

Bio

Eeva Anttila (Ed.Lic, Doctor of Arts in dance) works as a professor in dance pedagogy at the University of the Arts Helsinki, Finland. Her research interests include dialogical and critical dance pedagogy, embodied learning, embodied knowledge and practice-based/artistic research methods. Anttila is actively involved in national and international dance and arts education organizations and journals. She served as the Chair of Dance and the Child International (2009–2012), and has published several articles and book chapters nationally and internationally. Anttila has been the editor of the Nordic Journal of Dance: Practice, Education and Research and is currently co-editor of the International Journal of Education in the Arts.

Abstract

On be(com)ing and connecting: Participatory approaches to dance research and pedagogy

This presentation will focus on the interconnectedness of art and pedagogy, as well as on evolving approaches to dance research that stem from post-qualitative and performative paradigms. The key questions that will be addressed are, how to facilitate social change and transformation through dance, and how to respect the processual nature of these phenomena when researching them. The discussion will draw from various theoretical and philosophical frameworks, including socio-material and non-representational theories. These theories open exciting possibilities for investigating dance practices. They uncover how human meaning-making is always connected to the physical, material conditions of life, and how meaning arises through manifold actions and interactions rather than in discourse or symbolic order; in other words, how thought is placed in action and how action is placed in the world. This view entails a shift away from understanding human meaning-making as separate from materiality. The theoretical and philosophical discussion will be accompanied with examples from practical work where the aim has been to merge pedagogy and performance. Especially, the notion of an artistic-pedagogical event will be illuminated as a possible way to foster connectedness and participation. Such public events, based on collective, participatory approaches may be one possible way to understand the evolving and emerging nature of artistic-pedagogical processes; and to see performances as on-going events. Here, the interest is in creating situations rather than objects, to foster action and interaction, participation and affect. Finally, returning to the notion of social change and turning focus towards a better future, the question is, how to foster change in a conscious way while acknowledging that human and non-human forces interact in complex ways, creating an eventful reality.

