

TOWARDS A DANCE COMMONS

A FORUM FOR CROSS-COMMUNITY SHARING



A Durham University and Dance City, Newcastle Event

Community is as much an ideal people strive towards as an actual fact. Community making is a crucial part of democratic society; it helps avoid harmful conflicts and repair inequalities. Dance assumes a special place in community building. Happening in spaces that are both open ('brave' space) and protected ('safe' space), dance promotes inclusion and offers new models of what a community can be. Projects developed in the frame of community dance can tackle marginalisation, inequality, exclusion, forge social engagement, and heal trauma. We propose a forum at which scholars, dance practitioners, and community dancers across the North East exchange knowledge and experience about community making in the context of dance. Grounding the event in interdisciplinary research on embodiment and cognition, affect and trauma, dance and performance, we will engage a range of distinct communities to explore how they share through sequences of embodied movement, gesture, and touch.

Day 1: 12 November, [Dance City, Newcastle](#)

Dance as community action: A programme of workshops, new dance films, and live performances by professional and community dancers. The event is free, but capacity is limited and booking is essential. ([Please register at the Dance City site.](#))

13:30-14:00 *Registration*

14:00-15:00 Welcome, introduction, and a talk (Theatre)

- **‘Why movement matters’, by Roger Smith**

15:00-17:00

Parallel events (participants can choose between activity in the Theatre or Studio 2):

- **Workshops (Theatre): Every body dancing**

‘Can one define a gracious movement?’, workshop of Isadora Duncan, with Irina Sirotkina

‘What a pity that you exclude us: your dance is boring’, workshop focused on larger bodies, with Gillie Kleiman

- **Open rehearsal (Studio 2): BA students**

‘Patterns of Parts’, by Sophie Douglas and the BA students

17:00-18:00 *Refreshments* (Corner Room)

18:00-21:00

Dance films: Screenings and panel discussion with directors and cast

- 'Inner Gods' (Gateway Studio)
- 'Lighthouse' (Beth Veitch)
- 'On the patterns we gaze' (Ellen Jeffrey et al.)
- 'Coal' (Sel MacLean)

Interval

Live performances by professional and community dancers from the North East.

- ‘Patterns of Parts’, by Sophie Douglas and the BA students
- ‘Sacrament to Spring’, by Alyssa Lisle and community dancers
- ‘Deserted’, by Hummingbird Dance Company
- ‘Connecting’, by the Sirotkina-Smith Collective
- ‘Too Long in the Tooth’, by Lynn Campbell and Falling on Your Feet – Helix Arts
- ‘Performance Excerpts’, by North East Dance Project
- ‘Augmenting Reflections’, by Kristin Kelly Abbott for Boundless

Day 2: 13 November, [St Aidan's College, Durham University](#)

Dance, inclusion, and collective memory: Presentation and discussion of projects accompanied by the screening of dance films from the North East, ending with an interactive performance. The event is free, but capacity is limited, and booking is essential. (**Please register at this [Eventbrite site](#) by no later than 3 November 2025.**)

09:30-10:00 Registration and welcome (Lindisfarne Centre)

10:00-12:00

Panel on INCLUSION

- Martin Wilson (TIN Arts)
- Fusako Innami (Durham University) & Sara Chezari (Surface Area Dance Theatre)
- Ally Hunter & Alison Thain (Converge Northumbria)
- Pelican Theatre (Live Well and Dance with Parkinson's)
- Rachel Kurz & Emily Davis (Institute of Medical Humanities)

12:00-13:00 *Lunch*

13:00-15:00

Panel on MEMORY

- Ellen Jeffrey (working with communities through time-specific performance)
- Sophie Douglas & Lucia Piquero (N'Alcordanza project on embodied memories)
- Eliot Smith (Eliot Smith Dance, The Pitman Project)
- Laura Connolly and Emily Wallace (Dance Heritage Project)

15:00-15:15 Interactive performance

- 'Protection', by Samba

15.15-15:30 Closure of the forum

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