3	What do you mean by "This" in the sentence "Despite this, the interviews…"?	
AQ 4	Please cite Lasica (2013) in text.	